Reviewed in This Issue...

Liber Usualis
The Church and Her Treasure
Ruth (Concordia Commentary)
Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism
Isaiah (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture)
Lighten Our Darkness: Music for the Close of the Day

http://wy.lcms.org/LHP/QBR
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From the Editor

What We’re Thinking

In its first issue, our Wyoming District Liturgy & Hymnody newsletter gave book and CD recommendations. For its first birthday, L&H became Liturgy, Hymnody, & Pulpit. Eventually those recommendations became reviews. (By then the LCMS Lutheran Hymnal Project had a name for their new hymnal, Lutheran Service Book. The initials LHP were up for grabs!) As LHP Quarterly Book Review begins its second year, I thought it appropriate to explain a little about “what we’re thinking” in our review categories.

LHP Reviews feature an item that either combines the elements of liturgy, hymnody, and preaching, or is a book of such importance you should know about it (or be warned about it) whether or not you actually buy or read it yourself. Dr. Pieper’s topics of The Church and Justification find themselves at the heart of Lutheran liturgy, hymnody, and preaching. A resource like The Crossway Illustrated Bible Handbook is of such value, you should consider shelving it next to your other ESV resources. No wonder our own publishing house included it in their catalog.

Briefly Noted features brief reviews of noteworthy items. In this section you may find announcements about special deals, books that are much shorter than the typical item we review, resources are more “off topic” (at least initially) when they were requested or sent to us, and resources that we paid for ourselves and thought you should know about.

More about Liturgy Reviews, Hymnody Reviews, and Pulpit Reviews (and other combinations) will be featured in this space over this Church Year.

In Christ,

Paul J Cain, Jr.

The Rev. Paul J Cain, Editor

Ephesians 2:8-10

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While every effort was made to be as accurate and objective as possible, inevitably, the opinions of the authors of various articles and reviews will surface, and individually, we take full responsibility for them. Opinions expressed are those of the contributors, and may not necessarily reflect that of the LCMS, the Wyoming District, or LHP Quarterly Book Review.

Book prices and availability may change without notice.

The “circular” art in this issue is from the Higher Things Ecclesiastical Art CD.

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http://higherthings.org/html/store/ecclesiasticalart
From the Organ Bench

“Christ Jesus in All Things,”

Part V

By Dr. Steven Hoffman

The following is an excerpt and expansion of a series of lectures on sacred music delivered by Kantor Dr. Steven Hoffman at Zion Lutheran Church, Imperial, Nebraska 6-8 October 2006.

Greetings in Christ Jesus!

By the grace of God, we pause at this holy season of Advent to contemplate the mystery of the holy Incarnation of our dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Our dear Lord Christ is the Word made flesh, God Incarnate, the One Who came to dwell among us. He is Emmanuel, God with us. Thus, He has promised likewise to never leave us or forsake us.

This Good News is what we believe, teach, and confess as Lutherans. Further, our hymns and liturgy bear witness to that which we believe, teach, and confess. One of the best examples is the hymn, “Of the Father’s Love Begotten.”

In this hymn, we confess that God the Father, in His own love for us, would send His Son to take away our sins even before the foundations of the world: Of the Father’s love begotten ere the worlds began to be. We confess with Holy Scripture that Jesus is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of all things, “He the Source, the Ending He.”

Christ Jesus is over all, through all, and in all, from before the beginning, through all ages of ages, and through eternity, “Of the things that are, that have been, and that future years shall see.” How long will it be so? “Evermore and evermore.”

We confess in this hymn, as we do in Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, that the blessed birth of Christ came about by the Holy Ghost conceiving in the virgin Mary, that she would bear the Savior of our race, the world’s Redeemer. This Holy One, born of Mary, is the One that Seers and Prophets of old “Chanted of with one accord” and the One of whom they “promised in their faithful word. This Babe is the long-expected, the One whom heaven’s heights adore, whose praises the angels sing, the One before whom powers and dominions bow.

May it be, again by the grace of God, that our tongues will not remain silent, that each of our voices, in the freedom Christ was born, lived, died, and rose to bring us, ring in full concert with this great Good News of our Savior. May it be so, as we sing in the final stanza of this great hymn:

Christ to Thee with God the Father
And O Holy Ghost to Thee
Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving
And unending praises be,
Honor, glory, and dominion,
And eternal victory
Evermore and evermore.

Amen

God bless and keep you, and a very Merry and Blessed Christmas, and a Christ-filled New Year!

In the Name of Jesus,

Kantor Dr. Steven Hoffman

SAH

Dr. Steven Hoffman is Organist-in-Residence at the University of Wyoming. He is the Kantor at St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church and Campus Center in Laramie, and at King of Glory Lutheran Church in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Dr. Hoffman holds degrees from the University of South Dakota and the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Dr. Hoffman’s interests include the development of an organ instruction program with learning centers throughout Wyoming with the goal of enriching the skills of organists and increasing the awareness of the organ as the “King of Instruments.” He is currently authoring a book exploring the relationship between Lutheran theology and music during the Reformation.
Numbers can reveal what we can see: people at church, membership totals, and offerings given to the Lord’s work, but you can’t measure the human heart or growth in faith. Big numbers don’t necessarily mean that a congregation is faithful to Christ and His Word, or faithful to the confession of the church body named on the sign out front.

If you don’t believe me, at least believe them, the “Church Growth” so-called “seeker-sensitive” and “contemporary worship” megachurche s that many in the LCMS are copying. In connection with *Reveal: Where Are You?*, a startling book by the leaders of Willow Creek Community Church near Chicago, pastor Bill Hybels says, “Some of the stuff that we have put millions of dollars into thinking it would really help our people grow and develop spiritually, when the data actually came back it wasn’t helping people that much. Other things that we didn’t put that much money into and didn’t put much staff against is stuff our people are crying out for.”

In other words, their approach to doing church with large theatre-like sanctuaries, contemporary music, small group ministries, and watered-down theology, did very well at getting numbers, but failed miserably at making disciples who were taught all that Jesus commanded (Matthew 28:18-20). Pastor Hybels also admits, “We made a mistake. What we should have done when people crossed the line of faith and become Christians, we should have started telling people and teaching people that they have to take responsibility to become ‘self feeders.’ We should have gotten people, taught people, how to read their bible between services, how to do the spiritual practices much more aggressively on their own. Incredibly, the guru of church growth now tells us that people need to be reading their bibles and taking responsibility for their spiritual growth.”

Members of His congregation wanted in-depth doctrinal Bible Study. As long as people are there and Bibles are available, that’s about the cheapest way to teach there is. Could it be that LCMS congregations like ours are on the cutting edge? Or, would we rather say that we’ve just continued to be faithful to what the Lord gave us to do?

After hearing news like this our sinful human nature wants to scream, “I told you so!” But, that would not really be helpful to our brothers and sisters inside and outside the LCMS who have fallen for this fad-driven way to do church. I was hopeful for the future direction of members of the “Willow Creek Association,” a group of congregations looking to Willow Creek as a model, until I read their future plans as articulated by pastor Greg Hawkins: “Our dream is that we fundamentally change the way we do church. That we take out a clean sheet of paper and we rethink all of our old assumptions. Replace it with new insights. Insights that are informed by research and rooted in Scripture. Our dream is really to discover what God is doing and how he’s asking us to transform this planet.”

I commend his passion for the lost. That’s something good that should rub off on us as Lutherans. But shouldn’t their insights on how to do church come first and primarily from Scripture? Shouldn’t research take a back seat? Isn’t this a quote that could have been written when Willow Creek was starting in order to justify why they were changing the way Christians had traditionally done worship, instruction new members and all members young and old? Why not look to how the Church has done Church for 2000 years, faithful to God’s Word and using His means of grace to make disciples of all nations?

Over the last ten years I’ve learned a lot about “doing church.” from comparing my home congregation to the “Willow Creek” style LCMS campus ministry to seminary experiences and serving multiple congregations as fieldworker, vicar, or pastor.

- Much growth at congregations like Willow Creek are only recycling sheep, not making new disciples. At worst, it is “sheep stealing.” At best, it appears to be sheep playing musical chairs with churches.
- There is a lot of transfer growth in growing communities. In our Platte valley, Many people work, play, shop, (and worship) in “the Bluffs,” Scottsbluff and Gering, even though they live in a smaller town miles away.
- Thanks be to God that there are new Christians in virtually every Christian congregation that trust in Christ alone for forgiveness, life, and salvation. Unfortunately, for all of its techniques, changes (or otherwise, they say, the church will die), high-paid consultants, and untold books over the last three or so decades, “Church Growth” (CG) has not actually grown the church.
Various factors help explain the appeal of the CG approach:

- An area of the country with a growing (rather than declining) population
- Novelty (Recently, members of one Church Growth congregation in Scottsbluff were complaining to me about another CG congregation stealing their members.)
- Location, location, location. People look around their neighborhood. They don’t want to walk or drive very far—even in a parking lot
- They were invited to church.
- Old-fashioned Christian care and concern for people in their time of need.
- Friendliness of the members of the congregation on Sunday and during the week.
- Availability of group ministries and people like them.
- The chance to be lost in the number of a larger congregation and not be asked to serve.
- Legalism is attractive. Law-based sermons where the “to do” list is watered down make the law “something I can do” in contrast to the reality, God’s Ten Commandments. Only Christ can keep the Law perfectly. We need His forgiveness once we realize that even watered-down law still accuses us when we can’t or won’t do it.

As you read this, Christmas is sooner than when I wrote it. Christmas songs (sacred and secular) are on the radio and in the air at the mall and area stores. For all of the so-called “contemporary” Christian music written, very little of it has anything to do with Christmas. Why? Perhaps it’s because people want to sing Christmas carols and hymns that they already know, hymns that present Christ on Christmas in all the detail and Gospel comfort that the Bible gives. As Christians around the world sing hymns like “Silent Night,” “From Heaven Above to Earth I Come,” “O Come, All Ye Faithful,” and “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing,” maybe—or maybe—they will look around their hymnals this Christmas and wonder why worship can’t use good, solid, Biblical hymns with the Gospel comfort of Christ every week—not just on Christmas.

PJC

From the Professor

A Theology of Worship

by the Rev. Dr. Norman Edgar Nagel

Our Lord speaks and we listen. His Word bestows what it says. Faith that is born from what is heard acknowledges the gifts received with eager thankfulness and praise. Music is drawn into this thankfulness and praise, enlarging and elevating the adoration of our gracious giver God.

Saying back to Him what He has said to us, we repeat what is most true and sure. Most true and sure is His name, which He put upon us with the water of our Baptism. We are His. This we acknowledge at the beginning of the Divine Service. Where His name is, there is He. Before Him we acknowledge that we are sinners, and we plead for forgiveness. His forgiveness is given us, and we, freed and forgiven, acclaim Him as our great and gracious God as we apply to ourselves the words He has used to make Himself known to us.

The rhythm of our worship is from Him to us, and then from us back to Him. He gives His gifts, and together we receive and extol them. We build on another up as we speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Our Lord gives us His body to eat and His blood to drink. Finally His blessing moves us out into our calling, where His gifts have their fruition.

How best to do this we may learn from His Word and from the way His Word has prompted His worship throughout the centuries. We are heirs of an astonishingly rich tradition. Each tradition receives from those who went before and, in making that tradition of the Divine Service its own, adds what best may serve in its own day—the living heritage and something new.

(Introduction to Lutheran Worship, p. 6).
LHP Book Review


Blessed Lord, You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning. Grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them that, by patience and comfort of Your holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

(LSB Collect for Grace to Receive the Word, #148, p. 308 in Pew Edition)

Read, learn, and inwardly digest? Sure. But I’ve always had a hard time of marking up a Bible. Maybe it was that bad experience with highlighters in youth confirmation class. Perhaps it was a theological realization that the text of Scripture is so much more important than any notes, whether they be mine or any human interpreter.

The 7.5-point type is similar to an ESV Bible I bought for travel and convention use. Both editions are probably intended for young eyes. That leaves about two inches of ruled margins on the outside of each page for taking notes during sermons or individual or group Bible study.

The elastic strap holds the Bible closed without need of a cover or bag. That’s a big positive built right into the book’s design, in addition to an attached ribbon bookmark. As always, there is a free ESV Bible Resources CD-Rom included with this Bible edition or by mail or internet request. (As far as I can tell, only ESV pew Bibles don’t have the free companion CD-Rom. But then, who brings their laptop with them to their pew?)

Three colors are offered at the $35 price with two leather editions also available.

Book introductions for both the Old and New Testament, an annual Bible reading plan and information about the English Standard Version are found in the back of this edition, right after the article, “God’s Plan to Save You.”

For the most part, this article does a pretty good job of explaining sin and grace, divine wrath and divine forgiveness. The prayer at the bottom of 1045 has and unclear (at best) and questionable theology of conversion. The Bible does not teach a “Decision Theology.” Jesus Himself teaches “You did not choose me, but I chose you …” (John 15:16). In addition, Scripture confesses that we are born with original sin, at war with God, and spiritually dead. A quick read of Psalm 51 and Romans will make that abundantly clear to any reader.

Apart from the small print, that’s the only exception I find to this being a really great Bible edition.

PJC

LHP Book Review


This is the first of seven planned reproductions of “the first handwritten and illuminated Bible commissioned since the invention of the printing press” (back cover of dust jacket).

“Gospels and Acts has more than 25 illuminations, including full-page opening illuminations for each of the four gospels. Some of the prominent illuminations include the Genealogy of Jesus, the Birth of Christ, the Raising of Lazarus, the Crucifixion, Christ Our Light, the Last Supper, the Road to Emmaus, and Pentecost” (Publisher’s website).

The Genealogy art, appropriately placed just before the beginning of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, features a menorah “family tree” with all names given in Hebrew and English.

The Beatitudes (Matthew 5 and parallel texts) are also illuminated. The Lord’s Prayer Matthew 16, Matthew 22 Greatest Commandment conversation. The Mark 5 miracles of Jesus raising Jairus’ daughter and healing the woman with hemorrhages is depicted in iconography. The very next page spread has loaves, fishes, and gold covering all four margins.
The use of gold as a unifying theme continues through all volumes of *The St. John’s Bible*, as shown there and also as the Transfiguration is depicted on the page before Mark 10.

The Gospel according to Luke has been mined for its rich canticle texts, which are beautifully illuminated. The Nativity art that precedes Luke is particularly magnificent and memorable (see below). Prints are available. See the websites above for details.

Don’t miss the post-Resurrection meeting of Jesus and Mary Magdalene (John 20) the icon-inspired picture before Acts 6, or St. Paul (Acts 15).

“An internationally respected calligrapher, Donald Jackson is the artistic director and illuminator of *The Saint John’s Bible*. He is a Senior Scribe to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth’s Crown Office at the House of Lords in the United Kingdom, a position in which he is responsible for the creation of official state documents. He is an elected Fellow and past Chairman of the prestigious Society of Scribes and Illuminators. His 30-year retrospective exhibition, *Painting with Words*, premiered at The Minneapolis Institute of Arts in Minneapolis, Minnesota in August, 1988 and traveled to 13 museums and galleries. Donald Jackson works with a team of theologians and artists from Saint John’s University and Abbey on *The Saint John’s Bible*. From his scriptorium in Wales, he oversees scribes, artists, and craftsmen who work with him on the handwriting and illumination of the seven-volume, 1,150-page Bible” (Publisher’s website).

Personally, I look forward to the publication of the remaining volumes, as well as accompanying resources that explain the work in process and completed St. John’s Bible.

Arthur Carl Piepkorn passed away a month after I was born. We had the same barber, though. I enjoyed my monthly walk to Hy & Lee’s Barber Shop close to 801 DeMun (Now 801 Seminary Place), St. Louis, MO, 63105. As part of Evening Chapel, we prayed Evening Prayer every Tuesday and Compline every Thursday, both at 10 pm. It was there that I was first exposed to the Lutheran Church’s use of kneelers, incense, and festive vestments like Dr. Piepkorn’s gold cope.

Before all that was my first campus visit in May 1996. A fresh graduate of the University of Nebraska, I had questions about LCMS history. What’s the difference between that “new hymnal,” *Lutheran Worship* and *Lutheran Book of Worship*? What was Seminex? The famous walkout? Why did they happen? What did they mean for the LCMS today? The admissions office personnel were quite knowledgeable and helpful, and so was the seminary library.

Professor Piepkorn died on December 13, 1973, four days before his funeral on the 17th. According to the “About the Author” section of this book, that funeral date was supposed to be the day that the Board of Control was originally going to suspend President Tietjen.

Emotions ran strong then and still do today for those involved in the conflict at the St. Louis Concordia Seminary (and their theological descendants) over Bible interpretation and “academic freedom.”
Concordia’s A Seminary in Crisis: The Inside Story of the Preus Fact Finding Committee is a resource I didn’t have in my seminary days, but I was able to track down both parts of Faithful to Our Calling, Faithful to Our Lord. Piepkorn was part of the faculty majority that issued a common statement with much content that saddened me, yet he also issued a personal confession of faith. Before re-reading The Church, I made a point to re-read Piepkorn’s personal statement. I was impressed.

The old adage goes, “Don’t judge a book by its cover.” I know that it is hard not to. The Church: Selected Writings of Arthur Carl Piepkorn, Volume 1 is worth your time in reading. Piepkorn’s writing published in this volume reads as that of a careful theologian rooted in the Lutheran Book of Concord, confessing what the Church catholic has always and everywhere believed, taught and confessed. Personally, I’m puzzled by his association with the faculty majority back then. I don’t see how the “good stuff” here is compatible with the theological statement of the faculty majority.

I read with interest of his work on the U.S. Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogues, translation of parts of his beloved Concordia, and his description of an “evangelical catholic.” His definition, this volume of articles and essays, sounds like that of a confessing Lutheran rather than today’s all-too-often and so-called “eventually Catholic.”

His writings are worth reading now. Consider the (positive!) change in the LCMS since his 1938 article about the average LCMS member communing only 2 times a year (94). Read with interest his pastoral concern regarding private confession and discussions about the number of “sacraments” (97ff), what Lutherans and Roman Catholics have in common in fifteen hundred years of shared history (114), the author’s assertion that “communion of saints” was previously understood as “participation in holy things” (140, et al), how care is in order when criticizing references of the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord’s supper as “impanation” or “consubstantiation” (149, 174 note 10).

Dr. Piepkorn encourages conversation with Roman Catholics as well as Roman teachings. And best of all, he has good questions of them to lead them to the Scriptures and the Biblical Gospel, rather than traditions, authority figures, works-righteousness, and the cult of Mary and the Saints. Part III this volume discusses Mary. We dare not worship her, nor should we ignore her. The Lutheran (and Biblical) common ground should be this with regard to “pious opinions” about the Mother of Our Lord: “It is when these pious opinions are elevated to the status of dogmas which must be believed under pain of eternal condemnation that we declare this kind of constraint—rather than the opinions themselves—to be antichristian and diabolical” (330). This section of three essays is “must” reading before making a fool out of oneself (to either extreme) on an email or blog discussion about Mary.

The Bidding Prayer found greater Lutheran use in the 16th Century and following with the Muslim Turks at the gates of Vienna (cf. 201). In our post 9/11 climate of a War on Terror and fear of terrorism at home, (as well as conflict within our own Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod,) why not pray the Litany and the Bidding Prayer more today, asking the Lord of all love and concord for a gift that can only come from the Prince of Peace?

PJC

LHP Book Review


Mark Labberton makes a rather bold statement at the very beginning of his book, The Dangerous Act of Worship: Living God’s Call to Justice. He asserts that everything that matters is at stake in worship, for in the act of worship humanity finds its rightful place in creation as God intended it from the beginning. For Labberton, worship includes the normal weekly assembly of believers who gather to sing, pray, hear preaching and give thanks to the triune God. But it is also more expansive, including every aspect of the believer’s life. This is perhaps the book’s greatest strength. Worship, in the narrow sense of the weekly worship service, should and must impact people’s lives of worship in the wider sense of everything that occurs in home and vocation, and vice versa. The author’s understanding of Christian worship is holistic and fully integrated with the worship life of a Christian congregation.

The Dangerous Act of Worship, however, is not another barrage in the worship wars infecting most American denominations; nor is it intended to be so. Rather, the purpose is to call the church, particularly the Protestant church of America, to a life of worship, in both the wide and narrow sense, which leads the worshipper to live a life of justice in every aspect of society.
It is Labberton’s judgment that the American church is blissfully asleep in her comfortable worship services, both liturgical and contemporary, and in her well-meaning but often simplistic and parochial programs that have no real bearing on people who are suffering from personal, societal and environmental injustice. In their self-induced sleep, Christians are not living lives of justice and the world is suffering as a result. Micah 6:8, “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” provides the primary basis for the central critique and hope of the book – the church is asleep in false worship but she can be awakened to true worship and live a life of justice.

The most engaging material in the book is found in chapters three and four, “False Dangers” and “Real Dangers,” where the problem of idolatry in Christian worship is keenly and perceptively diagnosed. Idolatrous Christian worship comes in the form of self-chosen worship that is focused upon pleasing the worshipper rather than God. According to the author, the real danger of idolatry occurs unintentionally but persistently in American Christianity. True worship will approach God on His terms knowing that He will perform the dangerous work of recreating His people in the image of His Son so that they can live Christ-like lives of truth and justice. When Christians engage in true worship, in the wide and narrow sense, the Church will awaken to her true purpose and only then will she come near to the heart of God.

In my judgment, two weaknesses emerge that prevent the book from achieving the stated goal of awakening Christians to true, Biblical worship. The first is worship in the narrow and wide sense is asserted as being intimately connected to each other but how this connection is expressed concretely is not fully developed. The diagnosis of false and inadequate worship is made but no substantial remedy is provided. Several anecdotal stories are provided to illustrate what can happen when a Christian is awakened by true Biblical worship. The impression is given through these accounts that the best way for Christians to live worshipful lives of justice is to start a ministry that addresses and alleviates a particular injustice. Labberton never states this explicitly. He does mention in passing that Christians can live lives of justice while remaining in their current vocations, but the bulk of illustrative material leads one to conclude it would be better to be involved in some sort of social ministry. A corrective to this would be to explicate the doctrine of vocation wherein God calls Christians to love their neighbor as spouse, worker and citizen.

Labberton, for example, recounts the story of a teenage, Southeast Asian girl who was forced into prostitution. He uses this tragic story to illustrate the need for Christians to wake up and be sensitive and active in pursuing justice. While reading this story, the question kept occurring to me as to how can the typical American Christian combat such a situation thousands of miles away? No answer is provided. It was a parachurch social justice agency that was able to help this girl and thanks be to God for it. Other such examples of Christians leaving their vocations to start social ministries are provided, but how the butcher, baker, or candlestick maker goes about living a life of justice is thin. It would have been far more helpful to provide Biblical examples of how true worship led to justice in both the Old and New Testaments.

The second weakness, and the far more serious, centers on the importance of God’s Word in fostering lives of faith and justice. While correctly diagnosing a serious problem in the American Church, Labberton does not seem to think the solution lies in repentance and a renewed commitment to the preaching and teaching of God’s Word in its truth and fullness. It may be that he takes this as a given in American Protestantism but it is not stated in any coherent, meaningful way in the book.

Two sections in chapter 7 are devoted to the public reading of God’s Word and preaching. Neither state that the solution to the problem of a lethargic, sleeping church lies in hearing, believing and living God’s Word. Earlier in chapter 3, Labberton describes special worship services offered at his congregation. They include services of silence, simple responsive liturgies and the tearing of cloth symbolizing the Biblical practice of ripping sackcloth. He concludes, “God met us there, and we knew it” (p. 48). But where was God’s Word? Was there preaching and teaching? In chapter 9, he does encourage the practice of “other-centered” Bible reading (p. 152), meaning Christians read the text with a specific group in mind: the poor and homeless, the imprisoned, the runaway, and so forth. While the intent seems good on the surface, it is another way of using the Bible for man-centered interests rather than endeavoring to hear the Scriptures as God revealing His will and purpose to all nations, languages, tribes and people of all times and places. To be fair, this is not Labberton’s intention, but it is the result of not placing God’s Word as the objective, central focus of all life and piety in the Christian church.

Overall, The Dangerous Act of Worship is a timely reminder of the need for Christians to wake up to the needs of those who are suffering in our world. The summary of the Law is to love God and man. You cannot have one without the other. The lack of any coherent doctrine of vocation wherein Christians can live lives of faith and justice and the lack of any call to a renewed commitment to the teaching and
preaching of God’s Word seriously limit the usefulness of the book. Martin Luther’s explanation to the Six Chief Parts of the Small Catechism express the need for love and justice clearly, in such a way that Christians can indeed live lives of mercy and justice in a world that needs it desperately.

Mark Labberton is Senior Pastor at First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley, Berkeley, California. Labberton received his doctorate in theology from the University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England. He has published articles in Leadership Journal and Radix magazines.

**LHP DVD Review**


www.bakerpublishinggroup.com (LHP)

*Bible Archaeology* has two strengths. First, the scholarship is faithful to a Christian’s confession of the Holy Scriptures. Second, the writing and full-color maps, photographs make this a very appealing book to read. The pages draw your interest so that you will see and read the result of archeological evidence that is in harmony with Biblical history and truth.

The volume is structured by land areas (Mesopotamia, Egypt, OT Palestine, Persia, NT Palestine, Anatolia, Greece, and Italy) after an introductory chapter. Each chapter is in chronological order.

Helpful highlights include:
+ Four factors for dating Paul’s movements (27ff)
+ The uniqueness of the Genesis creation account (42)
+ An explanation of the Gilgamesh Epic and Noah (46)
+ Egyptian dating and the time of Joseph and Noah (77ff)
+ Continuing challenges with excavating Jericho (108)
+ That the original marathon is only a legend (137)
+ Gergesa: where Jesus exorcised demons in Matthew 8:32; Mark 5:13; Luke 8:33 (165ff)
+ Masada and the failure to find the bones of 960 defenders
+ A strong Recommended Reading Section (282-283)

This is a great introductory resource for pastor and layman alike. Scholars still have much to learn about the work of archaeology, and also have countless mounds to work on. *Biblical Archaeology* will draw you into the world of the Old Testament and New Testament Scriptures to the benefit of your Bible study.

Alfred Hoerth is the former director of archaeology at Wheaton College, where he taught for almost thirty years. He is the author of *Archaeology and the Old Testament* and coeditor of Peoples of the Old Testament and has participated in numerous archaeological excavations.

John McRay (Ph.D., University of Chicago) is professor of New Testament and archaeology at Wheaton College Graduate School and the author of *Archaeology and the New Testament* and *Paul: His Life and Teaching* (back cover).

**LHP Book Review**


Whether you agree with his positions on contentious topics in LCMS politics today, you have to admit that Dr. Paul Maier is an engaging and fascinating speaker, timely and timeless at the same time. He uses humor well, especially the humor he finds by using anachronism.

His seminars are better in person, but this DVD is a close second. Don’t miss this one! Ancient history comes alive as Dr. Maier applies Scripture and his knowledge of the larger context of ancient history to modern caricatures of Christ.

Today, Christians face the challenge of fiction marketed as fact. That’s all part of the *Jesus Game*. Someone learns a little about Jesus in the Bible, takes a reference out of context (thereby changing the meaning) and makes up the craziest sounding
hypothesis they can, and then go on a book tour. Dan Brown’s *The DaVinci Code* book and movie is just the latest installment in what Maier calls the *Jesus Game*. Unfortunately, Brown’s is the most widespread and financially successful caricature of Jesus yet. And the wildest of Brown’s 124 falsehoods have no shred of evidence, biblical or historical!

Maier also warns against Christian misuses of media like the *Left Behind* series and its promotion of the false theology of the rapture (held by only 6% of Christians worldwide) and its second-chance decision theology.

This four session DVD lasts 70 minutes total.
+ Session 1 - Christianity in a Postmodern Culture
+ Session 2 - Who Do Men Say That I Am?
+ Session 3 - the DaVinci Code: A Case Study
+ Session 4 - Doctrinal Discernment

A leader guide with a Bible Study outline and questions as well as background information is included with the DVD.

On-screen titles and definitions add to Dr. Maier’s encyclopedia-like knowledge and apologetic (defense of the Christian faith) expertise.

Prepare yourself and your congregation for the secular world’s annual attack on Christ and the Church each Lent, Holy Week, and Easter with this wonderful (and affordable) DVD seminar.

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**LHP Book Review**


With the advent of the computer, "clip art" just isn’t what it used to be—and that’s a good thing! No more scissor-cutting and photocopying copying into bulletins and newsletters! Thanks be to God! Desktop publishing inserts a picture with the click of a mouse.

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**LHP Book Review**


The artists had a liturgical church in mind when preparing designs for holy days, Sundays, and other Christian occasions. Not all images are appropriate for Lutheran use, though 98% certainly are.

Add this CD-Rom to your computer’s “My Pictures” folder for use in this new Church Year. You’ll be glad you did.

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Schmidt and Placit Stuckenschneider may not be household names, but their clip art is used widely across denomination lines, but largely among liturgical churches. The artists have provided striking and memorable black and white images full of Scripture, Christian symbolism, and the richness of the liturgical year.

This art was in use while I prepared for the ministry at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Over the years I’ve seen much of it (unfortunately illegally) online. This CD-Rom combines three previous collections into one easy to use multi-format CD-Rom. All pictures are provided in PDF, JPEG, BMP, and TIF formats and “may be reproduced without charge for bulletins, programs and announcements prepared by noncommercial organizations...They may also be reproduced for personal use. The designs may not be reproduces for commercial use…including by way of a bulletin board or other electronic distribution system…” (back cover) Yes, internet-savvy friends, that means that the Commandment “You shall not steal” applies to copyrighted clipart.

The artists had a liturgical church in mind when preparing designs for holy days, Sundays, and other Christian occasions. Not all images are appropriate for Lutheran use, though 98% certainly are.

Add this CD-Rom to your computer’s “My Pictures” folder for use in this new Church Year. You’ll be glad you did.
Too many of us only know Francis Pieper on the basis of his Christian Dogmatics, and that, only in English translation. Hopefully this collection of “Luther Hour” lectures from 1891 will give today’s “Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other states” a greater appreciation of Justification, the treasure of the True Visible Church on Earth and also teach her to give thanks to God for two of her greatest theologians, Luther and Pieper.

O. Marc Tangner’s fresh and clear English translation reads smoothly. Footnotes give translations of Latin terms in the lectures, a nice feature. Perhaps a new more accurate translation of Christliche Dogmatik (with similar footnotes) would be a suitable future project.

Readers have before them two books in one, The Lutheran Doctrine of Justification, and Lectures on the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the True Visible Church of God on Earth, originally presented in 1890 and 1891 as “Luther Hour” lectures by Dr. Pieper.

The article of Justification “tolerates the presence of no error” (59). “Whoever places an additional source of salvation next to Christ throws out the doctrine of justification” (11). “Pursue your language studies with all diligence, yet with the purpose of understanding Scripture all the better...in order to reveal Christ to the world...” (34, also 153, 161, et al). Luther’s experience Romans 1:17 is reviewed on 68ff.

The second book under the same cover deals with the church and serves as a commentary on Walther’s Theses on the same topic. And no, not just Lutherans will be saved. (See the Second Lecture beginning on 106.) What is the role of vestments (106)? No, the Reformed church is not a sister church to the Lutheran (124). Christian freedom is also to be applied to Sunday (227) as opposed to Reformed practice and its influence upon secular law. Pieper briefly and quite elegantly states that the Reformed still have Baptism because they only teach falsely about its fruits. Yet, they do not have the Holy Supper because the Reformed “publicly declare that they do not wish to celebrate” a supper where Christ gives His Body and His Blood (272).

In a previously reviewed book, (Lively Stone, QBR 1.4.) the Rev. Von Schenk saw leitourgia, missio, and diakonia as marks of the church. Even a beautiful liturgy can be theologically ugly without the Gospel (213).

Pieper explains that mission and service are also insufficient as marks of the church:

“If you wish to accurately assess the existing church bodies, you must apply the proper measure. This measure is the orientation a particular church body has to the teachings revealed in Holy Scripture...If you apply any other measure, you will be misled.

“For example, you will be misled if as your yardstick you use so-called church functions, mission activities, or the erection and maintenance of charitable institutions...But, as the Lord Jesus has disclosed in Matthew 23:15, the sect of the Pharisees and Scribes will cross land and sea to gain one proselyte, only to turn him into a child of perdition.

“Indeed the true church should be unsurpassed in its seal for mission and other works of love. It is a disgrace whenever this is not the case. But such works are not a sure sign of the true church. Even the proper works of the church can be outwardly imitated” (Emphasis original, 113-114).

Pieper on Law and Gospel: “This is why this distinction must be maintained in the church with great diligence. You must stress this difference as early as confirmation instruction. If you neglect to do so, you will not establish the right understanding in these young Christians and will fail to arm them against temptation. I advise you to instruct your confirmands in this with the use of practical exercises. Offer them a number of verses, and ask them which verses belong to the law and which to the gospel” (195).

Unity in worship practice is to be pursued (212) and the weak are to be “taken into account” (216). Patient, pastoral teaching is in order, especially with regard to “chanting.”

If I had to pick one resource from this issue for you to purchase, it would be this one book. I can’t say enough good things about The Church and Her Treasure, a very readable, instructive, and comforting paperback. Order your copy in time to read over Christmas vacation or at least before Easter 2008. Shelve it next to Christian Dogmatics as a reminder of Pieper the pastoral theologian as well as the systematician.

PJC
LHP Book Review


Truth is assumed to be a subjective thing not only in today’s academic climate, but also among the general populace: “That may be true for you but it’s not true for me” (21). Nancy Pearcey teaches about the importance of Christian worldview in her book, Total Truth, now available with a bound-in study guide from Crossway.

Her book and her personal story merit our attention as Lutheran Christians, for Pearcey was raised in a Lutheran home (apparently of the LCA or ALC—now ELCA—variety) and was taught the Small Catechism. “Yet I had never been trained in apologetics, or taught to analyse ideas, or taught to defend Christianity against competing ‘isms’…” (124). That’s helpful information for the pastor on the front lines of the culture wars—and that’s every pastor everywhere. Defense of the faith is important for defending our own people from error, and as we attempt to correct the deliberate falsehoods of so many programs about the Bible, Christians and Christ on PBS, the History Channel, or the Discovery Channel. Apologetics and knowledge is no replacement for faith, but an informed faith is truly wonderful.

All to often people compartmentalize their lives. You could call it the gap between what they believe and what they do, or see it as the difference between Sunday morning and Saturday night or Monday morning. There is often a disconnect. We can be the “double-minded man” that is sharply (and rightly) criticised in Psalm 119:113 as well as James 1:8 and 4:8. We dare not allow Christianity to be relegated only to the private sphere, to realm of opinion, or declared irrelevant or anti-science.

She takes to task Christians who have a “two story” understanding of truth, especially when it comes to Darwinian Evolution. “This is what I believe, but this is how I do my job.”

The abuses of American Evangelicalism (today and historically) also are the target of some constructive criticism:

“In short, among the Reformers, [I know, we should only recognise one Reformer—Ed.] the principle that the Bible is the final authority was not intended to deny other forms of religious authority. Thus when nineteenth-century evangelicals urged common people to cast aside the rich heritage of creeds, confessions, and theological systems, they were embarking on a radical departure from the Reformation heritage. The most distinctive principle among evangelicals was ‘No creed but the Bible,’ which clearly goes far beyond the Reformers’ position” (303). Confessional church bodies like our face this danger today in the form of the ‘Emergent Church’ and “Church Growth.” The famous book The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology needs a modern companion. Why has no one written it yet?

Pearcey has an M.A. from Covenant Theological Seminary largely thanks to the great influence of Francis Shaeffer upon her personally and spiritually. He is a hero of apologetics to her. His words are also worth considering here: “The central problem of our age is not liberalism or modernism,” Schaeffer writes—or even hot-button social issues like evolution, abortion, radical feminism, or homosexual rights. The primary threat to the church is the ‘tendency to do the Lord’s work in the power of the flesh rather than the Spirit.’ Many church leaders crave a ‘big name,’ he continues: They ‘stand on the backs of others’ in order to achieve power, influence and reputation—instead of exhibiting the humility of the Master who washed His disciples’ feet. They ‘ape the world’ in its publicity and marketing techniques, manipulating people’s emotions to induce them to give more money. No wonder outsiders see little in the church that cannot be explained by ordinary sociological forces and principles of business management. And no wonder they find our message unconvincing” (emphasis original, 365ff).

The author has great praise for Luther’s doctrine of the Theology of the Cross. Gene Edward Veith and the doctrine of vocation also make an appearance in this discussion on pages 49-51. (See also p. 358.)

Yes, Christians do need to hear the Gospel every Sunday. I pray that many readers of this book may realize that vocation is how Lutherans understand the life of sanctification, framed by the cross, rather than a theology of glory.

“Luther once said that if we fight on all fronts except the
one actually under attack at the moment, then we are not really fighting the battle” (174). Not only is this good military advice for a nation engaged in a generational worldwide war on terror, but it was intended for Christians and theologians. Lutherans have been quite skilled at properly distinguishing Lutheranism from the Roman Church. We should also have similar dedication and fervor for properly distinguishing the Church of the Augsburg Confession from the inch-deep and mile-wide theology and practice of American Evangelicalism.

This book is a tool for that battle. Buy the book. Discuss it among yourselves. Struggle through and stretch yourself by means of the Study Guide in the back. Learn about how our own Lutheran Confession of the Christian faith can appropriately impact the public square.

PJC

LHP Book Review


This useful companion to the Holy Scriptures has been included in the 2007 Concordia Publishing House Catalog on pages 117 and 144, as well as www.cph.org.

In order to be included in that catalog, I understand that it had to go through our LCMS doctrinal review process. In reading it myself, I noted two things to be aware of.

1. The two-page spread on the book of Revelation (124-125) notes four “Millennial Interpretations of Revelation” including: Amillennial (ours), Historical Premillennial, Dispensational Millennial, and Postmillennial, without noting which “interpretation” is to be preferred or best supported by the Scriptures.

2. The “People of the Law” section (166-167) gives the Exodus 20:1-17 text of the Ten Commandments. Bullet points (rather than ESV verse numbers) divide the text into the numbering system preferred by John Calvin and the Reformed and Eastern Orthodox (4 and 6) rather than that used by Luther and the Western Church (3 about God and 7 about our neighbor).

First published in the US by Crossway in 2005, this was published in the United Kingdom as The Candle Bible Encyclopedia. I’m glad we have it here in the States.

The format will lead both young and old into the great content which includes How the Bible Came to Us, The History of Bible Times, Introducing the Old Testament, Introducing the New Testament, Living in Bible Times, Religion in Bible Times, Men and Women of the Bible, and the especially useful final section, Some Bible Facts and Figures.

Pastors and laity will learn from this handy book (or at least be reminded of something they shouldn’t have forgotten). Order a copy today to put under the tree of someone who loves the Bible.

PJC

LHP Book Review


The short answer (for the one who usually asks this question)? Yes. Baptism “counts” done with water, “In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” where there is a clear Trinitarian confession of one God in three Persons and three Persons in one God.

“Martin Luther addresses infant baptism and rebaptism in this short work and in the process outlines the basics of baptism. It is a must read for anyone contemplating their own rebaptism or the baptism of an infant.

“In ever more increasing numbers, Christians who were baptized as infants are having themselves rebaptized as adults. But is a second baptism really necessary? Could it even be harmful? The great reformer Martin Luther addresses these questions in this short work—freshly translated from German into modern English—and in the process outlines the basics of baptism. It is a must read for anyone contemplating their own rebaptism, or the baptism of an infant.
“Formatted into 14 simple chapters along with study questions, this 88-page book is perfect for personal devotion or Bible study.

“All of the books in the "popular series" are translated and adapted from Luther's own writings - but presented in easy-to-read modern English and formatted into short chapters with study questions. These works are perfect for personal devotion or Bible study” (publisher’s website).

And yes, the book lives up to the advertising. What you essentially have in *Did My Baptism Count?* (and two similar works) is an attractive, meaningful, theologically clear and profound tract book. Tracts are unpopular in many circles today because the idea seems dated somehow. But people will flock to Christian bookstores for the latest fad on how to live the Christian life. Finally! Something worthwhile!

Pastors and congregations should have copies of this resource on hand to answer the questions that come up again and again about Holy Baptism. “A person should not abolish or change what he cannot abolish or change on the basis of the clearest word of God” (61). Period. “No one has ever been able to show that infants, in baptism, do not have faith, or that such baptisms are not valid” (60). Amen. Go Luther!

The common “Why?” questions are gracefully answered by Dr. Luther in this easy-reading translation. The discussion questions draw the reader back into each chapter to drive the important points home.

“Lutheran Press is a non-profit corporation established to publish and promote the theology of Martin Luther (1483-1546). Although many of Luther's works are already available to the general public, their publication as part of collected works editions has prevented them from being widely disseminated. Of special interest to Lutheran Press are the smaller topical works of Luther that continue to address the Christian Church today, but nonetheless, remain effectively unknown.

“In order to achieve its purposes, then, it is the intent of Lutheran Press to make such works available on the internet free of charge, and by mail at a minimal cost. Proceeds from the sale of such works will be used to publish further works” (publisher’s website).

I see the need for BOTH *Luther’s Works* (and its forthcoming expansion) AND inexpensive tract books like this. God bless Lutheran Press in its continuing work. I look forward to many, many more booklets by Luther for modern Christians.

PJC

**LHP Book Review**


**Description**

“How important was music to Martin Luther? Drawing on hundreds of liturgical documents, contemporary accounts of services, books on church music, and other sources, Joseph Herl rewrites the history of music and congregational song in German Lutheran churches. Herl traces the path of music and congregational song in the Lutheran church from the Reformation to 1800, to show how it acquired its reputation as the "singing church."

In the centuries after its founding, in a debate that was to have a strong impact on Johann Sebastian Bach and his contemporaries, the Lutheran church was torn over a new style of church music that many found more entertaining than devotional. By the end of the eighteenth century, Lutherans were trying to hold their own against a new secularism, and many members of the clergy favored wholesale revision or even abandonment of the historic liturgy in order to make worship more relevant in contemporary society. Herl paints a vivid picture of these developments, using as a backdrop the gradual transition from a choral to a congregational liturgy.

“The author eschews the usual analyses of musical repertoire and deals instead with events, people and ideas, drawing readers inside the story and helping them sense what it must have been like to attend a Lutheran church in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries. Parallel developments in Catholic churches are discussed, as are the rise of organ accompaniment of hymns and questions of musical performance practice. Although written with academic precision, the writing is clear and comprehensible to the non-specialist, and entertaining anecdotes abound.

“Appendixes include translations of several important historical documents and a set of tables outlining the
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http://wy.lcms.org/LHP/QBR

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Lutheran mass as presented in 172 different liturgical orders. The bibliography includes 400 Lutheran church orders and reports of ecclesiastical visitations read by the author” (Publisher’s website).

From the Kantor

Dr. Joseph Herl has written an enormously beneficial book; one that should be on the shelf of every Pastor, Church Musician, and any other ordained or lay leaders of the Church, especially those who are Lutheran.

Dr. Herl presents the history of German Lutheran worship and attendant issues focusing on the period between 1523 and 1780. He further focuses upon the major transition of this period from a primarily choral liturgy to a congregational liturgy.

This book is not a typical historical narrative of events, but, rather, it is a bringing forth of the reader into the practice of the sacred liturgy of the time. In his preface, Dr. Herl states, “My goal in writing has been to bring the reader inside the story, as it were, to help them imagine what attending church would have been like in Germany several centuries ago.”

Dr. Herl, indeed, takes the reader inside the story, writing in an engagingly straight forward manner. He shares many eyewitness and anecdotal accounts ranging from liturgical practice to observations of congregational singing. In order to bring the reader into the story, Dr. Herl has thoroughly researched the accounts and historical information as the extensive list of acknowledgments exhibits.

The book is 354 pages in length, with the text occupying the first 178. The remaining pages include appendices containing (in respective order): Sources of German Hymns; Translations of Selected Writings; Choral versus Congregational Singing in the Mass; The Mass According to the Church Orders (with extensive tables and end notes); Notes from each chapter; and an exhaustive Bibliography.

The quality of the scholarship is of the highest level, to which the text itself and numerous appendices bear witness. The substance of this book has the ability to substantiate, challenge, and shape perspective upon the practice of sacred liturgy in the first three Centuries of the Lutheran Church.

This book is thus commended to those who practice the sacred liturgy in the presence of God’s people, to the end that such practice may, by God’s rich grace, edify His Holy People, and remain faithful to God’s Holy Word.

To the Glory of God in Christ Jesus.

SAH

About the Author

Joseph Herl is assistant Professor of Music at Concordia University, where he teaches courses in music history, music theory, and church music. He has also published compositions for choir and organ. This volume is the winner of the 2004 SCSC Roland Bainton prize for an outstanding book in Art History and Music. (Publisher’s website)

“Joseph Herl arrived at Concordia in 2000 after having been a church musician for two decades. Along the way he earned a master’s degree in organ performance, the Associate and Choir Master certificates of the American Guild of Organists, and a Ph.D. in musicology. In 1991 he traveled to Germany on a Fulbright dissertation research grant and worked there until 1993; the Elias Prize in Hymnology from Westminster College, Cambridge allowed him to conduct research in Britain as well during this time.

“Herl was an editor of the Missouri Synod’s Hymnal Supplement 98 and its historical companion, the Hymnal Supplement 98 Handbook. More recently he helped to produce the Lutheran Service Book (2006), which contains three of his original hymn tunes, 19 hymn settings, one hymn translation, and one liturgical setting. In 2004 his hymn concertato When to Our World the Savior Came won a composition prize from the Midwest Region (Region III) of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians. Also in 2004 Oxford University Press published his Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism: Choir, Congregation, and Three Centuries of Conflict, which was awarded the 2005 Roland Bainton Prize of the Sixteenth Century Society and Conference for best book in its field.

“Herl’s choral and organ music is published by Oxford University Press, Concordia Publishing House, and MorningStar Music Publishers. In addition to areas in which he has published, he is also interested in the historical use of Gregorian chant in Lutheran churches, recent choral music, recent compositions using just intonation, keyboard improvisation, music in the elementary school curriculum, and English and American country dance. During the summer Herl serves as a reader (grader) for the College Board’s Advanced Placement examination in music theory.

“Herl lives in Seward with his wife Jenny, who teaches chemistry at Concordia, and daughter Anna” (www.cune.edu)
Liturgy & Hymnody

CD Review

My Morning Prayer/My Evening Prayer. (Set of both My Morning Prayer and My Evening Prayer, or available separately for $25.95 each.) Seven Daily Services for People on the Go. Chicago: GIA, 2006 & 2007. 4-CD Audio CD set. $40.00. www.giamusic.com 800 GIA 1358 (LH)

When I first saw these advertised, I thought, “This has got to be one of the best ideas that I’ve seen in years that would encourage busy people to pray.” I still hold that opinion. This four-CD set has some wonderful strengths. I will also share some deeply-held concerns.

Here’s how they are to be used, according to the back of the CD cases: “Each day of the week has two tracks on these CDs; the odd-numbered tracks are the beginning of the day’s service, the even-numbered tracks begin with the Canticle…” My Morning Prayer makes use of the Canticle of Zechariah, often called by its Latin title, the Benedictus, while My Evening Prayer sings the Canticle of Mary, often called the Magnificat, also after the Latin.

Due to the success of their 2006 release of a resource for the morning, GIA followed up with a resource for the evening. My Evening Prayer appropriately begins with Saturday, the “eve” of Sunday, since it is prayed after sunset. My Morning Prayer goes Sunday through Saturday.

The services are very learnable by repetition. Repeated elements like the Invitatory, Canticle, music for the General Intercessions and Lord’s Prayer, and the Blessing are the same for either MMP or MEP all through the week. The services are reverent and respectful of the received tradition, and their structure will be familiar to liturgical Christians nourished by the teaching of the Gospel. They also give the listener a good exposure to the texts, music and composers in the GIA catalog.

My primary concern with these CDs is the inclusion of women presiding in a prayer office. This will likely lead to confusion with regard to the Office of the Holy Ministry, (see 1 Corinthians 14:33b-40; 1 Timothy 2: 8-15; 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6; et al) and there is enough of that in Christendom as is. I wonder if the 50-50 male/female balance in reading Bible texts and praying collects is due to the influence of the flawed idea from “liturgical theology” that liturgy is “the work of the people.”

Sunday’s concluding collect at Morning Prayer makes a vague reference to how to “find” God. This could have been cleared up by a reminder that Christians find God “for us” in Word and Sacrament, just as He promises in Scripture. You will wish to avoid adding your “Amen” to the prayer for the dead near the end of Evening Prayer on Monday.

The hymn for Sunday Morning Prayer shows the influence of St. Augustine and his teaching of the role of Christianity in society (according to Niebuhr) as “transforming culture.” The hymn text for Thursday Evening Prayer is weak, due to its theology coming primarily from the First Article of the Creed.

Additional strengths of the set are memorable well after finishing the week of prayer for the first time. The Morning Prayer canticle has the tune the British use to sing “O Little Town of Bethlehem,” FOREST GREEN, also found in Lutheran Service Book. That is but one example of how familiar melodies provide a welcoming foundation to both MMP and MEP. New compositions help add a breathtaking freshness. Wednesday’s Evening Prayer hymn is wonderful. Listen to that before you begin using the set. Some users will notice that the hymn for Monday Morning Prayer is a text we knew from The Lutheran Hymnal 525 with new music and a new refrain.

I would encourage GIA to provide similar My _____ Prayer resources for Compline (bedtime) and Midday Prayer (useful for mid-morning, lunch hour and mid-afternoon prayer).Praying with other people is better than a recording, yet this kind of help for personal prayer is better than praying alone.

PJC
Liturgical & Hymnody
Book Review


This biography follows the rough outline provided Johann Sebastian’s obituary, completed by his son Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach and Sebastian’s pupil, Johann Friedrich Agricola.

Williams is not afraid of controversy, either in the questions that face a Bach scholar or the possibly more embarrassing or tense episodes in Bach’s own life. (For the 1728 hymn selection controversy and its lesson for “trendy clergy” today, see 323.)

Question marks abound as he either answers or provides educated guesses to long-held questions about “our Bach.” In addition, Peter Williams is unafraid to reframe old questions and add new ones of his own, calling upon the reader to make up his or her own mind, or pursue future Bach research. In the end, there are some questions that will likely remain unanswered, an uncomfortable part of our own lives, too.

This is not a fast read, yet its rich detail makes it an enjoyable one. What was it like to study under Bach? See 110ff. Aspiring musicians can learn from Bach’s composition and harmonization exercises for chorales (347). Bach’s Leipzig years are covered in three chapters. The appointment procedure leading to Bach’s call there (he was 3rd choice) is as long as it is fascinating (165ff). The author’s liturgical (Anglican) background adds enjoyment for the Lutheran reader. References to Bach as a devout Lutheran liturgical musician are numerous (262, 289, among other locations). Read the text closely for detail on the background of his cantatas for the Church Year (also 289, et al), the St. Matthew and St. John Passions, the famous Mass in B minor.

I welcomed reading how Bach recycled music composed for secular occasions (like a birthday for a secular monarch) and brought it into use for the King of Kings (223). The movement was only one way. Music set aside for sacred use was not again used for secular use.

An index of Bach’s compositions is included as an appendix, arranged by BWV number (392). The best background music while you read this splendid biography is, of course, Bach. The aforementioned appendix gives the page number upon which each BWV is mentioned, so it would be possible to coordinate what you listen to while you read about a composition’s creation and performance history.

Thanks to Cambridge University Press, Peter Williams has given the world a definitive biography of Johann Sebastian Bach for our time. He “held first Chair in Performance Practice” at Edinburgh “and the first Arts and Sciences Distinguished Chair at Duke University.”

PJC

Liturgical & Hymnody
Book Review


This is the Festschrift in honor of a composer, conductor, and church musician, one especially dedicated to congregational choirs for children.

“This book is a collection of essays that will prove immensely valuable to all who work to strengthen the church’s musical life in the twenty-first century. The essays are contributed by life-long church musicians and teachers who have remarkable skill and passion for music in worship.

Contributors
+ Anton Armstrong - “Rehearsal Techniques for the Church Choir”
+ David and Susan Cherwien - “Hymns New and Old”
+ John Ferguson - “Repertoire for the Church Choir”
+ Helen Kemp - “A Case for Children’s Choirs in Churches”
+ Paul Westermeyer - “The Oratorio Tradition and Worship”
+ Martha Fisher - “Tip and Tools for Music and Worship Education”
+ Zebulon M. Highen - “Musical Excellence and the Church Choir”
+ Ralph M. Johnson - “Teaching Global Song”
+ Kristina Langlois - “Biography of Ronald A. Nelson”
+ Elizabeth Shepley - “The Choir School: A Brief History”
+ Mons Tieg - “Worship in Space”
+ Yvonne Thomas - “Compositions by Ronald A. Nelson”
+ Dale Warland - “The Continuing Importance of Sacred Composition”

Essays focus upon Children’s Choirs, Adult Choirs, or Music and Worship in the Lutheran Church.

Teachers and choral directors for young singers will find Martha Fisher’s essay both practical and helpful (22ff). Elizabeth Jenson Shepley follows in her mentor’s footsteps by encouraging the establishment of choir schools (30). Several essays provide recommendations for choir libraries, a great help to overworked volunteer choir directors. The always interesting Paul Westermeyer helps sort out common issues and controversies in worship (100ff). Susan Palo Cherwien even contributes a hymn festival that may be reproduced and used by purchasers of this volume (127 provides permission information). Mons Tieg’s essay on liturgical space (129) would benefit those anticipating a church remodeling or building program.

“A composer, conductor, church musician, and educator, Ronald A. Nelson, has spent the last sixty years shaping the lives of children and adults through his prolific choral and liturgical compositions and his passion for the people’s song.

On the occasion of his eightieth birthday, his colleagues in the fields of choral and church music have chosen to honor him with insightful, yet practical essays about children, choirs, and music in the life of the church. These essays represent some of the many areas in which the exemplary work and ministry of Ronald A. Nelson set an example and provide inspiration for the church musicians of today and tomorrow” (Publisher’s website).

I am wary—for Biblical reasons—of Nelson’s pro-inclusivity work in the ELCA (for the ordination of women and tolerance for the practice of homosexuality), yet there is no doubt of his positive influence in the sphere of Lutheran church music. 

PJC

Liturgy & Hymnody
Book Review

Here’s your after-Christmas splurge!


Back at seminary, I read Volume 53 of the American Edition of Luther’s Works for the first time. In this famous volume on Liturgy and Hymns, Luther offers his revision of the Latin Mass he inherited. One of the unanswered questions I had was, “What book on Martin Luther’s missal stand?”

At the following website, I found an intriguing possible answer on a Lutheran pastor’s recommended list of Liturgical Resources. http://www.redeemer-fortwayne.org/resources.php?nugid=12


This is the book Luther used and to which his modifications were made. Often Luther states that we should simply leave the practice and Rite alone but doesn’t give the text. This is it. Thus it is really invaluable
as a primary source when working with Luther or trying to find what the tradition actually is.

Recently, an updated version of that same list of resources was found at the Lutheran Liturgical Wiki website: http://www.lutheranliturgicalwiki.com/index.php/Liturgical_Bibliography

**Other Hymnals and sources for understanding the Common Service and Lutheran Worship, some following the Roman reforms of the 2nd Vatican Council**


*Some claim this to be a reproduction of the book Luther would have* used and to which his modifications were made. Often Luther states that we should simply leave the practice and Rite alone but doesn’t give the text. This is it. Thus it is really invaluable as a primary source when working with Luther or trying to find what the tradition actually is. *Some musicologists have questioned the authenticity of the book, claiming it is a latter compilation.* (Emphasis added to show the updated information.)

Technically, it appears that the jury is still out regarding the question, “What book on Martin Luther’s missal stand?” but this volume is may be the closest and most readily available possibility today. (I’m open to correction on this point. Please contact QBR if you have better information and we’ll print it in a future issue. Ed.)

**St. Bonaventure Publications**


**Features:**

+ Originally published in Belgium in 1953 & edited by the Benedictines of Solesmes
+ Contains all the Little Hours of the Divine Office
+ Introduction and rubrics in English
+ Hardbound, embossed "Liber Usualis" in gold leaf, red page edges
+ Smyth (sewn) binding, 6 colored ribbon markers
+ Includes tone for the Gloria Patri & also the 8 tones of the Psalms

Admittedly, this Latin language resource will be used “mostly by music scholars, choirs and those reciting the Divine Office [in Latin with Gregorian musical notation]”, it will find use as a help to Lutheran Christians and others who still make use of the inherited Western Rite.

Beyond the Divine Service, here is another example. Page 271 features the Nunc Dimittis at Compline, known to us on p. 258ff in *Lutheran Service Book* (2006). *Not only* do we Lutherans carry forward the use of the same antiphon, *Salva nos, Domine, vigilantes, custody nos dormientes: ut vigilentem cum Christo, et requiescamus in pace*, [English: Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping that awake we may watch with Christ and asleep we may rest in peace.] *we also* make use of the *same* chant melodies for both the antiphon and canticle, adapted to modern musical notation. I find that very cool indeed. Martin Luther was a conservative Reformer. (This is also true of those who compiled *LSB*.) He conserved the best of the received Western Rite, removing only those items in conflict with the Gospel, i.e. justification by grace through faith, and Holy Scripture. This is in marked contrast to the “throw the baby [Jesus] out with the bathwater” approach of other so-called “reformers.”

“Gregorian chant was classified into eight modes, influenced by the *oktoechos* of Byzantine chant. The texts that are chanted are mostly from the Bible, and mostly in Latin (there are some Greek texts such as Kyrie eleison and Hagios Theos). Gregorian chant has gone through periods of decline and revival, most notably, the revival by the monks of Solesmes Abbey, who produced the current official edition, the *Liber usualis*. Most editions of Gregorian chant available today can be traced to the work of the Solesmes monks.”

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_music
It appears that the abbey responsible for this book also helped standardize and improve the ancient practice of Gregorian Chant.

No, The Liber Usualis may not be a “must-have” for every LCMS pastor’s library, yet, as a lifetime investment and heirloom, it would be blessing to you if you chose to include it on your liturgical bookshelf.

PJC

**Liturgy & Hymnody**

**CD Review**


Compline has become a tradition in our Wyoming District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. For a number of years, time was set aside on Tuesdays of Pastoral Conference to spend time with the brethren. Golf, meals, music, and other fellowship has been a part of that. Following a concert by an ad hoc “chamber orchestra” of district musicians and a wine and cheese tasting, we concluded Tuesday evening by praying Compline. It is now a regular feature of our conferences as well as recent Tell the Good News About Jesus Convocations and the 2006 District Convention.

This is the bedtime office. I first became acquainted with “Prayer at the Close of the Day” in this form while at seminary, a week before classes started. I had grown up with the Nunc Dimittis, or canticle of Simeon from Luke 2, as the concluding canticle of the Lutheran Divine Service after the Communion. It was comforting to prepare to bedtime as if I were preparing for death. Then, preparing for death in Christ ought to be less frightening, and more like preparing for bedtime.

This is a two-CD set by The Cambridge Singers under the direction of John Rutter. Exquisite sound. Comforting texts. Soothing Word and music together—a perfect end for a hectic day.

“Compline is believed to have originated with the Rule of St. Benedict in the early sixth century, though some scholars believe it to be even older. In England it was observed during the Middle Ages using Sarum chants (i.e. from Salisbury, a medieval center of church music) rather than their related continental Gregorian counterparts, but it was suppressed at the [English] Reformation. This was partly because of its ‘[Roman] Catholic’ nature including homage to the Virgin Mary...” (Liner notes). In contrast, the...
Lutheran use of Compline followed the pattern of Luther’s conservative reform of the Latin Mass. Marian elements were removed (similar to the deletion of the canon of the Mass), and the office returned to a Christocentric celebration of the Resurrection. Tracks 11-16 of CD One may be appreciated for their music, and their texts may be insofar as they are in accord with Sacred Scripture.

CD One abounds with 16th Century settings of text familiar to those who have prayed Compline previously. They will serve as a wondrous introduction to those new to Completorium.

CD Two is a recording of the Office of Compline according to the 1928 unadopted edition of the English Book of Common Prayer with appropriate chants largely from the 1929 efforts of the Plainsong and Medieval Music Society.

While Compline has been a cherished part of prayer on collegiate and seminary campuses, I see this recording and the inclusion of Compline in a growing number of hymnals as an encouragement for Christian congregations and families to begin praying this comforting office.

There is nothing like the comfort of the Resurrection of Christ and His Gospel right before bed!

PJC
Liturgy Book Review


Holy People is a more readable volume than Holy Things, yet it still disappoints. (The introduction of this second book does a good job of summarizing the first and of introducing the second.) Ecclesiology, or the study of the Church, the focus of Holy People, should be simple for Lutherans: sheep who hear the voice of their shepherd. I find this volume unnecessarily complicated. Like with the first volume, I rejoiced when the author proclaimed the Gospel clearly, and groaned when liberal theology crept in.

Lathrop, on more than one occasion, refers to the “seeker service” and accompanying movement way too positively (3, 29, et al). Why must “inculturation” be pushed to the point that local communities are allowed to celebrate a “Lord’s Supper” (65, note 21) that no longer uses the elements Jesus did in His institution of Holy Communion. It is no longer the Lord’s if others rewrite the institution and mandate. Lathrop’s favorable discussion of Baptisms done “without a formula,” meaning without Jesus’ words from Matthew 28, is similarly unacceptable.

And no, Christians do not “join the rest of humanity…in calling out to the divine” (77) merely because of the word “Father.” YHWH is Father only because Jesus is Son. Zeus is not a “Father” comparable to the L ORD. In John 14:6 Jesus said, “No one comes to the Father but by Me.” That clear text cannot be contradicted, not even by the history of religions school of thought. (See also 172 for a similar discussion with regard to the origin of Christian Baptism, and 198 for an odd discussion of the “holy” apart from the Lord in pagan practices.)

The discussion of bishops (96ff, et al) left me uncomfortable, but not because of any personal opposition to that kind of church governance, but because of the hierarchical door it leaves open, in contrast to Luther’s “one office of the Holy Ministry” teaching.

This volume assumes the acceptability of the ordination of women (and their “presidency” at Eucharist, 128). False doctrine (and resulting false practice) definitely is “grounds for breaking the communion of churches. Those who heed not 1 Corinthians 14:33b-40 should at least listen to verse 38! There is a need to continually refute the ordination of women to the pastoral office in so many QBR reviews due to the frequency that this false teaching and practice is so often promoted. If Scripture really was OK with it, would its supporters need to push so hard?

Hearing Luther’s list of the “marks of the Church” (55) was refreshing when so many theologians posit alternatives that are not reliable, primary Marks of the Church. I can see the good of Lathrop’s point with regard to true catholicity and how the Roman Church and the Salvation Army (130) can be helpful to one another in calling each other to repentance where their doctrine and/or practice falls short of the Scriptures.
Justification, yes! Word and Sacrament, yes! Making use of some cultural forms (162) in Christian worship is acceptable and to be welcomed when such music or ceremony does not fight against Christian proclamation (unlike revivalistic worship forms and their false conversion teaching and doctrine of the Holy Spirit and sacraments) and when what Jesus taught and gave is not changed.

Only one is holy (213). This is true. Therefore, the holy things can only come from the Father, through the Son, delivered by the work of the Holy Spirit. The Lord’s Holy Things are for His Holy People, not those who find common ground with those who do not confess Christ. “Holy to the Lord” means something. It calls for the rejection of our own personal religious opinions in favor of the Lord’s words, and also for the denial of the flesh and the political correctness of the culture around us.

This book is not totally without merit. There is plenty to praise, but much to condemn. Sometimes a book is included on a syllabus because it can teach by example. Other times a book is included as a counterexample. This one is both—under the same cover.


PJC

Liturgical Book Review


(Both volumes are also available in hardcover for $65 each.)

There is a great need for good books that explain the history behind the Liturgical Year. Many Christians, congregations, and pastors know what traditions are kept, but often don’t know why they are and how they came about. Enter this two-volume set.

“Eternity Today is a handy reference for anyone who wishes to observe the liturgical year with intelligent devotion. Throughout, Connell aims to recover the theology and spirituality of the Christian year. As an aid to reflection, he incorporates numerous selections of contemporary poetry, thereby demonstrating how secular poets can often hit upon a point that finds its echo in Christian life and ritual” (from the publisher’s email advertisement).

Martin Connell writes from a Roman Catholic perspective. He teaches at St John’s in Collegeville, Minnesota (home of the St. John’s Bible) as an associate professor in the Department and School of Theology.

Each volume tackles part of the Church Year after an introductory essay on a major topic. Volume 1 covers “God and Time,” as well as Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, and Candlemas. Volume 2 begins with a major chapter on “Sunday” and then covers Lent, the Three Days, the Easter Season, and what the Roman Church has recently called “Ordinary Time.”

With regard to the latter, the long “green seasons” of the Liturgical Year, Connell writes, “It is no surprise...
then that the Lutheran Book of Worship takes up the nomenclature of the late Middle Ages, for Lutheran worship is often the most traditional of all, preserving aspects of the medieval rites that have been forsaken even by the Roman Catholic tradition. The Lutheran use of “after Epiphany” and “after Pentecost” is simply a vernacular iteration of the medieval phrases post Epiphaniam and post Pentecostem (Vol. 2: 220). Such high praise would also include Lutheran Worship as well as Evangelical Lutheran Worship and Lutheran Service Book. Yes, One-Year Lectionary users, “after Pentecost” does historically predate “after Trinity.” The previous quotation made reading both volumes well worth it.

Similarly, the second volume’s extensive discussion on the post Vatican II reforms and the development of the Three-Year Lectionary (2: 200ff). The Three-Year almost was a Four-Year Lectionary (2: 209).

Thomas Talley (179ff) has been a very influential liturgical scholar, especially because of his landmark work, The Origins of the Liturgical Year, a book that is as influential in some circles as it is distasteful in others. I rejoiced when Talley’s more controversial “history of religions school” theories were dismantled because of the serious problems that abide with them.

I tire of liberal opinions being passed off as Christian theology, whether late dates for New Testament books and other canonicity questions (1: 97; 2: 171, 199), appeals for the ordination of women to the Pastoral Office (2: 231), or the often subtle statements that all religions are equal (2: 212). I’d also rather not see Martin Luther lumped in with the Reformed (1: 228ff; 2: 21). Luther is mentioned more positively at 1: 117.

The contemporary selections introduce each chapter with uneven results. Topically they may be relevant, but often the connotations of the illustration outweigh the point they were chosen to bear. Overall, these books are a more readable, more faithful, and more affordable (in paperback) alternative to similar resources.

The title of this two-volume set derives from the writings of St. Augustine. “Eternity, by God’s gift, is indeed today” (1:22). Worship is heaven on earth, an intersection of the eternal and time. The saints on earth receive the gifts of heaven and join with angels, archangels, and all the company of heaven in their unending hymns of praise to the Lord.

PJC

**Liturgy Book Review**


Let me be honest from the outset: I do not buy the common assertion of Liturgical Theology that liturgy, leitourgia, is “the work of the people.” Divine Service, Gottesdienst, is God’s service to us. That must be held to be true first and foremost. “We love because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19). Then and only then can we have a discussion of the sacrificial aspect: our sacrifice of prayer and praise, offering and song.

Frank Senn acknowledges this as the “Classical Lutheran” position (87), but I am less than clear what his position is. The main references in this book still emphasize “work of the people,” but Senn does confess that “Theology must concern itself with both the sacramental dimension of worship—God’s service to his people through the proclamation of the word and the administration of the sacraments—and the sacrificial dimension of worship—the congregation’s service to God in prayer, acclamation, praise, and adoration” (ibid).

This book (2000) predates the latest round of Lutheran hymnals, yet Senn isn’t that far off in predicting a new generation of denominational books around the year 2010 (ix). The author acknowledges his liturgical theology ancestry in Aidan Kavanaugh (2). Chapter 1 is a more helpful introduction to Liturgical Theology (and theologians, 6-7) than Lathrop’s Holy Things.

There is a brief acknowledgment that some in the church consider the cross “divine child abuse” (86) and that he himself considers the whole “twelve days of Christmas” discussion “lost” (125).

What’s helpful about this book? Actually, quite a bit—especially for the current $8.50 online price. The much quoted phrase by Prosper of Aquitane (the way of praying is the way of belief) is better explained here than many other places, particularly because Senn makes us of Prosper’s original quotation (11ff). He defines what is truly small-c catholic: “what is believed everywhere, always, by all” (13), gives the literal definition of orthodoxy
(18). And then there is a pointed critique of both Finney and Willow Creek (51).

I also appreciated Senn’s discussion of apostolicity (55ff), the historical and liturgical impact of the legalization of Christianity (75, 80-81, 135), the clash of worldviews at worship (86, 89ff), and three later chapters: 8, Liturgical Hospitality; 9, Liturgical Culture; and 10, Liturgical Evangelism. We do not have to adopt Church Growth, the Emergent Church, or pop culture in order to be nice to visitors and our own members, catechize our children, and provide plenty of relevant Biblical preaching, good lighting, easier to follow services, and plenty of parking.

“Frank C. Senn is author of the magisterial history, *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical* (Fortress Press, 1997), as well as such other volumes as *The Witness of the Worshiping Community* (1993) and *A Stewardship of the Mysteries* (1999). Past president of the North American Academy of Liturgy, he has also been a pastor for more than thirty years and currently serve Immanuel Lutheran Church, Evanston, Illinois” (Back cover).

PJC
Hymnody CD Review


The Lutheran Church has never had the restrictions on music found in so many Reformed bodies, whether it was the non-instrumental tradition, or the earlier “psalms and psalm paraphrase only” school of worship. Luther saw music as a gift of God, writing, “Next to theology, I accord to music the highest place and greatest honor.” Amen to that.

This compact disc provides twenty metrical paraphrases of Biblical psalms. Hymns like this form the foundation for other hymns in the English language once restrictions were largely removed by Watts and others. And the church of today has the blessing of wonderful hymn texts and tunes such as these.

Of the twenty tunes used on this album, four (OLD HUNDREDTH, ST. JOHN, MARTYRDOM, AND OLD 124TH) are included in *Lutheran Service Book*, and two of the hymn texts are in *LSB*. These include tracks I/XIV. “The Lord’s My Shepherd, I’ll Not Want” (set to a different tune at *LSB* 710), and track II. “All People that on Earth Do Dwell” *LSB* 791. The enclosed booklet includes the sung texts.

There is great potential for more use of psalms and psalm hymns in our congregations. Hymns like these would serve well in the Lutheran Church in place of the Introit, as an additional Psalm setting, or in place of the Gradual or Choir Anthem. For example, track III sings Psalm 30 and would be appropriate for Ash Wednesday. Psalm 24, track VII, would be great for Palm Sunday and Advent I. There may be some irony in using VIII, a paraphrase of Psalm 46 on Reformation Sunday, but XVII, Psalm 95 would be an ideal substitute for the Venite at Matins. (A list of similar psalm paraphrases in *LSB* is found on page 996.)

The Scottish Philharmonic Singers do well in singing their heritage of psalm hymns and remind us of the blessing of both congregational singing and parish choirs.

PJC

Hymnody Book Review

Why didn’t somebody think of this before?


This for a cool idea for a book! Christians both young and old need to know more about what we sing and why we sing what we do. Hymns don’t come from a vacuum. Hymn text authors and hymn tune composers were (and are) real Christians in a specific place and time.

“Get ready for a great story about two American teens traveling in Europe with David McCallum, an English organist known in his parish as Mr. Pipes. During a series of hair-raising adventures across Europe, Mr. Pipes introduces Annie and Drew to sixteen hymns from the early centuries, and to hymnists Ambrose of Milan, Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Patrick, and more.”

“Readers of *The Accidental Voyage* will come away with a new knowledge and appreciation of the hymns from the early centuries” (publisher’s website).

From a Lutheran perspective, praiseworthy elements include:

+ Wonderful hymns such as “Of the Father’s Love Begotten,” the Te Deum, “Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation,” “All Glory, Laud and Honor,” “Jerusalem the Golden,” “All Creatures of Our God and King,” and St. Patrick’s Breastplate, among many others (Hymns are reprinted from *Trinity Hymnal*. See Table of Contents and Hymn list in the back of the novel)
An insightful criticism of so-called “contemporary worship” songs and service orders (54ff, et al)

Confession and forgiveness in a real situation (183)

Pre-evangelism apologetics and a confession that “Salvation is entirely of the Lord.” (195)

There is so much to praise and be thankful for in this fourth novel of the series. (The first three Mr. Pipes books are available from another publisher.) Reformed and Lutheran Christians honestly acknowledge real theological differences between their confessions. True to advertising, Mr. Bond (and Mr. Pipes) confess the Christian faith according to the Westminster Confession and Catechism.

Lutheran pastors, teachers, and parents will need to be aware of the following:

A reference to Sunday as the Christian Sabbath (27, 225)

A confession of only a spiritual presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper, contrary to the very text of the hymn being discussed, “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence” (89-90ff, see also 172)

An unfavorable reference to “sacramental religion,” and a definition of the term that is critical of Rome (and also misunderstands the teachings of the Lutheran Reformation) (99)

A brief mention of the doctrine of election (159) and the sovereignty of God (195)

The first line of the Westminster Catechism quoted: The chief end of man is to “glorify and enjoy God” (205)

With the above carefully identified, explained, and countered while reading with a young audience, I see a use for this novel (and others like it) in Lutheran homes and schools.

Also author of the Crown and Covenant series of novels, Douglas Bond (M.I.T., St. Martin’s College), a high school history and English teacher, lives with his wife and five children in Washington. The Accidental Voyage is his seventh book.
Pulpit Book Review


Initial trepidation in undertaking this review was due to this reviewer’s failure to maintain whatever level of proficiency in Hebrew achieved while in the Seminary. Dr. Hummel assuages such trepidation quickly via his thoroughness in presentation of the original language and working through it to the extent that the reader is brought through it relatively unharmed; all the while relearning the moth-balled skills of operating in the ‘original language of God.’

In keeping with sound Lutheran hermeneutical principles and practices, each pericope is given in an original translation by the author and presented in a manner that does homage to faithful scholarly tradition maintaining the unity of the historical aspect in the textual analysis. This is of course a common element found in most commentaries regardless of the background of the commentator. It merely forms the basis for that on which the comments are made. But the Lutheran perspective which comes through so well in Dr. Hummel’s work in Ezekiel, maintains as a vital issue the projection and unveiling of Christology through the lens of Ezekiel’s visions and prophesies that are the very oracles of God. The Lutheran navigation through Ezekiel’s vision narrative “steer[s] between the Scylla of historicism on the one hand and the Charybdis of allegory on the other.”

The reader will find Dr. Hummel’s exegesis and commentary a welcomed aid in the study of Ezekiel’s inaugural vision and subsequent “Prophesies of judgment against the Israelites condemning those still living in Judah” and to a lesser extent those in exile too. Even by Dr. Hummel’s estimation Ezekiel is at times “opaque”. Yet in commentary, the reader is treated to not only the messianic and eschatological interpretations of the appropriate sections of Ezekiel, but is also provided with strong Law for use in preaching so that the Gospel may be preached in its sweet fullness.

Dr. Hummel does not shy from bringing out the Sacramental (physical, external means of grace to which God’s Word and Salvation are attached) overtones with in Ezekiel as well as throughout the Old Testament in relation to land, temple and sacrifices. It is by no means an “I see water, I see Baptism” presentation. The discontinuity is maintained between Old Testament “sacraments” and the ones given us by Jesus for use in His Church today.

If one desires to add this commentary to his library with the intent of planning a portion of Old Testament pericopal preaching, it will be if limited use, as the *Lutheran Service Book* one year series has only three Sundays with lessons from Ezekiel. The three year series offers nine Sundays with two feast day texts. As any commentary Ezekiel 1-20 is a tool. Tools are implements employed to enable the user to work more effectively and efficiently. This commentary surveys numerous other commentaries on the same book and includes a lengthy (3.5 page) bibliography of sources on topics explored within. Thereby the reader is spared countless hours culling the heterodox and enabled more time to devote to preaching Christ in Ezekiel.

DCB

Pulpit Book Review

An Excellent Resource for the One-Year Lectionary

Giertz, Bo. Translated by Clifford A. Nelson. *Preaching from the Whole Bible.* Fort Wayne, IN: Lutheran Legacy, no date. Reprint of 1967 Augsburg edition. 144 Pages. Paper. $15.00 www.lutheranlegacy.org (P)

Lutheran Worship (1982) only provided limited support for the Historic Lectionary. Lutheran Service Book has done much better in this regard, yet there is a more immediate need for more helps and resources for pastors and congregations (like many in the Wyoming District,) that use the One-Year Lectionary now.

* No doubt a testament to Dr. Hummel’s pedagogical expertise for which he is internationally renowned.
This reprint of a classic Bo Giertz book is just what the doctor ordered. Many thanks to Lutheran Legacy for undertaking the reprint and to Augsburg Fortress for granting permission for it.

The original Swedish title would go something like this in English: *What does God’s Word Say? The Hammer of God* author Bo Giertz (1905-1998), serve as a bishop in the Gothenburg Diocese of the Church of Sweden.

There is a page and a half to two page devotion-like sermonic study for each Sunday in the Church Year and each major Feast based upon the appointed Holy Gospel. The left margin includes other Bible references or allusions, helpful for connections when preaching. Each study begins, “What the Bible has to say About…”

A review of the Contents page serves as a Church Year as well as a topical index. Find topics such as “Rewards,” “Learning How to Pray,” “Responsibility for the Gospel,” “Our Anxieties,” and “Being Stewards.”

In the concluding paragraph for the Fourth Sunday in Advent Bishop Giertz wrote: “These are the two great fundamental truths that Luther rediscovered when the Bible came into his hands. This is the center of all evangelical Christianity—that forgiveness of sins is granted to us by faith in Christ and that God’s Word gives us this faith when we allow it to be our guide. These two fundamental truths are too often forgotten and misunderstood in our time. That is why so many people imagine that they can be Christians without going to church if they only live a decent and honorable life every day. But this is not what God’s Word says to us. ‘And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher?’ One becomes a Christian through the living Word of God that abides forever” (15).

Allow Pastor Giertz to be your guide through the next Church Year, and he might just talk you into making use of the One-Year Lectionary.

For congregations that already hear the Historic Lectionary on an annual basis, this brief book would be a great One-Year weekly devotion for the layman. For the pastor and preacher, this is an essential resource for the proclamation of the One-Year pericopes.

In addition, Lutheran Legacy has some impressive work already completed, with similarly ambitious goals: “The Lutheran Legacy website is an evolving online digital database of public-domain Lutheran documents. For the time being, we provide indexed page images (over 40,000 of them as of June 1, 2006). We are developing technology and support to provide transcribed text, translated text, and interactive web features. As translations become available, we will offer the most important titles in library-quality print form…

“We provide documents of all types from the Age of Lutheran Orthodoxy (dogmatic works, commentaries, hymnals, etc.). We are also seeking to provide documents from the Early and Medieval Church, early Reformation Lutheranism, and early American Lutheranism. All texts provided in this database are believed to be public domain and have been donated from various library collections” (Publisher’s website).

Pulpit Book Review


Musicians release “Greatest Hits” albums. You could call this Bonhoeffer’s “Greatest Hits,” his best meditations on the Cross of Christ, Gospel comfort for people facing crosses in their own lives.

Granted, some of what American Lutherans read in Bonhoeffer’s writings makes them uncomfortable from a Biblical perspective. I find the cause to be twofold: what Dietrich Bonhoeffer actually wrote, and what has only been available heretofore in unclear translations. Perhaps scholars who understand the original German better than I can be more specific and thorough on this point.

More troubling to some is the actions of Pastor Bonhoeffer, especially his role in the failed assassination attempt on Adolf Hitler. Does that truly make him a Christian martyr? Would the title “German Patriot” fit better? How does this fit in a discussion of Luther’s doctrine of the Two Kingdoms?

Questions remain, but there is great value in this 94 page book that could serve you as an undated devotional, an aid to preaching Christ crucified, and a book of comfort.

Bonhoeffer knows how to get your attention! Sometimes it is because of the creative and innovative language that he used, oft misunderstood, oft misunderstandable. No wonder he is such a
popular author even now. This is writing with great impact for the reader. Two examples of the poignancy of writing are offered below.

’you are the salt’—not you should be the salt! It is not for the disciples to decide whether they are or are not to be salt…” (81).

‘tribulation produces patience, and patience produces experience, and experience produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us.’ But all this only for those who have found and who keep God’s peace in Jesus Christ, and of whom our text now says: ‘God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.’ Only those who are loved by God and who for that reason love God alone and above all else, those alone are permitted to speak thus. No, the gradation from tribulation to hope is no self-evident earthly truth. Luther said that one could very well put it quite differently, namely, that suffering produces impatience, and impatience produces obstinacy, and obstinacy produces despair, and despair disappoints us completely. Indeed, thus must it be if we lose God’s peace, when we prefer an earthly peace with the world to peace with God, when we love the security of our lives more than we love God. Then must tribulation become our ruin” (44).

The copyright page admits, “This volume draws on material from Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, which is being translated and published by Fortress Press. This translation has been reviewed by the Editorial Board of the English edition, but may be identical to the forthcoming text.” Although this is true, Westminster/John Knox Press should be commended for whetting our appetite for the yet-to-be-released volumes of the official English translation.

“Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945), martyred during World War II, was one of the leading voices of Germany’s Confessing Church and is one of the most widely read Christian writers of the twentieth century” (Back cover).

PJC

Pulpit Book Review


Colossians is another Concordia Commentary on a short letter (95 verses) that provides a wealth of information on this wonderful Biblical text. The Rev. Dr. Paul E. Deterding (B.A. 1975, M.Div. 1978, S.T.M. 1979, Th. D. 1981) currently serving as a parish pastor in Carson City, Nevada, presents a thorough treatment of the apostle Paul’s letter to Christians in Colossae. Dr. Deterding’s main thrust in the book is the Christology of Colossians. “The letter to the Colossians is rich in Christology. One might even argue that it is the most profound Christology in all the NT.” Related themes presented are creation and eschatology, the two bookends of the Bible and all theology. Creation and eschatology properly surround the center and core of this book and the faith…that of the cross and the empty tomb.

Rev. Deterding’s introduction posits that this letter speaks of the relationship between Christ Jesus and His creation possibly more than other much longer NT books. This is a point that Dr. Deterding returns to frequently and proves well in his most excellent work (note especially The Christ Hymn (Colossians 1:15-20) pg. 43f and an excursus titled The Cosmology of Colossians, pgs. 61-62). A very helpful section in the introduction of this volume discusses The Colossian Heresy (pgs. 7-12). Much of what is written in this section concerning this “deceptive philosophy” can be applied to modern theology of glory influences.

