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Augustana: A Lively Tradition

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Augustana: A Lively Tradition

The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) celebrates its fiftieth anniversary in 2012, and the June 2012 issue of *Currents in Theology and Mission* marks this anniversary by focusing on one of the six traditions that have converged to constitute the seminary. The Augustana heritage has been a crucial contributor to LSTC's identity and mission, and the articles in this issue explore specific aspects of this heritage. All of the articles are slight revisions of presentations made at Augustana Heritage Association (AHA) Gatherings and have been posted on the AHA website at www.augustanaheritage.org. They are printed in this issue of *Currents* by permission of the Augustana Heritage Association and the individual authors.

In the first essay, Arland J. Hultgren explores the question of whether there was a distinctive Augustana way of being Lutheran in North America. He answers the question affirmatively and offers five descriptions of the Augustana Synod's Lutheran identity: Augustana was a small church with a big heart; it functioned as a bridge church between Eastern and Midwestern Lutheranism; its ecclesiology fostered both congregational and synodical loyalty; it avoided major theological controversy even as it promoted admirable theological scholarship; and it cultivated a rich liturgical tradition that was shaped largely by the liturgy of the Church of Sweden. Augustana's way of being Lutheran in North America was expressed particularly in these ways according to Hultgren.

Norman Hjelm provides an overview of the Augustana Synod's relationship with churches throughout the world. He focuses particularly on the Synod's persistent relationship with the Church of Sweden and its creative engagement with the Lundensian School. He also highlights the Synod's efforts to repair broken relationships with European Lutherans caused by World War I and particularly by World War II and to provide emergency assistance to Lutheran Christians who were particularly impacted by the ravages of war. In the last section of the essay, Hjelm traces Augustana's participation in ecumenical bodies, particularly the Lutheran Council and the Lutheran World Convention which would become The Lutheran World Federation. Hjelm's account confirms that Augustana was a church with a clear ecumenical commitment manifest in a variety of cooperative efforts.

Gerald Christianson recounts the story of the emergence of Augustana Seminary as a "modern" seminary that was also "historically respectable and genuinely Lutheran." He argues that this emergence, after 1930, was due primarily to the appointment of four faculty members, Conrad Bergendoff as Dean and Professor of Systematic Theology, A.D. Mattson as Professor of Christian Ethics and Sociology, Eric Wahlstrom as Professor of Greek and New Testament Exegesis, and Carl Anderson as Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis. All of these men made important scholarly contributions and shaped the Seminary's identity for three decades. They did so by affirming Augustana's heritage of confessional commitment, liturgical worship, and communal identity while also embracing the modern ideals of ecumenism, social justice, and historical-critical study of Scripture. Christianson proposes that this intentional combining of traditional and modern priorities did not cause conflict in the Seminary

or the Synod because a creative synthesis was achieved especially through a persistent engagement with Lundensian theology. The old and the new were thereby brought together in a constructive way that promoted an "ecumenical confessionalism" and transformed Augustana into a modern seminary.

Maria Erling not only discusses the Augustana Synod's youth work in her essay but also offers helpful insights into the process of Swedish immigrant assimilation into North American society. She notes that Swedes were a privileged community of immigrants who were generally welcomed by the dominant United States citizenry because of their acceptable ethnicity. The incorporation into United States society was, therefore, a relatively positive experience for Swedes. As the North American culture taught the Swedish immigrants how to become American, the Synod sought to preserve the immigrants' Swedish identity by reminding particularly the young of their ancestral history through the educational programs of church colleges; various jubilee celebrations; and the Luther League, the Synod's youth organization. The latter also became an important means of training future leaders of the church. Through such efforts the Swedish identity of its people was kept alive by the Augustana Synod, and leaders who were loyal to the Synod and its mission were trained and nurtured.

Communities, like individuals, are shaped in significant ways by their heritage. LSTC is no exception. As this community reminds itself of its past while it eagerly anticipates the future, it recognizes that it has inherited a rich tradition that remains a resource for its mission now and in years to come. Augustana has contributed much to that tradition, and for this we give thanks to God.

Kurt K. Hendel

Co-editor of Currents in Theology and Mission

Augustana and Lutheran Identity in America

Arland J. Hultgren

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There are others who have a longer institutional memory than I, and they would take up this topic in ways different from my own. Each of us gathered for this occasion has had experiences both inside and outside of the Augustana Church that are quite specific, and they affect how we assess that church.

In my own case, I grew up in an Augustana congregation, Mamrelund Lutheran Church, located in a rural area north of Grand Rapids, Michigan, equidistant to two small towns, Kent City and Sparta. Founded in 1866, it is the oldest Augustana congregation in the state.

College and seminary were both here in Rock Island. I was a member of the last class to enter Augustana Seminary. Our class entered in the fall of 1961, but by the time we had finished our very first academic year, we were students at the Lutheran School of Theology—Rock Island Campus. So we are alumni of LSTC, but we were educated by the professors in Rock Island.

In spite of my roots in the Augustana Church and its institutions, the course of my professional life has not been at institutions founded by the Augustana Church, except for some time in parish ministry at Trinity Lutheran Church, Tenafly, New Jersey, founded in 1910. Aside from that, the contexts in which I have lived and worked have been primarily in a college founded by Lutherans of the United Lutheran Church in America on the East Coast—Wagner College, Staten Island—and then at Luther Seminary, founded by Lutherans of other traditions, primarily Norwegian. That means that I have bumped up against other ways of being Lutheran in America. Those experiences have been delightful, puzzling, and sometimes a challenge. They have often provoked me to think about what it meant to be an Augustana Lutheran in North America. They have also provided a vantage point from outside.

The assignment to speak about "Augustana and Lutheran Identity in America" was given to me by the program committee several months ago. I have spent time trying to figure out what to do with it. After many false starts, going down blind alleys, I came to a conclusion. I decided that the best way for me to approach the topic is simply to ask the question: "Was there a distinctive Augustana way of being Lutheran in North America?" I realized early on that there are several ways of being Lutheran in America. They are not necessarily better or worse, but they are different. They range over the spectrum all the way from a strict confessionalism, as embodied in the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, to the stark simplicity and antipathy toward formal theological education in the Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Church. These illustrate the breadth of possible ways of being Lutheran in North

America, and there are others.

Finding something distinctive of any Lutheran body is complicated by the sheer number of synods and associations that Lutherans have created over the years. How many were there? I have seen various estimates. According to one estimate, Lutherans created some sixty church bodies between 1840 and 1875.[1] According to another, the number of synods created along geographic, ethnic, and doctrinal lines since 1748 exceeds one hundred. [2]

Attempts have been made to unify Lutherans, but we know how slow the process has been. Back in 1965 church historian Winthrop Hudson, a Baptist, wrote words that do not surprise us:

> By 1900, there were 24 different Lutheran groups, with the family tree of most of them so complicated, by constant reshuffling, that it was difficult to chart even their individual histories.[3]

I return to the question that I posed: "Was there a distinctive Augustana way of being Lutheran in North America?" I have settled on five different ways. There are certainly others, but I do not think anyone would cross these five off the list.

I. A Small Church with a Big Heart

The Augustana Church was never very large. At the time of the Lutheran Church in America merger in 1962, it consisted of 629,547 baptized members, 423,673 confirmed, in 1,269 congregations.[4] That was rather small on the North American scene, even among Lutherans. It accounted for only seven percent of Lutherans belonging to various synodical bodies. It was much smaller than the big three: the United Lutheran Church in America with its nearly 2.4 million baptized, the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod with over 2.3 million baptized members, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church—earlier called the Norwegian Lutheran Church—that became a part of The American Lutheran Church in 1960 with over 1.1 million baptized members.[5]

However, in proportion to its size, Augustana had a very large presence on the North American scene. It had founded several colleges in Minnesota, Texas, and Idaho that went out of business. Yet, four four-year colleges still existed in 1962—Augustana, Bethany, Gustavus Adolphus, and Upsala—plus Luther Junior College in Wahoo, Nebraska, which merged that same year with Midland Lutheran Col-

1. Krista R. Klein, "Lutheranism," *Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience: Studies of Traditions and Movements*, ed. by Charles H. Lippy and Peter W. Williams, 3 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988), 1:439.

2. Conrad Bergendoff, *The Doctrine of the Church in American Lutheranism,* The Knubel-Miller Lectures, 1956 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1956), 75 (n. 1).

3. Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion in America* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), 260.

4. G. Everett Arden, *Augustana Heritage: A History of the Augustana Lutheran Church* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1963), 410.

5. The statistics are from the *Yearbook of American Churches*, ed. Benson Y. Landis (New York: National Council of Churches, 1960), 255–256. The figures are for 1959. The precise figures provided are 2,369,263 for the ULCA; 2,304,962 for the LCMS; and 1,125,867 for the ELC. The total for all the Lutheran churches listed is 8,006,932 baptized members.

lege.[6] In addition, it had its own theological seminary.

There were also a good number of institutions of mercy, as they were called: ten hospitals, which often had schools for nursing; twenty-four homes for the aged; six hospices; ten homes for children, including the remarkable Bethphage Mission of Axtell, Nebraska, for which we, the children of Augustana, sold Crimson Hearts. In addition there was the Immanuel Deaconess Institute of Omaha, and the Seaman's Center in New York. The church also supported forty-two inter-Lutheran health and welfare agencies.[7]

In an essay prepared for the centennial of the church in 1960, Robert Holmen calculated that Lutheran church bodies, inter-synodical Lutheran organizations, and various associations of Lutherans in North America owned some 300 institutions. Of these, Augustana owned fifteen percent, even though it made up only seven percent of the membership of those Lutheran churches. If one goes on to speak of direct ownership by the churches themselves, rather than by inter-Lutheran organizations and associations, Augustana owned thirty percent of the institutions in spite of its membership of seven percent of Lutheran churches of the time.[8]

If we look to another area, global missions, we see the Augustana Church deeply involved. According to David Vikner, no less than 432 men and women were commissioned as missionaries to ten foreign countries over the years, usually accompanied by spouses and children. Most went to India, mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and Tanzania.[9] A Committee on Foreign Missions was organized in 1861, and the earliest person commissioned as a missionary was Pastor August B. Carlson who was sent to India in 1878. The Board of Foreign Missions was established in 1923.

One could go on to give details about these and other aspects of Augustana, particularly its outstanding youth ministry, its homeland missions in the United States and Canada, the expansive role of women in the life of the church, and more. However, on those matters, statistics are more difficult to find.

There is a temptation, of course, to be nostalgic and even try to claim some bragging rights in all this. That is not my intention. Every Lutheran church tradition in North America would have bragging rights on some matter. However, especially on this 150th anniversary of the founding of the Augustana Church, neither should we forget what our forebears accomplished. They constituted a small church with a big heart.

II. A Bridge Church

Augustana was a bridge church. The term "bridge church" was given to me. I was in a conversation one day with a colleague who does not come from the Augustana tradition but from a predecessor body of The American

6. For a list of some of the colleges that went out of existence, cf. Emmet E. Eklund, "Lutheran Higher Education: The Augustana Tradition," *The Augustana Heritage: Recollections, Perspectives, and Prospects*, ed. Arland J. Hultgren and Vance L. Eckstrom (Chicago: Augustana Heritage Association, 1999), 272.

7. Lee H. Wesley, "Social Ministry in the Augustana Lutheran Church," *The Augustana Heritage*, 183–190.

8. Robert E. Holmen, "The Ministry of Mercy," *Centennial Essays: Augustana Lutheran Church 1860-1960*, ed. Emmer Engberg (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1960), 244.

9. David L. Vikner, "Augustana in World Mission, 1861–1962: Introduction," *The Augustana Heritage*, 193–195.

Lutheran Church. He said that Augustana was always the "bridge church," and I think I know what he meant. The thought is echoed in a statement by Edgar Trexler, who came out of the United Lutheran Church in America tradition and served as editor of *The Lutheran* magazine. In his historical record of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) merger process, he says that the Augustana Church, though no longer existing, was "a bridge builder in the merger process."[10] There is also that well-known article about the formation of the ELCA in *The Christian Century* in 1987, written by Richard Koenig, "The New Lutheran Church: The Gift of Augustana."[11]

The relationship of Augustana with other Lutheran churches is interesting from many perspectives. What is particularly interesting is that it was often caught in the middle of struggles between much larger Lutheran churches, particularly between so-called "Eastern Lutheranism," meaning the United Lutheran Church in America, and so-called "Upper Midwest Lutheranism," meaning primarily the Scandinavian bodies, dominated by sheer numbers by Lutherans of Norwegian heritage. It is not an insult to either of those traditions to say that they were often at odds with one another in days gone by; the historical record shows that. The record also shows that Augustana tried as best it could to steer a middle course and to create a bridge between them.

To tell the story of how Augustana worked its way through the maze of synodical relationships requires a review of some major turning points in Lutheran history in North America, but within limits. I will limit myself to Augustana's relationships with the church bodies that made up the National Lutheran Council. Of those eight, four flowed into The American Lutheran Church in 1960, although the Lutheran Free Church came in a bit later, and the other four flowed into the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) in 1962.

He knew that, in order for a Swedish Lutheran church to survive in America, it had to try new approaches.

The Augustana Church sought to be on good terms with all of the churches within the National Lutheran Council. However, that was not easy, and it caused some irritation among some of the other churches along the way. So, if Augustana was eventually to be recognized as "the bridge church," that honor came with some bumps and bruises within American Lutheranism.

When Lars Paul Esbjörn arrived in America in 1849, he was aware that Swedish Lutherans in the New Sweden colony had been too dependent on the Church of Sweden for its support and totally dependent on it for obtaining pastors. He knew that, in order for a Swedish Lutheran church to survive in America, it had to try new approaches. Moreover, he became

10. Edgar R. Trexler, *Anatomy of a Merger: People, Dynamics, and Decisions That Shaped the ELCA* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1991), 246.

11. Richard Koenig, "The New Lutheran Church: The Gift of Augustana," *The Christian Century* 104/19 (June 17–24, 1987): 555–558.

aware soon enough that provisions had to be made for educating pastors within North America itself.[12]

Esbjörn had been in North America only two years when he and the three Swedish congregations in Andover and Moline, Illinois, and New Sweden, Iowa, joined the newly formed Synod of Northern Illinois in 1851. That synod was a coalition of pastors and congregations consisting of Swedes, Norwegians, and "Americans" (English-speaking individuals primarily of German origins who had moved westward). Often the membership of Esbjörn and others in that synod is considered nothing more than a prelude to the forming of the Augustana Church, but in fact it was one of the most fateful events for the trajectory that Augustana was to take early on in its life. Membership in the Synod of Northern Illinois was a catalyst for the Swedish Lutherans to become more self-conscious of their way of being Lutheran in North America. It was also a factor in its forming of associations with Lutheran bodies that had been created earlier in the eastern part of the United States—something that the other Scandinavian churches would not do.

By joining the Synod of Northern Illinois, the Swedish Lutherans found themselves quite soon in wider associations of Lutherans outside the Midwest. Those associations were not always happy; in fact, they were often tumultuous. Nevertheless, the Augustana tradition never developed the distrust of so-called "Eastern Lutheranism" that characterized so much of Midwestern Lutheranism.

At the time of joining the Synod of Northern Illinois there were not many alternatives. There were only two synods of any viable size in the Midwest at the time. One was the Missouri Synod, founded by Germans in 1847, but that was hardly an option. Even if the Swedes wanted to join that body, it is unlikely that the Missouri Synod would have accepted the Swedish pastors and congregations into their synod. Moreover, there is no evidence that the Swedes wanted to join that synod.[13] The other synod on the scene was the Eielsen Synod, formed by Norwegians in 1846, but that was hardly an option because of its strong emphasis on lay preaching and its requirement of evidence of conversion for membership in its congregations.

There was another synod being formed in Wisconsin by Norwegians, the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, popularly known as the Norwegian Synod, but that synod was not created until 1853. Perhaps the Swedes could have waited and could have cooperated to form a broader Scandinavian synod, but that would have been fruitless, for the Norwegian Synod was unmistakably Norwegian and sought to replicate features of the state church of Norway on the North American scene.[14] Moreover,

12. Lars Paul Esbjörn, *Report on the Development and Current State of the Swedish Lutheran Congregations in North America, Presented at the Clergy Meeting of the Upsala Archepiscopal See, 14 June 1865*, trans. John E. Norton (Rock Island: Augustana Historical Society, 2009), 12.

13. On relationships between these synods, see Mark A. Granquist, "The Augustana Synod and the Missouri Synod," *Lutheran Quarterly* 24 (2010): 42–60.

14. Additional reasons for not joining this group, even after it came into being, are provided by Hugo Söderström, *Confession and Cooperation: The Polity of the Augustana Synod in Confessional Matters and the Synod's Relations with other Churches up to the Beginning of the Twentieth Century*, Bibliotheca Historico-Ecclesiastica Lundensis IV (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup Bokförlag, 1973), 49; cf. also the report by L. Esbjörn, *Report on the Development and Current State of the Swedish Lutheran*

its leaders opposed the influences of the Norwegian revivalist lay preacher Hans Nielsen Hauge. Therefore an association with the Swedes, influenced by the Swedish revivalist lay preacher Carl O. Rosenius, was not likely.

There were synods existing in the eastern United States at the time, but they were remote geographically. The Synod of Northern Illinois was the best option at the time. In fact, Esbjörn played a role in its founding. In 1850, a year before its founding, Esbjörn was still the only ordained Swedish Lutheran pastor in the land. During that year he contacted two Norwegian pastors in Chicago who had no interest in joining with those forming the Norwegian Synod in Wisconsin. Esbjörn approached them about forming a Scandinavian Lutheran synod in Illinois.[15]

However, Esbjörn cannot be called one of the founders of the Synod of Northern Illinois. It was founded on September 18, 1851, at Cederville, Illinois, about 30 miles northwest of Rockford.[16] Esbjörn and a lay delegate from Andover arrived a day late to miss the actual founding, but both he and the Swedish congregations were received into the synod during the five-day meeting.

The story from the early 1850s to 1860 is a sad one, and we need not go into details. The Synod of Northern Illinois joined the Evangelical Lutheran General Synod of the United States of America in 1853. The General Synod, founded in 1820, was a federation of district synods, and by 1860 it encompassed about two-thirds of all Lutherans in North America. It was notorious for its latitude. It seems that any group could join it that claimed in some fashion to be Lutheran. Some of its synods had no confessional statement in their constitutions at all.[17] In the case of the Synod of Northern Illinois, it was received into the General Synod with a confessional statement, but it was a weak one. It claimed that the Augsburg Confession was "mainly correct." That was not satisfactory to Esbjörn, and when he joined that synod, he made a request that the minutes record that, for the Swedish congregations, the symbolical books of the Lutheran Church are believed to contain "a correct summary and exposition of the divine word." His request was granted.[18]

The Synod of Northern Illinois founded a college in Springfield in 1851 with the grandiose name of the Illinois State University, although it was not a state school and was hardly a university. In its first year of operation it had four faculty members and eighty-two students.[19] Lars Paul Esbjörn began teaching there in 1858 with twenty Scandinavian students.[20]

Congregations in North America, 8–9. A brief account of the founding of this church body is provided by August R. Suelflow and E. Clifford Nelson, "Following the Frontier," *The Lutherans in North America*, ed. E. Clifford Nelson (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 186–188.

15. Oscar N. Olson, *The Augustana Lutheran Church in America: Pioneer Period, 1848–1860* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1950), 134.

16. George M. Stephenson, *The Founding of the Augustana Synod 1850-1860* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1927), 17.

17. Richard C. Wolf, *Documents of Lutheran Unity in America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 66.

18. Stephenson, *The Founding of the Augustana Synod*, 18.

19. Olson, *The Augustana Lutheran Church*, 266; G. Everett Arden, *School of the Prophets: The Background and History of Augustana Theological Seminary* (Rock Island: Augustana Theological Seminary, 1960), 75.

20. George M. Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration: A*

For Esbjörn and the increasing number of Scandinavians associated with him, the Synod of Northern Illinois was not a satisfactory association, and the conditions at Springfield became intolerable. Doctrinal matters and other issues came to a head in the spring of 1860, and Esbjörn resigned his professorship. From June 5th to June 11th of that year, twenty-six pastors and fifteen lay delegates from forty-nine congregations consisting of 4,967 members founded the Augustana Synod.[21] It ceased at the same time its membership in the General Synod. Its doctrinal statement concerning the Augsburg Confession said that that document is a "correct summary of the principal Christian doctrines."

The act of cutting off its ties with the General Synod did not mean that the Augustana Synod was to go into isolation. The trajectory of Augustana from the earliest days continued so that it maintained ties with Lutherans outside the Midwest. In 1870, the Augustana Synod joined the newly formed General Council, a coalition of district synods primarily in the East that was more solidly confessional than the General Synod had ever been. It was established at the invitation of the venerable Ministerium of Pennsylvania in 1866 as a union of synods that "confess the Unaltered Augsburg Confession."[22] Over the years its membership varied; at one time or another twenty-four synods belonged to it.[23]

Augustana had a unique place within the General Council. It was the only Scandinavian group to join it. It was also the only non-geographical synod within it and had the largest membership of any of the member synods.[24] Moreover, Carl A. Swensson of Lindsborg, Kansas, served as President of the General Council from 1893 to 1895, and it met in Rock Island and Moline in 1915.[25] The host congregations were First Lutheran Church, Moline, and Zion Lutheran Church, Rock Island, which merged with Grace Lutheran Church in 1928 to form St. John's Lutheran Church.[26] Augustana College and Theological Seminary hosted a reception in Denkmann Memorial Hall. Several Augustana individuals preached sermons and addressed those present. These included the Synod President Lawrence Johnston (President, 1911–1918) and G. A. Brandelle, soon to become the next President of the Synod (1918–1935). The incomparable and indomitable Emmy Evald addressed the Women's Missionary Mass Meeting.[27] She was the founder and long-time President of the Women's Missionary Society of the Augustana Church (1892–1935). Among other things, that organization raised money for the construction of the building on the Augustana College campus called at various times the

Study of Immigrant Churches (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1932; reprinted, New York: Arno Press, 1969), 185.

21. Arden, *Augustana Heritage*, 83.

22. Wolf, *Documents of Lutheran Unity in America*, 141.

23. William A. Good, *A History of the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America* (Ph.D. diss.; New Haven: Yale University, 1967), 306–307. At the time of the ULCA merger in 1918 it consisted of fourteen synods.

24. E. Theodore Bachmann, *The United Lutheran Church in America, 1918–1962* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 74.

25. *Minutes of the Thirty-Fifth Convention of the General Council* (Philadelphia: General Council Publication Board, 1915).

26. Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration,* 467.

27. *Minutes of the Thirty-Fifth Convention of the General Council*, 305–306.

"Women's Building," "Carlsson Hall," and finally the "Emmy Carlsson Evald Hall."

This sketch is sufficient to show how the Augustana trajectory was to develop within North American Lutheranism. It was set on a course that would position Augustana within a large company. Early in the twentieth century one could expect that Augustana would continue as an ally of all the other synods within the General Council to merge with two other large units to form the United Lutheran Church in America (UCLA) in 1918.

However, that was not to be. Augustana voted against joining the ULCA at its national convention at Minneapolis in 1918. Four leaders of the ULCA merger came to the convention and made an appeal, and the president of the church, G. A. Brandelle, favored being a part of the merger.[28] However, the negative vote was almost unanimous. In his history of the ULCA, E. Theodore Bachmann has a brief section concerning Augustana in 1918. He calls that portion of his book "Augustana Disappoints."[29] He speaks of Augustana's action of withdrawing from the ULCA merger as "a major disappointment" and "a traumatic event for all parties." According to him, the major factor for the negative vote was that the General Council had begun mission work among English-speaking Swedish Americans in Minnesota and other parts of what was called at the time the "northwest." The Augustana people looked upon the mission work as siphoning off the younger people, whose primary language was English, from Augustana congregations. The transition from Swedish to English had actually begun in the Augustana Church as early as the 1880s, and in 1884, congregations had been urged to use English where appropriate,[30] but the progress was slow. Those leaders who proceeded to form the ULCA without Augustana wrote an official response to Augustana's withdrawal, expressing their "deepest regret that the Augustana Synod could not see its way clear at this time to remain with the General Council and enter with it into The United Lutheran Church."[31]

As the twentieth century moved on, the place of Augustana within American Lutheranism became even more complicated. Not becoming a part of the ULCA merger, Augustana joined up with four other bodies in 1930, primarily in the Midwest, to form the American Lutheran Conference. The others in the American Lutheran Conference were the American Lutheran Church (the German body formed in 1930), the Lutheran Free Church (of Norwegian background), the Norwegian Lutheran Church, and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (the pious or sad Danes). From that point on, a casual observer might assume that Augustana had now cast its lot in a different direction and was on the trajectory that led to the formation of The American Lutheran Church (ALC) in 1960. However, Augustana was to be a disappointment to those individuals as well.

I recall a conversation with an older colleague. That gentleman had been a leader in the Lutheran Free Church, which joined the ALC—but a bit late—in 1963. The man made the remark to me: "You know, you Augustana people should have been with us." In his view, we should have been a part of the ALC merger rather than the LCA merger.

28. Ibid. and Arden, *Augustana Heritage*, 255–256.

29. Bachmann, *The United Lutheran Church in America,* 74–75.

30. A. D. Mattson, *Polity of the Augustana Lutheran Church* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1952), 143.

31. Wolf, *Documents of Lutheran Unity in America*, 281.

In good humor I played along with him a bit and asked him why he thought things turned out the way they did. His response, also in good humor, was: "Well, the Swedes were always a bit too proud." It was humor, but I tend to think he also meant what he said.

The official reason why Augustana did not continue on the trajectory toward the ALC was that it disagreed with others in the American Lutheran Conference regarding Lutheran unity. The Conference was promoting Lutheran unity among its own members, but leaving the ULCA, the Grundtvigian Danes, and the Suomi Synod out. The Augustana view was that all eight Lutheran bodies of the National Lutheran Council should be a part of the discussion. Since that was not going to happen, Augustana withdrew from the Conference in 1952.

Augustana's act of withdrawing from the Conference caused disappointment with those who remained on the union committee. The committee expressed "its deep regret over the situation which has developed by the decisions of the Augustana Lutheran Church."[32]

When we consider the larger panorama of Lutheranism in North America, and as we seek to determine where to locate the identity of Augustana within that panorama, we find that it was often caught in the middle of the movements toward Lutheran unity that were managed by bodies much larger in size. It disappointed those who formed the ULCA in 1918, and it disappointed those who formed the ALC in 1960.

But being of smaller size than the mighty ULCA and being only one in five of the large block making up the American Lutheran Conference, Augustana also had to learn to get along as best it could with the larger bodies. It caused some hurt feelings in doing so, but, in the long run, its destiny was to be the bridge church between so-called Eastern Lutheranism and the church bodies located primarily in the Midwest. The basis for that was its view of the church in general, but that is a story that belongs to the next section of the essay.

