Special Section
Reprinted from *Currents*, January 2024:
Papers presented at the Fifth Conference
of the International Loehe Society
Wartburg Theological Seminary, July 24-27, 2022

Christian Identity in Crisis:

The Legacy of Wilhelm Loehe as Inspiration for the Church Today

Introduction to This Issue

The first two issues of *Currents in Theology and Mission* for 2024 are devoted to the papers presented at the 5th Conference of the International Loehe Society held at Wartburg Theological Seminary, July 24-27, 2022, under the theme "Christian Identity in Crisis: The Legacy of Wilhelm Loehe as Inspiration for the Church Today." Over forty participants from Germany, Switzerland, Australia, Canada, and the United States gathered on campus and a handful of others joined the presentation sessions by Zoom.

The days of the conference were full with presentations, opening and closing worship services, and good fellowship over breaks and mealtimes. There was also opportunity for a trolley tour of historic Dubuque and a day-long excursion that took the group to Wartburg College, Waverly, Iowa, and to two churches founded by Loehe *Sendlinge* ("sent ones"): St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Waverly, and St. Sebald Lutheran Church, in the rolling countryside near Strawberry Point. At St. Sebald, the group visited the farm site where Wartburg Theological Seminary was located from 1857-1874. Over the course of days together at the conference, a genuine sense of camaraderie and spiritual community developed among the participants. Let us call it *Gemutlichkeit* and *Gemeinschaft*! Planning for the next conference in Neuendettelsau, July 27-30, 2025, is currently underway.

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to explore the work of the Franconian Lutheran pastor Wilhelm Loehe as a living legacy for the church today. With the engagement of representatives from other institutions in Germany and North America that trace their roots to Loehe—the Gesellschaft für Innere und Äußere Mission, Diakonie Neuendettelsau (now Diakoneo), Missionswerk Bayern (now Mission EineWelt), Concordia Theological Seminary-Fort Wayne, and Wartburg College—the organizing conference was held at Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, July 2005. Subsequent conferences were held at Neuendettelsau (2008), Concordia Seminary-Fort Wayne (2011), and Neuendettelsau (2014). After an extended hiatus that included a virtual conference in 2021, the Society is again back on track to meet every three years.

The theme for the 2022 conference, "Christian Identity in Crisis," offered space to reflect on Loehe's theological and pastoral work in relation to crises from within and from without the church of his own time. Through his many endeavors—in church and mission, liturgy and diakonia, Lutheran confession and piety—Loehe grappled with matters of Christian identity, both personal and ecclesial. Within the church, Loehe promoted the currents of a spiritual awakening, a renewed confessionalism, and a rich liturgical life in the wake of enlightened religion and rationality. With his imagination for a mission to German immigrant communities and Native People in North America, and for the ministry of a deaconess community attentive to the physical and spiritual needs of the sick, the poor, and the rejected, Loehe was engaged in a churchly response to the social upheaval caused by industrialization, migration, revolution, and war. The question at the horizon of interest in Loehe's work is how to understand Loehe's legacy to us in the face of crises to Christian identity today.

The articles published here include historical and theological explorations, critical assessments, and reflections for the church in its life and mission today. In the first place—as befits a conference focused on Loehe, who was first and foremost a pastor—is a sermon from **Martin J. Lohrmann** preached at the worship service opening the conference. That day, July 25, was the commemoration of James, Apostle. Lohrmann uses the witness of the apostle James as well as the pastor Loehe to proclaim the freedom of those who follow Jesus Christ to see possibilities beyond the difficulties of the moment, to see the world as God sees it, and to serve others in love. In that spirit, you are invited to engage the articles offered here—and in the next issue as well.

Craig L. Nessan (Wartburg Theological Seminary) identifies several dimensions of Loehe's endeavors that inspire imagination for the renewal of the church. In Loehe's contributions to mission, worship, equipping others, diakonia, open questions, and reclaiming the missionary, Nessan finds resources "to reconstitute Christian existence today." Loehe offers a model for "cultivating new and imaginative repetitions of historic Christian practices" and practicing solidarity in human suffering.