Dr. Deterding outlines Colossians, contrary to some, into two simple major headings, kerygma (preaching) and paraenesis (exhortation, admonition). This simple outline is workable and fits the general layout of the book nicely. This outline provides an excellent method for teaching and studying the book of Colossians in the parish. First, and foremost is the doctrine, the truth of the Word and the Gospel (at times over and against error) followed by the application of the message to life and conduct resting on Christ.

The general structure of each section of the book, introduction, translation, exegesis, commentary and any necessary excurses, with all these tied together in a brief summary works quite well. The exegesis by Dr. Deterding (with footnotes) is thorough, precise, yet simple, allowing a parish pastor who has tended to lose ground in his language studies to quickly be reacquainted with the beauty of the Greek text. Rev. Deterding detailed exegesis includes a superb section on Indicative and Imperative: Be What You Are (pgs. 137-138) summarized thus, “The ongoing imperative of ethical living is grounded on the
completed indicative of what Christ has done for our salvation.” (pg. 98)

Excurses worth taking a look at include Pauline Anthropology, The Christology of Colossians, The Soteriology of Colossians, The Powers, and Baptism in the Message of Colossians. In his excursus on The Powers Dr. Deterding provides some excellent resources for the parish pastor and layman in examples of “contemporary manifestations of the powers” (pgs. 128-131). Properly so, baptism is highlighted by both the kerygma and paraenesis sections of Colossians and Rev. Deterding’s commentary. An especially helpful discussion of baptism in terms of sanctification (and figures 1 and 2) occurs in Part 2, Put Off and Put On. (see pgs. 153-156)

The apostle Paul’s defense of the truth and hope that he has occurs in the Christology of Colossians 2:9, “For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form…” The Concordia Commentary on Colossians finds its center in its treatment of this very verse, and surrounding this are pages full of excellent tools and teaching for pastor and laymen alike. This commentary, its faithful work and insight is a great blessing to the church and to any Christians who desire to look deeper into true Wisdom and Freedom that is Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

Pulpit Book Review


Ruth, by Lutheran Church-Canada professor Dr. John Wilch from St. Catherine’s Seminary in Ontario, is part of the Concordia Commentary Series. It provides a very in-depth analysis totaling over 400 pages. It begins with a detailed isagogic survey and thorough consideration of Ruth’s historical context. He spends a great deal of time in literary analysis, outlining, at great length, motifs such as Fidelity, Redemption, Suspense, Honor, Shame and others as well as organizing the main commentary points according to dramatic structure. The political and legal discussions are particularly interesting, as one seeks to understand the way levirate marriage and inheritance functions within the complex plot. But in the end, he brings the focus back around to the book’s theology and Christology.

Wilch uses the word “Christotelic” in place of the more familiar word “Christological” emphasizing the fact that Ruth was prior to Christ and points forward to him. Nonetheless, he very effectively focuses on this all-important teaching using both exegetical observations and the teachings of Luther. There are many good conservative and intellectual commentaries out there, but Wilch makes a genuinely Lutheran one.

He writes: “Luther rightly rejected anti-incarnational, spiritualizing, and Platonic methods of interpretation, not only in respect to Christ, but also in respect to the persons, events, and institutions of the OT, which are physical realities that are to be fully appreciated as historical examples of God through his Word granting faith life and salvation.”

This seems to be his primary theme throughout the commentary. In the main section, Wilch provides a fresh translation and incredibly meticulous textual notes. In a number of cases the footnotes on a page are longer his text itself. I would be genuinely shocked if anybody undertook to read them all. To be fair, the vast wealth of information is made somewhat more accessible by an Index of Subjects and an exhaustive table of biblical references (of which there are several thousand!). He also indexes his references to the Apocrypha, Early Christian Literature, the Lutheran Confessions, and the works of Luther.

On the one hand, it is the most impressive confessional Lutheran commentary on Ruth I have seen. On the other, it is impractically long and reads more like a series of scholarly papers than one streamlined commentary. This commentary may be too involved and scholarly to efficiently benefit an average busy parish pastor, who may preach on Ruth once a year or so. Such a person would expect to reference a specific pericope and glean some good exegetical points, historical contexts and so forth during an hour or so of study time.

All this and much more certainly is contained between the massive blue covers. However, one would have to search many hours to find all the good exegetical and homiletic insights peppered throughout this unwieldy volume. To be perfectly honest, I would never read through this entire commentary unless compelled by the requirement of writing a book review, but aren’t commentaries usually reference books anyhow?

JCH
Pulpit Book Review


I could imagine a negative review calling this book The Hermeneutical Black Hole because of the cover and its length. But this isn’t a negative review. Largely, it is a positive one.

This 2006 revision is an expansion of the 1991 first edition. As a Nebraskan, I’m much more familiar with a guy named Osborne (Tom) talking football rather than an Osborne (Grant) talking Biblical Interpretation.

I like what I read here, and with 521 pages plus notes, that made for a lot of reading! I say this with a few caveats, the author’s theological positions and his discussion of the analogy of faith.

In The Fire and The Staff, Klemet Preus defines “the analogy of faith.” He writes, “It means that all the articles of the Gospel should point to Jesus Christ who died for you. Jesus and His sacrificial life and death for us are the central and unifying teaching of the Bible. Everything relates to this central point” (462-3).

On page 28 (and 361-62, 452) of this volume, Osborne argues for Calvin’s analogy of Scripture instead of the analogy of faith. While this was indeed an intriguing concept at first, upon further reflection it can easily be demonstrated that something may be Biblical, but not necessarily have the Gospel in focus. Lutheranism’s ability to properly distinguish between Law and Gospel is a great strength of our traditional hermeneutic method. Besides, I think Calvin (and this author) slightly misunderstand the term they wish to replace.

The great Lutheran dogmatician Francis Pieper writes that “the analogy of faith is not something external to Scripture, but it is Scripture itself. By this term we mean the sum of all teachings revealed in the Bible, as they are set forth in all of the perfectly clear passages....Also the overall purpose of Holy Scripture is a means of interpretation. The overall purpose of Sacred Scripture is to reveal Christ and to bring men to salvation through faith in Him” (The Church and Her Treasure, 154ff).

Pieper quotes C. F. W. Walther’s Thesis XVI, I on the True Visible Church on page 176 of the same book: “The Evangelical Lutheran Church rejects from the outset all interpretation not in agreement with the analogy of faith.” I would recommend sticking with the traditional term rather than Osborne’s new one.

Late in the book, the author shares his theological position. “For instance, I feel 99.99 percent certain that my views on the deity of Christ and substitutionary atonement are correct, but only 90 percent sure of my middle position on the charismatic issue (that tongues are used of God today but not meant for everyone) or my premillennial posttribulation belief. As for my moderate Arminian views or my openness to women’s ordination I feel about 80% certain” (396). As a confessional Lutheran, I believe the author has reason for less than 99.99% certainty on those issues upon which we differ. Additionally, it makes me want to carefully weigh his hermeneutical advice, especially if would allow for women pastors, the so-called “tongues” I’ve witnessed that can be duplicated by pagans, and decision theology.

In a paperback tome nearly two inches thick, there is plenty of room to find something to criticize. Part 2, on Genre analysis was very useful to me. An extensive bibliography will greatly aid further study. (In addition, the author and James Voelz, author of What Does This Mean? could certainly have a lively discussion someday.)

I also certainly commend his major idea, the Hermeneutical Spiral, that recognizes the need to acknowledge text, significance, interpreter, receptor culture, and meaning in the search for theological truth. Post modernism and its common denial of any objective meaning is a major challenge to the church. This is a resource for that battle.

“Grant R. Osborne (Ph.D., University of Aberdeen) is professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and series editor for the IVP New Testament Commentary Series, for which he contributed the volume on Romans. He has also written on Revelation for the Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament” (Back cover).

PJC


Pulpit Book Review


While it is wonderful to have a 38-volume set of the Ante-Nicene Fathers and the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers staring at me from my bookshelf, the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture volumes continue to be more readily usable than those with the formidable red, green, and blue covers. In particular, the translations and font size are much easier to read. In addition, some fathers were not included even in the encyclopedia-like ANF/NPNF series.

The introduction by Bray was encouraging, especially the reasoning for the inclusion of Pelagius in this volume (xxiv), a brief section on Origen and his use of allegory (xxii), and this explanation on Jews and Gentiles and faith: “Therefore the Jews were still God’s chosen people. However, the mark of their election was not circumcision or some other outward sign or ritual. It was faith—the same faith that Abraham had. Jews who shared this faith were added to the number of the elect, but the rest were not. Gentiles who shared Abraham’s faith were added to the number of the elect, but the rest were not” (xix).

For me, the test of a good Romans commentary depends largely on what is said with regard to Romans 1:16-17. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, ‘The righteous shall live by faith.'” This is the verse that inspired the Lutheran Reformation. It is surprising what many commentaries say (or fail to say) about that text. Twelve commentators are heard on verse 17. About two-thirds of them preach with the clarity of the Gospel I look for (29ff).

Beyond that, there is great joy in reading this particular ACCS volume. That was until I reached p. 354, where the pericope of Romans 16:1-16 begins. Bray comments in his overview: “The Fathers made much of Phoebe and of the other women mentioned in Romans 16 because their names proved that there were women in the ministry in the first generation” (355). Oh, really? Why couldn’t they have been deaconesses, serving children and other women in a “social ministry” role? Why couldn’t Junia/Junias (if she were a she and not really a he) and Phoebe have been Christian women who hosted a church in their homes? Can’t laity of both genders also do the work of the Lord in their daily vocations? Why must they be seen as ordained to the Office of the Holy Ministry?

How does this compare with another volume by the same editor, 1-2 Corinthians, and a much clearer text: 1 Corinthians 14:33b-40?

One of the same ancient commentators quoted in connection with Romans 16 also comments on 1 Corinthians 14:34. “If this was the case, [women keeping silent in the churches, not serving as pastors,] what are we to make of the fact that Philip had four daughters who prophesied? If they could do it, why can we not let our own prophetesses speak? We may answer this question as follows. First, if our prophetesses have spoken, show us the signs of prophecy in them. Second, even if the daughters of Philip did prophesy, they did not do so inside the church. Likewise in the Old Testament, although Deborah was reputed to be a prophetess, there is no indication that she ever corporately addressed the people in the way that Isaiah or Jeremiah did. The same is true of Huldah” (1-2 Corinthians, 143).

The burden of the editor is to sift through all the patristic comments on a text and select the best. In that regard, the “best” would keep in mind both the Gospel, as well as Scripture as a whole. It is here that I became disappointed with this volume. Here we have the same editor (Bray) choosing quotes by the same ancient father (Origen), who contradicts himself between Romans 16 and 1 Corinthians 14. This is why Francis Pieper wrote, “Our [Lutheran] church, therefore, disassociates itself from the Fathers, councils, and opinions of the church as a source and norm of Christian doctrine” (The Church and Her Treasure, 130, underline added for emphasis). It is not that we Lutherans disassociate ourselves from the Fathers or the ancient church, but that only Scripture can be the norming Norm, the Standard that standardizes all Christian doctrine and practice. We can respect and read the Fathers in a series like this, but the text commented upon must be seen as more authoritative than the comments made upon it.

I still argue in favor of your purchase of this volume, not merely for the sake of a complete ACCS New Testament set, but because of the good quotes about Romans that are only available in a few places like

[Reference to image of book cover is not included in the transcription.]
this—ones that are easily accessible to pastors and lay Christians.

“Gerald L. Bray (Ph.D., La Sorbonne) is a professor at Beeson Divinity School of Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama and Director of Research at Latimer Trust. He has written and edited a number of books on different theological subjects. A priest of the Church of England, Bray has also edited the post-Reformation Anglican canons” (Inside back flap).

PJC

Pulpit Book Review


When ACCS Isaiah 1-39 was released in 2004, nine Old Testament volumes and four New Testament volumes in the series were forthcoming. With the recent release of Isaiah 40-66, only five OT volumes, zero New Testament volumes (and a volume or more on the Apocrypha) are forthcoming. All the rest are in print. This is seen not only upon the back flap of the dust jacket, but also in each volumes appendix of “Biographical Sketches & Short Descriptions of Select Anonymous Works.” Over the years it has grown from eleven pages (Isaiah 1-39: 280-290) to fifteen (Isaiah 40-66: 310-314). These “brief sketches” help the busy reader acquaint himself or herself with the immense world of patristic commentaries.

I disagree with the introduction by the first volume’s editor, McKinion, in that Christians were not concerned about the authorship of Biblical books (1-39: xvii). Indeed they were, for what else explains the origin of the terms prolegomena, spoken for, and antilegomena, spoken against? Beyond that, he and I get along fine.

Jerome insightfully defines “Lord of the Sabbath” as either “the Lord of powers or the Lord omnipotent” (10). Read Fulgentius of Ruspe on Trinitarian relationships and the trisagion, “Holy, holy, holy,” of Isaiah 6 (50). The RSV may use “young woman” in Isaiah 7, but the ancient commentators get right, “virgin,” what a previous generation of translators got famously wrong. Cyril of Jerusalem helps conclude the volume with the power of repentance (261) for a nation and King Hezekiah.

Steven A. McKinion is associate professor of historical theology at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina.

I welcomed reading about the frequent Christological interpretations editor Mark Elliot saw in the patristic commentators selected for the second Isaiah volume (xix).

I deny the existence of the “second Isaiah” and also the so-called “third Isaiah” asserted by so many contemporary commentaries. Yet, I posit that two ACCS Isaiah volumes with different Roman Numerals may have “two Isaiahs” in mind. (My spellchecker didn’t like seeing Isaiah with an “s” after it, either.) In the New Testament set, both Matthew and John have two volumes. Both are subdesignated by Ia and Ib or IVa and IVb, rather than the X and XI seen here.

That said, it is possible for a Lutheran to see a great connection between the prayer of Hezekiah in Isaiah 39 and the “Comfort, comfort my people” of Isaiah 40. Judgment is coming for the nation, yet the Lord promises hope. The comfort of a loving parent follows the rare and appropriate use of corporal punishment upon a child administered by that same parent. The law is proclaimed in all of its severity. And then the Gospel is preached in all of its comfort. Each one is preached in its turn as if the other did not exist.

Clement of Alexandria agrees with our own Dr. Steven Hoffman (or should that be the other way around?☺ ) that Christ is the New Song of 42:10 (40). “Inasmuch as the Word was from the first, he was and is the divine source of things. But inasmuch
as he has now assumed the name Christ, consecrated of old and worthy of power, he has now been called the New Song. This Word, the Christ, the cause of both our being at first (for he was in God) and of our well-being, this very Word has now appeared as a man. He alone is both God and man. He is the Author of all blessings to us. By him, we, being taught to live well, are sent on our way to life eternal…This is the New Song, the manifestation of the Word that was in the beginning and before the beginning. The Savior, who has existed before, has in recent days appeared.”

Melito of Sardis is worth quoting this Good Friday: “He accepted the suffering of the suffering one, through suffering in a body that could suffer, and set free the flesh from suffering….This is the one made flesh in a virgin, who was hanged on a tree, who was buried in the earth, who was raised from the dead, who was exalted to the heights of heaven” (166ff). (There is much more from his On Pascha, and it looks much better in print as a poem than in this brief review quotation.)

The patristic citations will be helpful to Lutherans preaching upon Isaiah 40, 52-53, 55, and 66. Comfort, the Suffering Servant, God’s Wisdom, and Mission to the Gentiles are important themes Isaiah brings to Lectionary preaching.

ACCS has more in store for Missouri Synod (LCMS) Lutherans, too, in a forthcoming publication. Our own Quentin F. Wesselschmidt serves as editor of Psalms 51-150 in the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Look for this volume soon!

PJC

The Grammar of Divine Service


This is a handy and brief booklet on the Divine Service, and what it means to be a Lutheran at worship from A (Adiaphoron) to Z (Omega).

The author clearly has in mind Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal by his own Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, but it also lays well with our new Lutheran Service Book.

As in CW, the explanation of the Kyrie, “Lord, Have Mercy” is inserted between Confession & Absolution. This one change may be unique to the WELS. Typically, the Kyrie is understood as the first prayer of the Divine Service, where forgiven sinners ask for mercy. This would cover the Lord’s provision for everything that has to do with our body and life as well as the needs of the whole world and those of the universal church, rather than only asking for mercy in connection with the forgiveness of sins.

I believe this booklet would also work well as an illustrated book for children, similar to other “ABC” resources.

Study and discussion questions are available for free download from www.nph.net/html/abc.html

PJC

Cloned Sheep and Dead White (mostly Christian) Males


PJC
What does it mean to be “Politically Incorrect?” In Nebraska it means that you have common sense, can think for yourself, and have respect for the Bible and its Divine Author. We’re talking about old-fashioned horse sense, a heart to show respect and care for everybody, and a stubborn unwillingness to go along with any linguistic, artistic, scientific, moral, or political fad.

Regnery’s popular and helpful series of books respond to those who think they know better than the average American. Look at the facts rather than just the press releases, and you will find that much of what we are told and taught is either wrong, or comes with a liberal agenda.

It is surprising how much two seemingly “off topic” books like these have to do with the Christian faith.

Among Christians I have known, “creation and evolution” live together in a near-permanent contrast. What few ever hear is that the fundamental disciplines of modern science were pioneered by Christians, not atheists. A Lutheran pastor wrote the preface to a book by Copernicus (192). A believer can see the same data and come to a very different conclusion to that of one who follows the modern “politically correct” party line of neo-Darwinian evolution. Research by scientists unwilling to “play ball” according to such rules may never see the light of day in biased, peer-reviewed journals. Unfair? Sure. Many in science today live more by dogma than the “religious extremists” they fear Christians to be. Science is supposed to be a method, not an ideology.

Other PIG guides give more detail on Evolution and Global Warming. This volume is a good “warm-up” for the others.

I was particularly fascinated by his discussion on hormesis in Chapter 3. I know what you’re thinking. I had no idea what the term meant either. Currently, our town is looking for an alternative water source due to unacceptable levels of naturally occurring substances. Years ago, they were at acceptable levels. And no, the amount found in the water didn’t increase, the definition of “acceptable” was lowered by the EPA. Usually, government scientists say that any amount of a harmful substance is harmful. That’s what we’ve heard for a long time. Hormesis looks at the actual data and finds that for very small doses, some harmful things have beneficial effects. These effects disappear at larger doses. Think of all the wasted time, effort, and money used to clean up miniscule amounts of what turn out to be harmless material.

Consider this example of good reading for those cold winter nights instead of the latest faith-hostile theories on public or cable science programs.

Only a few comments are necessary with regard to Dr. Elizabeth Kantor’s PIG to English and American Literature. This is what you thought college English and Lit classes should have been.

There’s a big difference between reading a piece of literature and reading most books about literature. Most lit texts today try to reinterpret some famous author’s works based on feminism, Freudian psychoanalysis, or upon whatever odd anti-Christian worldview held by the author or professor.

This book is different. Dr. Kantor allows the original authors speak for themselves. No wonder these “dead white males” (and some females) are felt to be so dangerous—most had a Christian and Biblical worldview. That’s not politically correct! And now you understand the need for this book.

This is the education you should have gotten for your tax dollars and/or your tuition fees. The first part follows a chronological approach, while the two back sections explain why the curriculum was intentionally changed and how you can learn now what you should have been taught then.

Buy a copy of this for the English teachers you know, the high school and college students you love, as well as anyone who may have been shortchanged by modern reinterpretations of our English-language heritage. Happy reading.

PJC

A Resource for Pastors, Congregational Treasurers, & their Accountants


Brother Pastors, have you added up your Housing Allowance receipts for 2007 yet? Yes, it’s that time of year again. There’s nothing quite like working for
a congregation but paying taxes quarterly as if one were “self employed.”

You’ve probably been wondering for years if a book like this existed. Here it is. My own accountant, [http://www.witmerwoodtax.com/](http://www.witmerwoodtax.com/), appears to make use of the worksheets included.

Many of your long-term tax prep questions will be answered. What changes need to be made if your congregation allows you to buy your own home? What language is recommended for a congregation’s official resolution with regard to the amount declared for housing allowance? What are the implications of the year 2000 [Rick, yes, that Rick] Warren v. Commissioner Tax Court Case?

In addition to the new LCMS manual for congregational treasurers, wish your church’s treasurer “Merry Christmas” with the forthcoming 2008 Edition (For Preparing 2007 Tax Returns).

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**Free Book. Need I say More?**

**The Lord’s Supper in the Theology of Martin Chemnitz**

by Bjarne Wollan Teigen

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**DVD Movies**

**Merry CHRISTmas**

*The Nativity Story.* New Line Home Entertainment, 2006. 101 minutes. PG. DVD. (BN)

This is a great film, though perhaps too violent in some aspects for the youngest among us. Herod’s murder of the young boys two years of age and under in and around Bethlehem begins and concludes this story of the First Christmas.

The visual images are friendly to those we have seen in countless nativity scenes and on innumerable Christmas cards. In addition, this is of the highest quality. The acting, costumes, and settings are believable. The author(s) of the screenplay give details to the story beyond the Biblical text, yet in a way that is not contrary to Scripture.

A word about the wise men is in order. We are only told in Matthew that they brought three gifts. We are not told specifically where they came from, what they looked like, or what their names were. The Nativity Story supplies “Persia,” “three skin colors,” and the “traditional” “Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar” for the three. Those names are Persian, the names and use of three wise men come from “tradition,” not Scripture. And they were told in a dream not to go back to Herod. It is neat to see them used as comic relief at times, and also in seeing their travel scenes interspersed with those of Mary and Joseph.

This is worth spending money and time on, well after Christmas.

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PJC
Notes

Books Received


Edersheim, Alfred. *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, New Updated Edition, Complete*


Hendrickson, Marion Lars. Musica Christi: A Lutheran Aesthetic. New York: Peter Lang, 2005. 313 Pages. Cloth. $73.95 www.peterlang.net (LHP)


http://wy.lcms.org/LHP/QBR


Therefore Hosea cries: “This example of Jacob by no means confirms your idolatry. He did, indeed, struggle with the angel, but you should have remembered that the Lord God of hosts led Israel out of Egypt through the prophet. But where is this God to be [Vol. 6, Page 128] found? Where has He made a memorial for His name? Where is this memorial? Where the ark of the covenant is” (cf. Ex. 20:24).

This is true, indeed, that God is not bound, neither to Jerusalem nor to any other place, and that He is able to save also elsewhere. No one will deny this. But try it and see what you will get! If you invent forms of worship according to your own judgment, you will be in danger of God’s wrath. By His almighty power God could save the human race without Christ, without Baptism, and without the Word of the Gospel. He could have illuminated men’s hearts inwardly through the Holy Spirit and forgiven their sins without the ministry of the Word and of ministers. But it was not His will to do so. And God very strictly prohibited all erring forms of devotion and worship.

When hypocrites say: “Whatever is done with good intention is pleasing to God,” those self-chosen devotions are to be condemned, and men should be reminded that they should direct their eyes where God has revealed Himself. We must not say: “Paul preached at Rome, therefore Christ is there. James is buried at Compostela in Spain, therefore God should be worshiped there by the invocation of Saint James.” By no means! Yet many miracles are performed there? My reply is that God abominates and condemns all erring thoughts outside the one and only revelation made in the Word and sacraments, to which He wished to include us. For this reason Christ sent His disciples with this command: “Go therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19-20), and “He who believes and is baptized will be saved” (Mark 16:16). He wants us to be gathered in connection with the Word and Baptism as by a sure and infallible sign because He wants to save us and help us, just as He promised He would listen at the mercy seat among the people of Israel.

If you want to be absolved from your sins in this manner, go to your pastor, or to your brother and neighbor if your pastor cannot hear you; he has the command to absolve you and comfort you. Do not invent a special absolution for yourself. If you want to receive the Lord’s Supper, go to the assembly of the church and the public congregation and receive it there. Do not devise a special administration and use of the sacraments. For God does not want us to go astray in our own self-chosen works or speculations,

A Closing Thought

A Longer-than-Usual Closing Response

By the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther with a brief introduction by the Rev. Paul T. McCain

PTM: How often have we all heard it said: “It doesn’t matter where I worship, or how I worship. All paths lead to the same god.” Martin Luther faced this same attitude and here was how he responded to it:

God through Moses had issued a most rigorous prohibition against the impudence of inventing new forms of worship, as when He says: “You shall not offer in every place but at the place which the Lord your God will choose out of all your tribes to put His name and make His habitation there; thither you shall go, and thither you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices” (cf. Deut. 12:4-6). At that time the place appointed for worship was the temple at Jerusalem. The ark of the covenant was there, and God had promised that He would speak from the mercy seat to draw the people away from the diversity of idols to a united worship of God, to which He wanted to gather all together, if not in bodily presence and external works, at least in heart and prayer, if any were too far away from this place.

But the false prophets used to fight against this viewpoint and say: “God is everywhere; therefore He can be adored and worshiped in every place, both in Bethel as well as on any other mountain.” They did not have regard for the commandment of God. For when God fixes a certain manner and designates a certain place for His worship, it must not be said: “Wherever I will worship God, it will be pleasing to Him if only I do it in a godly and devoted manner,” or, “I shall make offerings to Him wherever it pleases me.” Isaiah, for example, censures this madness very severely, saying (Is. 57:5): “You burn with lust under every green tree.” The Turks and Jews are accustomed to speak in this manner today, claiming that they are able to serve God outside of the unity of faith and the church of Christ. Mohammed claims that anyone is saved in his own religion if he prays, if he gives alms, if he does other good works. It is not necessary for him to be a Christian or that he should be in the unity of Christ and the church. In the papacy also all corners were occupied with chapels, convents, and idolatry of every kind.
and so He gathers us together and encloses us within the limits of the Word so that we are not tossed about by every kind of doctrine (cf. Eph. 4:14).

This happened to us under the papacy when we despised Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and the remission of sins and made pilgrimages meanwhile to Saint James, Rome, and Jerusalem, as though God were not present in all the churches and congregations which have His Word and sacraments. Finally, there was an infinite variety of sects and orders, each of which had its peculiar, segregated ritual in distinction from the ritual and ordinance of God. Nor could those innumerable forms of fornication, as Holy Scripture calls them, be prevented except by casting off our own works. So God wants all these things to be removed, and He sets forth His Word, which says: “Here you shall adore, worship, and make offerings. In the Word, in the Lord’s Supper, and in Baptism you have the remission of sins. With these you will have to be satisfied if you wish to be saved.”

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From the Editor

A Blessed Easter to You!

This issue, I’ve been “Simpsonized.” 😄

No, it really doesn’t have anything to do with Easter, worship, church music, or preaching, but Lutherans should regain a reputation for having a healthy sense of humor. 😊 I can hardly get through Luther’s “Twenty Questions” without being reminded of Luther’s own pastoral humor (see p. 43 in the current LCMS edition of Luther’s Small Catechism or p. 330 in the pew edition of LSB).

Last time we explained what we were thinking with regard to LHP Reviews and our concluding Briefly Noted section.

Liturgy & Hymnody Reviews include resources that are about balanced in their coverage of worship and church music. This issue, that includes the new spiritual care resource for laity and pastors called Visitation. It features both prayers and brief rites alongside of psalms and hymn texts. Also, the devotional For All the Saints includes hymn texts on a regular basis as a day’s Fourth Reading and/or as a closing prayer.

Under the heading Liturgy Reviews, we feature items that cover liturgical theology, the history of the liturgy, and liturgical catechesis. Dr. Arthur Just makes the most recent contribution to this section, while Dom Gregory Dix is now available in a reprint edition.

More about Liturgy Reviews, Hymnody Reviews, and Pulpit Reviews (as well as other combinations) will be featured in this space in future issues.

Happy Reading!

In Christ,

The Rev. Paul J Cain, Editor
From the Organ Bench

“Christ Jesus in All Things,”

Part VI

By Dr. Steven Hoffman

The following is an excerpt and expansion of a series of lectures on sacred music delivered by Kantor Dr. Steven Hoffman at Zion Lutheran Church, Imperial, Nebraska 6-8 October 2006.

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

“Sing unto the Lord a new song!” Dr. Luther said faith cannot help but sing. He also said that whoever sings prays twice. Faith is God’s gift to His people. The Source and Perfecter of our faith is Christ Himself. The faith that God has given us through His Holy Word and the Holy Sacraments is given to singing because God has acted upon it. Faith sings because God first acts and His people respond. It is important to understand that it is not the act of singing that either brings about faith or sustains it. Christ is the Author and Perfecter of our faith. Our singing is faith’s response to His Authoring and Perfecting.

Psalm 98 teaches us what God has done to cause such singing. “Sing unto the Lord a new song!” Why? “For He has done marvelous things.” “Sing unto the Lord a new song!” Why? “His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.” “Sing unto the Lord a new song!” Why? “The Lord has made known His salvation; His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations.” “Sing to the Lord a new song!” Why? “He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; All of the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.”

There is a precedent for a new song to crown new events in Scripture. As God laid the foundations of the earth and set its cornerstone in place, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. The nation of Israel sang a new song at God’s victory over the Egyptian army at the Red Sea. At the annunciation that the Word of God, God Incarnate was conceived in her, the new song of the Magnificat was brought forth in faith from Mary. Holding the infant Christ in His arms, Simeon sang the new song of the Nunc Dimittis. All of the aforementioned events of Scripture point to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The new songs of Scripture are sung in faithful response to God acting in Christ for the salvation of all mankind. The right hand of God and His holy arm have gained Him the victory over sin death and hell in the redemptive work of our dear Lord Jesus Christ. Our Blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and His death, burial, and triumphant resurrection - all for our salvation - are a new song, the likes of which has never been sung before. In his commentary on Psalm 98, St. Jerome wrote thus:

“Sing unto the Lord a new song;” the story of the Son of God crucified is the new song that had never been heard before. A new event should have a new song. “Sing unto the Lord a new song.” It was the man, indeed, who suffered; but, you sing to the Lord. Suffer, certainly, He did as man; He redeemed as God. “Sing unto the Lord a new song.” Why? What has He done? Why is there a new song due Him? For He has done wondrous deeds... God died as man that man might live; the Son of God was crucified that He might lift us up to heaven.”

At this Passiontide, may the words, “Sing unto the Lord a new song!” fill us with great hope in the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ. For Christ is the New Song. He has won our salvation for us. “Sing unto the Lord and new song!” is all about Jesus. A Blessed Passiontide and a Blessed Easter to you, in the Name and for the sake of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen

Kantor Dr. Steven Hoffman

Dr. Steven Hoffman is Organist-in-Residence at the University of Wyoming. He is the Kantor at St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church and Campus Center in Laramie, and at King of Glory Lutheran Church in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Dr. Hoffman holds degrees from the University of South Dakota and the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Dr. Hoffman's interests include the development of an organ instruction program with learning centers throughout Wyoming with the goal of enriching the skills of organists and increasing the awareness of the organ as the "King of Instruments." He is currently authoring a book exploring the relationship between Lutheran theology and music during the Reformation.

Commentary

Mother’s Day at the Megachurch

by the Rev. Paul J Cain

Years ago I had an opportunity to visit an LCMS “Church Growth” congregation on a “Church Growth Holiday,” namely, Mother’s Day. Last year, I attended another non-Lutheran congregation the evening before Mother’s Day. What did I see and hear? What do I mean by “Church Growth”? Although many define the term “Church Growth” differently, consider the following two experiences. And remember, this is the commentary page!

Part 1: 2000

When we arrived on the campus (their term) we had an Einstein’s bagel and coffee (from the local bagel chain) right next to the bookstore. Since we were visiting with someone connected to the congregation, we were given the full tour. We saw classrooms for Sunday School, Bible classes, and various support group ministries. As service time was approaching, we took a pause in the tour and went to see the old sanctuary. It had been cleared out of pews, banners, etc. All that remained were a few pieces of unmoveable furniture, the walls, and the stained glass windows.

The ‘new’ sanctuary was shaped more like an auditorium or concert hall, although there were still pews. This brings me to some of the things that were neglected. On some of the printed materials, the congregation was called X Lutheran Church and the LCMS name was mentioned. On other materials even "Lutheran" was absent. A clear confession of the Confessional Basis was neglected! Also, any mention of close(d) Communion practice was absent. (The particular service we attended did not celebrate the sacrament, but previous communion service bulletins, cards, etc. were silent on the matter.)

Vestments, paraments, candles, etc. are technically adiaphora, but these items, useful for teaching the faith, were absent. In place of the hymn of the day, a talented singer and instrumentalist sang “Watercolor Ponies.” I heard this once on the radio, and this person did much better than the original. Unfortunately, the song had nothing to do with Christ and Him crucified, or the unique vocation of Christian mother, but was purely secular and a tear-jerker to boot.

The sermon was a travesty. I don't say that lightly. The congregation was “reading through the Bible in a year,” a wonderful idea. The pastors preached on a part of the Bible readings for that week, also, not an atrocious idea. The text was from Ruth. Rather than doing *exegesis*, drawing meaning out of the Biblical text, it was blatant, self-serving, legalistic, Scripture twisting *eisegesis*, reading an idea into the Biblical text. The sermon would have got me kicked out of any of my preaching classes.

We left stunned. Back to the tour. We saw larger classrooms this time, including one where youth confirmation was taught, 300 at a time. What was neglected here? A former Methodist had led class the previous week after recently joining X Lutheran Church. He blatantly neglected the Third Article of the Creed and taught decision theology, making sure that the kids had made a decision for Christ. What was neglected? Lutheran Catechesis. The kids missed out on the truth. And, the adult instruction class didn't do its job either with the new member teaching the kids false doctrine.

Other parts of the campus had offices for the administrative pastor, etc. They had a large staff. Rather than being a pastor, he seemed to prefer the role of CEO, or in animal care terms, rancher. He carried out little of the specific things pastors are called to do. These things, including communion visitations, were delegated to elders.

The last neglect we saw was in the bookstore. The only items in the store with “Lutheran” printed on them or Lutheran theology in them were the Catechisms stacked near the back. Other books were found in abundance: *Left Behind*, Jesus as CEO, Serenity Principles, etc. I wouldn't be surprised to see *The Prayer of Jabez* or all of the *Purpose Driven* books if I were to go back there. Good theology was neglected at the expense of what sells in Christian bookstores these days.

I pray for the pastor and congregation. I don't know what else to do. On bad days, I do let my feelings
show and wish that X Lutheran Church would actually become an Ex-Lutheran Church, for there is little there I recognized from the Book of Concord, LW or TLH (or LBW, HS98, or any other 'Lutheran' resource like Creative Worship).

In most of the LCMS “Church Growth” congregations I've been to, the teaching isn't usually as far afield as this. There just seems to be a downplaying of the Lutheran brand name and distinctives. I love theological honesty, as hard as it often is. I often feel I have a better connection with a Roman Catholic, Reformed, or Presbyterian who is honest about our theological differences than an LCMS pastor or congregation that separates practice from theology as if the two weren't connected. Practice is theology in action, either good or bad.

**Part 2: 2007**

No, this trip wasn’t to a congregation of the LCMS. It was to the local cowboy Megachurch. Why did I go? That’s a story in itself.

The non-member spouse of one of the members the congregation I currently serve was in the coffee shop on Easter Sunday morning. (Yeah, I know where he should have been, too!) A lady came in all upset. She explained that she was just traveling through the area (why she didn’t say) and decided to go to church on Easter to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Why was she so upset? She stopped at the Townname Biblereaders Church right next to our rural four-lane highway. (Yeah, I know where he should have been, too!) A lady came in all upset. She explained that she was just traveling through the area (why she didn’t say) and decided to go to church on Easter to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

I have no reason to doubt her testimony or his retelling of it. The main facts are these: she did not hear the words “Jesus,” “Christ,” and “Resurrection” in that sanctuary on Easter Sunday morning. Wow. No wonder she was upset. In addition, the “sermon” was an artist who did two paintings during the service. I later saw them for myself. Both were nearly identical “head shots” of a man I assumed to be Jesus.

I had to see for myself. After my Mother’s Day experience in 2000, I thought I’d try that same holiday at Townname Biblereaders Church. As a pastor who needed to serve my own parish on Sunday morning, I went to their Saturday evening service, which is supposed to be identical to their two Sunday services.

A couple clarifications. 1) I’m not opposed to Mother’s Day. I have a mother. And a guy would have to be a fool to ignore the day. Caution is also recommended, for it hardly fits with pastoral care to ignore those women of the congregation who are not able to be mothers for one reason or another. As moms arrive, I greet them personally with a “Happy Mother’s Day!” 2) I’m not opposed to Saturday evening services. If that would provide another opportunity for those with health issues or temporary work schedule problems, I’m all for it.

This congregation’s building is prominent along a busy US Highway. I was impressed by the cross on the top of the roof and that it was in an eight-sided shape, much like some of the Lutheran churches of Germany built after the Reformation. Unlike those church buildings, there is no altar here. The baptismal font was hidden in a corner in an office area and appears to have been replaced by a dunking tank or a nearby river. Website photos attest to this. What you’re left with is a stage with a grand piano front and center. The drum set was hidden behind a Plexiglas shield, which didn’t mute it that much and ironically drew more attention to it visually. (A projected rodeo arena is allegedly Phase Two. Why? Christian “Horse Whispering.” I wish I were joking.)

Music was the first thing you heard. Friendly greeters were on hand to welcome you at the front door. (The nice young man in the Hawaiian shirt actually was one of their pastors, the preacher for the evening, since Pastor Cowboy was making the rounds as Townname High School also had graduation that Saturday afternoon.) As is typical of many “praise” services, music was the first thirty minutes of the service. I do try to keep up, at least on a limited basis, with what passes for worship music in such congregations, but I was surprised with what I heard and what I didn’t hear. I didn’t recognize 2/3 of the music. And, more troubling, the name of Jesus was not mentioned until the sermon text at about 35 minutes into the service. The gifted pianist and lead singer led the prayers and she even sang a duet of “I Will Be Here” with her daughter. It fulfilled my expectations of being cute and heartwarming. Musically, it wasn’t up to the par of the rest of the band. The Bass player, if memory serves closed off the “praise time” with a prayer.
The preacher, trained at a Bible College, I’m told, introduced the sermon text by reading it as it was projected upon the wall, just like the songs before. Of Matthew 1:18ff, he said, “I don’t know if this is a Christmas text for Mother’s Day or a Mother’s Day text for Christmas.” Boy, I sure do! My mother and father gave me life, but Jesus Christ gives me eternal life!

What was his main point? Mary got pregnant—and not by Joseph—so SHE had a reputation—just like some of you women did! Ouch! Did I hear that guy right? Yep. He said it more than once! Such hard-hitting Law screamed for Gospel. I did hear the Gospel proclaimed clearly, but only for 30 seconds. It was not the predominant message, unfortunately.

After that, I didn’t know what to expect. Near the end of the sermon, about an hour into the service and a half hour into the sermon, the preacher told a story about a shy man in an office who wanted to ask out a fellow office worker. She didn’t even know that he existed. So, he sent her a single red rose every day for a week. And then he asked her out. The roses continued every day until the first date. Her friends said that it wouldn’t last. They were wrong. The roses kept coming even until the day he proposed. And then until their wedding day. And throughout their honeymoon. And her friends said it wouldn’t last. They were sure wrong! Fifty years later, she still received a single red rose every day from her loving husband. By this point, I’m thinking, “This husband makes me look bad.” And so did every other husband there. One day the man passed away. The florist showed up at the door all the same. “You know he died,” she told him, “You don’t have to come anymore.” “Don’t worry,” he told her, “your husband made sure that you receive a single red rose every day of your life.” A neat story, but an impossible standard. What heavy, heavy law!

The preacher explained that the head pastor was visiting the homes of graduates and asked that members put their offerings in tithes in the box by the door as they leave. No ending to the sermon or the service. Just the beginning of the announcements…

The congregation was made up of the Boomer generation mostly, with a smattering of their kids or grandkids. I saw mostly short-sleeved shirts and shorts, which was a relief, because I had dressed to fit in and be inconspicuous.

I pray for this congregation, too, and those like it where the Gospel is not the predominant message. It’s probably there sometimes, but sometimes isn’t enough. The Gospel isn’t just a starting point. It is the place to dwell all the days of our life. Christian fish swim in the waters of Holy Baptism. Without the water of the Gospel, you know what happens! If Christian worship isn’t focused upon Christ and His Gifts for us, is it Christian worship?

PJC

Notes
From the Pulpit

“Not a Hired Man”

An Installation Sermon

by the Rev. Jeffery Grams

John 10:1-16

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.”

Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them. Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd."

Introduction: If you have ever attended a call meeting, you probably noticed that never once in the course of the meeting do we use the word hire... Indeed the language of a call meeting is very carefully chosen to reflect the nature of the activity going on at the time... You don’t prepare a contract – instead you prepare the call documents. You don’t hire a man for the job – instead you extend the call to a pastor... If the congregation even presumes to meet with the man ahead of time, it is not a job interview – it is a visitation...

But some congregations today are pushing the issue. They say, “Why not just get it over with, conduct come job interviews, negotiate a suitable contract, and hire the best candidate for the job! That’s how things are done in the ‘real world’ every day!”

It’s an honest question. Why not? Why shouldn’t we abandon our strangely awkward and seemingly antiquated process of PIFs and SETs and months worth of meeting after meeting where you only seem to offer one man the position, only to have to reconvene the whole set of meetings again when he declines?!? Plus, it is not very efficient or practical to have the congregation meet every time and hammer out the details, shouldn’t that be delegated to a committee?

There is a reason why we use these words and function in this way... This is special language being used by special people who are receiving a special gift of the living God. For it is the Lord of Earth and Heaven who calls a pastor, through His Church, to serve the people of God in this place. The people of God as the Body of Christ are the instruments of His will in this matter. Preachers and hearers gathered together in His Name, prayerfully extending a call on behalf of the Lord to serve His people for the sake of their salvation...

Serving as pastors... Not simply administrators or chief executive officers, for a pastor is no hireling over the flock... For “pastor” means shepherd and the shepherd’s task is clear...

“This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead. So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep." [John 21:14-17]

“To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of
God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.” [1 Peter 5:1-4]

“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.” [Acts 20:28-30]

Pastor Naylor, through the Holy Church the Lord has placed you into the Office of the Holy Ministry to serve the Body of Christ as a pastor for the people of God. The People of God in this place have extended the call of our Lord to you to be their shepherd. After prayerful consideration under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, you have accepted that Call and rejoiced to serve as their pastor. Today, in this most solemn rite where both preachers and hearers have gathered in His Holy Name, you will be placed in this congregation as the one who has been sent by the Lord to serve in this place.

The vows that you first made in your ordination will be re-affirmed in the presence of the people you have been called to serve. This is for your comfort and for theirs, for only by the grace of the Lord are we enabled to serve, and only by the mercy of God do his people rejoice in our service…

May it be of great comfort to you that the foundation upon which your service to the people of God is built has been again publicly confessed… The Divinity of the call. The inspired and infallible Word of God. The Ecumenical Creeds of all true Christendom. The Book of Concord that stands as a bold confession of the one scriptural faith in defense of the pure Gospel…

It should also be of great comfort to the people of God that their shepherd is held to an unswerving standard. That he is bound to serve them according to the absolute and unchanging truth of the Word of God! And that his preaching of that Word will flow from a proper confession of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Pure Gospel in all of its articles.

In the same way, your task is Biblically defined… For you are no hired hand—you are a shepherd of the people of God serving under the One Good Shepherd—Our Lord Jesus Christ…

† Instruct the people of God in the faith…
† Forgive the sins of the repentant – never divulging a sin confessed to you…
† Minister to the sick and dying…
† Always be ready to serve the people of God, centered in the Gospel, through Word and Sacrament.
† And by the Word of Law and Gospel, admonish the people of God unto repentance and encourage them with the Good News of Forgiveness – so that they may live lives to the Glory of His Name and ever have confidence in the salvation of Jesus Christ.

To this end dear brother in Christ, spend time in the Word and in Prayer so that the Lord may refresh your own soul first. Let the Word of God be the guide for your living, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ be the balm of your forgiveness. Thus refreshed and rejoicing in His Love and Forgiveness for you, go forth among His people to shepherd them with His Means of Grace.

To the people of God, the Lord gives this charge concerning their pastor…

“Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.” [Hebrews 13:17]

As in all cases of authority truly given by the Lord, the authority of the pastoral office is given not for the benefit of the pastor, but for the people that he serves. He has the authority only to speak the Word that God has commanded him to speak to you, and to rebuke you when you fail to heed that Word and obey it. It is to your advantage to honor and receive that authority in full humility of spirit, for this is the man whom God has placed among you as the under shepherd of your souls.

Support him, encourage him, pray for him; and when he sins and comes to you in repentance, forgive him. For he has been marked as a bondservant of the Lord, and placed among you to shepherd the Body of Christ—yet he remains a man, born of Adam, saved only by grace…

Trust in the Word and Promise of God and know that when you see this pastor serving as steward of the mysteries of God among you, it is truly the gifts of the Lord Jesus Christ that you receive. Hear with his voice the voice of the Good Shepherd speaking to you His word of Holy Absolution. See with his hands the water poured and the Holy Name spoken upon the newborn in Christ and know that the Spirit
of Christ is doing His Work. Taste on your lips the bread and wine from his hands, and know that it is the body and blood of your savior you receive.

For the Lord Jesus Christ is now and ever shall be your savior and your Good Shepherd. He alone was willing to lay down his life for the sheep. He alone lived the perfect life under the Law to satisfy all righteousness. He alone died upon the cross bearing the sins of the world. He alone rose again in Glory on the 3rd day as was prophesied of old. And He alone sits now at His Father’s right hand on High.

He alone comes to you in the law to hold up the mirror of truth and show you your sins. He alone comes to you in the power of His Gospel to create saving faith within you. He alone pours out His Spirit into your soul and breathes the breath of eternal life into you in the waters of Holy Baptism. He alone speaks His word of total forgiveness to you through Holy Absolution. And He alone cleanses from sin and strengthens your life of faith in His body and blood.

Rejoice this day in the one whom God has called through His Church to serve you in this place so that you might receive these precious gifts.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.

JWG

The Rev. Jeffery Grams serves as pastor of St. John Lutheran Church (LCMS) in Scottsbluff, Nebraska. A 1995 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, he also serves the Chimney Rock Circuit of the Wyoming District as Circuit Visitor. This sermon was preached at the installation of the Rev. George E. Naylor as pastor of Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, Bayard, Nebraska, on January 6, 2008.

LHP Book Review


Once again Christians see “Holiday Trees” advertised, “Winter” Music Programs held at public schools, and “Happy Holidays” shared by people and business during December.

In the rush to be “politically correct,” many Americans and retailers seem to have forgotten that even the word “holiday” has a Christian connection. Did you know that Happy Holidays is derived from “Happy Holy Days”? Even that expression isn't as religion-neutral as many think. We find a similar situation with “Season's Greetings”. Why not share greetings in Christ as we celebrate the Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany seasons?

LCMS pastor Robert C. Baker has a perfect book for the children you know and love, with friendly and engaging illustrations by Scottish artist Dave Hill.

“Christmas seems to be under attack from what some have called "secular fundamentalism." Presumably to avoid giving offense, businesses forbid their employees from wishing customers “Merry Christmas," retailers substitute Holiday trees for their Christmas cousins, and some school districts have transformed Christmas break into Winter break. This visually-stunning picture book for children asks, ‘What happened to Merry Christmas?’

“As Christmas becomes more commercial and secular, Christian parents are increasingly challenged to teach about the real meaning of the day and about celebrating our Savior's birth. In this story for children ages five and up, children can learn about a little boy who discovers that Christmas truly is everywhere we are. For those who believe, the message of God's love in Jesus and the story of His birth are still found in the symbols and traditions of even a modern Christmas.
There is still time for this book to be part of the Twelve Days of Christmas at your home and/or congregation. It will help parents, grandparents, pastors, and the children in their Christian care! It will (and should) find wide readership beyond the LCMS and is a great blessing to Gospel-centered and Christ-focused Christians in the United States and English-speaking world. The sale price (and offer of free regular shipping for orders of $60 or more) is good until December 31, 2007. And this is a book you will use next Christmas!

PJC

LHP Book Review

Honestly, the Press Conference Was More Revealing...


Numbers can reveal what we can see: people at church, membership totals, and offerings given to the Lord’s work, but you can’t measure the human heart or growth in faith. Big numbers don’t necessarily mean that a congregation is faithful to Christ and His Word, or faithful to the confession of the church body named on the sign out front.

If you don’t believe me, at least believe them, the “Church Growth” so-called “seeker-sensitive” and “contemporary worship” megachurches that many in the LCMS are copying. At a press conference in connection with Reveal: Where Are You?, a startling book by the leaders of Willow Creek Community Church near Chicago, pastor Bill Hybels says, “Some of the stuff that we have put millions of dollars into thinking it would really help our people grow and develop spiritually, when the data actually came back it wasn’t helping people that much. Other things that we didn’t put that much money into and didn’t put much staff against is stuff our people are crying out for.”

In other words, their approach to doing church with large theatre-like sanctuaries, contemporary music, small group ministries, and watered-down theology, did very well at getting numbers, but failed miserably at making disciples who were taught all that Jesus commanded (Matthew 28:18-20). Pastor Hybels also admits, “We made a mistake. What we should have done when people crossed the line of faith and become Christians, we should have started telling people and teaching people that they have to take responsibility to become ‘self feeders.’ We should have gotten people, taught people, how to read their bible between services, how do the spiritual practices much more aggressively on their own. Incredibly, the guru of church growth now tells us that people need to be reading their bibles and taking responsibility for their spiritual growth.”

Members of His congregation wanted in-depth doctrinal Bible Study. As long as people are there and Bibles are available, that’s about the cheapest way to teach there is. Could it be that LCMS congregations like ours are on the cutting edge? Or, would we rather say that we’ve just continued to be faithful to what the Lord gave us to do?

After hearing news like this our sinful human nature wants to scream, “I told you so!” But, that would not really be helpful to our brothers and sisters inside and outside the LCMS who have fallen for this fad-driven way to do church. I was hopeful for the future direction of members of the “Willow Creek Association,” a group of congregations looking to Willow Creek as a model, until I read their future plans as articulated by pastor Greg Hawkins: “Our dream is that we fundamentally change the way we do church. That we take out a clean sheet of paper and we rethink all of our old assumptions. Replace it with new insights. Insights that are informed by research and rooted in Scripture. Our dream is really to discover what God is doing and how he’s asking us to transform this planet.”

I commend his passion for the lost. That’s something good that should rub off on us as Lutherans. But shouldn’t their insights on how to do church come first and primarily from Scripture? Shouldn’t research take a back seat? Isn’t this a quote that could have been written when Willow Creek was starting in order to justify why they were changing the way Christians had traditionally done worship, instruction new members and all members young and old? Why not look to how the Church has done Church for 2000 years, faithful to God’s Word and using His means of grace to make disciples of all nations?
Over the last ten years I’ve learned a lot about “doing church,” from comparing my home congregation to our “Willow Creek” style LCMS campus ministry to seminary experiences and serving multiple congregations as fieldworker, vicar, or pastor.

+ Much growth at congregations like Willow Creek are only recycling sheep, not making new disciples. At worst, it is “sheep stealing.” At best, it appears to be sheep playing musical chairs with churches.

+ There is a lot of transfer growth in growing communities. In our Platte valley, Many people work, play, shop, (and worship) in “the Bluffs,” Scottsbluff and Gering, even though they live in a smaller town miles away.

+ Thanks be to God that there are new Christians in virtually every Christian congregation that trust in Christ alone for forgiveness, life, and salvation. Unfortunately, for all of its techniques, changes (or otherwise, they say, the church will die), high-paid consultants, and untold books over the last three or so decades, “Church Growth” (CG) has not actually grown the church.

+ Various factors help explain the appeal of the CG approach:
  - An area of the country with a growing (rather than declining) population
  - Novelty (Recently, members of one Church Growth congregation in Scottsbluff were complaining to me about another CG congregation stealing their members.)
  - Location, location, location. People look around their neighborhood. They don’t want to walk or drive very far—even in a parking lot
  - They were invited to church.
  - Old-fashioned Christian care and concern for people in their time of need.
  - Friendliness of the members of the congregation on Sunday and during the week.
  - Availability of group ministries and people like them.
  - The chance to be lost in the number of a larger congregation and not be asked to serve.

  + Legalism is attractive. Law-based sermons where the “to do” list is watered down make the law “something I can do” in contrast to the reality, God’s Ten Commandments. Only Christ can keep the Law perfectly. We need His forgiveness once we realize that even watered-down law still accuses us when we can’t or won’t do it. This is why pastors often hear “Boy, Pastor, you really let them have it today…”

The Reveal book is visually stunning. Great illustrations, graphs, text, sidebars, headings—you name it. After I read it, I think the press conference was more revealing than the book. This does appear to be an ongoing project. Visit www.revealnow.com for more information.

This is what they expected to find in their ongoing congregational research:

![Reveal book](http://wy.lcms.org/)

What did they actually see? Take a look at the next graph.

![Graph](http://wy.lcms.org/)

![Graph](http://wy.lcms.org/)
This result actually made sense to me. And then page 25 pulled the rug out from under me: “Is it possible to measure the heart?” It’s like trying to measure one’s faith. I still don’t think it is possible. Unlike the Lord, surveys are not omniscient. They are fallible, just like Willow Creek’s earlier survey efforts (and those of any congregation or church body. Let’s be fair.) Lutherans love to make use of what we call “First Article Gifts,” gifts of creation, referring to the First Article of the creed. We must be careful to use such things (science, medicine, history, sociology, etc.) as servants to the Biblical text. Reason can be a beautiful servant but a horrible ogre of a master.

Personally, I do find some value in sociological research. For example, many recent studies show a high correlation between the spiritual influence of fathers upon the spiritual activity of children. That encourages me to focus some intentional pastoral ministry upon our inactive or non-Christian heads of household. At the same time, I know the Holy Spirit can use God’s Word to bring people to faith in Christ Jesus. I can give examples of this for families with active fathers and mothers, fathers or mothers, and in some cases, no family religious leadership at all! God’s Word and Spirit trump sociology. Thanks be to God.

Do you see my point? I’ll look at studies, and use them as servants of what I’ve already been called to do as a pastor, but God’s Word remains the foundation.

Programs don’t necessarily help people to grow. “If you build it, they will come” is not a guarantee for the church. Full parking lots are not necessarily a measure of a congregation’s health. If that were true, the Mormons and Muslims would have to be measures of a congregation’s health. If that were true, the church. Full parking lots are not necessarily a guarantee for the church. You build it, they will come” is not a guarantee for the church. Programs don’t necessarily help people to grow. “If you build it, they will come” is not a guarantee for the church. Full parking lots are not necessarily a measure of a congregation’s health. If that were true, the Mormons and Muslims would have to be measured as servants of God. Reason can be a beautiful servant but a horrible ogre of a master.

I commend Willow Creek for their honesty and openness. That took courage and humility for their leaders as a group as well as individuals. My prayer for them and the whole one, holy, Christian and apostolic Church is that every pastor, every Christian, and every congregation may be led into all truth, that His kingdom will spread, and that Christians may grow in faith, knowledge, and how they are comforted by Christ.

I further pray that our insights on how to do church would come first and primarily from Scripture, the only true source of teaching and practice. God’s Word reveals to us a lot of things. Money can be better spent on Bibles and tables and chairs for group Bible Study under a well-taught pastor. Research should take a back seat. Turn off the calculators and open the Scriptures. Why not consider changing practice to the way Christians have historically done worship, instructed new members and all members young and old? Why not look to how the Church has done Church for nearly 2000 years, faithful to God’s Word and using His means of grace to make disciples of all nations? The more radical reformers of the 16th Century tried starting from scratch, as if the previous centuries didn’t happen. Well, they did. And there’s been more history since.

Knowing about attitudes, motivation, and the opinions of the sheep (both past and present) is indeed helpful at times, but nothing is more important than the guidance and love of the Good Shepherd Himself.

PJC

**LHP Book Review**

**LSB Behind the Scenes**


Paul Grime, former Executive Director of the LCMS Commission on worship wrote, “Right now, somewhere in this Synod, there is likely someone opening a copy of *Lutheran Service Book* for the first time. That person may be one of those hymnal aficionados who just can wait to get his or her hands on the new book. We have lots of good folks like that in this Synod. They want to see just what we did with hymn harmonizations. They actually enjoy digging...”
through the indices in order to compare the new book with our previous hymnals. These are the eager beavers who can’t wait to start introducing new hymns and services to the congregation, or who are anxious to put their choirs to work singing new Canticle settings and standard hymn harmonizations” (31).

Yes, Dr. Grime, I admit it. I am one of those hymnal junkies. I further confess to reading the 2004 LSB Proposal three times in the first 24 hours after it was posted online. I too went through TLH, WS69, LW, and HS98 to see what was retained and through a host of other Lutheran and Christian hymnals in search of what was new.

This journal will answer many of your questions about why things appear the way they do. Naomichi Masaki shares, “The [Liturgy] Committee was aware that musically the goal of textual uniformity was challenging, if not impossible. The Committee decided not to change the musical portion of TLH page 15 revision in LSB’s Setting Three, for example. However, the Committee expressed ‘deep regret,’ according to the minutes of the Liturgy Committee on May 8-10 2003, when it heard the decision of the Commission on Worship to retain the language of the response to the Salutation, ‘and also with you.’ From the point of view of textual uniformity we did not take advantage of the opportunity that we had to give back to the church what she has always spoken and sung through the centuries, [i.e. ‘and with your/thy spirit’] although I would like to add that we respect the Commission’s decision on the basis of their ‘pastoral’ concern to avoid unnecessary confusion” (89). After a brief period of teaching, it could have worked. The Roman Church is returning to “and with your spirit” or “and also with your spirit” as a translation of the Latin et cum spirituo tuo.

Echoing the words Peter Rehwaldt, a Lutheran hymnwriter, Steven Starke, chairman of the hymnody committee, says, “One way to think about Lutheran Service Book would be as a carefully planned collision of two or three books, books that in certain corners of our Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod were not often shelved too closely together” (103). TLH. LBW. LW. At least Hymnal Supplement 98 had some fans among all groups. That makes LSB, the “burgundy” hymnal also a collision of TLH’s red (or earlier dark blue) with LW’s lighter blue. Starke notes the theological, linguistic and musical criteria for hymn texts and tunes:

“Theological Christocentric, biblically grounded, Law/Gospel rightly distinguished, theology of the cross

“Linguistic Doctrinal precision poetical integrity of a text and language issues, corporate nature of the text

“Musical Music as servant of the text, the proper union of text and tune, musical integrity of the tune and setting, churchly character of the tune” (104).

The remainder of Starke’s essay, the longest of the volume, fleshes out this basic outline where he cites specific examples.

John Pless introduces the LSB Agenda (as well as the now released but then-forthcoming LSB Pastoral Care Companion) as teaching tools for instructing pastors and seminarians in pastoral care. Everyone uses rites. To quote John Kleinig, “Every pastor is either a witting or an unwitting ritualist.” Ready-made resources are a servant to the pastor in addition to those he serves. They also train the pastor in a caring and biblical pattern of the Word he shares in a given situation.

Additional papers by Jon Vieker (LSB in historical context), Gene Edward Veith (translation issues), Arthur Just (Lectionary), Timothy Quill (Liturgy), and a Hymn Festival Commentary by volume editor Daniel Zager round out the volume. I did miss the inclusion of the sermon from All Saints Choral Vespers as was the practice in previous Conference journals. I thank the Lord for the Good Shepherd Institute in general and for this 2006 Conference and Journal in particular.

One day I will issued my heavenly hymnal and my harp—then and only then will a hymnal be perfect. ☺ I rejoice today in the gift that Lutheran Service Book is to the LCMS and to every individual and congregation that uses it to shape a Christian response of thanksgiving and praise to the Lord! May it aid our work toward a truer unity in God’s Word.

Watch for the release of the latest resource from The Good Shepherd Institute:

Singing the Faith invites the listener/viewer to discover God’s Word proclaimed in a rich heritage of music that faithfully confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. It is a study of the history of Lutheran congregational song featuring:
LHP Book Review

Illuminating Viewing


It hadn’t been done in 500 years. And it would be expensive. But what a way to celebrate the new millennium: Saint John’s University in Collegeville, Minnesota, two hours from Minneapolis, commissioned a hand-written illuminated Bible! Great art requires a great investment and great sacrifice on the part of the artist.

The Illuminator is an enlightening look into the seven-year process of master calligrapher and Donald Jackson (and his amazing team) in inscribing the English text of the New Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible with real goose quills and antique “hand-ground ink” upon “carefully prepared calf-skin vellum” (back cover). Egg yolks were used to brighten colors. Gold serves as a running visual theme for the Lord’s presence. The word “illumination” has to do with the play of light on gold. The eye is often led to see motion.

Imagine dedicating a day to writing a mere two columns. One hundred sixty Illuminations are found in this seven-volume Bible. To date, five are available as coffee table reproductions. Two are pending. Other supporting volumes and frameable art are available for purchase.

The intention of St. John’s was to have a Bible in English that was “welcoming to those of other faiths” in contrast to a traditional “aim to convert.” Is not that the goal of God’s Word used by the Holy Spirit? Hearing this was disheartening in light of Jesus’ own Commission to make disciples of all nations by means of baptizing and by means of teaching the Word (Matthew 28). I also would have preferred that another translation would have been used other than the NRSV. That said, this is a laudable and unique project. And I agree with the assessment that it is on par with the painting of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Other monumental projects of fine Christian art of significance to the world (or at least English-speaking world) are few and far between.

Closed Captioning would be nice to have in future editions of this DVD. That would be enormously helpful if this video were broadcast on public television, a likely and appropriate venue for this forty-nine minute program.

“Weekly Noted section this issue for more information.

PJC
Society of Scribes and Illuminators. His 30-year retrospective exhibition, *Painting with Words*, premiered at The Minneapolis Institute of Arts in Minneapolis, Minnesota in August, 1988 and traveled to 13 museums and galleries. Donald Jackson works with a team of theologians and artists from Saint John’s University and Abbey on *The Saint John’s Bible*. From his scriptorium in Wales, he oversees scribes, artists, and craftsmen who work with him on the handwriting and illumination of the seven-volume, 1,150-page Bible” (Publisher’s website).

The *St. John’s Bible* is fascinating to see in coffee table reproductions, intriguing to watch in production as on this DVD, and must be utterly inspiring to behold in person. This is as close as we can get today to looking over the shoulder of a monk in a medieval scriptorium. If the pages of *The Saint John’s Bible* are on tour in a city near you, plan to go. In the meantime, inspire the Christian and the artist within with *The Illuminator* on DVD.

**LHP Book Review**

**Religion in America**


In addition to my class notes, and the unfortunately outdated Concordia Publishing House book *The Religious Bodies of America* (1961), the Tenth Edition of Mead and Hill’s *Handbook of Denominations in the United States* was my constant companion throughout seminary years. And it was especially handy when we visited congregations of varied Christian traditions, church tours we called “steeple chases.”

The work begun by Frank S. Mead and expanded by Samuel S. Hill is now enlarged by Craig Atwood to include all of the so-called Abrahamic faith traditions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and “derived” groups) found of the United States of America. “As Atwood states in a new essay, “The Handbook of Denominations was written to help individuals navigate the confusing and shifting waters of American religion” (15). Shifting indeed! A Twelfth Edition was urgently needed, and revisions will always be necessary. 9/11 signaled a prime opportunity to better understand our fellow Americans even though we may differ about fundamental questions about God and man. This opens up the possibility of honest discussion.

The *Handbook* provides good, accurate, and concise descriptions of church bodies in our Lutheran family (112-124). (I was disappointed that Martin Luther was lumped in the more radical reformers (49). A reference on 166 repeats the common misconception that Luther’s reforms were incomplete, especially morally and spiritually. *This is patently false.*) The denominational “family” and its general characteristics is introduced first, then each church body gets its turn. Our own Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod gets one page (122).

With the exodus of a few pastors from our midst to other Christian Church bodies, LCMS readers will want to learn more about the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America (59), among others.

You will want to begin with your own church body and “family,” and then perhaps branch out into reading about the church bodies represented in your own community. Our valley has congregations from the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference (135), Berean Fundamental Church (308), and the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel (292).

Also, there are some unfortunately titled groups and therefore unforgettable entries: Church of God and Saints of Christ, the so-called “Christians Israelites” or “Black Jews” (266); the No-Hellers, officially “Universalist Primitive Baptists” (208); the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, newly and deceptively renamed “Community of Christ” (352); the fascinating story of the Worldwide Church of God (273); Kip McKean’s International Church of Christ; and the new American Unitarian Conference (371).

Another significant addition is a new “family,” Community and New Paradigm Churches, which includes so-called non-denominational, Church Growth, “Community”, Mega-church, and “emergent” congregations. This section acknowledges that many of the largest congregations...
in the country actually behave as tiny (and not-so-tiny) denominations themselves.

The Appendix includes membership lists for the National Association of Evangelicals, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., “family trees”, and websites of church bodies included.

I echo the publisher: “This handbook is a helpful resource for clergy, laity, journalists, and the curious who want to know more about the many facets of religious tradition in the United States today” (website).

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Liturgy, Hymnody, & Pulpit newsletter (the parent of this Quarterly Book Review) endeavored to (and still strives to) give practical help or recommend practical resources. This is an excellent and practical entry-level resource. As the current editor of this book admits himself, a full work-up of information on all American religious groups would look like an encyclopedia. The updates guide the user to the current websites of the church bodies that have them. This is a good tool, but only a tool. The best guidance and comparisons of the Lutheran confession of the Christian faith is given by a faithful pastor-theologian.

PJC

**LHP Book Review**

*A Home and Desk Reference Edition*


Due to the extensive resources found in the *LSB Altar Book*, Concordia Publishing House wisely saw the need for a more manageable volume for home use and for planning services.

“This valuable reference edition contains the complete propers for both the three- and one-year in the *LSB Altar Book*.

Introits, collects, readings, graduals, and verses are provided for each Sunday and season, as well as the feasts, festivals, and occasions. Use it for planning services, selecting music, or singing the propers” (website).

This book proves well the point of the Commission on Worship and CPH regarding the inclusion of all the propers in the pew edition: it just isn’t practical or possible. Four hundred and forty-two pages of Introits, collects, graduals, and verses would have severely limited other content in the pew edition. (And yes, I do believe that having propers unique to each of the years in the Three-Year Lectionary is a marked improvement over *Lutheran Worship*.) Be honest. How many times during Divine Service, Matins, or Vespers did the average layperson use the propers in *The Lutheran Hymnal* or *Lutheran Worship,* Weren’t we all more accustomed to using a bulletin insert, or a resource printed locally?

In addition to the propers this paperback volume includes “Church Year calendars, instructions for chanting the collects, the music for the psalms, and the propers for the Vigil of Easter. Several resources from other volumes are included—namely, the Hymn of the Day list and the indexes both for the three-year and the one-year lectionaries” (vii). If you were accustomed to using the collects and the Hymn of the Day list in *LW* as I did, then this is a book for you.

One important thing to bring to your attention: “Each congregation that purchases this edition may be granted the rights to reproduce in print or through video projection all copyrighted liturgical material, including texts and music, to exclusively support the worship life of congregational members, provided they have purchased and continually subscribe to the annual CPH Liturgy License” (460, boldface added for emphasis).

Personally, I would have rather seen this volume in hardcover. That’s my only critique. In the interest of affordability, a paperback is certainly understandable. I can envision a place for this book in the homes of pastors and laity and on the desks of pastors and church musicians alike. Pastors, this is a worthy use of your limited book budget.

PJC

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PJC
LHP Book Review


The Great Exchange, and its subtitle, *My Sin for His Righteousness*, provides an interesting discussion of the exchange between Jesus Christ and sinners. The exchange is summarized on one of the first pages of the book in this way, “The Cross – where the God-man Jesus Christ, traded places with the sinners he redeemed, exchanging his perfect righteousness for their sin, condemnation, and death.” Jerry Bridges, a staff member for the Navigators currently serving with their college ministry and Bob Bevington, a practicing optometrist co-author *The Great Exchange*. Bridges has solo-authored numerous other books such as *The Pursuit of Holiness*, *The Practice of Godliness*, and *Growing Your Faith: How to Mature in Christ*. This appears to be Bevington’s first published work.

The Great Exchange is patterned after an 1870 book titled *The Apostles’ Doctrine of the Atonement* written by George Smeaton, a nineteenth century Scottish author and theologian. The authors work their way through each of the books of the New Testament (minus the Gospels) in the body of *The Great Exchange* pointing out the theology of the “Great Exchange” in each inspired text. Bridges and Bevington divide the book into two major divisions, part one speaks of Christ’s atonement in overview and context. Part two is the Biblical book by book study of the “great exchange” as it is presented in the each book.

The Forward of *The Great Exchange*, written by Sinclair Ferguson, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, South Carolina interestingly strongly references Dr. Martin Luther and his presentation of the “great exchange.” Ferguson rightly states that Luther, “understood that at the heart of the gospel message stood the cross.” Ferguson takes aim in his forward at churches who do not preach “Christ and him crucified.” While some of the book agrees with Luther and his Biblical presentation of the “great exchange” there are major and significant differences evident in part two…more on that later.

Bridges and Bevington present a very sound and helpful discussion of the qualifications of the apostles as eyewitnesses to the events of the atoning work of Christ Jesus. Their treatment of the sacrificial system as it points to Christ is theologically worthwhile. The author’s present some valuable Old Testament prophesy pertaining to the “great exchange”, yet their presentation here is limited to just a few passages from the Psalms and Isaiah.

It is, as mentioned, in part two that this book begins to stand in contrast to Lutheran, to Biblical theology. Bridges and Bevington clearly show a Calvinistic approach to the “great exchange.” This can be no better illustrated than by a quote from the author’s hand in discussion of the book of Romans, “An important question is raised when Paul declares that God did this “for us all.” Who is included in the word all? Does it refer to all mankind? Does it refer to every sinner? The answer to both questions is an emphatic no. The author’s also state later in their treatment of 2 Corinthians, “To attempt to say that Christ died for those whom he failed to save is to distort and misrepresent the atonement and deny its nature as a single, complete, vicarious transaction.” Bridges and Bevington clearly limit the “great exchange” to the benefit of only those who are elect, and thus, true to Calvin, make the atonement limited and in effect limit God’s universal grace.

Other troubling matters, of course, then are the nature of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The author’s state, “Baptism is a symbolic performance, it is not an act that saves us.” And as one would expect in regard to the Lord’s Supper, “The elements, the bread and the cup of wine – are physical reminders of a greater reality: Christ’s body was the true Passover sacrifice and Christ’s blood was the true Passover blood, the basis and means of the new covenant.” Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar become symbolic acts, or more so, ordinances.

*The Great Exchange* was an interesting read, and presented some useable material for Lutheran pastors and laity, particularly in part one. However, the Reformed theology of the book, evident in part two, ultimately reduces the “exchange” to a partial “exchange” and in the process denies some clear and convincing Biblical texts to the contrary.
LHP Book Review


NEWSFLASH!! Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a natural-born sinner who was born-again through the water and Word of Holy Baptism to be a saint of God while still remaining a sinner. I searched Professor Haynes’ book in vain for this perspective which would, in my humble opinion, be foundational to understanding this German Lutheran theologian of the 20th century. Absent this perspective, I struggled to grasp Professor Haynes’ focus which is “the relevance [of the Bonhoeffer legacy] for the Christian understanding of Jews, Judaism and Christian-Jewish relations” (p. xi). Another reason for this struggle may be my ignorance of a previous book by Professor Haynes. He writes about it, “In 2004 I wrote The Bonhoeffer Phenomenon: Portraits of a Protestant Saint, which may be read as a sort of preface to the present volume” (p. xi) (italics added).

One of the most impressive features of The Bonhoeffer Legacy is the author’s comprehensive grasp of Bonhoeffer scholarship. If something has been written about Bonhoeffer, his relationship to the Jews and the Holocaust, Prof. Haynes has read and well-digested it. While this is impressive, it is somewhat daunting for a non-Bonhoeffer scholar like me to fully grasp what much of this scholarship means. It is difficult to follow unless one is familiar with the scholarship and the scholars Haynes references.

I realize that space is limited in any book, but it seemed on many pages I was reading very brief synopses of the scholars and their scholarship. What I struggled with most was the lack of perspective the author gives to the reader. Again, this is likely due to my unfamiliarity with Professor Haynes’ previous work(s). But is it not the responsibility of an author to give his/her readers this perspective? The more perspective one would have, the more one would benefit from this book. I have a limited knowledge of Bonhoeffer, who he was and for what he was famous. In my mind, he is known for several important books and for dying an unjust death at the hands of the Nazis in the waning days of World War II in Europe.

More historical background on the issues of the day, brief descriptions of the important organizations (churches especially) and personalities, and their relationship to each other all would have been helpful. That being said, this book opened my eyes to a part of Bonhoeffer’s life and theology that was unknown to me – his relationship with the Jews and Judaism in very difficult times. I may need to read the previous book to get more information.

As the subtitle implies, this book seeks to determine see whether Bonhoeffer - flawed man and theologian that he was—is able to provide any help to post-Holocaust Christians seeking to relate to the Jewish faith. While making the case that Bonhoeffer lived a life that benefited a limited number of Jewish people in some ways, Haynes believes that Bonhoeffer’s words did not match his deeds. In the Preface, Haynes uses parts of two pages to briefly list ten “well-documented actions” (p. xii) that Bonhoeffer took on behalf of Jewish people. But Haynes maintains that Bonhoeffer’s theology was flawed in respect to the Jewish faith. There are many pitfalls to laying out this view. For example, Haynes writes, “the tendency is simply to align Bonhoeffer’s thoughts with his praxis and assume that his martyrdom by the Nazis makes him a reliable model for post-Holocaust Christianity” (p. xiv). But Haynes points out that there is “evidence of a bifurcation between thought and deed” (p. xiv), especially in relation to the Jewish Question. The term “the Jewish Question” “indicated that ‘the Jewish presence was understood to be so corrosive that its very existence threaten[ed] the destruction of society,’” (p. 66). Haynes provides evidence that Bonhoeffer believed that the Nazi government had the authority to deal with this “corrosive” (p. 66) influence. He writes, “Bonhoeffer concedes the state’s responsibility for dealing with the ‘historical problem’ of the Jews’ presence in Germany” (p. 66). This view of some of the Jews in Germany as a “problem” flows from his flawed theology which is summarized as Haynes quotes Richard L. Rubenstein, “without [Bonhoeffer’s supersessionism] he would have had no Archimedean point with which to transcend his culture and oppose Hitler and National Socialism. Regrettably, that faith was a seamless garment that included a harshly negative evaluation of Jews and Judaism.” I know of no better description of the paradox that is the post-Holocaust Bonhoeffer” (p. 146).
We arrive back at the beginning—at a paradox. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a paradox—a baptized Lutheran who was a saint in Christ by virtue of his born-again nature, and a sinner by virtue of his natural-born nature. His theology toward the Jewish people was not perfect and could very well have given aid and comfort to the Nazis who were busy solving the Jewish Question.

While Professor Haynes does not look at Bonhoeffer from the saint/sinner perspective, he concludes that “it remains an open question, however, whether Christians can learn from Bonhoeffer without reiterating the problems that are part and parcel of the tradition he represents” (p. 147). With Professor Haynes’ fine book, the reader gets what the title and subtitle promise: Is Bonhoeffer useful in determining a post-Holocaust theology?

I was pleasantly surprised by note 27 on page 133 where the author allows for the “salvation of infants and the mentally handicapped who do not have the physical ability even to apprehend that there is any revelation available at all.” This is quite an admission for a Baptist. Lutherans would biblically assert that there is a difference between knowledge and faith. The devil “believes” in the Lord in one sense. Satan can even quote and twist Scripture. That does not equate with salvation. Once faith is biblically defined as the Lord’s gift and not our work, the truth of Titus chapter 3 is greeted with a hearty “Amen.” Christians have always baptized infants, fellow sinners and part of the “all nations” of Matthew 28. They are also specifically mentioned in Acts 2 following Peter’s Pentecost sermon. The burden of proof for clear passages that forbid baptizing the very young is upon those who stopped doing it, for they changed traditional, apostolic, biblical practice.

Also regarding “nations,” the author (beginning on 164) gives extensive references with regard to the meaning of the phrase “all the nations” and its variants in the New Testament. Nations as we understand them today are not really at issue. We are truly dealing with” ethnic groups, seen more clearly in the Greek than in translation.

I am wary of speaking or thinking of worship in the same sentence as “experience.” Our emotions can lead us astray, rather than to Christ. They are tainted by sin. The author acknowledges that Scripture itself does not reprint for us an apostolic Sunday bulletin or order of service. (I do wish he had discussed Acts 2:42 and 20:7.) A brief Luther quote is blended in with the thoughts of Calvin and the Puritans on the things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ, including the best-seller Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist. He has been married to Noël for more than thirty-four years and has five children and two grandchildren” (255).

It is impressive when one’s theological heart and mind is revealed in a brief biography of an author. As a Lutheran I would favor centering everything on God’s justification of the sinner in Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone, as proclaimed in Scripture alone. I disagree with the author on that significant point, but am still impressed by the pithy and straightforward end-of-book bio.

And, it is really best to identify the use of “supremacy of God,” a restatement of the classic Reformed emphasis of the “sovereignty of God” from the outset. The subtitle of Let the Nations Be Glad! is The Supremacy of God in Missions. This book is, as aforementioned, one of “twenty books that called readers to a passion for the supremacy of God in all things....”
freedom of time and place for worship. This is true. We are also called to worship the Lord in Spirit and in Truth (John 4:24), offering “acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:28b-29).

I commend Piper for recognizing and urging others to see that worship needs to be God-centered, that it is an end in itself (rather than entertainment or something to be changed in order to evangelize visitors), and the idea that all of life is worship. This latter idea sounds to Lutheran ears like the doctrine of vocation. The historic western Christian order of Sunday service does evangelize both visitors and the Christians who are gathered by the Lord. I would love to more explicitly hear “Christ-centered” and “Gospel-focused” rather than “God-centered” for the sake of clarity.

I saved my favorite point for last: “Not a few pastors foster this very thing [that it is morally defective to seek happiness—Kant] by saying such things as, ‘The problem is that our people don’t come on Sunday morning to give; they only come to get. If they came to give, we would have life.’ That is probably not a good diagnosis. People ought to come to get. They ought to come starved for God. They ought to come saying, ‘As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God’ (Ps. 42:1). God is mightily honored when a people know that they will die of hunger and thirst unless they have God. It is the job of pastors to spread a banquet for them. Rediscovering the rightness and indispensability of pursuing our satisfaction in God will go a long way toward restoring the authenticity and power of worship…”(227-228) I saw in this the author’s way of saying that worship begins with being served by God, hearing His Word and receiving His gifts. Although I mention it last, I rejoiced that Piper listed it first.

The Conclusion is a true conclusion and summary, unlike so many books today. The author tells you what he told you so that the reader does not miss out on what he said about worship, missions, suffering, knowing Christ, and the salvation of every person. With regard to suffering, the theology of the cross bears more accurate biblical and practical fruit, as opposed to the theology of glory, which tends to disappoint in actual daily life.

John Piper writes well. He communicates his ideas clearly. I can practically hear him preach the book. It has that kind of quality about it that it is easy to read. The ideas easily flow off of the page.

You don’t have to agree with every doctrine or practice the author presents in order to resonate with the central idea of this book. Piper gives a heavenly view of what Christians have been given to do in this life. What can you take with you? It’s not money, possessions, or fame. The Word of the Lord endures forever, of course. And so does His love for you in Christ Jesus. Worship is the intersection of heaven and earth. Our Lord is present with His people in His Word and Gifts to us. As we return to Him a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, how can we use our worldly goods and precious time to “bring Christ to the nations and the nations to the Church”? Fellow believers are another important thing we can take with us to heaven.

PJC

LHP Book Review


Once again The Liturgical Press gifts the Church with evocative images for the Church Year. Illustrator Barbara Knutson’s CD-ROM gives both black and white and color clip art that are rich in expression and simple in form.

Consider the following two images that confess Christ’s Body and Blood:

They show the cross, where forgiveness of sins was won in conjunction with how and where that forgiveness is delivered today. Holy Communion is a
means of grace, where God has promised to be “for you,” i.e., for your benefit in Jesus’ Body and Blood given and shed for you.

The images are arranged on this affordable CD-ROM according to the Three-Year Series of the Roman Church, though easily understandable for those using the Revised Common Lectionary or the Three-Year Lectionary provided by Lutheran Service Book. Creative church secretaries and pastors using the historic, One-Year Lectionary will have plenty of options to choose from, too! All art on the CD may be searched by keywords.

The images depict the Gospel and/or the Old Testament reading of the day. Unlike so much protestant art, these images extol the sacraments and present much traditional Christian symbolism.

“Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” John 1:29 comes to life in Knutson’s art even as the proclamation of the Baptist lives on in the Agnus Dei:

The black and white images are elegant in their simplicity. The four-color graphics remind me of folk art, especially in its warmth and in its ability to illustrate. The sunrise suggests the Son rise. Did you notice the butterfly, an ancient symbol of resurrection? One can even feel the urgency of the disciples running to the tomb. They even look out of breath!

Study all three of these example black and white pictures. Color copying may not be in your congregation’s budget. If the use of color is possible, consider the impact the three sample four-color pictures could have in illustrating the truths of God’s Word, especially in extolling God’s Gifts and His work for you and your salvation in Christ Jesus.

The disc works for both Windows and Mac computers.

The late Barbara Knutson was an award-winning author and illustrator. She illustrated many books for adults and children. (I do not advocate or endorse personal beliefs or the book Heart Talks with Mother God, but I see great value in a faithful use these images.)

PJC

**LHP Book Review**

“Could I Have this Dance for the Rest of My Life?”

Anne Murray


Marriage is indeed like dancing. Richard Eyer’s new book from CPH will lead a Christian husband and wife to dance better together as they walk together in Christ.

Luther’s Small Catechism introduces each of the Six Chief Parts as how the head of household should teach them in a simple way to his family. When was the last time you heard good, in-depth Biblical counsel for a head of household? For an adult male, that includes his vocations of Christian, husband, and father, all rolled into one.

Rev. Eyer admits that it took retirement (and being embarrassed to dance while on a cruise) to get him to take dance classes with his wife. With this metaphor fresh in mind, the author pastorally applies God’s Word (and Law and Gospel properly distinguished) to the “’til death do us part” dance of Holy Matrimony. Not only does he give his wife the last word in the Afterword, Pastor Eyer divulge a truth wives (and smart husbands) already know: “It’s
Always the Man’s Fault,” true on the dance floor as it is in married life. Husbands need to be taught by the Word, their wives, experienced husbands, and often the school of experience how to properly lead their brides.

The author champions the Biblical one-flesh union of husband and wife (30, et al), how to argue well (61ff), maintaining the spiritual connections in marriage by challenging unscriptural cultural norms and/or trends (97), and personal responsibility for relationship sin and failure (128). Parenting is the topic of Chapter 8. It is given to Christian parents (in particular, the father) to train a child in the way he should go. Discipline may not be pleasant to impose or introduce discipline, yet parents are called to be parents, not “buddies” to their children. Even more important than providing food, clothing and shelter is giving food that does not perish, Christ’s own robe of righteousness, and mansions in heaven itself, instruction in the Christian faith from birth on.