III. The Augustana View of the Church

Another way that Augustana was Lutheran and distinctive, even if not unique, was in its sense of church. Throughout the globe Lutherans have had widely different ecclesiologies and polities. In the case of the Swedish Lutherans in America, one can go back to the writings of T. N. Hasselquist for what was to become the Augustana view. As the first president of the synod, he sought to create a cohesive organization. In 1887 he published a commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians, the premier New Testament book on the unity of the church.[33] In that book Hasselquist bemoans the fact that, even though churches share a common confession, too often they split apart. He attributes that to a false sense of spiritual freedom and an inadequate understanding of the nature of the church. He argues in his book, as does Ephesians itself, that the church is not simply a human organization made up of congregations. As Ephesians has it, "There is one body and one Spirit…one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all" (Eph 4:4–6). The church is a fellowship of believers throughout the world who are gathered into congregations. Christians are therefore not only members of congregations but of the wider

32. Ibid., 513.

33. Tufve N. Hasselquist, *Försök till en grundlig och dock lättfattlg förklaring af Pauli bref till Efeserna* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1887).

church as well.

That view persisted throughout the life of Augustana. It is affirmed in the book called *Christian Dogmatics* by Conrad Lindberg, which was the basic text used in systematic theology from the late 1800s well into the 1920s.[34] That view is echoed also in writings by Conrad Bergendoff, Eric Wahlstrom, and Edgar Carlson.[35] It also had a practical effect, for it had a bearing on how the Augustana Church governed itself and related to others. There was a strong national expression of the church and a strong sense among its members that they are part of the church beyond the congregation and even the denomination. That sense of church has affected developments in Lutheranism in North America more than many people realize. The following examples illustrate that reality.

First, it surely affected the merger of 1962. Augustana and the ULCA had different traditions, but they were able to come to a common understanding. Theodore Bachmann has described the ULCA as a general body that came into existence by the approval of its constituent synods; the synods, he says,

> transferred limited powers to the national body, notably in external relations; in other respects they retained an ecclesial equivalent to "states rights" over against the national government. In contrast to the centralized authority in most other Lutheran bodies with their districts or conferences, there was a certain decentralization in the ULCA.[36]

Indeed, the Constitution of the ULCA said that "each Synod retains every power, right and jurisdiction in its own internal affairs not expressly delegated to The United Lutheran Church in America" (Article VIII, Section 4).[37] Nothing like that appears concerning the conferences within the Constitution of the Augustana Church.

The contrast of the ULCA with other bodies that Bachmann mentions can be observed in the case of Augustana. Augustana had thirteen geographical conferences in 1962, and each had been the creation of the church. Each was in fact a unit of the national church.[38]

The outcome of the merger negotiations leading up to 1962 was a hybrid to some degree. The LCA was like the ULCA in that its various synods were incorporated, examined candidates for the ministry, and conducted ordinations. However, in another, very important way the LCA was more like Augustana. The national church was more centralized, and the synods were units with limited powers within it; there was more of a sense of church across the

34. Conrad Lindberg, *Christian Dogmatics* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1922), 372–373. The Swedish edition was published in 1898.

35. Conrad Bergendoff, *The Making and Meaning of the Augsburg Confession* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1930), 50–51; idem, *The One Holy Catholic Apostolic Church,* The Hoover Lectures 1953 (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1954), 94–95; Eric H. Wahlstrom, "The Church," *What Lutherans Are Thinking: A Symposium on Lutheran Faith and Life,* ed. Edward C. Fendt (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1947) 247–264; idem, *The Church and the Means of Grace* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1951); idem, *God Who Redeems: Perspectives in Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1962), 179–190; Edgar M. Carlson, *The Classic Christian Faith* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1959), 106–109.

36. Bachmann, *The United Lutheran Church in America,* 131.

37. Wolf, *Documents on Lutheran Unity in America,* 277.

38. Arden, *Augustana Heritage*, 408.

U.S. and Canada.

A second example of the Augustana effect can be detected in the construction of the ELCA in 1988. To show what might have been, there was a proposal during the merger negotiations that the new church should consist of small synods or districts within larger regions. The larger regions would each have a bishop and its own legislative convention. We would, in effect, have a federation of territorial churches. The national church would be weak; its presiding bishop would be one of the regional bishops serving on a rotating basis. There would be no national conventions at all.

Although that design was proposed, it was not entertained very seriously or for very long.[39] At one of the meetings of the merger commission, Reuben Swanson, a prominent figure in Augustana and the first President of the Augustana Heritage Association, took to the floor and said that he opposed the proposal, adding, "We are mandated to form one church, and this option will not fulfill the task given to us. It will produce a federation, not a church."[40] Insofar as that was the Augustana view of the church, it carried the day.

Augustana's way of understanding the church also had a direct bearing on its ways of doing outreach, both globally and in home missions. These became activities of the national church, often in cooperation with other Lutheran bodies. It also affected habits and patterns for financial support of the church. As early as 1873, congregations were expected to contribute to the national church, based on their confirmed membership and a formula established by the synod.[41] The concept of grace giving was not the Augustana way to support the national church. Augustana's way made the creation of institutions of learning and care possible. Finally, Augustana's way of understanding the church affected its ecumenical outlook. It became a charter member of the National Lutheran Council in 1918, The Lutheran World Federation in 1947, the World Council of Churches in 1948, the National Council of Churches in 1950, and the Canadian Council of Churches in 1952.

IV. Theology

A fourth way of being Lutheran in North America has to do with theology. Each strand of Lutheran tradition has had a distinct flavor. Some of the most obvious are the Grundtvigian heritage among one wing of the Danes, the controversies over election among the Norwegians, or the principles for the interpretation of Scripture in Missouri, and so on.

In the case of Augustana, there was one famous controversy, which had been ignited in Sweden, the so-called Waldenström controversy, which led to the formation of the Mission Covenant Church in North America in 1885. Aside from that, the Augustana Church was relatively free of theological conflict within itself, and it was not particularly affected by the multitude of movements and controversies within North American Christianity in general.

How does one describe the Augustana way within the theological stream of Lutheranism in North America? The early leaders had to steer a course through confusing times. They had problems with leaders of other denominations and with other Lutheran bodies. Coming to clarity was not easy, but it did come.

In 1856 Lars Paul Esbjörn wrote a letter in which he speaks of himself as being liberated from current views of the Protestantism he had encountered in Illinois. He says in that letter that he had

39. Trexler, *Anatomy of a Merger*, 80.

40. Ibid., 81.

41. Mattson, *Polity of the Augustana Lutheran Church,* 240–241.

gained greater clarity in the gospel; that the new birth is given in baptism, not in an emotional conversion; and that anyone is worthy of the Lord's Supper who hungers for grace and accepts it by faith. He concludes: "I have become more and more convinced that what our people and the whole world need is, Gospel. We have had too much law and human works, so that the consciences of both teachers and hearers have been burdened."[42]

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, a new wave of immigrants came from Germany and Scandinavia with a more conservative view of the Lutheran Confessions, and that affected all the synods that created or joined the General Council. Moreover, a period of scholastic orthodoxy reigned in theological education in the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. That was surely the case at Augustana Seminary, as reflected in the *Christian Dogmatics* written by Conrad Lindberg,[43] who taught dogmatics from 1890 until his death in 1930. The Swedish edition was published in 1898, and the English version appeared in 1922. In spite of all that we find insufficient in scholastic orthodoxy today, it must be said that it helped to preserve and promote essential Lutheran convictions. However, in the opening decades of the twentieth century some new impulses were being felt. In 1911, a new English edition of the *Book of Concord* was published, edited by Henry Eyster Jacobs of the Lutheran Seminary in Philadelphia.[44] In 1915, the first two volumes of *The Works of Martin Luther*, often called the "Philadelphia Edition," were published, providing Luther to readers in the English language.[45] In 1917, Lutherans celebrated the 400th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation.

In the case of Augustana, there are some particular events and personalities to which one can point to catch something of a profile of how its theological heritage developed. In 1922 the Augustana Church launched a new theological journal known as the *Augustana Quarterly,* which continued to exist until 1948 when it merged with others to form the *Lutheran Quarterly*.[46] A review of the contents of that journal over the decades shows that theological research and conversation was not as stale, unimaginative, or isolationist as we might think. Issues of all kinds related to theology and the church were taken up and discussed. Then in 1923 the Augustana Church received the Archbishop of Uppsala, Nathan Söderblom, as a guest, accompanied by his wife, Anna. He was in the United States from late September until early December of that year. During that time he preached

42. Conrad Bergendoff, *The Doctrine of the Church in American Lutheranism* The Kubel-Miller Lectures, 1956 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1956), 39–40; for an account of his struggles in detail, cf. L. Esbjörn, *Report on the Development and Current State of the Swedish Lutheran Congregations in North America.*

43. Conrad E. Lindberg, *Encheiridion i dogmatic* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1898); idem, *Christian Dogmatics* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1922).

44. *The Book of Concord,* ed. Henry E. Jacobs (Philadelpha: United Lutheran Publishing House, 1911).

45. *The Works of Martin Luther*, 6 vols. (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1915–1943).

46. For information, cf. Maria Erling, "The Quest for an American Lutheran Theology: Augustana and *Lutheran Quarterly," Lutheran Quarterly* 24 (2010): 20–41; on this and other publications, cf. Virginia Follstad, *The Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church in Print: A Selective Union List with Annotations of Serial Publications,* ATLA Bibliography Series 53 (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2007).

in two dozen Augustana congregations from coast to coast, and he gave lectures not only at major universities, including Harvard, Chicago, and the University of California, Berkeley, but also at Augustana College and Theological Seminary, Gustavus Adolphus College, and Luther Junior College at Wahoo, Nebraska.[47] Although his travels in North America and reception by the Augustana Church were not without controversy, both within that church and among its critics outside,[48] he made a huge impact on the synod. The sheer force of his personality made a big hit with many. In addition, people could sense the Archbishop's warm and heartfelt feelings for Augustana. Probably the most lasting effect was a renewed interest within Augustana in its relationship to the Church of Sweden and its theologians. As a sequel to his visit, Söderblom invited Conrad Bergendoff to be in Uppsala in 1926 and 1927. He made arrangements for Bergendoff to work on his doctoral dissertation on the Reformation in Sweden, as well as enabling travel to conferences and meetings with ecumenical leaders coming to Uppsala.

In the very same year of Söderblom's visit to America, 1923, the first edition of *The Faith of the Christian Church* by Gustaf Aulén was published in its Swedish version.[49] It was not published in English until 1948, however, and it did not seem to receive much attention early on. It took until the 1930s for this work and his other famous book, *Christus Victor*,[50] to receive notice in the *Augustana Quarterly*.[51] However, his works did receive attention, and they had a major and lasting effect on theological education at the seminary.

We know that already by 1930 there had been a growing interest in new perspectives in theology. After the death of Professor and Dean Conrad Lindberg in August of 1930, there was a major change in the composition of the faculty. The change took place over the next couple of years in an era that historian Gerald Christianson has called "the Augustana renaissance."[52] The new Dean was Conrad Bergendoff, who also taught systematic theology. Three others were added: Carl Anderson in Old Testament, Eric Wahlstrom in New Testament, and A. D. Mattson in ethics and sociology. The story of this transition has been told many times over, including an account in the book by Maria Erling and Mark Granquist.[53] Histo-

47. A summary of his travels, speeches, and sermons is provided in Nathan Söderblom, *Från Upsala till Rock Island: En predikofärd I nya världen* (Stockholm: Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelses bokförlag, 1925), 380–387. His wife wrote of their travels too: Anna Söderblom, *En Amerikabok* (Stockholm: Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelses bokförlag, 1925).

48. On controversy within the Augustana Church, cf. Arden, *Augustana Heritage,* 317; for an example of criticism from outside, cf. Mark A. Granquist, "The Augustana Synod and the Missouri Synod," 48–49. A record of his more endearing presence (including an account of his impact by Conrad Bergendoff) is provided by John E. Norton, "The Archbishop and Augustana," *Augustana Heritage Newsletter* 5/1 (Fall 2006): 13–15.

49. Gustaf Aulén, *Den allmänneliga kristna tron* (Stockholm: Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelses, 1923).

50. Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor* (New York: Macmillan, 1931); the Swedish version was published in 1930.

51. Carl G. Carlfelt, "Recent Theology and Theologians in Sweden," *Augustana Quarterly* 14 (1935): 14–39.

52. Gerald Christianson, "The Making of a Modern Seminary: Augustana Seminary in the 1930s," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 39/3 (June 2012): 219–228.

53. Maria Erling and Mark Granquist, *The Augustana Story: Shaping Lutheran Identity in North America* (Minneapolis:

rian G. Everett Arden, of the class of 1932, was a front-row observer of the change. He makes this comment:

> The writings of contemporary theologians from Scandinavia, Germany, England and America were the subjects of reflection and discussion, bringing new insights regarding the relevance of the gospel to a world of bewildering tensions. Such names as Aulén, Nygren, Bring, Soderblom, Barth, Brunner, Niebuhr and Tillich became part of the daily vocabulary on Zion Hill.[54]

The story of Augustana's theologians is too big to cover here. It has been covered in part in essays by Bernhard Erling and myself in the book called *The Augustana Heritage*, containing essays from the Augustana Gathering at Chautauqua in 1998. Erling deals with systematic theologians, and I deal with biblical scholars. However, our essays tell only part of the story. For one thing, they do not cover individuals outside systematics and biblical studies. Moreover, we deal only with faculty members at Augustana Seminary. We do not attend to the work of all those theologians at work in the church-related colleges. That would be an interesting field of study. The same is true of all those theologians of Augustana heritage who have taught at institutions not related to the Augustana Church.

It is interesting to peruse through issues of *The Augustana Quarterly* and *The Augustana Seminary Review,* published from 1949 through 1962, and ask whether there are topics that were distinctly of interest to the theologians of the Augustana Church.

And of course there are. There are essays on trends in biblical studies;[55] articles and reviews of books in systematic theology;[56] articles on Lutheran churches in North America and around the world,[57] an article in 1957 by Carl E. Lund-Quist, Executive Secretary of The Lutheran World Federation from 1952 to 1960, called "The Tasks of the Lutheran Churches of the World;"[58] and an interesting article by Eric Wahlstrom in 1957 concerning discussions in the Church of Sweden on the ordination of women.[59] There are several articles on global missions,[60] social ministry and

Fortress Press, 2008), 235–252.

54. Arden, *School of the Prophets,* 232.

55. Eric H. Wahlstrom, "Eschatology Today," *Augustana Seminary Review (ASR)* 3/4 (1951): 31–35; idem, "Studies in the New Testament," *ASR* 7/3 (1955): 27–29; Carl A. Anderson, "Isaiah 7:14 in the New Translation," *ASR* 5/2 (1953): 3–8; N. Leroy Norquist, "New Insights in Biblical Interpretation," *ASR* 14/4 (1962): 21–27.

56. Carl G. Carlfelt, "Significant Books in the Field of Systematic Theology," *ASR* 2/4 (1950): 8–12; idem, "Recent Books in the Systematic Field," *ASR* 5/4 (1953): 6–11; Edgar M. Carlson, "Christian Hope," *ASR* 4/4 (1952): 10–13; Hjalmar W. Johnson, "The Theology of Paul Tillich," *ASR* 10/4 (1958): 3–13; Richard H. Englund, "The Christocentric Theology of Cullmann," *ASR* 11/4 (1959): 3–18.

57. Eric H. Wahlstrom, "Recent Theological Literature in American Lutheranism," *ASR* 1/2 (1949): 11–13; idem, "Hannover and Lund," *ASR* 4/4 (1952): 15–25; G. Everett Arden, "Sources for the Study of American Lutheranism," *ASR* 4/2 (1952): 21–23; Malvin H. Lundeen, "Whither Augustana?" *ASR* 6/4 (1954): 3–14.

58. Carl E. Lund-Quist, "The Tasks of the Lutheran Churches of the World," *ASR* 9/3 (1957): 3–10.

59. Eric H. Wahlstrom, "Ordination of Women and the Authority of Scripture," *ASR* 9/4 (1957): 8–11.

60. George F. Hall, "The Theological Task of the Missionary," *ASR* 6/2 (1954): 3–26; N. Arne Bendtz, "Lutheran Strategies

ethics,[61] pastoral care,[62] and evangelism.[63] The *Augustana Seminary Review* went to all alumni of the seminary and kept a conversation going that was distinctively Augustana in terms of major interests.

It is dangerous here for me to name major figures in theology, since I would leave some out and cause offense. However, it is fair to limit myself to some major books published by Augustana theologians who have passed away; surely no one can object to my mentioning them. That is doubly so because those that I shall mention are world-class books, not simply for Augustana consumption but for theological schools and churches everywhere. Conrad Bergendoff wrote the definitive book in English on the Reformation in Sweden, called *Olavus Petri and the Ecclesiastical Transformation in Sweden,* published in 1928, and reprinted in 1965.[64] Edgar Carlson introduced current Swedish research on Luther to the English-speaking world with his book called *The Reinterpretation of Luther* in 1948.[65] Eric Wahlstrom published an outstanding book on the theology of Paul, called *The New Life in Christ*, published in 1950.[66] In addition, G. Everett Arden and Eric Wahlstrom translated the famous book by Gustaf Aulén of the University of Lund, *The Faith of the Christian Church,* published in 1948.[67]

By way of an all too brief summary, one can say that the Augustana theologians did both original research and writing in the various branches of theology, and they seemed to think that it was their unique vocation to interpret the works of Swedish scholars for the English-speaking world. Their written work met the scholarly standards of the academy, but were also written in service of the church—something that is desperately needed today.

V. Worship

There was a fifth way that Augustana had a distinct profile within American Lutheranism. That is worship. Indeed, for many individuals, the Augustana liturgy is the most lasting memory of that church.

Lutherans brought to America a wide range of liturgical orders from their homelands, and they created new ones in North America. G. Everett Arden wrote his doctoral dissertation at the University of Chicago on the relationships between theology and liturgical forms in Ameri-

in World Missions," *ASR* 9/2 (1957): 25–32.

61. A. D. Mattson, "Impressions from Recent Literature in Christian Ethics," *ASR* 1/4 (1949): 5-8; Oscar A. Benson, "The Social Thrust of the Augustana Lutheran Church," *ASR* 12/2 (1960): 13–29.

62. Granger E. Westberg, "Significant Developments in the Field of Pastoral Care," *ASR* 2/4 (1950): 13–17; Paul R. Swanson, "The Contribution of Pastoral Care," *ASR* 14/4 (1962): 13–20.

63. Melvin A. Hammerberg, "The Growing Edge of the Church," *ASR* 2/3 (1950): 6–23; H. Conrad Hoyer, "Give God's Gift of Grace to All," *ASR* 8/3 (1956): 3–16; G. Everett Arden, "Lutheran Evangelism in America," *ASR* 9/2 (1957): 3–24; P. O. Bersell, "Augustana's Outreach," *ASR* 14/3 (1962): 1–16.

64. Conrad Bergendoff, *Olavus Petri and the Ecclesiastical Transformation in Sweden* (New York: Macmillan, 1928; reprinted, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965).

65. Edgar M. Carlson, *The Reinterpretation of Luther* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1948).

66. Eric H. Wahlstrom, *The New Life in Christ* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1950).

67. Gustaf Aulén, *The Faith of the Christian Church* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1948).

ca.[68] In that work he surveyed over thirty liturgical orders in use at various times in North America.

The Swedish Lutheran situation was different from that of the Germans, since there was only one official liturgy used throughout Sweden at any given time. The early pastors and congregations used the Church of Sweden liturgical handbooks, as attested in the writings of Lars Paul Esbjörn, Erland Carlsson, and Eric Norelius.[69] The pattern of the Sunday morning liturgy had been set by Olavus Petri,[70] whose order of service appeared for the first time in 1531.[71]

In one of his essays, Conrad Bergendoff claimed that in 1860 "the Augustana Synod was the most liturgical Lutheran Church in America." He goes on to say that "none of the German Lutheran synods…had as rich a Lutheran service as the Swedish churches."[72] In any case, Augustana never created its own liturgy; it simply brought it from Sweden. Using the Swedish rite was a distinctive way of being Lutheran in North America, and it gave decisive shape to the character of Augustana Lutheranism. We have here a case of *lex orandi, lex credendi*. That is to say, the way people worship has a direct bearing on what they believe. The liturgy teaches the faith to the people.

The Augustana way of being Lutheran in America was taught, first of all, by the way that the liturgy began. After an opening hymn, the pastor spoke or intoned the words of Isaiah's vision in the Temple (Isa 6:3):

> Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts!
> The whole earth is full of His glory.

Then in a spoken voice, the pastor continued with the words:

> The Lord is in His Holy temple; His throne is in heaven. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of an humble and contrite spirit. He heareth the supplications of the penitent and inclineth to their prayers. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto His throne of grace and confess our sins.

The Confession of Sins that follows makes definitive affirmations about the nature of God. God is holy and righteous, but God is also a God who receives "with tender mercy all penitent sinners." On the basis of that, God is addressed directly in prayer as merciful and gracious. If one can take the Common Service of 1888, a forerunner of the liturgy in the *Service Book and Hymnal*, the *Lutheran Book of Worship*,

68. G. Everett Arden, "The Interrelationships between Culture and Theology in the History of the Lutheran Church in America" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Chicago, 1944).

69. Lars Paul Esbjörn, *Report on the Development and Current State of the Swedish Lutheran Congregations in North America*, 2; Eric Norelius, *De Svenska Lutherska församlingarnas och svenskarnas historia i Amerika*, 2 vols. (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1890–1916), 2:249; for a quotation from Erland Carlsson, see Oscar N. Olson, *The Augustana Lutheran Church in America: Pioneer Period 1846–1860,* 365.

70. For a discussion of his liturgical works, see chapter 5 ("The Liturgical Works") in Conrad Bergendoff, *Olavus Petri and the Ecclesiastical Transformation in Sweden* (New York: Macmillan, 1928), 147–177.

71. An English translation of the Mass of Olavus Petri (1531) is provided in an appendix to the work of Eric E. Yelverton, *An Archbishop of the Reformation: Laurentius Petri Nericisu, Archbishop of Uppsala, 1531–73* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1959), 97–102.

72. Conrad Bergendoff, "Augustana's Idea of the Church," *Augustana Seminary Review* 7/2 (1955): 21–22.

and *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, as a measure of comparison, the Confession of Sins in the Augustana liturgy is noticeably both longer and more descriptive of the character of God. God is portrayed as compassionate and merciful, a God who has "promised…to receive with tender mercy all penitent sinners" who turn to him and "seek refuge" in his compassion.

The combination of those liturgical elements creates within the person at worship a sense of both the transcendence and the imminence of God. God is holy and righteous; but God is also merciful and gracious. God draws near to hear us and forgive us. In a rather audacious manner, in our worship we hold God to his promise "to receive" the penitent and "to forgive us all our sins," not only for our sake but also "to the praise and glory" of God's holy name. That is as much as to say that if God expects praise and glory, God must remain faithful to his promise and forgive all our sins.

Although the service provided a theological perspective on God, it went beyond theological *understanding* to create for us an actual *experience*, a sense of the presence of God, if we are open to the promptings of the Spirit. One may justly wonder whether any other Lutheran liturgy has ever been so explicit about the presence of God within the community gathered for worship. To be sure, the announcement of God's presence is done in a way that still preserves the otherness of God, but God's nearness is declared in such a way that it is not only announced but is to be experienced. The pastor declares that "The Lord is in His Holy temple," and no one should miss the meaning. The temple is the present parish church and its gathering. The Lord "is nigh unto them" who are gathered; "he heareth the supplications of the penitent and inclineth to their prayers"; and so we "draw near with boldness to his throne of grace." Yes, "his throne is in heaven," but it is accessible to those who gather for worship. To gather at the throne of God means that the distance between the heavenly and the earthly has been overcome. We enter into the courts of the Lord.

Any good ecclesiology will affirm that "where two or three are gathered" in Jesus' name, the risen Lord is among them (Matt 18:20). However, the Augustana liturgy made it explicit, not only by teaching a theological truth, but by doing what it could to make that an experiential reality in people's lives. The presence of God, both transcendent and imminent, was experienced by worshipers in a way that could not be experienced elsewhere in the world outside. That meant that Sunday worship was not simply a means of charging one's spiritual batteries for the rest of the week, an instrumental view of worship. Sunday worship was itself the highpoint of one's relationship with God and Christ. All other forms of devotional life were subsidiary to worship on Sunday morning. That is a distinct way of being Lutheran in America, even if it is not necessarily unique.

Closing Comment

I have covered only five aspects of the Augustana Church, which, I think, help delineate what was distinctive about its way of being Lutheran in America. These have to do with its being a small church with a big heart, its location as the bridge church within the spectrum of Lutheranism, its sense of church, its theological contributions, and its worship.

On an occasion when we celebrate the Augustana heritage, lest we get too nostalgic, it is important for us to remind ourselves of a glaring fact. The Augustana Church that we remember most vividly is the Augustana Church of the 1950s; it went out of existence in 1962.

The closing decade of the Augustana Church was the era of President Dwight David Eisenhower for the most part. The fifties were the days when religion was booming, including civic religion that helped keep the churches afloat. It is Eisenhower who declared in 1952, just before taking office that "our government has no sense unless it is founded on a deeply felt religious faith, and I don't care what it is."[73] In 1954 the Pledge of Allegiance was revised to include the phrase "under God." And in 1956 Congress voted the national motto to be: "In God We Trust." Churches were booming. New buildings were constructed. Attendance and membership were up. From the beginning of 1950 to the end of 1960 the Augustana Church grew numerically by 35 percent.[74] However, that was not unusual, since all major denominations increased in size dramatically at that time. That was an era that we shall probably not see the likes of again in our lifetimes.

Be that as it may, what has often impressed a lot of observers of church life in the century of its existence is that the Augustana Church was able to accommodate a wide range of attitudes and activities within one body without breaking apart into separate Swedish Lutheran churches. It was able to combine a clear but moderate Lutheran confessionalism along with pietism, social activism, ecumenism, liturgical worship, strong central leadership, strong congregations, global and national missions, and a desire for Lutheran unity. All of those things, which can pull a church apart in different directions, were a part of the Augustana profile. What Augustana held together, others might put asunder.

I recall that when I was a pastor in New Jersey in LCA days, another LCA pastor of ULCA tradition made a memorable remark. He told me that "Whenever you meet another Lutheran pastor, you will quickly know whether he is Augustana. If he is, all you have to do is wait a minute or two, because he'll let you know it."

That remark prompts memory of that other remark I mentioned earlier. We should take seriously the remark of my elderly colleague when he said that the Swedes—the Augustana people—were always a bit too proud. It is possible that at times we have been too proud. However, on this occasion we should throw caution to the wind. We should not fail to honor those who have gone before us for their work, and we should not hesitate for a moment to give thanks for the Augustana Church.

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73. Quoted in various newspapers, such as *The New York Times* (December 23, 1952); cf. G. Elson Ruff, *The Dilemma of Church and State* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1954), 85.