Rudolf Keller (Institute for Evangelical Theology, University of Regensburg) wants to let Loehe speak for himself about his central concerns: the Brethren Church, the sacrament of the altar, the Lutheran confession, the office of ministry, and true church fellowship. Keller explores these theological and churchly matters in statements from Loehe's letters and other less familiar sources. He encourages us to hear Loehe out and understand him in his own context, even as we seek to address the challenges in our own.

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James A. Lee II (Concordia University-Chicago) interprets Loehe's thought in the context of the wide-ranging discussion in nineteenth-century academic theology concerning the history and development of doctrine. Although Loehe was neither an academic nor a liberal theologian, but a pastor and a confessional theologian shaped in the piety of the Awakening Movement, Lee finds evidence for an understanding of doctrinal development operating in his thought, one that distinguishes him from his academic contemporaries.

Thomas H. Schattauer (Wartburg Theological Seminary) explores what he calls Loehe's liturgical imagination. As a dimension of faith, imagination and the images that fund it are foundational for Christian liturgy and liturgical-theological work. To describe Loehe's imagination both *from* the liturgy and *for* the liturgy, Schattauer focuses on three quotations from Loehe's writings. The picture that emerges is that of a eucharistic community participating in the life of the triune God and practicing a living liturgy.

John R. Stephenson (Concordia Seminary-St. Catharines) reflects on the task of writing a biography of Loehe for the English-speaking world, especially readers in North America, where Loehe's influence remains significant. Stephenson suggests that the three-volume biography prepared by Loehe's co-worker Johannes Deinzer would provide the foundation of such a work. A

new biography could incorporate currently available source material and speak to the concerns of contemporary North American Lutherans.

Additional conference papers from Mathias Hartmann, Jenny Wiley Legath, Stephen Pietsch, Jan Schnell, Klaus Detlev Schulz, Man-Hei Yip, and a sermon from Christian Weber will appear in the next issue of *Currents.*

The papers presented at this year's gathering add to a growing body of work on Loehe and the legacy of individuals and institutions influenced by him. Readers of *Currents in Theology and Mission* are invited to explore the papers published from previous conferences of the Society:

Dubuque (2005)
Wilhelm Loehe and His Legacy, ed. Ralph Klein. *Currents in Theology and Mission* 33.2 (2006).

Neuendettelsau (2008)
Wilhelm Löhe: Erbe und Vision, ed. Dietrich Blaufuß. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2009.

Fort Wayne (2011)
Wilhelm Loehe: Theological Impact and Historical Influence, ed. Craig L. Nessan and Thomas H. Schattauer. *Currents in Theology and Mission* 39.1 (2012).
Wilhelm Löhe: Theology and History / Theologie und Geschichte, ed. Dietrich Blaufuß. Nürnberg: Verein für bayerische Kirchengeschichte; Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 2013.

Neuendettelsau (2014)
Wilhelm Löhe und Bildung /Wilhelm Loehe and Christian Formation, ed. Dietrich Blaufuß and Jacob Corzine. Nürnberg: Verein für bayerische Kirchengeschichte; Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 2016.

The 2022 conference resulted from many months of collaboration among the officers of the Society: Christian Weber (Basel), Thomas Schattauer (Minneapolis), Thomas Kothmann (Regensburg), and Jacob Corzine (Fort Wayne). The Society is most grateful for the generous support provided for the conference as well as the publication of these papers by the German American National Congress (DANK), Diakoneo, Gesellschaft für Innere und Äußere Mission, Wartburg College, and Wartburg Theological Seminary. Sadly, Thomas Kothmann (April 22, 1965—August 4, 2022) was not able to attend the conference due to serious illness and died shortly after its conclusion. We remember him and his loved ones in prayer and give thanks for his contributions to the Society. This issue is dedicated to his memory.

Membership and conference information for the International Loehe Society can be found at https://www.iloes.net.

The *Currents Focus* feature articles for January begin with an article on Loehe's preaching by **Joshua Pfeiffer**. This contribution explores the preaching of Wilhelm Loehe via a theological and rhetorical analysis of the opening sermon of his series on the Lord's Prayer. Loehe's preaching is located within the history of preaching, specifically the Lutheran catechetical heritage. He faithfully embodies this tradition not merely by conveying information and moralizing but by proclaiming law and Gospel within his catechesis. Loehe here manifests some of his distinctive ecclesial emphases, such as the creative holding together of confessional orthodoxy and pietistic devotion. Loehe's preaching provides a rich resource for the ongoing homiletical task today.