“This is not a book on how to fix a bad marriage, but how to support a good marriage” (Website). This readable, practical book will equip you in your vocations within a Christian family and as couples establish a Christian household. It would be an appropriate wedding or anniversary gift!

“Richard C. Eyer has served as a parish pastor, hospital director of pastoral care, university professor, and as Director of Concordia Bioethics Institute. In his retirement he serves as Professor Emeritus, Concordia University Wisconsin. He is the author of Holy People, holy Lives (Concordia, 2000) and Pastoral Care under the Cross (Concordia, 1995)” (back cover).

PJC

**LHP Book Review**


“Lutheran Press is a non-profit corporation established to publish and promote the theology of Martin Luther (1483-1546). Although many of Luther's works are already available to the general public, their publication as part of collected works editions has prevented them from being widely disseminated. Of special interest to Lutheran Press are the smaller topical works of Luther that continue to address the Christian Church today, but nonetheless, remain effectively unknown.

“In order to achieve its purposes, then, it is the intent of Lutheran Press to make such works available on the internet free of charge, and by mail at a minimal cost. Proceeds from the sale of such works will be used to publish further works” (publisher’s website).

Lutheran Press carries forth this vision once again in Don’t Tell Me That! a popular edition of Martin Luther’s Antinomian Theses. (Antinomian literally means “against law,” the erroneous idea that some have proposed through the centuries that under the Gospel, Christians have no need for the Law.)

“What do I mean? Well, it could just be that there is a general uprising in the Church nowadays against any preaching, teaching, ministering and music which would involve the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, convicting hearts of sin (cf. Romans 3:20), and consequently, causing guilt. Now I may be wrong here, but what modern Christian ears seem to want to hear, what Christian minds want to contemplate, what Christian emotions want to feel is not guilt, but joy!” (9). Paul Strawn is correct. The law hurts, so many would rather ignore or avoid it.

There is a lack of an understanding of repentance. Luther’s explanations are the antidote: “Many people hear the Law, but because they do not feel the effect or power of the Law in their hearts, experience no sadness, and so are not truly repentant” (19).

As I write, it is still in the middle of Lent, our annual season to remind the faithful that repentance is to be daily, just like our reception of the gift of daily bread. The “whole life of the believer” is to be spent repenting. Luther provides a glorious reminder that theology is indeed practical, especially then the law and the Gospel are properly distinguished.

“All of the books in the "popular series" are translated and adapted from Luther's own writings - but presented in easy-to-read modern English and formatted into short chapters with study questions. These works are perfect for personal devotion or Bible study” (publisher’s website).

In the Afterword, the translator shares the occasion that led him to produce this popular edition of an
obscure writing of Luther (from the perspective of an average Lutheran layman). The question he was asked, “Why can’t Christian worship be simply, totally, and completely joyful?” finds an answer when the Christian is reminded of the penitential aspect of Christian worship. We are there to receive the Lord’s gifts because we are all beggars (this is true). Joy follows receiving the gift of forgiveness. As sinners, we will always be in need of forgiveness until the Lord returns or calls us to Himself. Much of so-called “contemporary worship” neglects the reverence, awe, respect, spirit, and truth due our Lord. Excitement, emotionalism, muted law and watered down Gospel (which is no true Gospel at all) are the worldly substitutes for the law preached in all of its severity and the Gospel proclaimed in all of its sweetness. And both pastor and people are the worse for it.

Get this book into the hands of the people who need it. Buy it in bulk. Encourage your people with the truths of God’s Word. At the same time, you will be encouraging this publisher in producing more “tract books” like this one. Look for the release of Luther’s “complete Antinomian Disputations” in a wonderful side-by-side Latin/English text designed for the academic, pastoral, and advanced lay audience” and a “devotional edition of a small treatise by Luther on the two kingdoms” soon from Lutheran Press.

PJC

LHP Book Review


This new study Bible from Crossway is significant for two reasons. First, it is the first ESV study Bible published by Crossway, the publisher of the English Standard Version of the Holy Bible. Second, it is a literary Study Bible. When many people hear of the Bible spoken of as literature, they are understandably suspecting that there is a liberal understanding of Scripture waiting in the wings. Not so in this case. The editors have the utmost respect for both the inspiration and the inerrancy of the Bible.

In addition, this ESV Bible is notable in this one line on the copyright page: “ESV Text Edition: 2007.” A minor detail you may say? Perhaps. It is of note to those of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod because of this sentence from the copyright page of the pew edition of Lutheran Service Book: “A few alternative readings of the English Standard Version have been used in Lutheran Service Book by permission of the publisher and in accordance with the translation principles of the English Standard Version.”

Here’s an example. Compare Psalm 18:22 in both books. The 2007 ESV Text says: “For all his rules were before me, and his statutes I did not put away from me.” The footnote (indicated by 1) reads: “Or just decrees.” That note is missing from previous editions of the ESV text. In LSB, Psalm 18:22 reads: “For all his just decrees were before me, and his statutes I did not put away from me” (psalm tone marks removed for clarity). I was always uncomfortable with “rules” as a translation for the original Hebrew there.

In addition to the ESV notes, this study Bible also includes special cross-reference notes in the New Testament that identify parallel passages in the Gospels and direct quotations from the Old Testament. See the bottom of page 1528 as just one example. Very helpful!

Literary features of this edition include a conservative explanation of the Bible as literature and a defense of a proper use of this approach, an introduction to the specific literary features in this study Bible, and a discussion of literary genres as an aid to proper Bible interpretation. A Glossary of literary terms and genres is provided on p. 1883ff.

Every chapter has a gray introduction box. The authors have a reformed confession, so that is reflected in the assumed numbering of the Ten Commandments (107). Another Reformed perspective, i.e., the sovereignty of God is also demonstrated on p. 1684. I found the explanation of priestly garb (118) both interesting and informative, better equipping me in a congregational study of the book of Exodus. A literary explanation of the Aaronic Benediction (191) is enlightening, as is the change of direction in the narrative as David is anointed as Saul’s successor (395). See also the insightful chapter introductions on pages 529, 1140, 1296, 1297, 1577, 1639, 1877.

I continue to disagree with every study Bible that asserts that the behemoth (Job 40, p. 740) is an “embellished hippopotamus” or that the leviathan is a “mythological version of a crocodile.” Why are dinosaurs excluded from consideration?

Book introductions are extensive. Divine authorship of the entire Holy Bible is an essential part to
understanding the story of salvation as a whole cloth, a truly Divine drama. Considering the introductions to the Psalms, Isaiah, Matthew, and Romans, the following helps are provided for each Biblical book:

- The book at a glance
- Genres, form, format, and sub genres
- Storyline
- Rhetorical and stylistic features
- Tips for reading/How to visualize the book
- Inferred literary intentions
- Theological Themes
- This book as a chapter in the master story of the Bible.

(The latter became my favorite source of information from the perspective of a Biblical Theology, the overarching themes that unite the Scriptures under God’s authorship.)

This is also a readers’ edition. That means that there is only one column per page, like most books, or a novel, as compared to a regular text edition Bible.

Visit the following websites for samples and more information:

http://www.esvliterarystudybible.org/

http://www.esv.org/editions

The Literary Study Bible would be very useful for Lutheran pastors and Lutheran laity. It would aid encourage personal Bible study and assist and inform discussion and understanding of the Biblical text when used in a group Bible study.

About the Authors:

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PJC

LHP Book Review


The woodcuts are triptychs, threefold pictures, with the two side panels interpreting the center panel on Jesus’ life, illustrating who He is and what He has done for us. Pictures are reproduced from Biblia Pauperum.

“Kathryn Ann Hill’s poetry has been published in The Bride of Christ, The Cresset, Gottesdienst, and Lutheran Forum. She was born on January 20, 1952, in Auburn, Alabama, to the Reverend and Mrs. Vernon (Georgia) Boriack. Kathryn was made a member of the body of Christ through Holy Baptism on February 24, 1952, at Trinity Lutheran Church, Auburn, Alabama. She received instruction in the Holy Scriptures and the Small Catechism and was admitted to the Lord’s Supper on Palm Sunday, April 3, 1996, at Trinity Lutheran Church, Bloomington, Illinois. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and the Humanities from Valparaiso university. On August 25, 1974, Kathryn Married Michael James hill at Valparaiso University’s Chapel of the Resurrection. They live in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and have two adult sons” (back cover).

A Christian life is marked by the Lord’s gracious action from new birth in Holy Baptism to death and eternal life in Christ. His action guides our steps. His Word gives voice to our response in faith. Through the Church Year, the whole Church follows the life of Christ in the Festival half and sits at Jesus’ feet during the Green seasons. Rich in Grace, as its cover indicates, gives “Meditations in Verse” based upon medieval woodcut depictions of the life of Christ, pictorial and verbal witness to the Lord’s gracious action “for you” throughout your life in Christ.
When Jesus answered, Through faithful gospel preachers Jesus would enlighten all, He sends out preachers every day who have good news to tell: Our Lord does not want anyone to make his home in hell—sword.
The good Saint Michael cast him down with one stroke of his But when that rebel angel chose to fight against the Lord, Before this age he dwelt above, where holy angels are; The evil one who prowls the earth was once called Morning Star:

Jesus of Nazareth
Him;
With torches, swords, and clubs they came, in darkness seeking
Confronted by the presence of the only Holy One; Upon the ground those wretches lay, for rightly they were stu
And since Go in

The One who said, I AM the light, was sought by violent men: With torches, swords, and clubs they came, in darkness seeking Him; Jesus of Nazareth, they said when asked for whom they came: When Jesus answered, I AM He, they fell back at His name. Upon the ground those wretches lay, for rightly they were stunned, Confronted by the presence of the only Holy One: And since God willed it only did those men stand up again To capture and imprison him who came to free all men. The evil one who prows the earth was once called Morning Star: Before this age he dwelt above, where holy angels are; But when that rebel angel chose to fight against the Lord, The good Saint Michael cast him down with one stroke of his sword.

Our Lord does not want anyone to make his home in hell— He sends out preachers every day who have good news to tell: Through faithful gospel preachers Jesus would enlighten all, And feed His body and His blood to those who heed His call.

Wise are the ones ordained by Christ, the preachers He has sent; Wise are the ones the Spirit leads to hear and to repent. May we be numbered with them now, rejoicing in God’s love, And join the ranks who shine like starts, at home with God above.

Wise also are the ones who introduce, expand, and refresh teaching of the Christian faith with Rich in Grace. Together, let us look forward to more poetry from Kathryn Ann Hill.

PJC

LHP Book Review


“This helpful handbook will help those dedicated to providing a reverent worship space that demonstrates love and respect for God and His people gathered in His name.

“This manual covers altar guild functions such as

\[+\] displaying, cleaning, and storing paraments and linens appropriately
\[+\] caring for sacramental vessels and vestments
\[+\] preparing for and cleaning up after worship services
\[+\] ordering supplies
\[+\] and more

“This is an excellent reference book for any church library” (website). I would most certainly agree!

What makes this different from the previous edition, which debuted in 1986? All of the references and citations that previously referred to The Lutheran Hymnal (1941) or Lutheran Worship (1982) are now updated to refer you to the correct citations and references in the LSB library. And, this replacement for the old addition is currently sold at the same price. So, if you, your altar guild, or your congregational library need a good manual, this is the one to buy.
Other updates include changing chapter endnotes to more helpful footnotes, Biblical and confessional references are from the ESV and Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions instead of NIV and Tappert, and the Church Year and Festival charts on pages 19 and 25, both slightly different in LSB. I rejoiced to find more references to the historic One-Year Lectionary than in the 1996 edition. The updated Bibliography announces that a collection of banner designs based on the symbols in LSB is forthcoming this year.

Over the years, the most common concern I hear from altar guilds around the Synod is this: “Why does every pastor want things set up a different way?” Why not teach toward a common tradition than emphasising mere personal preference? There is a need for patient and clear pastoral teaching before anything is put into practice. In addition, insisting upon a practice needs to be based on something more than opinion. (Please see LHP newsletter 4.5 for more on this topic.) Communion needs to be set up. Why not set it up the same way?

Maxwell addresses the use of flags in the chancel, the color of candles in a congregational Advent wreath, the propriety of a center “Christ candle,” and the potential use of rose (pink) as a liturgical color. And that’s just a summary of page 46!

He also comments upon the use of individual glasses at Holy Communion: In some congregations, individual glasses are used instead of the chalice. These glasses fit into a templatc ina round tray (see fig. 13.2). Enough trays should be prepared to commune the entire assembly (the typical tray holds 40 glasses). Besides lacking the unifying symbolism of the one cup, individual glasses create much more work for the altar guild. In addition to the filling of the glasses there is the cleanup after the service. Each glass should be rinsed in a basin of water that is then poured into the ground or a piscina (aor each glass filled with water that is then poured into a common receptable to be emptied in the above fashion). Then the glasses need to be washed with soap and hot water, rinsed, and dried. Despite their popularity, plastic disposable glasses should never be used, for their use reflects the disposable nature of our culture and as such contributes to a lack of reverence” (62). I echo the author’s pastoral concern. I am wary of seeing the chalice displaced from use and would much prefer seeing both be offered. In addition, where disposable cups are a current practice, out of reverence they should at least be rinsed (in the fashion Maxwell describes above) before they are disposed of. Proper cleaning of glass cups is essential if they are in used. I recommend some kind of sterilization, perhaps a little bleach in the hot water.

Pastors, use the release of this update to The Altar Guild Manual as an opportunity to remind you of what you may have forgotten, to relearn a common practice alongside the altar guild, and to renew your congregational altar guild, perhaps with new energy or even new members.

The Rev. Lee A. Maxwell is pastor of St. John Lutheran Church, Maryville, Illinois.

PJC

LHP Book Review


Good things come in small packages. This is a big one. That means there are many riches inside.

This work was originally issued in two volumes (1883). By 1890 The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah was eligible for the claim on today’s cover: Complete and Unabridge in One Volume. That’s right: 1883 and 1890. Why is it that so many today prefer new so-called treasures to old actual treasures? Did not our Lord Himself teach about bring out treasures both old and new?

Alfred Edersheim was born in Vienna. Of Jewish parentage, he converted to Christianity and studied theology at both Edinburgh and Berlin. He was ordained as a Presbyterian minister 1846 and as an Anglican curate in 1875. Also a lecturer at Oxford. The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah is one of his best-known works today.

1 Expanded from http://www.lcms.org/ca/www/cyclopedia/02/display.asp?t1=E&t2=d
Edersheim (1825-1889) “was one of the leading authorities of his time regarding the doctrines and practices of Judaism in the centuries preceding and during the early Christian era” (back cover). This scholarship shows in spades over the course of 1115 pages in this edition. The unabridged text has been reset for easier reading. It also aids in attracting modern eyes to the pages, for many reprints of old titles actually reprint the original pages. Since this work is often quoted, the top center of each page includes the original volume number and page number. For example, page 826 is also designated [2.510], page 510 in the original 1883 volume 2. (See also the publisher’s note on xviv.)

The author’s experience provides a wealth of background on Judaism in Jesus day for today’s readers of the Gospel accounts. Think of this volume as a harmony of the Gospels, commentary, and background reference in one. That makes this a very affordable reference for laity and pastors alike.

I was particularly interested in reading about the synagogue in the time of Christ (Chapter 10, 298ff, et al). That drew me in to his masterful retelling of intertestamental history and the house of Herod. Edersheim explains that both the Lukan and Matthean genealogies of Christ are those of Joseph, one legal, the other genetic (105). He also says, with regard to the 25th of December, “There is no adequate reason for questioning the historical accuracy of this date” (132, note 18). An earlier “tradition” asserts the arrival of twelve wise men (141, note 4 mentions Augustine and Chrysostom). He enters into a helpful discussion of Qorban/Korban/Corban on 487. That a Jewish father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son could act so “un-Jewish” is detailed on 653ff.

Lutherans are diligent to look to see how the Lord’s Supper is treated in any theological tome. I had never heard the following before: “First, the copula ‘is’ [‘This is My Body,’ ‘This is My Blood’] was certainly not spoken by the Lord in the Aramaic, just as it does not occur in the Jewish formula in the breaking of bread at the beginning of the Paschal Supper” (826, italics original).

It is most certainly true that the text of Jesus’ Passover deviates from the traditional text—intentionally! This is a different way to “break bread.” It is for the forgiveness of sins! The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world will once for all substitute for the traditional Passover Lamb. Jesus remodels Exodus 12 and the accrued tradition in order to serve His own Divine purposes. And the burden of proof is on Edersheim to produce a manuscript proving his assertion that “is” was not spoken by Our Lord in the night he was betrayed. I must not go beyond the text. I dare not base a teaching upon a reconstruction or a “Maybe.”

I do remain grateful to Edersheim and other scholars who do prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that this was the Passover Meal, no matter what Dom Gregory Dix claims.

Edersheim claims that Christ carried the ordinary (and traditionally pictured †) Latin cross (877).

Detail and literary excellence intertwine in the opening paragraph of the final chapter: “Gray dawn was streaking the sky, when they who had so lovingly watched Him to His burying were making their way to the rock-hewn tomb in the garden. Considerable as are the difficulties of exactly harmonizing the details in the various narratives—if, indeed, importance attaches to such attempts—we are thankful to know that any hesitation only attaches to the arrangement of minute particulars, and not to the great facts of the case. And even these minute details would, as we shall have occasion to show, be harmonious, if only we knew all the circumstances.” (907).

I am grateful for the many reprints (of sometimes sadly neglected) Christian classics by Hendrickson so that they may no longer be neglected! Supplement your copy of the works of Josephus with this rich work.

LHP Resource Review

Relax—Faster and More Consistently


“Just take a deep breath and calm down.” How many times have you heard that statement or said it yourself? Medical research and treatment has discovered that there is actual truth behind that old advice—but it takes more than one breath and it doesn’t necessarily have to be a deep breath.

LHP QBR readers may know that the life of a pastor is incredibly stressful. Apparently, we’re a notoriously unhealthy bunch due to the fact we sometimes tend to put our families or our flock first, before even our own health.
Our church body, the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod is currently sponsoring a preventative care emphasis for church workers nationwide. The StressEraser would be a perfect fit for this kind of consumer.

What is StressEraser? Simply put, it is an iPod-sized portable electronic medical device that gives what is called biofeedback. At a hospital, the beep—beep-beep and wavy line of a heart monitor shows heart rate. That’s one form of biofeedback. The heart monitor does nothing to the patient it is monitoring. It simply shows what is happening in one part of the body. Such information is helpful for what it can do for the patient, especially in an emergency.

Like the heart monitor, the StressEraser does nothing to you, but it can be of great benefit for you because of what it can show and tell you about yourself and your body’s reaction to stress. Compared to other biofeedback treatments, it is a bargain—less than a dollar a day if used just one year!

How does using biofeedback help? The StressEraser, by monitoring heart rate, identifies the times for you to breathe out. And by breathing out at the right time, you activate your own nervous system to calm yourself down. Isn’t the parasympathetic system a wonderful part of God’s creation?

“Do you know what actually causes you to feel stressed?” the StressEraser website asks.

“Does it seem too easy for life to make you feel stressed lately? Are you getting stressed too often? You may not realize it, but there’s a biological reason why you feel this way, and it’s called ergotropic tuning.

“Ergotropic tuning is a biological process that changes the way the nerves in your body respond to stress. Ergotropic tuning causes your nerves to respond faster and more strongly to stress. In other words, it makes you feel stressed more easily, more quickly, more intensely.

“Medical researchers discovered a biological system in the body that can literally reverse the effects of ergotropic tuning. Interestingly, this system, called the parasympathetic system, is intricately connected to the biological mechanisms of breathing. And clinicians found that breathing can even regulate the activity of the parasympathetic system.

“The challenge has been to create a medical device capable of measuring the effects of breathing on the parasympathetic system, and guiding a person on how use this information to reduce ergotropic tuning. Helicor Inc. has been awarded Frost and Sullivan’s 2006 Medical Innovation of the Year award for accomplishing this achievement.

“If you have difficulty coping with stress, try the award-winning StressEraser risk free for 30 days” (website).

So I tried it myself. The device came in well-padded small box and envelope along with supporting materials, a manual, and two sets of batteries! And it happened to arrive on a particularly stressful day. I tried it right away. Most users seem to need only fifteen minutes of training.

Yes, I did feel calmer after my first “treatment.” And it took more than the one “deep breath” of the old saying. The following chart gives the basics:

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2 The StressEraser is classified by the FDA as a Class II 510(k) exempt medical device. It is intended to be used for relaxation, relaxation training, and stress reduction. (website)
Wearing the pulse sensor reminded me of an oxygen sensor I once had to wear on my left index finger overnight. This doesn’t take nearly as long as that.

Set aside fifteen minutes your first time. Try to listen to your pulse. Breathe in and out. (The breaths don’t have to be deep. In fact, you may get dizzy if you take in too much oxygen.) At first, the screen looks like the picture above. Notice the triangles near the top of the screen? Those are times the StressEraser recommends for you to exhale. You may need to be patient and breathe out whenever you can find one that works for your breathing pattern. Eventually, you get better. And your “score” and the waves on the screen will show it.

At the very top of the screen, there will be a number in the left-hand corner. This tells you how well you’re doing. One could think of this as a video game.

Depending on whether you exhale at the right time and in the best way, you will see a visual (or audio) score. One square at the bottom is not good. Two is better, a reward of ½ point. Three is best: One point toward the goal of 30 points per session and 100 total every day before you go to bed. Before long, you may be breathing naturally when the triangles indicate and hopefully see a good wave that the company calls a “Breathwave” like the one shown here.

I’ve been through two sets of batteries so far. Often, I can get three squares within the first couple of breaths shortly after beginning, and an entire 30 point session takes only 5-8 minutes. Early on, I had one that took nearly 11 and one of 9 ½, but usually I can get 30 points in 6 ½ to 7 ½ minutes. And sometimes, I get so relaxed during my last session of the day, I can get into bed and fall to sleep within minutes.

How long do the effects of each "session" last? According to Evan Birkhead, “We do not have a study on this specific point, but we have enough data to determine that it varies from person to person and also varies according to length of session, time of day, frequency of use, etc” (personal correspondence).

The StressEraser website has much more information, including several videos on what the device is, what it does, how it works, and how you are to use it. They would be worth your time to watch both before and after purchasing StressEraser.

“How did this device come about? “The original StressEraser concept came from our Chief Science Officer & co-founder, Michael Wood. Five years ago, Michael was working as the SVP of Software Development at a major enterprise software company. As a result of his stressful job, he had a panic attack. It happened while he was giving a presentation in front of 120 developers.

“Over the months and years leading up to this, Michael had been working nights and weekends building a successful software company with his business partner Adam Forbes. Their company was acquired in 1999 by a larger software company (now owned by IBM). Over time, stress had taken its toll.

“Michael Wood, an already successful inventor, began suffering from uncharacteristic and quite alarming symptoms. His resting heart rate was racing above 100 beats per minute. His weight had dropped to 130 pounds on his 5’ 10” frame. His blood pressure was steadily rising, and he was unable to sleep most nights.

“Michael tried many different products that claimed to relieve stress, but he was forced to face the reality that despite his dedicated use of these products, his stress was getting worse, not better. Two weeks after the panic attack, he quit his job and began a full-time study of the biological cause of stress.

“Six months later, he had an innovative idea for reversing the root cause of stress. And he contacted his long-time business partner Adam Forbes to discuss his discovery. While Michael focused on the core technology and algorithms behind the StressEraser, Adam focused on building a product that would be both easy to use and socially acceptable.

“Early on, they decided to focus on creating a personal, affordable medical device. Typical medical-grade biofeedback systems cost thousands of dollars and require a person to be attached to a computer.
Michael and Adam chose to create a unit that would be self-contained, portable and had no external wires or leads to attach.

“After 4 1/2 years of design development, prototyping, testing, programming, and user feedback, the StressEraser was launched at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association in August 2005. First customer shipments began in October 2005.

“The StressEraser has been extremely well received by the medical and scientific community, and a number of clinical trials are currently underway using the StressEraser. You can check back periodically for the results of these studies as they become available” (website).

Studies have shown that “the StressEraser heart rate data collection and display to be accurate against diagnostic-grade medical equipment” and reduced stress-related symptoms of anxiety.”

Other Studies reported user responses: 76.7% felt calmer, 69.6% less irritable, 64.6% improved work functioning. Another study found the StressEraser reduced anger and stress-related symptoms of anxiety…. Reports: 75% reduced stress levels, 80% increased levels of relaxation. In addition found the StressEraser more helpful and relaxing than unassisted breathing exercises, 77.8% found the StressEraser more helpful than meditation. (More on “meditation” later—QBR)

Many other studies are in progress. The StressEraser is currently in controlled clinical trials for stress-related issues such as:

- a. Insomnia
- b. Depression
- c. Anxiety
- d. Stress levels in pregnant women (cortisol, fetal motion)
- e. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- f. Performance (i.e. Golf professionals) (By February 2008, we anticipate receiving data from e. and f.)

The StressEraser is being studied in controlled clinical trials at leading institutions such as:

- a. Duke University
- b. Cornell University
- c. Johns Hopkins University
- d. Boston University
- e. Universite Laval (Quebec)
- f. San Diego Naval Hospital
- g. Alliant University
- h. Mayo Clinic

(Correspondence with Evan Birkhead, VP, Corporate Communications).

Biofeedback treatments are available (and very expensive) in a doctor’s office. This is portable, relatively affordable in comparison, and available for use at any time. It is possible to replicate the breathing patterns learned at a doctor’s office at home all by yourself, but this device makes the process more consistent, faster, and more reliable than trying to breathe calmly (uninterrupted for 5-20 minutes).

We are bombarded with lots of stress in our normal lives in addition, many suffer from chronic pain today, as an aftermath of surgery, an accident, or an ongoing ailment or condition. A person suffering from fibromyalgia tried my StressEraser and felt much better, expressing interest in using a StressEraser long term. My wife also tried it and after her fifteen-minute learning period felt noticeably calmer.

During my personal trial of StressEraser, I used it at noon, after supper, and just before bed, to total 100 points a day. I slept better the nights I got the 100 than when I only had 30 points that day (or none at all.) This silver and white device is not a silver bullet to take away all of your pain and stress, but may be of help to you in addition to giving yourself a realistic daily schedule, being prepared for pastoral emergencies, and reducing or eliminating caffeine.

The website says, “We recommend you use the StressEraser every night for 2 weeks, 15 minutes before bed to see the difference it can make in your life. If you have difficulty coping with stress, try the award-winning StressEraser risk free for 30 days…”

“The secret to stress-free living is found in reversing ergotropic tuning. From a biological perspective, there is no other way. And Helicor’s Relaxing Nights Program puts you on the fast track to doing this—so you can experience the joys of stress-free living as soon as possible.

“The key is to use your StressEraser 15 minutes each night right before you go to sleep. By using your StressEraser to activate your parasympathetic system at this time, your parasympathetic system can remain active all night long while you are sleeping.

“This simple 15 minute routine can result in hours of ergotropic reversal. Within two weeks, you will feel a difference all day long. And within a month, you will feel like you did when you were younger, before the stress caused by ergotropic tuning became a part of your life.
“Helicor promises that if you use your StressEraser 15 minutes each night, you will feel good again within 30 days. Helicor backs up its promise with a 30-day risk free trial of the StressEraser” (website).

As I write, it has been 45 days since I began using the device. I must comment on “meditation,” mentioned in one of the studies done on the StressEraser.

The type of meditation used in Eastern religions is simply incompatible with Christian belief. It was therefore a relief to hear the phrase “mindfulness exercise” in connection to StressEraser. In contrast to the “emptying of your mind” of Eastern meditation, or merely on a word (Ohmm...), StressEraser demands a focused mind. Count as you breathe in (wave curves up), wait for the triangle pointing down (wave peaks), count as you breathe out (wave curves down and bottoms out—rejoice in having three triangles). Please don’t misunderstand—this is not a substitute for Christian prayer, but should be regarded as a supplement to regular exercise.

You may have seen ads for StressEraser in WORLD, Newsweek, or PARADE, seen it reviewed on ABC, MSNBC or in your favorite magazine. Now Liturgy, Hymnody, & Pulpit Quarterly Book Review has been added to the list. (Watch for TV ads airing in April.)

Our Creator designed our bodies and knows best how to care for them. Lutheran Christians have always been willing to use what we have called “First Article” gifts, those of the Lord’s creation, and also substances, technologies, and treatments that are “rediscovered,” one might say, with the understanding that science could be defined as thinking God’s thoughts after Him. Breathing well is an important part of feeling well. Consider the very beginning of human life: “...then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.” Genesis 2:7 ESV

I ask you: can you spare 15-20 minutes a day to feel better? The bottom line: StressEraser did for me what it claims to do, reduce stress, and the symptoms of anxiety, including irritability. While not a substitute for Christian prayer, exercise, eating well, or other healthy lifestyle habits, I recommend it especially for other pastors, particularly in the midst of a hectic day, but also just before a Voters’ meeting. It would be enormously helpful for someone suffering from a chronic pain condition or anxiety disorder.

LHP Resource Review


These are the Holy Ten Commands
God Gave to us by Moses’ hands
When High on Sinai’s Mount he stood,
Receiving them for our good.
Have mercy, Lord! (LSB 581:1)

Until recently, the only way one could “sing” the Ten Commandments was through Luther’s hymn in one of the various translations available in The Lutheran Hymnal, Lutheran Worship, and now Lutheran Service Book.

DPD Productions in Olympia Washington is one of the groups setting the actual catechism texts to music. The texts are from the King James Version of the Holy Bible and the Triglotta translation of the Book of Concord.

“Based in Olympia, Washington, DPD Productions was started by a group of Christian school teachers and music instructors in 2006. We’ve recently completed the first CD in a series of children’s song collections. The songs in our “Little Ears” series are designed to be enjoyable for children and adults while instilling a message that is true to scripture and valuable for life” (website).

Joe Hier, Vice-President for Product Development writes, “We have five young children of our own and have been very challenged finding appropriate
materials for them to listen to. Too much of what is out there today is either boring for the children or just silly and dumbed down. We set out to create products that would capture children’s imagination, while feeding their heart and mind with scripture and sound Christian doctrine (website).

Upon receiving the CD, I had to listen to it immediately. Here is the version of the Ten Commandments I memorized from the old LCMS synodical catechism! (That this is the old text of the Catechism in English instead of the new version is the only weakness of this project so far—that is, only if you consider that sort of thing a weakness! ☺)

Ranging from folk and country to classical and 60’s surf rock, the genre of music accompanying the text of the Commandments and meanings is varied, indeed. Both guitar chords and keyboard accompaniment are provided in the companion Songbook, an essential component of the set. Additionally, the CD helps young and old alike in properly learning the rhythms of the melodies. They fit well with the texts with regard to both rhythm and mood.

The melodies have the good side-effect that they stick with you. I found that I heard the melody of a random commandment song running through my head a week after last listening to the recording. The CD recordings are winsome, including both adult and child voices with regard to the spoken text and accompanying song. Young children will identify with the children singing and speaking the catechism texts. That alone can be an encouragement that they, too, can learn these.

CDs are a great resource for the young to teach them songs. Why not use this tendency to soak up information like a sponge and nurture the questions of the youngest Christians in our midst for their own spiritual benefit? What would our congregations look like a generation from now if our young people had the Catechism memorized by their 8th year instead of by the end of the 8th grade?

One can only hope that there will be more CDs and Songbooks from DPD Productions for the other chief parts of the faith from Luther’s Small Catechism. May God bless this continuing effort!

PJC
each day. The compilers and editors (Frederick J. Schumacher with Dorothy A. Zelenko and Members of St. Matthew’s) humbly solicited suggestions to provide this fourth reading for every day of the year, and especially festivals and saints’ days. These two emphases give birth to the subtitle, A Prayer Book For and By the Church.

Modern Americans need to have this important interaction with believers in Christ who have gone on before us. We tend to indulge in ignoring our own history and heritage in pursuit of the “contemporary,” whatever that term means anymore. That which is “with the times” today is not soon after. Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever! Thus equipped, we are better able to interact with the believers in Christ who dwell around and with us.

The basic structure of the set follows the Liturgical Year via a two-year Daily Office Lectionary. Found in Lutheran Book of Worship beginning on page 179, this Daily Lectionary (with three readings for each day/feast) has been borrowed from the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer. This particular lectionary gives evidence of great Biblical insight, deep reflection upon the Word, and an intriguing hermeneutic in the selection of the readings according to season. (Bible texts are from the RSV. That provides a common text for those who tend to use either the NRSV or ESV now. We all know—or should know—where the “landmines” are in the RSV by now.) It is also worthwhile to note that this set is still usable on its own, even though both LSB and ELW adopted two other Daily Lectionaries.

After the three Readings from Holy Scripture (the Apocrypha does occasionally substitute for the First Reading), a “fourth reading” reflects upon the appointed readings of the day and/or the season.

This is quite an ecumenical prayer book—in a good way! An index at the back of each volume briefly introduces each Christian or document quoted and why they are notable. (A full index to all the readings and closing prayers is printed in Volume IV.)

It was wonderful to see most of the Lutheran Augsburg Confession included! While I did not personally agree with every statement of every saint in every fourth reading, I could see some devotional benefit in theologically wrestling with a given writing in conjunction with Sacred Scripture. (This includes a quote from “Sermons by Women,” a couple of discussions of what we could call “open communion,” the musings of German theologians, or even a theological musing by Van Gogh.

Additionally, I would suggest letting the person speak for himself or herself before looking at who is being quoted. That not only is appropriate to put the best construction on everything in accordance with the Eighth Commandment, but also as we weigh every truth against the Holy Scriptures alone.

Extensive copyright permissions give witness not just to respect for the Seventh Commandment, but a commanding working knowledge of a breadth of Christian literature.

Volume I is intended for use beginning with the First Sunday in Advent preceding odd-numbered years. Therefore, I began using Volume III for Advent 2007 through Pentecost 2008. That is the volume you will use if you order soon after reading this. Be sure to get Volume IV for use after Pentecost! For the purposes of this review, I read both years’ worth of devotions each day. What riches!

Art by Jeff Larson announces the beginning of a new season of the Church Year. Icons also grace each volume introducing Western Christians to the heritage of Eastern Christians.

The center of each book includes Matins, Vespers, Compline, Responsive Prayer, and all 150 Psalms. Volumes I and III contain the entire text of Luther’s Small Catechism. Volumes II and IV include Lancelot Andrews’ poem, “The Dial,” a meditation on the hours of the day.

Rev. Schumacher concludes the introduction to Volume III in this way: “This book is a Thanksgiving for all the saints in glory who have passed on the faith once delivered to them. But it is also a book for all the saints who still struggle with us here on earth and a Thanksgiving for them and their continuing witness as well. We pray that For All the Saints may help us all to see that the church militant on earth and the church triumphant in heaven are all one in Christ” (Volume III, xxiv).

May we find that unity in God’s Word alone. While best prayed in a group setting, For All the Saints will be a blessing to your individual walk with Christ.

Frederick J. Schumacher was born in Brooklyn. He served as pastor of St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church, White Plains, New York from 1964 to 2004 and has been Executive Director of the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau since 1993. Dorothy A. Zelenko was born in the Bronx. She is a graduate of Concordia College, Bronxville, New York and
Concordia Teachers College, River Forest. She has been treasurer of the ALPB since 1989. PJC

**Liturgy & Hymnody**

Book Review


“Jesus visited the sick and the suffering to show them the mercy and compassion of God. We now visit the sick and suffering armed with Jesus’ Word, His baptismal invocation, prayer, and His Holy Supper. In our visitations we bring those we visit into communion with Jesus, Creator and Redeemer of the universe” (from the Preface).

Visitation is the kind of resource for which pastors have been waiting a long time! Not only is it a great supplement to the *LSB Pastoral Care Companion*, but it also can be used on its own. “Visitation is carefully designed to put immediately useful resources into the glove compartment, briefcase, or pocket of healthcare workers, deaconesses, pastors, and all those who visit distressed, sick, and suffering Christians” (website).

Resources for the care of souls include wonderful bedside devotions based on psalms and another section arranged by topic: “Devotions targeted to situations such as childbirth, surgery, baptismal identity, prolonged illness, and many more.” They are supplemented by additional “topical reflections and prayers, numerous Bible passages, and handy cross-references to related material in other sections” (website).

Who is this for? Ultimately, this resource is intended to be used for God’s people in their time of need: shut-ins, the hospitalized, those who mourn, and all who struggle through the wilderness that is this fallen world. It is a book for pastors to use, certainly, but has been designed for use by those not ordained. Deaconesses, vicars, seminarians, lay elders, members of an LWML shut-in visitation committee, and others who visit the sick and distressed will feel at home in this volume. Devotions and prayers are written in first-person, i.e., “our,” “us”, “we.” This is similar to the difference between a Benediction at Matins said by a Leader or the Pastor:

**P** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **C** Amen.

**L** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all. **C** Amen.

(*LSB*, p. 228, emphasis added)

A select number of Visitation Orders from the *Pastoral Care Companion* conclude the book: Holy Baptism—In Cases of Emergency, Visiting the Sick and Distressed, Brief Service of the Word, Blessing of a Mother after Childbirth, Commendation of the Dying (When a Pastor is not present). Excluding the portions of Visiting the Sick and Distressed that specifically call for a pastor the (indicative-operative absolution after confession and the Lord’s Supper) there is strong support for appropriate lay visitation.

This book is easy to use on a visit. For a devotion meditating on a psalm, turn to pages 3-38. To give spiritual care in a specific time of need, consult the Topical Index, pp. 273-274. Visitation Devotions (p. 39ff.) are supplemented with Visitation Resources (p. 133ff.) and Visitation Prayers (p. 217ff.). And the best part: *those three sections are cross referenced within each section!* Add a different reading, hymn, or collect to a well-worn Visitation Devotion. This will be particularly helpful when continuing ministry to the same person with regard to the same spiritual ailment.

Pastors and congregations, provide a copy for each lay elder/deacon. Depending upon the emergency, they may be able to give some initial comfort and “first aid” spiritual care as the pastor is on his way.

In *Visitation: Resources for the Care of Souls*, Scot Kinnaman and Arthur Just have given a great blessing to those who are distressed, sick, and suffering and to those who are given to comfort them throughout the LCMS and world Lutheranism, and hopefully also among Christians in the United States and around the world among whom English is spoken.

PJC

So-called *Primary* Liturgical theology has to do with the text of the liturgy. So-called *Secondary* Liturgical Theology finally gets down to it from the Lord’s lips raise. the Biblical theology behind that. Am I the only Lutheran pastor or theologian who finds that to be exactly backwards? Lutherans begin with truth because we hear it from the Lord’s lips first. Then, He opens our lips and our mouths declare his praise.

Building on his earlier work, *Holy Ground* completes Lathrop’s trilogy.

The first two titles came from the Greek: τα αγια τοις αγιοις, “The holy things for the holy ones (or holy people),” the words proclaimed by the deacon in the Liturgy of St. Mark. (See *Eucharist and Church Fellowship* by Elert for more on this phrase.)

Holy Ground is a “liturgical cosmology,” or “how liturgy maps the cosmos” according to the back of the dust cover.

While I respect Lathrop as a wordsmith, I am not ashamed to say that much of what he writes goes over my head on a first reading. It takes work to interpret, much like poetry. I assess his third volume to be “unnecessarily complicated.” Once I understood what he was asserting, I’m not sure it was worth the mental effort. As with the two previous volumes, “I rejoiced when the author proclaimed the Gospel clearly, and groaned when liberal theology crept in.”

Here more than in the other two books I noted the continual references to non-Christian religions and their practices. Is it not possible for Christianity and her worship to be described on its own terms? On one level I find these comparisons to be very creative. Overall they are cumbersome to the author’s communication of his thesis.

Why must a Zen master be upheld as a model for a Christian pastor presiding at worship? How are “the ecological implications of baptismal practice” relevant? Enough with the politically correct agenda of “same-sex unions” (87) and women in the pulpit!

*Holy Ground,* like *Holy People* and *Holy Things* before it are thoughtful and thought-provoking, but unfortunately burdened by JEDP historical-critical thought and a combination of the history of religions school and comparative religion. Such theological reflections are unique and illustrative, but in need of a firmer grounding in the only revealed Word of God, the Holy Bible. It is yet another example of a fundamental and unfortunate difference between the ELCA and the LCMS on the exact nature what the Bible is, what it does, and what it says.

“Gordon W. Lathrop is Charles A. Schieren Professor of Liturgy at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia and author of many books… (Back flap).

PJC

**Liturgy Book Review**

**Worth the Long Wait**


I found it ironic. The congregation’s organist/kantor was leading a Bible study on historic Lutheran worship in the basement of the church. Meanwhile upstairs, the two pastors led the suburban congregation in a so-called “contemporary” service. The Bible Study was structured around Dr. Just’s 1999 video *Lutheran Liturgy: Yesterday, Today, and Forever.* The video was produced at the request of the LCMS Indiana District Board of Worship and...
distributed by Ken Ring of Lutheran Visuals. (To order the video, go to www.lutheranvisuals.com. It was positively reviewed in QBR 1.3, p. 62ff.)

That was nine years ago. Since then, I have supplemented catechetical instruction for young and old with that video series. I couldn’t wait for the book. Now it is here. I hope for widespread use throughout the LCMS alongside such modern classics as The Spirituality of the Cross, Dying to Live, The Defense Never Rests, and The Fire and the Staff. May these resources lead laity, pastors, and their congregations into God’s Word, the Lutheran Confessions, and a godly and faithful Lutheran hymnal like Lutheran Service Book.

“The liturgy is not a style of worship. The liturgy is the substance of justification as it is brought through means.

“This book is an introduction to the liturgy and its importance. It takes the liturgy and makes it easy for the layperson to understand that the New Testament church service brings God’s presence, in Jesus the Christ, to the people of God who have been cleansed from their sins. This is a holy meeting made possible by the blood of Christ that cleanses the believer. This understanding of the church service helps one to understand that the church service is more than a meeting place; it is the manifestation of the New Testament church on earth as Christ calls His bride around Word and Sacraments.

“Heaven on Earth will deepen your understanding of the Divine Service and why it remains the Church’s chief worship service” (website).

You may recognize the cover art. It is the famous Weimar Altar Painting, completed in 1555 by Lucas Cranach the Younger. For more information about the painting, courtesy of the Rev. Paul T. McCain, visit his blog dedicated to this richly detailed painting that preaches Christ and Him crucified: http://cyberbrethren.typepad.com/cranachinweimar/.

Dr. Just lays before the reader the Lutheran theology of worship. Simply put, “worship” is merely our response to what is really the main thing of the Divine Service, the Lord serving His people with His Gifts and presence. Word and Sacrament deliver here and now what Christ won on Calvary there and then. This Christian theology of worship is sadly missing from too many Lutheran and Christian congregations at worship.

Jesus’ Table fellowship included His presence, the meal, and teaching. Close (d) communion is faithfully confessed here: “Catechesis teaches table etiquette, that is, how one stands in the presence of God to receive His mercy and forgiveness in a manner that is reverent and faithful to that presence” (27).

With a faithful foundation, a Biblical theology of worship where God speaks and serves and then we listen and repeat His Word back to him, the author shows the historic structure of the Divine Service, particularly its Jewish origins. Personally, this has been the most continuously interesting part of Dr. Just’s catechesis on Lutheran worship. The historic western rite (including the Lutheran service, what should be called the Augustana Rite) is the Jewish Synagogue Service combined with Jesus’ Passover Service.

The Lutheran Divine Service is…

| The Service of the Word (Synagogue Liturgy) | + | The Service of the Sacrament (Jesus’ Passover Liturgy) |

Therefore, the old saw that Lutheran worship is “German” is proven untrue. Granted, there is human tradition involved, yet one should be careful of replacing one that has served the Lord’s people well since the time of Christ (and before) with a different human tradition, that of American Evangelicalism, that has not faced the same rigorous testing in how it is practiced and what it teaches about Christ.

At worship, Christians rejoice in the presence of God in Christ: “The Jerusalem temple is rendered obsolete by Jesus’ incarnation (cf. John 4:20-26). The destruction of the temple in AD 70 will prompt people to look for God’s presence in the place where He has come to dwell forever—in Jesus, who, in turn, comes to dwell in His Church through the Gospel—His Word and Sacraments” (96).

Pastors, rejoice in the quotation from Dr. John Kleinig (p. 104) regarding singing in the temple (with application for singing and “chanting” in the church today). Another wonderful tidbit: Just posits that “The word mass came from the word dis-miss-al” (204, emphasis original).

Disciples are made by means of baptism and by means of teaching. Both are necessary. Catechesis is essential to the Christian life. Structured and intentional teaching over a period of time is best. I do not believe that RCIA, the Roman Catholic process of Initiation for Adults, is the best model to follow for Lutherans as it chops up baptism into chunks or stages.

Dr. Just also delves into the Christian concept of time, that Easter is the 8th Day of creation and every Sunday a little Easter. The Church Year is presented engagingly. The reader’s knowledge of the structure of the Divine Service is strengthened by focus on each of parts, its Biblical source, history, and how it points us to Christ.

A clear, five-fold shape of the Liturgy:

- Entrance (Confession and Absolution, Introit, Kyrie, Gloria in Excelsis or This Is the Feast, and collect)
- Word (Old Testament, Gradual, Epistle, Alleluia, Gospel, Sermon, Creed, Prayers for the Faithful)
- Preparation (Offering, Offertory)
- Sacrament (Preface, Proper Preface, Sanctus, Prayer, Lord’s Prayer, Words of Institution, Peace of the Lord)
- Distribution (Agnus Dei, Canticle, Collect, Benediction) (p. 231, et al)

“The time has come for Lutherans to stop apologizing for their liturgical heritage. Instead, we need to proclaim the gifts we inherit in our worship life as Lutherans who continue the catholic tradition. And these gifts are considerable. Any liturgical scholar could list them for you: the historic five-pinnacles of the Divine Service—Jesus’ words in the Gospel and Jesus’ word in the Sacrament—the biblical ordinaries that surround Jesus’ words as the major hymns of the liturgy, the centrality of preaching centered in Christ and liturgical in character, our hymnody in both its content and music, as well as our musical tradition with its deep resources to support the flow of the liturgy from beginning to end. The list could go on. And this is not to mention the most important treasure of all: that within this fivefold shape we believe, teach, and confess that Jesus Christ is present offering the gifts of life, salvation, and the forgiveness of sins as we hear His Word and receive His holy meal. In the Divine Service we are confident that we have entered heaven itself because Jesus Christ inhabits our worship with His bodily presence. This confident liturgy is embodied in a life of worship that ‘receives from those who went before and, in making the tradition of the Divine Service its own, adds what best may serve in its own day—the living heritage and something new’ (242-243).

Dr. Arthur Just excels in this book by bringing together a pastoral sensitivity and Biblical, historical and theological scholarship that leads to a practice that is faithful to our Lutheran Christian heritage.

Rev. Dr. Arthur A. Just Jr. is professor of exegetical theology and director of deaconess studies at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, and co-director of the Good Shepherd Institute of Pastoral Theology and Sacred Music. He has served as chairman of the Lectionary Committee for the Lutheran Hymnal Project for the Commission of Worship of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
This is not that kind of social history. While I remain unconvinced by the common assertion of Liturgical Theology that liturgy, *leitourgia*, is “the work of the people,” I can see a positive use for the phrase in a book that focuses upon the *response* of the people at worship once we agree to the traditional Lutheran understanding of what goes on first and foremost.

Divine Service, *Gottesdienst*, is God’s service to us. That must be held to be true first and foremost. “We love because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19). Then and only then can we have a discussion of the sacrificial aspect: our sacrifice of prayer and praise, offering and song. “The Reformation period understood completely the patristic statement that ‘the law of prayer should constitute the law of belief’” (225).

*The People’s Work* is a social history of the liturgy. That you get from the cover. I would have rather seen something like *And My Mouth Will Declare Your Praise* as a title. (And another picture rather than the Corpus Christi procession on the cover, while I’m wishing for things. See also 184.) You can actually read and understand this book, a remarkable contrast to many authors of liturgical theology today. Of all the books that I’ve read by Frank Senn, this is my favorite.

He focuses upon the people in the pew (even before there were pews) and does not ignore the major figures, traditions, and rites of Christian worship. That alone gives me a greater sense of respect for social history as a sub-discipline.

It is unfortunate that Senn denies the word of the Holy Spirit with regard to 1 Corinthians 14 and the prohibition of women speaking/preaching in churches, dismissing it as “judaizing.” While Senn is probably right that “retrieval of tradition, combined with instances of inculturation” is probably the future of the global Church, I was astounded to hear commendation (rather than condemnation) for the so-called “emerging church,” which seems to be in a state of always *emerging*, but never fully *emerged* (332). (It’s like the old Lutheran joke: always reforming, but never Reformed!)

The above references are outweighed by the readability and insightfulness of the book as a whole. While baptism was originally done in the nude, deaconesses assisted male pastors (32). I recall from another source that a pastor (standing behind a screen in order to prevent the appearance or reality of sexual immorality) while he poured water on a female baptizand (the one being baptized) helped by the deaconess.
Liturgical Book Review

A Preview of the Forthcoming WELS Hymnal Supplement


**Christian Worship—New Service Settings. What is it?**

- the newest addition to the product line of *Christian Worship* resources.
- a set of liturgies containing new musical settings of The Common Service and Morning Praise from *Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal* and two versions of a new evening service, Prayer at Close of Day (Compline).

My first response was, “Great! This is just what *CW* had been missing—items that find their origin in the work of Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship now can find a home and use within the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (plus other Lutheran congregations that adopted *CW*.)

*Features/benefits*

- varied settings for organ, piano, and optional instruments can add new variety to worship services.

Rather than always having to say “no,” it is nice to have resources that help us say yes to a godly variety of instrumental accompaniment at Divine Service.

*These editions are available:*

*Christian Worship: New Service Settings Pew Edition* is a soft-cover booklet, contains the four new service settings with all the text and melodies necessary for congregations to participate. 6" x 9" format, 96 pages.

*Christian Worship: New Service Settings Accompaniment Edition* is a spiral-bound booklet that has the keyboard accompaniments for the four settings, includes a CD-ROM with musical recordings, printable scores, and instrumental parts of some songs. 12" x 9" format with CD, 96 pages.

*Christian Worship: New Service Settings Electronic Edition CD* includes MIDI files for accompanying the congregation on computer using HymnSoft or a standard MIDI player. CD also has graphic and text files that allow printing of the services. Note: Permission to reprint the services requires a separate yearly licensing agreement with GIA and NPH based on congregation size. (website)

Support Downloads are also available, including graphics files for bulletins and mp3 audio files of samples.

Most impressive is a new musical setting of the Common Service of 1888, what *TLH* congregations knew as “page 15.” Both organ and piano accompaniments are available. Morning Praise is another musical setting of Matins, with revised *TLH*, p. 32 texts set to music by Marty Haugen, with the exception of “Lord, Have Mercy” by Kermit Moldenhauer. Have you ever got up in the morning with a tune already running through your head? These melodies stick with you and aid in retaining the Biblical texts. Here music does what it has been given to do, be a servant to the Word. Compline, here called Prayer at [the] Close of the Day is presenting in two musical settings, with specialized organ and piano accompaniment provided for Prayer at Close of Day II. Psalm settings by Dale Witte close the volume, along with special Psalm Prayers.

*Christian Worship—New Service Settings does well at digesting the liturgical work of late 20th-Century American Lutheranism. I pray their upcoming projects also receive the Lord’s blessing.*

I was impressed at the format of the Accompaniment edition. Structurally, the back of each page in this spiral-bound edition is reinforced right where it needs to be.

In many substantial ways, this resource is a preview of the new WELS Hymnal Supplement, set to debut in July at the WELS National Worship Conference. Here’s an official announcement:

![Praise His Name Proclaim His Love](https://www.example.com/lyricimage.png)

New Hymnal Supplement

- 288 pages, 34 hymnbooks, new dispensations, hymns, liturgies, expanded territory, much musical accompaniment availability
- Only six for summer publication, free copy for registered or worship conference
- MIDI projects per page pricing at $13.50 (remember unforeseen changes in pricing cost)
- A professionally recorded CD set of highlights using a wide variety of movement will be available in April. Each congregation will receive a free copy; additional copies available at low price.

National Worship Conference (fee back of this report for advertisement)

- June 28-30, 2008 at Gustave Adolphus College in St. Peter, MN

Congregations and Christians at home in *Christian Worship* A Lutheran Hymnal should have no trouble acclimating to these new service settings. I would recommend the purchase of the Accompaniment and pew editions as choir music for other Lutheran congregations in addition to members of the WELS.

PJC
**Liturgy Book Review**

Dix’s Big Fat Red Book


I mean no disrespect to the author or the book by the review title above. In fact, Dom Gregory Dix himself affectionately called the original printing of the tome his ‘fat green book’ (x). Dix intended his work for the non-specialist. And whatever you think about The Shape of the Liturgy, you must admit that this massive book is a landmark in its field.

Reprinted in an attractive, quality new edition by Continuum, a new introduction helpfully sets the stage. Dix was an influence even though many of his fundamental assertions have long since been dis proven. “The Shape” according to Dix, is the grouping of Jesus four-fold acts of “taking, giving thanks, breaking and distributing” (xvii), a so-called “invariable model of the liturgical Eucharist.” Critics arose soon after the original publication and on numerous anniversaries since. Advocates have put Dix’ shape into practice in accordance with the “liturgical renewal” movement.

My own weeks-long reading of The Shape resulted in a rejection of an assertion early on, that the meal Jesus celebrated “on the night when He was betrayed” was not the Passover Seder, but a *chaburoth* meal (36, 50, 232, et al). If Dix is true, then Jesus would be wrong in Luke 22:15. We must heed the Lord rather than men.

Additionally, Dix’ four-fold shape (78ff, et al) grates on Lutheran ears because it downplays the *Verba*, Jesus’ own Words of Institution. After all, this Passover is Jesus’ Passover. While His Last Supper need not be repeated, He commands that this Lord’s Supper be repeated. He remembers us as His Body and His Blood is given and shed for the forgiveness of our sins.

These two fundamental critiques gave me pause to consider just how reliable the rest of his scholarship was. That is unfortunate, but part of wrestling with any scholarship, ancient or modern.

The word *synaxis* comes into view as helpful to denoting the Service of the Word, derived from the order of the Synagogue. The latter word shares in common a prefix with *synaxis*, one that means “together.” Indeed, the Lord gathers His people around His Word and also around His table.

A chart on 475 adds to those on the endpapers, showing the parallel development of the synaxis according to the different “rites,” both eastern and western. Consider it a liturgical family tree.

The author laments schism and mutual excommunication in the ancient (and modern) Church, but at times gives the impression that differences were minor. We are reminded that it is impossible to absolve a sin if the sin isn’t clearly identified.

I take issue with his treatment of Luther beginning on 629 and for saying, “the literal understanding of the words of institution…is logically unrelated and unnecessary to Lutheran doctrine as a whole” (635). Had Dix ever met a Lutheran? Note 2 on the same page states that Luther never really gets into the “how” of what is called the “Real Presence of Christ’s Body and Blood.” Lutherans know that’s precisely the point. Theologians get into trouble quickly when the go beyond the text, theorizing about the “how” more than confessing the “what.” The “what” is revealed to us: is. We are not given to know the “how.”

Yes, the Reformation is complicated. No author dare lump Lutherans with the radical reformers!

The Shape of the Liturgy is a monumental history of the liturgy of sorts. It is imperfect and exceedingly influential. I am reminded of a Missions & Evangelism Conference I once attended. One of the speakers, a Church Growth advocate, urged us to draft Mission and Vision Statements, long the stuff of the corporate world—not the Church. His supporting text? “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” The thesis was, your congregation will die unless you come up with a purpose and a vision for the future. What does the Hebrew actually say? That’s KJV.” The thesis was, your congregation will die unless you come up with a purpose and a vision for the future. What does the Hebrew actually say?

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Dix’ Shape so influential, if the foundation is found to be sand?

Additionally, The Shape of the Liturgy has a weakness of assuming things about the worship life of early Christianity and Judaism in Jesus’ time that we cannot possibly know. We don’t have their Sabbath/Sunday bulletins! ☺

At $70.00, purchasing this book is a sizeable investment for the average pastor or layman. At 764 pages plus introductory material, reading it is a large investment of time, too. It may not be worth your time and money, but then again, knowing his arguments better may aid you in identifying them in use and being better prepared to refute them.

Notes

Hymnody Book Review

Aitken, Jonathan. Foreword by Philip Yancey. 

*John Newton: From Disgrace to Amazing Grace.* 


Cloth. $21.99. [www.crossway.com](http://www.crossway.com) (630) 682-4300 (H)

Redemption and forgiveness is always a powerful story. That is not only the story of John Newton, but also the story of his latest biographer, Jonathan Aitken.

“Jonathan Aitken is a well-known British author and former politician. He was a Member of Parliament for twenty-three years, serving in the Cabinet as Chief Secretary to the Treasury and also as Minister of State for Defense. His political career ended when he pleaded guilty to charges of perjury as a result of having told a lie on oath in a civil libel lawsuit. During an eighteen-month prison stay, he converted to Christ. He is president of Christian Solidarity Worldwide, a director of Prison Fellowship International, and executive director of The Trinity Forum in Europe. He is the author of twelve books, including the award-winning *Nixon: A Life* and *Charles W. Colson: A Life Redeemed*” (book jacket).

This biographer’s unique personal history uniquely qualified him to write about pastor and hymnwriter John Newton.

John Newton is sadly often confused with the other Newton, Isaac Newton, who discovered gravity. If John Newton is known at all, it is likely due to his famous hymn, “Amazing Grace,” *Lutheran Service Book* 744.

“Most Christians know John Newton as a man who once captained a slave ship, was dramatically converted to Christ on the high seas, and later penned one of the greatest hymns of the faith, “Amazing Grace.” But he also had a huge impact on his times as an icon of the evangelical movement, as a great preacher and theologian, and as a seminal influence on abolitionist William Wilberforce. Newton’s friendship with Wilberforce is portrayed in the major motion picture *Amazing Grace.* (Also reviewed in this issue—QBR)
“Jonathan Aitken’s new biography John Newton explores all these facets of Newton’s life and character. It is the first biography to draw on Newton’s unpublished diaries and correspondence, providing fresh insight into the life of this complex and memorable Christian. The result is a fascinating, colorful, and historically significant portrait of John Newton, a self-described “great sinner” redeemed by a great Savior through amazing grace” (website).

The forty days of Lent are our annual reminder to repent daily. Our Lord gives daily bread daily. Our daily contrition and repentance is a return to baptismal grace. We live as little Christian fish, swimming in the waters of Holy Baptism. We are nourished in the wilderness by God’s Word and Supper. We are given to meditate and deliberate upon our own sinfulness, but we are to drink in God’s Word first during that daily deliberation. And no matter how bad you think your sin is, God in Christ can forgive it. That’s what Good Friday was for. That’s why Good Friday was Good. And Jesus’ Easter Resurrection proved it. Meditate upon that!

John Newton: From Disgrace to Amazing Grace is a powerful biography. This is essential reading for those who think the hymn is only for funerals, for those who see its tune only as a “nice melody” for bagpipes to play for civil religious events, as well as those who think “Amazing Grace” is overused in American congregations today. It is not necessarily a compliment when it is said that Buddhists and other non-Christians can sing the hymn (237). This biography provides the context for the text and the author that composed it.

Aitken makes the reader aware of the larger religious controversies among Christians and Christian groups during the lifetime of Newton (1725-1807). Social status also had an impact. Methodists, independents and members and clergy of the Established [Anglican] Church often had unique interactions due to both theological and societal differences. Aitken as biographer excels in providing the every-important context of time and place.

The author notes Newton’s mother’s religious influence upon him (30) as well as the profound effect of his re-conversion at sea (84, although the author counts this as his actual conversion). Alexander Clunie is mentioned, between Newton’s third and fourth voyages as a slave-ship captain, (124) is acknowledged as having a profound influence upon Newton, especially with regard to “the doctrine of justification by faith.” Thanks be to God for that! In addition, Newton rejected the Lodge at Liverpool (134).

Newton was always one for a remarkable intellectual rigor. How many slave-ship captains were able to translate Livy, Caesar, Sallus, Terence, Cicero, Pliny, or Virgil from the original while at sea (108)? This served him well as a pastor in the pulpit, with regard to pastoral care, providing informal guidance to large groups of congregants, and as a writer of Christian hymns. Informed faith is a powerful tool.

Newton is also known for his own profound influence upon William Wilberforce, Member of Parliament, whose life-work was the abolition of the slave trade and slavery itself in the British Empire. Wilberforce considered becoming a member of the clergy himself. Newton reminded him of his vocation to serve the Lord by serving the people in the civil realm (304).

While perhaps Newton’s best-known hymn, “Amazing Grace” found notoriety in America long before it had success in England. Much of that had to do with the text’s pairing with an American Folk Hymn/White Spiritual now called New Britain. They appeared together in The Southern Harmony (1835). It was also the tune’s first known appearance in print. Note that this is nearly thirty years after Newton’s death.

There is something of a parallel to that of the Apostle Paul in the story of John Newton. Read this biography and judge for yourself.

Lutheran readers will appreciate the fact that Newton struggled with his internal call to the Office of the Holy Ministry and the years between the beginning of this internal call and its confirmation by an external call to the pastoral office within the Church of England. Although he had several opportunities to pursue being a preacher on his own terms, he patiently waited for that external call.

While close readers will undoubtedly note differences with regard to the theology of conversion, it is possible to understand the biographer’s (and Newton’s) statements in a more Biblical sense. That should not be a stumbling block to prevent people from picking up this inspiring biography. Sin is truly a disgrace. As a fellow sinner in need of God’s grace, I rejoiced to hear I was not alone. Great sinners have a Greater Savior in Jesus Christ. It is always the Lord’s doing when He brings a sinner to repentance and faith by His Word and the work of the Holy Spirit. That is what makes grace so amazing.

Crossway is to be commended for this biography. I hope for more biographies on notable Christian leaders from them in the future.

PJC
Hymnody CD Review


It is a bold claim to issue a CD of “hymns for all time.” Director John Rutter and the Cambridge Singers live up to the subtitle of Sing, Ye Heavens: Hymns for All Time. With titles including Vexilla Regis ("The Royal Banners Forward Go"), “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God,” “Amazing Grace,” and Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation,” it is hard not to go wrong. “O God, Our Help in Ages Past” is a powerful beginning, followed by an emotive arrangement of “The King of Love My Shepherd Is,” good listening for St. Patrick’s Day, also Monday in Holy Week this year as I write this review.

Church Music bears the eternal Word of God. It should not be intended to be ephemeral or temporary, disposable music as if there were a Church version of “America’s Top 40.” The music of the church should be durable enough to wear well and meet the test of time—all time. We sing of eternal things. Why not write, choose, and sing music from and for the ages?

“The hymns heard on this recording span over fifteen centuries of the history of Christian Europe. They have been chosen not with the aim of representing every possible strand in the rich and complex history of hymnody, but simply to make up a varied programme which can be listened to for pleasure” (liner notes). I would add to that introduction the purposes of giving examples of music that supports the Word of God, teaches the faith, as well as music that encourages and comforts Christians.

The hymns are presented according to eight categories:
+ Hymns from the Psalms
+ Invocations
+ The Eucharist
+ Passiontide and Easter
+ Folk Hymns
+ Evening Hymns
+ Thanksgivings and Dedication

Of the twenty-one tracks, most of them are included in our Lutheran Service Book in their entirety, although Veni, Creator Spiritus (LSB 499), Pange Lingua (LSB 630 uses GRAFTON—see HS 852 for this recording’s Gregorian tune) and Vexilla Regis (LSB 455 with adapted tune) are in English rather than the recording’s excellent Latin. The following are not included in LSB, or are only partially included:
+ “Drop, Drop, Slow Tears” track 10
+ The tune for “Be Thou My Vision,” Track 13 supports a Timothy Dudley Smith text, “Christ Be My Leader,” number in LSB 861
+ LSB does not include the traditional English favorite, “All Things Bright and Beautiful,” Track 14
+ BUNNESAN, the tune for Track 15, “Morning Has Broken” instead is paired with “Praise and Thanksgivings,” 789 in LSB
+ Track 17, “We Plough the Fields and Scatter”
+ “Eternal God,” track 20, words and music by John Rutter

This is an excellent ecumenical and “small-c” catholic collection of hymns sung by the Church universal. Rutter concludes his introduction with these words: “Perhaps it is timely to reflect on the immense riches of hymnody built up over so many centuries, and to be reminded of them at a time when they at risk of neglect” (liner notes). Amen. This CD is good listening for many good and godly purposes.

PJC

Hymnody CD Review


The Beautiful Treasure is a collection of original music and arrangements featuring American Folk Hymns, also known as “White Spirituals.” These kind of tunes sound beautiful when sung

unaccompanied. The versions presented by composer John Leavitt only aid to their memorability.

“This is John's newest instrumental album with the Mid-America Symphonic Ensemble. This album features American folk hymns and folk songs as well as original pieces” (website).

The Beautiful Treasure is available in CD and for items marked with “*” in Piano Folio.

1. Let Beauty Awake (original music)
2. To the Heart* (original music)
3. The Beautiful Treasure* (Shaker Tune: Hymn)
4. Resignation (American Folk Hymn, was LW 252, but unfortunately not in LSB)
5. New England* (American Folk Hymn)
6. Pleading Savior* (American Folk Hymn)
7. Dunlap's Creek* (American Folk Hymn)
8. The Gift of Love* (American Folk Hymn)
10. The Roadside Fire* (original music)
11. Dulcimer Sweet* (American Folk Hymn)
12. Blessing* (original music)

Other folk hymn tunes in Lutheran Service Book include Beach Spring (848, 849), Detroit (843), Foundation (728), Holy Manna (540, 584, 782), Land of Rest (673, 859, 937), Nettleton (686), New Britain (alternately called Amazing Grace for obvious reasons, 744) and Wondrous Love (543).

The tracks on this disc would be great additions to a congregational keyboardist’s repertoire and will serve your congregation well as preludes, offertories, and postludes, in addition to reintroducing the piano to Divine Service and the Daily Office in a churchly way.

Even upon a second hearing, this music feels like an old, trusted companion: friendly, intimate, engaging, comforting, and reliably good. And once you own the disc, it will quickly become a favorite. You will find yourself humming the melodies days later. I do this all the time with “Resignation,” track four.

Leavitt’s own original compositions, tracks 1, 2, 10, and 12, complement the American Folk Hymns. In many respects they resemble one another. Music is an incredible servant of the Word of God. Perhaps a wordsmith could provide hymn texts to be supported by the core melody of these rich, emotive, pensive, and durable tunes, if that has not happened already.

“Blessing,” track twelve, cries out for a text to sing!

This is simply beautiful music. Listen while at work, while studying Scripture, or while spending time with your family instead of watching TV.

Dr. Leavitt wrote, “I have wanted to do a recording of music featuring American Folk Hymns. This is the result” (personal correspondence).

The Mid-America Symphonic Ensemble is perfectly paired Leavitt’s arrangements and interprets them well.

Leavitt’s music is soothing for a hectic day, calming while in traffic, and mentally stimulating while on a long road trip across Nebraska or Wyoming.

I encourage you to visit www.johnleavittmusic.com to order The Beautiful Treasure and learn more about this and other John Leavitt recordings, and folios!

“John Leavitt was born in 1956 in Leavenworth, Kansas.

“[He] is a composer, conductor, teacher, and church musician, whose music continues to captivate listeners and musicians of all ages. He received his undergraduate education at Emporia State University, Emporia, Kansas, a master’s degree from Wichita State University, and the Doctorate of Musical Arts from The Conservatory of Music at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Leavitt is a lifetime member of the American Choral Directors Association and is a member of the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers, from which
he has received annual recognition for his achievements.

“Leavitt was the recipient of the W.A. Young Award for teaching excellence, in recognition of his career at Friends University in the fields of music theory, choral, and church music. He has also served briefly on the faculties of Concordia College, Edmonton, Alberta (Canada), and Concordia University, River Forest, Illinois. Leavitt currently resides near Wichita (Andover), Kansas where he has held the post of music director at Immanuel Lutheran Church and Cantor at Reformation Lutheran Church. He also conducted the community choral program, The Master Arts Chorale and Youth Chorale, during their twelve-year tenure. In March of 2003, he received the Kansas Artist Fellowship Award from the Kansas Arts Commission for his contribution to music composition. He most recently completed a residency on faculty as Director of Music at Newman University in Wichita.

“An extraordinary composer and clinician for church and school music literature, Leavitt continues to teach, lecture, and conduct numerous workshops, festivals, and symposia. He continues to serve as a regular guest conductor annually on the Mid America Productions Carnegie Hall Concert Series in New York, which he has done since 1998. He has also been featured regularly on the Manhattan Concert Productions Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Series in Washington D.C.

“His compositions are represented in nearly every major music catalog, including Alfred, Augsburg Fortress, Concordia, Hal Leonard, Morningstar, GIA, Hope, Shawnee Press, and Warner Brothers. He has numerous publications for choir, piano, organ, hand bells, and string orchestra and is co-author of the widely used choral music method textbook series Essential Elements for Choir.

“His discography includes A Sonic Spectacular, organ; A Little Night Music, piano; Requiem, choral; What Child is This, choral; Silent Night, Wondrous Light, piano; Jubilee, choral; On Christmas Night, orchestra & piano; and The Beautiful Treasure, orchestra & piano.” (website).

PJC

Notes

Christmas Night, orchestra & piano; and The Beautiful Treasure, orchestra & piano.” (website).
"Jaroslav Pelikan initiates the forty-volume Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible with his work on Acts. This commentary, like each in the series, is designed to serve the church—though aid in preaching, teaching, study groups, and so forth—and demonstrate the continuing intellectual and practical viability of theological interpretation of the Bible” (back cover).

This is a new commentary series with an exciting idea: theological interpretation! While that should not be anything new, it is refreshing to see with an ecumenical cast of commentators. Five volumes in the series are scheduled to be available by June of this year.

You may have heard the name Jaroslav Pelikan before. While the brief biography of Pelikan on the dust jacket shares that he is “Sterling Professor Emeritus of History at Yale University,” it does not mention his earlier work as one of the General Editors (along with Helmut T. Lehmann) of the American Edition of [Martin] Luther’s Works, and being the author of the Companion Volume, Luther the Expositor, nor his recent conversion to Eastern Orthodoxy. While his public and outward confession has changed, I wonder how strongly his Lutheran upbringing and adult life guided this particular commentary.

Consider the uniquely Lutheran contributions to this volume: “De servo arbitrio/The Bondage of the Will, Christus Victor, The Cost of Discipleship, and a proper distinction between the Fides que creditor and the Fides qua creditor. That’s a lot of Latin, but a lot of Latin with which Lutherans are largely familiar. (One would hope that their catholicity is also acknowledged in other Christian traditions due to their Biblical nature!)

According to the introduction (29), “the discussion of an individual theological issue or locus communis, which is printed in bold type, has been concentrated at one or another particular passage of the book of Acts where that issue and doctrine are prominent…” The plural of locus communis is Loci Communes, the Latin title of Phillip Melanchthon’s landmark doctrinal work. As with Melanchthon’s work (30), this is not intended to be a replacement for true works of dogmatic/doctrinal/systematic theology, but a guide to the interpretation of Holy Scripture.

Each chapter of Acts, in addition to brief textual commentary, also has three theological topics. Whether this practice is also carried forth in the other volumes of this series remains to be seen. I eagerly await the release of further volumes to answer this particular question, because it was exceptionally helpful to me.

Pelikan is not afraid to throw around foreign (non-English) words. Reading this book on vacation, it was stimulating and relaxing reading, nourishing and at the same time to keep my Greek pronunciation in good shape.

I read this volume with the worship of the church in mind, since LHP Quarterly Book Review evaluates books (and audio CDs, printed music, electronic media, etc.) and other resources that have to do with preaching, worship, and church music. I wanted to focus in on Acts 2:42.

In lieu of Pelikan regularly refers to the Western Text/Textus Receptus by the abbreviation TPR, textus a patribus receptus, “text accepted by church fathers” in order to support his arguments (33). (See also 230ff for Pelikan’s insistence on the importance of the original texts in the Biblical languages. The final word of Acts 2:42 is one such time the TPR is quoted.

I am less concerned with his reference to “fixed text and liturgical forms” (60) than to the Biblical reference to those who “were persisting in the doctrine of the apostles and in fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayer” (57). This is the church at worship in every age. Apostolic teaching should trump the importance of so-called “apostolic succession” in every time and place. I wanted to hear more about fellowship, knowing that koinonia is always in something, never merely theoretical. It makes sense that the fellowship is in the breaking of the bread. I found the author’s dedication, “To my liturgical family at Saint Vladimir’s And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in

The whole Eastern concept of theosis (162ff, et al) is troubling to me. I feel it misses the point of being more like Christ. More emphasis should be given to His gift of righteousness given to us and the call to lead a holy life rather than this, lest we start sounding like Mormons who wish to be gods of their own planet someday. There is much opportunity for misunderstanding than there is for clarity.

Pelikan states that Peter was not to be the primate, or “Pope” (176, reviewer’s paraphrase). Page 181 is intriguing reading, especially with regard to Canon Law and Martin Luther. We must remember not to bind consciences, yet even our Augsburg Confession (AC XXVIII) acknowledges the role of bishops in establishing ordinances for the sake of good order.

Near the end of the commentary text itself (253), Pelikan provides a very useful chart that gives references in Acts for recipients of Pauline letters from Romans to 1-2 Timothy, excluding Colossians, Titus, and Philemon.

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“Pastors and leaders of the classical church—such as Augustine, Calvin, Luther, and Wesley—interpreted the Bible theologically, believing Scripture as a whole witnessed to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Modern interpreters of the Bible questioned this premise. But in recent decades, a critical mass of theologians and biblical scholars has begun to reassert the priority of a theological reading of Scripture.

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I am hopeful that this new series will be a great blessing to the Church as a whole, for Christians both Eastern and Western, Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Lutheran. Examine a copy for yourself and see. We look forward to reviewing other volumes.

PJC

Pulpit Book Review


Having no desire to mince words or provide an unnecessarily lengthy review, I submit to you my humble thoughts on the above titled book. A total of sixteen essays were included in this volume, with virtually all of the authors being unknown to me (Rev. John MacArthur being the lone exception).

The essays were compiled under four parts: 1) Interpretive Principles and Practices; 2) Biblical and Historical Paradigms; 3) Contemporary Challenges and Aims; 4) Training and Example. For all practical purposes I found the first set of essays most helpful and edifying, in particular the one by MacArthur, whose essay was titled, “Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth: A Study Method for Faithful Preaching.”

Regrettably, the practical is about the most helpful area of preaching for this pastor to glean. Although all preachers hopefully strive to be good expositors – since expository preaching is nothing more basic than explaining the text – the kind of expository preaching promoted by the authors of these essays follows the model of a theology of glory rather than a theology of the cross. Very little – if any – emphasis is placed upon finding Jesus Christ and Him crucified in any given text. Much more is emphasized on personal application for the hearers in their postmodern lives. Moreover, the book was entirely void of any mention to the importance of the proper distinction between Law and Gospel when it comes to faithful preaching.

A sermon can be Biblical, but not Christ-centered. A preacher should strive to be both Biblical and Christ-centered. A sermon filled with only law can convict and condemn, but it would lead the hearers to despair.
or self-righteousness. The Gospel is the proclamation of Christ crucified for the forgiveness of sin. That is the essential heart of every truly Christian sermon. How can one Preach the Word without the Word made flesh?

The inclusion of one or more orthodox Lutheran theologians would most definitely have given a deeper and weightier credibility to this book, allowing readers to better understand the challenges of Law and Gospel, sin and grace, malady and means. Moreover, I think it would be clearer for the reader to realize that, regardless of the system to which one binds himself to preach (such as, a pericope or “expository” system), the central theme to every book of the Bible and, hopefully, every sermon is this: We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone.

In any event, there are some helpful suggestions provided by a number of the essays whereby one can gain some value for practical application in sermon preparation. But really, why bother when you already have a jewel like Walther’s Law and Gospel?

JRM

**Pulpit Book Review**


Here’s why. If Ruth was important enough to be merely mentioned in Holy Scripture, there should be a Christian book written about her. Ruth isn’t just merely mentioned in the Bible. As we all know there is an Old Testament book that bears her name. That makes her important for a purpose. That calls for an important commentary like this one in the Concordia Commentary series.

Yes, Ruth was important. That she is mentioned by name in the first chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew speaks of her importance. She is an ancestor of Jesus Christ. That is why she is important. Her story is also one that shows the Lord is serious about including the gentiles with His people, for they are spiritually sons of father Abraham. Not only that, the book of Ruth introduces the concept of a “kinsman redeemer.” This commentary will be a key resource for you in your preaching and teaching.

Dear brothers in office, this book is a commentary, as you well know. It is a tool, certainly, and we should be diligent in our original-language study and in our theological study before consulting a commentary. When pastoral care emergencies arise, the realities and practicalities of the parish challenge what we’ve been taught at the seminary with regard to sermon preparation. There is the temptation to just use an English translation. At those times, I would encourage you to pick up a volume of the Concordia Commentary series and consult the original-language study of the Greek or Hebrew, as in this case. John R. Wilch and other authors can be of great assistance to you. Once the emergency has passed, resume your regular sermon preparation, and use good, faithful commentaries like this as a support after your own work on the text first.

Commentaries are tools and tools are made to be used. Commentaries are also, by common definition, reference books. They are not usually designed to be read straight through, but I would wholeheartedly recommend that with Ruth!

“The commentary focuses on the themes of God’s covenant; His loyalty, reflected in the lives of His faithful people; the theology of missions and evangelism; Boaz as a redeemer, prefiguring Jesus Christ; and the promise of eternal life. The commentary’s Christocentric hermeneutic elucidates the rich Gospel message of Ruth and its relevance for the church today. The author’s international perspective and decades of service as a pastor and professor have given him unique insights into the message of this neglected book” (website). I agree!

Ruth only shows up one time in the *LSB* lectionaries: Proper 23 of Series C. That means the book shows up zero times in the One-Year Lectionary. Remember what makes Ruth important? Of the thirteen times she is mentioned in Holy Writ, the last one is at Matthew 1:5. She is worth studying because of her connection to Jesus because of her connection to King David.

And then there are Bible Study opportunities. Any book could be studied by any group on Sunday morning particularly. This one lends itself well to Bible Studies with ladies, of course.

I would recommend this book to laypeople. I recently heard this true story: “A Lutheran lay woman in her 50s told me she loved the Ruth commentary. She and her women’s Bible study group read through the commentary as they covered the book of Ruth over
four months” (private correspondence). What a wonderful idea! You could turn Bible Class into “Pastor’s Book Club” every once in a while. Book length is rarely a concern in book clubs, where I’ve seen War and Peace or the latest Tom Clancy thriller discussed successfully over weeks or months.

The commentator’s extensive literary analysis, Hebrew word studies and comprehensive exegesis show this to be a thoroughly Biblical commentary, faithful to the Lutheran Confessions, and of high scholarship. I would expect no less of a commentary published by Concordia Publishing House.

In addition, I found information on the historical setting of Ruth to be of great help in explaining the book to laity. In many ways, the journey of Naomi’s family reminded me of the dust bowl of the 1930’s and moving to California. Perhaps a better comparison between Moab and Israel might be Californians moving to Oklahoma back then! ☺

It was intriguing to note the author’s term Christotelic. The word is explained in this way: “This commentary endeavors to employ the hermeneutic of Luther, who followed that of the Scriptures themselves, which presumes, first, that not only all the NT, but also the who OT is connected in essence to the person and saving work of Jesus Christ. Second, every verse of the OT in context (i.e., every pericope) receives its essential interpretation and fulfillment through Christ, in his earthly ministry and in his church through his Word and Sacraments…That the entire OT points prophetically toward its fulfillment through Jesus Christ indicates that a refinement of the term ‘Christocentric’ (see above [61]) is in order. More exactly for OT exegesis, it is a Christotelic hermeneutic, for it deals with Jesus Christ as the “goal” and ‘fulfillment’ (telos) of the OT…” (61-62). Believers in the One True God focus upon Christ and His work on the cross (our past, Ruth’s future). What an insight!

References to the “kinsman redeemer” permeate this Concordia Commentary volume. Understanding these first is an important part of the proclamation of Christ as our Redeemer.

‘The Reverend Dr. John R. Wilch is professor emeritus at Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, St. Catharines, Ontario, where he taught exegetical theology (1980-1999)” (dust cover back flap).

This commentary would be a good gift for Mothers’ Day for a Christian woman in your life. And pastors will treasure it as an extensive and definitive commentary on the book of Ruth.

PJC

Pulpit Book Review


Central to the church’s life of faith and witness to the world is the continual proclamation of God’s Word. Preaching the truth of God’s Word is the great task of God’s people since the Fall into sin. In Telling God’s Story: Narrative Preaching for Christian Formation, John W. Wright attempts “to present a specific homiletical rhetoric that may shape congregations into distinctive, alternative Christian communities. In other words, [he] seeks to explore how to preach in order to form a congregation into a ‘peculiar people’” (p. 12.). The need for such a book is, in the mind of the author, predicated upon the observation that preaching in modern America had failed to call the Church and her members out of a worldly, culturally determined self-understanding to an identity formed by the narrative of the Holy Scriptures. The former is inadequate and transitory while the latter is sound and lasting.

Dr. Wright contends that there is always an underlying story or narrative to an individual or a congregation. Depending upon the congregation’s past pastoral ministry and preaching rhetoric, a congregation’s narrative may be built upon the prevailing cultural narrative or the narrative of the Scriptures. According to Dr. Wright, most congregations tend to follow the narrative of the culture which manifests itself in Christian thought via two forms.

First, the cultural narrative of rugged individualism becomes Christianized and morphed into a private, sentimental and individualized form of spirituality leading to personal perfection and fulfillment divorced from any coherent connection to the church. What pastor has not heard the comment, “I’ve got my faith and that’s all that matters.” Second, patriotism becomes Christianized into “manifest destiny” equating America with the new Israel (p. 60). The Church exists to benefit the society as a whole with a continuing inoculation of morality and justice variously defined around the contours of political conservatism or liberalism. Dr. Wright concludes that the division of the church around a right-left split mirrors American cultural and political boundaries.
Dr. Wright uses preaching that is happy (comedic) or sad (tragic). He should not understand these theatrical terms to mean God’s people recorded in the Scriptures (p. 33). One might wonder whether members and calls them to follow the narrative of the congregation and her preaching rhetoric disrupts and may even shatter the congregation without challenging them. A tragic preaching rhetoric reinforces the convictions and narrative story of the congregation without challenging them. A tragic preaching rhetoric disrupts and may even shatter the underlying narrative of the congregation and her members and calls them to follow the narrative of God’s people recorded in the Scriptures (p. 33). One should not understand these theatrical terms to mean preaching that is happy (comedic) or sad (tragic).