74. The percentage is based on statistics for the end of 1949 and 1959 in *Yearbook of American Churches,* ed. George F. Ketcham (New York: National Council of Churches, 1959), 237, and *Yearbook of American Churches*, ed. Bebsib Y. Landis (New York: National Council of Churches, 1960), 255. The figures are, respectively, 440,244 and 596,147 baptized members.

Augustana and the Global Church

Norman A. Hjelm

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It has fallen to me to reflect with you this morning concerning "Augustana and the Global Church." Even though I was involved in making up the title for this talk, I am not at all sure what I should be doing. "Global Church" was surely not the way people in Augustana talked. "Foreign missions" or "international relief and cooperation" were terms far more common to our self-understanding. Similarly, as seems clear to me, our mid-twentieth century understanding in Augustana of "ecumenism" lacked the ecclesiological dimensions that are increasingly common today. In a certain way, then, our topic is quite simply anachronistic. Augustana as such ceased to be in 1962 and history has moved on. Indeed, a case might well be made that history has now surely passed us by.

Yet I recall that some years ago I had an exchange of letters with Reuben Swanson, the late president of this Augustana Heritage Association, in which I suggested that this Association served no helpful purpose if it existed merely as a forum for our nostalgia. We are, rather, formed to review, clarify, and understand our history and our tradition both appreciatively and critically. We exist for the life of the church today, a church that increasingly is expressed globally and surely can be enriched by a critical appraisal of the Augustana heritage.

Let me start by telling a story, a true one. In 1986, it happened that I was part of an official delegation from The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) to Ethiopia. Four of us, including the LWF General Secretary, were guests of both the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Eritrea, both LWF member churches, and we were also guests of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. It was for me and for Ingalill, my wife who was accompanying our group, an extraordinary experience.

On the Sunday during our visit three of us were guest preachers in churches around Addis Ababa, congregations of the Mekane Yesus Church. But first, that day, we were guests of honor at Divine Liturgy in the Holy Trinity Cathedral, the Orthodox Cathedral where Emperor Haile Selassee had worshiped prior to the Communist takeover of Ethiopia in 1974. The Liturgy started at 4:00 a.m. It was conducted in Geez, an ancient Semitic language whose use is now confined to the Ethiopian Orthodox Liturgy. (I thought I knew something about liturgical matters and identified the Words of Institution at least four times – and was wrong every time.) The Liturgy was still going at about 9:30 a.m. when our group had to leave for the Lutheran churches where some of us were to preach. I vividly remember our departure from the packed Cathedral. We had stood for the entire Liturgy, as is the Coptic custom, and of course we had taken our shoes off as a sign of worshipful respect. I found my shoes and was about to leave the Cathedral with my wife when I saw that

Gunnar Stålsett, Lutheran World Federation General Secretary and later Bishop of Oslo, was down on all-fours searching for his shoes. He saw me about to leave, but called out, "Hjelm! Find my shoes!" That's how General Secretaries make it through exotic liturgies carried on in ancient tongues that no one can any longer understand. I found the shoes.

When my wife and I arrived at the Ariel Church in Addis Ababa where I was to preach, we first met in a separate building with the deacons of the church for prayer prior to the service. The church itself had, I would guess, over a thousand worshipers that Sunday morning, including the most beautiful children I had ever seen, most of them seated in windowsills. Ingalill and I were ushered to seats of honor in the chancel, next to the altar facing the large congregation. After the opening hymn, the senior pastor, an older man, came to the altar. He was wearing a long white robe, the kind of robe my father wore during humid summers in Washington, D.C. where he was pastor of the Augustana Church—we called it his "Amy Semple Macpherson robe." The pastor turned to the congregation and began to sing—and Ingalill and I nearly fell off our chairs. He sang, albeit in Amharic, but my wife heard "*Helig, helig, helig är Herren Sebaot! Hela jorden är full av hans härlighet,"* and I heard "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts! The whole earth is full of His glory." We knew the melody; it was Epiphany season. There in Addis Ababa, Ingalill heard the same liturgy in which she had been raised in the Church of Sweden, and I heard the same liturgy in which I had been raised in the Augustana Lutheran Church.

It was an unforgettably beautiful experience.

But it was also an unforgettably sad experience.

In 1988 I was again in Addis Ababa for a meeting of The Lutheran World Federation Council. That time I was part of the worshiping congregation at the Entoto parish of the Mekane Yesus Church, but the liturgy there, for which the music had been composed by an extremely talented pastor, was Ethiopian, not Swedish or American. Indeed, the music was reminiscent of what I had heard two years earlier in the Orthodox Cathedral. There was obviously a striking and, I think, instructive contrast between the liturgies in those two Ethiopian Lutheran churches. One was a translation of the liturgy of the Swedish missionaries. The other was an artful expression of the indigenous culture of the people. Now it is important, to be sure, that if our understanding of Augustana is to be helpfully critical we must not simplistically judge Augustana's history by standards that have been arrived at over the past fifty or so years. In a way that would be an easy task. However, helpful criticism comes with greater effort. For example, to build on that experience in Addis Ababa and evaluate the international Protestant missionary movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, of which Augustana's missionary efforts were surely a part, from the vantage of what is now called "post-colonialism" is a necessary but complicated endeavor. It is far too easy simply to assert that "[t]he end of the colonial era was also the end of the missionary era."[1]

At the opening session of the international mission conference that took place in Edinburgh, Scotland, as a commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the 1910 World Mission Conference, which took place in the same city and is widely considered by many as the symbolic starting point of the modern ecumenical move-

1. Lamin Sanneh. *Whose Religion is Christianity? The Gospel beyond the West* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 37.

ment, Olav Fykse Tveit of the Church of Norway, the new General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, spoke of "the many difficult lessons" we are having to learn about mission: "Our struggles with mission have included valid criticism towards different actors, a wide variety of reflections, as well as critical commentaries [on the work of global mission]. We have all learned about the links between mission and colonialism, about shameful power struggles, and about the need for renewing the response to the Gospel in what used to be called Christian cultures. We are continuing to learn hard lessons about being sensitive to one another in mission. We cannot but reflect and wrestle with the problematic tensions mission can lead to, even with so many good intentions. We cannot ignore that mission is a challenging theme in our relation to people of other faiths."[2] These kinds of searching questions typify an authentic historical inquiry that is enlisted in the service of the church today. The task of viewing the heritage of Augustana, with both its accomplishments and its failures, requires nuance, a refusal to give into passing fads of criticism, and an openness both to the gifts and ambiguities of our history.

Yet it *is* clear to me that in the history of the Augustana Church are buried, sometimes deeply but at other times close to the surface, the seeds of plants that have since borne great fruit. These seeds are not without ambiguities but that is the way history—surely church history—always is. I shall, therefore, try to reflect without great detail on this idea of "global church," concentrating on Augustana's understanding and practice of its relation to its mother church in Sweden, on its concerted actions in times of war, and on its ecumenical vision for the unity of the church. There are many other things connecting Augustana to what we call "the global church"—for example, its missionary vocation and its structural affiliations—but for reasons both of time and competence they shall be unattended to in this presentation.

Augustana and the Church of Sweden

As an introductory point, it seems to me, especially on the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Augustana Lutheran Church as an ecclesial body, worth emphasizing that there was an international, if not global, dimension to Augustana's life from its very beginning. We were, of course, children of Sweden and in time we were acknowledged to be a "daughter church" of the Church of Sweden itself, although we have heard from the Archbishop of Uppsala that now the more appropriate term would be "sister church." In 2000, at the Augustana Heritage Gathering held here in Rock Island, I was asked to speak on "Augustana and the Church of Sweden: Ties of History and Faith." In that address I recounted in three "acts" something of a history that had not always been smooth. I called those acts "Uncertain Ties," "Encounter," and a more profoundly deep relation under the rubric of "Communion."

The story of Augustana and the Church of Sweden is increasingly familiar.

— A group of Lutheran immigrants to North America at times considered themselves, save for the committed boldness of a very few pastors from Sweden led by Lars Paul Esbjörn (1808–1870), orphans from their spiritual home in the old country.
— The first period marked by "uncertain ties" was perhaps epitomized by the tension between the declaration in 1911 by Eric Norelius (1833–1916), then president of the Augustana Synod, that "[w]e shall always welcome [our]

2. Geneva: World Council of Churches Press Release, June 3, 2010.

Christian brethren in Sweden as guests to our meetings but with the State Church as such, we cannot have any relations." Yet in 1910 the Archbishop of Uppsala and Primate of Sweden, J.A. Ekman (1845–1913), in discussion with two bishops of the Church of England, had said, "It [is] a self-evident and commonly recognized fact within the Church of Sweden that the Church in America which [has] its confession in full conformity with the Church of Sweden and which [is] its daughter, is the Augustana Synod." [3]

— The second period, which I called "Encounters," was highlighted by the visits to America of two prominent bishops of the Church of Sweden, Knut Henning Gezelius von Schéele (1838–1920) of Visby in 1893, 1901, and 1910 and Archbishop Nathan Söderblom (1866–1931) for several months in 1923. There were issues within Augustana about episcopal orders and the intentions of these (and other) bishops and also about the theological orthodoxy of Söderblom, although I hold him to have been one of the great ecumenical church leaders of the twentieth century. These and subsequent visits by leaders of the Church of Sweden were signs of a growing solidarity between the two churches.

— The third period, "Communion," began a time of genuine fellowship between the churches. Conrad Bergendoff (1895–1997) worked and studied with Archbishop Söderblom in 1926 and 1927. The theological works of individuals published in English largely after 1962 by Fortress Press, such as Gustaf Aulén, Anders Nygren, Ragnar Bring, Gustaf Wingren and others, and later works in biblical studies by such individuals as Krister Stendahl and Birger Gerhardsson, were determinative for the post-World War II theological milieu of the Augustana Church.

Let me share another personal story. In 1974, three years before Aulén's death at the age of 98, I attended *Promotionen* at Lund University, a remarkable event when doctorates in all faculties were conferred in the magnificent Lund Cathedral. Gustaf Aulén was there as the first Jubilee Promoter in the history of Swedish universities. Fifty years earlier he had "promoted," that is, he had conferred doctorates on behalf of Lund's Faculty of Theology. I was stunned to see him at this Promotion wearing a hood from my alma mater, Augustana Seminary. Later when I was with him privately I asked him "Farbror Gustaf, why did you wear that hood from Augustana Seminary?" He laughed (cackled would be a better word) and said that he could have worn academic regalia from Edinburgh, Oxford, Tübingen or other universities. "But I like that little school in the American mid-west. Besides, the Augustana hood has the Swedish colors, blue and yellow." He had received an honorary doctorate from Augustana Seminary in 1947, and he really liked the colors!

In my judgment, one of the enduring contributions which people like us who share the Augustana heritage can make is to keep ties between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America and the Church of Sweden alive. There is a rich liturgical and theological tradition in Sweden and an increasingly distinctive ecclesial tradition

3. Söderstrom, *Confession and Cooperation: The Policy of the Augustana Synod in Confessional Matters and the Synod's Relations with other Churches up to the Beginning of the Twentieth Century* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup Bokförlag, 1973), 177–178.

represented by the descendents of Augustana in North American Lutheranism. We share astonishingly common challenges of mission in our increasingly pluralistic and secular societies. As the children and grandchildren of Swedish immigrants, we can affirm that old sociological maxim (formulated, I think, here at Augustana College by Marcus L. Hansen) about immigrants, "What the second generation wants to forget, the third generation wants to remember."[4] We no longer need to forget Sweden; we must remember our heritage. Our communion with the Church of Sweden and, indeed, with other Lutheran churches from which our ancestors came is a rich part of our life in the global church.[5]

Global Tensions and World Lutheranism

E. Clifford Nelson, in his extremely illuminating work of 1982, *The Rise of World Lutheranism: An American Perspective*, has about as good a description as can be found of the attitude of both North American and European Lutherans toward global connections at the beginning of the twentieth century:

> The idea of a world fellowship of Lutherans was hardly a burning issue among the Denominations' leaders in America. A similar attitude prevailed among German and Scandinavian churchmen. The pressure of immediate problems left most Lutherans with little energy and less time to give thoughtful consideration to establishing a Lutheran world organization. In America, for example, parochial and sectional demands seemed to exhaust all available resources. The task of missions to the immigrants, the erection of church buildings, the founding of schools and institutions of mercy, the establishing of a Lutheran presence in a predominantly Anglo-American Protestant milieu—all these matters seemed to require immediate attention and large sums of money, of which there was never enough. Had it not been for the high degree of dedication and Christian commitment of both laity and clergy, the planting of Lutheranism in North America would no doubt have been an unimpressive and less-than- fruitful enterprise. And [a]lthough the European church circumstances differed from the American, the lassitude toward global Lutheranism was identical.

But then, Nelson became cautionary:

> To assume, however, that Lutherans did virtually nothing to foster their international relationships prior to the distressing postwar circumstances that produced them [and] to engage in united action would be an injustice to history. [6]

It is not possible in this presentation to elaborate thoroughly or even cursorily on those international relations which marked North American Lutheranism as early as the eighteenth century. We know that "the father of North American Lutheranism," Henry Melchior Muhlenberg (1711–1787)—whose personal motto, *Ecclesia Plantanda*, "The Church must

4. Marcus L. Hansen, "The Problem of the Third Generation Immigrant" in *Augustana Historical Society Publications*, Vol. 8, Pt. 1 (Rock Island, Ill., 1938).

5. cf. Norman A. Hjelm, "Augustana and the Church of Sweden: Ties of History and Faith" in Hartland H. Gifford and Arland J. Hultgren, eds. *The Heritage of Augustana: Essays on the Life and Legacy of the Augustana Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Kirk House Publishers, 2004), 19–36.

6. E. Clifford Nelson, *The Rise of World Lutheranism: An American Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 79.

be Planted," has provided us with the theme of this Gathering—was sent to the New World at the behest of the famous pietistic foundation at Halle, Germany, and he remained in close touch with that foundation throughout his remarkable ministry here. We know that Wilhelm Loehe (1808–1872) was instrumental in enlisting young men for German-language pastoral service in America. We know that two "practical" seminaries in Schleswig-Holstein, Kropp and Brecklum, provided the Lutheran General Council and General Synod with approximately 350 pastors over a span or four or five decades in the nineteenth century. (The Swedes should have done as well!) There have also been other fruitful contacts between North American and European Lutherans, for example, in the areas of theological reflection, missionary work, and deaconess work.

However, we want to lay emphasis on the effects of international tension, two devastating World Wars, on Lutheran cooperation both within North America and between North America and the rest of the world. These two wars broke transatlantic inter-Lutheran relationships. At the conclusion of each war those relationships desperately needed rehabilitation.

In 1917 the National Lutheran Commission for Soldiers' and Sailors' Welfare was formed to minister to North American servicemen, both in the United States and in Europe. Augustana participated fully in this work. Funds in the vicinity of $1.5 million were contributed by North American Lutherans acting together in this effort. Interestingly, G. Everett Arden (1905–1978) has commented: "What theological debate and doctrinal discussion failed to accomplish, catastrophe achieved, namely, galvanizing Lutherans in America into common action, and creating out of their divided ranks a common front."[7] In light of Arden's words, some have spoken about the effects of both World War I and II on American Lutherans as "catastrophe producing cooperation."

The second event of importance bringing many Lutherans closer to one another and, again, to their sisters and brothers in Europe at the time of World War I was the formation in 1918 of the National Lutheran Council. Three particular issues forced the formation of this Council. The first was the matter of "linguistic injustice," particularly felt in churches of German background. A number of United States governors and state legislatures took action to forbid the use of German and other European languages in public worship, and a means of pleading the case for the use of such languages was needed. The second was the matter of developing a home mission strategy that would bring Lutheran church life to communities where defense industries were mushrooming. This was a particularly difficult problem since the Missouri Synod, which was affiliated with the Synodical Conference and not a part of the new Council, was prone to charge other Lutherans with "sinful unionism" since their ministry in these communities was open to all Lutherans, even those with whom there was no pulpit and altar fellowship. The final issue giving birth to the National Lutheran Council was the need to provide aid to Europe's war-stricken people and churches.

7. G. Everett Arden, "Enroute to Unity," in Herbert T. Neve and Benjamin A. Johnson, eds., *The Maturing of American Lutheranism* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1968) 229. Quoted in Maria Erling and Mark Granquist, *The Augustana Story: Shaping Lutheran Identity in North America* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2008), 318.

In this latter connection, the Council in 1919 established a "European Commission" of six people, including Professor Sven Youngert (1861–1939) from the Augustana Church. This group was instructed to travel to Europe "to investigate and report the situation of each Lutheran group in the war-involved countries; they were to offer American assistance in solving the ecclesiastical problems of their brethren; and they were empowered to spend up to $50,000."[8] Again, Augustana was brought into strikingly new global situations and contexts, largely on the basis of human and church need. Yet it is difficult to assess the effects of this European Commission and its work. Once again, Clifford Nelson has shown us where North American Lutherans stood at a particular point in history, the end of World War I:

As a matter of fact, nobody could foresee the nature of the problems to be confronted; the implications of American Lutheran involvement in postwar Europe were almost totally unpredictable. One member of the [National Lutheran Council] executive committee, Victor G.A. Tressler, recognized the ambiguities of this venture of faith. Said he, "The question really is, whether or not American [Lutherans are] ready and able to [assume a role in] world leadership." In the light of subsequent developments, this opinion proved to be valid. With the benefit of hindsight, about the only safe and unquestioned conclusion we can draw is that, by the NLC's appointment of a European Commission, Americans were taking the initial steps in reestablishing contacts with their overseas brethren, and that is all.[9]

Perhaps Dr. Arden's words about "catastrophe" and the work of the National Lutheran Commission for Soldiers' and Sailors' Welfare apply here too. Human need forces human action, and global need brings about global action. Others have described this as "the calamity theory"—common calamities require common action.

Now the vastness of our topic, "Augustana and the Global Church," requires some decisions as to what we should here cover. At the end of World War I, Augustana and American Lutheranism, indeed, North American Lutheranism and global Lutheranism, was embarking on an institutional journey that would take them far. While the story of that journey hardly provides the story line for a Broadway musical, it is fascinating, at least to old men like me. It is also an important story, namely, the founding of the Lutheran World Convention in Eisenach in 1923, where Augustana's president G.A. Brandelle (1861–1936) played an important role, an event within the context of a shattered German economy, which caused massive hunger among the people. The second such convention in Copenhagen in 1929 was almost shattered by the insistence of German Lutherans that a resolution be passed protesting the inhumanity of the Treaty of Versailles that had been signed ten years earlier. The third meeting of the Lutheran World Convention occurred in Paris in 1935 when the shadow of the church struggle in Germany fell over global Lutheranism. Of course, the fourth meeting of the world group of Lutherans scheduled for 1940 in Philadelphia never took place because of World War II. War, it seemed, was destined to keep Lutherans forever apart from one another.

However, during the war the leadership of North American Lutheranism, through the American Section of the barely breathing Lutheran World Convention and the National Lutheran Council, neither slept nor despaired. In 1940 Lutheran

8. Nelson, *The Rise of World Lutheranism*, 71.

9. Ibid., 88–89.

World Action was begun, a program of aid to refugees and to orphaned missions, under the leadership of two of the ablest people in North American Lutheran history, Ralph H. Long (1882–1948) and Paul C. Empie (1909–1979). Lutheran World Action was perhaps the most important and successful program of interchurch aid ever undertaken in American Lutheranism. By 1965, Lutheran World Action had gathered more than $80 million for its work.

In 1944 the National Lutheran Council adopted a carefully worded statement that brought the Missouri Synod and the Council together to plan for postwar relief. In this effort, the relation of the Augustana Church to world Lutheranism was solidified forever. In early 1945, while war was still raging in Europe, three American Lutheran leaders were commissioned to take a six-week fact-finding journey to Europe. They were Ralph H. Long, then executive director of the National Lutheran Council; Lawrence B. Meyer, then executive of the Missouri Synod's Emergency Planning Council; and P.O. Bersell (1882–1967), then president of both the National Lutheran Council and the Augustana Lutheran Church. It was Bersell who gave us the most complete account of this journey. They left Washington, D.C., on February 28, 1945, in a U.S. Army transport command airplane, stopping in Labrador and Iceland on the way to London. Bersell described the flight as "hazardous"—German V-1 and V-2 bombs were still falling on London—and their later flight to Sweden, aboard a converted Boeing Flying Fortress, was during a moonless night over the North Sea and German-occupied Norway.

Bersell described the purpose of their trip in the following way:

> First, [we were] to observe and evaluate conditions, to learn as much as possible of the state of the Lutheran churches and their present and postwar needs. The magnitude of this prime objective of our mission is quite evident when we remember that eighty-five percent of all Protestants on the continent of Europe are Lutherans, and that no church has suffered as much as ours.
>
> Second, to contact as many Lutheran church leaders as possible in order to set in motion and implement a worldwide program of Lutheran action looking to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the Lutheran church and its work in all lands.
>
> Third, to contact other Christian leaders, especially the World Council of Churches' Reconstruction Committee in Geneva, for the purpose of coordinating and integrating this work of the Lutheran Church with the work of other churches that are also ready to launch out on great reconstructive and eleemosynary programs, involving the expenditure of millions of dollars. It is obvious that by the very ecumenical character of this worldwide church relief work the Lutheran Church will be the greatest beneficiary. Proportionately the free Lutheran churches should also be the greatest contributors.
>
> Fourth, to contact the United States Army and Navy chaplains, their chiefs and staffs, for the purpose of extending as widely as possible our American Lutheran spiritual ministry to our servicemen abroad…
>
> Fifth, to contact those in charge of the prisoners of war work on the continent and in England, namely, the civilian organizations Y.M.C.A. and World Council of Churches, and the military command, for the purpose of learning how our American Lutheran Commission for Prisoners of War can

> best cooperate in this service wherein we have already given such a large contribution.[10]

After nine days of meetings in Great Britain, the three Americans flew, as already mentioned, over Norway to Sweden. In Stockholm, they had intense discussions regarding these same issues with King Gustav V, Count Folke Bernadotte and leaders of the Nordic churches.

Subsequent meetings were held in Sigtuna, Sweden, March 17, 1945, and Geneva, April 2, 1945. The Sigtuna meeting laid the groundwork for the future of world Lutheranism as it would take shape in The Lutheran World Federation (LWF). Bersell maintained that the LWF was "conceived" in Sigtuna in 1945 and "born" in Lund in 1947. During these discussions extremely difficult issues were faced. In addition to the matter of leadership and coordination of the post-war relief work that was to be carried on by the Lutherans from America and Sweden, two countries untouched by the ravages of the war, the role of Bishop August Maraharens (1875–1950) of Hannover, Germany, in the future of world Lutheranism was faced. Maraharens was president of the Lutheran World Convention, but the North Americans wanted his resignation since, as Bersell put it, he had "blessed" Hitler's armies in their "push to the east." A forthcoming major study of the role of the LWF during the cold war by Dr. Risto Lehtonen of Finland will shed new light on this judgment. Lehtonen is of the view that the North Americans somewhat overstated the case against the German bishop.[11] Only with reluctance did the Swedes, led by Archbishop Erling Eidem (1880–1972), agree to the North American insistence.[12]

The story of the establishment of the LWF at Lund in 1947 cannot be fully told here. Jens Holger Schjørring of Aarhus University in Denmark has described the LWF as being founded on "four pillars": rescue for the needy, common initiatives in mission, joint efforts in theology, and a common response to the ecumenical challenge.[13] The Augustana Church lived through the first fifteen years of the LWF, crucial post-World War II years.

Perhaps Augustana's contribution in those early years of the Federation was greatest in the person of Carl Lund-Quist (1908–1965), a graduate of Bethany College and Augustana Theological Seminary, who was ordained into the ministerium of the Augustana Church in 1936. Lund-Quist served as general secretary of the LWF from 1951 to 1960. Those were years when the East–West divide, the cold war, was at its sharpest. It was under Lund-Quist's leadership that the third Assembly of the LWF was held in Minneapolis in 1957. While Lund-Quist's attempts to bring delegates to Minneapolis from East Germany and Hungary did not bear great fruit, he did secure permission

10. P.O. Bersell in *The Lutheran Standard*, May 19, 1945, 14. Quoted in Nelson, *The Rise of World Lutheranism*, 353–354.

11. To be published by the William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. of Grand Rapids, Mich.

12. This whole story is told in considerable detail in E. Clifford Nelson, *The Rise of World Lutheranism.* 350–404, "The Rebirth and Reconstruction of World Lutheranism, 1944–47." cf. also Jens Holger Schjørring, "The Lutheran Church in the World Today: The Founding of the LWF" in Jens Holger Schjørring, Prasanna Kumari, and Norman A. Hjelm, eds., *From Federation to Communion: The History of the Lutheran World Federation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997) 3–40.

13. Schjørring, "Lutheran Church in the World Today."

for Bishop Lajos Ordass (1901–78) of the Lutheran Church in Hungary to come to Minneapolis where he preached at the opening service of the Assembly. Ordass had been imprisoned by the Communists for his outspoken leadership of the church and was to be placed under house arrest again. We know that Carl Lund-Quist on at least one occasion traveled into Communist Hungary wearing two suits, one of which he was able to give to Bishop Ordass. Lund-Quist's health failed largely because he bore within himself the sufferings of the church in a time of world division and tension.[14] Augustana made no greater contribution to the global church than Carl Elof Lund-Quist.

Augustana and Its Vision of Unity[15]

Let me bring this consideration of Augustana and the Global Church to a close by saying something about Augustana's vision of the unity of the church. This cannot be done at length. Indeed, I will not touch on the important role that the Augustana Church played in the movement toward Lutheran unity in North America. A few points concerning Augustana and *ecumenism* will have to suffice, but Augustana's commitment to ecumenism, the "whole inhabited earth," is clearly its commitment to "the global church."

There was considerable theological diversity in the early leadership of the Augustana Church. I have in another place described this diversity. Lars Paul Esbjörn was basically a revival preacher, who after his conversion felt keenly, in the words of the British Methodist George Scott to whom he attributed his conversion, that "a pietist does not belong to any particular denomination but is one of the members of the holy catholic Church which is found in all Christian Churches."[16] Eric Norelius was a strictly orthodox Lutheran grounded in the *Book of Concord*. T.N. Hasselquist was a practical low-church pietist. Erland Carlsson was one who stood quite loose in relation to the Lutheran confessions, although his appreciation of those documents grew especially during his service as President of the Synod from 1881 to 1888. Olof Olsson's development, as American religious pluralism forced him increasingly to move from a stress on Christian life to a stress on Christian doctrine, was in many ways typical of the whole church. As Hugo Söderstrom described matters of doctrine and church cooperation during the Synod's early years, "Having earlier stressed Christian life, they [the leaders of Augustana] began to emphasize Christian doctrines. Pure Christian doctrines became more important than a true Christian life. From having been willing to cooperate with all Christians who *sincerely* believed in Christ, they only wanted to cooperate with those who *correctly* believed in Christ. And they were firmly convinced that the *Book of Concord* gave the correct

14. On Lund-Quist, cf. Schjørring, Kumari, Hjelm, *From Federation to Communion,* and also Emmet E. Eklund and Marion Lorimer Eklund, *He Touched the Whole World: The Story of Carl E. Lund-Quist* (Lindsborg, Kans.: Bethany College Press, 1990 and 1992). On Ordass, cf. László Terray, *He Could Not Do Otherwise: Bishop Lajos Ordass, 1901–1978.* trans. Eric W. Gritsch (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).