Pete Singer offers comprehensive guidance for becoming a more trauma-informed church. The most fundamental element of trauma-informed practice is a basic understanding of trauma. Trauma involves an event that overwhelms the normal human capacity to adapt or cope. This event leaves a lasting imprint on the mind, brain, body, and soul. Research is clear that one of the biggest factors contributing to resilience after trauma is competent, supportive relationships. Collaboration may occur between the church and survivor, the various people at the church helping the survivor, or between the church and providers from other organizations who may be able to help the person. The church is best able to fulfill this calling when it follows core principles and practices, grounded in Scripture, and lives them out every day as a manifestation of who we are in Christ.

"Preaching Helps" in this issue takes us from the Feast of Epiphany to the Great Feast Day of Easter. It's a bit unusual for the first quarter of *Currents* to include Easter and it happens only when Easter Sunday comes as early as the end of March. The introduction to "Preaching Helps" focuses on the book of Jonah, a reading we will hear during the early days of Epiphany. Though Jonah never prayed for Nineveh, we are urged to pray more expansively than he did. Perhaps we can add another verse to "God, Bless America."

Thomas H. Schattauer, Guest Editor
Craig L. Nessan, Issue Editor

Sermon at Opening Worship

Martin J. Lohrmann

Associate Professor of Lutheran Confessions and Heritage
Wartburg Theological Seminary
Dubuque, Iowa

Commemoration of James, Apostle

Scripture Readings: Acts 11:27-12:3a; Mark 10:35-45

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ.

I attended the first International Loehe Conference here in Dubuque in 2005. I was a recent Wartburg Seminary graduate, had studied for a year in Neuendettlesau, and was thinking about doing a PhD in church history. So, I had good personal, pastoral, and academic reasons for coming to that first Loehe conference. And…I needed a change of scenery from my first call. I was going through a tough time early in my ministry; it was nice to return to a warm, *gemütlich* place like Wartburg.

I remember enjoying the conference. The keynote lecture by Hans Schwarz particularly stands out in my mind. The most transformative moment of the conference for me, though, happened in a conversation I had with Duane Manson, who was a local retired pastor and chaplain. I had gotten to know Pastor Manson a little when I was a student, and it was nice to see him again. If I remember correctly, at the time Pastor Manson was a little stooped in the shoulders, and maybe he had a squinty eye. He asked me how my first call was going. I was honest and told him it wasn't good. He smiled. Looking up at me, he pointed and said, "You know, Marty, you got options!" Those words were a Holy Spirit breath of fresh air and opportunity to me: I was not stuck or trapped. In Christ, we are free.

Pastor Manson died a few years after that. But I continue to cherish those words of apostolic freedom, and the twinkle in his eye that came with them. We who follow Jesus Christ have options. We have the chance to see life through God's eyes as a world of grace and beauty. We get to learn that real leadership means serving others from a spirit of love. We get to be like the prophets and disciples in Acts 11, who "determined that according to their ability, each would send relief to the believers" who needed help. And then they went out and did just that, and so can we.

It's amazing to consider how Loehe and those who worked with him built up global missions, theological education, local social ministries, deaconess communities, and liturgical reforms that are still worth talking about 150 years after his death.

In Christ, we also know that faith and love sometimes come with opposition. What options do we have then? Today we remember the Apostle James. Unlike the accounts that Acts gives us of St. Stephen's trial and martyrdom, we don't know much about how things went for James the brother of John at the hands of King Herod Agrippa. Did the heavens open for him as they did for Stephen? Did he preach like Stephen did? We don't know. What we do know is that James followed Christ to the end, as Jesus had told him, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism that I am baptized, you will be baptized." The cup is Christ's Passover from death to life; his baptism is losing one's life to gain it. These are our sacraments, and these are our lives in Christ. They hold the same power and promise of life with God for us as they held for James and his fellow disciples.