Dr. Wright uses I Love Lucy to illustrate a comedy. In spite of the ups and downs of the events in an episode, the conviction that all will turn out well is never challenged. By contrast, the author uses Romeo and Juliet to illustrate a tragedy. In this case, the play shatters the human convictions of self-determined autonomy while forcing us to grapple with human contingency and vulnerability.

According to Dr. Wright, the church in America needs to adopt a tragic preaching rhetoric that will call Christians to repentance and to abandon the inadequate narratives of culture and embrace the sufficient narrative of the Holy Scriptures that began in creation, continued through Abraham and Israel, found fulfillment in Jesus and His redeemed church and anticipates the new creation. Only when the church lives within the Biblical narrative can she be true to her calling to be “a peculiar people, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation” (I Peter 2:9).

Two chapters are provided by Dr. Wright to demonstrate how a pastor can adopt a tragic preaching rhetoric. Such preaching is not to be understood as being depressed or negative – a misunderstanding of the term “tragic” – but rather life-giving and salvific. Tragic preaching is a call to repentance and faith (p. 79). Preaching, the highest form of interpretation according to Dr. Wright, is best and most faithful when the Scriptures are read and proclaimed through an eschatology of “already/not yet” (p. 82) and “typologically” (p. 83-84) thus allowing the present day church to live in the story of the biblical narrative. The goal of tragic preaching is not to “sucker punch” the congregation but to reveal the inadequacies of cultural narrative while leading them to live in the biblical narrative. Four sample sermons with commentary are provided to give concrete illustration of a tragic preaching rhetoric.

Dr. Wright’s analysis of modern preaching is quite accurate and challenging. His recommendations are uniquely presented but are anything but novel. The biblical text is replete with examples of preaching that calls God’s people to repentance, to live in the light of the Last Day and to view the faithfulness of God in light of His faithfulness to His people in the past. From a Lutheran perspective, Dr. C.F.W. Walther instructed his students over 120 years ago to preach the Law leading to repentance while proclaiming with great fervency the saving gospel of Jesus that leads to new life in Christ in the present and eternity. What is most disappointing in Dr. Wright’s book is that he does not engage the Scriptural witness to such “tragic” forms of preaching, to speak anachronistically. There are references to Jesus’ preaching in the Sermon on the Mount and the New Testament epistles but a Scriptural witness is underdeveloped.

What was most surprising was Dr. Wright’s discussion of the necessity of incorporating pastoral and congregational acts informed by the biblical narrative into a faithful preaching rhetoric; even though he states that the “book ranges far and wide” (p. 12). In other words, narrative preaching must be coupled by Biblical actions in order to achieve the most beneficial effect for the congregation. Three practices are specifically mentioned: the Lord’s Supper, forgiveness and reconciliation, and sharing and hospitality. These actions embody the church’s witness that Christ has redeemed creation and will bring that redemption to consummation on the Last Day.

Telling God’s Story is well written and any Lutheran pastor will do well to read it. My own conviction that faithful Law/Gospel preaching coupled with a proper administration of Christ’s Sacraments being the right means to serve God’s church was strengthened upon completion of the book. Though not written from a Lutheran perspective any Lutheran pastor will gain much to consider as he attempts to lead his congregation to live in the biblical narrative.

http://wy.lcms.org/LHP/QBR
“John W. Wright presents a new model of preaching that aims to connect the biblical text with a congregation so that they are formed into a true Christian community. Such formation calls for interpretative engagement with both the biblical narrative and the cultural narrative that shapes our society. Wright critically surveys current theories of preaching and the variety of hermeneutical practices, providing clear guidance and practical direction for faithful preaching.” (website).

“John W. Wright (Ph.D., University of Notre Dame) is Professor of Theology and Christian Scripture at Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego, California. He is the author of Conflicting Allegiances: The Church-Based University in a Liberal Democratic Society and And Then There Was One: A Search for the True Disciple in the Gospel of Mark. He is a coeditor of Priests, Prophets and Scribes: Essays on the Formation and Heritage of Second Temple Judaism in Honor of Joseph Blenkinsopp” (website).

Pulpit Book Review

The Psalter is the original prayerbook and hymnal of the church. This unique commentary series makes available to the church today “early Christian commentary on Psalms 51-150,” “covers the period from Clement of Rome (second century) to John of Damascus (mid-eighth century)” (flyer from publisher).

Not only is it one of the latest releases in the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture series from InterVarsity Press/IVP Academic, it is one of the newest commentary volumes by a Missouri Synod Lutheran! (Now I have your attention, right?)

Many Christian hymns have been based upon psalms. One of the recordings reviewed this issue reminded us of that. Psalm 46 is the original source material for “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.”

Readers may be aware that for a time (and in some congregations and church bodies today) the Psalter, albeit in metrical/hymn form, were (are) the only hymns allowed. It is simply inconceivable to me that New Testament hymns were prohibited for even a second! The Psalms should inform our reading of the New Testament and vice-versa. They served the church of our theological ancestors well in supporting New Testament doctrine of Jesus (xxi).

Martin Luther knew the psalter well, regularly praying it in its entirety as an Augustinian monk (See also 337, Psalm 119:137ff for the source of monastic prayer “seven times a day.”) This prayer life served him well as a Christian pastor, exegete, interpreter, and the Reformer he became.

Psalm 51 acknowledges original sin, even in infants, as Origen confesses: “But the prophets, who have given some wise suggestions on the subject of things produced by generation, tell us that a sacrifice for sin was offered even for newborn infants, as not being free from sin” (5) The fathers, especially when they deal with this and other topics like conversion and pelagianism, are well-suited to help us when we struggle with similar issues today like “decision theology.” It is indeed good to pray for unity (Psalm 133, p. 368ff), but we recognize that true unity is only found in Christ and His Word of Truth.

In a comment upon Psalm 56, Augustine upholds that we are saved not by merit, but by grace: “You see, ‘he was handed over on account of our sins, and rose again on account of our justification.’ Your justification, your circumcision does not come from you. ‘It is by grace that you have been saved through faith; and this not from yourselves, but it is God’s gift; not from works.’ In case by any chance you should say, ‘I deserved it, that is why I received it.’ Do not think you received it by deserving it, because you would not deserve it unless you had received it. Grace came before your deserving or merit; it is not grace coming from merit but merit from grace. Because if grace comes from merit, it means you have bought it, not received it free, gratis, for nothing. ‘For nothing,’ it says, ‘you will save them.’ What is the meaning of ‘for nothing you will save them’? You can find no reason in them to save them, and yet you save them. You give for nothing, you save for nothing. You precede all merits, so that my merits follow your gifts. Of course, you give for nothing, save for nothing, since you can find no reason for saving and many reasons for condemning” (27).
The editor of this volume is in a long line of Lutherans that rejoiced in much of what they found in the fathers. It was primarily because they confessed what the Holy Bible confessed. Secondarily, it was because of who they were and how highly they were regarded by the Roman opponents of Luther and his evangelical teaching. St. Augustine can be a great blessing. We are also aware of his limitations.

Augustine teaches us to pray as he reads with us. Psalm 80 (139), Cyril of Jerusalem, Theodoret of Cyr, Chrysostom, and Paulinus of Milan teach about daily contrition and repentance (209-210). Don’t miss John Cassian’s comparison of a Christian to a hedgehog (233)!

I rejoiced to see Dr. Wesselschmidt to mine the best of the fathers on Christology. Examine the following: Psalm 69, particularly pages 76 and following, Psalm 72’s references to the Magi, who Tertullian claims were honored as kings (98) Would this be similar to ambassadors today? Read Gregory of Nyssa on “the right hand of God (127), Cyril of Alexandria (143) about Jesus remaining God even during his “state of humiliation”—great reading in conjunction with the Explanation of Luther’s Small Catechism,

It is only appropriate for our review to conclude with a reference to musical instruments by Arnobius the Younger: “Let us praise him on the psaltery and on the harp, supposing that on the harp we may embrace the wood of the cross and on the psaltery we may maintain the universal confession. The sound is harsh because the confession is not held in unity. Let us praise on timbrel and with dance, when we, firmly set upon a restored way of life, adorn the timbrel of our body with the models of best behavior. Let us praise him on stringed instruments and on the organ as we play the fresh strings that are on our harp, let us also, as with the narrow needs of modesty make melodious sounds to God, cleansing ourselves from all the blight of sin” (430).

My only problem with this volume of the ACCS is that Professor Wesselschmidt was not invited to do all 150 Psalms!

Quentin F. Wesselschmidt (Ph.D., University of Iowa) is a professor of historical theology at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis” (back flap). He previously served as chairman of the department of historical theology (1981-95); as chairman of the editorial committee of the Concordia Journal (1982-2007); and was acting chairman of the department of historical theology (1996-97). He is a member of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

PJC

Pulpit Book Review


Augustine and Pelagius. There’s an ancient clash of theologies! Then consider that Pelagius’ commentaries on the books of St. Paul were known as commentaries by Jerome for a long time (xxiv). Wow. That’s quite a mistake. It is better to positively judge the teaching (based upon Scripture) and be pleasantly surprised by the name than to automatically ignore (or praise) a teaching just because of a name.

Consider Augustine’s comments on Colossians 1:6. “It is much less surprising that he [Paul] used his verbs in the present tense in that passage which, as you remarked, he repeated again and again: ‘For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, which you have heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which is come to you as also it is in the whole world, and brings forth fruit and grows.’ Although the gospel did not yet embrace the whole world, he said that it brings forth fruit and grows in the whole world, in order to show how far it would extend in bearing fruit and growing. If, then, it is hidden from us when the whole world will be filled by the church bringing forth fruit and growing, undoubtedly it is hidden from us when the end will be, but it certainly will not be before that” (3). Consider for a moment when Augustine wrote these words!


“While patristic commentary on St. Paul’s shorter letters--Colossians, 1-2 Thessalonians, the Pastorals and Philemon--was not so extensive as that on
his longer letters, certain passages in these letters proved particularly important in doctrinal disputes and practical church matters. Pivotal in controversies with the Arians and the Gnostics, the most commented-upon christological text amid these letters was Colossians 1:15-20, where Jesus is declared “the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.” In other texts scattered throughout the Pastorals, the fathers found ample support for the divinity of the Son and the Spirit and for the full union of humanity and divinity in the one redeemer, the "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). These early Christian commentators also looked to the Pastorals, where Pauline authorship was assumed, for important ethical and moral teaching, as well as explicit qualifications for choosing church leaders and guidelines for overseeing the work and behavior of widows.

“Chief among the Eastern commentators and widely excerpted throughout this volume is John Chrysostom, praised for his pastoral insight and shrewd, generous empathy with the apostle Paul. Other Greek commentators whose works are cited include Theodoret of Cyr, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Severian of Gabala, Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Athanasius, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa. Among Western commentators Augustine dominates. His work is joined by that of Ambrosiaster, Pelagius, Jerome, Hippolytus, Tertullian, Novatian, Cyprian of Carthage, Hilary of Poitiers and Ambrose, among others. Of particular interest for their ascetical and devotional insight are works from Syrian and Egyptian churches, including Aphrahat, Ephrem the Syrian, Isaac of Nineveh and Philoxenus of Mabbug” (jacket back cover). I simply had to quote the previous paragraphs because of the name of the last commentator!☺ Names today just aren’t what they used to be.

And neither are some commentaries. This, however, is a good one. Lot’s of food for thought and vigorous discussion!

When Lutheran Fathers of previous generations gave Lutheran congregations instructions on how to conduct call meetings, they noted that even a child (not given the right to vote at a call meeting) can call into question a pastoral candidate if what he teaches and preaches (and what the congregation is preparing to accept from a preacher) is contrary to Scripture. In that light, consider this partial quote from Chrysostom on 1 Timothy 2:8-15: “The blessed Paul did not suffer them [women] even to speak with authority in the church. But I have heard someone say that they have obtained such a large privilege of free speech as even to rebuke the prelates of the churches and censure them more severely than masters do their own domestics” (165). I’ll have to follow up on this quote in the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers set, First Service, 9:49. It appears that the ancient fathers were divided over the issue of a second marriage for a pastor who had been widowed (170). Isn’t it better not to burn? Consider also page 286. Ambrosiaster rejects the idea of women deacons (175).

Confirm the Word. Teach those who wish to hear. Plow straight furrows. Teach correctly. And No Additions! Great advice summarizing 2 Timothy 2:15 (249) courtesy of our volume editor.

Peter Gorday (Ph.D., Vanderbilt) is a clinical staff member with the Georgia Association for Pastoral Counseling and priest-associate at St. Anne’s Episcopal Church in Atlanta. He is also the author of Principles of Patristic Exegesis: Romans 9-11 in Origen, John Chrysostom and Augustine (Edwin Mellen Press).


This is the third ACCS volume edited by the Rev. Bray that I’ve read and reviewed personally. I was less impressed by the Romans volume than that with 1-2 Corinthians.

This volume covers James through Jude. The four Biblical authors are interpreted by voices as varied as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, as well as more formal commentaries authored by Clement of Alexandria, Didymus the Blind, and of course, Bede the Venerable to whom Bray gives “pride of place” among Latin commentators.

I didn’t read this volume for the introduction. I’m not in favor of rating Bible books based on their authenticity (xx). His table on xxiii that explains that
spiritual warfare “is not a form of dualism” is a positive discussion. Primarily, I want to hear the fathers speak. This series excels when the editor allows that to happen AND when the fathers speak according to the Lord’s Word.

Augustine is right. Faith is a gift (7). “Just because faith may be given to us before we ask for it, it does not follow that it is not a gift of God. God may well give it to us before we ask him for it, just as he also gives peace and love. This is why we pray both that faith may be increased in those who already have it and also that it may be given to those who have not yet received it.”

Turn to page 26 for the discussion of faith and works (James 2:14-26). In contrast, clarity is shown by Paul Speratus, Lutheran hymnwriter and author of “Salvation unto Us Has Come,” particularly stanza 9: “Faith clings to Jesus’ cross alone And rests in Him unceasing; And by its fruits true faith is known, With love and hope increasing. For faith alone can justify; Works serve our neighbor and supply the proof that faith is living” (Lutheran Service Book 555). Paul and James are best read in harmony with one another, not with the assumption that one or the other is wrong, implying that the Lord contradicts Himself. Sometimes myriad voices only contribute to verbal pollution. Often, a few voices confess what the Scriptures give them to say. For a Christian, antiquity is not the basis of authority for a father or a doctrine. What does the Word say?

Bede writes, “Although the apostle Paul preached that we are justified by faith without works, those who understand by this that it does not matter whether they live evil lives or do wicked and terrible things, as long as they believe in Christ, because salvation is through faith, have made a great mistake. James here expounds how Paul’s words ought to be understood. This is why he uses the example of Abraham, whom Paul also used as an example of faith, to show that the patriarch also performed good works in the light of his faith. It is therefore wrong to interpret Paul in such a way as to suggest that it did not matter whether Abraham put his faith into practice or not. What Paul meant was that no one obtains the gift of justification on the basis of merit derived from works performed beforehand, because the gift of justification comes only from faith” (31). Sound like we need to read more Bede!

Did you celebrate the Easter Vigil this year? Reading Exodus was an inspiration for us to do so this year at our congregation. We also were blessed by a Baptism on Easter Day! Consider Andreas on 1 Peter 3:18-22: “The water of the flood is a type of baptism because it both punished evil people and saved the good, just as baptism expels evil spirits and saves those who turn to Christ. This shows the great power of baptism, and how much we need it” (110).

Regarding 1 John 1, particularly verse 10, John Cassian wrote, “Among holy men it is impossible not to fall into those small lapses which occur because of something said, some thought, some surreptitious act. These sins are quite different from those which are called mortal, but they are not without blame or reproach” (173).

Is Enoch Apocryphal? Bede comments upon Jude 14 on page 255. “The book of Enoch, from which this quote is taken, belongs to the Apocrypha, not because the sayings of that prophet are of no value or because they are false but because the book which circulates under his name was not written by him but was put out by someone else who used his name. For it if were genuine, it would not contain anything contrary to sound doctrine. But as a matter of fact it contains any number of incredible things about giants, who had angels instead of men as fathers, and which are clearly lies. [Consider what Bede writes as refuting false interpretations of Genesis 6, too!] Indeed, it was precisely because Jude quotes him that for a long time his letter was rejected by many as being uncanonical. Nevertheless it deserves to be included in the canon because of its author, its antiquity and the way in which it has been used, and particularly because this passage which Jude takes from Enoch ss not in itself apocryphal or dubious but is rather notable for the clarity with which it testifies to the true light.” An interesting perspective. Put the first half of Bede’s words in the mouth of a modern conservative scholar and then watch the reaction!

The James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude volume of the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture is worth your investment of time and money.

“Gerald L. Bray is a professor of Anglican Studies at Beeson Divinity School of Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama. His publications include The Doctrine of God; Creeds, Councils & Christ; and Biblical Interpretation: Past & Present (All IVP Academic). He is also editor of Romans and 1-2 Corinthians in the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture” (Inside back flap). Based upon these three commentaries where he has served as editor, this reviewer is curious to read some of his original works.

PJC
Briefly Noted 🎶


If you’re looking for sermon illustrations, a good book for a group Bible Study on the Psalm 23, or a nice gift, this is a book to consider.

“Phillip Keller, born in East Africa, always loved wildlife and the outdoors. He trained as an agrologist at the University of Toronto in Canada and subsequently spent many years in agricultural research, land management, and ranch development in British Colombia. Later he pursued ecological studies in East Africa, which led to new careers in conservation, wildlife photography, and journalism. He was the author of numerous books. His experiences as a shepherd equipped him with the insights that are the basis for *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*” (book jacket).

Sheep don’t change much. That helps us remember that a book originally published in 1970 can be incredibly relevant and beneficial to read. The care of a shepherd often involves getting your hands dirty. Modern life and buzzing electronics distance us from the earthy, agricultural references in Holy Scripture. The author invites you to read, enter his world as a shepherd, and better identify with the shepherd and the shepherds the Lord introduces us to in His Word.

Buy it in bulk. Discuss it together. And rejoice in Jesus, Our Good Shepherd and Good Shepherd Sunday this year (April 6th—One Year Lectionary or April 13th—Three Year Lectionary). This would be an excellent Bible Class for that day and will provide the preacher with examples for sermons for years to come.

PJC

Music as Servant of Social Change


This is a film you must see. A “music store” used to mean a place where you could buy instruments and sheet music to play and sing at home, school, church, and with your community. Today, it’s where you buy recordings or iTunes gift cards. All America needs to see this film. It is embarrassing that so few people today sing along with The Star Spangled Banner. Many Americans will sing along with the radio in their cars (or in the shower) but rarely sing in public. That is a trend of concern to Lutheran Christians and the whole Christian Church.

The European nation of Estonia has suffered through numerous foreign invasions. *The Singing Revolution* documents how much of Estonian culture survived Nazi and Soviet occupations through song. (*LHP* readers will be interested to know that the sainted Rev. Dr. Kurt Erik Marquart (1934-2006), was born in Tallinn, Estonia, on June 20, 1934. He was reborn into God’s kingdom through Holy Baptism in the year of his birth. In 1941 the family moved to Vienna, Austria, and, having spent time in the Displaced Persons Camps in North Germany (1945), ultimately made its way to the United States. He served as Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana from 1975 to the time of his death.)

“In the 19th century [1869], Estonians started a song festival tradition called *Laulupidu*, where choirs from around the country come together to sing for days. 25,000 to 30,000 people sing on stage at the same time. But the founding of Laulupidu was as much an expression of the desire for self-determination and independence as about song.
“The Singing Revolution is the name given to the step-by-step process that led to the reestablishment of Estonian independence in 1991. This was a non-violent revolution that overthrew a very violent occupation.

“It was called the Singing Revolution because of the role singing played in the protests of the mid-1980s. But singing had always been a major unifying force for Estonians while they endured fifty years of Soviet rule.

“In 1947, during the first song festival (Laulupidu) held after the Soviet occupation, Gustav Ernesaks wrote a tune set to the lyrics of a century-old national poem written by Lydia Koidula, “Mu isamaa on minu arm” (“Land of My Fathers, Land That I Love”). This song miraculously slipped by the Soviet censors, and for fifty years it was a musical statement of every Estonian’s desire for freedom.

“In 1969, Soviets forbade the singing of “Mu isamaa on minu arm” at the hundredth anniversary of the song festival. Nonetheless, tens of thousands of Estonians on stage and in the audience sang the song in defiance of the Soviet authorities--not once, but numerous times. There was nothing the Soviets could do but invite the composer on stage to conduct the choir and pretend they intended to allow this all along.

“When Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985, Estonians began testing his policies of perestroika (economic restructuring) and glasnost (free speech) to see how far they could go. The first test was in 1986, when Estonians protested a plan to build phosphorite mines throughout the country” (Filmmakers’ Website).

Protests spread and grew in independent thought and action. Legislation restored the traditional Estonian flag and language. By 1991, Estonia was ready to declare itself an independent republic. One day later, Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin declared Russia’s withdrawal from the USSR. That effectively ended the pro-Communist military coup that had placed Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev under house arrest.

Each successive occupation in Estonia’s history threatened to do violence to the nation’s culture. (I would personally classify this film as PG-13 for violent content at both the beginning and the end.) Long decades of Nazi and Soviet propaganda killed off much of Christianity in Estonia. I wonder how many other “forbidden songs” there were with a Christian message. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has partner churches in Estonia’s neighbors, Latvia, and Lithuania. The Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, a member of the Lutheran World Federation, claims 200,000 members out of nearly 1.4 million Estonians, nearly 15% of the national population. This is in line with a recent poll that showed only 16% Estonians believed in “a god.”

I pray that Americans and Estonians can be a blessing to one another. Americans need to rebuild and relearn how to sing, instead of passively imbibing the music on our radios, TVs and iPods. Estonians need the message of eternal life found only in Jesus Christ. Martin Luther called music the “handmaiden of theology.” It is time for Lutherans in America to help Estonians see music as a wonderful tool of proclaiming the biblical Gospel.
State vs. Blue State stalemate, or at least what it perceived as a stalemate. Then, instead of using polls to see which wind the political wind blows, some politicians’ way of governing (or at least determining what they’re “for” or “against”), what major consensus issues would come to the fore if the American people were surveyed on what was really important to them? Much of the “filler” on the TV news (particularly some 24-hour news outlets) would be shown to be superficial, supercilious, and just plain silly.

“English should be the official language of government...New immigrants should be required to learn English” (250) “The American people favor legal immigration, control of the border, ending illegal immigration with an emphasis on employer responsibility, immediate deportation of felons who are here illegally, a requirement to return home to become legal temporary workers, assimilation of those who sincerely want to become American, an a sophisticated, technology advanced, temporary worker system” (251) “Separation between church and state does not mean the omission of all references to God in government-sanctioned activities or public buildings” (255). For more such issues that could unite Americans, visit www.americansolutions.com/platform. The Platform is regularly updated and also includes specific polling numbers, i.e., 87% of Americans are in favor of English as the official language of the United States of America, something that could further unite future generations of American citizens.

The author is former Speaker of the U. S. House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich, also architect of the 1994 “Contract with America,” senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, founder of the Center for Health Transformation, a FOX political analyst, general chairman of American Solutions for Winning the Future, and noted historian and author of “alternate history” novels.

As if we needed convincing, Gingrich begins by showing the failures of both parties as well as many of our current systems in America. Then, by giving examples of how real change is possible, he encourages the reader to believe that these initiatives could succeed where you live as well as nationally.

There are consequences for failure—dire ones, indeed.

Read Part Three for possible solutions for Social Security, NASA, toward a “Green” Conservatism and future energy needs to health care bureaucracy, an activist judiciary, balancing the budget, and National and Homeland Security. Gingrich takes the reader from theory to practice, and from merely reading a book to becoming actively involved in solving the real problems of our country—together.

PJC

Sex & Politics


Every time I drive to the largest city in our area for shut-in visits, a hospital call, church errands or personal shopping, I drive by a sign store. Out front, next to their TV-like sign giving time and temperature, the owner has placed this sign: “Political Correctness or the Truth?”

Seeing a volume of Regnery’s popular book series called “The Politically Incorrect Guide to…” makes me want to jump for joy. So many political pundits, political operatives, secular progressive professors and liberal politicians think that they know better than the average LHP Quarterly Book Review reader, it behooves us to be prepared to defend our Biblical and Christian worldview with good conservative common sense and the facts.

The Politically Incorrect Guide to Women, Sex, and Feminism is eye-opening. No, guys, it won’t explain the opposite sex to you. It will, however, explain to men and women how The Feminine Mystique was a hugh feminine MISTAKE.

Christians know that men and women were created differently. Genesis 1-3 is true, just like the rest of the Holy Bible. Scientifically, based upon actual research and observation, “men’s and women’s brains are built differently” (5). It’s not just “plumbing,” people. It’s not just societal conditioning. When science and Scripture agree, it’s got to be politically incorrect!
Cohabitation (85ff) is quite a modern phenomenon. Couples who cohabit are more likely to divorce. And it is still largely (and correctly) viewed as “living in sin.” There is need for good education on sexuality and marriage from parents and the church as a preventative measure. Faithful pastoral care needs to be Biblical, caring, and intentional.

Men and women view sex differently. Women gain very little in losing their virtue. Society also loses when there is a positive connotation for promiscuous men. “Women’s lib has ‘liberated’ men from having to commit, ‘freed’ women from marriage, and often ‘unshackled’ women from having a family.” What kind of liberation is that?

This book (by a woman) is needed to set the record straight, correct the intentional mis-education in our culture and some institutions, and return to a worldview supportive of family, home, marriage, children, and Biblical, Christian morality.

Carrie Lukas is the vice president for policy and economics at the Independent Women’s Forum. She is a senior fellow at the Goldwater Institute and a contributor to National Review Online. She holds a master’s degree from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and a bachelor’s degree from Princeton.

It is jarring to learn that something you have been taught is just plain wrong. In The Politically Incorrect Guide to the Constitution, Kevin Gutzman, associate professor of American history at Western Connecticut State University asserts that activist judges have been a part of our American judiciary from the beginning. It wasn’t good then and it is still a bad thing. The judiciary was never intended to legislate from the bench. That is why we have a legislature! Judges under the Constitution are given to interpret, never to innovate.

It is sad that the Constitution is not the most important thing about Constitutional Law. Read this book to understand what I’m talking about.

You’ve heard about the Federalist Papers and how they were used to argue in favor of the 1789 U. S. Constitution. What I had never been taught was that the “federalists” behind the famous Federalist Papers were actually in favor of a more centralized national government, rather that a federal government of sovereign states. True “federalists” were supportive of a government similar to that the states had under the Articles of Confederation. (When was the last time you read that, America’s first constitution? It’s included in the back of the book.)

To add to the confusion that the author so deftly clears up, those who were actually “federalist” according to the dictionary definition opposed the new Constitution because they wanted to amend it with a Bill of Rights (among other things) before ratifying it. Even though they were actual federalists, they wrote the Anti-Federalist Papers and called themselves Republicans (not to be confused with the modern G. O. P., the party of Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt, Reagan, et al). See page 33.

This book provides the cool details that would make American History more interesting to the average bored pupil. As a history major, I ate it up!

The famous Constitutional phrase “high crimes and misdemeanors” is explained beginning on page 79 in connection to the impeachment trial of Justice Samuel Chase.

Judicial activism has not new. It has just become more obvious due to sex, crime, and race-related cases, not to mention the “separation between church and state.” See 175ff. Does current practice allow for the free exercise of religion in the public square? For Christianity, no, but yes for virtually every other doctrine under the sun. Originally intended to prevent the Federal government from having an official religion (denomination) for the country’s as many states already had themselves, now this has morphed into what amounts to a war on Christianity and a defense for secular humanism as the official religion of public schools.

By examining American history, the author presents a convincing case for a host of changes in American governance that appear to be not in the spirit the Constitution was originally written. “Strict constructionalist” judges, contrary to the term used to describe them, actually interpret what the original words actually say. When Justice Antonin Scalia spoke at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis while I was a seminarian, much of what he had said was something good judges have in common with good interpreters of Scripture. Instead of reading into the text what we would like to see, we are given a draw out of the text what is written in plain black-and-white.

PJC
**DVD Movies**

**How Sweet the Sound**


This DVD is a must-buy for those who love the famous hymn of the same title and for all Christians who want to learn about Christian witness and action in the so-called public square. William Wilberforce finds purpose for his life as a Christian member of the British Parliament in a life-long crusade to end the slave trade and slavery itself in the British Empire, decades before the American Civil War.

Properly given a PG rating due to “material involving slavery and some mild language,” the viewer is enlightened to the evils of man’s inhumanity to man both then and now. Slavery still is practiced in some corners of the world even in the 21st Century.

What may be surprising to some, the tune NEW BRITAIN, LSB number, was not originally associated with the beloved text written by Anglican clergyman and former slave ship Captain John Newton. The tune was first found in the 1831 Virginia Harmony, an American hymnbook. Ioan Gruffudd, who portrays Wilberforce, sings Newton’s text to this tune relatively early in the film and the movie closes with the now iconic sound of bagpipes playing this American folk-tune.

Add this DVD to your home library, especially if you missed it in the theater.

**Sweet Truth in Song**


Coming soon to a congregation near you! Singing the Faith invites the listener/viewer to discover God’s Word proclaimed in a rich heritage of music that faithfully confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.”

(DVD notes). No compromise of message. No compromise of musicianship. This resource will aid the pastor and family in exposing Lutherans (and potential Lutherans) to the wealth that is the Lutheran Musical Heritage. Whet your whistle (and that of your congregation) by viewing this Demo DVD, and order the Complete Package (forthcoming) at $24.95, an affordable price for every family and any Lutheran congregation!

We can’t wait to see the full version!

**Online**

*Liber Usualis, Budget Edition*


Are printed editions of the *Liber* too much for your budget? Consider this electronic alternative!

**Resources**

*Need New Paraments?*


Does your congregation have a set of paraments (or more than one) in a state of disrepair? Are you looking to replace that faded and well-used green set?

Consider Peace and Joy of Garden Grove, CA. The welcome message on their website reads: “We look forward to working with you to make your place of worship a beautiful sanctuary where the Lord’s peace and joy is always present. You will find our work plain yet graceful, just as Jesus is humble and magnificent at the same time.

“We are particularly proud of our custom service, which enables us to create or reproduce any motif you desire for one-of-a-kind items. All we need is a
photo (film, digital, or slide), or even a drawing, to begin the process.

“Once you choose to order from us, you will receive works of quality and art that have been embroidered with the sincerity of our God’s love.”

This is the first time we have received a parament as a review item! And we are grateful!

We were sent the Pulpit parament of their green “Bread of Life” set. I liked that it was a brighter green than the more olive green that adorns so many LCMS altars and pastors. Clearly intended for Holy Communion, the gold emphasizes the cross. Striking colors! If you’re viewing this in color, the grapes on the other two parts of this set also grab your attention. (Stoles, banners, and additional coordinating paraments are available, of course.) Excellent stitching. Very professionally constructed. (My mother was a Home Ec Teacher. I guess she taught me more than how to sew on a button. 😊)

The art on these paraments, as well as their banners, chasubles and stoles and funeral palls is modern without looking dated. Classic design! Simple, elegant, and appropriate for the Lord’s House.

Contact “PnJ” soon for a copy of their new catalog.

PJC

Books Received


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<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>Celebration! Boe Memorial Chapel: To Dedicate a Renewed Boe Memorial Chapel and New Holtkamp Organ</td>
<td>Chan, Simon</td>
<td>St. Olaf Records</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$24.98</td>
<td><a href="http://www.stolafrecords.com">www.stolafrecords.com</a> (L)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liturgical Theology: The Church as Worshipping Community</td>
<td>Chan, Simon</td>
<td>InterVarsity Press</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>$22.00</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ivpress.com">www.ivpress.com</a> (P)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Wit of Martin Luther</td>
<td>Gritsch, Eric W.</td>
<td>Augsburg Fortress</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>$7.00</td>
<td><a href="http://www.augsburgfortress.org">www.augsburgfortress.org</a> (800) 328-4648 (BN)</td>
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<tr>
<td>In Search of Spirituality: Finding a Way through the Spiritual Maze</td>
<td>Green, Michael</td>
<td>Monarch Books</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>$11.99</td>
<td><a href="http://kregel.gospelcom.net">http://kregel.gospelcom.net</a> (LHP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Church as Worshiping Community</td>
<td>Harrison, Matthew C.</td>
<td>Concordia</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>$14.99</td>
<td>(800) 325-3040. <a href="http://www.cph.org">www.cph.org</a> (LHP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Musica Christi: A Lutheran Aesthetic</td>
<td>Hendrickson, Marion Lars.</td>
<td>Peter Lang</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>$73.95</td>
<td><a href="http://www.peterlang.net">www.peterlang.net</a> (LHP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Works of David Henkel Evangelical Lutheran Library Series 1</td>
<td>Henkel, David</td>
<td>Lutheran Legacy</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>$35.00</td>
<td><a href="http://www.lutheranlegacy.org">www.lutheranlegacy.org</a> (LHP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saint Paul'srcy Greek: See and Hear Flashcards on Your mp3 Player, Cell Phone and Computer</td>
<td>Hoffeditz, David M. and J. Michael Thigpen</td>
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<td>484</td>
<td>$54.99</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cph.org">www.cph.org</a> (LHP)</td>
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<td>On the Nature of Theology and Scripture (Theological Commonplaces 1)</td>
<td>Gerhard, Johann. Translated by Richard J. Dinda.</td>
<td>Concordia</td>
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<td>iVocab Biblical Greek: See and Hear Flashcards on Your mp3 Player, Cell Phone and Computer</td>
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**Notes:**
- Where available, ISBNs and prices are provided.
- Pages and prices may vary depending on edition and format.


Luther, Martin. Edited and translated by Philip D. W. Krey and Peter D. S. Krey. Preface by Timothy J. Wengert. Luther’s Spirituality. The


Tappert, Theodore G., editor. Selected Writings of Martin Luther. (Four Volumes: 1517-1520, 1520-1523, 1523-1526, 1529-1546). 60 Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2007. 484, 408, 483, and 403 pages, respectively. Four paperback volumes in a slipcase. $60.00. www.augsburgfortress.org (800) 328-4648 (LHP)


Thoma, Christopher I. Feeding the Lambs: A Worship Primer for Teachers of Children. Enumclaw, WA/Fenton, MI: Pleasant Word, 2008. 160 Pages. $15.99 (+ $2.00 for shipping and handling). (CPH item number 177418) Chris Thoma, 345 N. East Street, Fenton, MI 48430 cthoma@charter.net (LHP)


Notes

A Closing Thought

C. F. W. Walther on Chanting

The first president of the Missouri Synod worked long and hard to restore a common historic liturgy to the church when so many churches were following their own devices. C. F. W. Walther's efforts received some negative feedback. He responded in a publication that he edited for many years: Der Lutheraner, as in this example, translated from the July 19, 1853, issue, volume 9, number 24, page 163. (Reprinted from LOGIA, Epiphany 1999, p. 63 with thanksgiving for LOGIA as a "free conference in print.")

Whenever the divine service once again follows the old Evangelical-Lutheran agendas (or church books), it seems that many raise a great cry that it is "Roman Catholic": "Roman Catholic" when the pastor chants "The Lord be with you" and the congregation responds by chanting "and with thy spirit"; "Roman Catholic" when the pastor chants the collect and the blessing and the people respond with a chanted "Amen."

Even the simplest Christian can respond to this outcry: "Prove to me that this chanting is contrary to the Word of God, then I too will call it 'Roman Catholic' and have nothing more to do with it. However, you cannot prove this to me."

If you insist upon calling every element in the divine service "Romish" that has been used by the Roman Catholic Church, it must follow that the reading of the Epistle and Gospel is also "Romish." Indeed, it is mischief to sing or preach in church, for the Roman Church has done this also...

Those who cry out should remember that the Roman Catholic Church possesses every beautiful song of the old orthodox church. The chants and antiphons and responses were brought into the church long...
before the false teachings of Rome crept in. This Christian Church since the beginning, even in the Old Testament, has derived great joy from chanting… For more than 1700 years orthodox Christians have participated joyfully in the divine service. Should we, today, carry on by saying that such joyful participation is “Roman Catholic”? God forbid!

Therefore, as we continue to hold and to restore our wonderful divine services in places where they have been forgotten, let us boldly confess that our worship forms do not tie us with the modern sects or with the church of Rome; rather, they join us to the one, holy Christian Church that is as old as the world and is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

Liturgy, Hymnody & Pulpit Quarterly Book Review will return in June. In addition, issues of our Liturgy, Hymnody & Pulpit newsletter (one page, front and back) are also available. Visit our website for archives and other resources.

http://wy.lcms.org/LHP/QBR
Reviewed in This Issue...

Women Pastors?
Christ Have Mercy
Pagan Christianity?
Logos Libronix Scholar’s Library
Leviticus (Concordia Commentary)
Koine Greek New Testament on CD

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From the Editor

Humor in All Its Seriousness

There’s nothing funny about what is said from some pulpits these days. Controversial statements by preachers in Chicago should remind every preacher that he should stick with Scripture, that which we know to be true and sure. “Never say something in funeral sermon that you don’t know to be true.” Such good advice should apply to every sermon we preach.

It’s also not funny how much “screen time” many Americans, especially pastors, have each day and each week at the expense of not enough face time in the parish. Apart from the obvious sinful temptations online and on the tube, screens in general have the danger of becoming “time vacuums” and distractions from our vocations before the Lord. Although I can appreciate the many blessings of TV, computers, the Internet, iPods and mp3 players in general, and the diversion of video games like Civilization IV, I’m an old-fashioned guy in many ways. I prefer books, but even they bear the burden of the “always having your nose in a book” connotation. We should balance our important study AND our pastoral work among the people of the congregation alongside family time.

This year I’ve taken the time to explain what kinds of resources you’ll find under the headings within LHP Quarterly Book Review.

Hymnody Reviews are all about hymns, from hymn texts and hymn tunes to hymnals, hymnal resources like the ELW Guitar Accompaniment Edition, novels like the Mr. Pipes series, biographies of hymnwriters, and hymn recordings. Overall, this can be an umbrella heading for church music.

Under the heading Pulpit Reviews, one can see a variety of items as this issue exemplifies: Bible software, original language resources, commentaries, and references for preaching.

The Rev. Paul J Cain, Jr.

The Rev. Paul J Cain, Editor
"Next to Theology... Music: Luther's Musical Thinking and Hymn Improvisation,"
Part I
By Dr. Steven Hoffman

The following is an excerpt of a lecture given by Kantor Dr. Steven Hoffman. The lecture is entitled, "Next to Theology... Music: Luther's Musical Thinking and Hymn Improvisation." Dr. Hoffman gave this lecture at the Conference on Organ and Church Music at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, June 15-17, 2008.

In the words of St. Paul: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

"Next to theology, God's greatest gift is music." This oft quoted statement of Sixteenth-Century Reformer, Dr. Martin Luther, has reason to give great hope to us all as clergy, musicians, and laity alike. We can take comfort in the fact that, according to Luther, Christian theology comes directly from God. We can take solace that Luther's statement lends credence to our vocations as theologians and church musicians. But, what is at the heart of Luther's statement?

What is the greater breadth and depth of his famous quote? We will explore Luther's statement in two ways: First, we will examine the relationship between sacred theology and music through the lens of Luther's statement; and, second, we will examine this relationship as it applies to hymn improvisation and interpretation. In the end, my remarks are not so much a how-to approach to hymn improvisation, but I speak of a theological and textual frame of mind, a Christocentric point of departure, with which to approach hymnic and liturgical improvisation. May God grant this unto us all for the sake of Christ. Amen.

SAH

Dr. Steven Hoffman is Organist-in-Residence at the University of Wyoming. He is the Kantor at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church and Campus Center in Laramie, and at King of Glory Lutheran Church in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Dr. Hoffman holds degrees from the University of South Dakota and the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Dr. Hoffman's interests include the development of an organ instruction program with learning centers throughout Wyoming with the goal of enriching the skills of organists and increasing the awareness of the organ as the "King of Instruments." He is currently authoring a book exploring the relationship between Lutheran theology and music during the Reformation.
Guest Commentary

“Another Type of Revitalization”

by the Rev. Terry Cripe, Ohio District President

Original Source: http://oh.lcms.org/Home/Blogs/tabid/156/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/220/Another-Type-of-Revitalization-ABLAZE-5.aspx

Reprinted with Permission (05/24/08)

This month I’d like to talk about revitalization. If you remember the goals of ABLAZE, you recall that one of them is to revitalize 2000 congregations by 2017. While a number of our congregations have asked to hear a presentation on this process, and while some have already begun the process, I want to draw your attention to a different kind of revitalization that four of our District pastors have been involved in at one time or another in their ministry (and not all of these happened while they were in the Ohio District).

When they reached their congregations, these four pastors made a surprising and sad discovery: their congregations were no longer Lutheran. Oh, they were Lutheran in name, but certainly not Lutheran in teaching and practice. In several instances, some lay leaders and members proved to be quite hostile to any suggestion that Lutheran teaching should be reintroduced. Yet, to their credit, these pastors very patiently and lovingly set about to bring those congregations back into something resembling Lutheran congregations. For the most part, they taught and preached from Luther's Small Catechism. In some cases the teaching was received happily; in other cases, life became very difficult and challenging for them, especially when strong objections came or when people packed up and left. But these pastors persevered and with God's help, most saw progress. To their credit, when some laity saw that they were now being taught Lutheran doctrine, they left. They admitted they really did not believe our Lutheran teaching after all. I commend them for that integrity.

I once thought that reviewing the catechism with the congregation on a regular basis was pretty boring. I don't think so any more. What pastors know by heart is not always embedded so firmly in the hearts and minds of those we shepherd. A daily barrage of "Christian" radio and TV can muddy our distinctives over time. How pastors re-establish Lutheran teaching varies with each congregation and with each pastor's ability to apply the catechism to today's American version of Christianity.

These pastors could have taken an easier route. They could have rolled with the situation and continued down the path they found. But instead, they took the road less traveled. The saving Gospel of Jesus Christ, minus legalism, minus decision-theology, minus pietism, was restored in all of its comforting beauty and power. Wherever people hear that their sins are forgiven and that through faith in this Christ, a glorious eternity awaits them, a fruitful response comes and the congregation is strengthened.

I am fully aware that other pastors share the same desire to see their congregations revitalized in just that way, too. Restoring a Lutheran identity is a commendable task. But do you have the patience? Do you possess a winsome spirit? Can you be happy with progress sometimes measured in millimeters? If not, instead of revitalization, you may bring even worse discord and division that now has been agitated by a strident personality. It was said of our Lord that “a bruised reed He would not break, a smoldering wick he would not extinguish.” Besides a love for the Truth, an evangelical spirit coupled with a love for your people must be in any pastor who undertakes such an ambitious and praiseworthy revitalization project.

Without them, however, the last state of such a congregation may become worse than the first.

Posted Monday, May 05, 2008 7:47 AM by Terry Cripe

TLC
Guest Commentary
“Buy These Envelopes”
by the Rev. Paul T. McCain,
Concordia Publishing House

Original Source:
http://cyberbrethren.typepad.com/cyberbrethren/2008/04/support-luthera.html
Reprinted with Permission
April 10, 2008

You know that I tend not to mince words or speak in vague generalities. So, I need to talk to you about something that’s on my heart and mind. It has to do with Concordia Publishing House. I think (I hope!) that the publishing task CPH is given to do on behalf of your ministry and your congregation’s ministry is important to you. We pray we are of service to you. Over the years I have received a question that I’m always a bit shy to answer, but no more. Here is the question. “Paul, how can we help support you and the work of CPH?”

How? Simple. Use CPH resources. Now, before you say, “Oh, we are!” Please let me ask you to wait a moment before responding. I need to share some information with you that you may not know. There is an enormous misconception out there that CPH makes all its money by selling the wonderful theological books you know and love. We love all our books too! But, we rarely actually make money at the very bottom line on these books. So why do we do them? Because we are Concordia Publishing House. We publish books and resources uniquely and distinctly Lutheran. We publish books you can not find anywhere else. And I know you have a lot of choices.

So, how can we afford to publish these kinds of books? We are able to publish these sorts of books because of...are you ready for this....because we sell offering envelopes! Yes, you read that correctly: offering envelopes. And every-Sunday bulletin covers and day school curricula. And Sunday School materials and Vacation Bible School. That’s how it works. Because we sell offering envelopes, Sunday School, VBS, and other curricular materials, we are able to afford to continue to deliver to the entire Lutheran Church, worldwide, and particularly The LCMS, sound, faithful treasures of Lutheran theology: either classics or new works.

Let me also clear up another misunderstanding. CPH is not subsidized by the LCMS. We receive no Synodical funding to do our work. We are required to be entirely self-funding and self-sufficient.

Therefore, may I respectfully make a request of you, and here I’m speaking most directly to you pastors: Please always consider making CPH your first, and only, choice when you purchase offering envelopes, and Sunday School materials, and VBS, etc.

I invite you to call our offering envelope department, if you are not already using us, and talk to them about the range of options we offer you. And there is an impressive range of services. And, if you are saying, “But we get our offering envelopes less expensively from Company X-Y-Z” I want to say this to you: We will work with you and do whatever it takes to earn, and to keep, your offering envelope business.

So, if you are not using CPH offering envelopes, please consider that, strange as it may sound, this is actually one of the very best ways you can support faithful Lutheran publishing. Please call our offering envelope team and talk to them. They are eager to serve you! Call 800-325-3040. I ask you to pass this message around, and among, your fellow pastors and wherever you can. I thank you for your help and support!!

PTM
From the Pulpit

“Servants of Christ and Stewards of the Mysteries of God,”
A Pastoral Conference Sermon, Spring 2008

by the Rev. Richard O Boche, Wyoming District President

“This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy [faithful]. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact I do not even judge myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore, do not pronounce judgment before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.”

1 Corinthians 4:1-5

Dearly beloved in Christ Jesus, especially brothers in Christ:

We live in a time when great confusion and misunderstanding exist, especially in regard to the Office of the Holy Ministry. We see it in attitudes that range from “everyone a minister” to only what a pastor does is truly God’s work of ministry.

It surfaces in the attitude which would reduce the divine call to a mere job. And if certain standards of achievement are not met, one resigns. And when success, not faithfulness is the criteria for evaluating a pastor, even to the point, where statistics alone become the measure of ministry.

We have it thrust upon us with “business models” for running the congregation, where the type of “organization” predetermines success or failure, to the other extreme where everyone simply waits around & does nothing without any sense of urgency to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In one sense, nothing has changed since the time of Paul’s letter to Corinth. In Corinth, confusion and chaos were also the order of the day. Divisions existed among people about the “best” of God’s messengers: “I follow Paul, or I follow Apollos, or I follow Cephas, or I follow Christ.” Those mantras spoke volumes about their understanding of ministry, didn’t they?

Most likely, Sunday dinner evaluations of ministry must have been common also: Paul bluntly states: “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.” (1:17)

Paul quotes Isaiah 29:14 to point out God’s intention to debunk man’s wisdom: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

The power of God is not in worldly wisdom, nor in man’s wisdom, but in preaching the Cross of Christ, the power of God is proclaimed, the wisdom of God in the flesh is announced!

Why is this so crucial and necessary for a servant of Christ, one who is a faithful steward?

Listen to Paul as the Spirit would teach and encourage us tonight: “and I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” (2:1-5)

Here is the answer clearly stated for preaching Christ crucified! That the faith of others rests…., not on the wisdom of men…Not on fancy and flowery images…, nor in warm fuzzy feelings, but in the power of God, the gifts He provides in Christ Jesus, so that people may be saved in this life, and for life everlasting (I Cor. 15). To this end Christ sends you into His Church, and into the harvest fields today!

Like Paul, you are His servants, servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, Him whose ascension on high to rule

Liturgy, Hymnody, & Pulpit Quarterly Book Review
http://wy.lcms.org/LHP/QBR
over all things we just observed. The word used here for servant is not doulos, a word we might expect, but hypéretas, which also means “servant,” but with a special nuance. It means “attendant or helper,” “one who assists a higher master”, and includes the thought that “the servant’s will is to do his master’s will.” In other words, a servant of Christ is not free to do his own thing. He does not assert his own will or insert his own opinion into the message, is not one who goes forth for personal gain, and aggrandizement, not even to satisfy the felt needs and nuances of the congregation. But a true servant is “about the Father’s business,” just as Jesus Himself was about the Father’s business!

Thus, on the one hand, the word servant here reminds us of our lowly position.

We are mere servants, unimportant in and of ourselves, as Paul states: “What then is Apollos? And what then is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to each one...therefore neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but the one who gives growth is God.” (I Cor. 3:7)

Therefore, in spite of what our sinful human nature might like to think at times, we are mere servants, instruments of the Lord, His clay pots, people set apart to serve Him as He wills and desires, maybe even to suffer at times, perhaps even to die as His servant!

We are here for a time, to do His will; and one day soon, called home. But while we wait, our will is to do His will, to serve Him, humbly, faithfully.

And not even as servants who might deserve special recognition, or rewards, for in Luke 17 Jesus said: “so you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘we are unworthy servants, we have only done what was our duty.’”

“Unworthy servants.” How often do we forget that phrase...as pastors? Or in a larger context, as members of His Church?

Yet, on the other hand, you are servants with great responsibility as pastors and also described here as “stewards of the mysteries of God.” This is the “oikonomos” word, translated as “house manager, steward,” like Joseph in Potiphar’s house, as one doing the Pharaoh’s work, a trusted manager, or steward, of the master’s goods, treasures, and wealth.

In many of the parables of Jesus regarding stewardship we see that emphasized. The owner goes away, and leaves his goods in the care of the steward. He is left on his own, with all the owner’s wealth, and goods to administer. When the master returns the steward is brought forward for an accounting; faithfulness is commended, rewarded; Unfaithfulness is revealed, then condemned, and also rewarded, but with judgment!

So faithfulness in a steward is expected by the one who sets the steward in place: “Moreover it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.”

And to that end you might read Chemnitz’s Enchiridion some time. He sets forth at least 6 measures of “faithfulness” there for pastors, concluding that if any be found lazy, negligent, and unfaithful, they must render account before Christ, the chief of shepherds.

What has the Lord entrusted to pastors for stewardship? Paul uses the phrase here “stewards of the mysteries of God.” Broadly speaking, this word mystery refers to many treasures of God. These include the great “truths” spoken of, and revealed in the Scriptures, such as: The Trinity, the virgin birth, and even that Gentiles “partake of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.” (Eph. 3:6)

Our Lutheran Confessions reference this passage [1 Corinthians 4:1] when speaking about the Gospel and the sacraments (Apology XXIV, 80, on “The Mass,” Tappert, p. 264). These are the means of grace, by which God has chosen to offer to sinful man forgiveness of sins, faith and life everlasting, His saving grace in Christ Jesus, the crucified and resurrected Savior.” These are the “mysteries” of God, treasures to bring salvation, create faith, nourish and strengthen faith!

You, dear brothers, are stewards of those mysteries, once hidden, now revealed. You have the high and noble privilege to administer the Lord’s gifts for blotting out sin in hearts troubled & trembling in fear of God’s wrath, for renewing faith, and strengthening faith until the day of the Lord Jesus. What a joy to bring the peace of God into hearts and lives of people today!

And when Satan and your sinful flesh burdens you with that word “faithful,” remember that the Gospel is for you, the sacraments are for you also, not just to “administer, to manage, to guard, protect, dispense, disburse,” but given by a gracious God for you to hear, receive, believe, and trust, to comfort and strengthen you for doing your work as His servant/steward!

So the Lord invites you to hear and believe His Good News in Christ Jesus also! The Blood of Jesus Christ covers all your sins, every single one! The waters of baptism washed you clean, clothed you in Christ! The body and blood of Jesus Christ are present here for you tonight for the forgiveness of your sins, renewal of your heart, guarding your faith!
And dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Jesus rose from the dead for you! When death comes, and it will come to all, it cannot keep you in its grip, for Jesus will come again, He will raise the dead, your loved ones, and you, to join the company of heaven, angels, archangels, Jesus! You will enjoy an imperishable body, raised in glory, bearing His image. This “mystery” is revealed to you! But also is yours in Christ Jesus!

When Paul nears the end of that great comforting resurrection chapter, (15) He writes: “But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our lord Jesus Christ.” That’s your assurance as a servant of Christ Jesus, tonight and always. That’s your certainty and hope as a steward of the mysteries of God. God has already given you the victory through the Lord Jesus Christ.

He then concludes this chapter with added assurance as you go forth to serve: “therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the lord, knowing that in the lord, your labor is not in vain.” That is the precious promise you have as you serve the Lord.

In the Lord, your labor is not in vain! Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

LHP Book Review

Conversations with the LORD


It is a strange assignment to review a work of Martin Luther. His works, written 500 years ago, have been thoroughly examined during the last half-millennium. Especially strange is the assignment to review a classic must-read like his instructions on prayer. The pastor who does not own this in some form -- volume 43 of the American Edition (AE) of Luther's Works will do nicely -- needs to update their library to include this.

Luther's instructions on prayer were written to his friend Peter the Barber, who asked him, much like the disciples to our Lord, "How shall I pray?" Luther's advice was based on the catechism, encouraging meditation on the Ten Commandments, Creed and Lord's Prayer. It is the practical application of Luther's advice in the preface to the Large Catechism that the true theologian spends his days mediating on chief parts of our faith. If you don't own AE volume 43, and aren't planning on ordering it this afternoon, at least get this version.

As for the booklet itself, it faithfully reproduces Luther's text from the AE - no surprise since they simply obtained the rights from Augsburg Fortress to reprint it. The difference between this and the AE is the introduction. In the AE, the introduction gives an historical background - which is bittersweet to say the least. (That is all I will say - read it yourself to find out more.) The introduction in this pamphlet gives an apologia for why a Presbyterian spiritualist publishing house chose to publish prayer instructions from Martin Luther. Perhaps the most astonishing thing is not that they decided to print it, but that their reasons for doing so make sense. The Lutheran Pastor would not agree with everything that is written in the introduction, but the reasons, from a
Presbyterian perspective, make sense, without too greatly compromising the text of Luther's work. I expected the introduction to disavow and distort the greatness of Luther's writing. Instead, it speaks to the genius of Luther that even those who disagree with him on the specifics of teaching agree that he treats scripture and the chief articles of doctrine rightly.

Of course, there is the usual falderal about the polemic of Luther's day no longer being as useful in our own. On this I would strongly disagree - our age needs more theological polemic to clearly define right and wrong, not less to blur the lines between truth and lies. (John 8:20-59)

Ultimately, does this belong in a Lutheran Parish? The Luther part does indeed, and any Lutheran library (especially a pastor's library) is incomplete without it. From a Lutheran perspective, the introduction would be better left unwritten. While it speaks to Luther's genius, it adds nothing to it, and subtly changes the focus of Luther's work from the Word of God to the self. Perhaps if the introduction were cut out it would be good to hand out to members.

Ultimately, the booklet does its greatest service by bringing up the question: Why are we not publishing this ourselves!? It makes Lutherans so uncomfortable? Why is it, in most major cities, that the major works of Bach are more often performed by non-Lutheran churches? Why is it that Luther's very good words on prayer are consigned to the "pastor's library" of the American Edition of Luther's Works, instead of produced in pamphlet form for pastors to hand out like candy?

And most importantly, when will we learn that the writings of Luther are better reading for our laypeople than 95% the drivel that is published by any publishing house.

The new Readers Edition of the Book of Concord broke all sales records. Perhaps it is time for another bold initiative, putting some of Luther's more practical and shorter works in pamphlet form for bulk purchase.

There's really no good reason why every congregation in the LCMS should be without this DVD Bible Study.

If you have never made use of a video Bible Study, this would be a great one to be your first. If you've used video before, this one will impress you! It will appeal to lovers of history, music, and Lutheranism!

Four sessions of study will take you through 80 minutes of video in four chronological segments:

- T Martin Luther
- Late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Lutheran hymn writers: Martin Schalling, Philipp Nicholai, and Paul Gerhardt
- The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: J. S. Bach, Felix Mendelssohn, Friedrich Layriz, and the “Confessional Revival”
- Lutheran hymns of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries

http://www.goodshepherdinstitute.org/dvd/index.php has reproducible handouts.

This DVD and study guide was wisely designed to be compatible with TLH, LBW, LW, CW, ELH, ELW, and LSB. See page nine of the study guide for a list of some hymns from 1524 hymnals included in the previous list. LSB includes them all (as do LW, CW, and ELH) one more than TLH. ELW omits seven, including Luther's hymn on the Ten Commandments.
The Fourth segment features the late hymnwriters Jaroslav and Herman Stuempfle. “Thy Strong Word” and its author, Martin Franzmann, Stephen Starke and other living Lutheran hymnwriters.

The DVD is visually engaging. The featured speakers are experts in their field, not only with regard to scholarship, but also as musicians.

“Singing the Faith invites the listener/viewer to discover God’s Word proclaimed in a rich heritage of music that faithfully confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. It is a study of the history of Lutheran congregational song featuring:

- Christopher Boyd Brown, Boston University School of Theology
- Kevin J. Hildebrand, Concordia Theological Seminary
- Martin Jean, Yale University
- Robin Leaver, Westminster Choir College
- Richard C. Resch, Concordia Theological Seminary
- Carl F. Schalk, Concordia University Chicago
- Stephen P. Starke, St. John Lutheran Church, Bay City, Michigan
- Daniel Zager, Eastman School of Music

“With featured performances by:
- Martin Jean, Yale University
- The Bach Vespers Choir of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, New York City, Rick Erickson, Cantor
- Craig Cramer, University of Notre Dame

“The complete package will cost $24.95 and include:
- 80 minute DVD with Dolby Digital stereo (viewable in four 20-minute segments)
- 32 page teacher’s guide
- Reproducible classroom handout”

Singing the Faith: Living the Lutheran Musical Heritage is one of the large-scale projects advertised at the GSI website. Donors are welcome. Other projects include:

**The Good Shepherd Operational Budget**

Gifts in any amount help with the day-to-day operation of the Institute. Activities include preparation of the annual conference brochure, paid advertising, honoraria and expenses of conference speakers, and production of the annual journal. (Online Giving Code: GSI-1)

**The Good Shepherd Endowment Fund**

Larger gifts are welcomed to help ensure the on-going development and future of The Good Shepherd Institute. Concordia Theological Seminary has established an independent endowment fund account for this purpose. (Online Giving Code: GSI-2)

**Specific Projects of the Institute**

Three major projects are presently in production and are in need of support.

**For All His Benefits**

D. Richard Stuckwisch (Online Giving Code: GSI-4)

A monograph (similar to The Good Shepherd Institute release on the life and work of Walter Buszin) about the history of recent Lutheran hymnals. This is an important and fascinating story that has not yet been fully told. PRODUCTION COST FOR THIS RESOURCE: $20,000

**Luther: Liturgies, Chants, and Hymns**

Robin A. Leaver (Online Giving Code: GSI-5)

A new edition and translation of Volume 53 of Luther’s Works, reflecting the latest research. PRODUCTION COST FOR THIS RESOURCE: $45,000

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http://wy.lcms.org/LHP/QBR
You may contribute to any of these categories and projects of The Good Shepherd Institute directly through the Concordia Theological Seminary "Online Giving" Web form (see below). Simply enter an Online Giving Code (i.e., GSI-1) for any of the projects that you wish to help sponsor.

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http://www.goodshepherdinstitute.org/giving_opportunities/index.php

_Singing the Faith_, a production of the Good Shepherd Institute of Pastoral Theology and Sacred Music, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne and is distributed by Concordia Publishing House. Ask for item # 99-2260.

QBR looks forward to the future projects of the Good Shepherd Institute, the journals of its annual November conferences, and the two other major projects of GSI.

PJC

**LHP Book Review**

_Those who are wise will shine_  


With the publication of _Wisdom Books_, there are only two volumes yet to be published in the monumental _The St. John’s Bible_. Each of the seven volumes reproduces a portion of the hand-lettered illuminated Bible, the first of its kind since the invention of the printing press.

Donald Jackson is the director of the project as well as a skilled illuminator. Commissioned by St. John’s Abbey and St. John’s University of Collegeville, Minnesota, The St. John’s Bible is a project that should be noted by every English-speaking Christian. The text of the New Revised Standard Version (including Apocrypha) is used in the SJB.

Many of _QBR_’s Lutheran readers may not be aware that the Apocrypha were included in German-language Bibles published by Concordia Publishing House. Since the transition to English, the apocrypha have largely disappeared in the LCMS and American Lutheranism. Martin Luther distinguished these books from the Old Testament and The New Testament and declared that while they were not divinely inspired, they were still worth reading. Until the English Standard Version has a translation of the Apocrypha, we have the King James, NRSV, or RSV.

The opening art facing the book of Job contrasts Job’s prosperity to his great personal losses. Comfort, the purple of royalty, and the confidence of faith is portrayed in the familiar Job 19 text, “For I know that my Redeemer lives…” Another piece conveys the overwhelming question of God: “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the Earth?” (Job 38). By the end of the book, order is restored both in the narrative, artwork, and calligraphy as Job 42 returns to prose (instead of the poetic form).

Gold leaf continues to run through this set showing the Lord at work. The value of wisdom is shown in illumination: gold! See Proverbs 1. The cover art is taken from Proverbs 9. The Seven Pillars of wisdom stand contrasted with the foolish.

Occasional verses are shown in red with a roman cross (†). They are Revised English Bible substitutions for the NRSV text. One such example is Proverbs 15:3. The description of a “capable wife” (Proverbs 31) is portrayed in quilt-like artwork.

The opening pages of Ecclesiastes portray the vanity the Teacher, Solomon soon describes and of evil under heaven. The concluding illustration conveys the hope of “bread upon the waters” coming back. The joyousness of Song of Solomon is seen in gardens, plants, and butterflies.

Typically, the English text of each Old Testament Bible book is introduced with the Hebrew title. With The Wisdom of Solomon, etc., the Greek titles are given since there are no Hebrew originals. Even with computer preparation of each individual page, sometimes lines were forgotten. This doesn’t happen much. For Wisdom 7:7, part b of the verse was mistakenly omitted. A helpful worker bee lifts the rest of that verse into place using rope and pulley. ☺ If only my typos could look so good! Wisdom 7:26 is depicted on the pages of Sirach 35-36.
My favorite illuminations are the four-part scene entitled, “Creation, Covenant, Shekinah, Kingdom Wisdom of Solomon 10–11,” shown below.

“‘I was there,’ proclaims wisdom in Wisdom of Solomon chapters 10 through 12. There from the beginning of time, when God formed creation. There at the initial fall in the garden, and when God destroyed the earth by flood, only to bring Noah and his family into a new creation. There when God led Israel out of Egypt in a column of fire by night and cloud by day, coming to dwell in the tabernacle. And there speaking through the prophets and dwelling in the temple, even to the end of the age when the New Jerusalem will be established with God as king.

“It has been noted that this illumination suggests a comparison to the four elements: earth, water, fire, and air. It draws on previous illuminations, including the seven bars of creation in the first panel and a detail from Ezekiel’s vision of the restored temple in the final panel. The second shows the dove returning to Noah with an olive branch announcing the earth is coming back to life after the flood. Melded into the third panel like gold flame is the Hebrew word translated Shekinah, God’s presence. God first appears to Moses as fire in the burning bush, and it is this God who leads the Exodus as a column of fire and then reveals his glory to the people on Mount Zion.

“Gold and silver bars link the four panels together. They are representative of the joint forces of divinity and wisdom, ever present in the unfolding drama of God’s relationship with humankind” (publisher’s website).

To this day, calligraphers are sought out to inscribe documents for special occasions: weddings, baptisms, confirmations, etc. The elegance and beauty of handwritten script is a natural fit for the Sacred Scriptures even in the Third Millennium and The St. John’s Bible commissioned in celebration.

“An internationally respected calligrapher, Donald Jackson is the artistic director and illuminator of The Saint John’s Bible. He is a Senior Scribe to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth’s Crown Office at the House of Lords in the United Kingdom, a position in which he is responsible for the creation of official state documents. He is an elected Fellow and past Chairman of the prestigious Society of Scribes and Illuminators. His 30-year retrospective exhibition, Painting with Words, premiered at The Minneapolis Institute of Arts in Minneapolis, Minnesota in August, 1988 and traveled to 13 museums and galleries. Donald Jackson works with a team of theologians and artists from Saint John’s University and Abbey on The Saint John’s Bible. From his scriptorium in Wales, he oversees scribes, artists, and craftsmen who work with him on the handwriting and illumination of the seven-volume, 1,150-page Bible” (Publisher’s website).

It would be wise to add Wisdom Books to your coffee table.

PJC

LHP CD Review


St. Paul Lutheran of Escondido, California is to be commended not only for hosting a Conference on Christianity and Culture, but for making the two lectures by Rolf Preus and Burnell Eckardt available in CD audio Form to the wider church.

How does one confess the Truth of God’s Unchanging Word in Changing Times? Rev. Rolf D. Preus answers, “A confessional church is a confessing church. To be a confessional church is to regard the confessional writings of the church as authoritative over the church’s doctrine because these writings are drawn from the Holy Scriptures. To be a confessing church is to confess God’s truth in response to the various religious challenges that rise up against it. A confessional church is bound to the church of the past. A confessing church addresses
the issues of today. A confessing church that neglects the confessions will be captivated by whatever enthusiasm is currently most compelling. A confessional church that does not engage the religious culture of her day becomes irrelevant and concedes that the historic confessions of the church have little to say to us today.”

He concludes, “It is more important that our confession be true than that it be understood. We cannot control how others think or how they will receive what we say. We can only strive to speak as clearly as we can. We need to learn where and when to bend and where and when we cannot bend. We cannot deny the truth. We cannot confess what is not true. We can always confess what is true in a spirit of humility and reverence.

“To be a confessing Church in a pluralistic culture requires a humble stubbornness. Since people tend to look for truth within they also tend to regard our exclusive Christian claims as personal assaults against those who adhere to a different religion. Have you ever noticed how those who attack us for agreeing with our Lord Jesus that he is the only way to the Father will as often as not bring the Jews into the discussion? Are you saying that Jews must become Christians or be damned to hell? In this way we become not only intolerant religious bigots but anti-Semitic as well. Here is where a humble stubbornness is vital. We will not be intimidated and we will not respond to abuse by dishing it out ourselves. We simply confess what is true and leave the rest up to God.

There is no question that we live in a religious culture that despises what we hold to be precious. But those who are caught up in its spirit are not our enemies. We would all be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine had we not been delivered from the folly within ourselves by the Spirit of truth. We confess the gospel that has freed us from our own sin. We live by faith in it. To give testimony to it is no burden. It’s a joy. That’s because the gospel remains the power of God to save everyone who believes it.”

A confessional church has a confession to retain and confess. We confess Jesus Christ yesterday, today, forever, God who says, “I the Lord do not change.” Since that is true, His promises are rock-solid and sure.

The Rev. Rolf David Preus is pastor of First Confessional Lutheran Parish, First American Lutheran Church in Mayville, North Dakota; Grace Lutheran Church in Crookston, Minnesota; and First Evanger Lutheran Church in Fertile, Minnesota. First Confessional Lutheran Parish belongs to the Association of Confessional Lutheran Churches. http://www.christforus.org/index.htm

How does one worship as a Confessing Church in a Pluralistic Culture? Rev. Dr. Burnell F. Eckardt says, “When it comes to worship, the best and most noble confession of the Christian Church is seen when the Church is worshipping according to her liturgy.” We must resist, too. We have not yet struggled to the point of shedding of blood.

He points out that one of the concepts largely ignored in the “worship wars” is the fact the worship of the church is confession of the faith in precisely the way that the confession is “most needed and likely to be understood.” This is the second level of the discussion, once style and substance are understood to be inseparable.

Rather than being forced to worship differently than their Lutheran forebears (remember the “forced compromise” of the Prussian Union Agenda?), some Lutherans have willingly chosen to capitulate to American Evangelicalism and its so-called “contemporary worship.”

Eckardt, quoting Augustine, concludes, “Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee.” Christian worship focuses upon Christ. He is the Giver of all good gifts at Divine Service. Worship is not a show. The congregation is not an audience. The pastor and musicians are not entertainers. Worship is not to be man-centered like the culture. Lutheran Christians must respond not only to the Church Growth movement, but to the “societal idolatry” that inspired it.

The Rev. Dr. Burnell F. Eckardt, Jr. is pastor of Saint Paul Lutheran Church, Kewanee, Illinois. He is Editor-in-Chief of Gottesdienst. http://gottesdienst.org/ Visit his blog: http://gottesblog.blogspot.com/

Gottesdienst

I love the spoken word, and in some ways prefer it to the printed word. Hearing these will aid your retention better than the print versions, although those will be good long-term references, too.

As readers of QBR have come to know, resources are compared to the Holy Scriptures and measured against the Lutheran Confessions. We also look to
how well a resource retains the history liturgy and hymns of the Church. These CDs pass with flying colors. We have other practical standards, too. These recordings are also worth the $8 to purchase them, the two hours to listen, and room on your iPod or computer to store!

LHP Book Review

Gospel-inspired Compassion


The Social Gospel movement did the Christian Church no favors. In its zealously to visit the imprisoned, care for the sick, clothe the naked and feed the hungry and thirsty, it de-emphasized the Gospel itself, the gift of the forgiveness of sins. The Scriptures must be the “unifying force in the church” (164).

In response, many conservative Christians (118) allowed such social ministry to pass into the hands of mainline denominations, the Salvation Army and others, and secular government.

Christians have been given two important tasks, Gospel Outreach (Caring for our neighbor’s eternal needs: Telling the Good News about Jesus), and Human Care (Caring for our neighbor’s physical needs in this life: shelter, food, clothing, etc.). Both are important.

Sometimes one task gives us an opportunity to carry out the other. Caring for someone’s physical needs (Human Care) could get them curious about why you’re helping. Then you can share Jesus. In that case Human Care provides an opportunity for Gospel Outreach. Often we hear of a fellow Christian in physical need. In that case, past Gospel Outreach leads to an opportunity for Human Care.

Liturgy, Mission, and Service are blessings of the Church, but should not be called “marks of the church.” The Gospel is most important. The mercy proclaimed at Divine Service should be evident as Christians care for the physical and spiritual needs of their neighbors (99ff).

Christ Have Mercy by Matthew Harrison, Executive Director of LCMS World Relief and Human Care, is truly a handbook of “How to Put Your Faith in Action.” The author shows the intimate connection between Biblical theology and Christian practice, especially when it comes to showing mercy to those in any need. Harrison “has served parishes in Iowa and Indiana. In addition to his frequent contributions to periodicals, he has previously published translations of Herman Sasse and Johan Gerhard with Concordia” (back cover).

“Mercy—the mercy of Christ to and for us—and our demonstration of that mercy to those within and outside the Body of Christ is the key to the future of the Church, to mission and stewardship, to living our Christian lives together in love and forgiveness, to moving boldly and confidently into the future with courage in the Gospel. —from the Preface

“For two millennia Christians have echoed the pleas of blind men and beggars, “Christ, have mercy!” These words are part of the historic liturgy (the Kyrie) and have been sighed on deathbeds and in sick rooms and after natural and man-made disasters. But what does it mean to ask our Lord and Savior for mercy? and what about Christ’s command to be merciful, even as God has been merciful to us?

“Through Scripture study, real-life experiences, and the writings of Lutheran Church Fathers, Christ Have Mercy urges Christians to consider the innumerable opportunities we have to show mercy—to fellow Christians and to anyone God places in our path.

“Includes Study Guide (publisher’s website).

The Kyrie, “Lord, have mercy, Christ, have mercy, Lord, have mercy” is an ancient prayer of the church. It’s a personal favorite of mine, especially in the midst of a stressful day or at the end of a long day. It comes from Biblical narratives of Jesus’ mercy (20, et al). “The movement [action] is from God to man. It is Gospel! (22)

Justification is “The Heart of Mercy’s Heart” (Chapter 4) in addition to being the article of faith upon which the church stands or falls. The Gospel is the motivation for acts of mercy. Self-justification is alive and well from the streets of America to the streets of Kenya. Be sure to read Harrison’s poignant story about the Kenyan street boys (55).

“To forgive is the vocation of all Christians” (79). This is what it means to live “mercifully,” full of mercy.

Harrison takes on topics that challenge many Christians and even Lutherans today, such as closed communion (92), American individualism (115),
suffering (125), and acts of mercy beyond fellowship (148, 214) with Scriptural insight and a pastoral heart.

Works of mercy are among the seven duties of the office of the ministry (173). Harrison calls for Lutheran leadership in human care alongside Gospel outreach and faithfulness (187) especially in the cities of our nation (204). The author is a voice of our generation calling for repentance, faith, faithfulness to the Scriptures, and study of the Lutheran Confessions (229). These will be the foundation of confessional revival as well as corporate acts of mercy.

Like the author, I am grateful for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. We have room for growth in faith and knowledge of Scripture, faithfulness to what we have been given as well as to Christ’s mission of mercy. I would also like to commend the faithful work of Good News magazine (info@good-news.net 800-778-1132) and the Issues, Etc. radio show. I was deeply saddened by the cancellation of the latter and remain unsatisfied with the explanations behind its cancellation. For information about the new “Issues, Etc.” show, visit www.piratechristianradio.com

I found the study questions in the back of the book to be a good review of the main ideas of the book, as well as personally challenging.

Consider the wisdom of Julius Brohm: “Now what Christ says applies to every individual, truth faith’s fruit and proof—namely love, active, self-sacrificing, self-denying love—also applies to an entire community [Gemeine] of Christians. If the preaching of Christ has occurred with power in that community, if it has begun to grow deep roots, it will also be the case within the community as a whole that this love more and more will come into evidence. Works of love will no longer be those of individual members of the community; rather the community as a whole will take part in them” (121).

The Lord bless you toward that end through Christ Have Mercy!

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**LHP Book Review**


I rejoice when long out-of-print books are able to inform and inspire a new generation of Christians through a new edition. *Martin Luther: The Great Reformer* is just such a book due to Christian Liberty Press. (I thank our congregation’s office secretary for the loan of her 1924 printing of *Martin Luther: The Lion Hearted Reformer* for the purpose of comparison.)


One of the primary changes has to do with the woodcuts included. CLP, Christian Liberty Press, is a Reformed publishing house. The woodcut facing the first page of chapter one includes Calvin, the Bible, Wycliff, Luther, Knox, and Melanchthon (vi). This will appeal more to Reformed than to Lutheran readers. As a whole, I liked the inclusion of maps and other period woodcuts, as the original book had very few illustrations.

As a revision, one may expect specific revisions. Some came as a surprise. Here are two examples of textual changes in Chapter 1:

“….he [Luther] saw that the severity of his parents had only reflected the dark, legalistic spirit that had pervaded their age” (original, 12) “….he saw that the severity of his parents had only reflected the un-Biblical extremes that had pervaded their generation” (revision, 3).

“It was a religion without love, and such religion is always bondage most grievous” (original, 12). “It was a religion without balanced Biblical truth, and
such religion is always bondage most grievous” (revision 3).

The reviser is not incorrect in his proper critique of the “un-Biblical extremes” and of “religion without balanced Biblical truth,” but I see little justification for changing the original. The lack of love is a different criticism J. A. Morrison intended. There will be a time to give further example of the lack of “balanced Biblical truth.” “Un-Biblical extremes is more vague and different than a “dark, legalistic spirit.” These revisions were unnecessary.

The editorial choice to use a different font (80, et al, like we do for this Quarterly Book Review) for Luther’s letter to the Elector lends authority to it, but as you can see in the example of Old English Text above, one runs the risk of lack of readability. Still, it would have the benefit of forcing the reader to slow down and focus upon the important content of the letter.

I appreciated seeing part of the Large Catechism from Concordia Triglotta (73). While many Reformed Christians read Luther, the catechisms, both Large and Small are largely ignored because they still teach baptismal regeneration and the real presence of Christ’s Body and Blood (in, with, and under the bread and wine) in the Sacrament of the Altar for the forgiveness of sins. Further, they encourage confession for the sake of absolution and refer to “sacraments,” a Gospel, gift term as opposed to “ordinance,” a law term.

There appear to be fewer revisions as the book progresses. I did notice a change from the “Lutheran Reformation” to “Protestant Reformation” (original, 39; revision, 33).

A wonderful addition to Morrison’s original is the inclusion of Luther’s “Preface to the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans.” It is one thing to read about Luther. McHugh should be commended for providing an opportunity for his readers to actually read Luther. And that’s something all of us would benefit from.

While there is a general trend toward a more Protestant revision of Luther as well as visually associating him with other “reformers,” this little book is largely the same as the one released by Concordia in 1910. With parental or pastoral guidance, it would be of benefit for the Lutheran home or school.

PJC

LHP Book Review

Essential Reading


The list of the most common theological critiques QBR reviews make is short: inadequate Christology, unwillingness to confess all that Scripture does about Holy Absolution, Holy Baptism, and Holy Communion, and sadly, works that promote the ordination of women.

The endorsements on the back cover are from Indiana, Germany, Madagascar, and Kenya. Such praise is honest, sincere, and appropriate. The topic of women in ministry has been a flashpoint since the mid twentieth century and still is common in today’s headlines.

It is an issue that needs to be addressed in each generation. It is an opportunity to sit at Jesus feet, a great opportunity (and purpose) for a reawakened Confessional Lutheranism (268). Christians must examine the Biblical evidence and come to a conclusion about the doctrine of the ministry that has enormous impact on a congregation and the pastoral care it receives.

None of the included essays were commissioned for this book. All have been previously presented (1958-2002). The unique contribution of this book is gathering them together and organizing them into Exegetical Studies, Historical Studies, Systematic Theology, and Pastoral Theology, four “departments” often seen at theological seminaries. Superb introductions are given to each set of studies.

1 Corinthians 14:33b-38 and 1 Timothy 2:11-14 are the fundamental texts that must be understood in the original Greek, in context, and in detail. Section I lays the firm foundation for all that follows. In the last five years I’ve heard some in the LCMS claim...
that *lalein* means that the women were gossiping in the back pew. Not only is it exegetically inaccurate, I find it incredibly insensitive and offensive (47)! Further, is not reading the Scriptures at Divine Service or Daily Office speaking/preaching? Submission (48ff, et al) is another essential word to wrestle with. Clear Scripture must be ignored, twisted, or contradicted to allow for women in the pastoral office (88). After all, not all men are qualified to be pastors, either.

Historically, the first female “ordination” took place in 1853. By 1970, the ALC and LCA had women in the pastoral office, following the more recent example of ordinations in the Episcopal Church. I appreciated Section II and its advocacy for women in a variety of positions and vocations in the church, but not the pastoral office. Deaconesses assisted with the baptism of women (111). The Council of Sargossa “warned women not to attend Priscillian meetings where women might give readings and teach” (130). Why have Christians forgotten that? In Scandinavia, it was political pressure on the state churches (153ff, 228) that paved the way for women “pastors.”

Systematically speaking, it is easy to see how Gospel Reductionists could see a possibility for women pastors once the Formal Principle (the Scriptures alone) and Material Principle (the Gospel) of the church were reversed. The Gospel becomes an excuse to say God loves everybody no matter what they say or do. John Kleinig says it clearly and concisely: “As far as I am concerned, the assertion of St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:37 that Christ has commanded that women should not be speakers in the liturgical assembly of the congregation settles the matter for me” (217).

Gregory Lockwood (275ff) does a fabulous job of dismantling the most common “pro” arguments. Study this essay in detail! “How My Mind Has Changed” is a powerful and appropriate way to close. The late Louis A. Smith rightly notes C.S. Lewis’ concern (395) that the ordination of women to the pastoral office would bring about a whole new religion. Lewis is proved right in Smith’s personal and profound essay. Theological liberalism, feminism, and gnosticism are just the tip of the iceberg. The *Titanic* didn’t have to hit the iceberg. It didn’t have to sink. May God bless this collection of essays which present the light of Christ in His Word to prevent the LCMS from foundering on the rocks of the ordination of women.

Many of the same arguments previously used to promote the ordination of women are now used to argue for the ordination of practicing homosexuals. Once an argument “works,” people aren’t going to let it go. The “slippery slope” is an apt analogy, as is the sheep wandering away from the flock one enticing tuft of grass at a time. The Good Shepherd seeks and saves the lost. His undershepherds will be better equipped to handle stray sheep by reading this book.

Buy it. Read it. Study it. Talk about it at Winkels.

At the heart of the matter is a different understanding of Scripture, both its source and authority. The ordination of women is a “deal breaker” when it comes to fellowship (274). Participants in ecumenical discussions should be aware of this.

Matthew Harrison and John Pless have done the whole Christian Church a service in editing this important collection of essays. I pray that they will be read and taken to heart in the LCMS, world-wide Lutheranism, and beyond.

PJC

**LHP Book Review**


When a pastor writes an engaging annual congregational report, you know the man can write (Part 2). Not everything in *Volume 13 of Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works* is as exciting as his major works, but one can see how they came about. *DBW* is the “definitive English translation of Bonhoeffer’s theological and other writings” (xix). The sermons are well worth your time in reading. The rest of the included documents will highlight an important time of transition for Pastor Bonhoeffer.

Missouri Synod Lutherans are rightly passionate about avoiding “union and syncretism” of every sort. I was uncomfortable with this “Lutheran pastor” serving Reformed congregations in London, (two of the six German congregations in London at the time,) but such was the German church situation at the time (5), not to mention the problems of the growing Nazi influences. I say this not to excuse his actions, but to help other readers better understand them in context.

“Dietrich Bonhoeffer's pastoral sojourn in England from October 1933 to April of 1935, which he initially viewed as a withdrawal from the church clashes in Germany, marked instead a new phase in..."
his intensive participation in that struggle. This enlightening volume provides an almost daily documentation of his deepening engagement against the placid backdrop of his two London pastorates.

“Detailing Bonhoeffer’s extensive contacts with German expatriates, ecumenical partners and allies, and friends and family, London: 1933-1935 impressively records both Bonhoeffer's involvement in the rapidly developing clash with the deutsche Christen and the means by which he pursued it.

“The bulk of the material consists of his wide correspondence but also includes records and minutes of his congregational meetings, excerpts from the diaries of Bonhoeffer's friend and London colleague Julius Rieger, reports from international conferences from 1934, and more than twenty sermons he preached to his London congregations. The wealth of this material, says editor Keith Clements, allows us to experience a dramatic slice of this history and see the many and complex facets of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's personality” (publisher’s website).

The correspondence is usually dry reading with the sometimes exciting alongside the often mundane writings of daily life. Imaging someone archiving your email for publishing fifty years from now! The most fascinating parts are his personal ecumenical correspondence. Much of that work culminates in St. Paul’s and Syndenham congregations withdrew from the government of the Reich Church (276-277, 1935).