15. For much of the material in this section cf. Norman A. Hjelm, "A Journey toward Unity: Augustana, the Lutheran Communion, and Ecumenism" in Arland J. Hultgren and Vance L. Eckstrom, eds., *The Augustana Heritage: Recollections, Perspectives, and Prospects* (Chicago: The Augustana Heritage Association, 1999), 165–182.

16. Söderstrom, *Confession and Cooperation,*16.

interpretation *of the Holy Scriptures."* [17]

It is a complicated story. Augustana in 1875 joined other Lutherans in adopting the Galesburg Rule, which declared "Lutheran pulpits for Lutheran ministers only—Lutheran altars for Lutheran communicants only." Augustana, like other Lutherans, did not join the Federal Council of Churches when it was formed in 1908. Augustana sent no one to the World Mission Conference in Edinburgh in 1910. Augustana, quite rudely through Eric Norelius, declined an invitation in 1911 to join in a global movement regarding Christian doctrine and structures that was in time to become the Faith and Order movement. The break in this kind of "exclusive confessionalism," to use the expression of Everett Arden, came perhaps in 1925 when President Brandelle journeyed to Stockholm to participate in the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work where, indeed, he made an important intervention.[18] That global event was famously bound up with the life and leadership of Nathan Söderblom and Augustana's participation may well have been as a result of the impact of the Swedish Archbishop's visit to America in 1923, although it must also be acknowledged that some within Augustana and other American Lutheran bodies opposed Brandelle's involvement precisely because of their enduring doubts about Söderblom's "orthodoxy."

Nevertheless, this set a new pattern for Augustana. Conrad Bergendoff, who had worked in Sweden as an assistant to Archbishop Söderblom in 1926–1927, was the church's delegate to the Second Conference on Life and Work in Oxford in 1937.[19] We have said something about Augustana's involvement in the formation of the LWF as successor to the Lutheran World Convention at the end of World War II in Lund, 1947. When the World Council of Churches, bringing together Faith and Order and Life and Work, was formed in Amsterdam in 1948, Augustana was there. Augustana, along with the United Lutheran Church in America, was also a founding member of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. in 1950. After the Stockholm Conference of 1925, again to use Dr. Arden's expression, "exclusive confessionalism" was replaced in the Augustana Church by "ecumenical confessionalism."[20] This reality, "ecumenical confessionalism," was perhaps no more evident in the mid-twentieth century than in the invitation to Eric Wahlstrom to contribute a Lutheran perspective to a symposium, *The Nature of the Church,* prepared for the third world conference on Faith and Order to be held in Lund, Sweden, in 1952. This was a carefully worked out essay by the person who was perhaps the New Testament scholar most important in the history of the Augustana Church that represented a new depth of understanding. Ecumenism was beginning to be understood as more than "church cooperation;" it involves unity and communion around word and sacraments.[21]

17. Ibid., 20–21.

18. Derek R. Nelson, "Unity, Ecumenicity, and Difference in the Augustana Synod." *Lutheran Quarterly*, XXIV, No. 1, Spring 2010: 82.

19. Here mention must be made of the foundational doctoral study of Dr. Bergendoff by Byron Ralph Swanson. *Conrad Bergendoff: The Making of an Ecumenist—A Study in Confessionalism and Ecumenism in Early Twentieth Century American Lutheranism*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1970.

20. G. Everett Arden, *Augustana Heritage: History of the Augustana Lutheran Church* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1963), 297.

21. Eric H. Wahlstrom, "Lutheran

Before I bring this talk to a close, I would like with great sincerity to mention one additional ecumenist who came from the Augustana Lutheran Church. Indeed, he is more than an ecumenist; he has become one of America's preeminent church theologians. I speak, of course, of George Lindbeck. Lindbeck was born in China, the son of Augustana missionaries, and he was educated at Gustavus Adolphus and at Yale University. Together with Hans Frei at Yale Divinity School he has become a kind of "father" to a generation of theologians from a variety of Christian traditions who are concerned about theology and the life of the church in "a postliberal age." However, here I single out George Lindbeck because of his ecumenical contributions. Officially they began after Augustana had moved into the Lutheran Church in America. The LWF appointed him as one of its official observers at the epoch-making Second Vatican Council, and he has never given up either his commitment to the unity of the church or his involvement in the global ecumenical movement. Let me simply point out three documents from the international Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue, published when Professor Lindbeck was co-chair of that dialogue: *Ways to Community* (1981), *The Ministry in the Church* (1982), and *Facing Unity* (1985). These have become milestones along the global journey that Lutherans and Roman Catholics are taking together. They helped pave the way for the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* signed by representatives of the Roman Catholic Church and by representatives of the LWF in Augsburg in 1999. George Lindbeck has been central to the continuation of Augustana-style "confessional ecumenism," and the global church is richer for his work.[22]

Conclusion

Many of our forebears in the Augustana Lutheran Church would be surprised if they heard the contours of this story of Augustana and the "Global Church"—surprised in disappointment, surprised in gratitude. The story is a human story, marked by insight and stubbornness, by impossible dreams and low expectations. But in the providence of God it is also a story of the recognition, albeit slow at times and lacking in foresight, of a not-yet-finished search for communion in an ever more globalized yet continuously fragmented world. Church and unity; mission and world. I hope that running through the catalog of names and events that have been hurled at you there runs a thread of what God has done in the world through the history of the Augustana Church. It is an imperfect history that now lives on in an equally imperfect ecclesial community, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

What kind of a globalized world lies in front of us? Our fathers and mothers in Augustana would recognize so little, but we need their history. Mark Noll, the evangelical historian who now teaches at

Church" in R. Newton Flew, ed., *The Nature of the Church: Papers Presented to the Theological Commission appointed by the Continuation Committee of the World Conference on Faith and Order* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), 264–273.

22. Three of the published works of George Lindbeck should be noted: *The Future of Roman Catholic Theology: Vatican II, Catylist for Change* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970); *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984); and *The Church in a Postliberal Age*, James J. Buckley, ed., (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002). The three mentioned Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue reports were published in English by The Lutheran World Federation, Geneva.

Notre Dame has pressed the issue:

> …today—when active Christian adherence has become stronger in Africa than in Europe, when the number of practicing Christians in China may be approaching the number in the United States, when live bodies in church are far more numerous in Kenya than in Canada, when more believers worship together in church Sunday by Sunday in Nagaland than in Norway, when India is now home to the world's largest chapter of the Jesuit order, and when Catholic mass is being said in more languages each Sunday in the United States than ever before in American history—with such realities defining the present situation, there is pressing need for new historical perspectives that explore the new world situation.[23]

Throughout its history the church in all of its manifestations has been in need, desperate need, of *conversion*. In 1991, a group of French Catholics and Protestants called *Le Groupe des Dombes* issued a challenge to the divided churches: to recognize that their identity is grounded in a continual conversion without which their unity can never be realized. Our talk about the "global church" in Augustana history and beyond has led straight to the matter of unity. *Le Groupe des Dombes* has written about identity and conversion. Listen with ears sensitive to the Augustana heritage:

— By *Christian identity* we mean one's belonging to Christ which is founded on the gift of baptism and lived out with a faith nourished by the word of God, the word that is proclaimed and the eucharistic word. This belonging equally concerns each individual and the church as the people of God.
— By *ecclesial identity* we mean the belonging or participation of an individual or of a confessional church in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.
— By *confessional identity* we mean belonging to a confessional church that comes from a specific cultural and historical context, containing its own spiritual and doctrinal profile, which distinguishes it from other churches.
— By *Christian conversion* we mean the response of faith to the call that comes to us from God through Christ. This response takes place in a movement of constant conversion.
— By *ecclesial conversion* we mean the effort required from the whole church and from all the churches for them to be renewed and become more capable of fulfilling their mission in accordance with the motto, *ecclesia semper reformanda* ["the church must always be reformed"].
— By *confessional conversion* we understand the ecumenical effort by which a Christian confession cleanses and enriches its own inheritance with the aim of recovering full communion with other confessions.[24]

Augustana has a good story and its telling needs to continue. With its telling will come conversion and renewal—to God's mission to the world and to unity in a global church. So may it be.

23. Mark A. Noll, *The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2009), 10.

24. Groupe des Dombes, *For the Conversion of the Churches* trans. James Greig (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1993), 29.

The Making of a Modern Seminary: Augustana Seminary in the 1930s

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Winthrop Hudson concluded his brief history of American Protestantism in 1961with the dramatic assertion that Lutheranism was in a position to become a kind of secret weapon for a renewed Christianity in the modern age. Hudson argued that the Lutheran church was more insulated than Protestantism in general from "the theological erosion which so largely stripped other denominations of an awareness of their continuity with a historic Christian tradition" during what he called "the Methodist age." Lutherans thus preserved essential assets that could invigorate a renewed appreciation for this tradition.[1]

If this is the case, then the Augustana Synod's role in building a bridge to a genuine modernity that was both historically respectable and genuinely Lutheran owed much to a generation of scholars and teachers that began in the early 1930s at Augustana Theological Seminary.

Many of us at the Gathering were students during this very period, which, with a touch of hyperbole, we might call "the Augustana renaissance," and owe an immeasurable debt to those who brought it about. This alone could serve as a rationale for this essay. I am, however, a medievalist whose primary professional interests reside in a period long before the events in the 1930s. So, rather than present new research, my hope is to offer the opportunity for several reflections which, to be candid, may seem more a personal exercise in making sense of our salad years. However, this, too, is a function of our Gathering.

G. Everett Arden interpreted the early '30s at Augustana as a "thrust toward independence and freedom," and, not surprisingly, set this period into the context of the synod's approaching centennial and the merger leading to the Lutheran Church in America.[2] What is difficult to

1. Winthrop Hudson, *American Protestantism: History of American Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 33, 176. In the background to, if not the direct source of, Hudson's thesis are the groundbreaking essays by Sidney Mead collected in *The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America* (New York: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1963); see for example pp. 120–121, 187. Mark Noll, "The Lutheran Difference," *First Things* 20 (1992): 31–40, pursued this notion in much greater detail in a lecture first delivered at Gettysburg Seminary.

2. G. Everett Arden, *The School of the Prophets: The Background and History of Augustana Theological Seminary 1860-l960* (Rock Island: Augustana Theological Seminary, 1960), ch. 6; and idem, *Augustana Heritage: A History of the Augustana Lutheran Church* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1963), 283–297. Reading

explain, even after nearly fifty years of further experience, is why the synod did not have the same debilitating theological debates that roiled the Norwegians and Midwestern Germans, as well as other Protestants. Aside from the debate with the Mission Friends, Swedish Lutherans were relatively free from the splintering effects of doctrinal controversy. Was this only because they were immersed in the pressing need to establish their institutions in the new world?

In response to this intriguing question, I want to suggest a perspective that stresses how the new faculty self-consciously led both seminary and synod into its own version of modernity by engaging in two apparently contradictory fronts at once. On the one hand they would not surrender, but retained and built upon, the assets that Hudson thought Lutheranism had "immediately at hand": a confessional tradition, a surviving liturgical structure, and a sense of community. At the same time, and with few if any qualms, they embraced three fundamental principles of modernism: ecumenism, social justice, and the historical-critical method.

Furthermore, the juxtaposition between these two sets of convictions did not create the enervating conflict experienced elsewhere. On the contrary, the "new outlook," as Arden called it, remained within a comfort zone that could satisfy both tradition and innovation. And it did this primarily because it drew inspiration and support from a theology coming out of the University of Lund.

The events that generated this saga (or as they like to say these days, "the narrative") of a modern seminary-in-the-making are well-known to us both formally in Arden's works and informally in the realm of oral tradition. This is remarkable in itself. Those of us who were students in the late 1950s already knew the story even while the chief characters were still active. We participated in the act of myth-making in miniature, but this experience should also keep us on our guard against self-congratulation and chauvinism.

Conrad Emil Lindberg, the keystone figure of the previous generation, the seminary's dean and dominant figure since his appointment in 1890, died on August 1, 1930. For forty years, he remained the articulate advocate of Lutheran Orthodoxy.[3] For all of its strengths, this post-Reformation kind of scholasticism sought to express the gospel in epigraphic sentences with the conviction that the precise statement of pure doctrine was the primary task of theology. I vividly recall looking into Lindberg's *Dogmatics* for the first time and thinking how ironic that the dynamic, explosive message of Luther, the vehement opponent of Aristotle in

these works after forty-five years gives a new appreciation for their remarkable achievement in control of detail, clarity of style, and comprehension of treatment. See also his Four Northern Lights: Men who Shaped Scandinavian Churches (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1964). As illustration of the connectedness in the Augustana tradition that is a subtheme of this essay, Arden fortuitously became a colleague during what was to be his last teaching post, visiting professor of church history at Gettysburg Seminary, before his untimely death in June, 1978. See Gerald Christianson, "Light in the Forest: A Tribute to G. Everett Arden," Augustana Heritage Newsletter I (2000): 10–12. All this aside, however, the definitive work on the Synod is now Maria E. Erling and Mark A. Granquist, The Augustana Story: Shaping Lutheran Identity in North America (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2008). See the review by Byron Swanson, Dialog 50 (2011): 97–99.

3. Arden, *School of the Prophets*, 231; idem, *Augustana Heritage*, 283–284.

theology, had been forced into scholastic categories.[4] But this is not altogether fair. The goal of Lindberg's work was to provide clarity and comprehensiveness to the Christian message. Nevertheless, it also led him to resist some of the major challenges of the time, including the new biblical-historical criticism.[5]

Arden himself was a student during the turbulent times following Lindberg's death, and one can hardly imagine him as an uncommitted bystander. So he must be reporting first-hand when he relates that under considerable pressure from the student body, as well as the Board of Directors, the remainder of the faculty began to come apart. By the end of the next school year, 1931, four members had been relieved and accepted calls to congregations, leaving only the church historian, Adolf Hult and the teacher of preaching, S. J. Sebelius.[6]

Apart from the challenge of simply surviving during its earliest years, this may have been the seminary's greatest crisis because it now faced a double dilemma: to the internal challenge of faculty replacement was added an external challenge concerning location. In 1933, the synod assembly defeated a recommendation for the seminary's removal to Chicago by only fifteen votes—and this in the midst of a great depression.[7]

To make the situation even more difficult, university-trained scholars were hardly in abundance. The first appointment, however, proved to be the key to resolving both sides of the crisis. Conrad Bergendoff was called from Salem Lutheran Church in Chicago to replace Lindberg as dean.[8] Bergendoff was known as then, and remained for many years, the champion of joining a seminary to a major institution of learning. The school he had in mind in those days, however, was not the University of Chicago, but Augustana College. For the moment, in any case, the new dean had helped to stabilize the question of location, and a new age in Augustana's history quickly took shape. Together with Bergendoff himself as Professor of Systematic Theology, the three key appointments were A. D. Mattson, from Augustana College, as Professor of Christian Ethics and Sociology; Eric Wahlstrom of Warren, Oregon, as Professor of Greek and New Testament Exegesis; and Carl Anderson of Altona, Illinois, as Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis.[9]

Despite student complaints that members of the old guard were not academic scholars, only the dean among the new arrivals had a Ph.D., what Bergendoff and the Board were counting on was that "the great influx" would bring a new spirit to the campus. Students felt the impact of this new spirit in a very short time and on almost every level. Extensive readings, rigorous preparations, and heavy written assignments became the norm. Wahlstrom recommended works by Rudolph Bultmann and discussed a seemingly endless stream of fresh ideas from contemporary Swedish theology.[10] Bergendoff required

4. Conrad Emil Lindberg, *Christian Dogmatics and Notes on the History of Dogma*, trans. C. E. Hoffsten (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1922).

5. Arden, *Augustana Heritage*, 249–251.

6. Arden, *School of the Prophets*, 231; idem, *Augustana Heritage*, 284.

7. Arden, *School of the Prophets*, 228–230.

8. Arden, *Augustana Heritage*, 284.

9. *Arden, School of the Prophets,* 231; idem, *Augustana Heritage,* 284-285.

10. I inserted the phrase "an animated Wahlstrom" at this point in the original presentation, but Albert Ahlstrom, my influential friend from seminary days,

his students to produce abstracts of the early church fathers; Mattson urged them to get involved in the world; and—perhaps the epitome of the new ethos—Anderson assigned the infamous Old Testament Outline. It quickly became apparent that whatever their pedigrees, the new faculty were widely read and critically attuned to new trends of thought.[11]

As if this were not enough commotion, Bergendoff and his colleagues began another adventure just a few months later, in 1934. They introduced a year of internship into the curriculum, extending a student's residency from three to four years. It was one of the first such programs in North America,[12] but a risky one because the nation was in the midst of a depression. Moreover, it belied the expectation that the new scholars would stress study at the expense of parish experience.

The decision is not altogether surprising, however, if we see the new appointments as parish pastors as well as scholars. For example, when Bergendoff was a young man, he had accompanied Archbishop Nathan Söderblom on his church visitations, and in the light of his convictions about a university setting for professional education, the model of medical schools that required students to spend significant time in internships and residencies could hardly have escaped his attention.

Such, in bare outline, are the major events in those days of ferment and creativity. I now wish to offer some appreciative observations on the major contributions of the Augustana renaissance to Lutheranism and beyond.

Aside from vigorous programs in foreign missions, publications, education and lay leadership that were shared by other Protestants, the specific contributions of the faculty in the '30s linked them with three of the movements that stood at the forefront of early twentieth-century intellectual culture. The remarkable fact is that this small, provincial faculty embraced all three. Only a fourth escaped their notice, the liturgical renewal movement (in distinction to the Oxford movement),[13] although they were committed to gospel preaching and, with the exception of A. D. Mattson ("I have never seen a unicorn in Rock Island"),[14] endorsed the *Service Book and Hymnal*.

First, Augustana strove for an "ecumenical confessionalism" that fostered a sense of hospitality toward other Christians because it grasped a vision of something larger than itself.[15] As a consequence, Augustana became a partner that was frequently invited to the dance, not only

wondered out loud if this was not an oxymoron.

11. Arden, *School of the Prophets,* 232–233.

12. Ibid., 233–234.

13. On the distinction between the two movements, see Gerald Christianson, "Space and Spirituality," in *Spirituality: Toward a 21st Century Perspective*, ed. Kirsi Stjerna (Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2004), 80–96.

14. Mattson was referring to the ancient Collect included in the new *Service Book and Hymnal*, "Save us from the horns of the unicorn." Quick-witted students corrected the situation by presenting him a goat with a plunger strapped to its head. In hindsight, however, Mattson had put his finger on a weakness in the Red Book. Aside from its many good qualities, it was largely outdated in language, perhaps even outlook.

15. Arden, *Augustana Heritage*, 269–270; and in general Karl Mattson, "The Theology of the Augustana Lutheran Church," in *Centennial Essays*: *Augustana Lutheran Church, 1860-1960*, eds. Emmer Engberg, Conrad Bergendoff, and Edgar Carlson (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1960), 28–50.

in the formation of the Lutheran Church in America, but also in The Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches.

Second, Augustana continued a commitment to social service, but adapted and enhanced this commitment to meet twentieth-century needs for social justice that stood out among other Protestants. In earlier days Augustana followed the encouragement of William Alfred Passavant[16] but now drew inspiration from the theological "school" at the University of Lund in Sweden. It also incorporated the efforts of a remarkable body of lay women who were part of a mass movement, one of the largest in the American experience.[17] It also discovered a spokesman in A. D. Mattson. Although not all would follow the indomitable professor as he stood in picket lines with members of the labor movement, the synod's pursuit of justice became evident in the formation and support of trendsetting social service agencies.[18]

A third contribution calls for more comment, especially from a grateful historian, because it serves as a key to understanding the phenomenon of Augustana Seminary in the 1930s: The emergence and triumph of modern critical methods applied to the history of the church and in particular to its founding document, the Bible. For a large part of Protestantism, including a number of Lutherans, this could be a painful and divisive task, and one that for many has yet to be resolved.

Even before the entry of the new breed into their posts at Augustana, Gettysburg Seminary had passed through the crisis beginning in 1926 with the appointment of Raymond Stamm, a young scholar with a Ph.D. in New Testament but no parish experience. Charged by some as radical, if not heretical, Gettysburg Seminary nevertheless persevered and flourished,[19] as did Wahlstrom and Augustana.

There are differences between the two stories, however. To begin with, the new approach at Augustana did not come completely unannounced but fit into a long-standing pattern established by synod president T. N. Hasselquist who had carefully steered a course between doctrinal laxity and the Missouri Synod. Years later the new approach gained support from a small but articulate group of pastor-scholars such

16. Arden, *Augustana Heritage*, 115–118. For the European background, see Gerald Christianson, "Lutherans Face the Industrial Revolution: Awakening, Social Justice, and *Diakonia*," *Seminary Ridge Review* 7 (2005): 18–31; and idem, "J.H. Wichern and the Rise of the Lutheran Social Institution," *Lutheran Quarterly* 19 (1967): 357–370.

17. Arden, *Augustana Heritage*, 211–217.

18. Ibid., 360–362. See, more recently, Bernard Erling, "Erik Norelius," *Augustana Heritage Newsletter* 3 (2004): 13–26. Norelius was instrumental not only in founding Gustavus Adolphus College, but also the Vasa Children's Home, which marked the beginning of organized social services in the Augustana Synod. See also Christa Klein, with Christian von Dehsen, *Politics and Policy: The Genesis and Theology of Social Statements in the Lutheran Church in America* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989).

19. Abdel Ross Wentz, *Gettysburg Theological Seminary, vol. l: History, 1826-1965* (Harrisburg: United Lutheran Publication House, 1964), 295, 430–432; Roger Gobbel, *On the Glorious Hill: A Short History in Word and Picture of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg*, with Donald Matthews and Elaine Matthews (Gettysburg: Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, 1976; enlarged ed., 1990), 38–39; Gerald Christianson, "Saints, Scholars, and Seminarians," *Seminary Ridge Review* 8 (2005): 5–14.

as Claus Wendell and C. J. Sodergren.[20] However, a stream became a flood when Bergendoff, Wahlstrom, Mattson, and a newer colleague, Hjalmar Johnson, who had taught at Gustavus Adolphus and Augustana Colleges, produced a steady flow of publications. These appeared in *The Lutheran Companion* and *The Lutheran Quarterly*,[21] as well as in their own books. Together they defended the relevance of biblical-historical criticism to the gospel and the relevance of Lutheranism to ecumenism and modern society.

Each had a different emphasis, but all agreed that one does not have to pledge allegiance to any of several propositions regarding verbal inspiration in order to commit oneself wholeheartedly to the affirmation that the Bible proclaims the gospel of the living God who redeems humanity through the death and resurrection of his Son. In fact, such propositions are not so much wrong as that they miss, or obscure, the point of the biblical message.[22]

How the seminary could avoid the conflicts and divisiveness over these issues that plagued many other denominations brings us to the central question of this essay. Three factors stand out: the internal needs of early Swedish Lutherans in America to get themselves organized; the tendency of immigrants to hold onto the accustomed ways of the mother country; and the powerful effect of modernist winds that came blowing out of Sweden when the clouds of isolation began to lift. While the first factor is a commonplace, the juxtaposition of the second and third must be added if we are to explain why the new trends did not cause disruption, but became the accepted norm.

First, the Augustana Synod's internal needs must be noted. The general scholarly consensus, of which Arden was already aware, remains fairly consistent.[23] Scandinavian Lutherans were among the more recent European immigrants and arrived long after the first generation of German Lutherans who were organized by Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. Scandinavians came in large numbers, almost two million of them, only in the thirty-five years before the First World War.[24] Arden notes that in 1860 the Swedish section of the Augustana Synod counted seventeen pastors and thirty-six congregations with a total membership of 3,747, but a half century later it had grown to 625 pastors who served 1,124 congregations with a membership of 166,983.[25]

Understandably, the task of this first generation was integration and consolidation. They felt a strong need to accommodate the ever-new waves of immigrants, and although Swedes in general were

20. Arden, *Augustana Heritage*, 151–152, 249–251, 285–289.

21. Ibid., 289–297, with full bibliography.

22. Conrad Bergendoff, *Christ as Authority* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1947); idem, *The One Holy Catholic Apostolic Church* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1954); A. D. Mattson, *Christian Ethics* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1947); idem, *Christian Social Consciousness* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1953); Eric Wahlstrom, *My Father Worketh Hitherto: A Brief Outline of Christianity's Expansion* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1945); idem, *The Church and the Means of Grace* (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1949); idem, *The New Life in Christ* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1950); idem, *The God Who Redeems: Perspectives in Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1962).

23. Arden, *Augustana Heritage*, 44–74, 231–251; and note l above.

24. Noll, *First Things* 20:32.

25. Arden, *Augustana Heritage*, 228.

among the quickest of immigrant groups to learn English, the synod hesitated. Like other arrivals in the new land, they maintained a strong commitment to old world values.[26] This is not to say that the Swedes were completely isolated in these pioneering times. Their newspapers showed that they were aware of the issues around them, especially those directly related to their identity.[27] In their circumstances, it is not surprising that the synod's forebears took a cautious attitude toward the "New Lutherans" associated with the founder and president of Gettysburg Seminary, Samuel Simon Schmucker, the author of the *Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches* of 1838 and co-author of the anonymous *Definite Synodical Platform* of 1855.[28] The Augustana Swedes helped to precipitate the split in the General Synod and in 1860 joined the General Council.[29] So we are left to speculate, had these issues involving the synod's identity not intervened, whether they would have empathized with Schmucker's social concerns, especially his vocal anti-slavery stance that may have doomed his cause before it started.[30]

In any event, with more pressing needs to attend to, these late arrivals in the new world entered upon what Mark Noll calls "a desert sojourn." Nevertheless, this sojourn also brought benefits because Swedish Lutheranism escaped the acrimonious effects of the modernist/fundamentalist controversy that swept over other Protestants in the first decades of the twentieth century. When the synod came out of its sojourn sometime after the First World War, it seemed probable that "something distinctively Lutheran would survive into the twentieth century."[31]

Concentration on internal matters of organization and immigrant assimilation is the first factor in the historical context, but two other, contrasting factors contributed directly to the success of a small but gifted band of faculty members in the emergence of Augustana as a modern seminary in the 1930s. On the one hand, as large scale immigration ceased and consolidation continued apace, the church was now exposed to intense discussion over how much assimilation was necessary and proper in order for old world values to survive in the new world.