We see this apostolic witness in the life and work of Wilhelm Loehe, a village pastor who it seems might have not had many options. What did he do? He looked and listened and prayed. He paid attention to a letter asking for help in North America. He noticed local needs in the community. He saw how women could support their communities more publicly. Inviting others to take part, he found creative, effective ways to address the challenges around him. It's amazing to consider how Loehe and those who worked with him built up global missions, theological education, local social ministries, deaconess communities, and liturgical reforms that are still worth talking about 150 years after his death.

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While there's a tendency to fall into "great man" thinking about a unique leader like Loehe, he was assisted by people whose co-efforts made such things possible: Amalie Rehm at the deaconess house, his daughter Marianne, the Fritschel brothers and Augusta von Schwartz at Wartburg Seminary, Adam Ernst of the Missouri Synod, and many others. In Christ, at this conference, we remember all the saints before us, from the disciples, prophets, and apostles like James, to more recent figures like Wilhelm Loehe to those faithful people we have known in our own lives such as Pastor Manson.

Our time together these days in worship, fellowship, and learning provides a great opportunity to learn about the faith and love of those who went before us. We get to be inspired by their apostolic witness, learn from their mistakes, listen anew to the concerns of those around us, and find ways together to put our ideas into practice. Christ is faithful. He has already gone ahead of us, giving his life as a ransom for many. In him, we get to join in his heavenly mission to set people free from bondage and welcome them into the caring arms of our loving Lord. Amen.

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Wilhelm Loehe and the Future Church

Craig L. Nessan

William D. Streng Professor for the Education and Renewal of the Church
Professor of Contextual Theology and Ethics
Wartburg Theological Seminary
Dubuque, Iowa

As with the church in the present, the church of the future is always constructed out of the fragments of the past. Only God can create something out of nothing, *ex nihilo*. Human communities, including the community of church, always are constrained to imagine and construe the future with reference to what has gone before us. We are limited as human agents by our own personal experiences and accustomed patterns, in which we can be highly invested as the only way forward. One value of education is to expand our horizons to know, appreciate, evaluate, and reclaim those fragments of the past that are most promising for fashioning the future church.

In this article, we imagine how we can draw upon the Loehe legacy for the construction of a vital church in the future. We focus less on the past and more on the significance of the Loehe legacy for the emergent church, both for congregational life and theological education. We will explore six dimensions of the Loehe legacy: mission, worship, equipping others, *diakonia*, open questions, and recovery of the "missionary." How can these themes contribute dynamically to the vitality of the future church?

In this article, we will explore six dimensions of the Loehe legacy: mission, worship, equipping others, diakonia, open questions, and recovery of the "missionary." How can these themes contribute dynamically to the vitality of the future church?

Dimension One: Mission

Mission originates from the Triune God, who sends Jesus Christ by the power of the Spirit to gather the church community through worship into life-giving relationships, to send forth the people of God to love and serve neighbors in every arena of daily life. Families, schools, workplaces, local communities, and global relationships provide the arenas where Christians have opportunities to serve the neighbors God gives us.[1] Georg Vicedom, a Neuendettelsau missionary, wrote a ground-breaking work, The Mission of God, in 1960, in which he articulated the significance of the Loehe legacy for the mission of the church.[2] Vicedom pointed out that the primary agent of mission is the God who sends Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit to bring forth the kingdom as God's ultimate purpose for human salvation.

> The mission is work that belongs to God. This is the first implication of mission Dei. God is the Lord, the One who gives the orders, the Owner, the One who takes care of things. [God] is the Protagonist in the mission. When we ascribe the mission to God in this way, then it is withdrawn from human whims. Hence we must show that God wants the mission and how [God] conducts it.[3]

While the church serves as an agent in God's mission, the efforts of the church are not primary but are consequent and obedient to God as the divine Director of Evangelical Mission. With this seminal insight the Loehe legacy has born incredible

1. Craig L. Nessan, "Universal Priesthood of All Believers: Unfulfilled Promise of the Reformation," *Currents in Theology and Mission* (Jan 2019): 8-15, http://currentsjournal.org/index.php/currents/article/view/155/178 Accessed 26 January 2023.