His pastoral care is evident throughout, with a sermonic discussion of organs with non-instrumental Reformed Christians as one example (344).

It was fascinating to read in a footnote (n. 1, 353) that Bonhoeffer “nearly opted for music rather than theology as a career.” Also of note was his references and meeting with Gandhi (370, 437, et al) in preparation for forming an ideal Christian community, preparation for Life Together.

A helpful chronology (429) guides the reader through this segment of Bonhoeffer’s life.

I read the whole thing. You may wish to search for the most interesting things to you. The sermons alone are worth purchase of this volume:

After reading Luke 13:1-5, the sermon begins, “Perhaps this text frightens you, and you think it sounds only too much like the news of the day—too dangerous for a worship service” (365). That would get my attention.

He calls for Gospel Outreach and Human Care on Reformation Sunday, 1934: “For the message of the faith that alone saves and redeems us has become hardened, a dead letter, because it has not been kept alive by love. A church may have great faith—the most orthodox beliefs, the firmest loyalty to its confession—but if it is not even more a church of pure and all-embracing love, it is good for nothing” (399). This is a preview of his famous “cheap grace” statements in Discipleship.

“This is what makes a sermon something unique in all the world, so completely different from any other kind of speech. When a preacher opens his Bible and interprets the Word of God, a mystery takes place, a miracle: the grace of God, who comes down from heaven and into our midst and speaks to us, knocks on our door, asks questions, warns us, puts pressure on us, alarms us, threatens us, and makes us joyful again and free and sure” (323).

Each generation has a “Church Struggle” of its own. Perhaps by reading about Bonhoeffer’s, you may be enlightened and encouraged about your own.

PJC

LHP Book Review


An American Lutheran once wrote that that catholicity of Lutheranism is shown by its distinctive doctrines. To flesh that out, Lutheranism is proven to teach the small-c catholic Christians faith—that which has always and everywhere been believed, taught, and confessed from the Holy Scriptures—by the teachings that it uniquely holds forth before God and man. Among those distinctive doctrines are how the Lutheran confessions present Law and Gospel and the Means of Grace.

These two topics roughly divide Volume VIII in the Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics series, though there are fewer longer chapters on Law and Gospel and shorter chapters on the Means of Grace.

Dr. Scaer had worked on this particular volume since 1986. It holds true to the Lutheran Book of Concord and, in accordance with the intentions of the CLD series to present Lutheran doctrine faithfully and in a fresh way. It succeeds on both counts and is therefore worth the work and worth the wait.

Lutherans define their terms. Good definitions aid a good confession. Poor definitions, as in the case of...
“Gospel Reductionism” decades ago led to the declaration of altar and pulpit fellowship between the ELCA and reformed church bodies (14). Error leads one away from Christ and into misbelief and other great shame and vice.

The tension in Lutheran doctrine shown by paradoxical statements dare not be resolved. Calvinism tends to resolve Law/Gospel tension in favor of the law (22), a great danger.

Chapter 4 in the first part (62ff) provides a helpful and very necessary discussion of The Third Use of the Law. Yes, there is one! Ideas have consequences. A denial of the Third Use and the confusion that follows may be seen in recent ELCA debates over the ordination of homosexuals (89). There is great uncertainty when the material principle and the formal principle of Lutheranism are reversed.

I personally welcomed Scaer’s Chapter 5 retelling of Law and Gospel history in the 20th Century. This period of history has been unnecessarily complicated, mostly due to the ivory tower language and Scripture-denying assertions of so many of the prominent theologians of the period.

The Means of Grace half of the volume gets off to a good start with clear insight into the relationship of the office of the holy ministry to the means of grace through the lens of the Augsburg Confession (115). Scaer summarizes misunderstandings of the office among the Quakers, Roman Catholics, Calvin, and Zwingli.

Brothers, confuse not your congregations with regard to the number of sacraments! Heed the advice of the Confessions (Apology XIII, paragraph 17) and Dr. Scaer on this point. A page 136ff discussion of Luther and Zwingli at Marburg adds light to the often dark discussion of John 6 and the Lord’s Supper in Lutheranism. To this I would add that while John 3 speaks about Holy Baptism, it does not only speak about Holy Baptism, but the whole Christ. Similarly, while John 6 does speak to the Lord’s Supper and feeding on Christ, it does not merely speak of the Sacrament of the Altar, but feeding on the whole Christ.

The Holy Spirit Himself is the doer of the means of grace, He who delivers here and now what Christ won on Calvary there and then. Contra the assertions of charismatics, even so-called Lutheran charismatics, the Holy Spirit is very busy in the Lutheran Church! He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies me and the whole Christian church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the true faith. For more, begin reading on page 149 and again on page 200.

Confirmation is rightly (and ritely) explained as the practice of Holy Baptism (170ff). Roman so-called “sacramentals” are not sacraments, but they do proclaim the Gospel (178).

With respect to “Means of Grace on Non-Lutheran Churches,” the following quotations is appropriate:

“Lutherans recognize Reformed preaching and baptism as means of grace and hence do not re-baptize those who have been baptized in their churches…In the Reformed rite of the Holy Communion the right words and proper elements are in place for it to be a sacrament, but their confession does not affirm that the elements are the body and blood of Christ” (186)

Ultimately, Law and Gospel as well as the Means of Grace are given to us so that Christ may be preached to us for our comfort. It is so incredibly easy to mess up a Law/Gospel distinction or to veer off into looking for the work of the Holy Spirit apart from the means God instituted. The danger of abandoning the truth is always there, whether it be for the sake of personal profit, popularity, or preference. Hence, the need is always there for continuing education in the Word and the Lutheran Confessions under that Word of God. This volume of Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics will serve you that you may be faithful to your Lord and the people the Lord has given you to serve according to your ordination vow.

Dr. Scaer writes very differently from how he teaches, based upon my brief experiences with him in person. Both his teaching and writing is engaging, though in different ways and may reach different audiences. This book would be worth purchasing even if it were a stand-alone work. As a reviewer and QBR editor, I have basic questions to ask of every resource we review: Is it worth the money to purchase it? Is it worth the time to study it? Is it worth the space on your shelf to keep it? Yes. Yes. Yes. Law and Gospel and the Means of Grace is a great addition to Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics and only whets my appetite for the next volume to be released by the Luther Academy.

Outline of Volumes

This volume is in addition to the information provided on the Luther Academy Website: “To date (2007), five volumes [Now six with Volume VIII] have been published. All others have been assigned.
to authors and are in various stages of development, with the hope that the entire series will be completed within the next five to seven years.”

I. Prolegomena – Roland Ziegler

II. Scripture – Scott Murray

III. God the Holy Trinity – Adam Cooper

IV. Creation – Frederic W. Baue

V. Anthropology and Sin – Edward Kettner

VI. **Christology** by David P. Scaer (113 pp., published 1989)

   a. Biblical in its presentation, Christology describes the historic Christological controversies as well as more recent debates concerning the person of Jesus. Faithful to the historic and orthodox understanding of the incarnation, the two natures in Christ, the atonement and the resurrection, Scaer’s treatment is at the same time fresh and persuasive.

VII. The Work of Christ and Justification – Rolf Preus


IX. **The Church and Her Fellowship, Ministry, and Governance** by Kurt Marquart (263 pp., published 1990)

   a. This book not only rehearses the controversies of the past regarding church and ministry, but addresses today’s issues as well. With a completely biblical and confessional perspective, Marquart divides his presentation into four parts: The Church, Church Fellowship, The Ministry, and Church Governance. Marquart’s description of the Holy Ministry provides a welcome corrective to current trends to redefine this office according to secular business and marketing.

X. Life in Christ – John R. Stephenson

XI. **Baptism** by David P. Scaer (236 pp., published 1999)

   a. An orthodox yet fresh presentation on the sacrament of Baptism. Dr. Scaer offers analysis both of the Roman Catholic and the Reformed views of Baptism, compares current Lutheran worship forms with historic Lutheran baptismal practice, and provides a thorough defense of infant Baptism. Provides the reader with a strong defense against those who would deny God’s work in this precious sacrament.

XII. **The Lord’s Supper** by John R. Stephenson (xv + 294 pp., published 2003)

   a. A comprehensive study of the Lord’s Supper, drawing on scriptural and confessional resources to address key issues in the ecumenical context of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Stephenson draws richly from the writings of Luther, the Lutheran Orthodox dogmaticians, and modern confessional Lutheran theologians (especially Charles Porterfield Krauth, C. F. W. Walther, Herman Sasse, and Tom G. A. Hardt) in a treatment that is unabashedly Lutheran yet deals openly and forthrightly with new perspectives.

XIII. **Eschatology** by John R. Stephenson (176 pp., published 1993)

   a. An excellent description of the biblical view of the end times as well as an historical overview of the various millennial views that have surfaced in the church over the last two thousand years. Dr. Stephenson’s Eschatology is a breath of fresh air as it expounds the Christian view of the end times, a view which cannot be understood apart from orthodox Christology and incarnation theology.

PJC

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[http://wy.lcms.org/LHP/QBR](http://wy.lcms.org/LHP/QBR)
One of the Worst Books I’ve Ever Read


This book made me angry. In fact, I still am. That said, not everything asserted Pagan Christianity? is false. Some claims were supported by assumption, half-truths, or outright bias against traditional church institutions. Besides, everyone knows that just because something is printed in black and white does not make it true. I have little doubt that the author quotes his sources correctly. I doubt that the quotes (books, etc.) are always correct themselves. The use of footnotes does not a scholar make. Why are so many references made to the work of Will Durant (26, et al)? Legalism, not Christ, dominates these pages, although the author(s) might say differently.

Yes, I read the whole thing. Yes, I prayed about it. Yes, I compared what was written here to what I know from Scripture and Christian history and liturgics.

“Frank Viola is an influential voice in the contemporary house church movement. For the last twenty years, he has been gathering with organic house churches in the United States. Frank has written eight revolutionary books on radical church restoration, including God’s Ultimate Passion and The Untold Story of the New Testament Church. He is a nationally recognized expert on new trends for the church, holds conferences on the deeper Christian life, and is actively engaged in planting New Testament–styled churches. His Web site, frankviola.com, contains many free resources designed to enrich the spiritual lives of God’s people. Frank and his family live in Gainesville, Florida.

“George Barna is the founder and directing leader of The Barna Group, Ltd., a California-based company that offers primary research and strategic assistance related to cultural assessment and transformation, faith dynamics and leadership development. Barna’s firm has worked with hundreds of clients since its inception in 1984, ranging from Disney, Prudential, Ford, and Visa to numerous churches and denominations, the Billy Graham Association, World Vision, Campus Crusade for Christ, Focus on the Family, Prison Fellowship, and American Bible Society. He writes the popular biweekly Barna Update regarding his current research related to faith and cultural dynamics, available at www.barna.org.

“To date, Barna has written 39 books, including best sellers such as Revolution, Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions, The Frog in the Kettle, and The Power of Vision. His most recent books include Revolutionary Parenting and Pagan Christianity? With degrees from Boston College, Rutgers University, and Dallas Baptist University, he has been on the faculty of Azusa Pacific, Pepperdine, Biola, and several seminaries. He has served as the teaching pastor of a large, multiethnic church, has been a leader in several church plants, and has served on the board of directors of numerous organizations. Currently he leads a small church in Southern California. He has been married to his wife, Nancy, since 1978 and has three daughters (Samantha, Corban, and Christine)” (publisher’s website).

This book will be equally offensive to liturgical churches, so-called “low church” congregations, and “contemporary worship” congregations, though for some different reasons. Institutionalized “church” is in the wrong.

A definition is in order. The main author is advocating what he calls organic church. “(An organic church is simply a church that is born out of spiritual life instead of constructed by human institutions and held together by religious programs. Organic churches are characterized by Spirit-led, open-participatory meetings and nonhierarchical leadership. This is in stark contrast to a clergy-led, institution-driven church.) My experience in the United States and overseas is that when a group of Christians begin to follow the life of the Lord who indwells in them together, the same outstanding features that marked the first-century church begin to emerge naturally” (xix). No sermon. No paid clergy. No church buildings. The goal is a return to the New Testament time.

The argumentation of much of the book is silly. If pagans did _____, then Christians have no business
adopter, even today. If such argumentation were true, the very existence of this book would violate the very argument it uses. Did pagans invent books? Then Christians, even Viola and Barna CANNOT use them. Who invented computers, word processor programs, computer fonts, printing presses (ancient and modern, for the Chinese beat Gutenberg), stores, publicity, etc.? If pagans did, then, following the most common line of argumentation in the book, then Christians CANNOT use such things in the service of the Gospel. What of the non-Christians (pagans) who built the computer components? The argumentation of much of the book is just plain silly.

In contrast, we can see the gifts of God’s creation in harmony with the First Article of the Apostles’ Creed. They can be used with thanksgiving and in thanksgiving to Him for His glory, in defense of His Eternal Truth, and for the extension of His kingdom. Even good gifts of God may be abused. They dare not be used in blasphemy.

The main author, Frank Viola, assumes much from what is called the History of Religions School, specifically the belief that Christian practices are derivative from other religions. He does not go so far as to say that all religions are equal.

The authors seem to be oblivious of the redemption of some practices, called inculturation, when pagan connotations have faded to the extent that some things may be freely used by Christians.

In fairness, the author does not advocate open rebellion. “At this moment, all the rebellious hearts are applauding and are plotting to wreak havoc in their churches. If that is you, dear rebellious heart, you have missed our point by a considerable distance. We do not stand with you” (5).

One can learn a lot just by reading the chapter titles and subtitles.

The Church Building: Inheriting the Edifice Complex.

The author is correct in saying that ekklesia refers to the people of God (11). Good! Yet he nowhere acknowledges rightful derivative uses of the term “church,” referring to a building, a Sunday morning service, or a denomination. This is misleading because the discussion is not complete. Who would deny that the Church is a people?

He claims that the use of incense is from pagan origins (13). So much for Psalm 14 and Revelation…

He is correct to call into question the veneration of the bones of the saints (17) which became the medieval cult of the saints.

I do take issue with his characterization of Luther’s Reformation in making the pulpit central over and above the altar (31). I would argue for a resurgence of the pulpit and true understanding of the sacrament together.

It is helpful to note the cost of Christian buildings (41). There’s nothing wrong with a humble building that serves its purpose. Splendor and glory are not sinful. Taken to excess, one can see how mega campuses can be counter-productive.

The Order of Worship: Sunday Mornings Set in Concrete

With regard to Sunday Divine Service, the author writes, “The medieval Mass reflected the mind of its originator. It was a blending of pagan and Judaistic ritual sprinkled with Catholic theology and Christian vocabulary” (51) Prove your points, author! Lutherans are well aware of the abuses. Where is the pagan ritual? Dare you derogatorily call the Lord’s Supper or use of 3 readings and a sermon (like the synagogue) Judaistic ritual? Jesus Christ was born a Jew! Small “c” catholic theology is what Christians have everywhere and always believed from Scripture!

I was particularly offended that the book appears to assert that Jewish = pagan! Once that assumption is pronounced as dogma, then seeing the structure of the traditional western liturgy as an outgrowth of both the synagogue service and the annual seder meal as remodeled in Christ is impossible! What of Acts 2:42?

“Luther didn’t go far enough.” That’s a paraphrase (52ff). It always makes my blood boil! Luther retained that which was not contrary to Scripture. He was pastorally realistic with regard to the people of God and faithful to the Lord of the Church. There is such a thing as adiaphora, a concept covering that which is not commanded nor condemned by Scripture. Such things should be free as long as they are used without offense and are clearly explained.

To respond to the author (74ff), Sunday morning does not have to be boring. It does not have to be one-sided. Hymns of the church are great participatory things. Have you ever been to a Lutheran funeral? The seating should focus our attention upon Christ’s work and word. It is not a show. The musicians and pastor are not performers, nor is the congregation a mere audience. Misuse of Sunday morning services doesn’t mean that they’re all as bad as he claims. For an explanation of what he would like to see on Sunday morning, visit pages 78ff.

This review could go on and on. In order to spare the reader, I will be briefer from this point on.
The Sermon: Protestantism’s Most Sacred Cow.
Let’s offend fellow Christians by making use of a Hindu term! Let’s look for pagan sources for the Christian sermon rather than acknowledging the preaching of Moses and the prophets as well as Jesus and Peter and the other apostles! Viola looks too hard for pagan roots of church practices that he apparently cannot see biblical institution and mandate for so many of them.

The Pastor: Obstacle to Every-Member Functioning.
Review Luther’s confession of the Bible’s reference to the people being a royal priesthood and a holy nation. This chapter simply misses the point of the relationship between church and ministry.

Sunday Morning Costumes: Covering Up the Problem.
So much for hiding the man under the uniform of the office. So much for the motive of some in showing respect for the Lord and His Word and Gifts by wearing their finest.

Ministers of Music: Clergy Set to Music.
The choir is not sinful! Another example of trying to find a pagan history when the song of the people of God is found in the Psalter and among the Levitical musicians. What of Matthew 26 and Jesus singing a psalm with the disciples on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane…

Tithing and Clergy Salaries: Sore Spots on the Wallet.
The author, asserting the superiority of the “Spirit-led” organic house church denies and ignores the clear and truly Spirit-inspired words of St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:14.

This chapter could do a lot of damage to a lot of congregations and pastors. No, the New Testament does not demand tithing. Neither does it forbid its practice among those who cheerfully and generously choose to practice it!

A shepherd (pastor) is biblical. The worker is worth his wage. Don’t muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain. Shepherds are given to warn of false teachers and false teaching. Heed my warning about this book!

Baptism and the Lord’s Supper: Diluting the Sacraments. Don’t get me started! This was atrocious!

Christian Education: Swelling the Cranium.
What of a rigorous exercise of the Christian mind, loving God with your whole mind?

According to Mark Noll, “The scandal of the evangelical mind” check quote. I fear that widespread adoption of the mindset in Chapter 10 would lead to a further dumbed-down of Christianity. If left only to non-trained lay preachers gathering together to share the wealth of their ignorance, I fear for the rise of cults of personality in what should have been Christian congregations. There is a danger to knowledge without faith and ivory tower syndrome, but scholarship keeps ignorance in check, especially when knowledge of the Scriptures informs faith.

Reapproaching the New Testament: The Bible is Not a Jigsaw Puzzle.
Books of the Bible should rightly be seen as individual writings, yet they must be apprehended as the work of one Divine author. You must read the story of Marvin Snurdly (223ff) in order to believe it! It is disrespectful at best and blasphemous at worst.

Overall, the discussion questions are leading.

I am thankful for my Lutheran upbringing in reminding me to “put the best construction on everything.” After skimming the book, reading the whole thing, and reviewing it extensively yet again, I am convinced that his agenda is to create doubt and distrust of the church as he pushes for you to embrace his organic home church. Pastors everywhere should be aware of this book, for it would be dangerous for Christians with immature faith. It is helpful in that it reproduces many facts that are common knowledge or should be. Unfortunately, the good is so intermixed with bias, that it is hard to sift the wheat from the chaff. Bias is shown in what facts are included and what facts are omitted, how facts are “spun” and wed with half-truths and un-cited, unsubstantiated claims. Space and a good stewardship of my time prevents me from a page by page and line by line refutation of this work.

There is a significant difference between unbiblical and anti-biblical, a distinction not demonstrated here. The author appears to miss the point of Luther’s conservative Reformation, one that kept traditions and practices that could teach the Gospel, while condemning and purging all that is contrary to Holy Scripture and the Gospel. This was Luther’s reformation hermeneutic.

Polity does not save. Christ does. The authors would likely agree with this point, but then they would be back to pushing their revolutionary home-based church model, a form of piety. There is a lack of a proper distinction between Scripture’s two main teachings: Law and Gospel.

Wherever the Gospel is proclaimed there are Christians, whether they meet in a home, a catacomb, cathedral, church, or school gym. Taken to its logical conclusion, are non house, non “organic” churches
even Christian? Are we damned? There apparently is no freedom of the Gospel. A search for perfection ignores that Christians are found where the Gospel is proclaimed and the sacraments are administered according to Jesus’ own institution and mandate. I can’t help but wonder if some congregation, pastor, and/or church body must have really hurt the main author (251).

The publisher was ill-advised to release this book. It sullies the name of Tyndale. I pray its appearance owes no debt to the simple fact that sensationalism sells in a tight publishing market.

George Barna, appearing as co-author, has finally gone off the deep end. He should be ashamed of his association with such shoddy work.

According to a Canadian reviewer, “Frank Viola has written a book...or rather I should say Frank Viola has written a book again. Pagan Christianity was originally published in 2002 and has recently been repackaged and republished with a shiny new co-author - the well-respected Christian pollster George Barna and the addition of an enigmatic question mark” (http://www.amazon.ca/Pagan-Christianity-George-Barna/dp/141431485X on June 04, 2008).

In the end, I am thankful for the “?” in the title of this red volume. He has yet to prove his case definitively. The church in every age needs reformation. The life of every Christian is to be one of repentance. This is not the book to lead such a revolution.

PJC

LHP Book Review


David Henkel died before the Saxon fathers of the LCMS left Germany. He was a voice for a Lutheran Church in America rooted in its own confessions. He was accused of false teaching for merely holding to the doctrine confessed at Augsburg in 1530. His short life, 1795-1831, helped pave the way for others to confess the Lutheran Book of Concord in the English language. David Henkel is underappreciated because his corpus of writing is not well-known, not widely available, and not often read. Until now.

Thanks to Lutheran Legacy, these problems should now be addressed in this one affordable volume. Your purchase of this book will help them make available (in electronic and/or print form) other largely-ignored writings by Lutherans who held to the Lutheran Confessions.

Various editorial notes aid the contemporary reader in providing necessary context, critical marks for Greek or Hebrew text, or missing text. Page numbers from original standard editions are provided in the inside margins.

Following a fascinating introduction for Dr. Larry Rast and a helpful chronology (xxxiv), Henkel’s works are provided in chronological order, with the exception of some fragments on Regeneration and “against the Unitarians”.

These works are:

- A Loud Trumpet, of Futurity. Or a Few Reflections on Future Things.
- Carolinian Herald of Liberty, Religious and Political.
- The Objections of the Committee against the Constitution of the General Synod.
- Heavenly Flood of Regeneration: Or, a Treatise on Holy Baptism.
- Answer to Mr. Joseph Moore, the Methodist; with a Few Fragments on the Doctrine of Justification.
- The Constitution, of the Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod.
- A Treatise, Or a Few Fragments on Prayer.
- Doctor Martin Luther’s Smaller Catechism…
- A Treatise, Or a Few Fragments on Regeneration
- Against the Unitarians.

Henkel finds himself in conflict with his own church body over basic Lutheran teaching. President Shober (sometime Moravian) of the North Carolina Synod advocates unionism and denies parts of the unaltered Augsburg Confession. David Henkel’s ordination is delayed. He labors faithfully as a licensed servant of the Word and Sacrament until his ordination in 1819, the scheduled meeting time of the North Carolina Synod.

The next year, that Synod fails to confess baptismal regeneration and the real presence of Christ’s Body and Blood in Holy Communion. Is it surprising that the Tennessee Synod is founded the following July?

The next eleven years see the publishing of the bulk of David’s writing until his untimely death. Twenty years late, (1851) Henkel Press publishes David’s translation of Luther’s Small Catechism.
Henkel’s suspicions of church hierarchy and national bureaucracy are duly noted. One hears Law and Gospel properly distinguished, a confession of the divine institution of church and secular governments, a proper preaching and practice of the means of grace as distinguished from prayer, and apparently the first American translation of the Small Catechism into English.

This particular edition of the Small Catechism is notable also for the “Preliminary Observations,” particularly an explanation of the Lutheran approach to the Sabbath (348), recommended Scripture readings along with each portion of the “Five Chief Heads” (with “Of the Office of the Keys” and “Of the Confession of Sin” included after “Of the Sacrament of the Altar”), and how the English version of David Henkel has been carried forth in some extent even in the most recent LCMS edition of Luther’s Small Catechism. Daily Prayers are supplemented by hymn texts, many other prayers, and the Athanasian Creed.

An Appendix of nearly 250 pages includes detailed source material. In 1818 David Henkel baptized 377 children, 38 slaves, 49 adults, confirmed 135, and buried 11. (513). Further detail on how slaves were to be treated are found in a long footnote beginning on page 526.

A thirty-six year-old Lutheran pastor can do great things. That’s how old David was when he died. His last illness, according to his obituary (655) was Dyspepsia, a severe form of indigestion accompanied by nausea and other unpleasant symptoms which prevented him from service.

It is the challenge and blessing of every generation to examine the sacred scriptures and the Lutheran confessions and find them to be in agreement, with the Bible as the “norming norm” and the Book of Concord as the “norm that is normed” by Scripture. Each generation is challenged by old heresies and heterodoxies with fresh coats of paint. We are given to be faithful to what we have received and confess the truth in a new day and new context. There is nothing new under the sun. Those who are wise, like David Henkel, will continue to shine. May his writings shine forth to inspire yet another generation of Lutherans in North America.

PJC

LHP Book Review


This book has been on my wish list to read for a decade. When a review copy became available, I jumped at the chance, especially with Iran and its military ambitions causing concern on the current world stage.

Dr. Yamauchi is a detail-oriented scholar. Persia and the Bible doesn’t read like a novel, though its length is comparable to a Tom Clancy thriller. It’s value lay not in its excitement, but exhaustive wealth of research.

Two pages of Scripture References (577-578) were my guide to a practical use of this volume for the parish pastor. Extensive citations of Ezra and Nehemiah (253, 264, et al), Esther (226, et al) and Daniel were to be expected, but there’s more to the Medes and Persians in the Old Testament than just those books.

My one disappointment with the release of a paperback version of the 1990 hardcover is the conversion of the numerous photographs (see page 579 for a complete list) into sometimes-unclear (344-345) black and white images. Perhaps color book plates may be possible in a future edition. Reconstructions, drawings, artifacts, and ruins give excitement and rock-solid evidence to archeological discoveries. Besides, they’re fun, and generate interest in the spade, brush, and book research of real archeology, as opposed to the Indiana Jones variety.
Students of Exodus will rejoice to learn about the Apis bull (116ff) in Egyptian religion and its relation to the infamous Golden Calf incident.

Did you know that the motto of the U.S. Post Office comes from Herodotus, specifically, his description of the official couriers on a road built by Darius? “…these are stayed neither by snow nor rain nor heat nor darkness from accomplishing their appointed course with due speed” (174).

I appreciate the scholarly and faithful approach the author takes to refute the claims of the History of Religions School (458ff) when they say Judaism was influenced by Zoroastrianism. “…the doctrine of the resurrection can be explained on inner-Israelite grounds” (461). Further, “…earlier claims for the decisive influence of Persian beliefs upon Judaism have been overvalued” (466). That’s “scholar-speak” for “those guys were wrong.”☺

The Magi rate their own Chapter, number 13. Yamauchi rejects the assertion that the Christmas Magi were Zoroastrians. “…it is clear from the history of the Magi and the biblical context that they were astrologers who were probably from Mesopotamia” (481). On page 491, the author shares Marco Polo’s claim that the tombs of the Christmas Magi were 50 miles south of Tehran, Iran.

Near the end of the book (520-521) is a fascinating yet inconclusive discussion of the relationship between Christmas being celebrated on December 25th, Sol Invictus, and the birthday of Mithras.

“How to Live a Christian Life translates Luther’s famous treatise, “On Christian Freedom.” Easily understood translations, chapter divisions, large easy-to-read text, and helpful discussion questions are the hallmarks of this series. I pray for more titles to follow in this series.

Page 10 gives the book’s summary. “the faith of a Christian can be summarized with two statements:

A Christian is the most liberated master of everyone, and subject to no one.

A Christian is the most dutiful servant of everyone, and subject to everyone.

Paradox is commonly found in Luther’s writings. Like law and Gospel, the two poles of each paradox are to be properly distinguished, yet never separated. The tension of the paradox dare not be resolved either, or heresy will likely result.

This would make a wonderful introductory study of the Lutheran confession of the Christian faith for visitors or new members. One encounters the proper distinction (as well as the identification) of Law and Gospel, the relationship between faith and works, stewardship of the Gospel and all off the blessings we have from God, vocation, repentance, that Christians are a royal priesthood in Christ before God, and what makes good works good.

This is a good review and growth opportunity for more mature Christians, who learn why Timothy was circumcised (78), the danger of the abuse of Christian freedom (85ff), and a proper understanding of rituals (93).

These are really great books for pastors and congregations to buy in bulk and study and/or give out as tracts.

BakerAcademic

This is a definitive summary of extra-biblical source material on the Medes, the Persians, their rulers and cities, Zoroastrianism, Mithraism, and even The Magi of Matthew 2.

America is a mission field. While English will remain the main language of discourse in the United States, it is important for Christians to be prepared to share Christ with those who do not share our common language of English.

In the early days of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, “home missions” were those conducted in the German language, whether in North America, Asia, Australia, or South America. “Foreign Missions” were those done in English, even if it was just across the street!

When my wife’s grandfather was confirmed in 1929, he received two gifts, the English-language Evangelical Lutheran Hymn Book and the German-language Lutherisches Gesangbuch. His catechism instruction was bilingual. I cherish these books along with a German/English edition of Luther’s Small Catechism.

In the time between the Great War and World War II, Lutherans in America transitioned their language of worship to English. Within two or three generations of arriving in America, most immigrants retain their cultural and national traditions, but have embraced many American customs and speak English at home. This Spanish/English Bible by Crossway is a valuable tool to reach out to those whose native language is Spanish.

“For generations of Spanish-speaking Christians, the Reina-Valera has been the most beloved and widely-used translation of the Bible. First published in 1569, forty-two years before the King James Version, the RVR was thoroughly revised and updated in 1960. This popular RVR 1960 came to be known for its fidelity to the original texts, exceptional accuracy, and elegant language. Combining the traditional style of the Spanish language with modern clarity and readability, the RVR 1960 has become the most acclaimed and relied-upon Spanish Bible today for millions of readers worldwide.

“The ESV is an essentially literal Bible translation that combines ‘word-for-word’ precision and accuracy with literary excellence, beauty, and


The RVR 1960 and ESV are well-paired as literal and literary translations! Personally, I prefer the RVR 1960 to the NVI or Versión Popular.

“Spanish and English are two of the five most-spoken languages in the world. This new edition of the ESV honors the diversity and relevance of God’s Word in a way that is ideal for not only native speakers of either language but also bilingual readers. This Bible positions two columns of Scripture on each page: the beloved Reina-Valera 1960 Spanish text on the left, and the ESV English-language text alongside it on the right. It also features textual notes for both translations in the back, and is contained in a durable, gold-foil stamped cover.

- ESV is parallel with the RVR60 Spanish
- 9.15-point type
- Size: 6.5” x 9.1875”
- 1,792 pages
- Words of Christ in black
- Verse-by-verse rather than in paragraphs—every verse begins a new line
- Two columns (publisher’s website).

I would have loved to have an electronic version of this ESV/RVR parallel included with this print edition. It was a little cumbersome to consult the back of the Bible for notes, but the editorial decision to have a notes section makes the pages much more crisp and clear.

At the seminary, I was blessed to help a bilingual musician. It was a great opportunity to read the Scriptures and conduct the liturgy in both Spanish and English and also accompany hymns on acoustic guitar. This Bible would have been an ideal help at that time.

There is a lot of emotion tied up in one’s language. It is a part of a sense of identity. Common languages create family. My sister noticed this when she taught ESL, English as a Second Language (now called English Language Learning) at the Elementary, Middle School and High School levels. I would recommend working toward and ESL/ELL program in your congregation.

Spanish is a language commonly taught in public schools. Making use of this bilingual Bible, an edition of Luther’s Small Catechism, and a hymnal...
Like Lutheran Service Book (with fifteen hymns in both English and Spanish), a pastor and congregation could encourage a transition from Spanish to English in a Christian context!

**LHP Book Review**


http://www.wipfandstock.com (541) 344-1528 (LHP)

It has nearly been Six Hundred Years now, nearly One Hundred since this book’s original publication. And John Hus/Huss is still largely unknown outside of Protestantism. Hopefully, the availability of David Schaff’s biography of the Czech “Luther” will help correct that omission in church history in the minds of many.

One hundred years before the Ninety-five Theses, the Roman church stifled a reformer by burning him at the stake in connection with the Council of Constance. The story is a familiar one. A priest, standing on the Word of God is considered a heretic, not because he teaches differently than what Scripture does, but because he teaches differently than the Roman Church. (I am reluctant to give that body the title “Catholic,” for Lutherans and some other Christians are more “catholic” than the Roman Church.)

It makes a difference how one defines the term *heresy*. As I recently witnessed on the EWTN, the Roman cable TV network, heresy to them is teaching differently than the Church, namely the Pope, rather than teaching contrary to Scripture. Give me God’s Word rather than opinion, tradition, authority, hierarchy, or experience any time (226)! Hus said, “Since God is the supreme and most judge and never errs, I have committed the cause to Him; I do not say mine but His own” (161). Here I stand!

The most helpful feature of the Preface was the list of Hus’ writings (vii ff). (I will refer to John Hus with this modern preferred spelling of his name rather than Huss, found in the text. Hus means goose.) A Latin hymn attributed to Hus is included (310-311).

Like Luther, Hus was known for his preaching (28, 37). It was one writing in particular that led him to the stake, the Treatise on the Church (305). Therein, (36, 156), Hus asserted that the Church is built on Christ, rather than Peter. Matthew 16 agrees, especially in the Greek! This is a threat to the church hierarchy (147), which soon got involved. A local matter (107) was now one that was “the concern of Latin Christendom.”

Hus owed a debt of Wyclif. As a consequence, Hus was also accused of holding to all of Wyclif’s so-called heresies (206). Lutherans would not give their “Amen” to all of Wyclif’s teachings, nor would we condemn them all as Rome did.

Indulgences (110, 119) receive Hus’ critique. He argued for Communion in both kinds (200). His formal confession (246) reads much like Luther’s words at Worms in 1521. Hus holds to transubstantiation (271), a move criticized by the author. He asserted that the Pope could err (279).

One of the significant differences between Hus and Luther was the relative inactivity of Hus’ sovereign, Wenzel (141) compared to Luther’s, Frederick the Wise. For Hus’ influence on Luther, begin reading on page 291. Hus’ influence was not merely limited to his own followers in Bohemia.

I would like to learn more about this “bishop of Concordia” (252) as a one who confesses the *Concordia*, the Lutheran Confessions.

Martin Luther had much praise for John Hus (cf. 294ff):

“If Huss is to be regarded as a heretic, then may scarcely any one of all upon whom the sun has looked down upon be truly held to be a Christian” (85). This is a biography that should be read by every Lutheran pastor.

David S. Schaff was professor of the Western Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Thanks, Wipf & Stock for this much-needed reprint!

**Pulpit Book Review**


Christ is your substitute. He was punished in your place. Christians largely understand these concepts.
They are the meaning behind “penal substitution.” This should not be an intimidating Christian teaching.

I like to use sports analogies for the idea of a “substitute,” largely thanks to the Rev. Daniel Preus and his book Why I Am a Lutheran. Every time I read it, the Lutheran Lions still beat the Pagan Penguins at basketball, even though I fouled out in the first 30 seconds of the game. We still won because my substitute had a stellar day!

Sadly, not everyone is convinced that the Bible teaches penal substitution or even substitution itself. That is why this wonderful book exists. Examples are found in the writings of Brian McLaren and others in the “Emerging Church movement” in the USA and The Lost Message of Jesus and documents by the Doctrine Commission of the Church of England (25, 304).

“The book of Romans teaches the doctrine of penal substitution so plainly that the steady stream of attempts by some recent commentators and theologians to evade the obvious is both surprising and a little tiresome” (77). Indeed. What a great summary of my feeling to those who would doubt God’s Word on this matter.

“...Christ suffered as a substitute...” a fresh articulation and affirmation of penal substitution is needed. And Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach have responded here with clear exposition and analysis.

“They make the case not only that the doctrine is clearly taught in Scripture, but that it has an impeccable pedigree and a central place in Christian theology, and that its neglect has serious consequences. The authors also systematically analyze over twenty specific objections that have been brought against penal substitution and charitably but firmly offer a defining declaration of the doctrine of the cross for any concerned reader” (publisher’s website).

The first two hundred pages present the biblical, theological, historical, and practical case for Jesus as your substitute and suffering servant. The next 130 pages answer twenty-eight common objections. No, Jesus’ death on the cross was not “divine child abuse.” He willingly suffered in our place. The atonement was for our benefit, not for the pleasure of the abuser. We learn what a human father should be from “Our Father,” not vice-versa.

I commend the authors for their response to the challenge of teaching that could rob Christians of Gospel comfort. Their writing is winsome, engaging, scholarly, and accessible. The book paves a necessary middle path between an introduction to the Christian teaching of substitutionary atonement and the often daunting and intimidating world of academic journals. I commend the authors for their use of reason as a servant to the Word. Their closing advice to “take care not to press [illustrations] too far” (334) is well taken.

I felt quite at home in the book. There wasn’t much that I heard that was new to me, but it was nice having so much good material in one place and under one cover. This is a masterful work of apologetics!

If there is a weakness, the teaching and example of Martin Luther is sadly lacking. I understand his absence could be due to the simple lack of space (204), but at least one page could have been saved for him in the historical chapter. One can find fewer defenders of the Gospel than Luther, a man who preached Christ “for you” and your forgiveness, pioneer of Christus Victor theology (cf. 139) long before Gustaf Aulen (and more clear, complete, and concise, too), a preacher for whom justification was the article upon which the Christian church stands or falls. Penal substitution is the heart of the Gospel.

The inclusion of Luther would have been of great support to the authors’ central thesis. Pierced for Our Transgressions would have been a stronger book with Luther. His greatness is not in his own opinion or insight, but in the clarity and comfort of Scripture itself. In addition, some of the objections could be more clearly and authoritatively put down with the help of properly distinguishing between Law and Gospel, while acknowledging these two doctrines as more clearly and authoritatively put down with the help of properly distinguishing between Law and Gospel, while acknowledging these two doctrines as the two main teachings of Holy Scripture.

As it is, this book has the most important strength, support, and foundation one can have: teaching founded upon the Word of God rather than men. Exodus 12, Leviticus 16, and the Gospels are clear. It is only appropriate that the Lord get the last word:

*He was pierced for our transgressions,*
*He was crushed for our iniquities;*
*The punishment that brought us peace was upon him,*
*And by his wounds we are healed.*

Isaiah 53:5

PJC
LHP Book Review

Hendrickson, Marion Lars. Musica Christi: A Lutheran Aesthetic. New York: Peter Lang, 2005. 313 Pages. Cloth. $73.95 www.peterlang.net (LHP)


My only disappointments with this volume are the cost compared to the budget of its intended audience and that a Lutheran Aesthetic is given its definition so late in the book: “The true Lutheran aesthetic, a beauty of holiness revealed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ…” (130).

“Theological aesthetics is a rapidly expanding subject in the field of religious humanism that, until now, has not had a participating Lutheran voice. Musica Christi: a Lutheran Aesthetic fills this voice by approaching the rich tradition of music and theology in the Lutheran Church through Christology. Furthermore, this study shows Christ’s full participation in and by music. Selections from Lutheran works in Danish, German, Latin, Norwegian, and Swedish are offered in English translations for the first time by the author” (back cover). His theological and musical training and expertise uniquely qualify him to offer this book to the Lutheran Church.

One of the unique contributions of Musica Christi is a Second Article (of the Apostles’ Creed) discussion of music in contrast to the usual First and Third Article discussions that usually dominate the discussions of the current “worship wars.”

Good theology supported by reverent music are seeds of a Lutheran aesthetic found in Luther’s own Deutsche Messe (15). The inter-relationship between the music and the text is an important consideration to answering the question, “What is Lutheran?” (51).

This found impressive from in Bach’s Mass in B minor (125, 129), a truly Lutheran contribution founded upon a deep understanding of Gottesdienst, God’s service to us. Luther’s dictum of “singen und sagen,” “singing and saying” is also “determinative” (63, “From Heaven Above to Earth I Come,” stanza 1). Appropriate music supports the fides qua creditor, the content of the faith, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the message that brings forth the fides qua creditor, the faith that trusts in Jesus Christ (78). The most important thing is the content, the message, the verba, the Word. The music cannot detract from Christ in the Lutheran aesthetic. “Music, like its twin sister preaching, has a proclamation function as well as an interpretive function. There is both homiletics and hermeneutics in musical proclamation” (259). “Music serves to apprehend, to make one’s own, the gifts offered to faith by the mediating High Priest, Christ Jesus. Music is not a Sacrament, that is, music does not have the command and promise of Christ attached to it so that music itself bears the divine gifts of grace. It is music’s role in and with the ministry of the Word (Incarnate, Scriptural, Proclaimed, Sacramental) that creates the apprehending faith of the believer” (263).

The original rhythmic forms of the Lutheran chorale were reclaimed in the 19th Century (Chapter 4). Rather than a mere repristination, this led to a period of both confessional revival and musical creativity. Luther’s words were found to be well-supported by the melodies he wrote. I would love to read an English translation of Ullman’s Liturgik (148), particularly because of his words from another work, “Art needs Christianity and Christianity needs Art” (149). A common saying in our day is “art for art’s sake.”

One of the unique Lutheran musical masterpieces is Brahms’ Requiem. Lutheran piety shaped the alternate texts he set to music. As Hendrickson notes, “the work is more properly considered a proclamation and bestowal of the peace of Christ than a musical setting of the history of Christ’s work” (167). Therefore, it makes perfect sense for the author to assert later that composers and musicians are assistants to those in the Office of the Holy Ministry (188, 254ff). Musicians should be trained in theology and pastors should be trained in music (272).

Christology is essential to a Lutheran discussion of music (83) due to the role that the communication of attributes (between the two natures of Christ—see Chemnitz) plays in this work, particularly Chapter 6, pages 216ff.

When music and text are understood incarnationally, music remains servant to the text, the Word made
“flesh” in black and white print. When music dominates the words, as so often happens when worship is changed in order to appeal to the culture, the text is forced to be servant to the music and the message changes. The rule of the consumer dare not become the rule of church music (203). When reason or emotion or personal experience becomes more important than the clear word of Christ, similar problems emerge. The author quotes Luther D. Reed: “Our doctrine must rule our liturgics; our liturgics must rule our music” (200). Therefore, one must reject the assertions that “Primary Liturgical Theology” has to do with liturgy and that Scripture is relegated to so-called “Secondary Liturgical Theology.”

This is a well-researched and articulate work, worthy of your attention. “Since what Christ commands and promises by His Prophetic Office, He bestows by His Priestly Office, and then orders in His Regal Office, the Musica Christi proclaims and bestows, and in that proclaimed bestowal fo the gifts of God in Christ Jesus, the music orders, not by Law, but by the Gospel proclaimed and bestowed” (210). Since the new song is Christ Himself, the Music of Christ is the Gospel!

“Marion Lars Hendrickson is a pastor in The Lutheran church—Missouri Synod, and teaches religion and music at Concordia University Wisconsin. With advanced degrees in music and theology, Hendrickson received his Ph.D. in theology from the University of Durham and is also a performing musician. He is the author of Behold the Man!, a book on the Christologies of John Macquarrie and Wolfhart Pannenburg” (back cover).

LHP Book Review


Robert Tobias' book is a very personal account of his interactions with Orthodox Christians and his understanding of Orthodox theology and practice. He also attempts to show how dialog is possible between Lutherans and the Orthodox and how we might not be as far apart in our respective theologies as some might think. In doing so, he gives us insight into the Eastern way of thinking and doing.

Using personal anecdotes of his official visits with Orthodox Christians in Eastern Europe, most of which occurred under Communist rule, and his part in the Lutheran-Orthodox dialogues, Tobias examines the differences between the Western & Eastern ways of thinking about life and theology. He touches on many points of doctrine and practice, including the different ways in which Lutherans and the Orthodox approach doctrine and especially disagreement about doctrine. He guides us through an understanding of how the Orthodox think on such things as Scripture and Tradition, the Liturgy, Icons, respect for other religious traditions, ecumenical commitment, the role of community versus individualism, the false dichotomy of spirit versus material, the immanence of God in this present life, and several other matters.

It makes for fascinating reading and opens up a necessary window into Orthodox thought. Tobias is imminently qualified to make such an attempt based on his life long contacts with Orthodox Christians, both clergy and laity. One gets the impression that he is doing his best to make sure he presents Orthodox life and thought in such a way that they could agree wholeheartedly with his assessment.

This is leads to one of the criticisms of the book. Tobias presents the Orthodox teaching and practice in such a way that little critical analysis is given of it. His intent is perhaps not a critical analysis, but he does seem to accept the Orthodox presentation of their teachings and practice carte blanche and at face value. Which wouldn't be a problem except that he does offer critical comments about his own tradition, namely Lutheranism, and about Western thought and practice. This gives the appearance that whenever difficulties have arisen between Lutherans and the Orthodox, that the Lutherans are at fault. Not necessarily out of malice but out of the failure of Western thought and ways of doing things.

Tobias also presents a misunderstanding of Lutheran doctrine. He claims that the Lutherans are hampered by the solidification of their doctrine by the acceptance of the Lutheran Symbols and adherence to them, whereas Orthodox thought and doctrine remain open to new ideas. However, there is a school of thought that maintains that Orthodox doctrine became solidified after the 7th Ecumenical Council in 787 CE. Tobias also presents the Lutheran Symbols as confessions that were formed by their time and
thus do not necessarily need to be held to so firmly now that those historical circumstances have passed. This is not a view held in any sort of unanimity by all Lutherans.

This lack of a balanced view of Lutheran-Orthodox interaction leaves Tobias' work seeming like an unqualified acceptance of Orthodox thought and practice and leaves one wondering exactly what the Orthodox will gain out of any dialog, since they seem to have a complete package and don't need any changes to the way they think or do things. This has been the failing of most modern dialogues between Lutherans and other Christian confessions. The other side's view and position is always accepted without question and the Lutherans downplay their distinctiveness or else compromise their beliefs in order to draw closer to the other side.

This failing aside, Tobias' book is still recommended reading for anyone interested in a better understanding of Orthodox thought and practice. Tobias' recommendations at his conclusion of ways in which we can better communicate and dialog are not without merit. We do need to keep lines of communication open and to honestly discuss our differences, without compromise, so that false impressions and misunderstandings do not stand between us.

**LHP Book Review**


Gustaf Wingren’s classic work *Luther on Vocation* is back in print thanks to Wipf & Stock Publishers. This publication is a reprint of the 1957 translation by Carl C. Rasmussen. This is still an important contribution to Luther studies, and merits placement in any scholar’s or pastor’s library. Wingren delivers us Luther on the subject of vocation in this book, and Wipf & Stock delivers by making this book available for one’s library.

In the introduction of this book Wingren states this goal: “Our aim is rather to integrate Luther’s statements about vocation with his basic theology, that is, to present expressions concerning Beruf in the context of his fundamental concepts—law and gospel, the work of Christ, freedom, sin, etc.” [vii]. These fundamental concepts one finds throughout this book as Wingren presents Luther on vocation in three chapters: 1. Earth and Heaven, 2. God and the Devil, and 3. Man.

We are given Luther’s view of vocation from God’s perspective in the first two chapters. Chapter three presents the view from man’s perspective. And as far a man goes, it is specifically the man of belief or faith that concerns Luther. Certainly, the man of unbelief is not excluded in this discussion, especially for the sake of contrast and delineation from the man of faith. As Wingren wrote: “All have station (Stand) and office; but *Beruf* is the Christian’s earthly or spiritual work” [2].

In chapter one Wingren shows how according to Luther the Christian is in two realms at the same time. By faith he or she has the kingdom of heaven by grace. All is gift. All sin is forgiven on the basis of Christ’s work of atonement. There is only gospel, no law, no works in this kingdom of heaven. At the same time the Christian is also in the kingdom of the earth. Here there is love. Works are done for one’s neighbor. Who one’s neighbors are determine which vocations one finds themselves in, i.e. worker, spouse, parent, child, etc. It is important for the Christian to not mix the two kingdoms. If one begins to think that works matter in the kingdom of heaven, then they have displaced Christ and one’s need for his work of redemption. Not only does this negate one’s salvation, it also ruins one’s work for his or her neighbor because no longer are works of love done out of genuine concern for one’s neighbor. Rather, they are done selfishly as one tries to win approval from God.

These two kingdoms carry on through a spiritual and an earthly government respectively. God continues to work through both. God works through the spiritual government with the *word* that has been committed to preachers who deliver the gospel in the church. God also works through the earthly government with the *sword* or law in two economies: political and domestic. There is a connection between the two governments. Both governments are expressions of God’s love whether through vocation to one’s neighbor in the earthly kingdom, or through preaching in the heavenly kingdom. This is God’s view “from above.” From man’s view “from below,” the connection between the spiritual government and the earthly government is made as man lives under law in vocation and under gospel in church.
Chapter two discusses the important dynamic that affects the Christian’s life in the kingdom of earth and the kingdom of heaven. God is real, and so is the devil. They remain at war with the other. Man is caught in the middle as he or she lives in the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of earth. The war that is going on between God and the devil involves man because man is still struggling with sin, the very thing that God is warring against. So, while the man lives according to the gospel in the kingdom of heaven, he also lives according to the law in the kingdom of the earth. Sin and the devil add confusion to man’s life. It is difficult to sort through man’s place as he or she stands between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of earth as the cosmic war ensues.

Chapter three then discusses man living out his or her vocation with prayer and following God’s Commandment. Furthermore, Wingren shows how it is in the present moment that man has opportunity to live out one’s vocation on behalf of one’s neighbor. God seems hidden in all this because there is cross and suffering in this present life in the kingdom of the earth. The man of faith lives through struggles as he or she looks to the Eschaton, when the future kingdom of heaven will be fully manifested and the law and vocation will cease. Christ’s heavenly kingdom will also come in power.

Wingren masterfully shows how Luther understood and argued for the bondage of the will, while also maintaining the freedom the Christian has in living the new life. In living that new life, however, one cannot establish rules for Christian conduct due to the fact that not all situations are the same. This is not “situation ethics.” God’s Commandment has not changed. Love to one’s neighbor though, requires one to factor in all facets that bear on the situation. Since two situations are seldom identical it would be dangerous to set standing rules for all time. Herein lays the fundamental error in monasticism: vocation is not imitation. Luther does not offer a program of works. Rather, he says that one should give of oneself to his or her neighbor.

I found Gustaf Wingren’s *Luther on Vocation* an insightful look into Martin Luther who wrote volumes of material. This book was enlightening to me in that it showed patterns in Luther’s thought that permeates many things that he wrote. Wingren taught me how to understand Luther on the subject of vocation. Besides being insightful, this book was also challenging for me. Luther ran his teaching deep – checking his thoughts from all directions. His basic concepts are comprehensible for the most simple of mind, but he runs them deep enough for the most sophisticated of mind. That is why this volume of Gustaf Wingren’s is yet so important to this day.

*Luther on Vocation* opens the door of Luther studies to the beginner, yet captivates and engages one well versed in Luther.

Gustaf Wingren really does deliver Luther on the subject of vocation. By making *Luther on Vocation* available for anyone interested in Luther studies, Wipf & Stock Publishers also have delivered.

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**Notes**
There are a couple of little books in my personal library that aspire to the title, “A Lutheran Catechism on Worship.” This new volume by the Rev. Christopher Thoma (author of Kids in the Divine Service, released by a previous LCMS Commission on Worship) is truly worthy of being called “A Lutheran Catechism on Worship.”

While not published by Concordia Publishing House, this great volume is available through CPH. Personally, I prefer to support authors like this and smaller publishing houses by ordering from them directly. I would urge you to do the same.

“Receiving the wonderful gift of forgiveness in worship is at the center of our lives in Christ! “Digging into and understanding this reality is crucial in our approach to youth work. Writing from his personal experience of over a decade as a Director of Christian Education in the Lutheran Church, Christopher Thoma explores the depths of worship and its relevance in the lives of children. Thoma offers intuitive and practical insights which encourage parents, pastors, and your workers to celebrate the fullness of worship as the fold in which Jesus safely keeps and richly feeds His flock—a flock that includes the lambs!

“A must-read for pastors, Christian educators, and parents” (CPH website).

Young people need to hear what this book provides because so much material aimed at youth groups and the very young ignores or denigrates what Lutherans hold dear on Sunday mornings (see p. 19). Thoma walks the reader through the basics of Lutheran theology, especially the theology of worship and applies that to the vocations of those who lead children to Christ.

Children are more capable than some parents and many Christian educators are willing to admit (26). Presenting material that is age-appropriate is important. Not challenging them to grow in faith and knowledge is a crime. Memorization is becoming a lost art. Wouldn’t Catechism Class be different if children knew the Six Chief Parts by the time they were 8 years old instead of in the 8th grade? Luther’s advice to Bucer with regard to his teaching on the Sacrament of the Altar (40) is good advice for all who teach in the church: “Teach as you can answer to God.”

“Why?” is a question very familiar to parents and teachers. Pastors need not be afraid of it either! We ought to encourage this curiosity of children and nurture them during Divine Service. I discourage so-called “Children’s Church.” Stuffed animals, Cheerios, and books have their place, but the pew is perhaps not the most appropriate. Why not teach children parts of the Sunday service that they can understand and participate in? If they know what’s going on and can add their voices to the words prayed and sung, perhaps we can delay or stave off the use of the phrase, “I’m bored.” In previous generations boredom was considered a character flaw. Today it is too-often considered a reason to change things. And future generations are in danger of being denied things for which past generations were willing to die.

Consider this featured quotation by Dr. Norman Nagel: “Thus, the liturgy can be a great gift, haven, and joy to people who live in a society and world where they can’t be quite sure what things are going to be like five years from now, or whether tomorrow everything will be changed. In a world where everything has gotten to be so transitory and ‘throw it away tomorrow,’ is there anything that they can count on as lasting, that they can be sure will still be there tomorrow, next Sunday, next year, and when they die? The liturgy delivers the answer, ‘Yes!’ Same old liturgy every Sunday. You can count on it like it’s been there for a thousand years and more. When people bump into that in a world where there isn’t anything else they can be sure of like that, there is something real! And so we decline the demands of
a consumer society which has to have a new model every year or every week if you’re going to sell. For then you’re talking marketing, and you’re not talking the church of Christ and the holy liturgy” (71-72). This book is necessary to encourage many grown-ups to do the grown-up thing and use the hymnal, both liturgy and hymns, and deny the selfish desire to sacrifice to the god of “personal preference.”

On page 88, the author quotes one of my favorite authors and speakers, Craig Parton. A deeper understanding of worship is needed than merely what one person or a group of people like or what “feels good.” There is a recognition that there is a lack of reverent, rigorous, and law-and-gospel-distinguishing music for the guitar. (May I recommend “Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring” from Bach’s Cantata 147 as an appropriate prelude on acoustic guitar?) The point driven home by the end of Chapter 11 is that Lutherans do what they believe, at worship, and in their vocations. Parents, pastors, and Christians can do better at emphasizing the presence of Christ at worship because of His promises, rather than relying on subjective feelings and emotional experiences (91).

“Regularly Scheduled Separation from the Shepherd,” Chapter 12, is a reminder to repent. We go to Church not because we “have to,” but because the Lord has good gifts there for us and for our children.

Extensive endnotes provide additional fascinating reading, illuminating the text as well as providing a follow-up reading list of the author’s source material.

Children are not merely the Church of tomorrow. Baptized into Christ like Christians of all ages, they are part of the Church now. They deserve to inherit the best of previous generations, including faithful Biblical preaching and teaching, the heritage of the Small Catechism and the Lutheran Confessions, and a form of worship they can grow into rather than grow out of.

Read this volume yourself and make sure to order copies for VBS and Sunday School teachers, your pastor, parents, and church musicians. This would be a wonderful gift for baptismal sponsor to give to new parents, or to parents of growing children on that child’s baptismal birthday.

PJC

There is great beauty to music that has supported the proclamation of the Word of God in Latin, German, English, and other languages throughout western Christianity.

Three years ago, I learned Gregorian chant thanks to the First Edition of the *Brotherhood Prayer Book* and the mp3 recordings available from [http://www.llpb.us](http://www.llpb.us). This is the corrected, updated, expanded, and illustrated Second Edition.
If memory serves, this was originally intended as a supplement to *The Lutheran Hymnal*. It makes use of the King James Bible and supports that hallowed translation with four line Gregorian notation. Personally, I would have liked to see the English Standard Version used. There is a steep learning curve for Gregorian notation, but it can be learned by listening. Gregorian melodies in modern notation seem to lose something in translation. Again, I'm very grateful for the free recordings online, as well as opportunities to pray and sing with the Lutheran Liturgical Prayer Brotherhood.

*Above*: Pages 400-401 showing Gregorian notation and art for Christmastide, “From Christmas Eve until Jan. 5.”

*Below*: Compline, page 63, also available in Latin (76) and German (85).

Why a Second Edition? “After less than two years, the looming end to the first print run of the *Brotherhood Prayer Book*, the many corrections posted at www.llpb.us, and the desire to produce a prayer book more complete with music and rubrics has led us to create this second revised edition of the *Brotherhood Prayer Book*.

“The most noticeable change in the second edition of the *Brotherhood Prayer Book* is the new music. All of the Responsories, antiphons for the Magnificat, invitatories, and the Venite now have their proper Gregorian melodies. The new music has increased the content of the book by about 50%. The second edition also is now in a more convenient size, being roughly the same size as a hymnal. The second edition has marginal page reference to the first edition, so that groups can use both editions together and still avoid confusion. The second edition is also graced by the beautiful liturgical artwork of Mr. Edward Riojas. Introducing sections of the BPB, each of the 26 original drawings combines theology and piety to give the user a fitting focus for prayer. Indices allow the user to find particular Psalm tones, and hymns by their English and Latin names” (publisher’s website).

The Introduction to the First Edition (10) credits the German “Evangelical Lutheran Prayer Brotherhood” and their Leipzig Breviary for the idea. Rev. Benjamin Mayes and Rev. Michael Frese who both spent time studying in Oberusel. Rev. Frese served as translator. Rev. Mayes served as musician and general editor. Compared to *Breviarum Lipsiensae: Tagzeitengebete*, (I have a personal copy of that too) the pages of this book are extremely beautiful.

I used a variety of bookmarks and ribbons to help myself navigate the Calendar, Ordinary, Lectionary, Psalmody, and Proper sections of the First Edition. Another benefit of the Second Edition is the inclusion of seven very helpful colored ribbons.

The Introduction to the Second Edition (12) answers many questions users and examiners had about the book. Benjamin Mayes arranged the liturgical music. I like the description of BPB as a “choral service book.”

“Vigils, known in the Middle Ages as Matins” (30) is a good service to walk through as you consider the benefit this prayer book may be to you.

Versicles (30) are followed by the Venite (31) which may include Proper Invitatory (389-569). A hymn follows (weekday propers, p349ff). Readings follow. Recommended Responsories come from the propers or weekday propers. The Te Deum (34 or 35ff) is provided in a form that may be sung to a Psalm-tone. One may also sing it to a Gregorian melody. The service concludes with silent prayer. It may lead in directly to Morning Prayer (Lauds), p. 38.

The aforementioned Te Deum setting may be downloaded from:

http://www.llpb.us/MP3Hymns/Morning/Te-Deuma.MP3
I loved seeing a variety of canticles included (118ff) as well as the Athanasian Creed (135) all set to Gregorian psalm-tones.

The Psalm prayers alone are worth the investment in the book. Consider using these after praying psalms from Lutheran Service Book.

Rubrics are numerous and quite extensive. They will give you quite an education on how liturgy may be conducted during the festival half of the year. Note particularly rubrics for the Sacred Triduum, p. 445.

The art by Mr. Rojas is simple, yet reverent. I am particularly fond of the art for Lententide (424) and the Common of Apostles and Evangelists (538). He is also the artist behind the art on QBR’s covers from the Higher Things Ecclesiastical Art CD. To order, please visit http://higherthings.org/html/store/ecclesiasticalart

I welcome the addition of the Index of Psalm Tones (620) and the Index of Hymn First Lines (621), which includes the source of the hymn text translations.

It is a modern tendency to supplement the liturgy and song of the church with what it new. There’s nothing wrong with singing a new song unto the Lord. In addition, I would encourage you to consider adding something old to your song, ancient tones and melodies that sing Jesus Christ, He who is the New Song!

PJC

Notes


The title of the book is telling. It echoes the familiar line of the funeral liturgy. The author, LCMS pastor and school Alvin J. Schmidt, asserts that the “ashes” part of that familiar text finds no precedent in the Holy Scriptures. Further, he raises questions that would make good fodder for a Circuit Winkel or as a topic or sub-topic for a District Pastoral Conference: “Why have many pagan societies for thousands of years cremated their deceased human beings? Why did the Jews throughout the Old Testament era consistently oppose cremation? Similarly, why did Christians, like their Jewish ancestors, also consistently oppose cremation until the latter part of the 19th century? Why are more and more Christians and Jews in the West now cremating their loved ones?” (back cover, et al). These are questions worth asking and answering. “Why have many pagan societies for thousands of years cremated their deceased human beings? Why did the Jews throughout the Old Testament era consistently...
oppose cremation? Similarly, why did Christians, like their Jewish ancestors, also consistently oppose cremation until the latter part of the 19th century? Why are more and more Christians and Jews in the West now cremating their loved ones?

“In 1900 only .003 percent of the deceased in the United States were cremated. In 1960 the American cremation rate stood at 3.56 percent, but by 2001 it had risen to 27.25 percent. In 1999, Canada had a 46.15 percent cremation rate. In England the rate currently stands at about 75 percent. What has prompted these rapid increases? Are these relatively recent rates of cremation related to increases in secularism and a corresponding decline in biblical knowledge and conviction?

“This book Dust to Dust or Ashes to Ashes? A Christian Examination of Cremation, written in non-technical language by Dr. Alvin J. Schmidt, a sociologist and theologian, answers these and other questions. The book reflects research drawn from numerous biblical and historical sources. No book has thus far provided answers to these questions. Readers will benefit greatly from reading it, as it provides helpful information especially for Christians who have at some time wondered whether cremation might be an option for them when their time comes to depart for eternity. Non-Christians, who have questions about cremation, will also find the book valuable” (publisher’s website).

You will learn something from this book. It is likely that you will be uncomfortable at times. And it is quite possible that you will grow in the effort.

Paganism is reasserting itself around the world, especially in countries that were assumed to be Christian. Post-modernism, in contrast to Modernism, is not anti-religious. It may be anti-Christian, but it is not anti-religious. People are looking for love in all the wrong places. (Sometimes country songs get it right.) People are looking for the love of “god” everywhere except where He has chosen to be found: in Christ Jesus our Lord, God in the flesh. Cremation’s return has come along with other pagan practices (1).

Earth burial is the preferred method of honoring the dead (ii). The basic argument is, “If it was good enough for Jesus…” Granted, burial practices of first-century Judaism are different from 21st Century American burial practices, but the basics are the same. A body is placed in the ground. Dust to dust. (Ashes should never enter the picture, Schmidt would assert, nor our liturgical language.) Alvin Schmidt is to be commended for showing the lack of Biblical precedent for “ashes to ashes” in the Book of Common Prayer (68ff) and all of the liturgies that borrowed from it. This isn’t light reading for just before bedtime. On 21 and following, the reader learns what happens to the body when it is cremated. It isn’t pretty. Among the less-gruesome, yet necessary details, one learns that the bones don’t burn up. Fragments remain in the “cremains.” The bones that remain often need to be pulverized until they take the form of the fragments in the urn. Again, the details are not pleasant, but they are necessary to learn in the course of a full and honest discussion of the topic.

Part of Schmidt’s role is to dismantle arguments in favor of cremation, such as the economic argument (104). Why must earth burials cost so much? I’m sure that the use of vaults, etc. have much to do with preserving ground water quality, but what would prevent a person from the wish to be buried in a simple pine box like in centuries past?

He also notes a difference between those killed in accidents (or a tragedy like 9/11) and intentionally cremating the dead. The resurrection of the dead who have been cremated is not at issue (122). The author urges us to examine the evidence against cremation and lack of Biblical evidence in its favor. He argues for an end to cremation among Christians, yet does so pastorally sensitive to those have been told it is adiaphora, as well as those who have friends or family who have been cremated. This pastoral care is my final memory of the book. With a different intent, the author could have written a much different book. Knowing the difference between Law and Gospel is a blessing to the readers of this book.

This is a thought-provoking volume. Its difficulty for some will not be its cost, length, vocabulary, or argumentation, but the central thesis: Cremation of the dead is improper for Christians to continue doing. Schmidt lays out a powerful case in defense of his thesis. My personal reluctance to enthusiastically endorse cremation has been confirmed, yet I still wrestle with the pastoral and practical consequences of Dust to Dust or Ashes to Ashes?

“Dr. Alvin J. Schmidt holds the B.A., M. Div., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees. He is emeritus professor of sociology at Illinois College, Jacksonville, IL. Previously, he served as professor of sociology and Christian social ethics at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN. He has also taught at colleges and universities in Nebraska, North Carolina, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, and Canada. Dr. Schmidt has published numerous articles and several books, including The Menace of Multiculturalism: Trojan Horse in America and Under the Influence: How Christianity Transformed Civilization. The Great Divide—The Failure of Islam and the Triumph of the West” (publisher’s website).

PJC
**Hymnody Book Review**

_Let All the People Praise You: A Song Book._
www.nph.net (BN)

Let All the People Praise You is a songbook put out by the Wisconsin Synod. It does not claim to be a replacement for their hymnal, but rather a supplement aimed at more informal gatherings. It seeks to expand the average churchgoer’s musical pallet with more folk and African American spiritual songs.

But this is not, nor is it claimed to be, a "contemporary" song-book. A large part of the rhetoric of contemporary worship gurus is that the music will feel current and "hip" to a young demographic. It should be like the secular music they are comfortable with from the radio.

There are no genuinely "contemporary" songs in here. Over 100 out of the roughly 220 songs were written in the 1970's and 80's. I was familiar with quite a few songs that my parents have in a box of old beat-up cassette tapes from the early 1980's leftover from their Baptistic-Charismatic phase. That box is now likely covered with dust up in the attic and, in my opinion, it should stay there. This music will only feel comfortable and "contemporary" to middle-agers who were big into the same weak silly 1980's Christian pop scene.

Despite my obvious bias, I did not want to simply toss aside this book without an honest examination. So I read through all the lyrics in this book and rated the theological content on a scale of one to five. I gave 22 of them a "one" or "two", which means they contained overt heresy. If I heard one of these songs at a Lutheran church I would be visibly annoyed and likely have an angry confrontation with the Pastor at the door.

I rated 42 of them a "four" or "five". These I could potentially see myself using in some context. I only found two that made me think, "That is a great hymn. I would use it in our Divine Service," but it turns out they are both in _Lutheran Service Book_!

The vast majority of the songs are between these two extremes. I rated over 150 of the songs a "three". This means that, though I myself would never use these songs in any circumstance, they are not overtly heretical and offensive. They are just weak or shallow "fluff". Such songs make up the meat of the book.

This review is aimed at the average Joe Lutheran pastor or musician to answer the question: is it worth buying? I will be frank. A Lutheran pastor or musician who considers himself Lutheran should not even be considering implementing "contemporary" worship or the music that goes with it (or did 25 years ago).

However, if you are one who enjoys pouring through a new song-book, seeking to find a few good hymns you haven't seen before, you may enjoy this one. There are quite a few decent Christmas songs in here that a Lutheran could use with a clear conscience. I can see a pastor or choir director using this book to find material for a Christmas program or maybe even an Advent service.

JAH

**Hymnody Book Review**

Bond, Douglas. _Mr. Pipes and The British Hymn Makers_. Arlington Heights, IL: Christian Liberty Press, 1999. 242 Pages. Paper. $9.95. (All four novels are available for $35.00.)
www.christianlibertypress.com (847) 259-4444 (H)

In my life, I’ve been blessed to meet three men much like Mr. Pipes. Long road trips, discussions of music, and sharing wisdom about life have marked these friendships.

_Mr. Pipes and the British Hymn Makers_ is the first volume in the series. (QBR 2.1 reviewed the fourth volume in the series, _The Accidental Voyage._)

In this book, Douglas Bond introduces readers of all ages to Mr. Pipes,
Drew, and Annie, the main characters of the series. Olney is a real place, once populated with the likes of John Newton and William Cowper.

The author is true to his Reformed perspective (143, 159). Understandably, there are still hard feelings among the theological descendants of the Puritans (and other so-called “nonconformists”) for the “established church,” the Church of England, called “Episcopal” in the United States and elsewhere (28, 191).

I like how the author weaves in musical theory, church history and theology. One is introduced to the harpsichord (44). Mr. Pipes witnesses to Christ and Biblical truth sometimes subtly (50), other times more forcefully (55ff, 77, 179ff).

I struggle with books written by Reformed Christians that sometimes give the impression that “saving faith in Christ” (163, et al) depends upon a proper mindset, more knowledge, more thorough repentance, or a conversion experience. This denies baptismal regeneration, confessed by Peter (Acts 2:38-39), Paul (Titus 3:5-8) and Mark (16:16). The Holy Spirit creates faith through Holy Baptism, faith that trusts the Word of God in the water, no matter a person’s age. We must not confuse faith and reason. Yet, baptized or not, without faith in Christ, one cannot be saved.

A commonly sung last stanza of “Amazing Grace,” “When we’ve been there ten thousand years…” (115) is not Newton’s and is also associated with “Jerusalem, My Happy Home.”

Mr. Pipes says, “Music is a gift of God and has an enormous power that can help lead us to virtue. But in this fallen world, music—produced by sinners—is often chaotic, menacing, or flippant, and can lead us to our own destruction. You see, children, music shapes us in its image” (97).

Later, his wisdom continues: “—musical entertainers write most of what passes for worship music today. For the most part, these musicians lack a deep, theological understanding of biblical truth, and often lack literary training and poetic skill. Finally, most contemporary music written by Christians just mimics the world’s way, and thus, it is so eminently forgettable. Little of it will ever join the rack of truly great hymns, set to timeless, majestic music, and produced by men—and some women—with solid theological and poetic priorities” (196). There we Lutherans can find common cause with Mr. Pipes and Mr. Bond.

The main focus of the book is teaching hymns cherished by the church for the Biblical message of Christ they proclaim. Learn more about “All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night,” “Rock of Ages,” “Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted.” Read also of British Hymn Makers like Isaac Watts, Augustus Toplady, and Scottish, Anglican and Women Hymn Writers with this interesting, accessible and fun novel!

PJC

Hymnody CD Review


Congregational hymns have been popular because their words and melodies have been accessible to laity and pastors alike. Part of their appeal has been how they carry the Gospel of Christ to troubled hearts and minds. That is what makes Great Hymns truly great, whether they be new or old.

You may have seen the choirs of St. Olaf on one of their televised Christmas concerts on PBS or heard them on National Public Radio. St. Olaf Records makes The St. Olaf Choir, conducted by Anton Armstrong available to you year round.

There are currently two Volumes in their Great Hymns of Faith. QBR looks forward to many more.

Liner notes for both discs are quite extensive, including hymn texts, background on the choir and conductor, and source and theme notes by Paul Westermeyer.

“The St. Olaf Choir was founded by F. Melius Christiansen in 1911. An immigrant from Larvik, Norway, Christiansen came to St. Olaf in 1903 to organize the music department. It was he who fostered the a capella tradition of sacred music that became the hallmark for choirs throughout America.”

“The interests of Anton Armstrong, who succeeded Kenneth Jennings in 1990, lie in the tradition of Western European choral music, 20th-century compositions and folk music arrangements from the U.S. and the wider global community.
“Armstrong grew up on Long Island, New York. He was a member of the American Boychoir, an American counterpart of the Vienna Boys Choir. Armstrong graduated from St. Olaf in 1978 with a Bachelor of Music degree. He continued his studies at the University of Illinois, earning a Master of Music degree in choral music, and at Michigan State University where he earned a Doctor of Musical Arts degree.

“Armstrong is a frequent guest conductor, lecturer, and clinician.”

A highlight of Volume I is the F. Melius Christiansen setting of “Beautiful Savior.” Pastors and musicians may wish to consider track 1, “Holy God We Praise Thy Name” as a hymn paraphrase version of the Te Deum for Matins.

I appreciate the balance of the vocal parts, the precise enunciation of the hymn texts, and the overall consistency from track to track and disc to disc.

Westermeyer highlights “three defining characteristics,” “an Anglo-American context, St. Olaf’s Norwegian Lutheran cast, and a centering in 19th century sources and idioms.” Two themes emerge: “1) confessional roots derived from the story of what God has done, and 2) our responses.”

“Holy, Holy, Holy” is a favorite hymn for many congregations. While inadequate as a metric paraphrase of the canticle with the same name, it is well-suited for occasional use as an opening hymn.

TRURO is a powerful tune, often mismatched with an inadequate Easter text, “Christ Is Alive.” Here it is paired with “Lift Up Your Heads,” a wonderful musical marriage.

Many hymns are reactions to the grief and tribulation of life in a sinful world. “My Faith Looks Up to Thee” and “When Peace Like a River” fall into the response theme of Volume II.

“Amazing Grace” is given a fresh setting by Keith McCutchen. The second disc ends appropriately with the comforting hymn of benediction, “Go, My Children, With My Blessing.”

Hymns are wonderful tools for pastoral care. When a pastor visits the sick, imprisoned, hospitalized, or shut-in, they are a wonderful addition to conversation, proclamation of the word, prayer, and the Sacrament. When someone cannot make it to church, the pastor brings church to the person. Some pastors are novice musicians and reluctant singers. Hymns are a handy way to add music to pastoral visits.

The Gospel (and sung Gospel) is of great comfort on the deathbed. Hymns soothe like David’s psalms calmed King Saul.

Add both volumes to your audio library soon. And CDs like these make great gifts!

PJC

Hymnody Book Review


Official Guitar Chord Editions of official Lutheran hymnals are long overdue. In paintings one can see Luther himself playing a 16th Century lute.

I’ve been playing guitar since 1982. Since then, I compiled my own guitar hymnal. Many hymns can be accompanied quite well with three basic chords, the I, IV, and V7 in a given key, e.g., D, G, and A7 in the key of D. Beyond those chords (or the minor key “equivalents”, choosing the appropriate guitar chord can be hard work, well beyond the expertise of a beginner, especially one who cannot play by ear.

Enter the two-volume ELW Guitar Accompaniment Edition. The now-familiar cranberry and silver cover would complement the ELW pew edition. These volumes have a neat metal spiral binding, but unfortunately are not equipped with a hard cover. My copies look a little beat-up already. They are usable for sure, but nowhere near as durable as the LSB Organ Accompaniment editions. Augsburg-Fortress could correct this in future printings of this edition.

This is a two-volume set because a single volume would be too heavy for some music stands, but also to accommodate the melody line, hymn text, and at least one line of recommended chords. Many hymns have a second line of chords intended for use with a capo. “Capo 3” means that you put a capo device on the third fret of your guitar, play the recommended
chords, and they sound in the appropriate key. F can be a difficult key not only because the first finger has to make the notes F and C sound right, but also because Bb is a Barre chord and requires all four fingers.

The recommended chords can be further simplified by focusing on the I, IV, and V7 of each major key and then gradually adding in the other chords as they are learned.

The music in this edition is printed slightly larger than in the pew edition. Numbering, of course, is identical to the pew edition. Author, composer, tune name and metrical information as well as copyright information is provided on each page. Contents and Indices/Indexes are also included in both volumes along with a brief chord reference chart.

These volumes focus entirely on music that is not in the liturgical section of the ELW pew edition.

Source:

I used 787, “On Eagles’ Wings” to accompany a confirmation class choir last month. The repeated refrain could have been set apart from the verses better and the verses set apart from one another. I did notice one chord typo. In stanza 2, the third chord should be G instead of D, as in all the other stanzas.

As of this writing, I have played through a good sample of these settings and have used four additional hymns accompanied by guitar on Sunday morning. (All four of our organists were unavailable. I led LSB’s Service of Prayer and Preaching with acoustic guitar. In addition to the Old Testament Canticle and New Testament Canticle provided in that liturgy, we sang “To God the Holy Spirit Let Us Pray,” “Amazing Grace,” “Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word,” and “The Church’s One Foundation.” The Prelude was Bach’s “Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring.” A congregation need not change its “style” in order to make reverent use of the acoustic guitar.

The guitar now has some great Lutheran music available for Sunday School, VBS, youth activities, camp, confirmation classes and Lutheran day schools and preschools.

Perhaps having such a resource decades ago could have staved off so-called “contemporary worship” and its “hum and strum” sub-genre. I rejoice that both new Lutheran hymnals, Lutheran Service Book and Evangelical Lutheran Worship have official Guitar Chord Editions. The LSB Guitar Chord Edition is currently scheduled to be available later this summer.

This set is a worthwhile investment for a congregation with ELW or one of its predecessors and for Lutheran guitarists in the ELCA.

PJC
Pulpit Resource Review


Learning New Testament Greek (and Hebrew, for those doubly-blessed) at the seminary was a significant investment of time, money, and effort, wasn’t it? For the sake of our Lord, His people we are given to serve, and the message of comfort we proclaim to God’s people on His behalf, isn’t it worth the time and energy to keep up our knowledge and use of Koine Greek?

My best advice to QBR readers is simple: Upgrades (and additional electronic books) are always available. Pick a level to start at and grow your library to serve you in your ministry. You’ll hear this again. ☺

The latest incarnation of the Libronix (Lye BRON icks) Digital Library System (DLS) is licensed to one user: that would be you. The license agreement allows you to have the program installed on two computers at one time. I have the same books and software capability on the desktop computer in my church study!

Opening music greets you as the software loads every time. The opening page looks much like a webpage. So much of the software is intuitive, it can be used the very first time you load it up. I would recommend viewing the video tutorials and consider further training with Morris Proctor.

You will notice the following sections:

- Bible Study Starter
- Lectionary
- Devotions
- Prayer
- My Library
- News
- Blogs

This “page” is customizable. You may wish to have your Bible Study Starter include the Exegetical Guide and both Bible and Commentary.

My first exposure to the current version, Logos Bible Software 3 and its impressive software engine (the Libronix Digital Library System) was through the English Standard Version Bible. Apart from some specialty editions and pew Bibles, most copies of the ESV come with a free Bible software CD-Rom with at least the ESV and KJV text. What a blessing! This has only increased its growing acceptance among Christians who desire a literal translation that has the aural resonance of the King James. Beginning with CD-ROMs designated “6.0” (5.0 used WORDsearch instead), the software included was Logos Version 3 with the Libronix Digital Library System.

Our review copy of the Scholars Library arrived in late January. I can imagine life without this software, and I don’t like the thought of studying Scripture without it!

Version 3d was on my DVD-ROM. It was soon upgraded to 3e. There likely will not be a version 3f, as the effort in Bellingham, Washington is going toward Logos Bible Software 4!

One of my first experiences with the software was the need to add the license for the Scholars Library to my previous ESV license. I had to call customer service, and I must say I was impressed. A real human being answered the phone and transferred me to someone who quickly, expertly, and courteously handled my issue. Kudos! Logos Bible Software has much to teach the rest of corporate America!

I rejoiced to see the Lectionary section. It currently has the Revised Common Lectionary. A Lutheran Service Book Lectionary option for Libronix is in the works!
I hope someday to augment the Devotions with Luther’s Small Catechism and Prayer with Lutheran Service Book. If I’m going to dream, I’ll dream big!

My Library highlights a Book of the Day, likely one you haven’t opened before. Every time I run the software I always discover something new!

News keeps you up to date on the latest releases. One of the most exciting aspects is “pre-pub.” Respond to the emails from LOGOS when something you’re interested has been proposed for inclusion as a digital resource. Once enough subscribers show their interest in the resource by submitting their credit card information (only charged after the resource is ready), production begins. Recently a free book was offered to encourage more people to try the “pre-pub” program.

The Libronix Library system is also ready for the blogosphere! Read Logos Libronix blogs, blogs from Morris Proctor, and blogs from fellow users. And, start a blog of your own and write about your digital Library. A notable Lutheran Libronix user group is found on Wittenberg Trail. See http://wittenbergtrail.ning.com/group/libronixforlutherans

This is a truly massive electronic library. How huge? A complete listing of every volume included spans several pages. You will be impressed! I found 346 unlocked resources shortly after I began using it.

Imagine how long it takes to search through your entire pastoral library to find one reference in the right book. What if you wanted to find every mention of a particular Bible passage, person, in that same library? It would take forever! Every book included here can be searched at the same time for the same thing in a matter of minutes or even seconds.

Upgrades (and additional electronic books) are always available. Pick a level to start at and grow your library to serve you in your ministry. Here’s the details:

[Free LOGOS software comes with the purchase many editions of the ESV Bible (Crossway) or Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions (CPH). It’s a place to start...or, start with these library collections...]

Christian Home $149.95
Bible Study Library $259.95
Leader's Library $309.95
Original Languages $415.95
Scholar’s Library $629.95
Scholar's Library: Silver $999.95
Scholar's Library: Gold $1,379.95

I was first introduced to Logos back at the seminary. The cost seemed out of reach then. Unfortunately, I didn’t check into the facts well enough. Besides, Christian bookstores and online vendors occasionally offer deep discounts. This particular package, Scholar’s Library Silver, is available from discounters for less than the current cost of a credit-hour at either of our two LCMS Seminaries.

My first Logos digital books were the Concordia Self-Study Bible and Concordia Self Study Commentary. Both are still in my library, although the software has changed a lot since then.

Purchasers will receive free upgrades on the software for life. On a regular basis, additional books are made available free of charge. If typos are ever discovered, corrections are made in through Libronix Update (under the Tools menu).

Mac users rejoice! A version is coming for you!

So far, I’ve used this every week for sermon preparation. Having the original Greek or Hebrew text, parallel translations, and commentaries all open at the same time is great.

Imagine using this for Bible class. I wouldn’t mind having a projector hooked up to my laptop and be prepared for those “Pastor Stumper” questions. Fast searches of lots of books (or even just the Bible) is a wonderful thing to be able to do.

Consider the devotional possibilities. Choose a Bible-reading program, customized to your schedule.

Shortly after I felt comfortable using the software, I was responsible to lead the Exegetical study of Galatians for our Circuit Winkel (monthly local pastoral conference).

You will be surprised how much you use books you never bought in their print versions.

The software made this word find puzzle on John 3:16:

```
ODOABL  L  V  P
BGEED  A  S  E
OGVLOLPR
PARIRODI
GGAEOS
PVDPPELH
RPLESDVG
VBSPDA

BELIEVES
LOVED
GAVE
PERISH
```

Puzzles can be made for verses, chapters, or entire Bible books! This is only one of the many tools available for you.
For Lutheran Christians, I would recommend starting with a basic library: including the ESV and KJV, Greek New Testament, the Hebrew Scriptures, and either Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions or the Kolb/Wengert The Book of Concord. You may notice that the Libronix format is the digital format of choice of Lutheran publishing houses.