On the other hand, the decisive contribution to this process was the connection between the faculty's commitments—defend the new methodology and yet affirm the best of the tradition—with a sizable body of works originating from the University of Lund. The "Lundensian School" provided a safe haven in the gathering storm for those who wished to adopt the new ideas and still feel a sense of comfort about old world values and faithfulness to the past. Wahlstrom became the champion of this effort, not only through his own books but through his translations of key works.[32]

26. Ibid., 238–249.

27. I owe this information to Maria Erling.

28. Noll, *First Things* 20:32–35; Arden, *Augustana Heritage*, 51–58.

29. Ibid., 72–74; 143–159.

30. This is the provocative thesis of Paul Kuenning, *The Rise and Fall of American Lutheran Pietism: The Rejection of an Activist Heritage* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1988). See the reviews by Frederick K. Wentz, "Schmucker, Social Policy, and America's Lutherans: A Book Review Essay," *Lutheran Theological Seminary Bulletin* 69 (1989): 3–15; and Annabelle Wenzke, "Pietism, Confessionalism, and Social Reform: A Book Review Essay," ibid., 16–23.

31. Noll, *First Things* 20:36.

32. Wahlstrom almost single-handedly

The authors of these works all made their mark in a short span between 1929 and 1932: Ragnar Bring with his book on dualism in Luther (1929),[33] Gustav Aulén with *Christus Victor* (1931),[34] and Anders Nygren with *Agape and Eros* (1932).[35] These Lundensians intended to be both modern/scientific and faithful to scripture. However, they could not have accomplished these goals had they not been rooted in a new appreciation of the historical Luther that began in Germany with Karl Holl at the start of the twentieth century.[36]

Einar Billing became the pioneer of this Luther renaissance in Sweden as early as 1900.[37] Rather than build an ordered taxonomy of Luther's ideas in which all appeared to have relatively equal value, Billing set out to recapture the dynamic person of faith. For this purpose he introduced the notion of "motif research" which, in opposition to Lutheran orthodoxy, seeks to determine core ideas or recurrent themes within the whole body of Luther's faith and experience. As Billing himself noted, Luther's thought was not like pearls neatly arranged on a necklace, but rather like the petals of a flower, an organic whole. People were invited to meet the human Luther rather than read abstracts of Luther's thought.[38] Conrad Bergendoff reflected this scholarship in 1928 when he published *Olavus Petri*, his study of Sweden's premier reformer and Luther's early student,[39] and in so doing

brought the seminal works of Gustav Aulén to the attention of American readers as well as Augustana pastors. See the notes below.

33. Ragnar Bring published his *Dualismen hos Luther* in 1929, but is best known in English for his *Commentary on Galatians*, trans. Eric Wahlstrom (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961). Bring was a warm-hearted teacher who befriended young graduate students when, in his retirement, he spent a year in residence at the University of Chicago in the mid-1960s.

34. Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement*, trans. A. G. Hebert (London: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1945; first published 1931); idem, *Eucharist and Sacrifice*, trans. Eric Wahlstrom, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958); idem, *The Faith of the Christian Church*, trans. From the 5th Swedish edition by Eric Wahlstrom and G. Everett Arden (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960); idem, *Reformation and Catholicity*, trans. Eric Wahlstrom (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961).

35. Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros: A Study of the Christian Idea of Love,* trans. A. G. Hebert (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1932).

36. His best-known work in English is Karl Holl, *The Cultural Significance of the Reformation*, trans. Karl Hertz et al. (New York: World Publishing Co., 1959).

37. Billing's *Luthers lära om staten i dess samband med hans reformatoriska grundtankar och med tidigare kyrkliga läror akademisk afhandling* appeared at Uppsala in 1900, but he is better known in this country for *Our Calling*, trans. Conrad Bergendoff (Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1947; reprinted Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1964). See also Gustaf Wingren, *An Exodus Theology: Einar Billing and the Development of Modern Swedish Theology*, trans. Eric Wahlstrom (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969).

38. For a summary of these developments see G. Everett Arden, "Swedish Theology: II. Leading Swedish Theologians of the 20th Century" in *The Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church*, ed. Julius Bodensieck, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), 3: 2309–2311.

39. Conrad Bergendoff, *Olavus Petri and the Ecclesiastical Transformation in Sweden, 1521-1551: A Study in the Swedish*

set the stage for the later burst of studies and translations at Augustana.

The Lundensians had already made the Luther renaissance their own and on this basis began to articulate new approaches to exegesis, history, and systematic theology that were both rigorous in the methods of modernity and yet respectful of the tradition. Although called a school of theology, it is not at all fanciful to say that their methodology, even in systematic theology, was essentially historical and that their most important insight was that revelation, like the incarnation itself, is rooted in history.[40]

Behind the creative work of the Lundensian School and its appropriation of the new Luther research was the heritage of Pietist spirituality, a spirituality that, in some of its manifestations, could reach out to historical-scientific methods and new ideas because the "one thing necessary" was not a set of abstract propositions, nor a form of ecclesiastical government, but faithfulness of heart to a personal Savior who is yet cosmic Lord and who draws his church ever onward toward a promised goal. Such a joining of piety and intellect in Sweden contrasted both with Germany where radical forms of the Enlightenment caused considerable intellectual upheaval in the church and some corners of Scandinavia where Pietism turned anti-intellectual.[41]

Within this creative tension between piety and learning, spirit and intellect, the new breed at Augustana discovered the task of the Christian scholar as a model for twentieth-century American Lutheranism. The goal of this task was to retain a healthy respect for the whole sweep of Christian history, "warts and all," and the canons of historical criticism, while at the same time reaffirming Luther's emphasis on the gospel as a gracious act of God who justifies by faith.

Yet Augustana Seminary could survive the crisis of historical criticism not just because the new dean and his colleagues had grasped Luther's understanding of scripture as God's word of grace. It survived also because hesitant pastors and critics of the new ideas about biblical interpretation might have caused a much greater uproar had they suspected that these ideas came only from purportedly liberal institutions like Yale Divinity School where A. D. Mattson and Hjalmar Johnson had studied. But what could they say when spokesmen like Wahlstrom pointed to Sweden itself for support? In short, the new outlook provided a comfort zone that could embrace both old and new.

It was thus no coincidence that all the creative ferment at Augustana in the

Reformation (reprinted Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965). See Gerald Christianson, "What Happened in Sweden," *Una Sancta*, XXII, 4 (1965): 69–73, a review article on the occasion of the re-publication of this seminal work by Fortress Press.

40. Their goals and methodology reflected the principles of historicism, articulated by the great nineteenth-century historian, Leopold von Ranke. See the three major interpretations of the Lundensian School: Nels F. S. Ferré, *Swedish Contributions to Modern Theology, with Special Reference to Lundensian Thought*, with a new chapter, "Developments in Swedish Theology, 1939-66," by William Johnson (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1967); Edgar Carlson, *The Reinterpretation of Luther* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1948); and Gustaf Wingren, *Theology in Conflict*: *Nygren, Barth, Bultmann*, trans. Eric Wahlstrom (Philadelphia: Oliver and Boyd, 1958).

41. For the continental background see the Introduction to David Crowner and Gerald Christianson, *The Spirituality of the German Awakening*, in "Classics of Western Spirituality" (New York: Paulist Press, 2003).

1930s occurred at exactly the moment when the Lundensians were becoming known in North America and were making a greater impact than scholars from other Scandinavian nations, rivaling even their more famous and more controversial counterparts in Germany. Few other Lutherans, including the Norwegians and the Missouri Synod, had this resource.

Some Lutheran scholars maintain that Lutherans, having gone through their desert sojourn, escaped the erosion of Protestantism in the nineteenth century only to adopt a more pallid version in the second half of the twentieth. As evidence they offer the tepid response to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.[42] However, other historians outside the denomination such as Winthrop Hudson and Mark Noll assert that Lutherans "have much to offer to the wider American community," provided they remain true to their tradition, especially the benefits of being rooted in the past, the consciousness that history is important to the faith, and that "the communion of saints exists over time as well as out in space."[43]

To meet the challenge of remaining faithful to central affirmations of the Reformation, Lutherans possess Confessions that embrace the Christian tradition and offer a key, justification by faith, to interpret this tradition. They celebrate a liturgy that puts them in touch with the past. Furthermore, instead of private agendas dictating public policy, their doctrine of the two kingdoms asserts that "a different set of axioms might be appropriate for public life than for private life."[44]

Noll's observation that Lutherans experienced "a kind of coming out" after the Second World War applies especially to Augustana.[45] One could, for example, cite its contribution to twentieth-century historical-theological studies as an illustration of his tongue-in-cheek assertion "that some secret elixir devised to develop special muscles for historical scholarship is regularly dispensed to young Lutherans."[46] Three of the notable interpreters of the Christian tradition in the years following the new breed at the seminary were sons of Augustana: Edgar Carlson, Sydney Ahlstrom, and George Lindbeck who are widely recognized for their work, respectively, on Swedish, North American, and ecumenical theology.

As further evidence for the influence of those singular years that witnessed the making of a modern seminary at Augustana in the 1930s, one might also submit the longevity of the Augustana Heritage Association and the vivacity of its regular Gatherings. Most of all, one can point to a generation or more of pastors and lay leaders who, unselfconsciously and without particular fanfare, have sensed the potential role of Lutheranism in an evangelical and ecumenical Christianity that still has much to say to the twenty-first century.

End Note

I am grateful for the encouragement, suggestions, and correctives offered by my colleague Maria Erling and the technical assistance of Ann Dentry.

42. See Klein, *Politics and Policy*, note 18 above.

43. Noll, *First Things* 20:36–37.

44. Ibid., 37–38.

45. Ibid., 34.

46. Ibid., 31.

What America Wanted and Swedish American Youth

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When Mark Granquist and I were working on the history of the Augustana Synod, we divided up the work according to our areas of interest and experience. I had spent time in Sweden researching immigrant language and letter writing, and so the early part of the history was something I was very eager to work on, but then we had to divide up the later period according to other criteria. When we decided that I should research Augustana's youth work I did not realize at the time how formative this assignment would be, and how it would tie so many elements of the Augustana story together. So, I am very happy to make an argument about how important it was, and still is, for a church to take young people seriously.

One thing I learned in studying this work with youth and young adults was that every early initiative of the pioneer leaders involved a serious attempt to provide leadership training for young Augustana people. Through building congregational schools, educating pastors, and finally through colleges and youth conferences, Augustana's leaders were working constantly with young people. The records that we have of speeches and sermons, young people's magazines, and planning documents for youth conferences show that youth were on the center stage. Augustana's leaders knew that if they did not teach the youth to honor their heritage, to be proud of being Swedish, Lutheran, and American, the synod would not have a future. And to do this, leaders realized that young people needed to learn something about the history of their church and culture. The leaders believed that without any knowledge of history it would be impossible for the young people to feel any pride in their family, their church, or their associations. Also, since they were an immigrant people trying to assimilate into American society, they had to compensate for the negative stereotypes that adhered to immigrants. They did not want to lose their young people. Thus it was a matter of survival to take young people seriously.

The kind of history that Augustana taught its young people is not the kind of history we would tell today. Magnificent glorification of Gustavus Adolphus, Carl the 12th, Martin Luther, George Washington, and other heroes filled the pages of *Ungdomsvännen*, the precursor to *Youth's Companion*, which later became *The Lutheran Companion*. The evolution of the youth magazine into the church magazine is also instructive, since it shows that the youth culture became the church's culture. Even *Korsbaneret* started out as a youth journal!

In this essay I want to draw attention to something else, which at first glance might seem to be a very different approach. Instead of magnifying the wonderful accomplishments of past heroes, which was the style of history writing familiar one hundred years ago, I will do a more critical assessment of a dynamic

that affected all Swedish immigrant communities in America. I will try to unpack some of the unspoken assumptions of the surrounding culture, especially the competition among different ethnic groups over social prestige and place in American society. Swedish immigrants came out pretty well in this competition, mostly for superficial reasons—they looked like the kind of people who would fit in well with American society. Blond hair and blue eyes are still attractive to Americans. Thus Swedish Protestant immigrants had a relatively easy path toward acceptance. They also could maintain elements of their distinctive heritage more easily in America than some other immigrant groups were able to do. I have found that looking at Augustana's heritage through the perspective of America's ongoing story of continual absorption of immigrant groups can be a way that we can continue to draw on our heritage to help us become more deeply committed to the task of building up our society for all people.

This account will also have a youth focus, but a more critical one. I will examine some of the ways that Swedish Americans were influenced by the values and politics of American society. Assimilation can happen on an individual level—a person leaves behind any trace of a heritage and just tries to blend into the broader American society—or it can happen on a collective level through churches, societies, and private associations. Augustana's heritage was not only a church heritage, but also a vehicle for Swedish immigrants to fashion a new, Lutheran, or Protestant identity and ministry in a very new environment. The reason the Augustana heritage continues today is that the attempt to fashion an Augustana Lutheran collective identity in America was so successful that it is still serving an important purpose. When we come together in biennial gatherings, nostalgia is a very important element, but I also detect another impulse even more life-giving. We are extending our memories to learn more about the past rather than just to capture a feeling. We are arguing about the nature of our legacy and continuing to shape a collective response to American society. The Augustana heritage is still evolving and showing some life and energy to adapt to new challenges.

First I will look at the early stages of Swedish immigration and the American welcome, then at the role of Swedish American colleges like Bethany in shaping the contours of a Swedish American leadership corps, and finally at the development of a denominational youth ministry, where the heritage of Augustana—with its familiar intergenerational network—became less visible, but actually more crucial, since it provided the informal structure that made the programs succeed.

Model immigrants

Swedish immigrants who came to America in the second half of the nineteenth century followed several well-worn paths. Many followed earlier rural migrants from Norway and came to farmland in the Midwest. Later migrants, experienced with industrialization, found jobs in growing mill towns and cities of the United States. While they were choosing a place to work, the cultural and political leaders in these cities also played a role. American Protestants in particular sought ways to influence the types of immigrants that would settle in their towns. They wanted a certain type of immigrant so that they could advance their own political, religious, and cultural ideals. After the Civil War, they were concerned that too many Roman Catholics were coming to the United States. So American Protestant home mission societies directed their efforts to the newly-growing immigrant

communities, while city councils enacted laws to restrict tavern keeping and limit leisure time. American employers began to selectively recruit new employees to fashion a workforce that was compliant, hard-working, and devout.

Even modest efforts could have significant effects on the pattern of migration, for the chain of events following successful migration by a group of individuals was that others followed and created a settlement. Another effect of active recruitment by interested American employers or state officials did not leave obvious immediate traces on American society, but may have had a more lasting effect on the people who were subjected to it. Americans who worked to entice people of Nordic descent into coming to their businesses or communities were motivated to do so by their interest in promoting the settlement of immigrants with desirable "racial" and religious qualities. This explicit motivation was not well hidden; Swedes and other Scandinavian immigrants were well aware that they were seen as desirable settlers, and this favorable context affected the way that they themselves assessed the contribution they would make to the newly evolving population of the United States. One of the most immediate effects of being perceived as desirable because of their Nordic features and their Protestant faith was that immigrant leaders—preachers, college presidents, and politicians—drew on their desirable features, and emphasized them when they began to tell their own story to the rising generation of young Swedish Americans.

Church groups actively led the process of assimilation into American society. Swedish Americans formed other societies not connected to religious purposes, but especially when the Swedish language was no longer used, the work of creating a Swedish-American identity fell to the churches, where the many anniversaries, building dedications, and graduation ceremonies gathered the people. It is important to listen in on those occasions to learn what the immigrants heard, but we must also be aware that these religious gatherings made the immigrants visible also to the watching Americans who wondered what to make of these new foreign workers.

From "A City on a Hill" to "A People Wonderfully Made"

In New England, where a Puritan ethos still evoked strong nostalgia from increasingly beleaguered factory owners and establishment figures, newly arriving Swedish immigrants received increasingly favorable attention. This began with the recruiting trips of Maine's William Widgery Thomas, who served as President Lincoln's envoy in Stockholm during the Civil War and who later returned to Sweden to entice Swedish settlers to come to the far northern reaches of his home state. Established leaders in New England's Congregational, Baptist, Episcopal, and Methodist churches raised money for church buildings, preacher salaries, and Sunday school work all on behalf of what they felt was a favored population of fair-haired, blue-eyed, hard-working Protestants. In Worcester, Massachusetts, the political ascendancy of Swedish immigrants was achieved when Pehr Gustaf Holmes became the city's first Swedish American mayor. A first step in his assimilation into the establishment was becoming a Congregationalist, which in fact was another name for being a Mission Friend, or a member of the Evangelical Covenant church. For Americans, these Swedish debates over religion were confusing. It was easier to just think that Swedish immigrants were new pilgrims, and it was not hard for the immigrants to go along,

naming their churches Pilgrim Covenant Church, and so on, and affiliating with the Congregationalist Association.

This favorable churchly and political alliance characterized encounters between Swedes and Americans in the Northeast, as they together worked on promoting temperance, Sabbath-keeping, and congregational life within urban and industrial immigrant neighborhoods. In comparison to the Irish and other newly arrived radicals, like the Finn or Czech workers, Swedes appeared again and again as the favored immigrant group in the city. What the collective presence of pious Swedish immigrants said to their American neighbors was that these immigrants, as opposed to their Catholic neighbors, stood for traditional Protestant values and would as a community defend and advance these American ideals. For public consumption, and in the English-speaking press, the many disagreements and diverse views present *within* the Swedish immigrant community were almost invisible. One would hardly know there were any Lutherans around.

This New England episode happened in a favorable and hospitable Protestant culture. The anecdotes I cite here have to do mostly with the experience of Swedish revivalists, who later formed the Mission Covenant denomination. Immigrant young people in the Midwest, who grew up in rural communities or in much larger Swedish-dominated immigrant neighborhoods, certainly did not have the same degree of contact and influence on American opinion. In Minneapolis, the full range of Swedish leisure-time behavior was evident in the naming of Snus Boulevard. No such slang evolved in New England, where every Swede could enjoy a reputation for hard-working industrious piety.

The raw material for the development of a Swedish American identity sends a historian in many directions, and defies simplification. Even though we live at the far reaches of a long process, it can be extremely valuable for us to look at the beginning stages of this encounter between the "established" American society and the Swedish immigrant community, because this process of assimilation to a functional American identity is ongoing for many new immigrant groups today. We who benefitted from the wise and shrewd, as well as prudent and plucky, advances of our forebears, stand in a new position today in relationship to newer communities of immigrants from Africa, South America, and Asia. Knowing our heritage better will make us better fellow citizens and people of faith.

Those who know something about Swedish American identity in the United States realize that there are many regional differences in the process of assimilation into an American identity. The Swedish-American heritage that we celebrate was shaped by many diverse impulses, including many varieties of religious striving. It would be difficult to draw any conclusions about the construction of a Swedish-American identity and its racial dimensions by looking only at this isolated New England example. A Midwestern small town perspective or the important pluralistic and experimental environment of the Western states can significantly add to our understanding of how, in the Augustana Synod, it became possible for Swedish immigrants in such far-flung and diverse places to develop a national, Swedish-American, religious and cultural identity.

There are other examples to which I will briefly point in order to show that the self-conscious exploration of cultural transition, of the relationship between Swedish religion and culture—even the physical, or racial dimensions of culture—and the

American context in which this should be expressed, was also explored in other, Midwestern settings, and particularly by Lutheran Swedes.

Occasions for extended, public reflection on Swedishness in America occurred when immigrant leaders felt it necessary to define and express a common understanding of being Swedish in America, as the second generation of Swedish-Americans came of age. Still largely Swedish-speaking, these young Americans lived in a new, bilingual and bi-cultural world. It was not necessary for Swedish-American leaders to teach Swedish youth how to be American, for the surrounding culture was doing that adequately enough. The pastors and teachers at Swedish American colleges did feel, however, the necessity of teaching youth how to be Swedish. At jubilee celebrations marking significant historical moments, and through occasional as well as more permanent publications, the particular import of a Swedish, Nordic identity in America was communicated to a rising generation of these college-educated Swedes.

The year 1893 was a jubilee year commemorating the 300th anniversary of Sweden's acceptance of the Lutheran Augsburg Confession. Augustana's old guard of Hasselquist, Carlsson, and Norelius were more estranged from the Church of Sweden, and would perhaps never have thought of extending a hand of welcome to a Swedish bishop, but a new team of leaders had arrived on the scene and now wielded some influence on Augustana's national stage. C.A. Swensson, L.G. Abrahamson, and Olof Olsson, although they didn't always agree, invited the bishop of Visby, Knut Henning Gezelius von Scheele, to visit Augustana churches in America. Von Scheele's visit thawed the relationship between the synod and the Church of Sweden. It would not become a warm friendship right away, but von Scheele put the immigrants on speaking terms with the church at home. The tour also provided an occasion for this Swedish visitor to observe the "coming of age" of Swedish-Americans.

At Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas, the 1893 commencement exercises demonstrated to von Scheele that the Nordic spirit could still exert its influence on the coming generation: How good and beautiful that our Nordic spirit can yet be preserved as their descendants use the Swedish language; but also how necessary for them to completely master the tongue of their new fatherland, so that this spirit may infuse itself into life in this country as well, and that this spirit may not be completely overrun and overpowered by other nationalities, which do not stand in front of the manly power and the womanly beauty of the Swedes.[1]

Von Scheele's interest in the Nordic spirit surfaced in most of his many talks to Swedish Lutheran audiences across the United States, at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota, and at Augustana College and Seminary in Rock Island, Illinois. In the address quoted from above, which was entitled *A Swedish-American Declaration of Maturity*, von Scheele's notion of a cultural, Nordic spirit was linked with a clear reference to the physical beauty and strength of the young Swedish-American women and men that assembled before him when he addressed college audiences. But there was some danger: Swedish women with their beauty and Swedish men with their manly power were threatened by the overwhelming presence of other nationalities, other languages, and other religious commitments.

The Swedish-American youth who graduated from Bethany College on

1. Knut Henning Gezelius von Scheele, *Hemlandstoner* (Stockholm, 1895), 81.

that summer day in 1893 demonstrated a bilingual and cultural competence that impressed their Swedish guest. The college's president, the Rev. Carl August Swensson, was a second generation Swedish-American, totally familiar with two cultures, who knew the value of mastering the language and spirit of America and of Sweden. He collected the impressions and the speeches that had been made during the jubilee year of 1893 and produced a volume for the youth of the whole Augustana Synod titled *Forget Me Not*, a book of vignettes, exhortations, poems, and inspirational addresses.

Swensson's opening greeting or preface addressed the imagined audience of Swedish youth in America with a personal, heartfelt invocation: "Every time I think about the large multitude of manly youth and blue-eyed maidens, who together constitute the Swedish-American youth, my heart beats faster than otherwise, while memory and hope with racing speed compete in each their separate direction to command my attention."[2]

Similarly, in the greeting from Sweden that followed Swensson's introductory greeting, von Scheele sketched out his vision of Swedish-American loyalty to Sweden's rich, spiritual heritage of confessional freedom. He closed with a reference to the "Forget-me-not" flower, with its blue blossom and yellow sun-filled center. This flower said the same thing as the Swedish flag, he noted, which, having a yellow cross on a blue field, combined the wisdom of time immemorial with the sunny warmth of youth. "Remain true to this banner, you blue-eyed, golden haired descendants!" He also reminded his readers that the Swedish flag bore the sign of the cross, and that this sign was the only power that was worthy of their allegiance.

Swedish-Americans in New England and in Kansas as well as those reading these flowery orations, participated in an elaborate sizing-up activity, as dignified Swedish visitors helped them explore aspects of their common and apparently much exalted heritage. Augustana leaders who published these remarks were clearly intent on keeping a Swedish image of piety and vigor alive in the coming generation. Carefully-crafted jubilee events, commemorating heroic sacrifice were consciously connected to the new task at hand: preservation and advancement of a new kind of Swedish-ness in America. Those reading or hearing this message may well have also heard the implicit message that their physical features were a prominent and favorable aspect of their heritage. As surely as Swedish settlers experienced a welcome from American Protestants that was not extended to other immigrant groups, they learned to congratulate themselves on those aspects of their heritage that had already been singled out by high-profile Americans.

Fortunately, suffused throughout von Scheele's message were other themes that would resonate beyond ethnicity, especially his emphasis on faith, and on church loyalty that certainly could have, and hopefully did provide an antidote to racially derived theories of nationality. Thirty years after the 1893 von Scheele visit, another high profile Swedish Lutheran, Nathan Söderblom, the archbishop of the Church of Sweden, visited Augustana churches and schools. The kind of naïve nationalism highlighting racial characteristics and essential national ideals that flowed so easily from the lips of Carl Swensson and von Scheele had been put to the test by the World War. Now Söderblom visited a people in America who were very proud of their Swedish heritage, even though the themes of Swedish beauty and youthful

2. Carl August Swensson, *Förgät mig ej, Ungdom's Kalender för Jubelåret 1893*, 11.

vigor were not in the foreground of his message. For the most part the younger generation no longer spoke the language, and the archbishop realized that new aspects of their shared heritage needed to be emphasized.

Speaking at Augustana College, Söderblom became an ambassador for something else: a dramatic new Christian movement among students, a movement that would build a foundation for the ecumenical peace movement of the churches. Instead of Swedish-ness he spoke of faith as the connecting point between the students of Sweden and America. American generations of Swedes would need new reasons to maintain relationships with their homeland, and this student-oriented peace work of the churches could became a primary means for young people on both sides of the Atlantic to negotiate a new Lutheran identity in the world. Söderblom's recognition that his audience would need a new call to inspire them was in part a recognition that these Swedes were no longer Swedes as such, but American students.

By the time of Söderblom's visit, Augustana's young people had indeed become something other than vessels for the continuation of a Swedish-American identity. They were fully engaged with the modern student Christian movement, and had been pioneers in creating a vital, youth-oriented ministry: the Luther League.

Augustana's Luther League affiliated with the inter-Lutheran Luther League movement founded in 1895. Augustana Luther League promoters were prominent figures in advancing English language work. The modernizers in the synod seemed to split into two camps, a conservative, pietistic Bible school wing, and a more liberal, university and campus ministry-oriented wing. Both groups in the synod were avid supporters of youth, however, and found that summer Bible camps and evangelistic meetings provided an ideal way to shape the loyalty of a new generation. In the process, using the Luther League, which passed on to congregations the methods and organizational lessons of modern American Lutheranism, Augustana Lutherans began to give their young people significant training in leadership.

Chicago's Lutheran Bible School, a forerunner of the LBI in the Twin Cities, spearheaded the effort to provide resources for local leagues in 1925. *The Manual for Luther Leagues* described the history of youth work, and described the important ministries of the church. There were over one hundred tips for a successful meeting. A series of debate topics focused on stewardship, as in: "Resolved that the voluntary pledge system is preferable to the stipulated communicant fee system." In congregation after congregation, in all the conferences, Augustana's young men and women had been targeted for leadership. The program grew, and youth became leaders.

In the middle of the 1940s the synod prepared to celebrate the founding of the first Swedish congregation in Iowa in 1848. Even though the Synod had not been founded until 1860, the 1948 centennial celebration provided a remarkable opportunity for retelling the founding story. A stewardship emphasis accompanied the centennial to support the home and foreign mission field and the recovery work in post-war Europe. The celebration included the various boards of the church, and the youth board was no exception. Even though youth work was considered the wave of the future Wilton Bergstrand knew, as generation after generation of historically minded Augustana youth leaders had discovered, that the way to the future was paved by laying down the stones of history in a telling pattern.