Then, consider adding in the Concordia Theological Library, and Libronix files from Northwestern, AugsburgFortress, and the Lenski and Keil/Delitzsch commentaries. And don’t forget your Kittel (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament)!

Logos Bible Software and the Libronix Library System simply sets the standard for Bible software. This wonderful resource will encourage you in your study of God’s Word and aid you in your proclamation of Jesus Christ. There is no higher purpose than that.

PJC

Electronic Books Included

**English Bibles**

- New International Version**
- New Living Translation
- New American Standard Bible - 1995 Update
- English Standard Version
- The NET Bible w/ translators’ notes
- Holman Christian Standard Bible
- The Message
- American Standard Version
- New Revised Standard Version
- Revised Standard Version
- Darby Bible 1890
- New Century Version
- Today’s New International Version**
- New International Reader’s Version**
- New King James Version
- King James Version
- King James Version Apocrypha
- King James Version: Cambridge Paragraph Bible
- Young’s Literal Translation
- Wuest’s Expanded NT

**Greek Texts & Morphologies**

- Nestle-Aland 27th Edition Greek NT w/ McReynolds English Interlinear & Logos Morphology
- Interlinear Literal Translation of the Greek New Testament (Newberry)
- ESV English-Greek Reverse Interlinear of the NT
- ESV English-Hebrew Reverse Interlinear of the OT
- NRSV English-Greek Reverse Interlinear of the NT

**Hebrew Texts & Morphologies**

- The Andersen-Forbes Analyzed Text of the Hebrew Bible
- Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia w/ WIVU Hebrew Morphology

**Aramaic Text & Morphology**

- The Targums from the files of the Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon Project

**Latin Texts**

- Clementine Vulgate

**Ancient Texts in Translation**

- Amarna Letters

• Complete Works of Josephus
• Works of Philo

Greek Lexicons
• Dictionary of Biblical Languages (Greek NT)
• Enhanced Strong's Lexicon
• Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon (Liddell & Scott)
• Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged ("Little Kittel")
• Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (10 Volumes)
• Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domains (Louw-Nida)
• NAS Greek Dictionary

Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicons
• NAS Hebrew Dictionary
• Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon of the OT
• Dictionary of Biblical Languages (Aramaic OT)
• Dictionary of Biblical Languages (Hebrew OT)
• Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament

Latin Lexicon
• Dictionary of the Vulgate New Testament

Original Language Grammars
• Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in NT Greek
• Greek New Testament Insert (Chapman-Shogren)
• Hebrew Bible Insert
• Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar
• Hebrew Syntax, 3rd Edition (Davidson)

Latin Grammar
• An Introduction to Ecclesiastical Latin

Original Language Tools
• Tense Voice Mood
• Glossary of Morpho-Syntactic Database Terminology
• Clausal Outlines of the Greek New Testament (Deppe)
• Diagrammatical Analysis
• The Andersen-Forbes Analyzed Text of the Hebrew Bible: A Systematic Glossary

Bible Commentaries
• Teacher's Commentary
• New Bible Commentary
• Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary
• Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible
• Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Bible
• Life of Christ (3 Volumes)
• St. Paul the Traveller and Roman Citizen
• Bible Exposition Commentary (23 Volumes)
• Be Available (Judges)
• Be Comforted (Isaiah)
• Be Committed (Ruth & Esther)
• Be Decisive (Jeremiah)
• Be Determined (Nehemiah)
• Be Holy (Leviticus)
• Be Obedient (Abraham)
• Be Patient (Job)
• Be Satisfied (Ecclesiastes)
• Be Skillful (Proverbs)
• Be Strong (Joshua)
• Bible Knowledge Commentary

Bible Introductions & Outlines
• Introducing the New Testament
• Introducing the Old Testament
• Survey of Old Testament Introduction
• Why Four Gospels?
• Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament
• Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament
• Willmington's Bible Handbook
• General Introduction to the Bible
• New Testament Introduction
• Old Testament Survey Series: The Pentateuch
• Old Testament Survey Series: The Books of History
• Old Testament Survey Series: The Wisdom Literature and Psalms
• Old Testament Survey Series: The Major Prophets
• Old Testament Survey Series: The Minor Prophets
• Outline Bible (Tyndale)
Topical Bibles
- Bible Reader's Companion
- New Nave's Topical Bible
- New Topical Textbook

Bible Dictionaries
- Easton's Bible Dictionary
- Tyndale Bible Dictionary
- Exhaustive Dictionary of Bible Names
- Harper's Bible Dictionary
- New Bible Dictionary

Biblical Studies Tools
- Treasury of Scripture Knowledge
- Willmington's Book of Bible Lists
- NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Studies
- Word Pictures in the New Testament
- Synonyms of the Old Testament (Girdlestone)
- Figures of Speech Used in the Bible (Bullinger)
- Wuest's Word Studies

Bible Maps & Photos
- Logos Deluxe Map Set
- Images of the Holy Lands

Biblical History & Culture
- Time Travel to the World of Jesus
- Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah (Edersheim)
- Sketches of Jewish Social Life (Edersheim)
- The Temple (Edersheim)
- New Testament Milieu
- New Manners and Customs of the Bible
- Bible History: Old Testament (Edersheim)

Bible Archaeology
- Dead Sea Scrolls & Modern Translations of the OT
- Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land

History of the Church
- Studies in Early Church History
- History of the Christian Church

Theology
- Biblical Theology of the New Testament
- Biblical Theology of the Old Testament
- Concise Theology (Packer)
- Systematic Theology (Hodge)
- Institutes of the Christian Religion
- Ryrie's Survey of Bible Doctrine
- Great Doctrines of the Bible
- Moody Handbook of Theology

Biblical Ethics
- Biblical Ethics
- Following Christ
- Ethics for a Brave New World
- Moral Foundations of Life

Apologetics
- Difficulties in the Bible: Alleged Errors and Contradictions

Pastoral Resources
- Star Book for Ministers

Fresh Ideas Series
- Fresh Ideas for Administration & Finance
- Fresh Ideas for Discipleship & Nurture
- Fresh Ideas for Families, Youth & Children
- Fresh Ideas for Preaching, Worship & Evangelism

Leadership Library Series
- Called into Crisis
- Clergy Couples in Crisis
- Leaders
- Learning to Lead
- Liberating the Leader's Prayer Life
- Making the Most of Mistakes
- Sins of the Body
- The Contemplative Pastor
- The Healthy Hectic Home
- The Magnetic Fellowship
- The Secrets of Staying Power
• The Unity Factor
• Weddings, Funerals & Special Events
• Well-Intentioned Dragons
• When It's Time to Move On
• When to Take a Risk
• Music, Youth & Education
• Preaching to Convince
• Helping Those Who Don't Want Help
• Being Holy, Being Human

Library of Leadership Development

• Leading Your Church Through Conflict & Resolution
• Renewing Your Church Through Vision & Planning
• Growing Your Church Through Training & Motivation
• Building Your Church Through Counsel & Care

Library of Christian Leadership

• Changing Lives Through Preaching and Worship
• Deepening Your Ministry Through Prayer & Personal Growth
• Empowering Your Church Through Creativity & Change
• Growing Your Church Through Evangelism & Outreach

Mastering Ministry Series

• Mastering Church Finances
• Mastering Church Management
• Mastering Conflict & Controversy
• Mastering Contemporary Preaching
• Mastering Outreach & Evangelism
• Mastering Pastoral Care
• Mastering Pastoral Counseling
• Mastering Pastoral Role
• Mastering Personal Growth
• Mastering Teaching
• Mastering Transitions
• Mastering Worship

Pastor's Soul Series

• Character Forged From Conflict
• Deepening Your Conversation With God
• Leading With Integrity
• Listening to the Voice of God
• Your Ministry’s Next Chapter
• Pastoral Grit
• Power of Loving Your Church

• Preaching With Spiritual Passion

Pressure Points Series

• Pressure Points: Dangers, Toils & Snares
• Pressure Points: Measuring Up
• Pressure Points: Standing Fast
• Pressure Points: Time Crunch
• Pressure Points: Voice in the Wilderness
• Pressure Points: Who's In Charge?

Sermons

• Elements of Preaching
• Rediscovering Expository Preaching
• Selected Sermons of George Whitefield
• Sermons on Several Occasions

Illustrations

• Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations

Quotations

• All the Questions in the Bible
• Great Quotations
• The Merriam-Webster Dictionary of Quotations

Small Group Resources

• Big Book of Small Groups
• Seven Myths About Small Groups
• Small Group Idea Book
• Small Group Leaders' Handbook: The Next Generation
• Starting (and Ending) a Small Group
• Getting Together
• Good Things Come in Small Groups
• Biblical Foundations for Small Group Ministry

Bible Study Training

• How To Study the Bible
• Handbook to Bible Study
• Diving For Pearls in God’s Treasure Chest
• Keys to the Bible’s Treasures

Witnessing

• True Evangelism
Discipleship
  • Training of the Twelve

Prayer
  • Necessity of Prayer
  • Power Through Prayer
  • Prayer: Basic Training
  • Handbook To Prayer

Family Dynamics
  • Different By Design
  • Fulfilled Family

Home School & Christian Education
  • Keyword Learning System
  • Soul of Science

English Language Reference
  • Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition now!
  • Merriam-Webster Collegiate Thesaurus

Christian Reference
  • Who's Who in Christian History

Christian Living
  • Be What You Are
  • Christian's Secret of a Holy Life
  • Growing In Christ
  • Fourfold Gospel
  • Living a Full Life

Worship
  • Logos Hymnal, 100 MIDI Hymns

Devotionals
  • Alone with God
  • Amazing Grace: 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories
  • Drawing Close to God
  • Imitation of Christ

Fiction/Allegory
  • Pilgrim's Progress
  • In His Steps

Addins Included
  • Bible Tools Addin
  • LLS Addin
  • Logos Bible Software Addin
  • Personal Bible Study Tools Addin
  • Lectionary Addin now!
  • Bible Puzzles Addin
  • Biblical People Addin now!
  • Timelines Addin (8 Timelines) now!
  • Sentence Diagramming Addin
  • Graphical Query Editor Addin
  • Syntax Tools Addin now!
  • Compare Parallel Bible Versions Addin
  • Biblical Languages Addin
  • Original Languages Addin
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supports, is that in the book of Leviticus, God’s holiness, how God makes that which is unclean or unholy, clean and holy), and how the “church...proclaims the Gospel of Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.”

Dr. Kleinig states in the opening sentences of the commentary that, “The voice of the Lord fills the pages of Leviticus. This book, as fully as every other in the canon, is the Word of God.” This point is emphasized in the Biblical text itself with phrases such as, “The Lord spoke to Moses saying...” What Dr. Kleinig presents, and well supports, is that in the book of Leviticus, God initiates the sacrificial ritual and authorizes involvement with Him in worship. Dr. Kleinig suggests that Leviticus presents the holiness of God as delivered to His people by His presence and man’s access to Him in the Divine Service. Thus, throughout the commentary, Dr. Kleinig references in a modern day practical manner, the beauty and importance of the Divine Service.

Dr. Kleinig states, “what God intended to achieve ritually thorough His law in Leviticus is accomplished fully by Christ and conveyed to the church in the Divine Service.” Dr. Kleinig presents solid exegesis (something very necessary to most parish pastors who have likely neglected the Biblical Hebrew altogether), thorough and valuable commentary, and wonderful discussions on each pericope such as the ritual agents (who), ritual materials and objects (what), ritual location (where), ritual time (when) and ritual enactment (why). However, the most striking and useful feature of the commentary on each pericope is Dr. Kleinig’s addition of a section on the “Fulfillment in Christ” of each ritual, feast, sacrifice, and law provided and instituted by God.

Although in the Revised Common Lectionary the book of Leviticus garners only one pericope (Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18 [15-18]), pastors will benefit from reading all the “fulfillment in Christ” sections of this commentary as they proclaim and teach the Word of God from the balance of the Scriptures. A read of the commentary on this pericope is very worthwhile. Dr. Kleinig presents God’s Words, “You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.” (19:2 ESV) in three ways, as promise (you will be holy), as statement of fact (you are holy), and as demand (you must be holy). All three views receive treatment in the “Fulfillment in Christ” section of the text referencing God’s holiness delivered through His means of grace to sinner and saints.

Two additional features that Dr. Kleinig provides that are helpful, and interesting are the figures (26 in all) in the book and the hymns which conclude each section of text. The figures diagram and explain items such as holiness, offerings, sacrifices, procedures, etc. Especially helpful are those on God’s activity in the Divine Service (p. 39) and Date and Observance of Appointed Feasts (p. 496). The hymns provide a great conclusion to the discussion as they proclaim, in part, that which was discussed with simplicity, joy, and confession.

Dr. Kleinig states as an objective of the commentary, “to show how the legislation in Leviticus finds its proper fulfillment in the ministry of Christ in Word and Sacrament.” This commentary, with its faithful exegesis, careful yet detailed commentary,
and focus on the Divine Service does express to pastors, laymen, missionaries and post-modern society at-large that God does and will continue to justify and sanctify (to declare, make and keep holy) through the person and work of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the work of the Holy Spirit.

**Pulpit Book Review**


If you are looking for a good foundational preaching resource I would highly recommend this 264-page book. The theme that runs throughout the whole book is that form is a part of content. That will be, in my opinion, the greatest offering of this book to the average pastor’s preaching. As the author argues, “the way we say the Gospel, can be the Gospel.” This profound thought permeates the book and I believe the author makes his point rather well. The Word of God is not to be thrown at people like a stone, as Karl Barth was often accused of suggesting. There are factors that go into preaching that are beyond just content, and as the author points out influence content, things like the mood the sermon creates, the ability to use self-interest, the oral language of the sermon and the form of a sermon needed to preach on hard topics. There are also some wonderful checklists for evaluating sermon form towards the back of the book. All of these matters of form, discussed in this book, help to produce a great resource that will take the pastor’s preaching from simply “good” to better!

Form is not something that I was able to delve into deeply in my seminary training. Only two homiletics classes were required and they touched on form, but dwelt primarily on content. That’s truly why many of the chapters of this book were surprising, somewhat challenging, but ultimately wonderful advice for the preaching craft. In the Chapter entitled, The Mood We Want, the author talks about what we are focusing on is just as important as what we say. In the self-centered development of preaching the preacher simply focuses on himself and trying to survive the stressful, nerve-racking experience of preaching. In the content centered stage of development, which is where most pastors tend to stay, the focus is on what is said and how it is said. The author wants to see all preachers move to the third stage of development in preaching and that is to be people-centered. In this stage content is not all important, it is only important if it can reach the people in the pew and serve them. This is a noble goal!

Appealing to self-interest is new terrain that this book maps out. No courses in seminary and no previous homiletical books that I have read ever mentioned the power of using people’s innate self-interest. An appeal to self-interest is in fact used by Jesus when he says, “All who humble themselves will be exalted.” In other words, it is in the hearer’s self-interest to humble themselves because it means that in this life, and in the life to come, they will be exalted. In the same way the Luke 14 passage is held up as another example of this form of preaching. Jesus tells people to invite to their banquets the people that cannot repay them, like the poor and the crippled. And then Jesus points out then when you do this you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous. So in the end it is to the hearer’s advantage to be selfless! The author suggests using Maslow’s ladder of human needs as a checklist to better identify with the dreams and hopes of your people. I am grateful to the author for this concept and I think it could make for some powerful preaching.

Probably, the most important chapter in the book is the chapter on, Making Homilies Oral. Which of us preachers is not guilty of crafting sermon that is more like an essay than a speech? The problem is not necessarily the manuscript or how it is read, the problem is the writing. If we write an essay for the pulpit then it will come across as pompous and out of touch. The writing of a sermon needs to be done in an oral style and by writing in pictures or scenes. Some pulpits produce things like this, And Jesus said, “But who do you say that I am?” And Peter answered, “You are the eschatological manifestation of the Ground of Being, the kerygma in which we find the ultimate meaning of all our interpersonal relationships.” And Jesus said, “What?” Of course, this humorous point is to be avoided and that can be done by using the author’s six points concerning the difference between oral and written language.

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1 F.L. Herzog, “Theologian of the Word of God,” Theology Today 13 (October 1956) 326
In dealing with hard topics from the pulpit the author advises preachers to first know what gets them into trouble. There are three subjects that get the preacher into trouble—repentance, grace, and mission—in other words everything a pastor has to preach! (Check this section out for some wonderful explanations for why people get upset at each of these subjects!) However, there are those issues in a church’s life that are especially sensitive and could be dubbed hard topics. Half the battle in preaching on hard topics is to structure the homily in such a way as to discuss common ground first and then move on to the areas of disagreement. This is called the unfolding format because the preacher is to start with the common ground and unfold the sermon to the controversial punch-line. This is an extremely helpful insight sure to make preaching on hard topics more manageable. There is also helpful advice concerning word-choice when preaching on hard topics. This discussion on hard topics alone is worth the measly seventeen-eighteen dollars the book costs!

So as I have suggested pastors should add this book to their library and be prepared to take their seminary homiletical education to the next generation. When pastors finish this book I believe that they will be convinced that form in the preaching task is important and is in fact, Biblically-based. As a result of reading this book the parish pastor will not settle for mere correct content but now there will attempts to make the content of a sermon match the form. This will be evidenced by the preacher attempting to become people-centered, working to use the audience’s self-interest in order to keep attention, making the homily an oral event, and using correct structures when preaching on hard topics. With these steps in place what fine preachers will be heard throughout the land!

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Ephesians 3:1-6 (ESV)

For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

While studying Greek for the first time, I wrote those memorable verses inside the front cover of my copy of the Second Edition of Voelz’ *Fundamental Greek Grammar*. They were a reminder to me of why we were studying Greek. They still serve to inspire me to keep studying Biblical Greek.

Now in its Third Edition, this is the best Voelz to date. My Second Edition is covered with class notes as well as occasional (and important) corrections of typos. Those are corrected. In addition, the text has been given fresh new fonts. Notes (see page 109) have been given boldface and are more clearly set out from the text in order to highlight their significance. This was particularly helpful with Chapter 18 and Third Declension Consonantal Stem Nouns.

It is humbling to revisit the text twelve years since I first studied it, especially because I see how much I have forgotten in the meantime.

I cannot stress enough the importance of the Biblical languages, at minimum, Koine Greek. We are truly blessed with a multitude of English translations. They are like watching a 3” Black & White TV compared to the HDTV with Surround Sound world of the Greek New Testament.

An answer key (269ff) gives selected answers for the many exercises provided in forty-two chapters. My favorite part of each chapter’s exercises was getting into the text of the Greek New Testament, if only for a few phrases or verses. Exercises are helpfully reordered or revised.

Paradigm charts (297ff) are clear and well-laid-out. Resources for the principle parts (350-354) are essential study tools.

The Vocabulary list (355-372) is arranged alphabetically. Chapter numbers where each word is introduced are given in parentheses. This will help coordinate the flashcard system the student chooses to use.
One of the most helpful resources for use with *Fundamental Greek Grammar* is not found within these pages, but online. Visit [www.csl.edu](http://www.csl.edu) and look for the iTunes U symbol (viii). The complete nine-week course (over a day’s worth of continuous viewing) is available in both audio and video formats. The chalkboard is a little hard to read at times, but the viewing is well-worth the time in downloading the files!

To install iTunes, visit:


Once iTunes is installed, go to:

https://deimos.apple.com/WebObjects/Core.woa/Browsev2/csl-public

The best supplement to this text is a human instructor at the seminary, a Concordia college or university, or a parish pastor making use of his previous training.

PJC

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**Pulpit Book Review**


With *Connecting Sinai to Calvary*, John Jeske and Northwestern Publishing House provide the church with a guide to the first 39 books of the Bible. While this guide to the Old Testament is geared toward junior high and high school ages, readers of any age will benefit.

My only critique is the dual use of both the NIV and the controversial TNIV (*Today’s New International Version*).

I particularly loved the Luther quotes: “It’s God’s way to empty a person first, before he fills him with his blessing” (10).

The author gently exposes the reader to the support of some Christians for a rebuilding of the Jewish temple and the misuse of the present nation of Israel in prophecy (40). He is clear in grounding his teaching in Scripture like Hebrews 12:22 and Deuteronomy 28. Christ must be foremost for God’s people.

It was wonderful to reach such rich Christology in a book on the Old Testament. Readers may be surprised, but they shouldn’t be. Jesus is the message of the whole Bible.

In recent years I have appreciated the selection of Joel as the Old Testament reading for Ash Wednesday. Jeske writes, “Many centuries after Moses, God’s chosen people snubbed God’s mercy and were indifferent toward God’s Word and his worship. The prophet Joel tells us how God interrupted their food supply to let them know he did not appreciate being ignored” (45).

This is a very Lutheran book, particularly for its proper distinction of law and Gospel (67), the understanding of Jesus as our substitute (85), a proper explanation of the inspiration of Scripture and the relation of the divine author to human authors (114ff), and a discussion of the Messiah and His fulfillment of Scripture (128).

Chapter 6 gives a wonderful explanation of Israel’s worship. The four sacrifices are well-explained and would be good material for an adult Bible Class (85ff).

Numerous maps and timelines were quite helpful. It was particularly interesting to note Abraham at 2000 B.C., Moses at 1500 B.C., David at 1000 B.C., Ezra at 500 B.C., and Jesus at the center of history (119). I appreciated these visual aspects of the book.

“John Jeske is a veteran of 20 years in parish ministry, followed by 25 years of teaching Old Testament at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wisconsin” (back cover).

A free Discussion Guide for Connecting Sinai to Calvary is available at www.nph.net/Sinai2Calvary.

Jeske is an engaging writer. His style is conversational, and age-appropriate. His numerous illustrations are evidence of a gifted teacher at work, one who is at home in his material.

PJC
Pulpit Resource Review


Techies will love these!

I remember making flashcards for both Greek and Hebrew. How time-consuming! How easy to make a mistake! Thanks to Kregel, David Hoffeditz, and Michael Thigpen, much of the work of producing flashcards is done for you. No need to worry about typos, losing cards, or using cards so much that they wear out. Besides, paper flashcards never taught me never how to pronounce themselves!

*iVocab Biblical Greek* and *iVocab Biblical Hebrew* make use of computer files. When played in the free software known as *iTunes*, the digital “cards” even flip over for you! That, and one hears the correct pronunciation given each time. Having an iPod is helpful but not necessary to own in order to use these flashcards. A computer is necessary. (I would recommend a more up-to-date model with a DVD drive, or else borrow a friend’s to put the files on USB thumb drives to transfer to your non-DVD drive computer.) Files can be watched on your computer and can easily be transferred to a capable cell phone or an iPod. Flashcards are sortable, just like the old kind.

If you are blessed to have a newer model iPod, like an iPod Classic or iPod Nano manufactured after September 2007, you will need to contact Kregel about the free upgrade to have files that are viewable on your iPod. Both the upgrade and original files will work fine on any computer. Kregel customer service was very courteous, helpful, and knowledgeable, and the upgrade DVD-ROMs arrived very quickly.

Files are arranged according to how they show up in two basic Greek texts and three basic Hebrew texts. I would recommend the addition of Andrew Bartelt’s *Fundamental Biblical Hebrew* and James Voelz’ *Fundamental Greek Grammar* in future editions. In the meantime, vocabulary words would serve well as a random review just as they are. More ambitious users of the above mentioned texts will be able to sort the vocabulary and make their own customized “slideshows” to coordinate with the Voelz and Bartelt chapter vocabulary lists.

Each word and its meaning are given ten seconds. Beginners may want more time with each word. Others may want a shorter time before answering. Within *iTunes*, each user can use their computer mouse to move the progress bar of each video vocabulary card forward or back to meet their own needs.

“The *iVocab* package is a powerful, portable learning tool that helps vocabulary acquisition by combining flashcards with audio reinforcement. Using the premade slideshows included in *iVocab*, students are now able to see and hear vocabulary from any chapter in a number of widely used grammars. These unique audio-video flashcards can be used on the Apple iPod mobile digital device (both video and photo models), video cell phones, and computers (PC and Mac). Students with older iPods or other MP3 players can still access and utilize the audio presentations. Both products are keyed to leading grammars, which means users can access chapter vocabulary from the *Basics of Biblical Greek* and *The Elements of New Testament Greek* as well as *Basics of Biblical Hebrew, A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew, Introducing Biblical Hebrew*, and *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew*. Cumulative files that review vocabulary from several chapters together are also available. iPod is a trademark of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. Compatibility with Apple products does not constitute an endorsement of this product by Apple Inc.” (Publisher’s website).

It is good to remind students of Hebrew and Greek that vocabulary is extremely necessary, but only one part of learning one of the Biblical languages. I would recommend that beginning students of Greek balance their study of:

- Basic Vocabulary
- The principal parts (all 6)
How to parse verb forms
How to decline nouns and guess what a form could be
Cases and what they're used for
Participles
The Subjunctive
conditional sentences and indirect discourse
The Optative
Focusing on the basic (nouns and verbs) when it comes to translation

With regard to vocabulary, these two DVD-ROMs will be a blessing to any student of Greek or Hebrew, whether a beginner, or a veteran in need of review.

Pulpit Book Review


Looking at the Table of Contents, I was afraid that this would be one more book about the theory of “meaning,” unintelligible to many pastors and most laity. I was wrong. It is an incredibly practical and thought-provoking one-hundred-page volume, well worth your time.

Mark Allan Powell is “Leatherman Professor of New Testament, Trinity Lutheran Seminary. [He is] Author of Jesus as a Figure in History (WJK, 1998); A Fortress Introduction to the Gospels (Fortress, 1998); God With Us: Toward a Pastoral Theology of Matthew’s Gospel (Fortress, 1995); What Is Narrative Criticism? (Fortress, 1990).

“Powell provides a startling study of how differently the pastor and the congregation interpret Scripture, how this difference affects what the congregation hears in the sermon, and how to bridge this gap with equally startling practical steps.

“This remarkably fascinating book reveals how significant social location—such as age, gender, nationality, race, and education—is when interpreting the Bible. Illustrated with two studies, Mark Allan Powell demonstrates how this plays out most dramatically in the gulf, often quite wide, between the preacher and the congregation.

“Every preacher who reads this book will appreciate as never before the significance of social differences in the reception of his or her (sic) sermon, will see the unmistakable need to bridge this gap, and will receive clear instruction on how to do just that” (publisher’s website).

The author is a Lutheran, as is this reviewer. We do belong to different church bodies, and we do have some differences. For more a more thorough biblical reaction on the ordination of women, see the review of Women Pastors?, also in this issue. I would have appreciated more clarity on his Pneumatology (3). The Holy Spirit’s work is more important than communication theory.

Readers need not be scared off by the author’s references to different kinds of scholarly “criticism.” “Historical criticism,” the bane of the 50’s, 60’s, and 70’s plays no significant role in this book (93). In fact, I have found “narrative criticism” useful in understanding the Gospel according to Matthew.

The helpfulness of this book outweighs its weaknesses. There are more potential purposes for a sermon merely than “to inform.” Dozens are given on page 100, a very valuable page indeed! And there’s much more.

Consider what is commonly called the Parable of the Prodigal son. The author discovered that different readers emphasized or de-emphasized details of Luke 15:13-14 depending upon their cultural contexts. Overall, Americans largely ignored the famine and focused upon the son squandering his money. Russians emphasized the famine and looked past how he lost his inheritance (17ff). In Tanzania (26), respondents answered the question, “Why was the young man end up starving in the pigpen?” is answered, “Because no one gave him anything to eat,” yet another different answer compared to the two previous groups. Further, Western and Easter interpreters have traditionally differed upon whether the son was wicked or foolish. This example of a study by the author is enlightening for the preacher so that he correctly preaches the counsel of God in all of its divine detail. We dare not let our own preferences or prejudices change what ought to be preached from the Lord’s pulpits to His people. We must pay proper attention to the text before us. Translation work should be taken very seriously, focusing on important words that could be misunderstood.

Often without noticing it, we identify with a particular character in a TV show, movie, story, or novel. Why do we choose the person we do? As the author notes, for a pastor, picking the pastor is a
natural place to start. Sometimes one character is more sympathetic than another. And sometimes different people identify with, or to use the author’s terminology, make an empathy choice, with different people. When reading Scripture, pastors tend to identify with Jesus, while lay people largely tend to identify with the disciples. This has important implications for preaching. If your sermon’s main point is dependent upon you and the congregation thinking, feeling, or acting like a specific person in the text, make that point clear (60ff)! It will also help avoid much confusion later.

The author also notes a big difference in the responses to two very similar questions: “What does this story mean to you?” and “What does this story mean?” Consider the following from page 97:

+ Clergy are more likely to consider meaning in terms of authorial intent, meaning related to historical, comprehensive or typical situations, meaning as a message (what they learn from it) and identify relevance through contextual analogies
+ Laity are more likely to consider meaning in terms of reader response, meaning related to contemporary, particular, or personal situations, meaning in terms of impact (how it affects them) and identify relevance through unmediated application

This is a gap between pulpit and pew. Why not “both/and” instead of “either/or”? A sermon needs to pay appropriate attention to both the text and the hearers. Neither dare be ignored. Sermons written in an ivory tower ignore the congregation. It is good for the pastor to do regular visits of the congregation to know about their world, hopes, fears, and needs. Sermons written with all the empathy in the world are worthless without the proclamation of Christ.

The challenge preachers face is the same in every time and place: to tell forth the Word of the Lord. Some contexts are more challenging than others. This resource will be a blessing to your preaching and the congregation that hears it.

**Pulpit Book Review**


“*In the beginning…*” These words are usually spoken with reverence and awe. Creation and the Fall into sin are an essential foundation for Christian theology. The Church Fathers had a reverence for the Word of God, one that many Christians, pastors, and scholars sadly do not. Those who doubt the Word, particularly when it proclaims creation (as opposed to evolution) should heed the Lord’s Word to Job: “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?”

The essential patristic material on Genesis is so vast it called for two volumes.

Andrew Louth “is professor of patristic and Byzantine studies in the department of theology” at the University of Durham in England. (Adapted from publisher’s website) This uniquely qualifies him to be an editor in the landmark Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture.

“The rich tapestry of the creation narrative in the early chapters of Genesis proved irresistible to the thoughtful, reflective minds of the church fathers. Within them they found the beginning threads from which to weave a theology of creation, fall and redemption. Following their mentor, the apostle Paul, they explored the profound significance of Adam as a type of Christ, the second Adam.

“The six days of creation proved especially attractive among the fathers as a subject for commentary, with Basil the Great and Ambrose producing well-known *Hexaemerons*. Similarly, Augustine devoted portions of five works to the first chapter of Genesis” (publisher’s website).

I appreciated the longer General Introduction contained in Old Testament Volume I (xi-xxxii, compared to the two-page version in most volumes). ACCS has lay, pastoral, and academic audiences in mind (xv). Patristic commentary has been largely ignored in an age of historical criticism. With the influence of that school of thought fading in many respects, “once authoritative classic commentaries on Scripture” like these are being rediscovered and are often being translated into English for the first time (xvii). The method of making selections from the Fathers is detailed (xxiiif). Thanks be to God for the anonymous benefactors (xxxiii) who made the series possible.

The introduction to Genesis 1-11 gives another opportunity for thanks to God, Jerome’s priority of the original Hebrew over the Septuagint (Greek translation, xli). One wishes that the Roman church
would have given similar preference to the Greek and Hebrew originals over Jerome’s Latin translation.

As in subsequent volumes, this commentary has a basic structure: a Pericope is given in the Revised Standard Version, followed by an Overview and then a verse by verse commentary with roughly paragraph-long comments by the Fathers. Then, another pericope follows. Only occasionally are pericopes omitted. Some had very little patristic commentary. (See p. 229 in Volume II as an example.)

Ephrem the Syrian speaks to those in his day as well as people today: “So let no one thing that there is anything allegorical in the works of the six days. No one can rightly say that the things pertaining to these days were symbolic, nor can one say that they were meaningless names or other things were symbolized for us by their names. Rather, let us know in just what manner heaven and earth were created in the beginning. They were truly heaven and earth” (9).

I also appreciated Ambrose’s comments on Genesis 1 (23) that speak of seeds prefiguring resurrection.

Consider also the poem by Prudentius: “The inspired historian makes it very clear That at earth’s dawn the Father not alone Nor without Christ his new creation formed. ‘God fashioned man,’ he says, ‘and gave to him The face of God.’ What but to say that he Was not alone, that God stood by God’s side When the Lord made man in image of the Lord?” (29)

Irenaeus (31) also excels in preaching Christ who makes known, “The Invisible Father Through the Visible Word.”

Again Irenaeus, in words reminiscent of the Lutheran Service Book Proper Preface for Lent: “Because of this the Lord also declares himself to be the Son of Man, so renewing in himself that primal man from whom the formation of man by woman began, that as our race went down to death by a man who overcame, and as death won the palm of victory over us by a man, so we might by a man receive the palm of victory over death” (91).

Valuable Volume I concludes with the Deluge of Noah’s day and finally the introduction of Abram in Genesis 11.

Volume II picks up with Genesis 12 and covers nearly forty chapters, though it is only twice the length of Volume I.

“Genesis 12–50 recounts the history of the patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. From their mentors Paul, Peter, Stephen and the author of the letter to the Hebrews, the early fathers learned to draw out the spiritual significance of the patriarchal narrative for Christian believers. The Alexandrian school especially followed Paul’s allegorical use of the story of Sarah and Hagar as they interpreted the Genesis accounts. The Antiochene school eschewed allegorical interpretation but still set about to find moral lessons in the ancient narrative. For all of them the events pointed toward the promises of the age to come, the new age revealed in the resurrection of Jesus” (publisher’s website).

Patriarchal history naturally fits well in its own volume.

I appreciate the introductions to each volume. For those unacquainted with the Fathers, many may be interested in the personal story of Ambrose of Milan. “Arians and Catholics united in demanding that the governor become the new bishop. Ambrose, without theological training and not yet even baptized, reluctantly accepted and was quickly baptized and ordained bishop” (xxii). Such an account reminds the Church in every age of the importance of the unity in teaching that can only come from the Word of God.

A review of the Alexandrian and Antiochean schools of interpretation begins on xxv. Such groundwork is necessary for modern readers. There are dangers to an abuse of allegory, as the literal meaning may sometimes be ignored. The possibility that one’s own interpretation may be read into the text (eisegesis) is great.

One example is given in the Overview for Genesis 12:4-9. “Abraham’s departure is interpreted allegorically to signify the renunciation of the pleasures of the flesh, vices and the world with its father, the devil (Bede). The appearance of the Lord to Abraham poses the problem of reconciling this text with others, especially New Testament texts that stress God’s transcendence, but this is resolved by attributing the appearance to the Son, the ‘image of the invisible God’ (Novatian). Where there is Bethel, that is, the house of God, there is also the altar. The building of an altar at Bethel and calling on the name of the Lord represent spiritual progress (Ambrose)” (5). I remain personally uncomfortable with allegory. It seems to jump to quickly from text to application.
today. The question “What did this mean to the original hearer?” should be answered before “What does this mean for us today?”

By Chapter 17, we are treated to some name etymology. Names are important in Scripture. This is an area where the Fathers stand out (57, et al).

In contrast to “ancient” icons of “The Old Testament Trinity,” these Fathers pay attention to the text that these visitors were two angels (61ff, 67, et al), plus the Lord Himself, the pre-incarnate Christ.

Chapter 22 gives quotations that would serve well in Bible Class to explain the connection between Isaac and Christ.

The long account of Joseph in Genesis is summarized well in this segment of a sermon by Chrysostom: “The text goes on: ‘Joseph passed away at one hundred and ten.’ Why did it indicate to us his age too? For you to learn how long he had been entrusted with the control of Egypt. He was seventeen when he went down to Egypt, and is was when he reached the age of thirty that he appeared before Pharaoh and interpreted his dreams. Joseph then held complete control of Egypt for eighty years. Do you see how the rewards were greater than the hardships and the recompense manifold? For thirteen years he struggled with temptations, suffering servitude, that illicit accusation, ill treatment in prison. Since he nobly bore everything with thankfulness, accordingly he attained generous rewards even in the present life. Consider, after all, I ask you, that as a result of that short period that he endured servitude and imprisonment Joseph occupied a royal position for eighty years. For proof that it was by faith that he did all this and for the same motive gave directions about the transfer of his bones, listen to Paul’s words: ‘It was by faith that at the point of death Joseph gave a reminder about the exodus of the sons of Israel’ (352).

The editor of the second volume, Mark Sheridan, O.S.B., is “vice rector and dean of the faculty of theology at the Pontifical Athenaeum of St. Anselm in Rome, Italy. With Jeremy Driscoll he edited Spiritual Progress: Studies in the Spirituality of Late Antiquity and Early Monasticism” (publisher’s website).

The Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture is remarkable for its consistency from editor to editor and from volume to volume.

Grow in understanding and appreciation of the first book of the Bible by purchasing and reading these two resourceful commentary volumes.

PJC

Pulpit Book Review


“Martin Luther could not have found his own account of Paul precisely stated in any of the Fathers, though he might have felt that Marius Victorinus and Augustine had a sound view of the primacy of grace in our election and in our consequent good works. Others, even if they never deny that it is God who ordains salvation, tend to take the position that [H]is choice depends upon our foreseen response to [H]is invitation” (xix).

Such words are jarring to read. (I am not totally convinced by them.) At first glance, they may lead a reader to conclude that Luther was an innovator of doctrine. Rome certainly did and still does. Lutherans are well-aware of the debt Luther owed to Augustine. Our own Concordia, or Book of Concord, the 1580 compilation of the Lutheran Confessions, abounds in patristic quotations in support of Evangelical Lutheran positions in contrast to positions of the Roman Church. This is especially true with regard to salvation.

In classes with Dr. Norman Nagel, (now emeritus Graduate Professor of Systematic Theology, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,) it was important for us to get past Augustine and by faith and knowledge appreciate that Luther’s teaching salvation by “grace alone,” “faith alone” “in Christ alone” came from “the Scriptures alone.”

Therefore, it matters not if Luther didn’t find the precise language of justification in the Fathers, if he did find it in Scripture itself. And he did. His is the best commentary on Galatians (1519 and 1534 considered together) that a person can own.

“The Pauline letters…are fare more often quoted than discussed in the early church” (xvii). This statement is an important balance to the citation I used in introduction. God’s Word speaks for itself. Commentators, patristic or modern, say it best when they confess what Scripture does, no more and no less.
“Paul's letters to the Galatians, Ephesians and Philippians have struck an indelible impression on Christian tradition and piety. The doctrines of Christ, of salvation and of the church all owe their profiles to these letters. And for patristic interpreters, who read Scripture as a single book and were charged with an insatiable curiosity regarding the mysteries of the Godhead, these letters offered profound visions seldom captured by modern eyes. Trinitarian truth was patterned in the apostle's praise of God who is "over all, through all and in all" (Ephesians 4:6).

“Without a doubt, the greatest text in this collection of letters is the "Christ hymn" of Philippians 2:6-11. This commentary offers an unparalleled close-up view of the fathers weighing the words and phrases of this panoramic charting of the Savior's journey from preexistence, to incarnation, to crucifixion, to triumphant exaltation as universal Lord.

“This volume opens a treasury of resources for biblical study today. The expository voices of Jerome, Origen, Augustine, Chrysostom, Ambrosiaster, Theodoret, Marius Victorinus and Theodore of Mopsuestia speak again with eloquence and intellectual acumen, some in English translation for the first time” (Publisher’s website).

Galatians 3:28 is much misused in our day in support of the ordination of women to the pastoral office. Augustine writes, “Difference of race or condition or sex is indeed taken away by the unity of faith, but it remains in our mortal interactions, and in the journey of this life the apostles themselves teach that it is to be respected….For we observe in the unity of faith that there are no such distinctions. Yet within the orders of this life they persist. So we walk this path in a way that the name and doctrine of God are not blasphemed. It is not out of fear or anger that we wish to avoid offense to others but also on account of conscience, so that we may do these things not in mere profession, as if for the eyes of men, but with a pure love toward God” (49). One easily hears echoes of Galatians 1.

Perhaps the editor’s claim about Luther’s restatement of Paul’s teaching is overly critical. Re-read the pericope containing Ephesians 2:4-10 and the patristic quotations included in this volume (123-128). Decide for yourself. These pages alone are worth buying the volume.

I found the resources included on Ephesians 5-6 particularly good candidates for sermons on marriage, parenthood, and family life.

Chrysostom is particularly eloquent in reference to Philippians 4:7 and “The Peace of God.” He preaches, “‘The peace of God,’ which he imparted to us, ‘passes all understanding.’ For who could have hoped for such benefits? It transcends every human intellect and all speech. For his enemies, for those who hated him, for the apostates—for all these he did not refuse to give his only begotten Son, so as to make peace with them….The peace which will preserve us is the one of which Christ says, ‘My peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.’ For this ‘peace passes all human understanding.’ How? When he sees that we should be at peace with enemies, with the unrighteous, with those who display contentiousness and hostility toward us, how does this not pass human understanding?”

This volume of the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture is yet another worthy addition to your library. You will want to consult it simply for sermon illustrations when preaching upon Galatians, Ephesians, or Philippians.

“Edwards is tutor in theology at Christ Church of Oxford University, Oxford, United Kingdom” (Publisher’s website).

PJC

Pulpit CD Review


Reading Koine Greek aloud can be tricky business, especially for the beginner, as well as the Greek scholar who has let his Greek prowess degrade. It can be particularly intimidating at a pastoral conference or winkel, just as it may have been for you at the seminary or college level. You have reference books on Greek. Why not audio references? This Audio CD-set will be similarly valuable to your for your study and ministry as a reference book and is cheaper than the latest edition of A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament.

Should ει be pronounced “ay as in freight” or “ei (as in height)”? How about ειδ? “(y)ou as in feud” or “oi (as in oil)”? As James Voelz notes, “The latter system is superior for memorization of verb forms” (Voelz, Fundamental Greek Grammar, 7, note 1). Modern Greek pronunciation is another option. My
best advice is to choose one of the pronunciation traditions and stick with it!

“Dr. Spiros Zodhiates narrates the Koine Greek New Testament in his native Modern Greek pronunciation. In these 22 compacts discs, you will have one of the finest recordings of this beautiful Bible language. It is a great reference tool as well” (back of CD packaging). The 26th Edition of Nestle/Aland differs from the current 27th Edition only in the critical notes.

Prepare for a pastoral conference by listening to the assigned Bible text on CD (or after having imported it into iTunes, another great idea). Prepare for a Bible class or a sermon by listening to the appropriate text, chapter, or pericope. Follow along in your Greek New Testament. One of the best ways to learn a language is to immerse yourself in it. This can be a wonderful tool for you!

Imagine: Twenty-four hours worth of listening! I am grateful for the CD version of the original cassettes. In the future, all 22 CDs could be offered as mp3 files on a single DVD-ROM.

I am not aware of another audio Greek New Testament resource like this. It would be well worth your investment. If something is important enough, it finds room on our schedule, in our home or office, and in the budget!

Dr. Spiros Zodhiates is a native speaker of Greek. He was “born to Greek parents on the island of Cyprus. After completing his Greek education, he attended the American University in Cairo, Egypt, The National Bible Institute (now Shelton College), and New York University. He earned his Doctor of Theology degree from Luther Rice Seminary. In addition, Dr. Zodhiates has been the recipient of several honorary doctorates.

“In 1946, he came to the United States at the invitation of the American Mission to the Greeks, Inc. At that time, there were two part-time employees who met in a small, one-room office. Dr. Zodhiates became president of this organization in 1966. Now known as AMG International ('Advancing the Ministries of the Gospel'), it carries on a worldwide evangelistic and relief ministry and has its headquarters in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

“Dr. Zodhiates is a recognized authority on the Greek New Testament, and has edited an edition of the Modern Greek New Testament that was published by the Million Testaments Campaign and the American Bible Society. He is the author of numerous exegetical books and booklets in both the Greek and English languages. In addition, he is heard daily on the New Testament Light radio program, released over a network of stations across the United States and Canada” (website). To learn more, visit http://amg.gospelcom.net/amg/PPF/pg/ntlight/toe/aboutzodhiates/default.asp

AMG, now an abbreviation for “Advancing the Ministries of the Gospel.” has now expanded its mission beyond Greek-speaking Christians. “….Our mission is clear: to give each person at least one opportunity to hear and respond to a clear presentation of the gospel. Our parent company AMG International is an evangelical mission and relief agency, currently ministering in 55 countries of the world and has been doing so since 1942. Through our partnership, proceeds from the sales of our books go to furthering this mission. The books and Bibles we produce have at their heart to spread the good news of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ” (website). AMG desires to help Christians by enhancing their knowledge of the Greek New Testament.

“Since 1942, AMG International has been spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ through whatever means God provides. In the 1960s, AMG Publishers was born with the mission of teaching the Word of God, led by our President, Dr. Spiros Zodhiates. The books and Bibles we have produced over these many years have been a beacon to a lost world that their only hope is to be found in Jesus Christ. Since the release of the Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible in 1984
until this day, we have been even more focused on building up the body of Christ. Included in the resources we have published are strong biblical commentaries, Bible study workbooks, youth resources and many inspirational titles” (website).

This is a wonderful audio reference tool that can give you confidence in pronouncing Koine Greek. My CD set is a cherished possession that only grows in usefulness.

Pulpit Book Review


Preaching the Cross is a compilation of conference papers from the “Together for the Gospel” Conference held in 2006. Further papers were included by R.C. Sproul, John Piper, and John MacArthur. These are some heavy hitters in Protestant preaching. The introduction is an explanation on how the genesis of this conference began, and what could be agreed upon and what could not. The mantra throughout the introduction is, “we came together for the gospel.” They acknowledged that there were many things that they would not, or ever would agree upon, but the primacy of the gospel was a binding doctrine for them.

With a title like “Preaching the Cross” one would think that there would be a lot of expounding on the death and resurrection of Jesus, developing fresh, and cultural applications of the cross of Jesus and the effects of the cross, that is, the removal of sin. While this was touched on in most of the papers, it was definitely not the dominant theme. It was clear that the presenters could not agree upon whether they were going to be discussing the gospel in the wide sense (encompassing both Law and Gospel) or the narrow sense (Christ’s salvific work on our behalf).

It was essential to pay close attention to make sure one understood where the author was coming from in its use.

Interesting to note is that the one thing that was a common thread throughout all of the papers was the work and role of the pastor in preaching. This is evident in the titles for each paper: A Real Minister: 1 Corinthians 4; Preaching Christ from the Old Testament; Preaching with the Culture in View; The Center of Christian Preaching: Justification by Faith; Preaching as Expository Exultation for the Glory of God; The Pastor’s Priorities: Watch Your Life and Doctrine; Why I Still Preach the Bible after Forty Year of Ministry. Whether it was intentional or not, this compilation of papers emphasizes exactly what the order of the Augsburg Confession emphasizes, that the Doctrine of Justification and the Office of the Holy Ministry are directly connected and inseparable.

The dominant theme throughout the book was the act of the pastor crafting the sermon and what he should or should not include in his preparation and presentation. Since these papers were written by prominent Protestants, there was a great emphasis on the Word and its efficacy. For the most part each paper could be summarized by the phrase, “Get the Word right,” whether it is in the pastor’s preparation, life, exegesis, or motivation. This may seem simplistic and derogatory, yet is that not the core of Christian preaching? When our eyes drift to finding what is “culturally relevant” or “creative” or “dynamic” we head down a slippery path that can lead us away from getting the Word right.

Also of note is that there is in each paper an extensive view of the history of the topic at hand and how this topic may have slipped or been modified as it has been addressed in time. Niebuhr’s treatment of Christ and culture is extensively referenced in “Preaching with Culture in View.”

Lutherans will recognize that the sacraments are missing from the discussion of preaching. This can be expected from denominations that do not emphasize them in their preaching (and for many in their worship life). While not primarily about the cross, as the title would imply, it is a helpful reminder that many factors go into the creation of a sermon and that correct exposition of the Word must be primary. Of particular interest for Lutherans will be “Preaching Christ from the Old Testament,” and the opening life illustration from “Why I Still Preach the Bible after Forty Years of Ministry.” These two papers alone are worth the price as a constant reminder to speak only what the text says and to see Christ in every text. All of the papers are a worthwhile read to see through the eyes of other preachers and what becomes a primary emphasis for them in the act of preaching.

AKS
Also Noted

Resources

Strikingly Beautiful

“Christ the King” White Superfrontal Altar Parament, Design #; FTP100, Fabric: Faith (red). Garden Grove, CA: Peace and Joy Co., 2008. 72” x 12” x 24”. $314.00
http://www.pnjco.com/ service@pnjco.com (877) 765-2667 (N)

Once again QBR is blessed to review a parament from Peace and Joy of Garden Grove, CA. This parament is a custom-made altar superfrontal.

As you can see by the photos above, the gold-edged crown and Chi-Rhos are a uniquely creative use of the red “Faith” fabric, also available in white, purple, green, and blue.

Our congregation was absolutely “wowed” by this “one of a kind” design. Yours will be, too! I can’t wait to see it again in November for All Saints’ Sunday.

PJC

A Unique Reference

http://www.oup.com/us/ (212) 726-6000 (BN)

University of Chicago. Turabian. MLA. Oxford. Yes, Oxford. The Oxford Style Manual is so extensive and useful, it deserves to be considered by “all writers and editors” as an essential handbook.


I never knew why the parts of a book were put together the way they are. Copy-editing and proofreading are Chapter 2. The Manual’s treatment of foreign languages is a very distinctive and practical contribution to the book. We all have much to learn about the proper use of the humble comma (117ff). Pastors and members of congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod will note with interest Chapter 11’s treatment of the Fraktur
type previously used in German-speaking countries (293).

Granted, there are differences between American English and British English. This is acknowledged and explained repeatedly (63ff, 237ff, et al). A brief list of tendencies in the difference between US and British spelling is found on page 238. Personally, I prefer British conventions to many American ones.

I would welcome more information about American copyright law in future revisions, as well as how proper style may be applied to digital communications and publications.

The last two chapters of Part I, “References and notes” and “Indexing” should be more closely followed by scholars and editors alike. In a digital age, the need for a common way to cite electronic data is essential (545). I was pleased to see the date included in Oxford’s recommended format. Webpages change over time or they become “cobwebpages.” Too many books published today lack even a basic index, or the one provided is worthless.

Before using Part II, The Oxford Dictionary for Writers and Editors, consult both the “How to use this dictionary” section (599ff) and the essential “List of abbreviations” (602-603).

Simply put, this is a unique reference work. It has yet to be duplicated in all of its contents by English-speakers on this side of the Atlantic.

PJC

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Reformation...


20. But what should you do if you are not aware of this need and have no hunger and thirst for the Sacrament?

To such a person no better advice can be given than this: first, he should touch his body to see if he still has flesh and blood. Then he should believe what the Scriptures say of it in Galatians 5 and Romans 7. Second, he should look around to see whether he is still in the world, and remember that there will be no lack of sin and trouble, as the Scriptures say in John 15-16 and in 1 John 2 and 5. Third, he will certainly have the devil also around him, who with his lying and murdering day and night will let him have no peace, within or without, as the Scriptures picture him in John 8 and 16; 1 Peter 5; Ephesians 6; and 2 Timothy 2” (“Christian Questions with Their Answers,” Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation, CPH, 1986).

I love Martin Luther’s humor. That aspect of the Great Reformer has been largely ignored. The Wit of Martin Luther, by Eric W. Gritsch and part of the Fortress Press Facets Series aims to correct that ignorance, present even among Lutherans.

“Life as divine comedy—this mini-treatise finds in Luther’s humor a key to his whole life and thought. Eric Gritsch ties Luther’s wit and humor not only to his sharp polemical exploitation of the absurd or incongruous in service to his Reform. At a deeper level, Luther’s wit and witticisms also reflected Luther’s keep appreciation of human frailty and the unknowability of things divine. Luther, Gritsch shows, especially relished humor in his interpretation of the Bible, in his pastoral relationships, and in his encounters with death. Ultimately, humor in the face of mortality is a gauge of human freedom, a lightening up that makes of life a divine comedy.

“An interesting and entertaining entry into Luther’s thought, this little book brings out the sublime meaning at stake in the thwacks and thuds of the Reformer’s life” (back cover).

Luther lived before Queen Victoria. He wrote things and said things from the pulpit pastors would get in trouble with because what is considered socially acceptable has changed since his day. Like us, he lived between Christ’s Ascension and His Second Coming. When bad things happen, we may either laugh or cry. I’d rather cry, and it’s not just because I’m a guy. Gritsch notes that “joyous laughing and sad crying always struggle with each other” (6). He then quotes Luther: “When we should cry, because of our sin, we laugh. When we should laugh, because of our rejoicing in Christ who died for us so that we have eternal life, we cry. For we do not value such joy higher than other worldly joys which we should cherish. But when sin and divine wrath strike our heart we neither want nor are able to be consoled.”

Justification matters. It is the article upon which the church stands or falls. Luther’s humor about being a “bag of maggots” or kissing the pope’s feet (26) should be understood in this context. I am one of many who disagrees with the author and the ELCA with regard to the Lutheran World Federation’s Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification with the Roman church (27). Compromising with Rome on the Gospel is no laughing matter.
Gallows humor is common in Luther (72), particularly after 1521. He laughed about sexuality (121), ridiculous reintroductions of Roman practice (59), and my personal favorite fellow to mock, the Devil. He’s the only person you can get away with telling him where he can go!

In closing, this will be a fun book for pastors. Some portions may make good sermon or Bible Class illustrations. Save the following for Catechism Class: “Let Christians drill themselves in the catechism...Let them never stop until they have taught the devil to death and have become more learned than God himself and all his saints” (120).

“Eric W. Gritsch is Professor Emeritus of Church History at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Among his many works are Fortress Introduction to the Lutheranism (1994) and A History of Lutheranism (2002), both from Fortress Press” (back cover).

PJC

History Is Written By...


Since 1947

REGNERY PUBLISHING, INC.

History isn’t just written by the victors. It’s also largely written (and taught, thereby “written” into the minds of many impressionable students) by those with a left-wing bias. This 2004 volume in the very popular PIG series has much in common with The Politically Incorrect Guide to the Constitution, reviewed in the last issue of QBR.

Five questions and five answers are illustrative of the value of this volume.

1. “The list of authorities that supported the principle that American states had the legal right to secede is impressive. Taken together, they amount to very serious evidence of the existence of such a right: John Quincy Adams; William Lloyd Garrison; William Rawle; and Alexis de Tocqueville, the great French observer of American affairs. Add to this that the New England states threatened secession several times in the nearly nineteenth century, and the result is practically unavoidable: The legitimacy of secession, although not held unanimously, had been taken for granted in all sections of the country for years by the time of the [Civil] war” (65). Quite telling, isn’t it? Andrew Jackson’s opinion became de facto Constitutional Law by the war.

2. “What finally brought the Depression to an end as neither economic legislation nor World War II. Instead it was the return to normal conditions following the war and the removal of the uncertainty that had haunted business during the FDR years. Prosperity would have returned much sooner had it not been for the destructive and foolish policies of Hoover and Roosevelt” (156). I bet you never heard that in your FDR class at the state university!

3. “How ‘60s liberalism discouraged all the right things and encouraged all the wrong ones” (section subtitle of Chapter 16, JFK and LBJ, 221). Marriage and morality have suffered as a result for decades. The children of the Baby Boomers are much more conservative than their parents.

4. “Government is not the solution to our problems. Government is the problem” (Ronald Reagan, 231). The abuse of power is always a great problem. This is because of sin and the sinful human beings in political office. Tax cuts lead to higher revenue. Excessively high tax rates punish reinvestment as well as spending and they equal income redistribution.

5. “Meanwhile, the federal courts routinely violate the self-government of the states” (246). It’s not just federal courts. Courts at all levels thwart and contradict the clear voice of the people at the ballot-box. With great power comes great responsibility. To the people they are given to serve.

Facts are inconvenient things. They remain even after issues appear to be settled years, decades, or centuries later.

Particularly inconvenient throughout American history is the Tenth Amendment:

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

Give a copy of this book to the history-lover in your life.

“Thomas E. Woods, Jr. holds a bachelor’s degree in history from Harvard and a master’s and Ph.D. from Columbia University. Professor Woods is a contributor to five encyclopedias and dozens of popular and scholarly
periodicals. He lives in New York with his wife and daughter” (back cover).

**Footprints in the Rock, Christ**


This is a beautiful and concise hardcover book. It is beautiful not only for the photographs on every page, but also for the air-clearing information it contains. Drop an evolutionary geologist in the middle of what was once the neighborhood of Mount St. Helens and he or she will claim a timeline of deposition amounting to millions and millions of years. The beauty of it all is that the world knows of the eruption of Mount St. Helens on May 18, 1980. Period. Creation and catastrophism win. Atheist gradualism and uniformitarianism lose. It isn’t even a fair fight.

The explanations of strata, sedimentation, flow deposits, and rapid hardening are a marvelous counterbalance to the majority theory presented in modern textbooks.

Grooves in hard rock, also known as striations (71) need not always be created by the movement of glaciers. River canyons (74ff) are likely not formed by the river found at the bottom, but give evidence of catastrophic mudflow and drainage.

Every time I visit the Flaming Gorge of southwestern Wyoming and northeastern Utah, I marvel at the geology. I would love to tour the area someday with a Flood geologist!

The deposits in Spirit Lake show how rapidly fossil fuels formed following the Flood of Noah’s day and debunk the assumptions found in the layered Petrified Forest explanations presented at Yellowstone National Park.

Future books like this one would be helpful for Christian families as they visit our national parks and museums to refute the “millions and billions of years” we read about so much. I look forward to more great resources like this from the Institute for Creation Research and Master Books.

There were lives lost in the disaster. Sadly, many ignored fair warning and safety protocols. The book closes with a reminder of a coming, unpredictable day of Judgment. We are truly prepared only in our Savior and Substitute, Jesus Christ.

Footprints in the Ash would be an excellent science resource for homeschoolers, a useful and necessary science supplement for the parents of children in public schools, and a great reference for any Christian home.

**“...as you forgive those who trespass against you...”**


Forgiving is not our first impulse. It isn’t for Erik either, the main character of *Am I Forgiving?* By Jeannie St. John Taylor.

“Gold Medallion finalist
Jeannie St. John Taylor returns with her engaging character, Erik. Erik is afraid that he has lost his best friend when Chuck ignores him and plays in the snow with Todd. To make things worse, Erik breaks his arm when his sled swerves into a tree after trying to avoid their snowballs. Even though Erik thinks he will never forgive them, he learns that forgiving feels better than trying to get even . . . and it makes his friends feel better, too” (publisher’s website).

The author is also the illustrator. The eyes of her characters are simply, yet very expressive. They drew my attention right away. The font of the text is bold and playful.

After his accident, Erik confesses, “I think if a hundred ways to get even with Chuck and Todd. The problem is, I remember the Bible says that if we don’t forgive others, God won’t forgive us. I pray, ‘They were mean and I don’t want to forgive them, Jesus, but I will if you help me. I can’t do it if you don’t.’”

My favorite part of the book is the reconciliation between the three boys and everyone, even the animals, signing Erik’s cast. But first, there needs to be forgiveness. “Chuck comes inside, but he won’t look at me. He says, ‘Sorry, Erik.’ I don’t say, ‘That’s all right,’ or ‘You didn’t mean to.’ I just say,
'I forgive you.' That’s okay, isn’t it? God doesn’t expect me to pretend Chuck didn’t do anything wrong.” Wow. What a wonderful message for children to learn early and for grown-ups to overhear! Forgiveness is the most important thing Christians can learn. We forgive because we are forgiven in Christ. We dare not withhold forgiveness either: “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” No one ever said forgiving was easy, but it is one of the most practical teachings there is.

“Jeannie St. John Taylor lives with her husband of nearly thirty years on a small working farm in the middle of Portland, Oregon. A professional artist, as well as a mother and former teacher with a Master’s degree, Jeannie is uniquely qualified to craft children's books. She is the author and/or illustrator of several books, including the Gold Medallion finalist, *Am I Praying?*. In her spare time, she works as a private investigator for her husband’s financial investigation company” (publisher’s website).

PJC

**A Must Buy**


Building on the success of his other picture books for children ages 6-12, Paul Maier is back with *The Real Story of the Flood*, a companion to his other recent release, *The Real Story of the Creation*, also illustrated by Robert Barrett. Barrett’s illustrations are worthy of inclusion in the online Christian art gallery at www.cph.org. I appreciate the realism, important to children who may later grapple with the difference between the creation, flood, Jesus’ virgin birth and resurrection on the one hand and the Tooth Fairy, Easter Bunny, and Santa Claus on the other. Parents know what I mean.

The Flood is a day of judgment for the people on earth. In His grace and mercy, the Lord saves eight people to repopulate the earth. And He has a plan of rescue for the animal kingdom, too.

Maier defends the historicity of the biblical and historic worldwide Noahic deluge, as he earlier defended creation and the miraculously scandalous events of Jesus’ life. He speaks of Noah’s context: “Amid the sea of wicked unbelievers was an island of faith in the family of a man named Noah. He was righteous in God’s sight…”

The pictures add greatly to Maier’s retelling of the narrative. Our recent Wyoming District Education Chair, the Rev. Bill Heine, taught our district how to use both texts and pictures to retell Bible stories to our children at home and at Sunday School. This would be a great book to use for such a purpose. Encourage young people to pick two or three important words from each sentence. Using them only as an outline, ask them to tell you and their classmates the story. Together, look for ways to correct their retelling. This teaching technique is unique for how it encourages young people to tell the story of Christ to others! For pictures, once the overall story is well-known, encourage young people to describe what “scene” of the story is depicted. What is going on? What do the people illustrated show by their actions and facial expressions? (See the pictures opposite Chapter Three and Chapter Six). I use many of these techniques even with catechism classes and adults.

Parents will love this book because Maier’s humor is engaging and uniquely anachronistic. For example, you may remember the movie *Field of Dreams*. Maier uses the famous “Build it, and they will come!” line from the movie to talk about how the Lord gathered “two and two” of all flesh.

Chapter Twelve and the Epilogue tie up many loose ends. Shem, Ham and Japheth are shown to be the ancestors of all humanity. The author also acknowledges other “flood epics that parallel the biblical version,” holding the latter up for the reader as the true and complete account.

I would encourage the author, illustrator, and publisher to keep up the good work and consider *The Real Story of the Exodus!*
A Picture Book for Grown-ups


The Kregel Pictorial Guide Series has been of great benefit to me, particularly at Bible Class. Their numerous guides, including the Tabernacle and the Temple, are now supplemented with The Life of Jesus.

As Christians, we confess all that Scripture teaches about our God-man Savior and Redeemer, but other historical texts are not silent. Kregel uses another of its strengths, an English translation of the writings of Josephus to tell us more about First Century perspectives on Jesus (4).

Models of the Temple and Jerusalem adorn events leading up to Holy Week (10-11). I was particularly struck by this language with regard to the Lord’s Supper: “Jesus suggested that the bread and wine were his body and blood, and that, after his death, his followers should use them to remember his broken body and spilled blood” (12 caption, cf. text). While not the most clear confession of the supper or “Real Presence of Christ’s Body and Blood” from a Lutheran perspective, it was more of a confession than I expected. No, Jesus did not use grape juice, either. This is augmented by the Words of Institution from Matthew 26:26-28 on page 13.

The Gospel is confessed throughout, though I would have liked to see it more often and more prominently. Readers will come away knowing “that Jesus, as a sinless human being, was paying the penalty for the wrong living of the rest of humankind, and thereby allowing God to welcome sinful people back into relationship with him. But he seems to have been doing more than that. His death was a kind of ransom…paid to buy freedom from sin, a revelation of God’s love and a supreme example of sacrificial love. By rising from the dead, he also defeated death itself” (15, also 19, 25, et al.).

The powerful cover art is “a modern representation of Jesus healing, beside the sea of Galilee” (24).

It was a good reminded that “It was unusual for a teacher to choose his disciples” (26).

Our relationship with God is at Christ’s initiative, not our own.

“History that’s visual! New Testament scholar Rob J. Bewley presents the life of Jesus from Jesus’ early years to his last days, expounding on his ministry and the legacy that continues today. Loaded with four-color charts, maps, photographs, and illustrations, this concise guide to Jesus’ life is perfect for personal study or classroom use” (publisher’s website).

May this helpful guide be a blessing to you as you learn or teach about Christ and cling to Him!

PJC

Coming Soon

It’s Coming...

Lutheran Service Builder 2. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House

Currently, I’m a Beta tester for the new version of Lutheran Service Builder. The latest upgrades of 1.0 have had a much faster loading time than the original, right out of the box. While the software has always been designed to be easy-to-use, 2.0 is even more intuitive. I appreciate the humility of the designers and programmers. They are willing to try new things in order to streamline the service-planning process.

Look for Lutheran Service Builder 2 soon.

PJC

The LSB Treasury of Daily Prayer

Have you ever been frustrated trying to juggle multiple books as you attempt to lead a daily, structured, time of prayer and meditation on the Word of God? Have you ever wondered why it is that Roman Catholics and Anglicans have such fine books for daily prayer, called breviaries, but that Lutherans kind of/sort of do, but don’t, almost, but not quite there? Have you wondered why some of one-volume prayer resources are so complicated, complex and vexing to use, requiring you to turn pages until you are dizzy? Are you looking for a resource that will allow you to dwell richly in the Word, making the best of the good ancient practices of “lectio divino” (divine reading)? Have you been looking for a daily resource for a full, complete life of prayer and meditation on the Word that reflects the rich heritage of Lutheranism with its keen focus on Christ and His Gospel? Well, your wait is over.

Announcing the most complete resource for daily prayer ever before provided in the history of the Lutheran Church, in any language, let alone English. I present to you:
**Treasury of Daily Prayer**

Concordia's *Treasury of Daily Prayer* will be a comprehensive Lutheran resource for daily devotions, unlike anything else before, or presently available, bringing together under one cover Scripture readings, prayers, psalmody, hymnody, and devotional readings from the church fathers. The chief benefit of this resource is that everything for daily prayer and meditation on God’s Word will be available in a single book, with all the "propers" for each day provided together in the same place in the book.

The heart of *Treasury of Daily Prayer* is the Daily Lectionary developed for *Lutheran Service Book*. Each day’s section will contain: (1) the full text of the two Scripture readings. Using this plan nearly all of the New Testament, and about a third of the Old Testament, is read each year. (2) Psalmody and (3) Hymnody that captures the content, subject or theme of the appointed readings. (4) A devotional writing from a church father or the Lutheran Confessions; (5) on the days where a feast, festival, or commemoration falls, a brief biography of the person (or event) being commemorated will be included. (6) Finally, a brief prayer will be included that collects the thoughts and themes that are seen in the day, especially the New Testament Reading.

*Treasury of Daily Prayer* is designed to be equally useful for individuals, families, and small groups with the inclusion of the four brief orders of Daily Prayer for Families and Individuals. In addition, for those who choose to use them, the order of Matins, Vespers and Compline are included in the center of the volume.

In addition to the Daily Readings and Writing and the Orders of Daily Prayer, the book will contain a section of daily and occasional prayers, the Litany, the common canticles of the Church, Luther’s Small Catechism, all 150 Psalms, and several other resources for daily prayer and piety.

God willing, this will be published this coming October. We are not taking orders for it yet, but I thought you would like to hear about it. I’ll keep you posted.

Cordially in Christ,
Paul
+++

Rev. Paul T. McCain
Publisher and Executive Director, Editorial
Concordia Publishing House

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**From CPH**

**The Lutheran Study Bible**

Concordia Publishing House will release The Lutheran Study Bible in October 2009. The Lutheran Study Bible is the first study Bible in English to be developed from the ground-up with notes that are "exclusively and distinctively Lutheran."

The Lutheran Study Bible includes more than 26,500 study notes, including over 2,000 application notes and prayers for every part of the Bible; over 80,000 center column cross-references and 900 cross-references to 120 full or half-page maps, charts, and diagrams; and more than 220 articles and introductions to biblical books and topics. The Lutheran Study Bible notes were prepared by Lutheran theologians, scholars, and pastors from 12 Lutheran church bodies. “We are excited to offer all English-speaking Christians a study Bible that offers such a comforting and powerful Christ-centered understanding of the Scriptures,” shares Rev. Paul T. McCain, Publisher and Executive Director of Editorial for CPH. “As the Lutheran Reformers put it, Christ and His Gospel is the unspeakable treasure that alone opens the door to the entire Bible.”

*The Lutheran Study Bible* uses the English Standard Version® translation, one of the fastest growing translations worldwide and considered to be one of the most precise English translations available. “TLSB is a truly unique offering in the study Bible ‘market’,” says Gretchen Jameson, CPH’s Corporate Communications manager, “it combines a personal, devotional, and practical application approach to Bible reading, alongside solid scholarly study notes. There is, quite simply, nothing else like it available today.”

Detailed information about the unique features of The Lutheran Study Bible will be online at [www.cph.org/lutheranbible](http://www.cph.org/lutheranbible) in October 2008.

The Lutheran Study Bible is available for Internet pre-sale in March 2009.

Concordia Publishing House strives to be the premier publisher and provider of products and services that are faithful to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.
From Augsburg-Fortress

Lutheran Study Bible (NRSV)

Source
http://www.augsburgfortress.org/bookoffaith/resources.jsp

As a key partner in the Book of Faith initiative, Augsburg Fortress is working to develop resources for the whole church. And the first resource is now available!

Opening the Book of Faith: Lutheran Insights for Bible Study is a helpful introduction to the initiative. This book explores Lutheran perspectives on Scripture and applies these insights in practical ways for leaders, Bible study groups, and individuals who want to renew their relationship to God's Word.

Adult Bible study resources will make up the second Book of Faith offering to be published by Augsburg Fortress. These resources will provide a comprehensive, holistic, Lutheran approach to engaging Scripture using the four methods of study introduced in Opening the Book of Faith. An introductory course will be offered fall 2008, culminating in a spring 2009 release of major Bible studies.

The third Book of Faith resource is the Lutheran Study Bible, also to be released in spring 2009. Using the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) translation, this Bible will integrate solid study material—maps, timelines, historical background—with articles and notes on Lutheran perspectives and principles for Bible study (Emphasis added).

Visit the Book of Faith store
http://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/category_bookoffaith.jsp?elsid=193055&categoryID=3418 for resources that support the goals of the initiative.

Online

Liturgy and Dogmatics

This paper by the sainted Kurt Marquart originally appeared in Volume 67:2 of Concordia Theological Quarterly, April 2003. It is recommended here for your edification.

The following two paragraphs are reprinted to encourage you to revisit the entire paper.

The purpose of this article is to unpack the tangle of issues hidden beneath the deceptively self-evident commonplace lex orandi lex credendi. At the surface level this maxim seems plausible enough: of course there is reciprocity between worship and doctrine! All decent doctrine is prayable, and all decent prayer reflects and inculcates sound doctrine! If this were all there is to it, we could without further ado simply commend the motto to religious educators for practical implementation. But our little motto is not as simple or innocent as it seems. The original form of our now simplified saying was ut legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi- “that the obligatory manner of praying may determine the obligatory manner of believing.” The clause comes from a fifth century collection of anti-Pelagian pronouncements by Roman pontiffs, compiled probably by Saint Prosper of Aquitaine? The original meaning then is clear: the authoritative rule of prayer determines the rule of believing, not vice versa.

It seems that for theologians under the influence of the Reformation, lex orandi lex credendi is generally a two-way street, with the rule of faith having the primacy. For certain Roman Catholic writers, on the other hand, the primacy belongs decidedly to the rule of prayer, with the traffic moving decisively in one direction, from liturgy to theology. Such, at least, are the broad conclusions to be drawn from a perusal of Aidan Kavanagh's On Liturgical Theology, and of David Fagerberg's What Is Liturgical Theology Fagerberg, himself a former Lutheran, relies heavily on Kavanagh on the one hand, and on the late Russian Orthodox liturgiologist Alexander Schmemann (whom also Kavanagh invokes) on the other. To clarify just what is at stake, let us converse a bit with these authors, and then draw some conclusions of our own...

To download the entire article, visit:
http://www.ctsfw.edu/library/files/ph/945

PJC

On the Death of Jaroslav Vajda

The following obituary for Jaroslav Vajda appeared last month. You have sung many of his hymns listed below, whether composed by him or translations of Slavic hymns otherwise inaccessible to us.

LSB 369 "Where Shepherds Lately Knelt"
LSB 371 "Let Our Gladness Banish Sadness"
LSB 445 "When You Woke That Thursday Morning"
LSB 484 "Make Songs of Joy" (translator)
LSB 491 "Up through Endless Ranks of Angels"
LSB 593 "See This Wonder in the Making"
LSB 896 "Now Greet the Swiftly Changing Year"
(translator)
LSB 910 "Now the Silence"
LSB 922 "Go, My Children, with My Blessing"
LSB 945 "Your Heart, 0 God, Is Grieved"
(translator)

[You may wish to consider a Vajda hymn festival at your congregation or in your circuit.]

Rev. Dr. Jaroslav J. Vajda, composer, musician, and friend was blessed by God with a holy death on May 10, 2008, and taken home to rest in the arms of Jesus Christ to await the resurrection of the dead.

"Concordia Publishing House gives thanks to God for the faithful work of His servant, Rev. Vajda," shares Bruce G. Kintz, President and CEO. "We rejoice in resurrection joy with his wife, Louise and children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. His devoted service to CPH and his greater contribution to music will remain an enduring legacy."


Rev. Vajda came to prominence as a hymn writer with his hymn "Now the Silence," which first appeared in Worship Supplement (CPH, 1969). His hymns and translations biblically rooted and rich in imagery number more than 200 and can be found in nearly 50 hymnals of various Christian denominations worldwide. In recognition of his significant contributions to the world of Christian hymnody, Pastor Vajda was named a Fellow of The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada. He also received an honorary doctorate degree from his alma mater, Concordia Seminaries -St. Louis, in 2007.

In the spring of 2000, Concordia Publishing House purchased the rights to Rev. Vajda's hymns and translations in order to preserve this important body of work for many generations to come. The complete collection of his hymns, Sing Peace, Sing Gift of Peace, was published by Concordia Publishing House in 2003. His hymns and translations can also be found in Lutheran Worship (CPH, 1982), Hymnal Supplement 98 (CPH, 1998), and Lutheran Service Book (CPH, 2006).

Special thanks to CPH and the Rev. Shawn Kumm.


Another interesting link:
Books Received


Nagel, Norman E. *In the Name of Jesus: Sermons by Dr. Norman E. Nagel, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO—1983-1999.* St. Louis: Luther Academy, undated. mp3 audio CD. $15.00. www.lutheracademy.com (P)


Tappert, Theodore G., editor. Selected Writings of Martin Luther. (Four Volumes: 1517-1520, 1520-1523, 1523-1526, 1529-1546). 60 Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2007. 484, 408, 483, and 403 pages, respectively. Four paperback volumes in a slipcase. $60.00. www.augsburgfortress.org (800) 328-4648 (LHP)


A Closing Thought

“Dear Brother,
the Lord has good gifts for you today!”

The Rev. Dr. Norman Edgar Nagel

(Spoken to a St. Louis seminarian in danger of walking past the Chapel of St. Timothy & St. Titus, tempted by the need to study further for an exam. This is also a helpful invitation for those who have neglected “meeting together” (Hebrews 10:25), gathered by the Lord at Divine Service to receive His gifts.)
Notes
Reviewed in This Issue...

Eusebius
Cantus Christi
Liturical Theology
Luther’s Liturgical Music
The Digital Bach Collection
The Book of Concord on CD-ROM

http://wy.lcms.org/LHP/QBR
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Celebration Preparation

Finishing an issue of Quarterly Book Review is always a celebration. It is pleasant and joy-filled work, but it is work. (And that’s after prioritizing parish and family responsibilities.) As you read these pages the first time it is likely you are preparing for the festival of the Reformation and even getting ready for Advent and Christmas.

Hopefully, these articles and reviews will help you save valuable time, limited money, and even more limited shelf space. We commend them for your consideration when you make personal purchases, and when considering gifts with a Christian message.

Christ is the content of our preaching, song, and liturgy. Remember Martin Luther’s advice to keep Christ “for you” before your people every Sunday, and especially in the celebration preparation you are already doing.

This year I’ve taken some space to explain what kinds of resources you’ll find under the headings within LHP Quarterly Book Review. It would be neat to have a “Liturgy & Pulpit” section some day. Concordia’s Liturgical Preaching would have been reviewed under that heading if had QBR been in existence when it was published. If Dr. David Schmitt ever does a book version of his Seward presentation on integrating hymnody with preaching, we’ll have a “Hymnody & Pulpit” section at least once.

In our first two years, we have published nearly four hundred pages of commentary, musical and theological advice, sermons, and reviews of many items. Based on the time available to your humble editor and our busy reviewers, if it has to do with preaching, worship, or church music, we’ll considering doing a “book review” of it.

The Rev. Paul J Cain, Jr.

The Rev. Paul J Cain, Editor
"Next to Theology... Music: Luther's Musical Thinking and Hymn Improvisation,"

Part I

By Dr. Steven Hoffman

The following is an excerpt of a lecture given by Kantor Dr. Steven Hoffman. The lecture is entitled, "Next to Theology... Music: Luther's Musical Thinking and Hymn Improvisation." Dr. Hoffman gave this lecture at the Conference on Organ and Church Music at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, June 15-17, 2008.

In the words of St. Paul: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

"Next to theology, God's greatest gift is music." This oft quoted statement of Sixteenth-Century Reformer, Dr. Martin Luther, has reason to give great hope to us all as clergy, musicians, and laity alike. We can take comfort in the fact that, according to Luther, Christian theology comes directly from God. We can take solace that Luther's statement lends credence to our vocations as theologians and church musicians. But, what is at the heart of Luther's statement? What is the greater breadth and depth of his famous quote? We will explore Luther's statement in two ways: First, we will examine the relationship between sacred theology and music through the lens of Luther's statement; and, second, we will examine this relationship as it applies to hymn improvisation and interpretation. In the end, my remarks are not so much a how-to approach to hymn improvisation, but I speak of a theological and textual frame of mind, a Christocentric point of departure, with which to approach hymnic and liturgical improvisation. May God grant this unto us all for the sake of Christ. Amen.

Dr. Steven Hoffman is Organist-in-Residence at the University of Wyoming. He is the Kantor at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church and Campus Center in Laramie, and at King of Glory Lutheran Church in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Dr. Hoffman holds degrees from the University of South Dakota and the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Dr. Hoffman's interests include the development of an organ instruction program with learning centers throughout Wyoming with the goal of enriching the skills of organists and increasing the awareness of the organ as the "King of Instruments." He is currently authoring a book exploring the relationship between Lutheran theology and music during the Reformation.

SAH
Guest Commentary

Holy Cross Day: Upon a Cross the Victim Vanquished

By the Rev. Paul T McCain
Reprinted with Permission

This day, Sept. 14, is observed in both Western and Eastern churches as the Festival of the Holy Cross. It was on this day, in 335, that what was said to be a portion of the true cross upon which Christ was crucified, was brought outside of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher so clergy and laity alike could venerate it. Sept. 14 was the second day of a two-day celebratory dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, which was built on the site where, in 326, Helena, mother of Constantine, discovered the true cross. Obviously, the origin of the Festival of the Holy Cross is shrouded in uncertain historical assumptions, but it is a wonderful festival in the Church, and provides a great opportunity to shine a bright light on the instrument by which the world's salvation was purchased and won by our dear Lord Christ.

Venantius Fortunatus' glorious hymn, "Sing My Tongue" is sung at this festival, and I can't think of a more perfect hymn to set next to Cranach the Younger's magnificent painting for the St. Peter and Paul Church in Weimar. I was reminded of the painting in church today as the Old Testament lesson was read, the account of the bronze serpent. And then the Epistle lesson in which Paul asserts what the Church's proclamation is always to be all about: Christ and Him crucified!

A blessed Holy Cross day to all. May the blessings and grace that flow from the atonement won on the cross for you and the whole world fill you with joy and peace, as you live in the promises of your Crucified Lord, raised victorious over sin, death and hell. All glory to our Holy Triune God. Amen.

SING, my tongue, the Savior's glory; tell His triumph far and wide; tell aloud the famous story of His body crucified; how upon the cross a victim, vanquishing in death, He died.

Eating of the tree forbidden, man had sunk in Satan's snare, when our pitying Creator did this second tree prepare; destined, many ages later, that first evil to repair.

Such the order God appointed when for sin He would atone; to the serpent thus opposing schemes yet deeper than his own; thence the remedy procuring, whence the fatal wound had come.

So when now at length the fullness of the sacred time drew nigh, then the Son, the world's Creator, left his Father's throne on high; from a virgin's womb appearing, clothed in our mortality.
All within a lowly manger,  
lo, a tender babe He lies!  
see his gentle Virgin Mother  
lull to sleep his infant cries!  
while the limbs of God incarnate  
round with swathing bands she ties.

THUS did Christ to perfect manhood  
in our mortal flesh attain:  
then of His free choice He goeth  
to a death of bitter pain;  
and as a lamb, upon the altar of the cross,  
for us is slain.

Lo, with gall His thirst He quenches!  
see the thorns upon His brow!  
nails His tender flesh are rending!  
see His side is opened now!  
whence, to cleanse the whole creation,  
streams of blood and water flow.

FAITHFUL Cross!  
above all other,  
one and only noble Tree!  
None in foliage, none in blossom,  
none in fruit thy peers may be;  
sweetest wood and sweetest iron!  
Sweetest Weight is hung on thee!

Lofty tree, bend down thy branches,  
to embrace thy sacred load;  
oh, relax the native tension  
of that all too rigid wood;  
gently, gently bear the members  
of thy dying King and God.

Tree, which solely wast found worthy  
the world's Victim to sustain.  
harbor from the raging tempest!  
ark, that saved the world again!  
Tree, with sacred blood anointed  
of the Lamb for sinners slain.

Blessing, honor, everlasting,  
to the immortal Trinity:  
to the Father, Son, and Spirit,  
equal praises ever be;  
glory through the earth and heaven  
to Trinity in Unity. Amen.

September 14, 2008
PTM

From the Pulpit
A Pastoral Conference
Sermon, Spring 2008
by the Rev. Kirk Peters
Buffalo, Wyoming
Text: 1 Corinthians 8

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father  
and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, when I was preparing  
for my previous career in Fish and Wildlife  
management, a colleague and I where getting ready  
to go pheasant hunting. He said to me that because of  
his knowledge of wildlife populations he was not  
bound to seasons, bag limits and the like; in this  
knowledge he would never abuse the resource.

This seems arrogant and foolish; an abuse of  
knowledge. Writing to the Corinthian church, Paul  
teaches that the same can occur in the church itself.  
Some are blessed with knowledge and understanding  
concerning idols. Idols are nothing, really. Only mud  
and clay, gold and silver, wood perhaps, with nothing  
behind the work of man’s fingers. And so, meat  
sacrificed to idols is really no different than any other  
meat slaughtered for food. With this knowledge, one  
would be free to eat or not to eat meat sacrificed to  
idols with no consequence to faith. Unless you eat  
such meat in front of in the knowledge of one who  
does not have this same knowledge and  
understanding.

To such a person, without the knowledge and  
understanding that idols “are nothing,” such meat is  
“tainted” by false worship. To such a person the meat  
has been a tribute a false God. Anyone professing the  
true God should not eat such meat. Lacking a true  
understanding/knowledge about idols being nothing  
they are bound not to eat-it is a matter of piety for  
them-they are trying to be righteous and testify to  
God.

The problem in Corinth is that some are acting  
according to the freedom they have in Christ Jesus.  
No idol can take away the freedom to eat. However,  
knowledge of that freedom is not the end-all. We all  
know something, but the understanding of the  
problem of knowledge must be taught. Paul speaks  
plainly to us here.
Knowledge (alone) puffs. It makes us like a toad, who puffs himself up to look bigger than he is. He is full of air, fluff, (so much gas). Puff has no substance, is arrogant, is worthless, is even harmful.

On the other hand, Paul commends love. Love builds up! This is quite a contrast to “puffs up”. Love builds up; it is edifying, strengthening, and sustaining. Love serves. Love with the gift of knowledge serves in that it helps, encourages, instructs, and teaches. Love sees the other as greater than oneself, and brings to bear gifts for the benefit of others.

This is second table of the law stuff. Treat your neighbor as yourself. Work to lift him up, and it helps, encourages, instructs, and teaches. Love sees the other as greater than oneself, and brings to bear gifts for the benefit of others.

We abuse the gift of knowledge when we as congregations innovate and originate without concern for our sister congregations. Men, we all know that our people travel. Phone service and e-mail sends pastoral practice changes across the miles in short order. What I say and do in Buffalo at Prince of Peace affects you all. Exceptions and practices I do at home may quickly cause you, my brothers, problems. I may be “justified” in my knowledge to do such things, but if I act with out love for you and your congregation I sin. For these mistakes we ask forgiveness.

Brothers, as Lutheran pastors we know that we are free to partake of modified complex carbohydrates-a science person’s euphemism for beer and other fermented beverages. It is true, we are free. But, remember, someone is always watching you, pastor. For abuse of our freedom we ask forgiveness.

Speaking of adiaphora, I look and see that many of you are exercising your freedom to wear clerical attire of your choice. Some wear collars, some wear tabs, some ties, and some none of these. We know we are free. Yet, brothers, we often see others exercising this freedom, the same one we have, and we judge them for it. In this group we refer to others as “ringnecks” or “Romanists” or the like. And then suddenly we are sure that we know all motives, thoughts and theologies behind the collar or the tab. After all, we know what they “stand for” and what we express as the “proper faith”. We think we know and we judge not only the clothing but we judge things unseen. Lord, forgive us for our prejudices.

Looking out into our synod we think we understand a little bit better than all the rest. We know the confessions, or the languages, of the history of the church a little bit better than all the rest. Maybe you do! But do we use your gift of knowledge to serve of to puff yourself up and separate from others who would benefit from your gift. We think we know, but verse two warns us that we may not yet know what we ought. Love of self is no love at all. And if we do not love, we do not know God. For this we ask forgiveness.

I John 2:9-11 records for us: “Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. But however hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.” Knowledge without love is blindness. For
claiming knowledge and freedom without love for our sheep, for our brother pastors, and even of our enemies—we plead for God’s mercy.

Take heart. Here is true knowledge, you are known by God. God’s mercy for you does not depend on your knowledge or your love. God knew you in eternity and, in love, forgives you in Christ Jesus. This knowledge is made sure by Christ’s love for you. Ironically, for our sins of pride in our knowledge, the Father sent the Living Word, the Divine Logos, the Omniscient, to bear these very sins on the cross. He died there for you and me to pay for our arrogance.

He rose again from the grave to free you from these sins. You are free from the guilt and judgment of these sins. And forgiven you are free to put aside the sinful nature and live in service to others as you receive and use your gifts. We live in righteousness here, knowing that we will live in righteousness with Christ forever and ever. That alone is true freedom.

In the knowledge of that freedom we can continue to build up from the wisdom of the scriptures through our various talents and abilities. We together as brothers can mine the scriptures for the truth and learn what is essential-forgiveness for Christ’s sake through the means of grace. This we can preach and administer to others for their edification. We can also learn of “middle matters”; things neither forbidden nor commanded but still subject to loving service for others.

Pastoral work is hard in dealing with freedom and service. The scriptures promise us that when we come to our sheep in Christ we will bring them to good pasture and life eternal. Christ’s care for His pastors includes love, freedom and wisdom.

And to you I proclaim true knowledge: your sins are all forgiven in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen
English language are all reflected in this translation, now made more accessible and convenient in electronic form. This CD-ROM also includes hover links to the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible for all biblical References in the Book of Concord” (case)

Most editions of the *English Standard Version* Bible include Libronix Software. That is a great first purchase for a pastor or layman. This would be a very appropriate second purchase.

And just think—you won’t have to type in those long quotes from the *Book of Concord* anymore—just cut and paste!

I would love to compare this *KW* electronic edition to the other recently-released electronic edition, Concordia’s *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*.

**LHP Review**

*An Accessible Eusebius*


It is ironic, isn’t it? Here in the early years of the 21st century, an American Lutheran parish pastor in the Panhandle of Nebraska is able to pick up and read in English the very first book in an academic category known now as Church History. Written almost 17 centuries ago, this book lives on thanks to the countless, nameless scribes who kept it alive. And now it still lives thanks to Dr. Paul L. Maier (and many other translators over the years). But we know very little about Eusebius with certainty. A biography was written by his successor as the Bishop of Caesarea, but it has been lost. We do have this most remarkable book which can be picked up and read for edification by anyone. A remarkable book because it tells us church history that without Eusebius and his work would have been lost forever.

When reading this book, I tried to keep in mind several questions that I trust will help make this review helpful to the reader. They are: *Is the book useful? How does/can it serve a Lutheran parish pastor? And most specifically for Eusebius* *The Church History, Does it make Eusebius accessible?*

Dr. Maier’s translating and editing makes this edition very useful. The Introduction does what any good introduction should do – it guides the reader into how best to read/use this book. And it whets the reader’s appetite for what is to come in the rest of the volume. Helpful footnotes are found throughout the volume. An example of this is the very first footnote: “The modern equivalent for ‘books’ in the ancient world would be ‘long book chapters,’ since the term referred originally to scrolls. Such ‘books’ might range in length from a modern lengthy chapter to a seventy-page booklet” (p. 9). Some footnotes honestly point out mistakes Eusebius has made. See, for example, footnote #11 on page 60 where Dr. Maier straightens out Eusebius when he incorrectly quotes Josephus. Another corrective footnote is #19 on page 65. At the end of each “book,” Dr. Maier has very helpful commentary on the preceding “book.” These are filled with all kinds of historical background concerning the political landscape and honest appraisal of the preceding chapter. Maier writes, “Eusebius also shows himself a master at tying up any loose ends dangling from the New Testament record and possibly embroidering the ends in the process (p. 77).

Its usefulness for me is found as Eusebius masterfully reveals how God prospered His Church in the midst of many terrible persecutions. Books 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8 (and not just these) deal with the horrific persecutions visited upon the Church. Time and again Eusebius tells us that the great persecutor of the Faith is Satan. Governments and people are his instruments by which he tried/tries to destroy Christ’s Church. If we think for a moment that we have it bad today, the reading of a chapter or two from *Eusebius* (the gruesomeness of some of the violent acts against the saints is much more than the worst R-rated movie shows today) will disabuse us of this false notion. Eusebius tells also of attacks by Satan from within the Church by heretics who led many astray from the Truth. This book reminded me that the Triune God is with His Church permanently no matter what happens. He will not abandon the Church for which His Son died.

Above all, Dr. Maier makes *Eusebius* accessible to anyone willing to read this fine edition. With the aforementioned commentaries at the close of each “book,” the photographs, maps (see page 258), dates in the margins and the appendices, one can easily find one’s way around this book. Dr. Maier even tells
the reader when to skip certain parts of the book! Can you believe it? For example, he comments: “Many readers may find it too long, adulatory, or outright boring for modern tastes. They are urged to pass on to section 5” (310). Whether you do so or not is up to you.

This edition of *Eusebius: The Church History* is well-edited with much to teach a Lutheran parish pastor. As Eusebius describes the earliest history of the Christian Church, it is as if the reader is present. And what more could one ask after so many centuries have passed?

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**LHP Review**


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Initially, I thought *Worship Matters* was my first time encountering Bob Kauflin. I was wrong. Kauflin was the arranger for the Christian music group Glad. I have their (now twenty-year-old) *The A Capella [A Capella] Project* album. I remember purchasing it for two tracks, “A Mighty Fortress” and “Easter Song,” the latter with the line, “Hear the bells ringing, they’re singing Christ is risen from the dead…”

Relating to *a capella* vocal music was easy for me, but. I keep thinking that the intended reader of Kauflin’s new book isn’t someone like me: young but leading worship using more formal, historic, liturgical forms, including chant, hymns, and canticles.

I’m not clear on how Kauflin went from Catholic organist (17) to his current position (see biography). He does acknowledge that, as church titles go, “Worship Leader” is a pretty new one (it’s from the early 1970’s, p. 51). More “churchly” titles are available, in my opinion. The author notes many of them on p. 54.

Part Two of the book explains, in detail, his definition for a “Worship Leader.” “What Does a Worship Leader Do? A Worship Leader magnifies the greatness of God in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, skillfully combining God’s Word with music, thereby motivating the gathered Church to proclaim the Gospel, to cherish God’s presence, and to live for God’s glory” (9).

“Prayers can be written, planned, or spontaneous” (96). “Music should serve the lyrics” (100). “Worshiping God should make us mission-minded” (148).

The following advice may be helpful to speaking about Christian music and where it might (or might not) best serve: “When researching songs, I generally think of them in one of four categories. ‘Don’t Use’ is for those with words that are unbiblical or unclear or just bad poetry. ‘In Private’ is for songs that I can listen to on my own but that wouldn’t serve our church. The lyrics might include an obscure phrase or verse or be set to poor or complicated music. The ‘Could Use’ category is for songs that are a good choice for the congregation depending on the situation, need, and context. And ‘Should Use’ are songs like ‘In Christ Alone’ or ‘Blessed Be Your Name.’ They communicate truth about God in such a compelling and clear way that I make it a priority to teach them to the church” (110).

Consider also: “A good measure of how we’re doing in long-term planning is what I call the Twenty Year Rule. If someone was born in our church and grew up singing our songs over the course of twenty years, how well would they know God?” (119). That’s quite a powerful diagnostic question! I commend his idea to “plan thematically” (112) when choosing music in order to compliment the message of the sermon. This concept could be expanded to make use of a lectionary.

Is the church motivated by the Gospel or the music? He doesn’t want to motivate through manipulation or musical style (122). What is the Gospel? “Our sins have been forgiven. We’ve been bought by the blood of the Savior…” (131). How is God “present?” “Where two or three are gathered in my name” (138, Matthew 18:20) and, “God has promised to be with us as we celebrate the Lord’s Supper. What we’re celebrating is more than a reminder or a mere symbol. The risen Savior is present with us through faith as we remember his work of reconciliation. In a profound way we’re being freshly strengthened in our union with him and with each other” (138). This is a better confession than I’ve heard from many, but I’m nowhere near ready to declare altar and pulpit fellowship. “Enthusiast” workings of the Spirit and an emphasis on feeling (138ff, et al) show there are
real differences in theology and practice that still divide us.

It was very encouraging to see the words “theology” and “doctrine” dealt with early in the book (28, 30, et al). Writing to other American Evangelicals, Kauflin sees the problem Lutherans often see in some worship services today, that they give great respect to the Bible, but often little respect to Biblical teaching in worship practice. And, while we’re using the word “practice,” musicians should (40)! The church today should repent of compromise (48), especially in connection to sensual music. There are problems with the commercialization of worship music and the development of a “worship industry” (57).

“Jesus is where and how we meet with God. After he rose from the dead, the early Christians came to understand that Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection had been the perfect and eternal fulfillment of all that the temple merely foreshadowed. The implications are staggering. There’s nothing about our worship of God that isn’t defined or affected by Jesus Christ” (70). These words go a long way toward recovering a better, more Biblical theology of worship. Now I’d like to hear, “It’s not about what we do, but what He does and how and where He gives His gifts…”

Worship does matter. And so do the detailed matters about worship. Kauflin has obviously been reflecting on how he worships and why he worships the way he does, showing a willingness to learn (Part Three, especially Chapter 18, “Guiding Principles,” where the term “liturgy” is used), be reverent (160), connect both “head and heart” (165ff), “that worship begins and ends with God” (176), and confesses “the sin of arrogance” with regard to previously resisting hymns and hymnals (190).

He also seems to hint at the Lutheran doctrine of vocation in Chapter 27, aiming toward confession, forgiveness, and conflict resolution (Chapter 31).

I look forward to listening in on the dialog between Kauflin and his peers, as well as between this author and Christians from more liturgical traditions. All should be blessed by such sharing.

“Bob Kauflin traveled with the Christian group GLAD for eight years as a songwriter and arranger before becoming a pastor with Sovereign Grace Ministries in 1985. He is now the director of worship development for Sovereign Grace, overseeing its music projects and teaching on congregational worship. He blogs at worshipmatters.com and hosts the biennial WorshipGod conference. He and his wife, Julie, have six children and an ever-growing number of grandchildren” (back cover).

PJC

LHP Review


Beginning the Lord’s Day in the Lord’s House is a good thing. A church is a sanctuary from the outside world. That a church building is even called a church is a derived meaning from the ekklesia, the congregation of Christians the Lord Himself gathers around His Gifts of Word and Sacrament by the work of the Holy Spirit.

During the Lutheran Reformation, Lutheran rulers “took over” previously existing church buildings for Lutheran use. Contrary to the theology and practice of the Radical Reformers & iconoclasts, Lutherans retained church buildings much as they were before, with the exception of removing (not destroying) some statutes where “Mary idolatry” (cf. 129ff) could result, and by usually leaving only one altar in the sanctuary. Martin Luther advocated for a free-standing altar (cf. 33) so that the pastor could face the congregation as Christ did His disciples, as well as preserve a proper distinction between the “sacramental” and “sacrificial” liturgical posture of the Celebrant at Divine Service.

Remodeling, or “reimagining the environment for worship” is a good idea for Christian congregations, as has been popular and prudent for Roman congregations post-Vatican II.

More liturgical congregations are seeing the value in some changes in their church buildings in order to facilitate accessibility, a richer celebration of Holy Baptism, better lighting, sound (see 106 for assistive listening), and heating/cooling, better use of side-chapel space (Chapter 21), more flexibility in congregational seating (87ff), and Luther’s free-standing altar. After all, good ideas are good ideas, no matter where they came from.

Following Easter Day services, my wife and I spent the Easter Octave of 2007 vacationing in Santa Fe, New Mexico. We went for the amazing scenery and the churches.

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Relatively recent renovations at the Roman Catholic Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis showed many of the good ideas that Rev. Vosko details in his book (cf. 212).

First, teaching is critical. Catechesis is the churchly term for it (18ff). Why would anyone financially support renovations he/she doesn’t understand? A Glossary is included (232-233).

The Font (82) for Holy Baptism is worth “renewing” to rejoice in the use of water, that which the Lord adds His Word. Faith clings to that Word of God in the water, so why not celebrate the water? The best renovations I’ve seen personally or via photograph integrate a traditional font (often the one previously used by the congregation) so that no one may doubt the validity of their font baptisms conducted with “sprinkling.” I like the idea of the font overflowing into a larger pool, where the pastor can pour pitchers of water over an adult coming for Christian Baptism.

Music (97ff) is another occasion for renewal. Care should be taken to avoid turning the space for choir, piano, organ, and other instruments into a “stage” where an “audience” comes to see a “performance.”

Art (108ff) is sadly seen as an extravagant extra. Congregational leaders, especially before/during a building project, architects, musicians, and clergy would all benefit from better art education (Chapter 24) from a Christian perspective. Beauty isn’t a bad thing (Chapter 12). A friend of mine calls the typical church design in America “Protestant Ugly,” and has found that even some Roman churches in a Midwestern state he once served in measured “down” (rather than measured up) to that same, plain, sad standard.

Lutherans in Germany after the Reformation began building their own churches. The pulpit often hung over the altar, visually centralizing the spoken and visible Word of God. In addition, since God had yet to invent microphones ☺, buildings were constructed in an eight-sided shape with many balconies, so that all could hear as well as possible. The recently rebuilt Frauenkirche in Dresden is but one (large) example.

A Lutheran congregation (Our Savior) in Houston, Texas, completed their new church building along similar lines. I commend these ideas for the author’s future consideration.

The Megachurch models pushed by the Church Growth Movement are unrealistic for smaller parishes, as well as for meaningful liturgical participation. Here is a better model. God’s House Is Our House is a book that could be profitably used by any congregation in a liturgical tradition. God’s House is where His Gifts are regularly given to His people.

“Richard S. Vosko, Ph.D., Hon. AIA, has been a design consultant for worship environments since 1970. He received the 2003 Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Liturgical Life of the American Church given by the Georgetown Center for Liturgy, Washington, D.C. His work is widely acclaimed for liturgical and design excellence. He is a priest of the Diocese of Albany” (back cover).

PJC
LHP Review


The authors answer, “No, you really can’t. And one shouldn’t, either.” Dan Lucarini, based on what he told us in *Why I Left the Contemporary Christian Music Movement*, could also add: “And back then, I really, really tried to!”

The cover picture is illustrative of what often happens when rock takes over. The performance becomes the most important thing, with the Word of God on the floor by our feet. And then there’s the “electric guitar as phallic symbol” problem, too.

A baby-boomer youth executive in my church body once told me, “Contemporary worship came in with my generation, and it will probably go out with my generation.” Ten years ago, this statement made me hopeful for the future. In recent years he addressed a District Pastoral Conference: “When we survey the youth, they say they want the worship services that are in the hymnal.” That was his explanation of why they used hymnal liturgies at youth gatherings, not because that’s what Lutherans do. He did it because the kids told him to. Can you see the larger problem? We’ve progressed beyond just the mere preferences of one generation to a conscious attempt to placate each and every generation. So much for the unity of the Body of Christ found in Romans 12.

So, what if somebody doesn’t like the changes? Well, Rick Warren and others say (29), “Leave.” So much for the good shepherd of a congregation going after the lost. Now, he gets to drive away those he doesn’t like? This is inexcusable behavior for a pastor!

I remember reading books like Blanchard’s in the 80’s. We knew what he was writing was accurate, just like our parents’ concerns about lyrics, but couldn’t/wouldn’t admit the real problems with a music of rebellion, worldliness, irreverence (32), sensuality and sexuality, drug use, atheism/anti-theism/Satanism.

For years, I had thought that the whole “backbeat” argument against pop music in worship (55) was silly. Honestly, it does make sense. Feel the beat, get on the dance floor, and…

How can we really say that what passes for fun on Saturday night is worthy to carry the Word of God on Sunday morning? Can the music remain the same with just different words? Some congregations try a U2 Communion service, called a *U2charist.* Listen to the original U2 lyrics, people. They are *Universalist,* not preaching Christ alone (70).

Bad company ruins good morals. Consider the anti-Christian subculture that lives a tattooed lifestyle. Christians try dabbling in it (130). Music does manipulate our emotions and can be used for good or ill purposes. Yes, there are many “Red Flags” (Chapter 7). “True Christianity will be attracted to godliness yet offended by worldliness—never the reverse” (150)

In my church body, I’ve seen attempts at soft-rock services. Generally, they are not that well done. On my internship, one pastor asked another pastor to watch out for a family transferring from his congregation to the other merely for the contemporary service. His fear was that they would eventually move on for a congregation with better music. They left for a non-Lutheran congregation *with a better band* in less than six months.

Any time the Church changes its belief, teaching, worship, or practice for any reason other than the Word of God, there will be problems. When anything in a service draws attention to itself other than Christ or His Word, there will be problems. The authors don’t intend to be killjoys. They want Christians to read Scripture, think about what they’re getting into,
and pray before they get themselves and others into trouble. If we do not lead people to Christ, aren’t we leading them astray? Tolerating one sin, leads to tolerating another. Soon enough, you’re headed down a slippery slope.

Calvin was aware of the dangers of music, so he overreacted and banned all but metrical psalms. Zwingli, a highly-skilled musician, banned music entirely. The freedom of the Gospel is uncomfortable. Luther allowed for much freedom, but never “bar songs.” The term “bar form” meant melodies where the music was divided into measures, or bars. He did not advocate using secular melodies in the church. He tried once, but ended up writing a new tune (207).

Medium and message have an intimate connection (see 198ff). Rock albums teach a worldview. The Bible has a worldview. Music and style are not neutral things, empty of meaning. We are not to be conformed to this world (244, Romans 12).

The authors conclude (236):

* Words are of paramount importance—nothing must detract or distract from them in any way;
* Any kind of psychological manipulation must be avoided;
* The Bible’s message must be addressed directly to the mind and not merely to the emotions;
* That message must tell the ‘bad news’ [Law] as well as the ‘good news’ [Gospel] and it must be communicated seriously, earnestly, urgently;
* The communicator must do everything possible to be eclipsed by the message;
* Nothing must be done that will stimulate unwholesome appetites;
* Extreme care must be taken not to introduce stumbling blocks into any area of Christian life;
* As with any other method of ministry, music choices can be judged as either appropriate or inappropriate for God’s service;
* Everything must be done to avoid the worldliness that causes divisions in the body of Christ;
* Christians must take care not to mix light with darkness, all the more when it comes to ministering the gospel and worshipping the Lord;
* The worship of God must not be sold at a profit!

Can We Rock the Gospel? asks the question many Christians are asking today. This is a helpful update, expansion, and continuation of Lucarini’s Why I Left and Blanchard’s Pop Goes the Gospel. This is a good reference for parents, congregations, and pastors. I believe it makes a solid contribution to the discussion, but may be ignored by those who need to read it the most.

“The real Christ is still ‘despised and rejected by men’” (165). In contrast, temple prostitution was popular in the ancient world and it brought in money and numbers of people. Merely giving people what they want is a dangerous line to cross. They really need Jesus, not a watered-down electrified entertaining substitute.

“John Blanchard is an internationally known author, apologist, teacher and conferences speaker. Nearly fifteen million copies of his publications are in print in over forty languages.

“Dan Lucarini is a businessman, musician, conference speaker and author whose best-selling 2002 book on contemporary Christian music is already in its eighteenth printing” (back cover).

PJC

**LHP Review**

**Thoughtful Reading**


Jeremy Begbie’s latest book is one of several in this (2.4) issue of *Quarterly Book Review* where a non-Lutheran demonstrates a greater breadth of knowledge of and respect for Lutheran music and a theological understanding of that music and liturgical tradition than some Lutherans. This should not be perceived as an insult, but a constructive criticism offered in love as a wake up call.

The truths of Scripture, in particular Gospel comfort in Christ Jesus (see p. 20 for a clear definition), should properly and clearly sound forth in Christian song today. Begbie does the church, pastors, and musicians a service in his encouragement to them to think theologically about the sound (the music) that supports the sung proclamation of that Gospel.

Music is properly set in the context of world history and thought, the Old Testament “Church” and Scripture. Much more interesting and significant, however, is the way in which the Ephesians passage [5:18-19] the singing is given a two-dimensional quality. There is singing “to the Lord,” but in addition, the psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs are means of “addressing one another” (70). The author shows an encyclopedic knowledge of classical education (trivium and quadrivium), the instruments used by the Levites, and medieval modes, the predecessors of musical “keys,” still in use in some liturgical chant today.

Martin Luther (98ff) is held up as an example of an informed theologian and musician, and his understanding and theology of music is compared and contrasted with that of Calvin (109) and Zwingli. I would challenge the author on his assertion that the latter was the most musical of the three (112, see Leaver’s Luther’s Liturgical Music also reviewed in this issue).

Bach (119ff) is properly shown as a musician who was also a theologian. It is unfortunate that a man who was unknown in his own day compared to his later fame (thanks to Mendelssohn), Bach is little-known, little-understood, and little-played by so many in the church today. The author demonstrates in subsequent chapters that music and theology go very well together.

What is meant by a Christian “ecology?” The author secondarily refers to it in its now traditional sense, having to do with our environment and the doctrine of creation (186, 276). His primary definition is that of a “guiding framework.” “Developing a Christian wisdom about this music, then—the purpose of this book—means setting music in the context of the web of faith commitments through which Christians make sense of and live in the world they inhabit” (185). Worldview is an important consideration as well.

He criticizes “Misplaced Praise.” “The catastrophe of Adam is that humanity’s vocation as worshiper in creation has turned into the worship of creation” (203). Pithy and insightful.

This is a tour-de-force of music theory, history, and theology, a book designed for someone struggling with the questions of music in Christianity and Christ in music, as well as those trying to better communicate with those who uncritically use music in Christian worship. I encourage the author to write that follow-up book on music in everyday life (308).

Our Christian hope is “cross-shaped.” “The stunning and stupendous Easter hope is possible only because of the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth” (259).

Resounding Truth is part of Baker’s Engaging Culture series, designed to “help Christians respond with theological discernment to our contemporary culture” with “active engagement informed by theological reflection” (19). Brothers, this is worth paying attention to! This is a book that can and should be of great influence upon today’s Church, if only Christians, theologians, and musicians like you would buy, read, and inwardly digest it.

“Jeremy S. Begbie, (Ph.D., University of Aberdeen) is honorary professor of theology at the University of St. Andrews; Associate Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge; and an affiliated lecturer in the Faculty of Divinity at the University of Cambridge. A notable pianist, he has lectured widely in the UK, the US, and South Africa. He is the author of Voicing Creation’s Praise: Towards a Theology of the Arts and Theology, Music, and Time and the editor of Beholding the Glory: Incarnation Through the Arts and Sounding the Depths: Theology Through the Arts” (413).

PJC

LHP Review

A Psalter/Hymnal to Celebrate


Cantus Christi is a psalter/hymnal to celebrate. It was designed by and for a single congregation, Christ Church of Moscow, Idaho. This congregation is becoming well-known because of its many contributions to Classical Christian Education and its publishing house, Canon Press.

The introductory material of the volume prepares to singing Christian for a passionate defense and use of
the treasures of the Christian Church, especially the heritage of the Reformation.

Consider: “If we would repent of our cultural polytheism, we must return back to the worship of the living God, resolved to worship Him with reverence and godly fear, for He is a consuming fire. Because He is a consuming fire, we do not approach the unapproachable light humming a few snatches of Shine, Jesus Shine. Moses did not walk toward the burning bush with a praise CD in his Walkman” (vi-vii).

Douglas Wilson also adds: “Just a few practical considerations remain. Because we are recovering a number of older forms of musical and lyrical expression, some of the psalms and hymns contained do present a challenge. Learning them will not necessarily be easy—but one of the things we are abandoning is a convenience store approach to musical worship. There are many songs here that are an acquired taste. We can have confidence as we seek to acquire this taste because we know that in the history of the Church, generations of average Christians used to rejoice in and with these songs. We also have the testimony of modern Christians, like our congregation, who have set themselves to learn this music and have come to experience how wonderful it is. Psalm 95 used to sound just as strange to us as it does now to you, and more than a few of us thought that the ‘funky beat’ version of ‘A Mighty Fortress’ [336] was more than a little much. But this was the original form of the hymn, and it illustrates why Queen Elizabeth I did not call many of these songs ‘Geneva jigs’ for nothing. Learning these songs is like trying to drink a hearty oatmeal stout after years of lite beer. There will be a period of contorted grimaces, but, when all is said and done, there is no looking back. This psalter/hymnal contains the glories of aesthetic depth” (vii). Now, don’t these folks sound like one’s you’d like to meet? Yeah, me, too!

Dr. Louis Schuler explains that “Cantus Christi is a psalter-hymnal for the congregation of Christ Church, Moscow, Idaho. It does not pretend to satisfy the needs of any other particular congregation or any particular denomination. We are members of the Confederation of Reformed Evangelicals, a small denomination without a hymnal. Many denominations have published their own hymnals; Cantus Christi, however, is not intended to be a denominational hymnal. As Christ Church moved out of modern evangelicalism into a more historically rooted Reformational faith, the need for Psalm singing became a high priority. As the church sang Psalms, it became apparent that there was also a need to change hymn styles to those that approached the character and depth of the psalter. Choosing a modern hymnal for our needs was next to impossible. Most hymnals with good musical content were filled with inclusive language, a sort of bowdlerization of old poetry to suit current sensibilities, and tended toward liberalism. On the other hand, most evangelical hymnals have catered to the call for eclecticism for the sake of eclecticism alongside an overabundance of the subjectivist hymns of the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. Most show a simple lack of understanding of beauty. Modern psalters often fare little better musically…” (xi). As a Missouri-Synod Lutheran, I would love to have an ongoing theological and worship-related dialog with these Christians.

Psalms are a historic part of the worship of the Reformed. Lutherans should be unafraid to add to the variety of psalmody that they sing. A metrical paraphrase of Psalm 1 (sung to a Heinrich Schütz tune) is but one example. I also commend to your attention Psalm 19 set to Gregorian Psalm Tone 5, the Anglican chant setting of Psalm 73, and Thomas Tallis’ The Dorian Service setting of Psalm 95.

Hymns are organized according to the themes of the sacraments and the historic Church Year, as well as time of day.

Lutheran pastors and musicians know how hard it is to get congregations to sing Luther’s baptismal hymn, “To Jordan Came.” Yet, here it is on page 198! Consider also the inclusion of “How Lovely Shines the Morning Star!” (220), “Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying” (228), “From Heaven Above to Earth I Come” (232), “A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth” (256), “Now We Implore God the Holy Ghost” (279), “I Will Sing My Maker’s Praises” (308), “From Depths of Woe I Raise to Thee” (346), “May God Bestow on Us His Grace” (364), and Luther’s Ten Commandments hymn, “That man a Godly Life Might Live” (387). I was pleasantly surprised to see Luther’s “We All Believe in One True God” (404) and “Isaiah, Mighty Seer, in Days of Old” (408).

I rejoiced in a healthy Eucharistic theology, refreshing to hear from Reformed Evangelicals who sing “At the Lamb’s High Feast We Sing” (204), “Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior” (208), “Soul, Adorn Thyself with Gladness” (214), “Thee We Adore, O Hidden Savior” (217), “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence” (241), and “O Lord, We Praise Thee” (318)!

Other notable hymns in the collection are: “Of the Father’s Love Begotten” (246), “Jesus, Priceless Treasure” (356), “Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart” (362), and “My Song Is Love Unknown” (366).
That there is a section entitled “Service All Music” is “unusual,” “at least for modern evangelicals” (xiii). Lutherans will notice texts and melodies familiar to them, especially liturgical settings by Regina Fryxell, known in the ALC/LCA Service Book and Hymnal of 1958. I would love to make use of the offertery “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit” (414). An expanded liturgical music section would be a great addition to future editions.

The indices include an enlightening “Chronological Index of Hymn Tunes.” There are eight from the 1900’s, a hint at the focus upon the heritage of the Church, versus what is merely trendy.

Lutherans will rejoice to see their Reformation-era treasures endorsed and sung with vigor. And, sung by Reformed Christians at a time when (embarrassingly enough) some Lutherans are ashamed of and/or are ignorant of these great riches. If you are a hymnal collector, and many pastors are, this is an essential addition.

This is a hymnal sings the Song of Christ, the new song of the Gospel that is Christ Himself.

PJC

**LHP Review**


Intended for Roman Catholic parishes, *Worship, Third Edition* is a unique thing—a hardcover hymnal instead of a disposable newsprint quarterly missal. That switch alone would teach a congregation much about our Christian heritage in Church music as well as catechize them toward a better theology of worship.

There are Lutheran influences evident from a Lutheran *Worship* psalm tone for Psalm 6, liturgical music by Richard Hillert (271, 458), the *LBW* version of “From Heaven Above” (388), Martin Franzmann’s “Thy Strong Word” (511), “All Glory Be to God on High” (527), and even “Weary of All Trumpeting” (635). Lutherans will also recognize the Vajda/Schalk collaboration, “Now the Silence” (668). Martin Luther’s most famous hymn appears as the three-stanza “God Is Our Fortress and Our Rock” (576), a 1982 Michael Perry translation copyrighted by Hope Publishing Company.

Particularly impressive is an index of Hymns for the Church Year (1205), building upon the Lutheran contribution of the “Hymn of the Day.” There are many hymns on the list we have in common throughout the Three-Year Series.

After an initial section for the Liturgy of the Hours, the psalter is supplemented with numerous canticles and a first-hand view of the Rite for Christian Initiation of Adults (100). I do not believe the Bible’s theology of Holy Baptism supports such a piecemeal initiation process, but Lutherans can learn how to better connect a catechumen (youth or adult) with the congregation throughout and following catechesis. Petitions to anyone other than God (109, hymns 421, 443, 693, 711, 1202, et al) should be abandoned. Reconciliation (125) is a good Gospel word for “Confession and Absolution,” yet penitents should be taught that confession is made for the sake of absolution.

The Order of Mass, Divine Service, begins on 229. Much will be familiar to Lutherans. While I personally like seeing the Nicene Creed beginning “We believe…” because that is the original text, the Apostles’ Creed (239) should remain “I” rather than “We” for the same reason. Additional musical settings (and parts of settings) follow.

Worship is ahead of its time by continuing to include Latin-language liturgical music (340ff). Pope Benedict would be pleased. Even in Bach’s day, Lutherans still used Latin texts (at least occasionally) for the Daily Office and Divine Service. “O Come, All Ye Faithful” (392) is also presented as “Adeste Fideles,” memorably sung by Bing Crosby.

“Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates” (363) is a much better text to pair with the tune *TRURO* than with the weak Easter text, “Christ Is Alive” (466).

A section for liturgical propers begins on 765. Users of *LW* and *LBW* will note similarities to the front of those hymnals. For Palm Sunday and the Triduum, Holy Week, resources are notably and appropriately expanded.

Prayers of the Individual and Household (1152) are extensive and are weakened only by invocations of saints and angels rather than Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

An index of Scripture Passages Related to Hymns (1204) will be a welcome feature for regular users of the hymnal as well as other Christians mining it for resource suggestions.

I also liked the off-white paper inside and ribbon to the visually and texturally rich red cover.

*QBR* requested a review copy of this hymnal because it is a *Choir Edition*. It makes me more thankful for the hymnals I’ve used at worship over the years, *The Lutheran Hymnal, Lutheran Worship,* and *Lutheran*...
Service Book, all hymnals with the majority of the music presented in four-part (choir-like) harmony. LSB was supposed to have a “Choir Edition.” It probably won’t ever appear. I’m still curious, though. Given the similarities between this Worship: Choir Edition and the final form of LSB, what would a LSB: Choir Edition have looked like?

Yes, there is a greater expense to this choir version than the usual pew copies of Worship, Third Edition, but I encourage parishes that are considering a purchase of this hymnal to buy all choir editions, or to buy only choir editions from this point on. If you buy them, and teach the people, they will sing! Harmony is a beautiful thing. In addition, I would encourage GIA to include harmony parts on as many hymns and psalms as possible in Worship, Fourth Edition.

Yes, there is a greater expense to this choir version than the usual pew copies of Worship, Third Edition, but I encourage parishes that are considering a purchase of this hymnal to buy all choir editions, or to buy only choir editions from this point on. If you buy them, and teach the people, they will sing! Harmony is a beautiful thing. In addition, I would encourage GIA to include harmony parts on as many hymns and psalms as possible in Worship, Fourth Edition.

LHP Review


The Worship Hymnal is a special edition of the brand-new The Baptist Hymnal likely intended for non-Baptists. The content is the same under either name.

Overall, my impression was that about half of the content consisted of “traditional hymns,” while the other half was made up of “Contemporary Christian Music.”

“At the heart of the LifeWay Worship Project is a library of nearly one thousand theologically sound hymns and worship songs. These include 674 hymns and worship songs found in Baptist Hymnal and The Worship Hymnal Pew Editions, as well as 301 hymn arrangements and additional worship songs in an Extended Collection [bold added for emphasis] available in WorshipCharts, WorshipTracks, selected WorshipMedia and online at LifeWayWorship.com. This selection of titles represents a variety of musical styles with classic hymns from writers such as Isaac Watts, Martin Luther, and Fanny Crosby; gospel favorites from Bill and Gloria Gaither, George Beverly Shea, and Charles Weigl; and modern hymns and worship songs from Chris Tomlin, Darlene Zschech, Keith and Kristyn Getty, Stuart Townend, and Michael W. Smith.

Listen to the LifeWay Worship Project:

Copyright Information (PDF - 211 KB)

Song Titles, Hymn Tunes, and Keys for Baptist Hymnal and The Worship Hymnal (116 KB)

Extended Collection Titles (41 KB)

A Comparison of Musical Content in Baptist Hymnal (116 KB)

Baptist Hymnal Title Comparison Spreadsheet (Microsoft Excel - 1.1 KB)

Source:
http://www.lifeway.com/lwc/article_main_page/0%2C1703%2CA%25253D167093%252526M%252526D200836%2C00.html?RDR=worshipproject

The Preface is written by Thom Rainer, noted author and expert on what former non-Christians (i.e., new Church members) thought about the Christian Church before they were made part of the Body of Christ. Mike Harland, Director of LifeWay Worship, promises a hymnal “with no back cover,” a reference to the website http://lifewayworship.com and the additional 301+ songs mentioned above. Acknowledgments are found in the front of the volume.

Hymns are arranged according to the following major headings: God the Father, Jesus the Son, The Holy Spirit, The Trinity, The Word of God, The Church, We Respond to God’s Love, Special Categories (including civil holidays and “Child Dedication”) and then Service Music. Connective Worship Readings, a Plan of Salvation, and indices conclude the hymnal.

I was honestly surprised by how many hymns had an “Optional last stanza setting” provided in the pew edition complete with a key change and the final stanza in a higher key. This seems to be an incredible waste of space. It has been my experience that
congregations can adjust with musicians who make a key change for emphasis. Sadly, it is also an overused arranging technique, often in the case of the lack of musical creativity (but not always).

The Worship Hymnal gives evidence of honest differences in theology and practice between Lutherans in the LCMS and Baptists in the Southern Baptist Convention. We have many hymns in common, but that number is noticeably shrinking.

Hymns for “Child Dedication” replace those with an emphasis on Infant Baptism, but there are only two hymns under the heading of Baptism, “Come, holy Spirit, Dove Divine,” and “Baptized in Water” (397-398). I was pleased to discover that they showed a Biblical evidence of God’s work in Holy Baptism through God the Holy Spirit.

The “Plan of Salvation” concludes with a traditional Arminian emphasis, “decision.” (See also hymn 538, “Once to ev’ry man and nation Comes the moment to decide…”). I would respectfully remind all Christians of Jesus’ words in John 15:16 (Holman CSB), “You did not choose Me, but I chose you.”

Some hymns with a distinct Lutheran pedigree are found within: “Children of the Heavenly Father” (123), “Jesus, Thy Boundless Love to Me” (166, Paul Gerhardt via John Wesley), “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming” (177), Bach’s “Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light” (210), “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded” (231), “A Mighty Fortress” is also included at number 656 in the Bach-era Isorhythmic version. Ironically, this is the same number (656) as Luther’s original Rhythmic version in Lutheran Service Book. LSB has the “smoothed out” version of the melody with Bach’s harmonization at number 657.

It was also good to see “Cross of Jesus, Cross of Sorrow”, “For All the Saints” and “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence.”

More choral musical pieces include “The Lord’s Prayer” and “The Lord Bless You and Keep You.”

The Worship Hymnal also continues a development of hymnals of the 1990s in bringing a series of hymns and choruses together as “Connective Worship” or “Worship Links” (880).

A helpful feature of the Titles and First Lines Index was the inclusion of the key name (890ff).

This is a hymnal you need to see for yourself in order to be aware of what others are “up to,” what Southern Baptists are using at worship. The Worship Hymnal (or The Baptist Hymnal) will give you an insight into the theology and practice of worship today in one of the largest church bodies in America.

I wonder…what the response would be if Concordia’s Lutheran Service Book were also offered as a Christian Service Book?

PJC

**LHP Review**

*Long-Awaited in English*


Let us begin with book that we hold in our hands. This particular edition of Gerhard’s Commonplaces is clearly formatted and easy on the eyes. This matters because the work of Johann Gerhard itself is not simple in its presentation or its content. The editors did a fantastic job helping the reader to immerse themselves in the work of Johann Gerhard with the subtle yet important formatting and structural choices.

The text itself consists of two main parts that are essential to one another. “On the Nature of God” deals primarily with the deep philosophical and theological questions that naturally arise when grappling with the essence and nature of the Creator of All things. Johann Gerhard has already established the intimate bond between Theology and Holy Scripture in the first volume of his common places; nevertheless he properly begins this work establishing once again that: “As Holy Scripture is the only principle of knowing in Theology, so also God is the only and greatest principle of being with respect to Holy Scripture itself and the divine works.”

Thereby we establish the basic approach that Gerhard will use when grappling with the deep and meaningful questions concerning God and His divine attributes. Such meditation will be firmly grounded in the revelation of God concerning Himself as expressed in Holy Scripture. Human Reason will stand as servant to the revelation of God, yet be used to the fullest extent of its powers. Natural knowledge

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1. Summary from contents (p. v)
of God and the wisdom of Philosophers will not be discounted; but will be nevertheless governed by the Word of God.

The text is not what I would consider “light reading”, as Gerhard weaves together a complex tapestry connecting the clear word of God with the testimony of Church fathers and the logical assessment of human experience. An insight into his basic understanding and approach may be seen in the following quotation regarding whether God exists:

“We must prove it for the perfection of our natural knowledge. Although we know by nature that God exists, that natural knowledge is still imperfect, weak, and next to nothing in comparison with revealed knowledge...”

Regarding the general content and usefulness of the text itself; it is truly a treasure. Exegetical questions regarding the names of God throughout the Old and New Testaments are thoroughly discussed and brought into clarity from Holy Scripture and in light of the errors and heresies that have confronted the Body of Christ.

One also will rejoice in this volume as a resource for grappling with and understanding the attributes of God as they are revealed to us in Holy Scripture. Indeed, for any pastor or student of Theology who has ever pondered what is truly being confessed throughout the Athanasian Creed; this is a comprehensive study of the basic nature and characteristics of God as revealed in His Word. One by one in an orderly manner, the terms that Scripture uses to describe the Lord Our God are in turn broken down and discussed, errors are refuted, and the Gospel defended.

The second half of this work flows naturally from the first. Having established the existence of God and meditated upon his names, his nature, and his attributes – Gerhard then proceeds to grapple with the mysteries of the Holy Trinity. His approach is reverent and respectful, and yet his hunger to know is clearly present throughout the work.

One thing is clear regarding the purpose of this work: Gerhard’s primary goal is to articulate and defend the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in light of the doctrine of Salvation. His first thesis declares: All who are to be saved must know and believe the mystery of the Trinity.

In this simple truth we see the pastoral heart of Johann Gerhard. His concern, expressed in exacting detail with academic rigor, is ultimately for the salvation of souls.

“The exposition: (a) We exclude not only denial but also ignorance of the Trinity from humans who are to be saved. Some things revealed in the Word are arranged in such a way that they cannot be unknown without affecting one’s salvation, though one cannot deny them without endangering the same. However, not only the denial but also the ignorance of the Trinity is damnable. (b) We do not require from all members of the Church an equal level of understanding, because the light of spiritual knowledge and of faith in some is quite bright and in others quite dim...”

Thesis and antithesis, argument and counter argument; Johann Gerhard’s work on the Nature of God and on the Holy Trinity strives to establish a clear and articulate witness concerning who the One True God actually is, and what He alone has done for our salvation. With the steady pounding of a blacksmith’s hammer upon a sheet of iron; Gerhard strikes again and again upon his reader with hammers made of Scripture and Logic.

This text is not an easy read, but in the end you emerge as one whose edge has been honed even sharper for the challenges that lie ahead. And in a day and age when the struggle for absolute truth and deeper understanding is so easily dismissed; it is a joy to join brother Gerhard in his striving to know and understand what God Almighty has revealed about Himself.

JWG

LHP Review


I had been personally wondering what projects John Rutter and the Cambridge Singers had been working on recently. This new recording of Messiah, the complete work,

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2 Pg. 57
3 Pg. 267
4 Pg. 267-268
in conjunction with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra is the answer.

Too many versions of Messiah are only excerpts, sometimes recorded by off-labels and groups, often with a disappointing final product. This Handel Messiah is an all-digital recording by a major publishing house and big names in the musical world, well known for their musical expertise and professionalism. You will get your money’s worth in your purchase of this 2 disc set.

Messiah is a sacred oratorio in three parts, corresponding to the sublime mysteries of the Christian faith, the incarnation of Christ, His Passion, crucifixion, and death, and His Resurrection of the dead.

The entirety of Part One is on the first disc. The Here one will find the Christmas story. Don’t skip over tracks to get to the familiar, over-played favorites. Listen to the prophecy of the Hebrew Scriptures as they anticipate and celebrate the coming of God in the flesh, even Jesus Christ our Lord. Our current cultural impatience to get to Christmas (and its presents) short-circuits the way the Church has prepared fro the Nativity of Our Lord: a season of Advent.

Part Two begins with the final twelve minutes of the first disc. We move directly from Track 19, a wrap-up of the work the Christ was born to accomplish, Matthew 11:30, His yoke is easy and His burden is light, to Jesus being identified as the Lamb of God, John 1:29, He who would bear the yoke and burden of the cross for our sake, to take away the sin of the whole world. Track 20 is an Epiphany break between Christmas and Lent, the majority of the second disc.

Yes, I too was tempted to skip right to the Hallelujah. True, this recording of that celebrated chorus is worth your $25 alone, but Christians know that Easter isn’t Easter without Good Friday before it. Don’t spoil the way the story is retold! Christians were wise to follow the example of our Savior and Lord in a forty-day period before the celebration of Easter. So too the final tracks of Part Two and the entirety of Part Three have more meaning musically, textually, and theologically only after listening to this work as a complete whole.

The extensive liner notes introduce the listener to Georg Frederic Handel, the impressive story of how the whole oratorio was composed in a mere three weeks, as well as the current performers.

“John Rutter CBE is an English composer, choral conductor, editor, arranger, and record producer. Born in London, he was educated at Highgate School. He then studied music at Clare College, Cambridge, where he was a member of the choir and then director of music from 1975-1979. In 1981 he founded his own choir, the Cambridge Singers, which he conducts and with which he has made many recordings of sacred choral repertoire (including his own works). He still lives near Cambridge, but frequently conducts other choirs and orchestras around the world. In 1980 he was made an honorary Fellow Westminster Choir College, Princeton, and in 1988 a Fellow of the Guild of Church Musicians. In 1996 the Archbishop of Canterbury conferred a Lambeth Doctorate of Music upon him in recognition of his contribution to church music. He also works as an arranger and editor, most notably of the extraordinarily successful Carols for Choirs anthology series in collaboration with Sir David Willcocks” (liner notes).

Messiah is a timeless treasure, especially in this presentation. Listen to it at least twice a year, around Christmas and Easter.

Thank you to Hendrickson Worship for releasing this inspiring, professional, and musically excellent recording. We look for more great recordings like this of the best music of our Christian musical heritage.

PJC

LHP Review

Emmaus Eschatology


The Ongoing Feast is a revision of Arthur A. Just’s doctoral thesis. As viewers of Dr. Just’s video series on worship know, the table fellowship of Jesus is an important topic. Jesus’ table fellowship is marked by a meal, His teaching, and His presence “as a single act” (219). Keep that in mind.

“From the perspective of the Emmaus narrative in Luke 24, this study is a literary critical analysis of Jesus’ table fellowship as an expression of the
eschatological kingdom. [Literary criticism is not to be confused with the historical critical method.] The first time Jesus is recognized by faith as the crucified and now risen Messiah occurs at Emmaus through his teaching ‘on the road’ and ‘in the breaking of the bread.’ Emmaus is the transition between the meals of Jesus and early Christian meals, setting the pattern of Christian worship as one of word and meal” (back cover)

Emmaus is an appropriate place to begin such a study, for it is the culmination of the table fellowship of Jesus in the Gospel according to St. Luke (14).

The parallels between Lukan accounts are stunning. “Both Luke 9:1-6 [the Transfiguration] and 24:44-49 are commissioning stories” (17) and both refer to the Twelve/Eleven, sending, preaching, and the specific content of the Gospel. Similarly, the Luke 24:16 and 24:31a have in common the following words: eyes, opened, recognize, him (64).

In addition, this volume is a “draft” of sorts for Just’s second Luke Concordia Commentary volume, 9:51-24:53, particularly in his “concentric circle” (30, et al) outline of the Emmaus pericope. This outline forms the structure of The Ongoing Feast.

Luke notably doesn’t give as many “time notices” once the climax of the Gospel account has been reached (50).

Chapter 9 speaks of the other Lukan meals, particularly Jesus’ fellowship with sinners, speaking about the kingdom, and talking about the new age of the world arriving in himself (138-139).

The controversy over whether the meal at Emmaus is Holy Communion or not often ignores the eschatological fact that here Jesus makes Himself known in the Scriptures and the breaking of the bread.

“…Luke takes the reader from the level of historical data to a faith engendered by Jesus’ interpretation of these events against the backdrop of the Old Testament. Therefore, the goal is faith—faith to believe all that the prophets had spoken about the suffering of the Christ which precedes his entrance into glory” (85). The goal of Dr. Just’s book is to encourage your faith, better your understanding of the Emmaus account and Jesus’ table fellowship, as well as to enhance and bless your preaching and teaching.

This is one of four books by Dr. Just on the book of Luke in my library. The others are his aforementioned two-volume Luke set in the Concordia Commentary series, and his one-volume treatment of the patristic literature on Luke in the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. All are worth your money, study time, and shelf space.

“Arthur A. Just, Jr., M.Div., S.T.M., Ph.D., is Professor of Exegetical Theology and Director of Deaconess Studies at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

“Arthur A. Just Jr. was born in Salem, Massachusetts in 1953. His family lived overseas in Mexico and Spain for twelve years during his formative years. He attended Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts and Union College, Schenectady, New York, receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in history and English literature in 1975. He attended Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana, receiving a M.Div. degree in 1980. His vicarage was at South Shore Trinity Lutheran Church in White Bear Lake, Minnesota. His first parish was at Grace Lutheran Church in Middletown, Connecticut from 1980 to 1984.


“Dr. Just has been on the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, since 1984. He is presently Professor of Exegetical Theology and Director of Deaconess Studies. He teaches New Testament, liturgics, homiletics, catechetics, and pastoral theology. He has contributed a chapter on “Liturgical Renewal in the Parish” to Lutheran Worship: History and Practice by Concordia Publishing House, articles on preaching, liturgy, and New Testament in various periodicals…He [was] also chairman of the Lectionary Committee for the Lutheran Hymnal Project [now LSB] for the Commission on Worship and a member of the Steering Committee. He and his wife Linda have three children, Abigail (22), Nicholas (18), and Jacob (14)” (Source: http://www.ctsfw.edu/academics/faculty/just.php).

PJC

LHP Book Review


As theologians know, there are more than four views out there, but this new book by Zondervan helps advance theological conversation about the Lord’s Supper beyond 16th Century discussions. It by no
means resolves them, but helps us better understand where others are coming from.

“Who should participate in the Lord’s Supper? How frequently should we observe it? What does this meal mean? What happens when we eat the bread and drink from the cup? What do Christians disagree about and what do they hold in common? These and other questions are explored in this thought-provoking book.

“This new volume in the Counterpoints: Church Life series allows four contributors to make a case for the following views:

- Baptist view (memorialism)
- Reformed view (spiritual presence)
- Lutheran view (consubstantiation)
- Roman Catholic view (transubstantiation)

“All contributors use Scripture to present their views, and each responds to the others’ essays. This book helps readers arrive at their own conclusions. It includes resources such as a listing of statements on the Lord’s Supper from creeds and confessions, quotations from noted Christians, a resource listing of books on the Lord’s Supper, and discussion questions for each chapter to facilitate small group and classroom use” (publisher’s website).

I perceive a subtle bias in the book supporting the first two views, particularly in the introduction and conclusion, but it does NOT devolve in to a position of “it doesn’t matter what you believe as long as you are sincere.” That would’ve been unfortunate and may have short-circuited readers’ confidence in other books in the Counterpoints series. I’m not sure that a conclusion chapter was necessary here.

The Baptist writer critiques his own by criticizing an aversion to the common cup (42). The Reformed author notes that his fellow confessors are unfortunately offended by realistic language about eating Christ’s flesh (63). The Roman essayist correctly writes, “If we are in communion, then we can receive Communion [together]” (133).

David P. Scaer is the Lutheran essayist in the bunch and I love everything he wrote here. His own article points out the difference between a caricature of the Lutheran view, consubstantiation, and the Lutheran understanding of what Scripture says, “that recipients of the Supper actually eat Christ’s body and drink his blood and that this sacrament is vital to the Christian life.” Additionally, “Luther’s claim in the Small Catechism that forgiveness, life, and salvation are given in the sacrament strangely mirrors the teaching of John 6:50, 54 that eternal life and the resurrection come with eating Christ’s body and drinking his blood” (101). Responses to Scaer are partially complimentary, partly predictably critical.

Scaer’s responses to the other essayists are spot-on, particularly the response to the Reformed. Where the Reformed often look for verbal unity where there is no real unity, Scaer calls his co-author out. The terms and phrases may be the same, but the different definitions actually matter (78). Compare this to the Reformed response that mentions Missouri Lutherans by name as unconvinced “that Calvin believed that Christ is really and truly present in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper” (106). There’s good reason for that reluctance. But I’m willing to talk about it! Scaer’s response to the Roman essay brings in Chemnitz.

An appendix gives the necessary historical documents as theological context. Discussion questions follow author biographies.

This book (and others in the series) would make an intriguing addition to class reading lists at our seminaries. Each of the essayists was given a fair opportunity...

PJC

LHP Review


There are very few books out there that specialize in The Work of a Chaplain. Judson Press proposes to fill that empty space in our bookshelves with this 2006 book.

“Feeling led to a ministry outside the walls of the church? Uncover the historical and biblical foundations for chaplaincy, and then...
explore universal chaplaincy issues of accountability, privacy, personal ethics, spiritual assessment, and self-care. The Work of the Chaplain provides specific guidance for the multireligious and unique areas where chaplains minister:

- Military chaplaincy
- Health-care chaplaincy
- Correctional or prison chaplaincy
- First-responder chaplaincy
- Workplace chaplaincy
- …and more! (back cover)

The guardian of the bishop’s cloak was known as the chaplain (2-3). To this day, one who is the assistant to a bishop is called a chaplain. The “traditional” definition of chaplain is likely derived from this kind of service, sharing of a cloak of compassion in an institution’s time of need. Service to armies is ancient.

The ministry of presence (10, 71) can be powerful, indeed. Yet a Christian chaplain is to bring Word and Sacrament. Even a chaplain and training can bring much more than presence, even prayer and God’s Word. Compassion is wonderful (117), yet compassion in Christ’s name is even better.

The authors appear to show respect for those who do not support the ordination of women to the pastoral office (121).

I once heard a chaplain doing a recruitment talk to seminarians. He told us that his proudest moment as a naval chaplain was performing a corn burning sacrifice on the deck of an aircraft carrier to atone for a sailor’s sin of using his father’s grave as a urinal. It was a horrible story on so many levels. No mention of witnessing (or even attempting to witness) to the main of our hope and forgiveness in Christ Jesus! What part of “one name under heaven” and “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life” did he not understand?

Similarly, first-hand experience shows that Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE, 49) is a mixed blessing at best.

Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod members pledge to avoid unionism and syncretism of every kind. Therefore, I was troubled by the brief section on pluralism. “Being a religious pluralist is not abandoning one’s faith. Being a religious pluralist requires strength and wisdom for the chaplain who is faithful to his or her own faith and beliefs while being respectful and supportive of people whose faith traditions and practices are very different. The result of religious accommodation is peace and unity—a place where each person can experience the transcendent and the divine without compromise, resentment, or universalism. When asked, chaplains share their own spiritual pilgrimage and witness to their own faith (16-17, cf. 11, 43). Faith is never a concept by itself. Faith is always “in” something or someone else. Christian faith has its hope and trust in Christ. Therefore, the pluralism defended here puts at risk (at best) or denies (at worst) “Christ alone.”

A better model would be that of “perform or provide,” “perform” another’s religious request, or “provide” someone else (109), like a local person of that religious tradition to do it instead. Why not consider it another kind of referral (26)?

Several military chaplains are members of the LCMS through our Wyoming District. This service is to be commended. Locally, the small town I live in has had a chaplain serve with the town’s Volunteer Fire Department (77). A dual call, where a parish pastor would also serve an institution (93) is worth thinking about, perhaps as a workplace chaplain. For many years, an LCMS parish pastor served our regional hospital as chaplain. Perhaps this one of the best models for chaplaincy would be analogous to the “town and gown” pastor (86). He is called to a parish, yet he serves students of the local university or community college. Parish pastors are called to an altar and pulpit. Consider the work of a chaplain, brothers (www.lcms.org/spm). In order to aid you in that decision, consider the Judson Press book The Work of the Chaplain.

“Naomi Kohatsu Paget is board certified with the Association of Professional Chaplains and serves as crisis interventionist for the FBT, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief, and American Red Cross. The author of Disaster Relief Chaplaincy (North American Mission Board), she is adjunct professor at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary and Denver Seminary. She has broad experience in workplace, parish, health-care, community, and law enforcement chaplaincy.

“Janet Rae McCormack is board certified with the Association of Professional Chaplains and ordained by the American Baptist Churches USA. She is director of Chaplaincy and Counseling Training Centers and assistant professor of chaplaincy and pastoral counseling at Denver Seminary. A retired Air Force chaplain, she also has extensive experiences in hospital, police, prison, NASC, crisis, and workplace chaplaincy” (back cover).
LHP Review

A Bright Future in Christ


Justification is the article upon which the Christian Church stands or falls. It has to do with our salvation because of the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is a work none of us dare attempt, for none but Christ could accomplish it. When Christ is confessed as He reveals Himself Scripture, the teaching of justification is strong. When Christ isn’t confessed clearly or completely according to the Word, there will be problems. Many heresies in the church had endangered the salvation of the faithful simply because of theological malpractice on justification.

“N. T. Wright, a world-renowned New Testament scholar and bishop of Durham in the Church of England, has spent years studying the apostle Paul’s writings and has offered a ‘fresh perspective’ on Paul’s theology. [Three notable books critiqued in this volume were published by Fortress, 1992-2005.] Among his conclusions are that ‘the discussions of justification in much of the history of the church—certainly since Augustine—got off on the wrong foot, at least in terms of understanding Paul—and they have stayed there ever since.’

“Wright’s confidence that the church has gotten it wrong for 1,500 years, given his enormous influence, has set off warning bells for Christian leaders such as John Piper, a pastor and New Testament scholar. If Wright’s framework for interpreting the New Testament text and his understanding of justification find a home in the church, not only could the doctrine of justification be distorted for generations to come, but the New Testament writers’ original intent could be silenced. So Piper is sounding a crucial warning in this book, reminding all Christians to exercise great caution regarding ‘fresh’ interpretations of the Bible and to hold fast to the biblical view of justification” (publisher’s website).

More than book sales, personal popularity, and a congregation’s interest in a sermon are at stake in justification. Salvation is. Caution is more important than creativity.

Piper asserts that Wright is not under the curse of Galatians 1:8-9 (15). I’m not quite sure I agree. Yet, Piper calls Wright to account for his public teaching. As a popular and prolific author, Wright deserves a response for his own sake, as well as for those who have read his books.

Wright’s writing sadly denies the clear teaching of Scripture. He redefines the Gospel. “The gospel’ is not an account of how people get saved. It is…the proclamation of the Lordship of Jesus Christ” (18). I hear in this the old Calvin/Luther discussion of what is the most important doctrine in Christianity, not to mention a confusion of Law and Gospel. Where is the benefit, the Good news (89), the godly assurance of faith(96)? Where is the obedience of Christ for us and our salvation (125 et al)? Divine righteousness is what we need. (164).

Wright unnecessarily obscures the clear teaching of Scripture (177). This is shown in Wright’s response to the book Pierced for Our Transgressions (48ff), previously reviewed by QBR. He claims that imputation “makes no sense at all” (60, 79, et al). Wright again: “Justification is a second-order doctrine” (96). His new doctrine does not “preach” well. Wright is no modern-day Luther (61). In contrast, Piper treats The Augsburg Confession (111, particularly IV and VI) with reverence.

In addition, how does Wright get by with interpreting Paul by means of Qumran (138) instead of clear Scripture? Piper asserts, “Self-righteousness as the hope of salvation is what justification deals with” (161).

Piper: “On the cross Christ endured for us all the punishment required of us because of our sin. And in order that God, as our Father, might be completely for us and not against us forever, Christ has performed for us, in his perfect obedience to God, all that God required of us as the ground of his being totally for us forever” (184). Six appendices give additional perspective on the doctrine of justification by John. Piper.

In some ways, this is a strange review to write. It is a review of a critique of a set of books. I am thankful that the author and I can jointly confess much about what unites us as Christians. Honesty about differences among Christians only aids and encourages a genuine appreciation for what we do hold in common.

The future of Justification is bright thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever. In addition it is always encouraging when I see fellow Christians, pastors, church bodies, and publishers who know what the word means,
use it, mean it, and boldly confess it (as Luther does on the cover of the volume). And Bible-based apologetics doesn’t hurt, either!

“John Piper is pastor for preaching and vision at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. His many books include When I Don’t Desire God and Don’t Waste Your Life, as well as books that deal with Jesus’ life and death, such as Fifty Reasons Why Jesus Came to Die, What Jesus Demands from the World, and Seeing and Savoring Jesus Christ. He and his wife, Noël, have four sons and one daughter” (back cover).

Music for Advent [I] by The Schola Cantorum of St. Peter’s in the Loop is only available on audio cassette (for now). Do not let that prejudice you against purchasing this album or by being blessed by its thirty-one tracks. And you can spend quality family time with your teenager while he or she helps you import this recording into iTunes!

Music for Advent II, released a mere five years later, adds twenty-four additional Christian classics this season of preparation, hope, and repentance.

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Music for Advent II, released a mere five years later, adds twenty-four additional Christian classics this season of preparation, hope, and repentance.

The expanded liner notes, including texts, are a welcome benefit of the CD format.

The liner notes of Music for Advent [I] set forth multiple purposes forth for each and every recording
of The Schola Cantorum of St. Peter’s in the Loop: “This distinctive recording can serve well as a meditational or reflective aid for the Advent season while also providing a model of good musicianship for other liturgical choirs.” Well said. Quite true.

“Sleepers, Wake” (I 1) may be initially unfamiliar to you, but the strong chorale melody will remind Lutherans that this is a less-well-known translation of “Wachtet auf,” a.k.a “Wake, Awake for Night is Flying,” LSB 516, paired with the J. S. Bach setting of Philip Nicolai’s text.

Hymns are celebrated on this recording, from (I 3) “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” and (I 4) “Creator of the Stars of Night” to “Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding!” (I 20) and (I 23) “Savior of the Nations, Come,” with text by St. Ambrose, tune by Kantor Johann Walther, and setting by Bach.

Sung Scripture texts and paraphrases, a collect, an Introit, and liturgical pieces (in Latin or in English) swell the richness of Music for Advent [I]. Don’t miss the superb version of Dietrich Buxtehude’s “See There, The Lord Comes,” a motet for five voices based on Jude 14 and 15 (I 8).

“Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending” (II 1) is a powerful beginning to volume II. I am thankful that Lutheran Service Book, like the LCMS Hymnal Supplement 98 replaced Charles Wesley’s line “Once for favored sinners slain” with the Biblical “Once for ev’ry sinner slain.” HELMSLEY is the appropriate tune to this text.

Many choirs attempt Paul Manz’ “E’en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come” (II 7). Few excel at presenting it as well as The Schola Cantorum of St. Peter’s in the Loop.

“Soon and Very Soon” (II 15) isn’t the strongest Advent hymn, especially followed by (II 16) “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” but both are personal favorites.

“Tell Out My Soul” (II 19) will be recognizable to LCMS Lutherans by its text (and CPH copyright). The tune is different from the one it bore in Hymnal Supplement 98 and does so again in LSB.

Both Music for Advent [I] and Music for Advent II give a broad and churchly selection of hymns, choral settings, and liturgical pieces from the Anglican/Episcopal, Roman, Lutheran, and other Christian traditions. Listening to these recordings will remind you not to rush to Christmas like the mall music around you. Savor Advent!

PJC

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**Liturgy & Hymnody Review**

**Celebration! Boe Memorial Chapel: To Dedicate a Renewed Boe Memorial Chapel and New Holtkamp Organ.** Northfield, MN: St. Olaf Records, 2007. 2 Audio CDs. $24.98. www.stolafrecords.com (LH)

Celebration! Boe Memorial Chapel is a 2-CD set from St. Olaf College of Northfield, Minnesota, “to dedicate a renewed Boe Memorial Chapel and new Holtkamp Organ.” In addition, the recording celebrates the dedication of the new ELCA hymnal, Evangelical Lutheran Worship.

The CD cover art hints at the interior roof detail of the chapel, seen in the photographs found with the liner notes. The remodeled chapel is visually stunning. A centrally-placed free-standing altar allows for the celebrated St. Olaf choirs to face both the altar and the congregation. With side seating also available, the renewal effort appears to allow for worship “in the round.”

Disc One is a hymn festival. Disc Two consists of organ works. The recording is an archive of five days of dedicatory services and events from February 2007.

Hymns are featured that “sing the Incarnation,” “sing through the Ages,” as well as singing hymns from around the world and two versions of the Te Deum Laudamus, “Holy God, We Praise Your Name,” track 2, and track 7, “Te Deum in C” by Benjamin Britten.

“Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia,” track 5, is one of the best African Easter hymns, a good supplement to track 6, “Christ Is Alive,” a weak text with a sturdy hymn tune. Lutherans are learning to love a Chinese hymn, track 8, found in the translation of ELW,

Few recordings capture the experience of a new pipe organ. To listen to both discs, particularly Disc Two, visit a friend with a surround-sound home theater audio system (or invest in one yourself). You will hear (and feel) the 32’ and 16’ pipes.

Such a celebration doesn’t happen very often and is truly something to celebrate. This recording is an appropriate Celebration!

St. Olaf streams chapel services via the website http://stolaf.edu/church/chapel.

Liturgy & Hymnody Review

Unique & Creative


How Awesome This Place: Morning and Evening Prayer for the Anniversary of the Dedication of a Church is another worthy recording by The Schola Cantorum of St. Peter’s in the Loop, Chicago, directed by J. Michael Thompson.

The title of this recording is derived from Genesis 28:16-17, the account of Jacob’s Ladder. The anniversary of a congregation as well as the anniversary of a church building’s dedication are worth celebrating. This CD will give service planners ideas for congregational celebrations. In addition, it will hopefully give more exposure to the Daily Office, Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer specifically. Liner notes will supplement a Lutheran pastor’s liturgical catechesis.

Considering 1 Corinthians 14, it was unfortunate to hear female liturgical leadership on this recording. In saying this, my goal is not to disparage the speaking or chanting skill of the individual in question, but to call upon all Christians to see Holy Scripture as normative for faith, doctrine, and practice. The Morning Prayer Leader and Morning Prayer cantor exchanged places for Evening Prayer. The dismissal for Morning Prayer “is the one prescribed when the Office is led by one who is neither a priest nor a deacon” (liner notes).

Lutherans will rejoice again to hear familiar liturgical and Bible texts carried by traditional churchly melodies. This recording features The Jerusalem Bible, the Grail’s psalter, and ICET liturgy texts. While these may not be the most familiar to some listeners, the general pattern of both Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer will be familiar to Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and Episcopalians.

Three Motets are the glue that holds the recording together. Both track 1 (with a CPH copyright) and track 26 echo Genesis 28. Track 13 draws upon Isaiah 60 and the Canticle of Tobit.

Psalms are very appropriately sung. For those wishing to hear this modeled well, listen well! And I am a proponent of Psalm-prayers.

For those who are unaccustomed to the Song of the Three Young Men, this is a creative use of the canticle (apart from its usual use at the Easter Vigil).

Ultimately, Christians rejoice not merely in places made with hands or traditions handed down, but the gifts received from the Father in the Son and through the Holy Spirit. Those who are washed by Holy Baptism, forgiven in Holy Absolution, those who gladly hear the Holy Word, and are fed Holy Communion will cry out, “O how awesome is this place! Truly this is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven.”

PJC
Liturgy & Hymnody Review


Eventually, virtually every immigrant group in America makes the transition to English as the language of choice. Missouri Synod Lutherans made the switch between WWI and WWII. Roman Catholics began the transition in liturgy following Vatican II. That work continues in a wonderfully creative way in As Morning, a set of resources encompassing sheet music for keyboard, choir, and guitar, supplemental instrument parts, and an audio recording on CD. They will be welcomed by liturgical Christians.

There has been an often overwhelming assortment of new hymnody as well as the veritable avalanche of so-called “contemporary” worship music made by and for the “American Evangelical.” There has been much song composed for the generic protestant worship service, and even numerous worthy settings of the Christian Divine Service/Eucharist/Mass/Holy Communion. But, there has been something missing.

As Morning is another innovative offering by GIA out of Chicago. What sets it apart is that these are musical offerings for the Divine Office, in particular Matins/Morning Prayer and Vespers/Evening Prayer.

The composers have found a very singable, fresh, and memorable musical idiom. I first listened to the recordings in my car without the benefit of sheet music. There is a wonderful use of refrain, a godly repetition. It was quite easy to pick up the tune and at least hum along.

The texts show some weakness, at times “Christian Lite,” but few compilations are blessed with universally strong texts. That should be our goal, however. The morning and evening texts left me with more of an impression of either morning or evening than the kind of proclamation of Christ I am used to. There is some good application of morning/evening in the light of Christ. Textually-weak hymns, even in our LCMS Lutheran Service Book, can be used, perhaps one per service, when that service and the Gospel of Christ is more clearly proclaimed by stronger texts supported by vigorous tunes.

Instrumentation on the recording includes singers, piano, acoustic guitar, electric guitar, bass, recorders, soprano sax, drums, congas and other percussion, synthesizer, flute, cymbal, oboe, Hammond organ, Irish whistle, cello, violin, and classical guitar. Personally, I prefer real sounds to artificial because Christians proclaim authentic reality on the basis of Holy Scripture. In addition, drum sets and electric guitars may never measure up to the standard of “reverent” for me due to their current secular connotations. Hand drum rhythms can be easily picked up from the recording, even through they are not included in the instrumental edition, which does support 2 C instruments, flute, oboe, cello, and violin. Singers, acoustic guitar, and piano and/or organ will be well-served by the Choir & Guitar Edition.

Two pieces are particularly memorable.

Psalm 51, “Create in Me,” is a setting I could introduce at the congregation I serve next Sunday. It would be appropriate as an Introit, Psalm, or Offertory.

Psalm 141, “Like Burning Incense, O Lord,” is a creative adaptation of the 17th Century French tune PICARDY, often used to sing the text “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence,” LSB 621. The first two phrases are repeated, sung like a round followed by phrase 3 repeated by all to sing an adaptation of Psalm 141. Use this as an alternate setting to that found in LSB Evening Prayer.

Permission is given to original purchasers to legally make copies of the congregational “part” printed in the main accompaniment edition. As Christians, we are to keep the commandment to “not steal,” so sufficient copies of the instrument parts should be purchased for all musicians.

Overall, I wish to leave you with a favorable impression of this resource with this review. As Morning is a beneficial collection, worth using, imitating, and building upon.

PJC
Liturgy & Hymnody Review

Issues in the Light of the Word


This collection of essays was but one of several new and notable books on Christian worship that QBR has read in the last quarter.

Curious about the following?

- Criteria for Good Church Music
- King David’s Praise Team
- Instruments in Worship
- Sacred Music as Prayer
- Luther and Bar Song
- What Happened to Hymns?
- Should Church Musicians Be Paid?
- J. S. Bach and Musical Hermeneutics

“These are some of the topics addressed in this book of 32 thought-provoking essays on church music. Paul S. Jones, Organist and Music Director at historic Tenth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, provides biblical reasoning and practical wisdom concerning the purpose and practice of church music” (back cover). The four main sections of the book divide the essays according to general topic: Corporate Worship, Hymnody and Psalmody, Issues, and Composers and Composition.

Music should be a more significant part of the curriculum at our seminaries, especially if we want to take Luther seriously (xii, 3, 141, 145, 303). The young should be taught quality texts and lyrics, not merely what I call “cotton candy.” Buying and using hymnals is a good first step in music education (161).

Emotion (13) is tricky. Can it be appropriately used in worship without manipulation or “digressing” to consumerism? As a whole, this volume is a helpful, thoughtful and constructive way to examine “contemporary worship” and “Contemporary Christian Music” and re-examine historic hymns and liturgies. “Music is not neutral. It has a ‘message’” (292). (I disagree with his assertion that pietism was “entirely Lutheran” (225).)

An endnote explaining the proper physical place for musicians was particularly instructive: “Music is meant to be heard; but it does not need to be watched” (17).

Chapters 4 through 7 make the case for instruments (and better use of them) in worship, but not just any instruments. Some are more helpful in leading congregational song than others. Some instruments have cultural connotations. Practice is generally a good idea. “Authenticity” is to be desired as well (54ff).

Chapter 8 is a primer in liturgy for those undercathedized or not taught about it at all. “We should not fear the Mass as liturgy but feel the liberty to employ it or elements of it to aid our gathered worship” (66). This is a significant statement for a Presbyterian musician! And he does have a profound knowledge of Luther’s liturgical Reformation!

Jones urges his readers toward a continuing reformation of Christian worship in the congregation. I too, have recommended consideration of the hymns of James Montgomery Boice (110, see also QBR 1.4) which include hymns on the “solas” of the Reformation, even including Solus Christus and Soli Deo Gloria (122).

Chapter 21 is Jones’ noble effort to clear up historical myths about “Luther and Bar Song.” He clears up other misunderstandings in the next three chapters. No, contemporary services won’t make your congregation a Mecca for youth (184). And yes, hymns do effectively teach the faith (191).

In the fourth section, four of the seven chapters are on Lutheran Church musicians. I’m very pleased that they are receiving such wonderful new exposure to Protestantism. Jones notes that Bach adhered to the Lutheran confessional standard, the Book of Concord (207). Bach’s music functioned liturgically (221). In frustration I must ask: “Why does Jones see so clearly, and a significant minority of Lutherans today do not?” Jones is musically and theologically well-informed and eloquent in print.

Again, I must urge my Lutheran brethren to know the truth about the Lutheran worship heritage before they go running after “waterfalls.” At least know what you are abandoning before you toss your inheritance in the dumpster. Paul S. Jones hopes to nourish his church body with our good stuff. I don’t mind sharing, but I wish the LCMS infatuation with American Evangelicalism would come to an end soon.
The author’s diagnostic questions (132) are a thoughtful way to begin the Issues section of essays. Every Christian congregation, pastor, and musician should consider them. Lutherans and other Christians would be well served in the purchase and study of this book.

PJC

Liturgy & Hymnody Review


The successors to Lutheran Book of Worship and Lutheran Worship are now both two years old. Why should one be concerned about “The Legacy of Lutheran Book of Worship for the 21st Century”? Simple. LBW lives on. First, not every ELCA congregation has adopted Augsburg-Fortress’ Evangelical Lutheran Worship. Second, and more importantly for QBR’s LCMS readers, LBW lives on in both ELW and Concordia’s Lutheran Service Book.

In 1998, Ralph R. Van Loon edited this collection of essays in reflection upon LBW and in preparation for a hymnal projects only then getting under way.

I was relived that there was little to know “Missouri-bashing” for pulling out of the project. Whatever one may think of the special Blue Ribbon Hymnal Review Committee Report, the authors were right to note differences in practice between the LCMS and the predecessors of the ELCA, the AELC, ALC, and LCA (women’s ordination is only one example, 157). And, the 1888 Common Service was, in fact, absent from LBW (63), apart from how Holy Communion, Setting Three, made use of some of Service Book and Hymnal’s musical material. LW was far from perfect. Congregations who cherished “page 15,” TLH’s musical setting of the Common Service, didn’t buy LW’s “page 136.”

LBW did exercise a significant ecumenical influence on North American Lutheranism (18). Such influence can be challenging as well as being of some benefit. Such treasures as Mendelssohn’s setting of Luther’s “Grant Peace, We Pray” are only now becoming known to LCMS Lutherans at LSB 777.

Another benefit of LBW was the “normalizing” of Holy Communion (24) as the normal Sunday morning service, instead of congregation members seeing Communion as the exception to what TLH called “page 5.”

Eucharistic Prayers (28ff, et al) remain controversial due to Luther’s objection over the lack of proper distinction between prayer and proclamation. This is another reminder that age is not always the best argument for catholicity. ELW continues LBW’s direction. LSB attempts to answer Missouri’s decades-long concerns about LBW and its continuing influence.

There have been mixed reactions to LBW’s introduction of “Assisting Minister” as a liturgical role (71). The confusion comes from the “A” role in the liturgy being carried out by either lay or ordained persons. It was introduced to give greater voice to laity in accordance with the recent re-definition of liturgy as “the work of the people.” Lutheran theology had traditionally confessed liturgy as Gottesdienst, Divine Service. His work for our benefit, in accordance with the Lutheran Confessions declaring that the highest worship of God being the reception of His Gifts. I can certainly appreciate improper clergy/lay distinctions, but one does remain with regard to service. The difference is not one of worthiness or personal holiness, but one of office. A pastor is a servant with authority.

Frank Senn (75) is right to warn readers about a “Unitarianism” in some contemporary/alternative/diverse liturgies then and now. A fixed liturgical text serves a pastor and congregation by protecting all from the whims of musicians and pastors who use the computer as “liturgical meat grinder” (credit LOGIA).

Senn also shares the way the Holy Communion settings are/were used (78) at the congregation he serves: “Musical setting 1 [LSB Divine Service, setting 1] is used during the Christmas and Easter seasons and on festive occasions; setting 2 [LSB Divine Service, setting 2] is used on Sundays after the Epiphany and after Pentecost; Setting 3 [not in LSB, consider substituting settings 3 or 4] is used from All Saints Day through Advent and during Lent; the chorale setting [LSB Divine Service, setting 5] is used on Reformation Sunday and other occasions when the Lutheran heritage is celebrated.”

Other practices encouraged or re-introduced to American Lutherans include admitting younger children to Holy Communion (30), Evening Prayer, Morning Prayer, and especially Compline (83ff), and also the use of the chasuble (104).
I remember discussions in Missions class where there were arguments about whether Christianity was a culture or not. Thomas Schattauer’s essay explains that, “As a way of life, the Church is like a culture…Liturgy stands at the center of the ‘culture’ of churchly life…Liturgy exhibits patterns that are distinctive or ‘indigenous’ to the ‘culture’ of churchly life” (167).

God is encountered right where He has promised to be: where His Word is read, where two or three are gathered in Jesus’ name, and where His gifts of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion are delivered. Where the book of worship is a hindrance, the Lord’s people may be confused. Where the service book aids God’s people towards these ends, they are blessed.

The essays contained in this volume are by those who helped put Lutheran Book of Worship together, as well as by those who knew, used, and loved LBW best.


PJC

Liturgy & Hymnody Review

Comfort in Song


The Reverend Doctor Norman Nagel provides a profound theological introduction to the latest release from Laudamus of Concordia Seminary Chorus: “‘For we with Christ are one.’ Yet no two of us are the same. No boring cookie cutter here, or getting swallowed up. The same Savior is for each one, yet in each one His gifts ring and live on in His unique way with them. So this collection is only a selection with its worth the joy it may set going, with each one’s contrapuntal line added in as a choir of many voices…” (liner notes).

That same Savior is sung as “Beautiful” in track one, the celebrated F. Melius Christiansen (and Kurt J. Wycisk) setting of SCHÖNSTER HERR JESU. Hearing the setting by a men’s chorus is a treat.

Liturgical music from Russian sources is a major emphasis of this CD. Consider the Kalinnikov “Agnus Dei” (track 10) and “To Thee, O Lord, Do I Lift Up My Soul” (track 18), track two’s “Our Father” by Kedrov, and Chesnokov’s “Salvation Is Created” (track 6). The latter may be the most familiar to you. The men excel in their wide dynamic range. The soft volume does not short-circuit the intensity, support, or tempo of the singing. These, especially in combination, demonstrate a high musicality.

Other composers make an impact through “Magnificat,” a chant-like Healey Willan setting sung with the confidence Mary confesses in Luke 1:46-55, “The Hills Are Bare at Bethlehem,” a Royce Scherf text sung to the white spiritual tune Prospect, and Walter Pelz’ setting of Jon 14:27, “Peace I leave with You.” Listeners hear of God’s comfort for us as because of who Jesus is and what He has done “for us.”

Again Nagel: “Scripture’s words deliver to us the Jesus who is our Savior. Whatever is most beautiful in creation does not tell us that, but is drawn into extolling Him as a Savior beyond compare. So, off to fair meadows for a moment, then back to Jesus. Then
come the words our Lord gave us to join Him in praying, chanting, and singing. Then comes His mother’s prayer, and Hannah’s, too. And more and more, ever with Him at his birth, His cross, His table here and forever” (liner notes).

The Reverend Henry V. Gerike, conductor and gifted composer, had a hand in editing, arranging, or composing no less than eleven of the nineteen selections on Safe in God’s Faithfulness. This is a hallmark of each of the Concordia Seminary Chorus recordings, and a blessing to all who hear.

“We Believe that This Is Jesus,” track 11, is an African American Spiritual. It is well-sung. Perhaps the text may better reflect the call of Nathaniel in John 1:46, “Come and see,” if the title line were “We Believe that Christ is Jesus, Come and see…”

Two examples of Psalmody are provided, Psalm 23 (track 12) in through-composed fashion, and a Gerike setting of Psalm 47 (track 14) with antiphon. The former choral arrangement has benefits of its own, yet the latter antiphon, “God has gone up with a shout; the Lord amid soundings of trumpets” can be easily be taught by a choir or cantor to a congregation. Sheet music for this setting of Psalm 47 is included on Psallite, a CD-ROM collection of “Psalm Settings for the Church Year,” Item 97-6987, available through Concordia Publishing House.

A capella singing feels so artistically pure. (It was also a pleasure to hear organ, viola, too!) Pitch is sustained. Harmonic parts are balanced, with no one part overpowering another. Even without benefit of the liner notes, a listener can understand every word! Over time, you will learn to sing along. Not only that, you will be directed away from yourself and to Christ Himself.