By honoring the past and celebrating it, leaders knew that they could deepen

the commitment of members to ongoing work. Wilton Bergstrand knew this basic pragmatic truth about history, and asked Martin Carlson to write the history of Augustana's youth program. Those consulted about the pioneer years understood how to use the occasion of the anniversary for promotional purposes. Since immigrant pioneer pastors and the settlers had come to America as young people, the synod was itself a youth movement.

In the hands of the business-savvy stewardship division of the church, much of Augustana's history threatened to become cliché, but Bergstrand and his staff aimed at something more. They understood that the future of the church depended on cultivating and nurturing a leadership that was informed and loyal to the church. Invoking the longer, historical narrative was a crucial step in cultivating loyalty because the honor given to the past created generous and enthusiastic support. When Bergstrand communicated to the church that his youth ministry was for the church, not just for the youth, the flip side of the message was that the church needed to be "for the youth." Youth programming was not seen as transient, focused only on a life stage, or the work of an auxiliary, or as a movement with a fleeting lifespan. Youth work was to be "on the front burner" of the church. That meant enough staff, enough funding, and public support on all levels of the church's leadership.

Augustana's youth program and its leaders were not parochial. When they spoke of the work of the church they meant the wider church, not just the local congregation. Youth were trained for leadership with a vision for a future American Lutheranism that would engage the world in mission and service. Augustana's leaders, trained through this exceptional youth ministry, were builders of the mergers that began to come together in the mid-century. But the fine print of Lutheran merger plans caused Bergstrand, and his staff some real concern.

As the planning meetings for either the American Lutheran Church (ALC) or the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) merger progressed, at first Augustana was in on the ground floor for both of them; the relationships of the youth leaders in the various churches were important links between the churches. Wilton Bergstrand had stronger ties with youth leaders going into the ALC, and when the decision was made to turn instead to the LCA he began to be concerned, especially with the basic question that he heard again and again from his cadre of local leaders: "Will there be strong youth work in the emerging…?" He wrote to his friend Martin Carlson, now Director of Stewardship and Finance, to seek help in getting beyond the "blueprint" stage to actual budget planning, where crucial things were at stake.

Both men were concerned that the United Lutheran Church in America (ULCA) needed to catch up to Augustana's standards. The ULCA had just started with four League Leadership Schools, but to serve the 6,000 congregations the new church would need 120, and provision for counselor training. He had compiled the statistics on the status of the Luther League in the ULCA, also, and found that there were 2,500 congregations that had not yet organized a league; 2,300 of them were ULCA. Next he noted that the teenage population was "exploding": "The new LCA will start out with over a half million youth, going on to a million youth by 1973."[3]

Bergstrand wrote a five-page brief called "What's the Score re: The Youth Work in the LCA?" sometime in 1961, and it contained a clear expression of

3. Bergstrand to Martin Carlson, October 21, 1960. Copied to Malwin Lundeen. ELCA Archives, Bergstrand papers.

frustration felt within Augustana's Board of Youth Activities as their carefully built programs faced a kind of extinction through absorption in the merger. The opening statement makes clear what negotiators were up against, according to the author: "To understand what has happened in the youth work of the LCA you must keep this clearly in mind: Dr. Fry has had a dictatorial stranglehold on every comma of the negotiations that must be experienced first hand to be believed; and Dr. Fry has a notorious and long-standing blind spot when it comes to youth work."[4] According to the planning documents, the number of staff would go down, youth leadership schools would be planned by youth in the leagues rather than by professional staff, "Caravaning" would be cut back, and funding sources would be severely cut back. In effect, the new church would not provide the leadership for youth work that Augustana's people had come to expect.

When I was growing up in Southern Minnesota and just as I was finishing confirmation, I found out that the Luther League of the LCA had dissolved in favor of a wider participation of youth in the governance of the congregation. We still had a youth group, but it was no longer connected to a system of youth ministry, led and governed by youth. Instead of a youth-run auxiliary, with districts, regional, and national meetings and conferences, we would be able to have a youth representative on the church council. But, who and what did they represent? They didn't have any representative work to do beyond the local congregation, and their leadership skills did not get developed.

The leadership of the LCA Luther League that voted to go out of business also had a strong streak of idealism. Their large budget ought to be spent on social justice and to fight poverty, and not on financing conferences for privileged youth. So the Luther League disappeared just as I was looking forward to joining it. One of the more powerful institutions for cultivating youth leadership in the church was dismantled.[5]

Many people have stories like mine and some tell me that their experience in the Luther League wasn't all that positive. One woman said, "The Luther League was for all the uncharismatic children of pious mothers." Still she went. But her story was not a glorification of the thing. It was an interpretation of the Luther League. When that kind of sharing happens, we have moved beyond memory into honest history.

That history tells us that Luther Leaguers were not isolated from the pastors and other important leaders in synods and churches. When youth came to conferences they met other youth from other congregations who were leaders, and they met many pastors, parish workers, college professors, and camp directors. In short, they became acquainted with the ministries, agencies, and institutions of the church. This familiarity gave them access, interest, and enthusiasm about how their own leadership might someday be tapped. In short, they were, in the jargon we have outworn today, "empowered."

The networks of friendship that youth ministry created were probably the most significant strengthening factor in the American Lutheran church bodies in the twentieth century. In multiple ways, through women's church groups, missionary societies, the Luther League, the laymen's movement for stewardship,

4. "What's the Score re: Youth Work in the LCA?" ELCA Archives. Bergstrand papers.

5. The American Lutheran Church retained the Luther League as its youth organization until the merger into the ELCA in 1988. The Walther League was dismantled in 1969.

and then through more activist networks that bridged the various Lutheran groups like the Lutheran Peace Fellowship, the Lutheran Human Relations Association, and crossover places like Holden Village, or the many important outdoor ministry camping corporations, Lutherans got out of town and learned to know and trust other Lutherans.

Youth organizations helped Lutherans connect to young leaders in other church groups, and in the college-aged and university-oriented World Student Christian Federation, there was an ecumenical link for Lutheran students to other Protestant and Orthodox student movements, and also an institutional connection with students throughout the world, even in the mission fields. If you were to speak to leaders of the various denominations who were leaders in ecumenical work, you would discover that an important part of their formation for leadership came from their involvement in these Student Christian Movements. Mainline Protestant and Orthodox young people who were representatives at the national level got to know each other personally before they became church leaders.

But in the 1970s these formal, structural links for students were broken down, too. I call what happened to the structure of leadership for youth a kind of infection that wasted the institutional fabric of the church itself. The LCA shared the fate of other Protestant denominations that responded to the movements for social change. The protest movements did have a point. There were structures that prevented the kind of change that was needed, but many other beneficial things were dismantled during these years. A nihilistic virus that spread during the protest years affected so many institutions: the Worldwide Student Christian movement, the ecumenical movement, global mission, and, probably most significantly, denominational strength and leadership.

Augustana was already a part of the LCA when this happened, but Augustana as a heritage has been able to withstand much of the breaking down of the institutional ethos that was so prominent during the 1970s and up to this time. I think the reason for the strength of Augustana's heritage is based on the strong personal ties that were deliberately created through the many forms of youth leadership training that were created through the first half of the twentieth century. These very gatherings have reconnected Augustana people who were shaped by the youth ministry program of the church and who formed a lasting sense of purpose and identity through the investment that the church made in youth.

In reflecting on Augustana's history through interpreting what has happened to youth, I am using an old Augustana pattern. Whenever the synod was gearing up for a new initiative, such as a transition to English or a new push for ecumenical relationships, the church told young people about their history. They believed that young people needed to learn who they were, so that they could really belong and become leaders. And so we need to invest the same energy with our youth today. They need to hear stories about their church, about their family heritage, about their own people's story, so that they do not feel like strangers. It is time for our church to recommit itself to training youth for leadership in the church for the world. It is time to give youth responsibility, to treat them as leaders, and to relate to them as people who belong to our communities and not as outsiders.

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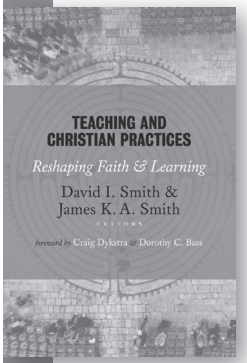

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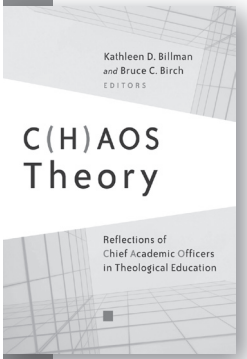

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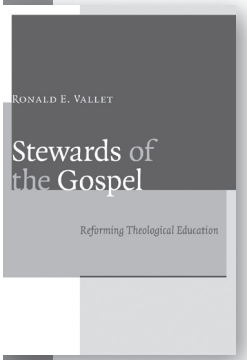

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Book Reviews

The Trouble with Resurrection: From Paul to the Fourth Gospel. By Bernard Brandon Scott. Salem, Ore.: Polebridge, 2010. ISBN: 978-1-5981-5020-9. xii and 252 pages. Paper. $25.00.

Scott, professor of New Testament at Phillips Theological Seminary, offers reflections on the various understandings of resurrection from 1 Samuel (David) through to the Didache. The study has been described as a "scholarly book written for the non-scholar." There is some truth to this statement. The writing in and of itself is not complicated and the printing is quite legible (though there are more printing slips than one might expect from Polebridge). Scott also frequently includes in his text the total passage rather than simply noting the biblical reference. On the other hand, lay readers may find it difficult to accept the main thesis—the death and resurrection of Jesus does not result in personal salvation. Furthermore, Scott uses his own translations. Often that is quite informative. But it may take some effort to recognize that *Christos* can always be translated "Anointed" or "Son of Man as the Human One" (see *Scholars Version*).

Scott looks at the several words and phrases used in the Bible to speak of the resurrection: "raised up," "stood up," "super-exalted," "seen," "appeared," and "assumption." None of these phrases automatically mean "resurrect from the dead," though eventually they are the key terms in early Christianity. The implication is that believing in the resurrection does not necessarily involve resurrection from the dead. The words imply any kind of rising or standing. For example the usual word for resurrection, *anastasis*, occurs in a simple form in Lam 3:63: "Whether they sit or rise—see, I am the object of their taunt songs."

Once we are aware of this, the famous passage in 1 Cor 15:12-14 makes good sense:

> But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

That is, belief in any type of "rising up" makes faith in the rising up of Jesus intelligible. Using the several Greek words often involved with resurrection, Scott examines more closely texts in Daniel, Maccabees, Paul, and the Gospels. First Corinthians 15 plays a special role (taking up three chapters). Throughout Scott utilizes four models of resurrection: "raised up," "he has been seen for," "taken up," and "exalted," Many Hebrew martyrs and Greek heroes were taken up after their death. Scott assumes Jesus also experienced assumption. The trouble with the resurrection is that we have literalized it, made of it a creedal dogma, and individualized it as an event for our personal salvation. In that sense we have lost the cosmic significance as well as its corporate significance—as a faith community in the resurrected (exalted) body of Christ.

Graydon F. Snyder
Chicago

Sun of Righteousness, Arise! God's Future for Humanity and the Earth. By Jürgen Moltmann. Translated by Margaret Kohl. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010. ISBN-13: 978-0-8006-9658-0. x and 254 pages. Paper. $25.00.

At this point, when I pick up a book by Jürgen Moltmann, I expect the following: engaging, interesting writing (credit must be given to Moltmann's faithful, talented English translator, Margaret Kohl); theological inquiry that evidences passion for the cosmos, and binds salvation to creation; an analysis of God's triune nature that is creative and relevant to today's context; and deep concern for justice and liberation. On all those fronts, this text does not disappoint.

Sun of Righteousness is a collection of essays and lectures that Moltmann composed over the last ten years. In the preface, he

notes how the book is organized, a system that I must say is clearer in outline than in presentation. After an introductory section in which Moltmann examines the current state of Christianity in the world—particularly the role of the church—the book is divided into three parts, each of which corresponds to one of Moltmann's "three fundamental Christian insights": first, "God is the God of Christ's resurrection;" second, "God is the righteousness which creates justice and puts things to rights;" and third, "the traces and signs of God give the world meaning." (1)

I found Part Two particularly interesting, in which Moltmann emphasizes the ramifications of Christ's resurrection for our physical bodies and nature in general, and accentuates the universality of salvation, even going so far as to say that "Since Christ's 'descent into hell' there has been hope where every prospect has disappeared…No one is 'damned to all eternity' any more." (56-57) Another interesting point of discussion comes in Part Three, where Moltmann discusses the concept of "monotheism" in a variety of contexts—including an analysis of the monotheism found in Islam. Additionally in this section, Moltmann discusses God's indwelling, and God's free choice to be with God's people—a chapter called "Shekinah: The Mystery of God's Presence in Judaism and Christianity" is particularly compelling in this regard.

The final two essays in the book work to further dialogue between science and theology, with Moltmann seeking to bridge the two with what he calls a "hermeneutics of nature" (especially chapter 16).

In my view, this text will best be appreciated by those already familiar with Moltmann's work—the structure of the book does not lead the reader easily from point A to point B. Instead, the theological commitments Moltmann has developed over decades intertwine and reinforce each other as he expresses them in new ways, in the course of different arguments. It is yet another example of why Moltmann is so widely read and admired in the United States.

Kristin Johnston Largen
Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg

Prelude to Practical Theology: Variations on Theory and Practice. By Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner. Nashville: Abingdon, 2008. ISBN-13: 978-0-6876-4729-3. Paper. $18.00.

Professor Stevenson-Moessner offers this rich, poetic composition as an introduction to the world of practical theology. Appealing to musical metaphors throughout the book, the author invites the reader to imagine the necessary contribution of a feet-on-the-ground theology to the whole of the theological enterprise. Schleiermacher classically conceptualized the division of labor within the theological disciplines as threefold: philosophical, historical, and practical theology. Reclaiming the image of a tree, Stevenson-Moessner envisions philosophical theology (including systematics) as the root system, historical theology (including biblical exegesis and church history) as the trunk, and practical theology as the branches and leaves. This work aims to demonstrate the organic interplay among these parts and the vital contribution of practical theology to the whole.

Case studies provide the point of departure for theological reflection at the center of this book—the challenges facing a congregation in the resettlement of a refugee family, reflections on the experience of a young pastor leading a congregation to respond generously to the purported needs of a con artist, or the discovery of ministry done by a woman dying of cancer. Theology comes vividly to life in such practical and concrete dilemmas. Stevenson-Moessner draws particularly from postcolonial theory and feminist theology in reorienting power relations in the life of the church: what we see and fail to see, who we view as the primary actors or recipients of ministry.

This book helps to demonstrate how practical engagement in ministry feeds the entire theological undertaking. Practical theology is not only "informed by" the other theological disciplines but properly "stimulates" theological reflection in the other arenas. As expressed in a classical study of theological education, finally the purpose

of practical theology is "to increase among [people] the love of God and neighbor" (13)
.

Craig L. Nessan
Wartburg Theological Seminary

Reviving Christian Humanism: The New Conversation on Spirituality, Theology, and Psychology. By Don S. Browning. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010. ISBN: 978-0-8006-9626-9. vi and 186 pages. Paper. $24.00.

Revising Christian Humanism is the final book from Don Browning, a leading scholar of religion, science, and culture, whose career spanned five decades. It provides context and self-critique for much of Browning's earlier work including *The Atonement and Psychotherapy* (1964), *Generative Man* (1973), *The Moral Context of Pastoral Care* (1976), *Pluralism and Personality* (1980), *Religious Ethics and Pastoral Care* (1983), *Religious Thought and the Modern Psychologies* (1987), *A Fundamental Practical Theology* (1991), *American Religions and the Family Debate* (2000), *Christian Ethics and the Moral Psychologies* (2006), and the Religion, Culture, and Family Project at the University of Chicago (1991–2003).

Browning's purpose is to guide the science and religion discourse toward revitalizing religious humanism and Christian humanism, defined as those expressions of Christianity concerned with the finite temporal goods of health, education, and material sufficiency in addition to the spiritual goods of salvation and justification. Otherwise, he judges, science and religion debates will yield a new atheism that seeks to deconstruct religious claims through scientific explanation and quasi-religious speculation, and a new fundamentalism that reacts to the new atheism by seeking to reestablish the dominance of religion over science.

Browning proposes that religious humanism and Christian humanism can best be revived if science and religion dialogue is conducted within a framework of "critical hermeneutics" and "hermeneutical phenomenology" as found in the thought of Paul Ricoeur. Unfortunately, Browning's technical philosophical language will tend to limit the readership of this book to academic professionals. By hermeneutic phenomenology, Browning means that understanding has four characteristics: first, effective history, meaning that historical texts, events, and artifacts mediate present understandings; second, that effective history shapes our pre-understandings, the inherited frameworks we rely on to understand our experience of the world; third, that understanding has the character of dialogue; and fourth, that moral interests shape the process of understanding from the beginning. By critical hermeneutics Browning means that science and religion dialogue should be a dialectic between religious understanding, which arises through an effective history shaped by religious traditions and institutions, and scientific explanation, which seeks critical distance from its objects. The moment of participatory understanding must take precedence, Browning maintains. Thus, for example, psychiatry does not overthrow Christian claims regarding Christ's atonement for human sin, but it may inform debates among Christians between the various theories of how Christ's action heals human brokenness.

The main difficulty with Browning's book is that the task of working out its practical implications is largely left to the reader. Browning's examples are drawn almost exclusively from debates in psychotherapy and family law. For the reader unfamiliar with these debates, it will be difficult to draw analogies from these examples for other disciplines or to evaluate the practical value of Browning's methods in comparison with other approaches to interdisciplinary analysis. Nevertheless, Browning's book may illuminate important issues for the churches, such as the need to preserve the transcendent and communal dimensions of Christian life in an era of ministry that increasingly emphasizes therapeutic models of spirituality and pastoral care.

Bruce P. Rittenhouse
Western Springs, Ill.

Jesus, Gnosis, and Dogma. By Riemer Roukema. Translated by Saskia Deventer-Metz. New York: T&T Clark, 2010. ISBN: 978-0-5674-6642-6. x and 231 pages. Paper. $24.95.

Roukema, professor of New Testament at the Protestant Theological University, Kampen, The Netherlands, offers a unique study of Jesus in Paul and the Gospels, followed by Gnostic materials on the same subject with a final statement on how these materials have entered early theological doctrine (dogma). His topics are The Origin and Identity of Jesus; The Teaching of Jesus; and his Death, Resurrection and Exaltation.

After summarizing the New Testament material Roukema describes the Gnostic material pertinent to that subject. Of special importance is the Gospel of Thomas followed then by the Gospel of Judas, the Gospel of Mary, the Tripartite Tractate, Cerenthus and the Ophites, Theodotus, and the tradition of Simon of Cyrene.

Regarding the historicity and identity of Jesus, Roukema distinguishes sharply between New Testament statements of history and statements of identity. Even then, he notes that the historical narratives may be more literary history than factual history, particularly Jesus' self-understanding (that is, Son of Man). While the Gnostic documents differ among themselves they agree that the man Jesus was not the Christ. Rather the Christ, as Son of God, descended on the man Jesus (likely at his baptism) and left before the Passion. The Son of God came from an ultimate divine Trinity with no relationship to the God of Creation (that is, the Hebrew God).

Roukema appropriately summarizes the teaching of the New Testament as Jesus' announcement of the coming reign of God. People who would follow him should now live according to his moral code, based on love, with details often found in the Hebrew Scriptures. While the Gnostic material may repeat, in a somewhat different language, some of the teachings of Jesus, the reign of God is not seen as an earthly eschatological expectation which guides our lives. Rather, it is a super-celestial reign. Followers of Jesus are created by the descent of the divine reign or light into a human body. The result is a person with divine self-knowledge. This spiritual person will not die, but return to the heavenly reign.

Turning to death, resurrection, and transfiguration, Roukema finds New Testament agreement that Jesus died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins. By his resurrection, he destroyed the power of death and thereby created a new covenant for those who would follow him. For the most part the Gnostic material does not even mention the death and resurrection of Jesus, because the divine Jesus would have left before the cross event. The Christ who descended on Jesus at baptism could not possibly suffer. If anything, it was the human Jesus on the cross. The Gnostic materials reflect a heavy Platonic influence inserted into the original Jesus tradition.

Turning to dogma or doctrine, Roukema describes two directions. The first deals with Jesus and Early Judaism. The Christology influenced by such Judaism as Philo lacked a pre-existent Jesus. In that theology there were two major Christologies: adoptionism and modalism. Adoptionists (note Theodotus) believed the human Jesus became a divine person at baptism, or even more likely after the resurrection. Modalists (note Sabellius) were strong monotheists who believed God was one person who could be seen by believers in three different ways or modes: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Shifting then to what Roukema calls "catholic" theology, the few New Testament references to the Trinity eventually developed into the formal Orthodox Christology. Trinitarianism was confirmed at the Council of Nicea in 325.

Strange as it may seem to some readers, the rather structured Roukema approved both the adoptionist and the catholic Christology. He did so for a good reason. Many Protestants, especially, believe in a human Jesus who, by his life and works, was accepted in the resurrection by God into the heavenly council. So we too will be accepted in everlasting life by our life and works. Divine acceptance because of faith in the Trinitarian God has less meaning for many of us Protestants. Nevertheless, the "catholic" faith has been the ecumenical position since the fourth century.

This book has much to offer. While Roukema's description of the New Testament material seems standard, his introduction to parallel Gnostic materials will be new and informative to most readers. And at the end he is willing to look sympathetically at both Christologies: adoptionism and Catholicism.

Graydon F. Snyder
Chicago

Luther's Works 58: Sermons V. By Martin Luther. Edited by Christopher Boyd Brown. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2010. ISBN 10: 0-7586-1387-3. xxix and 489 pages. Cloth. $49.99.

Luther's Works 69: Sermons on the Gospel of St. John Chapters 17–20. By Martin Luther. Edited by Christopher Boyd Brown. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009. ISBN 10: 0-7586-1398-9. xxii and 469 pages. Cloth. $49.99.

As the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017 approaches, it is fitting that new attention is given to the legacy of Martin Luther. The first 55 volumes of the American Edition of Luther's Works began to appear in 1955. Now an additional 20 volumes are being prepared by Concordia Publishing House under the editorial guidance of Christopher Boyd Brown. This review introduces the first two of these works, both books featuring Luther's sermons. Each contribution to this series is a fresh translation of Luther's writings based on the Weimar edition. Especially useful is the inclusion of the corresponding pages in the "Weimarana" at the top of each page. The volumes are enhanced by a significant critical apparatus, including substantial introductions, informative footnotes, and indexes of subjects/names and Scripture references.

Sermons V covers Luther's preaching from January 1539 to his death in 1546. During these years, Luther preached often in Wittenberg, particularly during the absence of Pastor Johann Bugenhagen, who was very involved in organizing other congregations. In 1539 alone, Luther preached seventy times, often employing serial preaching on the Gospels. Between 1541 and 1543, Luther's ill health limited his service as a preacher. From 1544 to 1546 he increased his activity as preacher (eighty-one sermons), disclosing his awareness of his own mortality and his desire to clarify his theological "testament." In the face of ongoing controversy, Luther sought to distinguish the meaning of faithfulness to the gospel in relationship to a variety of opponents. These sermons also reveal Luther's pastoral concern for the local congregation and community, sometimes sharp in condemnation of their shortcomings.

The tone of many passages seems to reflect Luther's growing despair about the course of the Reformation, shrouded in his apocalyptic outlook. Luther's warnings against the Jews, also evident in these sermons, remain a scandalous legacy and are disastrous for the history of the church. For example, the final section of the last sermon in this volume is a harsh admonition against the Jews [458–459]. Moreover, Luther's acrid polemic against the Anabaptists demonstrates the need for the act of repentance by Lutherans at The Lutheran World Federation Assembly at Stuttgart (July 2010) in relation to the Mennonite tradition [cf.109, 310, 375, 395].

One inspiring citation from a sermon delivered at Eisleben in Luther's final year: "This is, therefore, our sure foundation and comfort against all the gates of hell and the devil: that we know our faith in this Lord, whom we confess as true God and man, is the true, first, and most ancient faith, which has always been preserved by the Son of God, and will remain as the last faith until the end of the world" [419].

Sermons on the Gospel of St. John Chapters 17–20 includes a series of sermons from 1528–1529 and every extant sermon on John 20:19-31. From May 1528 through June 1529 Pastor Bugenhagen was away from Wittenberg, doing organizational work in Braunschweig and Hamburg. During these months, Luther continued the Sunday morning series already begun by Bugenhaugen on John's Gospel, interrupting only to preach on

the catechism. Luther was particularly moved by Jesus' prayer in John 17; it gave him an occasion both to comment on the significance of prayer, the person of Jesus Christ, and the meaning of the Gospel itself. There are consistent references to the catechism, reflecting Luther's own preparation of materials for the Large Catechism during this period. Again in these sermons we hear Luther at work as a controversialist, demarcating true Christian teaching from false. There are also notable references to the "Turks," reflecting the threat posed by the Ottoman Empire at this time.

There are eleven sermons or sermon outlines included in this volume on the text for the Sunday after Easter, John 20:19-31, running from 1522 to 1540. It is fascinating to be able to trace the contextualization of these sermons (based on the same text) over the course of Luther's career. The status of penance in the life of the church was clarified by Luther's emphasis on absolution as the central issue, trusting the promise of forgiveness. This preaching text gave Luther occasions to proclaim the heart and soul of the Reformation: the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ. One excerpt: "Now, one should not understand this only about the Absolution, by which people are released from sin, but rather, as I mentioned in the beginning, the Lord here comprehends with this mandate the entire office of preaching or ecclesiastical office: that forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed and distributed in preaching and holy Sacraments" [397].

The twenty additional volumes of Luther's Works will offer new stimulus to pastors, theologians, and scholars. Luther's legacy provides both provocation due to his uncompromising polemic and testimony to the treasure of the gospel. Both aspects are evident in these two volumes of sermons. Concordia Publishing House is to be commended for initiating this major project.

Craig L. Nessan

Constructing Irregular Theology: Bamboo and Minjung in East Asian Perspective. By Paul S. Chung. Leiden: Brill, 2009. ISBN: 978-9-0041-7417-7. ix and 226 pages. Hardcover. $120.

This book is an intentional challenge to western or eurocentric theology. *Minjung* is perhaps the well-known word, denoting simple-minded and oppressed people to whom *minjung* theologians had previously committed. Ahn Byung-Mu, a New Testament scholar, who graduated at Heidelberg, was the first theologian to propose the concept of *minjung* in his book, *Jesus of Galilee*. "Bamboo" relates to a Chinese symbol: silk characterizes the aristocrat, while bamboo symbolizes the lifeworld of the simple-minded and marginalized people. What is the irregular theology? At issue here is the emancipation of western regular theology from its captivity to the domination of western categories and culture. According to Chung, the message of the gospel can come to people in Asian contexts, insofar as a biblically-witnessed God speaks and acts in the sense of Hebrew *dabar* (speech act).