The ten recordings of the St. Louis Concordia Seminary Chorus are in regular rotation in my Jeep CD Player. (Disc number 6 was a “single,” a Gerike setting of “The Star Spangled Banner,” sung at a Cardinal’s baseball came in 2000.) In Lutheran theology, the role of music is to support the proclamation of the Word of God. Hearing this CD of comfort on the road will be great preparatory music as I travel to share the comfort of Christ with shut-ins, those who are hospitalized, and when I do every-member congregation visits.

Safe in God’s Faithfulness with have special meaning for anyone associated with the Wyoming District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod: “This recording is supported in part by gifts given in loving memory of Kris Boche—pastor’s wife, mother, grandmother, daughter, sister, friend, and fellow redeemed of the Lord Jesus Christ. On January 5, 2005, Kris departed this life to sing with all the saints in glory” (back of CD case).

PJC

Liturgy & Hymnody Review


Prepare now for Advent and Christmas with What Child Is This resources from John Leavitt and Concordia Publishing House.

The Concordia recording of What Child Is This includes both What Child Is This: a Christmas Cantata, but also The Children of Christmas, a Musical, the latter previously released as a separate CD recording with a red cover to match the CPH choir/keyboard sheet music.

The CD recording is on par with previous and current recordings of Dr. Leavitt’s music, showing John Leavitt, composer and director, and The Master Arts Chorale, Orchestra, and Youth Chorale at their respective best. Texts are well-enunciated, singers are on-pitch, and instruments are crisp, clear, and
professional. The 41:07 disc of digital enjoyment flew by.

It was an honor to examine the vocal scores courtesy of Dr. Leavitt himself. Numbers in parentheses refer not to page numbers or CD track numbers, but the order in which the musical pieces appear in either the cantata or musical.

*What Child Is This* is a churchly cantata designed to be sung in the context of “A Service of [Nine] Lessons and Carols” with its traditional texts intact. Keyboard parts are challenging, rigorous piano music (e.g., I and VI) on a par with the musicianship demanded by historic treasures for the organ. “Jesus Christ the Apple Tree” (II), a personal favorite text, is recast via an original tune and arrangement by Leavitt. “Magnificat” (III) is sung in Latin (See also VI, “Gloria Deo”). The music is memorable, especially rhythmically: “trip-uh-let trip-uh-let bum bum bum” introduced by the piano, then given to the choir: “Allelu, allelu, allelu…” “What Child Is This?” and its traditional tune, GREENSLEEVES, is blessed with an introduction that feels like an original part of that 16th Century tune. “A Stable Lamp Is Lighted” (VII) is a musically and textually appropriate pairing to the Ninth Lesson, John 1:14, and preparation for the prayers, blessing, and recommended congregational singing of “Joy to the World.” Vocal parts are SATB. Optional orchestra parts are available from CPH.

*The Children of Christmas*

“The Children's Prayer” (1) and “The Children’s Promise” (6) are wonderful bookends to the composition. “The Angel’s Song” (3), designed to “wake up” the shepherds has an energetic melody and pulse. Gifted pianists will relish the sixteenth note arpeggios, while beginners are given an alternative of parallel Ds.

Two-part treble or unison vocal parts are provided. Unison parts would be helpful for rehearsals, with children who do not have a very wide vocal range, or with groups unaccustomed to singing in parts. The text of “March of the Kings” (5), unfortunately echoes “We Three Kings of Orient Are,” a hymn excluded from Lutheran hymnals because St. Matthew cannot substantiate “three,” “kings,” nor “orient.” As a substitute, I offer the alternative “wise men” for “the kings” on the top of page 29 and elsewhere as appropriate. In “The Children’s Promise” (6), “pure innocent minds,” page 37, is ambiguous. It is best interpreted in the context of children compared to worldly-wise adults rather than understood morally, theologically, or biblically. The text of the musical’s narration concludes the volume. Optional instrumental parts for children’s percussion instruments are available from CPH.

Dr. Leavitt is a skilled and creative composer, unafraid of occasional accidentals. He is willing to change keys within a piece, but not in the hackneyed way that peppers modern choral (and hymnal) arrangements, by composers who resort to it seemingly for lack of musical creativity. His harmonies sound like they “should be that way,” comfortably support the proclamation of Christ’s Gospel of comfort, and the rhythms of his original melodies and accompaniments have an energetic and living pulse.

In summary, the CD is a wonderful stand-alone listening treasure, a great gift idea for someone who seems to already have “everything” when it comes to Christmas music. I encourage congregations to purchase both sheet music collections, even if they choose not to offer the entire cantata or children’s musical. The individual pieces are strong enough to be sung separately and learned (and re-sung) over a number of years.

Consider purchasing these resources from Dr. Leavitt’s own website: https://johnleavittmusic.com/smedia_form.html.

Place your order today!

PJC

*Liturgy & Hymnody Review*

Luther’s Liturgical Catechesis


*Luther’s Liturgical Music* is quite appropriate for two very different audiences: those who are at home in discussions about music, and also those who feel they don’t know much about music and fear they cannot carry a tune without a bucket.

“....four dimensions of Reformation theology were epitomized in four different types of publications that came from the pen of Luther: Bible, Catechism, Hymnal, and Liturgical Order” (297).

Musicians will learn a great deal of theology. Theologians will discover much about music. Both will learn to treasure the underestimated musician-reformer, Martin Luther. How I tire of authors who claim that Zwingli was the better musician!
In contrast to Zwingli’s non-use of music at worship, what was at issue “was not music itself but how it was used” (8). The debate of propriety rages yet today.

Luther knew the traditional Latin hymns of the Church. These he revised and expanded in his German versions (24-25). He also had skill at polyphony (59). He knew the Mass as well as the Daily Office (64) and understood it theologically. This enabled him to keep the good, discard the “cesspool” of the canon of the Mass into a cesspool, and emphasize Christ “for us.”

Luther wrote extensively on music, but never finished his outlined major treatise on the subject. The Reformer saw music not as “invention” of man, but “creature” of God (89) and a gift of God (283).

Often, editions of German chorales differ when it comes to accidentals. This is deftly explained on page 102.

A large chunk of Leaver’s masterpiece centers upon catechesis, catechesis in song, namely, Luther’s hymnody. “Missouri Synod congregations” are credited with singing “We All Believe in One True God,” Luther’s version, more than other Lutherans (127). Leaver argues that the Letterman metrical paraphrase of the Lord’s Prayer owes much to that of Martin Franzmann (133). The Lutheran Hymnal is properly criticized (140) for not including Luther’s baptism hymn. Such a glaring omission was corrected in both Lutheran Worship and Lutheran Service Book. Luther’s hymns functioned liturgically and theologically, and were grounded in Scripture.

“Luther’s Approach to Liturgical Reform” is well-documented in Part III. The author finds much evidence of an artful “musical hermeneutic” including using the same Tone to sing the Gospel and Verba (182ff).

Yes, pastors should be encouraged to sing, especially in larger towns (193, cf. 246). This is incentive to both practice and learn our musical parts, brothers. Music is indeed important, the “living voice of the gospel” (277).

A list of traditional Biblical Canticles for the days of the week is given on p. 243. This should have been part of my formal seminary training. Leaver references Luther’s famous hymnal preface on why these canticles should remain in use (254, also Klug).

How important is this book? For me, it is a long-awaited commentary on Luther’s Works (American Edition), Volume 53!

PJC

(Ed.) I wish I had more time in the preparation of this issue of QBR in order to bring the Leaver’s Appendix 1 up-to-date by including hymn numbers for Lutheran Service Book and Evangelical Lutheran Worship. Perhaps showing Luther’s continued influence on Lutheran hymnals would be a good follow-up project for our readers. Please contact us with for more information. We would be happy to pass an update on to our readers and the publisher.

QBR

Notes ♫

Liturgy, Hymnody, & Pulpit Quarterly Book Review

Volume 2, Issue 4, Angels’ Tide, 2008

http://wy.lcms.org/LHP/QBR
As a Lutheran, I read this volume with interest. I am grateful for its publication by IVP Academic. It amazes me how many non-Lutherans know Lutheran liturgics better than so many Lutherans. (For now, I’ll just pick on my fellow LCMS Lutherans.) In studying historical practice, one will encounter Martin Luther, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Robert Jenson, Gordon Lathrop, Phillip Pfatteicher, Frank Senn, Richard Eyer,

Chan criticizes the entertainment model of worship and the therapeutic model of ministry (9) and calls his readers back to sound liturgical practices (16) and recover an understanding of the Church as the body of Christ.

“Chan’s proposal advances the conversation among evangelicals regarding the relationship between theology and worship. In contrast to theologians who emphasize a sociological analysis, Chan seeks to understand what is essential to the church’s theological identity. Drawing on the larger Christian tradition, Chan argues that we discover that identity in the structure and significance of Christian worship” (back cover).

Even a few Lutherans are hard to convince that there is a fundamental connection between doctrine and practice, style and substance. I pray this conversation happens and that it will be richly blessed to the praise and glory of Christ, the extension of His kingdom, and the restoration of long-neglected and oft-ignored practices that are godly and proclaim Jesus “for us.”

I would love to have a dialog with the author, particularly with regard to what “Real Presence” means in connection with the Sacrament for Calvinists and for Lutherans (51, 71ff, 134ff, et al).

“Relevance” has become a new idol, when worship is planned without much thought for the consequences. “[T]his shows…the need for a sound theology of worship that can guide the church’s practice and ensure that its worship is truly the worship of the triune God and not hijacked to serve other ends” (41). One of his theses in this chapter is that “Worship is God’s action in the church” (47). The paradox the author speaks of on page 57 is on the road to a better distinction between law and Gospel, a hallmark of Lutheran theology and proclamation.

It does my heart good to hear Augsburg Confession VII quoted approvingly (63) by an evangelical unafraid of the phrase “word and sacrament.” And then there are the happy times Dr. Chan speaks of.
Liturgy, Hymnody, & Pulpit Quarterly Book Review

Volume 2, Issue 4, Angels’ Tide, 2008

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Liturgy Review


Through the course of a re-examination and re-translation of historical collects of the One-Year Series, Eugene Andrew Lehrke makes some intriguing proposals:

- Return to a use of the historic collects of the day (a recommendation followed by Lutheran Service Book)
- Reconsider use of offertory collects, perhaps as propers, but with evangelical content (compare Lutheran Book of Worship, p. 87-88, et al)
- Consider the Post-Communion prayer as another opportunity for content that corresponds with the propers of the day.

In the first portion of the book, Rev. Lehrke provides his rationale.

The bulk of the book (68ff) takes the reader Sunday by Sunday through the Church Year, with each two-page spread giving the collect of the day, its original-language text, a meditation, a listing of the readings for the LBW and RCL Three-Year Lectionaries, and the author’s suggested [Proper] Offertory and Post-Communion Collects. Historic collects are given fresh translations, and divided into multiple sentences (and suggested pause breaks) to help the congregation, so Christians can better follow and understand that to which they add an “Amen.” Perhaps this 1999 book did have some salutary influence on LSB and/or ELW.

I particularly appreciated prayers for preparation (before service, 206ff.) for a pastor alone or with acolytes and others, adapted from Adalbert Kretzmann’s The Pastor at Prayer.

This book is worth your time in reading it, for the liturgical knowledge one would gain, as well as its value as an exercise in historical theology. It could also be used as a once-a-week devotional through the year, perhaps as a part of sermon preparation.
As of the book’s 1999 publication, “Eugene Andrew Lehrke has been a student of liturgy and a Lutheran parish pastor in five congregations and Canada since 1958. During this time he has made an extensive study of the ancient and contemporary developments of the catholic liturgy in the context of parish ministry. A goal of his ministry has been to make that liturgy a living reality in each of his congregations. He presently serves at Zion Lutheran Church in Finland, Minnesota” (back cover).

I welcomed Bradshaw’s critique of Dom Gregory Dix and his book The Shape of the Liturgy. It has made some good contributions to liturgical studies, but has too many flaws to be revered as widely and reverently as it is.

I also have little patience for “scholarship” that even appears to question the Biblical text, e.g., the discussion of the Bible and Baptism on p. 60. Similarly, the question as to whether the Last Supper was a Passover (63, and also Dix) is a settled question because of the words of Christ in Luke 22:15, among other parallel passages.


Ancient church orders are often puzzling. Bradshaw visually presents them as a collection of puzzle pieces (74) and supports his thesis that they are “a continuing enigma.” How they fit together is often uncertain. You will note that the Apostolic Constitutions were rediscovered in 1563 and the Didache only recently, 1883.

A study of other major liturgical sources follows (Chapter 5). Individuals sometimes speak for a tradition or a community. Often, they speak only for themselves. The journals of Egeria (115, multiple spellings possible) are one such example. Critical studies can be illuminating when working with such sources, although there are similar pitfalls when analyzing them as the Biblical text.

It does appear extremely likely that Christian rites owe much to Jewish rites from the time of Jesus. This is a helpful observation in many ways, especially since the Service of the Word in western Christendom has much in common with medieval and modern Synagogue liturgies. Yet, we must show humility in our assertions. Christian rites have shown some marked variety, just as their Jewish predecessor rites.

It is tempting to read back into history the rites to which we are currently accustomed. This is historical eisegesis, rather than the proper work of a church historian (and Bible language scholar), exegesis. Let’s call Chapter 7 “Christian Baptism: A Study in Diversity” instead of “Christian Initiation.”

Bradshaw covers the origin of the Christian Church Year, the Daily Office, and “Christendom” after the legalization of the faith. Bradshaw also questions whether the Fourth Century is truly the “Golden Age” for liturgy that many have believed it to be.

Humility is a Good Thing...


Humility is a wonderful thing for a Christian, a great thing for a Christian scholar, and an essential characteristic for a Christian liturgical scholar.

Why? I’m glad you asked.

We know less than we want to know about worship in the ancient church. We have learned that there was a wonderful uniformity combined with a greater variety than scholars expected. And, at certain times in history, larger and larger regions began adopting what was the previous practice of a smaller area.

A new hymnal was released for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod two years ago. We haven’t used everything in the book, and the congregation may never will. Lutheran Service Book replaced our 1941 The Lutheran Hymnal. Trinity congregation didn’t know or use everything in that volume either. Bradshaw shares the same truth about the ancient church: “we must also note that liturgical texts can go on being copied long after they have ceased to be used” (5).
Whether you agree or disagree with that assertion, the benefit is in the “wrestling” as well as the result.

Based on clear Scripture (1 Corinthians 14, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, rather than ambiguous Biblical texts), the Lord Himself excluded most men and all women from the office of the holy ministry. That makes it easier to see, from the start, that the “liturgical presidency by women among the Montanists and within some Gnostic groups during the second century” (cf. 196) DOES represent “a deliberate deviation from mainstream [Christian] tradition.”

Reading The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship is quite an education in sources and methods for the study of early liturgy. Oxford was right in keeping the volume in print through this Second Edition. Paul Bradshaw has done the Church a great service in these pages. Consider adding a copy of this book to your liturgy library.

Perhaps the Lutheran Confessors demonstrated their humble understanding of the liturgy best in the Article VIII of the Augsburg Confession, “….The Church is the assembly of saints in which the gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly. And it is enough for the true unity of the church to agree concerning the teaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. It is not necessary that human traditions, rites, or ceremonies instituted by human beings be alike everywhere. As Paul says: ‘One faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all’” (Kolb/Wengert, p. 43).

“Paul F. Bradshaw is Professor of Liturgy at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, and Director of Undergraduate Studies at the University’s London Centre. He is the author of Early Christian Worship (2000) and Ordination Rites of the Ancient Churches of the East and West (1990), and co-editor of The Study of Liturgy (1992)” (back cover).

PJC

Liturgy Review

Visual Catechesis


Symbols of the Christian Faith is a unique resource, with illustrations and text by Alva William Steffler, “professor of art at Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois. In addition to teaching sculpture, drawing, and art education, he has also worked in church ministry and served as president of the international organization CIVA (Christians in the Visual Arts).

He continues to develop ways to sue the arts as an aid to worship” (back cover).

Art is a visual language, at times very simple, and often, at the same time, rather complex. If a work of art were immediately understood in all ways, what would be the point in revisiting it, apart from the imperfections of human memory. God the Father is portrayed on page 3. One immediately sees the hand, a right hand, consistent with the Old Testament idioms. Then the crown is recognized, followed by rays of heaven.

The symbol on the front cover is a good representative sample of what one will find inside (see also page 9). It is a rich combination of the fish, ichthus, Chi-Rho, and Shepherd’s Staff. Christians are good fish swimming in the water of baptism.

Pages 22-25 show common symbols for the Virgin Mary, often unfamiliar to Protestants. Theologically for all Christians, the cross (26-27) should be more important, because Scripture declares it so. The definitions are instructive and would augment a Lenten sermon series.

The Pomegranate (34) is portrayed and explained as a symbol of the Church (Old Testament as well as New) and illustrative of the blood of martyrs. Could this be the true fruit of the Garden of Eden?
Monograms begin on page 65. “M” or “N” can be included in Alpha & Omega monograms. Halos are spoken of most today, unfortunately, only in caricature. A visual dictionary (76-77) gives the reader/viewer better understanding of them and their use in sacred art, including mosaics, stained glass, and paintings.

Symbols of the Twelve Apostles (89ff) follow those related to the Evangelists. Martyrology and symbolism are deeply related. The symbol of each is the way they died in confession of Christ.

I would love to see a larger collection, where the exceptionally helpful Glossary (103ff) is further illustrated by this gifted author and artist. Why do “seven” sacraments show up in so much Roman Catholic art? It was a Counter-Reformation response to Luther and others (119).

Colors and Numbers and The Church Calendar will be of benefit to those of liturgical traditions (Roman, Anglican, Lutheran) as well as a growing number of American Evangelicals wanting more Biblical and symbolical substance on Sunday and in their daily confession of Christianity.

Preachers will find sermon illustrations through the Scripture Reference index (153). Congregational altar guilds and liturgical art committees will benefit from this book. And Christians in general will learn more about their visual heritage. Symbols communicate. "Churches are welcome to adapt the images contained in this book for their own artistic purposes, provided they are non-profit. For other uses, please contact the publisher” (iv).

PJC

Notes ♩


Mr. Pipes is back once again with our friends Annie and Drew to learn about the Psalms and hymns of the Reformation.

Douglas Bond presents his theological perspective through Mr. Pipes, e.g., “Worldliness makes sin look normal and righteousness look odd” (7), and both are honest about their Reformed theological background. As a Lutheran, it was wonderful to see the Lutheran Reformation revisited in so many of the chapters, but the “final word,” one might say, is given to John Calvin (197ff).

The author is writing to support and defend the singing of hymns in Christian worship, beautiful pieces of sung theology derided by many, even Annie and Drew’s parents as “dirges” (6). This is a caricature, a mocking ignorance that, depending upon the speaker, is the oft-heard spiritual maturity/superiority of one preferring banal “praise songs” on the one hand, or the hurt or hardened anti-Christian who is so fond of the term “hypocrite.”

Again Mr. Pipes: “Ah, but nowhere is Christ’s Church so united as in her hymnal” (19). Indeed. I
can only pray that our core Christian hymns continue to proclaim Christ for us and our salvation, and that the number of good hymns we have in common would increase instead of decrease.

Starting from London and Westminster Abbey, Mr. Pipes gets permission to take Annie and Drew on a trip to the continent, first stop, “Martin Luther” (23ff). The author’s sense of the history of vestments is inaccurate (39). Lutherans retained traditional vestments at worship. It was the Reformed who went to the “plain black gown.” In fact, Luther came back to Wittenberg in part because of what he deemed to be radical changes in the congregation’s worship under the influence of Carlstadt. Luther’s hymns “All Praise to Thee, Eternal Lord” and the smoothed-out melody version of “A Mighty Fortress” are included, the versions of Trinity Hymnal.

In connection with “A Mighty Fortress,” Pipes adds: “Nor is it appropriate to worship God with music designed to appeal to man’s—shall we say—to man’s baser nature. Music written for popular entertainment—especially for entertaining people in a decaying culture—is rarely useful in calling men to look beyond themselves to God who is above us” (57).

My major critique with the book has to do with another such quote: “We gather in the Lord’s house to worship God—to render praise and adoration to Him, not first to receive from Him” (113). This is exactly backwards. God has spoken first in His Word. We respond to His gifts to us with our praise and adoration. Even faith is a gift from Him. We cling to Christ by faith, faith that receives the forgiveness Christ won for us on the cross.

Learn about Gustavus Adolphus (91), gain exposure to the Christian treasure of metrical psalmody and tunes, and the enduring power of German chorales (237). Fall in love with hymnody again. Read of Luther, Nicolai, Gerhardt, Bach, and many more names familiar from Lutheran Service Book and other Christian hymnals throughout the centuries. And look forward with me to Mr. Pipes’ next adventure.

“Douglas Bond lives in Tacoma, Washington, with his wife Cheryl and their four children. He has traveled several times to the United Kingdom in preparation for writing this series. He teaches history and English at Covenant High School in Tacoma” (back cover).

PJ C

Hymnody Review

A Bargain for What You Get


Imagine: “Bach’s massive output at your fingertips!” The Digital Bach Edition is a 4-CD-ROM or 1 DVD-ROM collection of pdf files of the entire original 46-volume 1851-1900 Bach Gesellschaft. That was a monumental publishing project in its day, or any day for that matter. A free download of the Adobe Acrobat Reader (needed to open the files) is available from www.adobe.com.

The following are features of the collection:

- Tips for Navigation (background information about the edition, how it is organized, and examples for finding specific works)
- Table of Contents (main index)
- Index of Volumes (English)
- Band Inhalt (Deutsch/German)
- BWV Index (each work listed in BWV order)
- Title Index (each work and many subtitles, movement titles, etc., listed alphabetically)

I appreciated the historical background and musical glossary also included.

It must have taken forever for CD Sheet Music to scan in the entire set of sheet music. I am amazed at the brilliance of Bach’s compositions across the board. And this collection is made up only of his extant work! What if Bach had a MIDI-capable organ connected to Finale software—now I’m really dreaming!

This is a one-of-a-kind gift (over 18,000 pages) for the musician in your life, especially the Lutheran musician whose favorite composer is J. S. Bach because Bach was a Lutheran.

Modern editions of Bach compositions may be better for the beginner, especially when Bach’s original key may be more of a challenge. For the musical hobbyist, music major, music teacher, or church musician, this will truly be “The Ultimate Library.”
Consider the saving of storage space alone! And all music in the CD Sheet Music series consists of out-of-copyright editions, so they may be legally printed based on the need of the original purchaser.

CD Sheet Music bills itself as “The World’s Greatest Sheet Music Library.” Visit www.cdsheetmusic.com for complete listings and tables of contents. The offerings are numerous! I personally own the classical guitar sets as well as some of the previous Bach music. The 2.0 version of the software (version 2.5.611 was reviewed) is quite an improvement over the previous version. CDs work on either PC or Mac.

The Digital Bach Edition is now a cherished and frequently used possession. When I listen to my complete Bach CD Collection, I can now follow along with the sheet music. Now all I need are good English translations of all of the original German texts!

Hymnody Review


With Innisfree, James Jordan conducts his new “by invitation” choir, Anam Cara, Celtic for “soul mates.”

Lutherans will welcome works by Lutheran composers and familiar favorites (and new selections) sung with clarity, conviction, and zeal.

This is a gorgeous recording to listen to. Track 3, Morten Lauridsen’s “O magnum mysterium” is marred only by the liner notes. Jordan writes, “Whether one believes in the Christmas story is immaterial. Within this masterpiece, Lauridsen captures in sound the true awe and wonder that the event inspired.” This is unfortunately stated, at best. Faith may not be necessary to recognize musical beauty, faith, given to an individual by God the Holy Spirit, is necessary for the application of Christ’s incarnation, life, death, and resurrection to that individual.

Hassler’s classic “Verbum caro factum est,” “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us...” is a gem of a motet for six voices that stunningly paints “Christ’s descent from Heaven to take on human flesh in the Incarnation” (Gerald Custer, track 4 liner notes).

Felix Mendelssohn blessed the Lutheran church and all Christendom with his own compositions, in addition to introducing the world to the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. “Verleih uns Frieden,” his own setting of his original tune for Martin Luther’s prayer for peace. (Track 7, see also Lutheran Service Book 777 for a singable translation of the German text.)

Over 17 years ago it was a privilege to sing Brahms’ “Geistliches Lied, Op. 30” in a Nebraska State Honor Choir. Faith’s “Amen,” that Luther defined as, “Yes, yes, it shall be so,” is marvelously sung on track 8, a presentation worthy of this composition.

Johann Hermann Schein is featured through his “Christ lag in Todesbanden,” track 10, where the German choral finds vitality and strength from bass voices.

Track 11, “Ose Shalom,” is a surprising prayer for peace from the Jewish synagogue liturgy by composer John Leavitt, familiar to regular readers of QBR.

Dr. Jordan explains that track 14, “Choral Reflection on Amazing Grace,” began life as a Missa Brevis in remembrance of 9/11. It is powerful, evocative, and reverent treatment of a hymn particularly beloved by Americans.

James Jordan recognizes Innisfree as Anam Cara’s “first step into the musical world at large” and a “birthing” recording. I look forward to Anam Cara’s sophomore release, as these singers grow closer musically and personally.
Hymnody Review


Drums in the Church will disappoint someone wanting to add a Rock & Roll drum set to Divine Service or the Daily Office. This resource will be an encouragement to those who are thoughtfully looking for a reverent and responsible way to include hand drums and other percussion instruments in Christian worship.

Like music, drums (and other percussion instruments) are given to serve Christian texts at worship. They should not be a visual or auditory distraction, but a complement to what is already going on. I personally prefer a loft in the back for musicians to avoid any appearance of a performer/audience dynamic. Transepts are another good alternative to the generic American Evangelical “stage” idea.

“Drums in the Church is a hands-on guide to the effective and creative use of percussion instruments in the context of Christian worship services. This essential DVD covers fundamental rhythms and techniques for a wide range of musical styles” (publisher).

Marc Anderson brings thirty years of experience to this “Practical Guide for Percussion in Christian Worship,” a DVD with a wonderful companion booklet inside the DVD case.

Anderson covers African, Latin, Pop (by which he means American idioms), [Traditional] Irish, and Folk styles/rhythms on hand drums (like the conga, dumbek, and djembe), tambourine, claves (short wooden dowels hit together), African bells, shakers (like maracas), and unique ethnic drums like the Irish bodhran and the Middle Eastern “tar.”

Congas are tuned, much like tri-toms, quad-toms, and bass drums for a marching band. Two drums are usually pitched a fourth or fifth apart. My mini-congas are pitched at middle-C and G below middle-C. “Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia,” Lutheran Service Book 466, was the inspiration to buy my mini-conga set.

Hand drums are capable of unique sounds. They take time to develop well. Anderson calls for patience, especially for the beginner. “Touches” help keep time. “Open Tones” refer to the “open resonant tone of any given drum” (10). The “Slap Tone” is “the most difficult to master...The sound should be clear, crisp, and dry.” “Bass tones are quite simple. For the bass tone, simply bring your thumb into the side of your hand and slightly cup your palm. Strike the drum directly in the center (the center of your palm should be directly above the center of the drum). Your palm actually has little or no contact with the head; the contact should be with the perimeter of your hand and your fingers. The wrist stays locked with this technique. The hand can stay on the drum or bounce off depending upon the pattern and what follows” (14). All tones need practice on both hands for the best-sounding playing.

If you can’t quite picture how this works, the DVD comes to the rescue. Multiple cameras and angles give the hand drum student both “the forest” and “the trees.” You can see both at once!

I watched the DVD for the first time without my mini-conga set and without reading the booklet first. If you try that, read the booklet next and then watch the DVD again (and again and again…) with the hand drum at hand.

Hearing the rhythms may help you learn them better than seeing them in the booklet. There are basically rhythms “in two” and those “in three.”

Nothing can compare with learning an instrument from a teacher in person. This is a close second. Hand drum and percussion experts are often hard to come by in rural areas.

Anderson concludes his booklet with this encouragement:

“Be patient. Develop these skills over time, and be diligent. Watch the way I play as much as what I play. Try to mimic all of my movements to discover what is essential and what isn’t. Play the rhythms slowly at first, stop, and then increase the speed. Don’t be in a hurry to learn a lot of fancy patterns. If you can really execute a simple rhythm, it will be more effective than you think.

“HAVE FUN AND GIVE PRAISE IN ALL OF THE MUSIC YOU PLAY!”

PJC
Pulpit Review


At the seminaries in our church body, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, each seminarian is assigned to a congregation for “field education.” It was my first day at St. John’s. I was introduced to the young pastor and his wife, the organist, the sound tech, and the elders. One of the elders, trying to test their new seminary student, said with a smile, “Hi. My name is the second book of the New Testament.” I smiled back and said, “Hello, Mr. Exodus. I’m Paul.” Mark laughed. And I fit in well there in the two years before my vicarage/internship. But, Mark mentioned that Exodus story about every week.

I pray that the members of that congregation knew the book of Exodus as they did my sense of humor. My current congregation got a better view of the book as we studied it together after Sunday Divine Service my favorite way: verse-by-verse. The Exodus—Deuteronomy volume of the *Ancient Christian Commentary on Holy Scripture* was a great resource to have on hand (see pomegranates, p 132).

“Among Greek-speaking interpreters, the current volume draws widely on John Chrysostom, Clement of Alexandria, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret of Cyr and John of Damascus. Among Latin-speaking interpreters, quotations from Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome, Peterius, Cassarius of Arles, Cassiodorus and Isidore are found in abundance. Ephrem and Aphrahat are represented among Syriac speakers. Numerous other interpreters are present from each grouping” (publisher’s website).

“Three basic approaches to the Jewish Scriptures were open to the early Christians. Either the Scriptures were law, or they were prophecy, or they were irrelevant” (xvii). And the Fathers often saw both law and prophecy. Only Marcion and those like him rejected the Hebrew Bible. Irenaeus and Origin were particularly influential in patristic use of the Old Testament (xix).

Hear Irenaeus: [The behavior of the Gnostics] “is not the behavior of those who heal and give life but rather of those who aggravate disease and increase ignorance. The law shows itself much truer than such people when it says that whoever leads a blind man astray from the way is accursed. The apostles were sent to find those who were lost and to bring sight to those who did not see and healing to the sick. They did not speak to them in accordance with their previous opinions but by a revelation of the truth. For no one would be acting rightly if one told the blind who were already beginning to fall over the precipice to continue in their dangerous way as if it were a sound one and as if they would come through all right” (321).

Now Origen: “Just as meat, if it is not sprinkled with salt, no matter how great and special it is, becomes rotten, so also the soul, unless it is somehow salted with constant temptation, immediately becomes feeble and soft. For this reason the saying is established that every sacrifice should be salted with salt” (165, on Leviticus 2:13, though perhaps better paired with the Sermon on the Mount).

And Augustine on Deuteronomy 6:4, “That Trinity is one God. Not that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are identically the same. But the Father is Father, the Son is Son, and the Holy Spirit is Holy Spirit, and this Trinity is one God, as it is written…” (283)

Again, the editors’ pericopal summarize are helpful (e.g., 56). The many ancient hymn texts are a blessing (155 et al). It was interesting to note the term “holocausts” used for the pericope Leviticus 1:1-17 (163). Not every text of Scripture has patristic commentary (327, et al).

Money is tight these days. Your study at church or the parsonage is smaller than you’d like. I understand those challenges well. Still, at least own the ACCS volumes by LCMS authors and those covering the
four Gospel accounts and the Pentateuch, including this volume.

“Joseph T. Lienhard, S.J., is professor of theology, serving on the faculty of the medieval studies program at Fordham University” (dust jacket).

Pulpit Review

Stevenson, Kenneth and Michael Glerup. 

www.ivpress.com (P)

“The books of Ezekiel and Daniel are rich in imagery taken up afresh in the New Testament. Echoes of Ezekiel—with its words of doom and promises of hope, the vision of a new temple and its scroll-eating prophet—are especially apparent in the book of Revelation. Daniel is most notable in supplying terminology and imagery for Jesus of Nazareth’s favored self-description as "Son of man," a phrase also found in Ezekiel and one which John the seer employs repeatedly in describing the exalted figure of his vision on the island of Patmos. The four beasts of Daniel find their counterparts in the lion, ox, man and eagle of Ezekiel and Revelation. It is no wonder these books, despite the difficulties in interpreting them, took hold on the imagination of the early church” (publisher’s website).

This volume is one of the latest to be published in the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Only a handful of volumes remain.

On Ezekiel 9:1-4, Cyprian writes, “God says that only those can escape who have been reborn and signed with the sign of Christ; when sending his angels to lay waste the world and to destroy the human race he threatens more seriously than the last time….This sign pertains to the passion and blood of Christ and that he is kept safe and unharmed whoever is found in this sign” (35).

Ephrem the Syrian, in explaining Daniel 6, also explains the law of the Medes and Persians: “Darius, as he loved quietness and inactivity and found work and business unpleasing, left the care of the empire to his prefects, and for this reason the Scripture adds, he set over the kingdom satraps, that is 120 governors. And over them he placed three presidents, including Daniel. Then they asked him to set an interdict according to the law of the Medes and Persians. Indeed, among the Persians and the Medes, a law stated that when the king had set a certain rule, it was not permitted to rescind it. So the satraps asked the king for this kind of firm and immutable decree; and they were certain that the king would not have rescinded such a decree in order to save Daniel. It is likely that Daniel was not present in the hall of justice on that day, when the king argued from morning till evening with his satraps in order to save Daniel. If he had been present, he would have immediately confessed that he had prayed [to God], and after the confession of the crime the trial would have not been extended until evening” (212).

Pericopes from Ezekiel have been common this September thanks to Proper 18A, the festival of St. Matthew, and Proper 21A. Perhaps you will have a copy of this volume in time for Proper 29A, November 23rd and this commentary on Ezekiel 34: “He established the mountains of Israel, the authors of the divine Scriptures. Feed there, in order to feed without a qualm. Whatever you hear from the source, let that taste good to you; anything from the outside, spit it out. In order not to go astray in the fog, listen to the voice of the Shepherd. Gather yourselves to the mountains of Holy Scripture. There you will find your heart’s desire, there nothing is poisonous there, nothing unsuitable; they are the richest pastures” (Augustine, p. 109).

The benefit of the ACCS is not only that we are drawn into the world and thought of the Church Fathers. More importantly, through them, we are drawn ever more closely to Holy Scripture itself.

“Kenneth Stevenson (Ph. D., Southampton University) is the bishop of Portsmouth in England and the author of numerous publications, including Worship: Wonderful and Sacred Mystery and Rooted in Detachment: Living the Transfiguration.

“Michael Glerup (Ph. D., Drew University) serves as the research and acquisitions director for the ACCS and as the operations manager for the Ancient Christian Texts series” (book jacket).

PJC
Ancient Christian Devotional is the first offering I have encountered of Formatio, a new imprint of InterVarsity Press (1) “By helping us read holy writings with ancient eyes, the church fathers help us drink deeply from the only water that can give us true life. This guide to prayer and reflection combines excerpts from the writings as found in the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture with a simple structure for daily or weekly reading and prayer” (back cover).

Is a companion and introduction to the ACCS as well as IVP’s Learning Theology with the Church Fathers and Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers.

Each of the devotions has the same outline:

1. Theme
2. Opening Prayer
3. Readings (Three, from the A cycle of the Three-Year Lectionary)
4. Psalm of Response (after the Old Testament Reading)
5. Reflections from the Church Fathers (on each Scripture passage)
6. Closing Prayer (Both prayers are from ancient sources)

Bible texts are not printed for you. Have a Bible (or your Year A volume of the Lutheran Service Book Lectionary) handy.

“There are fifty-two weeks of readings following the weekly lectionary cycle A. You can read through them in order or by thematic interest. Each day you will also find a simple opening and closing prayer drawn from the prayers and hymns of the ancient church” (back cover).

Since this collection of devotions are based on Series A of the post-Vatican II Roman and Protestant Three-Year Lectionary series. I would encourage the editors and publisher to consider volumes based on series years B, C, as well as the Historic One-Year Lectionary Series of western Christianity. A Year of Weekly Readings could be followed up by B Year of Weekly Readings, and C Year of Weekly Readings.

I love the insights of the fathers, not for their infallibility, but for their apostolic, biblical theology, catholicity, and freshness, something we need in our modern world. We are hardly the first Christians to read Scripture, receive His forgiveness, and serve our neighbor to prove that faith is living (see LSB 555:9).

Read these devotions to prepare for Sunday services, to prepare to write your sermon, to learn from saints who have gone before. Mine them for sermon illustrations, encouragement for your own faith, and to sample the ACCS.

“Thomas C. Oden recently retired as Henry Anson Buttz Professor of Theology at The Theological School of Drew University in Madison, New Jersey. He is general editor of the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture and the author of numerous theological works, including a three-volume systematic theology.

“Cindy Crosby is the author of four books, including By Willoway Brook: Exploring the Landscape of Prayer. Her writing has appeared in numerous publications, including Books & Culture, Mars Hill Review and Publisher’s weekly” (back cover).

Pulpit Review


$20.00 for a set of all four guides.

These four booklet guides have common strengths, especially taken as a set. First, the examples provided come from the Greek New Testament itself. This is unique in my experience, impressive, and useful.
After all, our goal in learning Greek was to interpret the Greek New Testament. It is helpful to put that grammar into practice right away.

Second, I loved focusing on everything about a single part of speech (noun, pronoun, adjective, or preposition) at one time. Traditional grammars, like mathematics textbooks, begin with the basics and build on them, and changing topics from addition (or nouns) to multiplication (or verbs) to greater than/less than, decimals, fractions (or pronouns, adjectives, and prepositions). This four-volume booklet set treats parts of speech individually and thoroughly for the beginner, especially a Greek student praying and studying to pass a seminary Greek qualifying exam.

Nouns should be read first. It begins by introducing the declension of nouns, the nominative case, and the genitive, dative, accusative, and even the vocative cases. Charts are clear, concise, and in an attractive Greek font. The author defines his terms well, especially the definite article and indefinite article (18-19).

An especially helpful section, “The Use of the Cases,” begins on page 23. This is essential material to know, as survivors of the LCMS Greek qualifying exam know well.

Readers of Adjectives will learn/relearn (5) “the declension of adjectives, the use of adjectives, the adjectival use of prepositional phrases, the declension and use of comparative and superlative adjectives, and the declension and use of numerals.” Vance’s charts are arranged to help the student see the patterns imbedded in Koine Greek. I found it helpful and practical to learn the “2-2” and 3-1-3” nomenclature for adjectives (11). My understanding of adjectives is much improved.

Pronouns is organized into eleven parts, as the author’s own introduction notes (5). It builds upon the Nouns and Adjective booklets. I appreciated hearing the author’s original-language (Latin, 13) as in demonstro, “I point out,” in introduction of Demonstrative Pronouns. Often, seeing the same “chart” information in a different from helps a person better understand a concept better. Such is the case with this booklet, particularly with a specific “quantitative relative pronoun” on page 29. Again, the Greek New Testament examples are particularly striking.

In my college German class, we had songs to learn the various prepositions of that language based on common melodies. This is the next best thing. Not only that, the Prep booklet provides a much greater depth than musical memorization “ditties” could ever provide. Prepositions sets before the Greek scholar:

“position, direction, time, agency, means, association, cause, purpose, or source” (6). Dr. Vance ties up the loose ends of other basic grammars in that he helps the student solve the “mystery” that is Greek. Mystery plots reveal “who did it” at the end. Grammars are similar. Look for clearlyshown connections given to you as if a gift. What is the difference between improper and proper prepositions? See page 19 and items #34ff and the list on page 20.

As an active pastor in parish ministry, constantly working toward a balance between pastoral preparation in prayer and study and pastoral care in the lives of people, I commend these four guides have been a welcome review and refreshing re-presentation of some of the parts of speech in the service of understanding and translating the Greek New Testament.

“Laurence M. Vance, Ph. D., holds degrees in history, theology, accounting, and economics. The author of fifteen books, he regularly contributes articles and book reviews to both secular and religious periodicals. Dr. Vance is also a member of the Society of Biblical Literature.”

QBR and this reviewer welcome the opportunity to review Laurence Vance’s premier resource, Greek Verbs in the New Testament and Their Principal Parts.

PJC

Pulpit Review


Let me be perfectly clear: Basic Greek and Exegesis is not your typical Greek instruction method for your typical Greek student. It is designed for the non-expert, possibly someone who doesn’t have or won’t likely ever have “an extensive knowledge of the language” (ix).

This book is also an introduction to basic Bible interpretation, exegesis. On that note, I was not thrilled to see Bruce Wilkinson’s books brought up (3). Prepositions are actually very important. If
nothing else, the introductory chapter drives that point home for novice and veteran alike. A visual presentation of prepositions (73) is a nice touch.

This Lutheran reviewer rejoiced to see Justification front and center on page 6. Christ is at the center (11)! Context is important. So are the actual words of the biblical text. Both must be carefully considered (9), but the text is paramount, since context, other than the textual and overall biblical context can be subject to scholarship and human opinion.

The author recommends original-language Scripture texts and other references (29ff). I’ve heard such helpful recommendations in classes and on syllabi, but rarely in print like this. Ramsay also de-mystifies the textual apparatus (33ff). The Greek keyboard (42) is also shown. Even Kittel, the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT, 47) is shown in use.

Verb morphology is well explained (Lesson 10, particularly 84, 93). Diagramming sentences is actually worth learning, no matter what you thought in grammar school (103).

For someone who doesn’t have much experience in using the biblical languages with Logos or BibleWorks software, this would be a good basic guide and confidence-building introduction.

This may be a course to consider for a congregational Bible class.

There is also a chance for purchasers of this book to participate in an online class at www.miamiinternationalseminary.com. If you have never done continuing education online, I would recommend the concept.

And, it was a good review of the very basics for me as I review it. It is not a substitute for an extensive education in hermeneutics and New Testament Greek, but it does a decent job at fulfilling its own goals and objectives (x). Hopefully this book would encourage a future pastor or church worker to go beyond the mere basics of Greek and biblical exegesis. It also reminded me that the kind of Greek and Hebrew education at LCMS seminaries and universities is first-rate.

“Richard B. Ramsay (M.Div., D.Min., Westminster Theological Seminary; Th.M., Covenant Theological Seminary) is professor of Greek and apologetics at both the Faculty of Latin American Education in Theology (FLET) and Miami International Seminary (MINTS), as well as director of their online resources” (back cover).

PJC

Pulpit Review

Great Lutheran Preaching


Preaching to Young Theologians is not just for “young theologians,” but for any layperson, pastor, or seminarian that wants to hear the clear proclamation of Christ crucified.

“Editor Klemet Preus, second son of Robert D. Preus, has selected from the sermons his father preached at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and Concordia Seminary, Springfield/Fort Wayne, the collection included in this volume. Klemet is pastor of Glory of Christ Lutheran Church in Plymouth, Minnesota” (back cover).

Klemet brings a scholar’s insight, a son’s love, and a pastor’s heart to the task of identifying and analyzing the sermons included in this collection. He shows how his father makes use of rhetoric, but essentially, Dr. Preus “simply talks to the people. He announces Jesus Christ to the people. He opens the congregation to Christ, and employs four clear strategies to do so” (26). Those strategies are: identifying with the congregation, creating a dissonance between false teachers and his simple message, linking the congregation to the Gospel, and redefines Lutheranism as defensible and credible. We need more preachers like this.

Readers can learn both from the erudite and practical introduction, as well as the sermons that follow. The sermons are also edifying to preachers in need of hearing of the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

In one sermon, Dr. Preus gets right to the point about the heart of Christian theology. In asking a colloquizing pastor what “dikaiow” meant, Preus was shocked that he not only was unable to give an English definition, this Lutheran pastor didn’t know what it meant to be justified (42). So much of this situation reminded me of Luther’s Preface to his Small Catechism. What then would/did this pastor’s...
hearers hear on a Sunday morning? Counter-examples are quite potent.

Robert Preus had a phenomenal educational background. Yes, he could quote from plays and great works of Western Civilization, he could quote from even greater works, simple, pious hymns that confessed the one, true faith. He does both on page fifty-two.

Polemics are a common feature of the sermons included here. Preus was unafraid to do the “warning” part of his pastoral call. What is so amazing to me is how winsome the good doctor is, warning of false doctrine and upholding the simple and simply true message of God’s Word (60).

In a sermon on the book of Job, Preus connects his hearers to their future vocation of pastoral care. Yes, theology is a habitus practicus. This practicality is shown by the counter-example of Job’s friends, the poor TV-preachers that they are. He reminds these young theologians of the people the Lord will give them to serve, concluding, “My dear friends, if your theology is not doing anybody any good, don’t theologize…For Christ’s theology, true Christian theology, speaks to my needs…And it helps me to meet any exigency of life or death. Yes, theology is a precious gift of God, and I will seek to cultivate it and will treasure it all my life. Amen.” (67).

An unpreached sermon on prayer concludes the volume, silenced by his own death. Thanks to his son and this volume, you will be able to hear of faith “directed toward Jesus alone and His love” (108). And Jesus “for you” is the content and main message of each sermon here. If only there were more!

Robert D. Preus “served as pastor of parishes in North Dakota, Boston, and northern Minnesota for ten years. In 1957 he was called as a professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. There he taught for seventeen years until called to serve as president of Concordia Theological Seminary of Springfield, Illinois, and later of Fort Wayne, Indiana. He served as president of that institution until his retirement in 1993” (back cover).

Pulpit Review


The original version of The Homiletical Plot was one of my seminary textbooks, the original edition, I mean. It is likely that this book was included in a class on “Sermon Structures” because of its unique approach. Part of the challenge in the parish is to make use of all that you learned back then. Brothers, I encourage you to learn how to re-integrate those old lessons into your current practice.

“Now in a reissue with a new forward by Fred B. Craddock and an afterword by the author, Eugene L. Lowry, The Homiletical Plot, Expanded Edition follows in the same solid tradition of its predecessor. Upon its release, The Homiletical Plot quickly became a pivotal work on the art of preaching. Instead of comments on a biblical passage, Lowry suggested that the sermon follow a narrative form that moves from beginning to end, as with the plot of a story. This expanded edition continues to be an excellent teaching resource and learning tool for all preachers form introductory students to seasoned clergy” (back cover).

The story is told of an usher who always knew that the sermon was wrapping up because the pastor always talked about the Sacrament of the Altar near the end. When a preacher is that predictable, some rhetorical freshness is in order. Enter The Homiletical Plot.

The basic idea is this: treat the sermon as a narrative, a sacred story (xxi), and think of your outline as a plot. This would be a good process to learn for someone who usually preaches a three-point sermon, or a stereotypical “Law, Gospel, Response” sermon.

As a student of the first edition, I read with interest the new additions to this Expanded edition, a new forward by homileticians Fred Craddock, and an eye-opening afterword (117ff) by Lowry. Lowry agrees with some of the criticism of the original The Homiletical Plot, particularly in the names he gave for the stages of the narrative sermon. He now offers the following:

Stage/1980 “nickname”/new name
Upsetting the Equilibrium/”oops”/conflict
Analyzing the Discrepancy/”ugh”/complication
Disclosing the Clue to Resolution/”aha”/sudden shift
Experiencing the Gospel/”whee”/good news
Anticipating the Consequences/”yeah”/unfolding

Overall, the author’s more-reflected-upon understanding of his own book may be worth reading both before and after the text itself.

Lowry shows respect both for the Biblical text as well as the congregation hearing a sermon (17).
Preachers should show also the same concern for both.

Preaching the Word is a relatively simple idea. It takes great skill to make the Gospel boring. It takes greater skill to surprise a congregation with the Gospel so that they see/experience it again as if it were the first time.

Engaging the congregation in your “homiletical itch” may be more of an art than a science. And no, narrative preaching won’t work with every text. Allow the individual pericope and type of Biblical literature to guide you in how that text is best preached.

It is rare that a book on preaching gets so little revision, but in the end this shows the timeliness of narrative preaching in general, and using The Homiletical Plot in particular.

“Eugene L. Lowry is William K. McElvaney Professor of Preaching Emeritus, Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City” (back cover).

Pulpit Review


“The Concise Encyclopedia of Preaching is the most comprehensive reference work on Christian preaching available [1995] in the English language. No other book so richly combines concerns for the practice of preaching with theological themes and historical tradition. Its scope ranges from the technical tasks of sermon preparation to thoughtful essays on such topics as narrative preaching, African-American preaching, style, and prophetic preaching, as well as a host of issues that are shaping and challenging the contemporary pulpit. Also included are essays that explore the life and work of the church’s most influential preachers, including such diverse figures as St. Augustine, Sojourner Truth, and Fulton Sheen.

“The nearly two hundred contributors to this volume represent Protestant and Catholic pastors and homiletics from around the world, as well as leading voices in theology, rhetoric, history, and biblical studies…” (back cover).

This is a reference book. Without a “plot,” even a “homiletical plot,” it could make for dry reading. The editors knew this, so they make recommendations for a thematic reading of selected articles (vii).

I welcomed seeing “precautions” given in an article on “Children’s Sermons” (68). One sees the good and the bad side-by-side, like articles on “Law and Gospel” and “Lay Preaching.”

The signed article on Women Preachers (510ff) parrots the juvenile argument that Galatians 3:28 is justification for the ordination of women to the pastoral office. Such a misuse of Scripture might be convincing to a baby Christian that only knows John 3:16, but those who have read 1 Corinthians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus are not so easily convinced. Galatians 3:28 speaks about the common salvation male and female share as sinners in need of the grace of God in Christ. Passages that talk about the ministry (and the ministry serving God’s people His Gifts at worship) should inform our theology of the ministry. The article (and encyclopedia readers) would be better served by the honest and more truthful admission that church bodies and congregations have women preachers because they want to, not because the Bible or the Lord allow for it. (See also the sub-article on The Preaching of Women, Feminists, and Womanists in the longer article on the History of Preaching, p. 225ff.)

Notable articles are on the Church Year, Lectionary Preaching, the Pulpit, Radio Preaching (including a mention of the LCMS “The Lutheran Hour”), Sacraments and Preaching, and Theology of Preaching, which includes significant references to the Reformational emphasis on Justification by grace through faith in Christ alone. One of the “last words” of the encyclopedia is one on the “Word of God,” though I would rather here Luther and Luther “as retold by Karl Barth.”


The Evangelism [& Preaching] article has a “decision theology” bias. Biographical articles, like those on Chrysostom, Finney, and Walter A. Maier (318), among many others, include a sample of their preaching.

The most important preacher is Jesus, of course, complete with his own article in the volume. The best preaching presents Him for us and our salvation because of His crucifixion and Resurrection, just as His Bible presents Him.
I would recommend to the editors and publisher that the time has come for a second, revised edition, especially with regard to the use of media in the pulpit, as well as some better articles (more honest, Biblically accurate, and academically rigorous) to even out the quality and value of the volume so that it may remain a timely resource. It will then better serve “the experienced pastor” and be “a course in homiletics for the seminarian and the beginning preacher.” (back cover, modified).

Also Noted

LHP Review (Rerun)

everywhere we are. For those who believe, the message of God’s love in Jesus and the story of His birth are still found in the symbols and traditions of even a modern Christmas.

“Join author Robert C. Baker in the conversation! You’ll find information about ‘Christmas wars,’ links to Web sites offering guidance for parents, teachers, and administrators concerned about keeping Christmas in public schools, Christmas recipes, and so on his blog, www.christmaseverywhere.wordpress.com” (Publisher’s website).

There is still time for this book to be part of the Twelve Days of Christmas at your home and/or congregation. It will help parents, grandparents, pastors, and the children in their Christian care! It will (and should) find wide readership beyond the LCMS and is a great blessing to Gospel-centered and Christ-focused Christians in the United States and English-speaking world. And this is a book you will use every Christmas!

PJC—Reprinted from QBR 2.2

Piano for Christmas


Creator of the Stars of Night is a collection of lush piano arrangements of churchly hymns for the Christmas season.

Cliff Lewis is a seasoned musician, though this is obviously quite different from his 80’s hard rock with the band Femme Fatale.

This is an album by a gifted pianist, with arrangements reminiscent of Windham Hill.

Pastor Timothy Scharr provides a unique contribution to the CD liner notes, namely devotions on the hymns themselves.

Visit www.equitablemusic.com to learn about the label’s other music projects and to place an order.

This is a perfect Christmas gift. Concordia Publishing House thought so, too, and included Creator in its fall and Christmas mini-catalogs. Order several copies today!

PJC


“Freshly translated from the original German into today’s English, this book contains a treasury of devotionals taken from Luther’s writings and sermons (1513 to 1546), conveniently divided into daily readings to point readers to the Bible and a deeper understanding of faith.

“Some people value good works so much that they overlook faith in Christ. Faith should be first…. It is faith—without good works and prior to good works—that takes us to heaven. We come to God through faith alone.—Martin Luther

“Resounding across the centuries, Martin Luther’s prolific writings as a pastor, theologian, scholar, Bible translator, father, and more, remain powerful and richly relevant. Faith Alone is a treasury of accessible devotionals taken from Luther’s best writings and sermons from the years 1513 through 1546. This carefully updated translation retains the meaning, tone, and imagery of Luther’s works.

“Through daily readings, Luther’s straightforward approach challenges you to a more thoughtful faith. Read one brief section a day or explore themes using the subject index in the back of the book. Faith Alone will deepen your understanding of Scripture and help you more fully appreciate the mystery of faith” (publisher’s website).

Together, Grace Alone, Faith Alone, Scripture Alone, Christ Alone, and To God’s Glory Alone are a beautiful summary of the teaching of the Lutheran Reformation.


As an owner of a copy of that previous edition, I noted no other substantial differences. Zondervan is to be commended for using the NIV instead of the TNIV.

In addition to a helpful subject index, another index gives the original source of the brief quotes in both the German St. Louis Edition and the English-

This particular volume, in all of its incarnations, has a weakness (at least from the Lutheran perspective). Namely, Luther is quoted accurately, but not necessarily in all of his richness, especially when it comes to Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The Subject Index identifies zero references to the sacraments. Luther did preach about the comfort Jesus promises in both of them. This was undoubtedly done to increase the book’s appeal to a general Christian audience; yet, these unfortunate omissions mean that Christians are not called to repentance and the recovery of Biblical teaching and practice on these gifts of our God and Savior.

Readers will be grateful for the work of Martin Luther, general editor James C. Galvin and his English stylists, as well as the publisher for making this devotional available again. As prolific an author as Luther was, this is a good first offering for Zondervan. I pray that the publishing house will make other writings of Luther available in their product catalog.

“James C. Galvin (EdD), is a former national training director of Youth for Christ (USA), and is now an organizational consultant specializing in strategy, leadership, and change. Dedicated to releasing the potential of leaders and organizations, he has been developing resources for Christian leaders for over twenty years” (publisher’s website).

PJC

Long-Neglected, Highly Regarded


“When it comes to suggesting a date for the creation of the Earth, perhaps few people have been the butt of more ridicule on the subject from skeptics than Archbishop James Ussher. It was Ussher who in the 1650s put forward the idea that this occurred on October 23, 4004 BC, and this year appeared as a marginal note in many Bibles up until about the mid-20th century. So was Ussher a wise man, a charlatan, or just naive? And what should we think about his date?

“James Ussher was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1581. As a young man he resolved to devote himself wholly to the work of the Church, and the Lord honoured him in his resolve. At 18 he entered Dublin University, which was then one of the major universities. At 20 he was ordained a deacon and priest in the Anglican Church at Dublin. At 26 he was appointed chairman of the Department of Divinity at Dublin, an honour accorded to very few who were that young. He was a professor from 1607 to 1621, and was twice appointed vice-chancellor of Trinity College, Dublin.

“From his early school days he excelled in history, and from the time he was 20 for the next two decades he read every history book he could get his hands on. He excelled in church history and prepared several large authoritative works dealing with the Irish and English churches from the times of the Apostles.

“In 1625, he was appointed Archbishop of Armagh, which was the highest position in the Irish Anglican Church. An expert in Semitic languages, he argued for the reliability of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and wrote widely on Christianity in Asia, and other Bible-related topics.

“In 1628, King James appointed him to his Privy Council in Ireland. He was critical of the rebellion against Charles the first. However, Cromwell, who headed the rebellion, held him in great esteem. When Ussher died, Cromwell held a magnificent funeral for him and had him buried in Westminster Abbey…

“So was Ussher Right? Ussher was neither charlatan nor naive; in fact, he was one of the most learned men of his day. Understanding the assumptions with which he began his calculations (particularly the one we should all begin with, namely that God's Word is true and reliable), we can readily understand how he arrived at his date for creation. In fact, if one assumes that there are no deliberate 'jumps' or gaps in the later genealogies (for which the evidence in my view is inadequate), then his date is a perfectly reasonable deduction based on his detailed knowledge of and reverence for the Word of God” (Source: Larry Pierce, The Online Bible, reproduced from the accompanying CD-ROM).
The CD-ROM also includes the Westminster Confession Of Faith (1648), and The Articles of Religion (1562). The 39 Articles form the basic summary of belief of the Church of England.

This slipcased hardcover and CD-ROM is worth the investment. Long locked up in Latin, Larry and Marion Pierce have blessed the modern church and Christians who take Scripture seriously by completing the mammoth task of translating Ussher’s masterwork into English. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! The translation was a labor of love from 1997-2003. Philip Melanchthon shows up on page 12 in the introductory material, on a page just facing the Reference Key. Each section is precisely dated in the years of the world from creation, the Julian Period, BC or AD and in years of the southern and northern kingdoms (when appropriate).

I read the volume during Olympics, ironic because much of the ancient history was measured in four-year Olympiads. “Troy was destroyed by the Greeks four hundred and eight years before the first Olympiad” (p. 455, 1184 BC). Did you know that old King Herod was named a judge for life (767)?

Extensive appendices give the necessary background information on Ussher and his ultimate writing task.

Ussher is skilled at weaving together all of history through A.D. 70, both sacred and secular. Only a careful and Scripture-filled master scholar could have accomplished this. The Annals of the World is a landmark in world literature. It simply has no peer.

Gold edging and a ribbon bookmark make for a handsome volume. Study your own copy with your children and pass it down to theirs!

Ussher was a defender of the inspiration and authority of Holy Scripture, as well as divine creation and a young earth, much like Master Books, the good Bishop’s new publisher.

PJC

Political Fun


Among the men who have held the highest office in our land, the names on the most popular list are rather well agreed upon: Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, T. Roosevelt, F. D. Roosevelt, Eisenhower, Kennedy…and Reagan. Americans look up to these men, though their ideas and political views as a group are as varied as any in America.

“Sometimes I can’t help but feel the First Amendment is being turned on its head. Because ask yourselves: can it really be true that the First Amendment can permit Nazis and Ku Klux Klansmen to march on public property, advocate the extermination of people of the Jewish faith and the subjugation of blacks, while the same amendment forbids our children form saying a prayer in school?” (11).

Reagan was styled “The Great Communicator.”

Who could forget, “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!”? This President endeared himself to Americans by his folksy stories, humor, and down-to-earth wisdom. While he and I may have had differences when it comes to a theological understanding of organized religion, original sin, and the bondage or freedom of the will, his profound, honest, and outspoken optimism served his country well in its time of need.

“Sometimes when I’m faced with an unbeliever, an atheist, I am tempted to invite him to the greatest gourmet dinner that one could ever serve, and when we finished eating that magnificent dinner, to ask him if he believes there’s a cook” (36).

In the current campaign, one party’s Presidential nominee and the other party’s Veep nominee are often called “celebrities” or “Rock Stars.” While that may be true, there has only been one “Movie Star” in the White House to date. And Schwarzenegger is constitutionally ineligible!

“The Supreme Court opens its proceedings with a religious invocation—Hear ye, hear ye, hear ye. God bless this honorable court and save these United States. And the members of Congress open their sessions with a prayer. We have a prayer every time this door opens. I just happen to believe the schoolchildren of the United States are entitled to the same privileges as Supreme Court justices and congressmen” (25).

There are many more lines that you will be able to read for yourself and hear Reagan saying them in his own voice.
“We have to keep in mind we are a nation under God, and if we ever forget that we’ll be just a nation under” (21).

Presidential election years are always replete with the necessary serious discussion of issues, policies, and positions. Take a humorous vacation from sober politics with The Wit and Wisdom of Ronald Reagan.

“A young man whose father is a carpenter grows up working in his father’s shop. He has no formal education. He owns no property of any kind. One day he puts down his tools and walks out of his father’s shop. He starts preaching on street corners and in the countryside…This uneducated, propertyless young man who preached on street corners…had a greater effect on the entire world th an all the rulers, kings, and emperors, all the conquerors, the generals and admirals, all the scholars, scientists, and philosophers who have ever lived—all put together” (49).

“James C. Humes is a former presidential speechwriter whose words have helped create some of the most memorable moments in history. Before his speechwriting career, he represented the U. S. State Department in lectures on American government all over the world. He has served as a communications advisor to major U. S. corporations, including IBM and DuPont. He is the author of twenty-three other books, including Confessions of a White House Ghostwriter (Regnery) and the Pulitzer Prize-nominated Churchill: Speaker of the Century. A widely sought speaker across the country, he lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania” (back flap).

PJC

Defending Against Atheism


Many books cross my reviewing desk. Most are religious, while some are secular. Many, unfortunately, fail to clearly confess who Jesus Christ is and what He has done for mankind. And some Christian books entirely miss the point of Jesus and forgiveness as God’s gift in Him. Why Faith Matters is similar to some of the books I’ve already mentioned. But wait just one moment! I have reason to criticize Christians for getting the center of Christian theology wrong (like the author who wrote this book’s forward).

What makes this book unique is its subject matter, hinted at in the title, and its author, Rabbi David Wolpe.

The title Why Faith Matters originally led me to believe that it would be about faith in God, that is, faith, His gift to us by the Holy Spirit for the sake of Christ that allows us to trust in the Lord, hold onto Him for dear life and into the gift of eternal life.

Faith, as Christians know, can be defined in different ways. Therefore, one must not judge a book by its cover. After reading the book, I understand Why Faith Matters to refer to “religious faith,” sincerely believing in a god as opposed to embracing secular humanism and/or atheism. I would commend a substitute title to the publishers, Why Religion Matters.

In that struggle, religious Americans can find common cause with other religious people.

Sincerity alone cannot be a basis for salvation, as one can be sincerely wrong, like investors in ENRON or Lehman Brothers. As a Lutheran Christian, I do still hold to the exclusive claims made in Greek New Testament by Jesus and His apostles and believe them to be authentic, claims worthy of building a life upon on earth as in heaven. Yes, salvation is as narrow as the cross, but it is wide open as His arms nailed there for all.

“Judging by today’s bestseller lists, you’d think that religion is either irrational or extreme. What’s missing between the atheists and the fanatics is a genuine debate; someone to point out that religion has value in the modern world. Why Faith Matters is an articulate, nondenominational defense of established religion in America. Refuting the cold reason of the atheists with a vision of religion informed by faith, love, and understanding, Wolpe follows in a tradition that stretches from Cardinal Newman to C. S. Lewis to Thomas Merton—all individuals of faith who brought religion and culture together in their own works.

“Wolpe takes readers through the origins and nature of faith; popular misunderstandings of the relationship between religion, violence, and progress; the place of the Bible in modern life; and the compatibility of god and science. He concludes with a powerful argument for the place of God, faith, and religion in modern life” (publisher).

Wolpe is a scholar with command of an amazing breadth of information at his disposal and also a gift for communicating. He writes, undoubtedly, as he
speaks, in an engaging, interesting, and informative style. He communicates difficult or obscure concepts with clarity, aplomb, and passion. He presents here a thoughtful apologetic for religious belief based on fact and personal experience. He also dismantles the intellectual house of cards built by secularists who deride “the folks” who cling to religion in good times and bad.

*Why Faith Matters* also provides insight into contemporary Judaism. On the basis of that, I will take the author to task for his reluctance to listen to our shared Pentateuch and for his failure to take the text at face value (Monotheism only 3000 years old (49?) That denies creation by the One True God ). This is particularly evident with his opinion that the Exodus didn’t take place the way the Hebrew Scriptures say (www.raceandhistory.com/historicalviews/doubtingexodus.htm, cf. 143).

While I wouldn’t use this book to catechize new Christians, I do see good potential for beneficial uses of *Why Faith Matters*: a comparison or alternative to the works of Christopher Hitchens and his same-minded successors; a text for a university course on comparative religions, for secular humanism IS a religion.

“David Wolpe is a Senior Rabbit at the Sinai Temple of Los Angeles, California. He has previously taught at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York, the University of Judaism in Los Angeles, and Hunter College in New York, and currently teaches at UCLA. Rabbi Wolpe writes for many publications…He is the author of six previous books, including the national bestseller *Making Loss Matter: Creating Meaning in Difficult Times* and his most recent book, *Floating Takes Faith: Ancient Wisdom for a Modern World*. Rabbi Wolpe lives in Los Angeles” (publisher).

**Entertaining Angels**


Hospitality is a Christian virtue. The authors reinforce this by focusing chapters upon character, strangers, family, management, your home, others, culture, and ministry. While this may be a more “feminine” book than *QBR* usually reviews, all Christians could benefit from it.

Current events are a good reminder. Strangers often need a place to stay during a mass evacuation.
Hospitality meets the need of the neighbor. It is love in action (65). Sometimes we do need the reminder to treat your family “as good as guests” (80).

Ennis and Tatlock were wise to include “management” in a book on hospitality. “Understand that orderliness, not perfection, is your goal. Managing your home in anticipation of extending hospitality is only one of your priorities. Preparation for guests should never alienate your own family members by creating a sterile, untouched home” (111). This could be said another way. A floor’s vocation to be walked on. Pots and pans are designed for cooking, not to be stored or looked at.

Think of homes as centers for evangelism (137), consider adding the phrase “regrets only” for a less-formal invitation (142), “others” (Chapter 6). What about hostess gifts? See 204ff. And, “not every event has to be an elaborate one” (226).

All things are to done for the sake of the Gospel and as a response to the Gospel (cf. 261). We forgive as we have been forgiven, serve as we have been serve, and love as we have been loved by God in Christ Jesus. I was hoping for a more clearly articulated Gospel motivation in the book. Home is a traditional place for hospitality. Consider the real need for hospitality at church. Offer to pick up a guest for a church service. If they drive themselves, at least offer to meet them in the parking lot. If you see a visitor at your congregation, you could offer to sit with them, guide them through the service, and introduce them to others in the congregation after service. Perhaps more hospitality on Sunday morning can remove stumbling blocks to people (less distractedly) hearing of Christ.

Practicing Hospitality includes good recipes, practical tips, great advice, and self-diagnostic questions based on experience.

“Pat Ennis and Lisa Tatlock have also coauthored Becoming a Woman Who Pleases God and Designing a Lifestyle That Pleases God and Designing a Lifestyle the Pleases God. Dr. Ennis chairs the Home Economics department at The Master’s College, and Dr. Tatlock has taught home economics at The Master’s College since 1988” (back cover).

A Modern Restatement of Truth

“Great Evil…Good God presents a concise and cogent answer for the dilemma that has faced off with Christianity from the beginning: If God is completely good and limitless in power, why does He permit the terrible evil that we see within the world? Assuming the historical accuracy of the Bible, this little book suggests answers to [this and] many other perplexing questions…” (back cover)

The problem of evil is a serious one for the thinking Christian as well as the Christian facing the bad things in life. Great literature ponders the same question, like Paradise Lost, the source of each chapter’s opening quotation (see also 43).

Author David Paul Anderson (re)introduces the reader to a Good God in the face of great evil. The book (as well as the cover) presents Jesus Christ, the crucified God-man as the solution we find to the evil within our own sinful flesh, and the evil in the world and the devil himself.

But why does the Devil has such an interest in humanity? The author asserts an idea: “I have come to believe that demons lust to experience the physical world” (31).

This is not all there is. “God is at work in it all [creation and new creation] to create a humanity that will never repeat the mistake of their original parents. A redeemed remnant of humanity will abide in love and oneness with God always” (20).

Christ is at the center of history, our redemption, and the new creation. “The Christ event” is one way Anderson speaks of the incarnation, crucifixion, and Resurrection of Jesus. The Means of Grace connect us to Christ (45).

The author clearly speaks of the true difference between love and lust (49). The Love of God in Christ Jesus is the answer for humanity’s true need. God is not the cause of evil (55), but He is the solution.

“For the human creature to be forever free and forever loving, there must be faith. Faith is simply a theological word for trust. Trust is foundation to our
relationship with God. God will never give us all information, precisely because there is information inappropriate for us as finite beings. There is an awareness to reality that would trespass what we should know and place us in harm’s way. God in His love will not share this information with us” (60). Faith is one of God’s many gifts to us.

Based within the Lutheran tradition (67), Great Evil…Good God is a book worth the reading and re-reading.

It simply cannot be said enough: “We are saved by grace through faith in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus” (69).

David Paul Anderson and his wife Nancy “live in Fairmont, Minnesota. They have five children, a dog and a cat. They are deeply appreciative of the parish family and the staff of Immanuel [Lutheran Church] in which David Paul serves the Lord Christ as Senior Pastor” (back cover).

History in Pictures


John Hannah’s’ recent pictorial guide for Kregel/Lion Hudson covers 1000 years of Church History, from A.D. 500-1500.

As usual, the maps and photographs draw the interest of the reader and keep his or her interest through 32 pages.

The book provides a succinct explanation of “The Rise of the Papacy,” explaining that it was a historical development, not an original feature of Christianity as Rome still asserts (4).

History is quite practical, too, when one considers the continuing influence and challenge of Islam since its founding in the 7th Century (10ff), its two major divisions, and military ambitions (18-19).

The 1054 Schism (16-17) between Christians in east and west could have benefited from two more pages, perhaps, but the major issues are laid out and the accompanying map shows their spheres of influence at the time.

Monasticism was a major influence during the period covered by the book, financially, spiritually, and academically, preserving ancient texts until the Renaissance and Reformation.

Who was Peter Lombard and why was he in the book (24)? What was the impact (even today) of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 (22)? Was the Conciliar Movement a real historical alternative to a Papacy (28)? Will Luther’s reforms make a big impact (31)? You may know the answers to these historical questions, but if not, I won’t spoil the fun! And you might have to wait for Volume 4 to answer the last question…

The paperback format is affordable and friendly for young people and adults alike. Perhaps, once the series is complete, Kregel could consider combining all of the Church History booklets into one hardcover Pictorial Guide.

“John D. Hannah is Distinguished Professor of Historical Theology and Research Professor of Theological Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, Texas” (back cover).

Islam Examined


The *Koran* is not a book that preaches “turn the other cheek.” No—quite the opposite. That in itself does NOT make every Muslim a terrorist, but it certainly doesn’t help.

There are Christians and Bible-believing Christians. Robert Spencer, author of Regeny’s Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam (and the Crusades), introduces his readers to Koran-believing Muslims, so-called “Islamic Fundamentalists,” the most extreme of whom have been styled “Islamofascists” or “Islamic terrorists” by the media and “the folks.”

Current events became quite relevant to Americans in the light of 9/11 and the War on Terror.
The greatest service of this new hardcover is to dispel popular myth with fact. Properly skewered is “Lutheran” Martin E. Marty. We may have an M.Div. degree from the same institution, but share little else theologically. He accuses authors like Spencer of “cherry picking” through the Koran for bad things to say about Muslims (59). Marty also cherry picks what he likes or dislikes about the Bible.

Like his previous work, the author supports his claim that the Christian Crusades were a response to Muslim aggression (99). This does not excuse Christian sin, but it does help correct the historical record.

Chapter Eight was the pivotal one for me, “The West Calls for Dialog; Islam Calls for Jihad” (139). There are only a few “choices” to avoid this war, accept Islam, pay the second-class-citizen tax, or die (148, my paraphrase). “To defeat the jihadists, we don’t need Islamic scholars to lecture the pope; we need them to lecture Muslims about why traditional Islamic teaching and jurisprudence [cf 170, 177] on jihad must be reformed. There is a difference between reform and deception. If the Protestant Reformers had indignantly denied that the Catholic Church taught transubstantiation and the sacramental priesthood, instead of arguing that such doctrines should be discarded, they would not have been reformers, but obfuscators. There is little hope for the ‘can’t we talk about this’ approach when the pope calls for dialogue and the Islamic reaction is violence on one hand and disingenuousness on the other” (151).

One difference between Luther and a potential “Islamic Luther” is that Martin Luther went back to the source of Christian doctrine and life, Christian Scripture. What Islam needs is a few choice “deletions.” When a Christian calls him or herself a “moderate,” I weep, because they delete or reinterpret or deny what they don’t like in the Bible. Yet, when a Muslim moderates his or her personal belief and life practice away from the harsh teachings of the Koran, I rejoice.

Consider the subtitle. Christianity IS a religion of peace. It has also been a religion of innovation, freedom, and scholarship (Chapter 9). Islam is not (158). Under the banner of Islam, women find oppression (Chapter 11), slavery still exists, and true religious freedom is denied.

The author invites adherents of other world religions (204) to join with Christians against the common challenge of militant Islam. More importantly Spencer points to Christianity as the true religion of peace and best defense of Western Civilization.

Buy a copy for your own education. Consider donating one to your public library, too.

“Robert Spencer is the director of Jihad Watch, a program of the David Horowitz Freedom Center, and author of the New York Times bestsellers The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam (and the Crusades) and “The Truth About Muhammad, as well as six other books on Islam and terrorism, including Onward Muslim Soldiers: How Jihad Still Threatens America and the West and Islam Unveiled….Spencer has studied Islamic theology, law, and history for more than 25 years” (publisher).

PJC

Truth Is often Politically Incorrect


http://www.regnery.com/pig.html

Too many mainstream books, even those of the ‘for Dummies’ and ‘for Idiots’ variety, deride traditional, faithful Christian belief and history as backward, unenlightened, or out-of-touch. Regnery’s new PIG book is different. Robert J. Hutchinson informs his readers about some important contemporary perspectives on the Bible today.

The author defends taking the Bible’s text seriously, while respectfully critizing Scripture’s own critics while exposing them (e.g. The Jesus Seminar) for the apostate fools they truly are. Even David Wolpe criticizes the Bible’s account of Exodus. Consider Chapter Thirteen for clear refutations of some of the latest silly interpretations of Jesus.

This is a mainstream book of apologetics (defense of the faith). Atheists, not Christians (14), are responsible for innumerable deaths in the 20th Century. No, Rosie, Christians are not the same as Islamic terrorists.

Get an update on Bible-related archeology (Chapter Two), review 20th Century and contemporary challenges to the unique human/divine authorship of the Bible (Chapter Three).
Did you know that J. R. R. Tolkien was one of the translators of the original (NOT New) Jerusalem Bible (60), Martin Luther was a decidedly pro-life (84), that the founders of the modern major scientific disciplines were Christians (137, 148ff), and that the Bible and Christianity are the source or inspiration of social reforms and political freedom in the West (passim).

This PIG would be a great gift for Pastor Appreciation Month (October) or for any layperson.

“In light of recent events, you will also want to add another Politically Incorrect Guide, the PIG to Capitalism.

The term “capitalism” was originally one of derision, bestowed by none other than Karl Marx himself (6). Private property is essential to the system, which depends upon self-interest as a powerful incentive for hard work.

Capitalism is probably the best economic system human beings have come up with because it promotes and rewards hard work without regard to special interests or preferential treatment.

Yet, capitalism has a flaw. That’s difficult for me to admit, given what I’ve written already. But hear me out: capitalism is flawed by sinners. And that includes, every business owner, every stockholder, every investor, every government regulator or bureaucrat, namely every human being.

The absolute best economic system would probably be “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,” reference. Our Lord Jesus was and is the only perfect practitioner of His own system.

I think theologically about our life as human beings in this world because of the law of love, “Love one another,” reference.

In the light of our current financial mess on Wall Street (threatening Main Street), is now the time for more or less “pure ideology” when it comes to capitalism? Like most Americans could say, the answer isn’t up to me.

Often, government intervenes. And be prepared to encounter the famous “law of unintended consequence” in months, years, and decades to come (74). The following is quite relevant and timely: “A bank that is deemed ‘too big to fail’—meaning it will get billions in government bailouts if its investments turn sour—is a bank that takes too many risks” (95).

This PIG guide was the course in economics that my university course of study never included (for I was a history and math major headed to the seminary). In studying it, you will be better prepared for those conversations over the fence post, at the water cooler, or to be an active and informed TV news watcher and voter this election year. And, reading Adam Smith’s Wealth of Nations wouldn’t hurt either (150).

Capitalism is imperfect, but is far better than the other alternatives that have since been rightly consigned to the ash heap of history.

Robert P. Murphy earned his Ph.D. in economics from New York University. A former professor at Hillsdale College, he is now an adjunct scholar with the Ludwig von Mises Institute and an analyst at Laffer Associates. He has worked both as an economics scholar and lecturer, as an investment/business analyst, and as a writer of popular journalism on economic topics. He lives with this wife and son in Nashville, Tennessee” (back cover).

PJC

Pre-View Reviews

The LSB Treasury of Daily Prayer

“Cultivate an enriching devotional life with a book that nourishes your time with God. This comprehensive Lutheran resource brings together Scripture readings, prayers, psalms, hymns, and devotional readings from the church fathers to guide daily prayer and meditation on God’s Word.

“Organized around the Christian Church Year, Treasury of Daily Prayer is designed to be an all-in-one resource for daily devotions for individuals, families, and small groups. View the "How to Use" helpful download below for a complete overview.

“The regular edition has a durable sewn binding and includes a FREE 6-ribbon bookmark to help organize your daily prayer and devotion.

+ Dark Green = marks the Church Year calendar section

+ Gold = marks the current day in the Church Year

+ Red = marks the order of prayer you are using
Purple = marks the additional prayers you may choose to use
Light Green = marks your place in the Psalms
Blue = marks "Prayers for the Baptized Life"

Add a Treasury of Daily Prayer book cover to protect your investment. Comes in black or burgundy!

View additional excerpts and testimonials, or leave a message, comment, or testimonial of your own on our discussion board at cph.org/prayer

With liturgical music provided in a format even better (and more familiar) than Pfatteicher’s The Daily Prayer of the Church, the churchliness of The Brotherhood Prayer Book, the ease of use of For All the Saints, and all the resources of Lutheran Service Book, Treasury of Daily Prayer is the devotional you have been waiting for.

Perfect for personal or group use, Lutherans finally have a widely-available and affordable one-volume breviary.

And this prayerbook appears to have staying power. In that I mean that Concordia can and should keep this in print for years and generations to come.

There is truly nothing quite like Treasury. You simply must see for yourself.

Buy a leather heirloom edition to use with your family at prayer time. Buy several paperback editions to give this Christmas.

In today's busy times, God's people long for a richer, more intentional life of prayer and meditation on God's Word. Treasury of Daily Prayer presents an ordered collection of materials that guide daily prayer and devotions, and is appropriate for use by individuals, families, and small groups.

Scripture readings, prayers, psalms, hymnody, writings from the Church fathers appointed for each day work together to deepen reflection, and encourage personal devotion. Enliven your practice of prayer with the most comprehensive, single-volume Lutheran devotional resource ever published.

Explore our product excerpts, hear what others have said, post your comments, and participate in conversation with others as you learn more about this new resource, only from Concordia Publishing House.

Use the link below to take a look inside the Treasury, and find a sample you can begin using right now in your daily devotions.

Take a Look Inside (publisher’s website).

Finale 2009


The power and ease of use of Finale music software continually approves, especially notable since my original 2003 purchase and most recent 2006 upgrade.

It’s barely out of the box, and it is already a blessing.

More to come...

Also Recommended

Devotions with C. F. W. W.

God Grant It (CPH) is a collection of a year’s worth of daily devotions derived from sermons by C. F. W. Walther. They have been a blessing to my wife and me since Advent 2007. Preachers may find the volume useful because of the Scripture index, a good potential resource for excellent sermon helps.

Rediscover the Historic (One-Year) Lectionary by yourself or with your family in the new Church Year.

Beginning with the first week of Advent, God Grant It provides a daily devotion for each day in the year, placing particular significance on the church year. Through these classic sermons of Walther, the modern reader will be reminded that God's mercies...
are new every day, that His mercies are ours by the
work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Translated into modern English, these readings are
intended to encourage the laity, as well as pastors,
and affirm them in their daily lives as redeemed
children of God. Each devotion is accompanied by a
Scripture reference and a hymn verse. The
daily devotion will take less than ten minutes to read”
(publisher’s website).

Books Received

Aitken, Jonathan. Prayers for People Under
(630) 682-4300 (L)

Anderson, David Paul. The Book of Talyara: The
Chronicle of Windwalker. Mustang, OK: Tate
www.tatepublishing.com (LHP)

Anderson, David Paul. Plague of Terror.
Paper. $19.95. www.rivercitypress.net (LHP)

Andreopoulos, Andreas. The Sign of the Cross:
The Gesture, the Mystery, the History.
Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2006. 152
Pages. Cloth. $19.95. www.paracletepress.com
(L)

Arthurs, Jeffrey D. Foreword by Haddon W.
Robinson. Preaching with Variety: How to Re-
create the Dynamics of Biblical Genres. Grand

Atkinson, James. Martin Luther: Prophet to the
Church Catholic. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf &
Stock, 2004. (Originally published by
Paternoster, 1983.) 230 Pages. Paper (pdf copy
reviewed). $20.00. www.wipfandstock.com
(541) 344-1528 (LHP)

Bansmer, Richard. Forced to Pray: God’s
Chosen Under Pressure. Delhi, NY: American
Lutheran Publicity Bureau, 2008. 129 Pages.
Paper. $12.50. www.alpb.org (607) 746-7511
(L)

Bond, Douglas. Fathers and Sons, Volume 1:
Stand Fast In the Way of Truth. Phillipsburg,
NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing
www.prpbooks.com (LHP)

Bond, Douglas. Mr. Pipes Comes to America.
Arlington Heights, IL: Christian Liberty Press,
2001. 194 Pages. Paper. $9.95. (All four novels
are available for $35.00.)
www.christianlibertypress.com (847) 259-4444
(H)

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. Barcelona, Berlin, New
York 1928-1931 (Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works 10).


Craig, Karen L. Matin Latin, Book 1. Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 1999. 143 Pages Spiral bound. $28.00 www.canonpress.com (LHP)


Phillips, John. *100 Devotions for Pastors and Church Leaders, Volume 1*. Grand Rapids:


Tappert, Theodore G., editor. Selected Writings of Martin Luther. (Four Volumes: 1517-1520, 1520-1523, 1523-1526, 1529-1546). 60 Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2007. 484, 408, 483, and 403 pages, respectively. Four paperback volumes in a slipcase. $60.00. www.augsburgfortress.org (800) 328-4648 (LHP)


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**A Closing Thought**

"Tradition means giving votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead. Tradition refuses to submit to the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who happen to be walking about."

G.K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*  
*English author & mystery novelist (1874 - 1936)*
Liturgy, Hymnody & Pulpit Quarterly Book Review will return in December. In addition, issues of our Liturgy, Hymnody & Pulpit newsletter (one page, front and back) are also available. Visit our website for archives and other resources.

Digital Worship Resources from the LCMS Wyoming District

http://wy.lcms.org/LHP/QBR