In light of God's speech act, Chung appeals to a profound knowledge of Buddhism, Taoism, Confuciasm, and Hinduism in their respective contexts (India, China, Korea) in terms of his highly reflected hermeneutic of emancipation in a critical dialogue with Hans G. Gadamer. Chung's point of departure is grounded in the biblical narratives, which shows how the God of Israel speaks and acts through other cultures and religions. Running counter to the totalization of instrumental-rational enlightenment, Chung contextualizes Emmanuel Levinas's categories by taking seriously religious outsiders. What is at stake is not "totalitarian pluralism," nor an exclusive demand by Christianity, nor a relativistic one. In contrast to the pluralistic-relativistic theology of religions, Chung refurbishes critically and constructively a hermeneutical concept of the fusion of multiple horizons in relation to today's challenge of religious pluralism.

Chung seeks to develop a form of Asiatic irregular theology which provides new

space for Reformation theology. For this task Chung takes seriously the context of the religious-cultural realities of Asia in terms of the bamboo-reality of the suffering *minjung*. Chung does not judge the west in a dismissive manner. He knows western theology professionally—yet critically—as he evaluates it in relation to the Asiatic religions and realities. Our own theology will be measured in the future according to how constructively we perceive and answer the spirituality and the reality of the other in our endangered global world.

Ulrich Duchrow
University of Heidelberg

Sacred Witness: Rape in the Hebrew Bible. By Susanne Scholz. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010. xvi and 279 pages. Hardback. $35.00.

This book invites readers to wrestle with difficult biblical texts about sexual violence for several reasons. One is that the texts reside in the canon of Holy Scripture and, therefore, command attention and interpretation by those who claim these scriptures. Another is that the texts are read in a contemporary context in which sexual violence is prevalent throughout the world. Scholz wants to expose the "long androcentric history of interpretation" (5) by grounding her reading of the texts "in a feminist hermeneutic that honors the perspectives of raped victim-survivors" (5).

The book's chapters organize biblical texts thematically by a particular form of rape: acquaintance rape (chapter 1), the rape of women subjugated by gender and class (chapter 2), marital rape fantasies (chapter 3), gang rape (chapter 5), and the rape of men (chapter 6). Chapter 4 describes ancient laws against rape. Chapter 7 examines the prophetic rhetoric of rape, especially troubling since God is often portrayed as the husband punishing the nation of Israel for sexual adultery.

Scholz makes a persuasive argument that the texts she examines are indeed texts about rape: Dinah, Tamar, Hagar, Jacob's concubines, the Levite concubine in Judges 19, Bathsheba, and others. She criticizes androcentric readings that blame the victim or regard the behavior as culturally acceptable. For many of the narratives, Scholz recounts specific scholarship that encourages or challenges traditional interpretations and argues that traditional interpretations fail to reckon fully with the rape issues embedded in the texts. Less clear is what constructive, alternative readings would be and how they would affect our common life today.

By identifying rape texts and the androcentric interpretation that predominates, Scholz hopes these texts will be a "sacred witness' to the marginalized perspectives of the raped victim-survivors.

Marty Stevens
Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg

Never to Leave Us Alone: The Prayer Life of Martin Luther King Jr. By Lewis V. Baldwin. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010. ISBN-13: 978-0-8006-9744-0. viii and 159 pages. Paper. $16.95

This book provides an introduction to Martin Luther King Jr. as a praying preacher. Lewis W. Baldwin believes that King's prayer life and posture toward prayer is an underdeveloped aspect of King's life and ministry. The author connects King's prayer life with his spiritual, theological, and ethical development, and importantly with his fight for human rights. Additionally, Baldwin offers a view of the language and style of prayer in the black Christian tradition in the United States. According to Baldwin, it is a style informed by spontaneity, improvisation, and a range of emotions—including laughter, tears, compassionate pleading, and wrathful condemnation. This reader waited for fully developed prayers, crafted and prayed by King, but sadly, we get mostly bits and pieces. Most of King's public prayers have not survived in written or recorded form. Nonetheless, ***Never to Leave Us Alone*** is a well researched book that is accessable to a wide audience. It is ideal for small congregational group discussions. Images of King at prayer complete the narrative.

James R. Thomas
Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary

Theological Anthropology: A Guide for the Perplexed. By Marc Cortez. London: T & T Clark International, 2010. ISBN-13: 978-0-5670-3432-8. vii and 167 pages. Paper. $24.95.

Cortez states that the main thrust of ***Theological Anthropology*** is an eternal process of understanding humanity "anew in every age in light of the revelation of humanity given in and through Jesus Christ" (132). He does this by looking at four main categories: *Imago Dei,* Sexuality, Mind and Body, Free Will. In the section of *Imago Dei,* Cortez looks at this important concept through a Barthian lens, summarizing with seven important concepts such as *"Jesus Christ is the revelation of true humanity"* (38) and *"Human persons are broken"* (40). Following *Imago Dei*, Cortez tackles the topic of sexuality in theological anthropology in a traditional manner. It is a section covering differing perspectives in theology but does not fully sweep and engage contemporary accepted arguments.

In his third section "Mind and Body," Cortez engages general arguments to look not only at the concept of embodiment but also that of ontology. He says that we must have an ontology that affirms humanity with its "own ontological commitments" (97). For Cortez, in his fourth section, free will is central to understanding what it means to be human. He studies the debate between the two main camps of libertarianism and compatibilism; each argument's weaknesses and strengths need to be realized before moving on to constructing a more meaningful theological anthropology.

Serving pastors, academics and students, this text ventures into unraveling the complex fundamental arguments of studying theological anthropology. For those studying theological anthropology, it offers basic arguments and viewpoints that will provide a sound read from a differing perspective.

Joseph E. Gaston
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Briefly Noted

Handbook of Denominations in the United States (13th edition) by Frank S. Mead, Samuel S. Hill, and Craig D. Atwood (Abingdon Press, $24.00) is a reference volume that belongs in every parish library and pastor's hands. This revision covers all religious bodies active in the United States that are "religions of the book," i.e., Judaism, Christianity and Islam, some 250 in number. Each section is introduced by a brief history and description of religious beliefs; then discusses individual denominations, (e.g., under the category of "Brethren and Pietist Churches" eleven groups are discussed). A brief bibliography is appended, as well as the URL for any denomination that has one. The volume also covers independent mega churches, spiritual associations, and other more esoteric groups. Appendices have charts showing denominational relationships, listing members of ecumenical associations, and concluding with a directory of church headquarters and their websites.

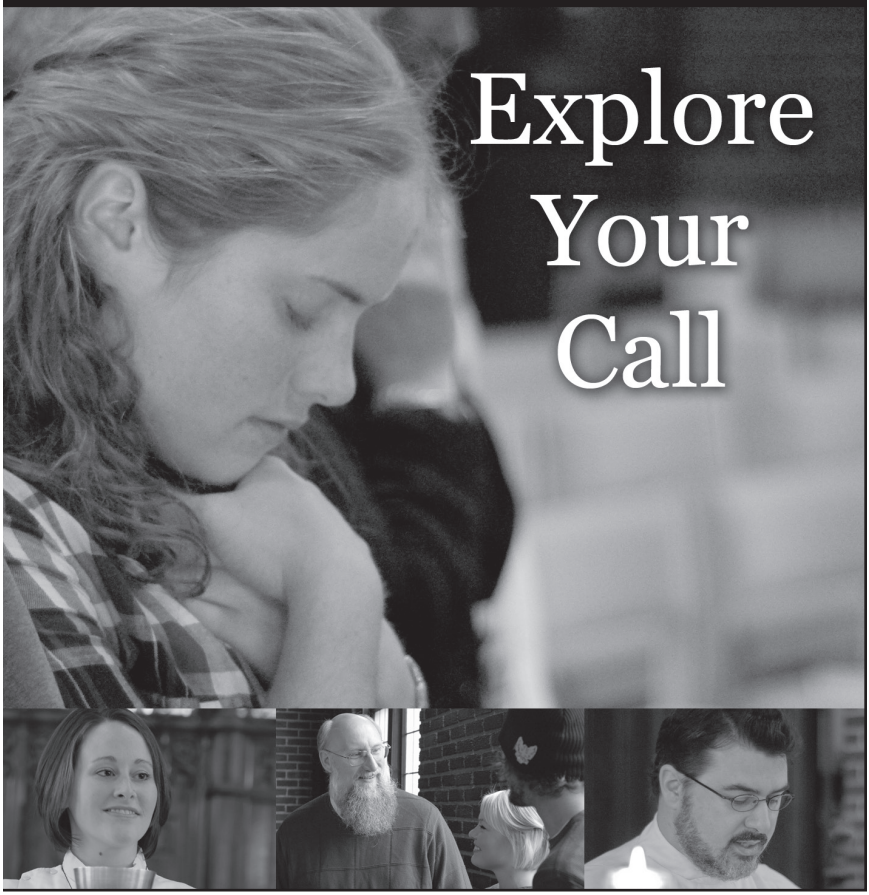
Immensely practical, non-judgmental, this is an extremely useful quick-reference volume. Try it, you'll like it.

Edgar Krentz

In ***Saint Peter: The Underestimated Apostle*** Martin Hengel unites two, loosely related papers (Eerdmans, $18.00, ISBN-13: 978-0-8028-2718-0). The first presents Peter as a significant person in the New Testament and in the early church; Peter was a major figure in the development of the church's gentile mission and a bridge builder between gentile and Jewish Christians. Thus he deserved the eponym "rock," (*petros*). Peter was married, the stimulus for the second essay on the role of Peter's family and other married apostles in the early church. A learned, stimulating and illuminating pair of essays that deserve wide reading.

Edgar Krentz

Wartburg Theological Seminary



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Preaching Helps

Proper 13 (Lectionary 18)—Pentecost 18 (Proper 21/Lectionary 26)

What Nourishes You Spiritually?

As I edit this set of "Preaching Helps," we of the ACTS Doctor of Ministry in Preaching Program have completed registration for this summer's residency. The most "popular" course this summer, registration-wise, deals with the spirituality of the preacher. As I edit this set of "Preaching Helps," it is Wednesday in Holy Week—sorry, the clock just chimed midnight, bringing Maundy Thursday morning. I spent wonderful periods in Lent working through the readings for Holy Week with preachers in California and Pennsylvania, as well as Chicago. More important than filling their heads with insights and ideas for preaching—which the preachers graciously told me I did—our time together around the word nourished our spirits. For many preachers, the spirituality of the preacher—coming to the task spiritually nourished and refreshed—is an essential yet elusive ingredient in preaching.

What nourishes you spiritually? I am spiritually nourished by having a method of preaching, a daily and weekly routine that I follow in the same way I follow Weight Watchers (Okay, I follow my preaching routine better that I follow Weight Watchers, but I've returned to WW with renewed vigor). You can read my method, which is also the method I teach, by visiting my website (http://craigasatterlee.com), clicking the Preaching tab, and then clicking "Homiletic Method." A method, a step-by-step process, guarantees some result. More important, the Holy Spirit works through a method; Lutherans call it "means." By following a method, we put ourselves in a place where the Spirit can catch us. If you are feeling spiritually depleted, take a look at your method. All preachers have one, whether they know it or not. Is yours spiritually nourishing?

Hearing sermons spiritually nourishes me. I hear as many as forty sermons some weeks; some of the best preaching I hear comes from senior seminarians. I know preachers that sneak into worship in churches other than their own, have favorite preachers on YouTube, and exchange sermons with trusted colleagues, all in order to be preached to themselves. If you are feeling spiritually depleted, go someplace where you know the preacher will serve up the gospel and get preached to.

Preaching nourishes me spiritually. As I say, it is Holy Week as I write this, and I find myself chatting with preaching colleagues, bishops and synod staff members, and other pastors not serving congregations. It's Holy Week and we all want to be parish pastors so that we can preach. I confess that, in the past, I have been so caught up in preaching week-to-week that I lost track of what a privilege it is to stand in the pulpit. Now, for the first time in years, I don't have a pulpit to call home, and I miss it. I realize how essential standing at ambo and table is for me spiritually. If you are feeling spiritually depleted, sit back, take a breath, and ponder that preaching and presiding are a privilege, an invitation, and not a right. Preaching and presiding are a grace extended and not a privilege earned or deserved.

Prayer also spiritually nourishes me. I do my best praying at my espresso bar.

Grinding, tapping, and pulling shots while talking to God and beholding icons of St. Ambrose is its own kind of "great thanksgiving." I had a student once who needed to cook to get spiritually nourished to preach; that's how she prayed. Her family asked me to assign her more sermons, because they ate better the weeks she had a sermon due. If you are feeling spiritually depleted, try praying in a new way, at a new time, in a new place. Or, return to the prayer life that nourished you in the past.

Of course, we have the sacraments. In this season of my life, I hunger for daily Eucharist. I make greater use of confession and forgiveness. I find value in penance. Since my first years at Notre Dame, lighting candles and oil lamps has become "sacramental" for me—a prayerful action when words fail or escape me.

And having someone who will both receive my spiritual struggles and explore with me my questions of faith, while still holding me accountable, is spiritually nourishing. Every preacher needs a pastor, confessor, spiritual director, and/or therapist. Many of us have a team! If you are feeling spiritually depleted, seek someone out and make an appointment.

Joan L. Beck, Cornelsen Director of Spiritual Formation and pastor to the community at LSTC, is such a one. Pastor Beck, who authors these "Preaching Helps," brings more than twenty-five years of ordained ministry experience serving congregations and campus ministry, all in the Oregon Synod (ELCA). In work with groups and individuals, Joan encourages people to listen and talk to God and respond authentically. She uses the Bible, literature and the arts, worship and other spiritual practices as resources for this growth in faith. Since earning a certificate in spiritual direction from the Mercy Center in San Francisco (1995), Joan has continued to give and receive spiritual direction. She also studied on sabbatical with Walter Brueggemann, Kathleen O'Connor, and Brian Wren, and has accepted influence from the Rev. Eric H. F. Law (developing cultural competency for leadership in a diverse, changing world); Bowen family systems theory (focusing on one's own functioning in the midst of anxiety); and ecumenical colleagues in a three-year "Pastor-Theologian" program of the Center of Theological Inquiry, Princeton, New Jersey. Before coming to LSTC in 2010, while still in the parish, Joan directed the field education program and taught homiletics at a small ecumenical seminary in Salem, Ore. She is blessed with three adult children and a wonderful spouse, the Rev. Dr. John H. Beck. Joan gardens, knits, does desktop publishing, walks, bikes, and plans to make a quilt one of these days.

As I watch from afar as Joan works with our students, helping them to discover and claim spiritual formation, I recognize that spiritual recipes and formulas are not as important as intentionally attending to our spiritual lives. I am mindful that, as I use this brief column to reflect on my spiritual life during Holy Week, what I am about spiritually may very well have changed by the time you read these words. Yet, God willing, my intentionality will not. Answering the question, "What nourishes you spiritually?" has been helpful to me. Perhaps spending an hour writing such an essay might help you as well.

Peace,

Craig A. Satterlee, Editor, Preaching Helps
http://craigasatterlee.com

Proper 13 (Lectionary 18)
August 5, 2012

Exodus 16:2–4, 9–15
Psalm 78:23–29
Ephesians 4:1–16
John 6:24–35

For fifteen years I served a congregation named Bethlehem, "house of bread." I rejoiced when Year B presented five Sundays of gospel readings from John 6 about the bread of life. We brought special breads for Eucharist those weeks, often representing a variety of cultures and continents. We gathered food, including garden produce, to share with a hungry community. Each week the readings drew us to the One whose body was taken, blessed, broken, and given for the life of the world.

In **Exodus** 16, the Israelites are in their second month in the wilderness after being delivered from Egypt (v. 1). They have been thirsty (15:22ff) and now they are hungry, experiencing "a *food crisis*, which leads to a *faith crisis*" (Terence Fretheim, *Exodus* [Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991], 181). God addresses both food and faith; people's suffering moves the LORD to intervene. God's response here ("Draw near to the LORD, for he has heard your complaining," 16:9) is cast in the same mold as God's declaration, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt…and I have come down to deliver them" (Exod 3:7–8). Other wilderness traditions report that the people's complaints trigger the LORD's anger (see Numbers 11), but not here. God sends quail for meat and manna for bread.

"**John** 6 functions as the hinge upon which the first half of the Gospel pivots," explains Robert Kysar. "It is the fulcrum upon which the heavy weight of division and opposition begins to tilt the drama. It is in the course of this chapter that opposition leaps up in threatening proportions to begin to take its awesome role in the story" (*John's Story of Jesus* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984], 39). The chapter is straightforward: First, Jesus performs signs of feeding the multitude and walking on the sea toward a safe landing. Then he engages his hearers in a lengthy discourse.

The two signs were narrated last week (6:1–21). This week, Jesus begins to disclose himself to a confused crowd as the one who makes God known (6:24–35). Next week, Jesus reveals to the grumbling crowd that he is the center of the faith to which the Father draws people (6:35, 41–51). The week after, over the crowd's objections, Jesus calls for public participation in a eucharistic community where he promises to meet his people with life (6:51–58). Finally, some scandalized disciples turn away from Jesus while others keep following because they are hearing "the words of eternal life" (6:56–69). Knowing how the story unfolds helps the preacher serve each portion of bread-of-life gospel without mashing them all together.

As we read the gospel we can let the crowd be our voice. With the crowd who sought Jesus, we have many questions about this one who attracts, gathers, and feeds us in wilderness places. Each time we let the crowd ask a question for us, we notice Jesus turning them from a dead end to an open door and inviting his hearers to walk through. He did the same in dialogues with Nicodemus in John 3 and the Samaritan woman at the well in chapter 4.

Our first question with the crowd is, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" (6:25). Someone wanting to watch but not get involved might ask such a question. Yet Jesus involves us with his observation, "You are working for food that does not

last" (6:27). *You're wearing masks instead of being real. You're making money instead of living a life. You're worshiping work or leisure or success or any number of other things instead of the living God. Eat your fill of the loaves, but also look up and love the One who feeds you. You'll know who that is through "the Son of Man."* "Son of Man" in John's gospel is associated with Jesus' crucifixion, also known as his glorification.

The crowd asks, "What must we do to perform the works of God?" (v. 28) They mean, "works *for* God"—how to measure up, how to contribute/get a handle/be in control. Jesus offers relief by saying, "This is the work of God [singular], that you believe in him whom he has sent" (v. 29). Read this as "work *by* God": *You do not have to "do" anything but only "be"— be loved, be forgiven, be in relationship with this God through the Crucified, be-lieve.*

Then the crowd wonders, "What sign are you going to give us?" and invokes the archetypal story of the wilderness (vv. 30–31). Jesus makes past tense present, declaring that the same God who acted in the Exodus is now at work in him: "It is my Father who [*now*] gives you the true bread from heaven," and *"I am* the bread of life" (v. 32, 35; the first of seven "I am" declarations in the gospel).

At Jesus' time, the symbol of manna had become associated with the gift of Torah, the teaching of the law. "How was God's word in Torah like manna?" muses Dennis Hamm. "The human spirit hungers for the wisdom of how to live according to the will of God, for knowing what to believe and how to act in ways that find peace with God. Torah, God's self-revelation of God's self and will, is therefore truly bread in the wilderness…. Now it is Jesus—the eternal Word made flesh—who is the full revelation of divine communication to the world" (*America* 181:19 [May 29, 1999], 29).

This week, "bread of life" names Jesus as revealer of God's wisdom and way, alive for us now (past tense present). With the crowd we pray, "Sir/Lord, give us this bread always" (6:34). JLB

Proper 14 (Lectionary 19) August 12, 2012

1 Kings 19:4–8
Psalm 34:1–8
Ephesians 4:25—5:2
John 6:35, 41–51

1 Kings 18 shows the contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal. The LORD withholds fire from the altar to Baal and sends fire to consume not only the offering but also the altar dedicated to the LORD. Then Elijah orders the killing of the prophets of Baal. Enraged, Queen Jezebel threatens to take Elijah's life. This reading finds the prophet fleeing. He will end up at Mt. Horeb with the famous experience of the "still small voice" (KJV, RSV) or "sound of sheer silence" (NRSV).

But wait! The fact that God is not revealed in the turbulence of nature, but in a quiet word, is not the *raison d'être* of the passage. Richard Nelson writes, "This [would be] a serious misreading of the narrative. The story is really about Elijah's attempt to relinquish his prophetic office and God's insistence that he continue. Elijah and his mission are the focus, not God's presence or absence" (*First and Second Kings* [Louisville: John Knox Press, 1987], 123). In other words, in this chapter Elijah burns out and is re-commissioned.

Today's reading features Elijah in his burnout and God in divine support mode. If the people are to be nourished by the prophet's ministry, God first will have to

feed the prophet. The place is inhospitable and the surroundings can't possibly give Elijah the essentials for life. However, he isn't just physically hungry, he needs a renewed spirit, a desire to go on doing God's work. The angel of the LORD addresses both of Elijah's hungers. The prophet receives food and encouragement. "Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you" (19: 7). This is the function of Holy Communion, too.

Up to this point in **Ephesians** (from which we have read sequentially for several Sundays), the author has been exploring the theology of the unity of baptized Christians, who are "members of one another" (4:25). Now Paul (or the person writing in his name) turns to the practical consequences of being the body of Christ. He gives injunctions that balance negatives and positives, supported by theological motivations (Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 248–249). In short, those brought together in Christ are to reject what destroys community and promote what builds community:

v. 25 Not falsehood, but truth. Why? One body.

v. 26f Not sinful anger, but boundaried anger. Why? No place for the devil.

v. 28 Not stealing, but work. Why? To have something to share ("The thief is to become a philanthropist." Andrew Lincoln).

v. 29 Not tearing-down talk, but building-up talk. Why? To give grace (speech is sacramental).

v. 31f Not harshness, but kindness and mutual pardon. Why? "As God in Christ forgave you."

Sum "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God (4:30f), but "be imitators of God." Why? You're beloved children (5:1).

And "live in love." Why? "As Christ loved us and gave himself up for us" (5:2).

To imitate God by living and loving as Christ has done is impossible without Good Friday, Easter, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. These are Christian, not merely human, ethics!

As **John** 6 enters into deeper contemplation of the bread of life, Raymond Brown has pointed out that the Old Testament text for Jesus' sermon (6:35–51) was, "[God] gave them bread from heaven to eat" (quoted in 6:31). Jesus goes on to proclaim, first, bread; then "from heaven"; and finally in 6:49–50 "eating." Today's reading is largely a weighing of the meaning of "from heaven" (i.e., an exploration of Jesus' divine origins). (*The Gospel According to John I–XII* [NY: Doubleday, 1966], 278.)

This portion of Jesus' discourse fits the setting of the miracle of the feeding as "near Passover" (6:4). Negatively, the verb *gongýzō* ("to grumble, murmur," 6:41, also 43, 61) has been imported from the wilderness stories (e.g., Exod 16:8 LXX). The ones murmuring are "the Jews/Judeans"—John labels them as such for the first time in the gospel and will continue to use the term to connote hostility shown to Jesus and his followers. (I prefer "Judeans" in the attempt to lessen anti-Semitism.) Positively, surpassing Moses in kind, Jesus' teaching is the new Torah and his presence communicates the knowledge and very life of God. Eucharistic themes come to the fore in John 6, but not fully until verses 51–58 (next week). The gospel this week proclaims the reliability of Jesus' person and teaching because of his authorization from and intimacy with the Father.

And how sweet the name of Jesus sounds in the believer's ear! His projects are: to raise to life in the new age all those

whom the Father draws when he is lifted up (6:39, 40, 44, 54, and 12:32); to teach *of* God, *as* God (6:45–46); to create faith that receives and enters eternal life—real life, beginning even now (6:47–50); to nurture believers with the ever-living, ever-giving bread of his own flesh crucified and raised for the life of the world (6:51). As my mother-in-law prayed before each meal, "Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest. May these gifts to us be blessed. May our souls by thee be fed ever on the Living Bread. Amen." JLB

Proper 15 (Lectionary 20) August 19, 2012

Proverbs 9:1–6
Psalm 34:9–14
Ephesians 5:15–20
John 6:51–58

What would you call a society whose advertisements feature all those things—products, entertainment, drugs, real estate, sex, glamour—that cannot sustain our spirits, faith, hope, or love? The Bible calls it foolish. Proverbs 9 contrasts Wisdom and Foolishness or Folly; the first reading features Lady Wisdom. Lady Wisdom invites her guests to a splendid banquet, and Jesus does her one better in John 6 by insisting that he is the meal itself, not merely its host, and that "the one who eats this bread will live forever" (6:58). The second reading also distinguishes unwise, foolish practices from the wise use of the time spent in community and worship.

Lady Folly's place (**Proverbs** 9:13–18) is a dump, and she charges high prices for low-quality goods. She will let people watch TV, play videogames and read pulp fiction all day. She knows that if they fill their minds with trash, they have no reason not to trash their lives. Taking the way of Foolishness and death is like eating empty calories. It may give a person a sugar high and some energy, temporarily, but it does not build them up as individuals or as a community to do the work of God. In contrast, Lady Wisdom doesn't really have customers—she has guests. She calls human beings into a beautiful hall with "seven pillars"—likely the created world with its deeds and consequences—for a banquet that will lead to maturity, life, and insight.

"Take care," Paul (or someone approximating his voice) writes, "be careful then how you live" (**Ephesians** 5:15). In Buddhist thinking, "mindfulness" is an important practice—a calm awareness of one's bodily functions, feelings, thoughts. The epistle writer insists that the key reference point, beyond what is happening in, to, and around someone, is an understanding of the will of God (5:17; cf. 5:10). The world promotes "getting drunk" as the activity of choice for renewal (5:18), but the writer prescribes the practices of worship as instrumental for obtaining wisdom. There is no more useful act on earth than worship for the countercultural people of God, no better way of "making the most of the time" (5:16). Being "filled with the Spirit,…singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (5:18–20)—this is not something we do for ourselves, but something we receive from the hand of the One who created us and made the most of his time with us, saving us through Jesus' death and resurrection. Worship is God making the world new.

It is in the community's worship that the living Jesus meets us in the power of the Spirit, in the bread of eternal life and the cup of salvation. Babies have to put things into their mouths to get to know them—how hard things are, or how soft,

what their texture is, what shape, what flavor. Jesus says we have to put him into our mouths to know him. "Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink" (**John** 6:53–55). This is forthrightly eucharistic language and promise.

The repetition of the word "flesh" (*sarx)* rather than "body" (*sōma*) in each verse from 6:51–56 is unmistakably graphic and links these verses to the prologue of the gospel, "The Word became flesh and lived among us" (1:14). "The language of remaining or abiding [*menō*] in one another, used in 6:56, is the language of intimacy and shared life. As 6:57 illustrates at every level, from the Father, through the Son, to the believer, the focus is life and the goal is that it be shared," counsels William Loader. He goes on to say, "[I]f we cannot connect the motif of Jesus, the bread of life, to contemporary issues of poverty and hunger, something is missing." ("First Thoughts on Year B Gospel Passages from the Lectionary, Pentecost 11," accessed at http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/MkPentecost11.htm)

It seems to be the graphic nature of eating "flesh" that alienates the crowd (6:52). In verse 54, Jesus employs another graphic verb, *trōgō* ("munch," the sort of eating done by an animal, rather than *esthiō,* "eat"). There is no room for interpreting Jesus' command metaphorically as if he were saying, "Let your hearts feast on all that I represent!" "The command to 'munch flesh and drink blood' makes unequivocal the demand to take the risk of openly joining Jesus in the community that lives by his spirit," wagers Wes Howard-Brook, even when, in John's time, that resulted in persecution and expulsion from the synagogues and in our time may result in ridicule and being dismissed. (*Becoming Children of God: John's Gospel and Radical Discipleship* [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994], 164–166)

St. Augustine often reflected on the centrality of the Eucharist in the life of Christians. He imagined Christ saying to the church, "I am the food of grown men and women. Grow, and you shall feed upon me. You will not change me into yourself, as you change food into your flesh, but you will be changed into me." (*Confessions* Book VII:10, trans. John K. Ryan [NY: Doubleday Image Books, 1960], 171). JLB

Pentecost 13 (Proper 16/ Lectionary 21) August 26, 2012

Joshua 24:1–2a, 14–18
Psalm 34:15–22
Ephesians 6:10–20
John 6:56–69

What keeps us with Jesus? Why do we not drop away, or when we do, why do we come back? Twelve Step meetings end with the injunction, "Keep coming back. It works!" What about Jesus "works" for our lives so that we don't want to stay away?

Joshua has a ready answer for that question (about God) in the first reading. The setting is "a long time" after the people of Israel had taken possession of the promised land and found some peace and quiet there (23:1). Venerable Joshua has called the people from all the tribes together in Shechem, along with their leaders, and is leading them in a covenant renewal ceremony (24:25–27).

Harry Wendt of Crossways International makes use of the form of ancient covenants in his Bible survey materials (www.crossways.org). The key dynamic

is "*Because/Therefore*": *Because* God did thus-and-so (such as delivered you from Egypt), *therefore* now you are called to act in a certain way (such as serve God and love neighbors). Note that God takes the initiative and the human parties respond. Human beings do not earn God's favor.

Today's first reading omits the entire "*Because*" section of the covenant renewal (24:2b–13). It skips to the "Now *therefore*," Joshua's call for the people's response to God's saving and protecting attention and actions: "Now therefore revere the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness…" (24:14–15). Yet the people's own enthusiastic affirmations do recall and recount the "*Because"* actions of God that brought them to this time and place (24:17–18). They are grounded in the central memories of faith.

It is an absurd predicament when God's saving attention and actions are perceived as scandalous instead of gracious. Yet that is what is happening in the gospel reading from **John** 6. In a previous pair of misunderstandings and complaints, "the Jews/Judeans" objected to Jesus telling them that he was from God and uniquely offered life to the world (John 6:41, 51–52). In this reading, Jesus' own disciples complain and, scandalized, decide to leave off following him (6:61, *gongyzō,* the wilderness murmuring word, and *skandalizō*; 6:66).

What's wrong with following Jesus? Over the years, I have met plenty of people who rightly reject the god they suppose Jesus to be—distant, bigoted, indifferent, irrelevant, old-fashioned, punitive, violent. But Jesus has been striving in this chapter to present the kind of God he is—close by, for the whole world, passionate, present, bridging to the everlasting future, accepting human judgment, dying. Truthfully, this is not the god we want, either.

"What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?" Jesus asks those who think his teaching is too hard (6:60, 62). In other words, he pointedly foreshadows his death on the cross, for that is how he will return to the heaven from whence he came (6:38). Will his death attract people or repel them? In Christ, God is living among us, our suffering within his suffering; present, touched, hurt, wounded, dying, dead, raised, ever offering holy spirit and new life (6:63). "Eat my flesh" means receiving this human, crucified Jesus as a bringer of God for us and for our salvation.

Jesus knows that there are those who will not believe, and he commends them to the mystery of God (6:65). But Peter has found himself drawn by God and makes his confession of faith in its Johannine version: "Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God" (6:68–69). "'Holy One of God' [presents] the only use of such a title in this gospel," notes Robert Kysar; "John enjoys using a variety of titles for Jesus and implies each is applicable to some degree" (*John,* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986], 113).

Like Peter, I have a checkered history of faith—believing *and* betraying, sometimes flimsy, sometimes firm. The epistle writer concludes **Ephesians** by urging constancy, commanding all the baptized to "stand," "withstand," "stand firm," and "stand therefore" (Eph. 6:11, 13, 14), grounded in the central memories and promises of faith.

"No other strength than God's own can fortify the saints," Ronald Olson declares, noting that "armor" does not come from self-discipline but from outside us, from God.

> "People of faith the world over find themselves contending against oppres-

sive authorities and sanctions. There are entire systems of violence and despair at work against us.... Ancient Roman armies simply marched headlong into enemy forces. But the well-protected soldiers stayed in such close formation, shoulder to shoulder, shields overlapping, that the blows of their opponents had little effect.... [T]here is no law against Christians standing together in truth, righteousness, peace, prayer, and perseverance. Nothing to keep us from joining forces, side by side, against violence and oppression....We need not fear being overrun. Within the garrison of God's provision, the word has come down the chain of command—stand ground!...Faith's resources are sufficient to prevail." ("'Thinking and Practicing Reconciliation': The Ephesians Texts for Pentecost 8–14," *Word & World* XVII:3 [Summer 1997], 327–328)

JLB

Pentecost 14 (Proper 17/ Lectionary 22) September 2, 2012

Deuteronomy 4:1–2, 6–9
Psalm 15
James 1:17–27
Mark 7:1–8, 14–15, 21–23

Students go back to school at this time of year to study (among other things) math, with its integers or whole numbers. "Integrity" comes from the same root and carries much the same sense of wholeness. The three Scripture readings are about integrity. Deuteronomy says the integrity of a community of faith will be inviting to others—will reach out across space and time. James says that our words of faith and actions in life must be congruent, integrated, because it is a travesty if our high-sounding religious affirmations in the church mean nothing in public contexts. Jesus speaks in Mark with the voice of a prophet, someone who understands us well enough to call our bluff; he knows our lack of integrity.

In **Deuteronomy** Israel is pausing at the boundary between forty years of wandering in the wilderness and a new life in the promised land. Moses stops for a sermon at the boundary, because even good changes call for taking stock and deciding how to move forward. He tells the people to conserve what is important: "Give heed," "keep," "observe," "take care," "watch yourselves closely," "neither forget nor let them slip." The important content seems to consist of "statues and ordinances" until Moses reveals that he is not talking about a guidebook, but a guide; not a law code, but the lover and deliverer of the people. "For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the LORD our God whenever we call to him?" (4:7). Answer: No other great nation! Now, literally, Israel was not then a great nation, nor should the present United States be read wholesale into this verse. Instead, lift up the God who draws "near to" people whenever and wherever they cry out.

In the promised land, the people of Israel disregarded Moses' admonitions. Prophets who reminded them of covenantal agreements found themselves at risk. In **Mark**, Jesus stands up as prophet to challenge what leaders were calling the best practices for faithfulness. He says that staking out special turf through rituals of washing and eating is turning in on self, not serving the God whose ears are open to the cries of people in need. Jesus' call for integrity will land him on a cross. However, the God so near to those who cry out will find a new way forward then.

Some organizations have secret handshakes. Others have clearly defined

missions or common interests. The Jewish-Christian letter of **James** tries to clarify the identity markers of the community of people who have been baptized into Jesus Christ. James is written in the name of the brother of Jesus who emerged as a leader in the Christian community in Jerusalem (see Acts 15:12–21), though it is not likely that he wrote the letter himself.

Martin Luther famously referred to James as "an epistle of straw." Luther found James disappointing because it does not dwell on justification by grace through faith as the meaning of Jesus. In fact, Jesus is mentioned by name only twice in the letter (1:1, 2:1). Instead, James dwells on the street smarts of life in the new faith. What happens when Jesus' people try to live a Jesus-shaped life? James takes up topics like class conflict between the rich and the poor; the discord that results if some members of a community badmouth others; and the lack of integrity if people don't "practice what they preach." The letter is wisdom literature addressing the most pressing problems of the churches. It has been selected to provide the second readings through the month of September.

Chapter 1 of James mentions all the major topics he will take up later in the letter. It also gives us the main theme: "Be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves" (1:22). James coaches us to make choices in our lives that match up to the values of our faith. Like a coach, James gives two strong pictures of the "game" and goal he has in mind for the people of God: First, he wants us to play consistently for our "team." For this he uses the picture of "first fruits" (1:17–18). Second, he wants us to keep an eye on how we're doing; honing our skills and playing our best. For this he uses the picture of the "mirror" (1:22–25).

In ancient Israel when a new crop ripened, farmers took the first fruits, ears, or sheaves and offered them to God, symbolizing that everything belongs to God and is to carry out God's purposes. James' picture is that the Christian people are to be early offerings to God, since we already are the beneficiaries of the promises God made through Jesus Christ. God desires to harvest all of humanity to such a Christ-shaped life. Our witness may help that happen. We belong to God's team and need to discipline ourselves to play to that end.

Often we look in mirrors to find mistakes and flaws that need fixing. James uses the mirror image differently. He suggests that we look in the mirror for a positive role model and for the image of the fully alive, mature, vibrant, life-loving individuals God intends us to be. James wants us to keep before ourselves the changes God has brought into our lives by incorporating us into the body of Christ, and he wants us to keep living out of that new life. We are first fruits—the mirror says so. JLB

Pentecost 15 (Proper 18/ Lectionary 23) September 9, 2012

Isaiah 35:4–7a
Psalm 146
James 2:1–10 [11–13] 14–17
Mark 7:24–37

There's an embarrassment of riches in this week's lectionary, but the readings all resound with the message that the Lord's welcoming grace extends to all. In the gospel Jesus moves into Gentile territories and, after his initial negative reaction, heals people there. So he sets patterns of inclusion, which members of his own movement would follow. But the epistle writer observes favoritism for rich over poor at work in the Christian community and condemns it. The Old Testament reading

and Psalm proclaim that God helps the poor, ends exile, heals hurts, and overcomes oppressions. So many good themes that the preacher has the difficult/delightful task of choosing among them!

"Having presented a healing doublet in 'Jewish' territory (5:21–43), **Mark** now narrates a corresponding doublet in Gentile territory (7:24–37). Jesus journeys to the region of Tyre and Sidon, a coastal area considered well outside the scope of Palestinian Jewish society (7:24a). The healings that take place here serve as object lessons in the inclusivity just advocated" (in last week's gospel, 7:19b; there he declared all foods clean and here he decides all people are clean). (Ched Myers, et al., *Say to This Mountain: Mark's Story of Discipleship* [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996], 82)

The first healing is remarkable for many reasons. A woman approaches Jesus on behalf of her daughter who has an unclean spirit (7:25). She is a stranger who intrudes on someone who is seeking a private retreat (7:24); an unclean Gentile who gets her daughter healed by an observant Jew; a woman who claims help from a man who is not her relative; a conversation partner who is his equal, turning insult to insight; a non-disciple who understands Jesus better than he understands himself and helps him grasp his calling. At the end of their repartee, Jesus tells the woman, "For giving me the Word (*logos)*, you may go home satisfied now—the demon has left your daughter" (7:29). Apparently, even the Son of God (1:1) needs to hear God's Word from time to time. Never again in Mark does Jesus refuse to heal anyone or question anyone's worthiness to be healed. All are welcomed at the table of God—not as dogs but as beloved children.

The second healing, also in Gentile territory, is of a man described as "deaf" and having "an impediment in his speech" (7:32). Jesus touches him with his fingers and his saliva—just as God bent over the dust of the ground at creation to make a human being—and prays the performative words, "Be opened" (the Aramaic *ephphatha*; cf. 5:41). *Immediately* the man is well, and the utterly astounded crowd exclaims, "[Jesus] has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak" (7:35, 37). Thus Gentiles are praising the fulfillment of biblical prophecy, which saw such healings as evidence of the end times!

Jesus' Gentile crowd is alluding to **Isaiah** 35, the first reading. There the prophet looks for God to restore creation (35:6b–7, also 1–2), heal the disabled (35:3–6), and bring home the exiles (35:8–10). (Parallel themes can be seen in Psalm 146.) Walter Brueggemann explains, "The theme is that the coming governance of Yahweh will radically transform both bereft 'nature' and disabled 'history.'…The turning point for the disabled is the utterance of verse 4a, which is a gospel announcement, the assertion of a newness from God. The assertion consists in two imperatives: 'Be strong, do not fear!' The latter is an oracle of salvation, an utterance of assurance that is situation changing." (*Isaiah 1–39* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998], 275–276)

Yet disabilities new and old continue to arise. **James** has observed a shocking fault line in the community that follows Jesus: discrimination in worship and other church gatherings that favors the rich and denigrates the poor (2:1–4). Social conflict between rich and poor extends to other public settings, with the rich taking the poor to court, possibly for non-payment of debts. The rich justify their actions on the basis of legality, saying they are within their rights to prosecute the poor, because the poor who owe them money are the law-breakers (never mind

that they are beloved brothers and sisters in Christ) (2:5–7). James insists that the law of God, both in the Old Testament and particularly Jesus' "royal law" ("You shall love your neighbor as yourself," 2:8), the "law of liberty" (2:12), would arrange the relationships between rich and poor with an emphasis on other values and outcomes (2:8–13), namely, the value of an attitude of mercy rather than judgment (2:13) and the outcome of practical help for the poor as the sign of living faith (2:14–17).

Prophetically, James names the gap between wealth and poverty as a great moral crisis—facing America as much as it faced first-century communities. The gap fractures along color lines as well. We who have been baptized all "have the excellent name [of Jesus] invoked over" us (2:7). We also are on many "sides" politically. Addressing poverty by showing mercy to the poor—in attitudes, church fellowship, practical actions, and public laws—could be something that calls us together across political dividing lines. If so, our human places might "be opened" to revel in more of the embarrassment of riches that God bestows through font and table. JLB

Pentecost 16 (Proper 19/ Lectionary 24) September 16, 2012

Isaiah 50:4–9a
Psalm 116:1–9
James 3:1–12
Mark 8:27–38

Each reading offers perspective on the motif of speaking (and listening). Isaiah, listening to God and the community around him, speaks to sustain the weary. The psalmist calls out to God—the listener nonpareil—for rescue. James blasts the Christian community because of the damage done when tongues are not bridled. And Peter confesses with his lips that Jesus is the Messiah.

Yet there is a deeper theme in these readings as well, the theme of suffering. What happens when our words grow out of the experience of suffering, as with the servant of God in Isaiah's passage? What happens when our words cause the suffering of others, as with James' community? And what happens when our confessions and subsequent commitments mean that we become involved with Jesus' cross, as Mark describes? Will we be able to give thanks, with the psalmist, that the LORD has rescued our lives from death, our eyes from tears, and our feet from stumbling (116:8)? Listen, learn, and live.

The gospel today is a turning point in **Mark**'s gospel. From now on Jesus will shift his attention toward Jerusalem and the showdown with the powers that be. Along the way he works to form his disciples into followers. Two framing stories about the healing of men who are blind (8:22–26 and 10:46–52) provide commentary on the capacity of disciples to grasp such repatterning. Jesus introduces the section asking, "Who do people say that I am?" (8:27) and concludes by averring that "the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (10:45). The church dwells in this catechetical emphasis for seven weeks (through Lectionary 30).

It is Peter who takes the deep breath and says out loud, "You are the Messiah" (8:29). Then Jesus "openly" tells Peter (and us) what it will mean to follow him. First, he says, understand "Messiah" in a revised way. Jesus won't be a superhero version of Messiah. He won't knock the Romans dead or whip their behinds. He must, he says, be rejected, suffer, and die before rising again on the third day.

When Peter rebukes Jesus for predicting this outcome, Jesus rebukes him in turn (same verb, *epitimaō,* the one for silencing demons, 3:12, and calming a raging sea, 4:39). He tells Peter where to go, literally: "Get behind me, Satan." (8:33). To abandon the tempter's wrong (human) perspective, Peter needs to get behind Jesus—following Jesus, copying Jesus, and, yes, riding on Jesus' coattails into death and new life. If Jesus can deny himself, say no to putting himself first in his life, then so can we. If Jesus can take up his cross and give himself away to make us free, so can we (8:34–38).

"Following Jesus is, more or less, Mark's definition of what being a Christian means; and Jesus is not leading us on a pleasant afternoon hike, but on a walk into danger and risk. Or did we suppose that the kingdom of God would mean merely a few minor adjustments in our ordinary lives?" (Tom Wright, *Mark for Everyone* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004], 112)

Isaiah wrote four "servant songs" in "the Book of Comfort" (Second Isaiah, chapters 40–55). Today we hear the third "song." The person speaking sounds like someone who is trying to be faithful to a God-given mission, which has brought suffering. It could be a group like Israel in the Exile (the original setting), was applied to Jesus by the early church, and may describe many who have followed Jesus by taking up the cross. "In the middle of ordinary time, the passage reminds the faithful of the cost of discipleship," says Frank Yamada. At the "crux" of the passage, v. 6, the servant nonviolently gives his back to those who strike him. "The same Hebrew verb, *natan* ('give'), which the poet uses to describe the LORD's gift of speech in verse 4, is used here in verse 6 to describe the prophet's disposition toward those who oppose the message…. Though suffering is the thematic and structural center of Isaiah 50, the LORD's calling (verses 4–5) and vindication (verses 7–9) of the servant frame the passage on either side. It is the LORD's initiative that defines both the vocation and destiny of the faithful. God's help is the source of their confidence and hope in the midst of suffering." (http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?lect_date=9/13/2009&tab=1)

James addresses unnecessary suffering in human communities (not just church communities) caused by careless and abusive words. He combines Jewish scriptures and pagan Greek philosophers to list the damage (3:3–11): Your tongue is like a bit and bridle on a horse—guide it! Your tongue is like a rudder on a ship—steer it! Your tongue is like a wildfire from hell—don't play with matches! Your tongue is like a dangerous animal—tame it! Your tongue is like a toxic substance poisoning a well—don't dump it! He marks the theological motivation in 3:9–10, "With the tongue we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God…. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so." *Because* God has so tenderly named us "beloved of God" in baptism, *therefore* we speak of and to others with respect and love. JLB

Pentecost 17 (Proper 20/ Lectionary 25) September 23, 2012

Jeremiah 11:18–20
Psalm 54
James 3:13—4:3, 7–8a
Mark 9:30–37

"Look out for Number One! "is the advice we most commonly hear. "Take care of yourself and your needs, and don't worry

about anyone else." Today's readings turn that bit of popular wisdom upside down. Get busy taking care of other people, especially children, Jesus says, and you will really be (or meet) Number One. Jeremiah and the psalmist display what God's followers do when they are threatened, persecuted, and far from first place or safety: They pray to God for justice. James urges the Christian community to follow a path of wisdom that takes others' needs into account.

The reading from **James** seems like part of a courtroom drama or prophetic lawsuit charging his hearers with embracing a polarizing and divisive stance toward people. Two of the indictments James makes (signaled by the questions he poses) are included in the lectionary's excerpt:

- The first issues are immaturity and arrogance, partiality and hypocrisy (3:13, 17). Evidence shows community members being motivated by selfish envy. There is quite a contrast between their current bitterness and the "wisdom from above" that would be "pure, peaceable, gentle, willing to yield"—that would look like God were present and managing things!
- Another issue concerns conflicts and disputes (4:1). James traces interpersonal fissures back to internal conflicts in each person and finds their roots in people grasping for things and for power.
- Two other issues are friendship with the world and disregard of Scripture (4:4–5).

Do these problems characterize the churches that our preachers will be addressing, or will the preachers bring other indictments on behalf of God? Either way, the final section of the passage advises defendants on how to approach the bench. Of the ten imperative verbs in 4:7–10, only three are in the lectionary, yet they are extraordinary commands: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you" (4:7–8a). Actually, in Christ God already has drawn near to reorient our life together, so take note and take heart.

Serving as prophet in the seventh and sixth centuries C.E., while Babylon was endangering Judah, took its toll on **Jeremiah**. Over time he was attacked by his own brothers, beaten and put into the stocks by a priest and false prophet, imprisoned by the king, threatened with death, thrown into a cistern by Judah's officials, and became an object of contempt and ridicule. A section of the book of Jeremiah includes several of his laments, complaints, or "confessions" (in chapters 11–20). The lament or complaint is the most prevalent form of biblical prayer. In this reading, Jeremiah employs it in the context of injustice. While his tormentors are guilty of sin and "evil deeds," Jeremiah believes that he is without blame. God has helped him discover the plot against him, and now Jeremiah prays that God will take vengeance on his enemies (11:18, 20; today's Psalm 54 exhibits similar themes). Jeremiah's words link with the gospel at the points of Jesus' frustration with his disciples' lack of understanding and his passion prediction that foretells his betrayal and death.

Mark 9:30–31 is the briefest version of the passion predictions. The most striking difference is in whose hands the Son of Man will be betrayed. The first and third predictions mention the Judean authorities. Here the Son of Man is betrayed simply "into human hands" (9:31). Jesus' betrayal is not by some demonic or divinized force; the responsibility is ours (Bill Moos, text study notes distributed

Sept. 21, 2003, in Portland, Ore.).

Immediately the disciples do not understand, and soon Jesus makes another attempt to form them. On the way to Capernaum they had been arguing with each other about who was the greatest, though they won't tell him that. When he "sits down," "calls the twelve," and "says to them," he is taking the role of a rabbi or teacher. He is not inviting them into a logic classroom but into a school for discipleship in the kingdom of God.

We see the visual. Now the audio: Jesus says, "Whoever wants to be the first must be last of all and servant of all" (9:35). We hear this audio; then we see this action: Jesus takes a little child, puts it in the middle, and takes it into his own arms. Possibly this is what a Jewish father does when a baby is born to his wife, a sign that he acknowledges the child as his own and takes responsibility for it. Certainly this is what happens in Holy Baptism. The audio continues, "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not [only] me but the one who sent me" (9:37; cf. Matt 25:31–46).

It is said that Menachem Schneerson (1902–1994), a Lubavitcher rabbi in Brooklyn, used to stand every week for hours as hundreds of people filed by to receive his blessing or advice about matters great and small. Once someone asked him how he, who was in his 80s, could stand so long without seeming to get tired. The rabbi replied, "When you're counting diamonds, you don't get tired."

Children in our midst: Diamonds. You and you and you among us: Diamonds. Welcoming God in our welcome of one another: Priceless. JLB

Pentecost 18 (Proper 21/ Lectionary 26) September 30, 2012

Numbers 11:4–6, 10–16, 24–29
Psalm 19:7–14
James 5:13–20
Mark 9:38–50

All of today's readings suggest that all God's people share in ministry. The first and second readings consider the role of "elders." The first reading and gospel propose that we make working alliances with people outside of our primary group. The second reading and gospel call for strenuous efforts against death and domination systems. God needs young and old, insiders and outsiders to work together to love, bless, and save the world.

The people of Israel behave with consistent faithfulness in **Numbers** 1–10 but rebel throughout chapters 11–20. Their griping infuriates God, who is ready to punish until Moses intercedes. Today's reading is part of a two-track story: (1) The people complain about the lack of meat (11:4–6), and (2) Moses complains about being overburdened (11:10–15). The lectionary excerpt follows the second track in which God answers Moses' complaint. Moses is so frustrated that he tells God to strike him dead if this is going to be the way things are (11:15). God divides the spirit that is upon Moses among seventy elders (11:16, 24–25), including two men who didn't go through the proper channels and forgot to come to the leadership installation service, but prophesy anyway (11:26–29). The omitted portion of the story shows God answering the people's complaint by providing meat through a surfeit of quail (11:18–20, 31–34). The Hebrew pun "spirit/wind" is prominent in both of God's answers: God's "spirit" falls on the elders and God's "wind" delivers the

quail. Though the elders' help may be a one-time event (11:25), Moses strenuously affirms their legitimacy (11:29).

The second reading is from the end of the letter of **James**—indeed, the very end, with no "greet so-and-so and goodbye" gestures that Paul would have included. "Everyday needs" are addressed in this text, "which envisions a community in which people suffer and pray, rejoice and sing, become sick and get well, sin and are forgiven. Such a broad spectrum of activities reflects congregational life as we know it—people with all kinds of needs looking to the community of faith for help. And what is instructive here is that the church offers help in ways that are genuinely appropriate and effective." (Fred Craddock et al., *Preaching through the Christian Year: Year B* [Continuum, 1993], 424–425). In particular, James confirms that prayer makes a difference; "the prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective." Through prayer God can heal physically (sickness) and spiritually (sinfulness) (6:15–16). The elders' prayers and anointing with oil that James prescribes are not "last rites," a blessing for death, but a means for cure (6:16). In its caring, truthfulness, and mutual trust, the faith community that James describes is a model congregation, yet not an impossible standard.

James reminds us that if any followers have wandered away from the truth, those concerned should try to lead them back (5:19–20). On the other hand, Jesus alerts us that not everyone who is different has wandered away from the truth. Previously in **Mark**, the disciples had been unable to cast a demon out of a child (9:14–29). Now they resentfully tell Jesus about someone who performed an exorcism successfully, suggesting that the independent contractor ought to be stopped. Jesus, however, appears glad to hear that someone has been freed from spiritual bondage, regardless of who the agent of healing was. He says, Lighten up, dear followers of mine—"whoever is not against us is for us" (9:40). He doesn't say, "Only those who subscribe to our points of doctrine may be authorized to practice miracles." Or, "If they're not from our denomination or religion they can't share the power." Or, "They're either for us or against us, and if they're against us, shut them down or blow them up." He says, "Anyone who isn't against us is for us." What an open, curious, appreciative stance the Christian church might have toward all sorts of people and groups if we took Jesus literally in this regard. When we know what we stand for as Christian people, we can find allies in other churches and all of society to partner with on matters important for the common good.

Jesus goes on to deplore those who subvert the common good, particularly if they "put a stumbling block" (*skandalizō*) before any "little ones who believe in me," whose only helper is God (9:42). He says without mincing words that such a one would be better off drowning in the deep sea with cement boots on (OK, "millstone") so they can never get back to commit a further crime. Just as we are ready to point the finger at "them," he says that we, his people, are among the perpetrators. If so, now is the time to stop: "Put out those eyes that can't see with respect, faith, hope, or love, and get new ones!" (9:43–48). When we don't discipline ourselves, it becomes a living hell all around us (9:48).

How amazing that the one who put the millstone around his neck was Jesus, drowning under the depths of our sins. We hear the "splash splash" of his baptism rather than the "chop chop" we deserve. We taste his salt in the bread broken and given for us; his Spirit is fire to energize our share in his mission (9:49). JLB

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