2. George Vicedom, *The Mission of God: An Introduction to a Theology of Mission*, trans. Gilbert A. Thiele and Dennis Hilgendorf (St. Louis: Concordia, 1965). Long before the subsequent work of David Bosch about the "mission of God" in his book, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991), Vicedom in the Loehe tradition formulated and developed the foundational concept of mission Dei, which has played a seminal role in the "missional church" literature and movement of our times. The work of Vicedom builds on the work of the Willingen Conference in 1952.

3. Vicedom, *The Mission of God*, 5.

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fruit for re-conceptualizing the entire field of missiology in an era where previous mission models have been severely criticized.

Outer Mission

Loehe and his colleagues distinguished mission activity into two types, outer and inner. Whereas inner mission addressed those who are already baptized members of the church, outer mission was directed to those outside of the Christian community. In Loehe's lifetime outer mission was directed in North America to Native Americans and inner mission to the emigrants from Germany gathering into congregations in need of Christian instruction. This distinction remains useful in our present context, though more nuanced and complex than implemented in previous generations.

Outer mission encompasses not only those in remote places, but also those who call themselves "spiritual" but not "religious," the increasing numbers of those who identify as "Nones," those who espouse Atheism as their studied worldview, and the "Dones," those who once were involved in the Christian church but now have lapsed into inactivity. Outer mission requires competence for building trustful relationships and constructive engagement with those in each of these categories.[4] The outer mission of God is comprehensive to count all individuals, even those expressing opposition against God, as falling within the loving divine embrace of Christ whose arms are extended in welcome from the cross.

Inner Mission

Although this usage has been more common in German missiology than in North America, inner mission is an extremely fruitful concept to be retrieved for the renewal of Christian mission. By making the distinction between outer and inner mission, we are reminded that the mission of God needs to be understood as an ongoing activity among the baptized as much as it is also a divine activity among those who claim no church connection. God the Missionary continues to establish, renew, and deepen life-giving relationships with those who are already members of the body of Christ, so they might be drawn ever more closely into divine belovedness and sent forth as agents of that divine love. Inner mission begins with the means of grace employed by God to mediate the gifts and presence of Christ, including the Word, baptism, affirmation of baptism, Holy Communion, prayer, and the Christian community itself.[5] God desires life-giving relationships for us, beginning with our relationship with the Triune God and extending to every human being, every living creature, and all of creation.[6]

There is a striking convergence between the central claim of Christianity about love as the greatest of all gifts (1 Cor 13:13) and what ultimately makes for human happiness. The inner mission of the church is so to mediate the love of God in Christ to fill our hearts in relationship with others.

Not only does God desire life-giving relationships for us, but life-giving relationships are the deepest longing of the human heart. There is a striking correspondence between Christian theology and research about what finally makes people happy.[7] While we are socialized to believe that things like wealth, status, and success are the most important factors in human happiness, the key element in long-term human happiness involves the quality of one's relationships and involvements in human community. While happiness is predicated on sufficiency in what is necessary for physical survival—food, water, shelter, safety, and health care among them, research demonstrates one compelling finding: "Human beings are social creatures, and the quality of our relationships is inextricably linked with our own physical and mental well-being."[8] There is a striking convergence between the central claim of Christianity about love as the greatest of all gifts (1 Cor 13:13) and what ultimately makes for human happiness. The inner mission of the church is so to mediate the love of God in Christ to fill our hearts in relationship with others.

Dimension Two: Worship

Every generation faces its own call to the renewal of vibrant worship of the living God. Loehe answered that call by returning to ancient sources for the construction of a creative liturgical order, his *Agende*, which was used both locally in Neuendettelsau and through publication by Lutheran congregations in North America. In recent decades Lutheran churches in North America have

4. Cf. Lillian Daniel, *Tired of Apologizing for a Church I Don't Belong To: Spirituality without Stereotypes, Religion without Ranting* (New York/Nashville: Faith Words, 2017); Elizabeth Drescher, *Choosing Our Religion: The Spiritual Lives of America's Nones* (New York: Oxford, 2016); Josh Packard and Ashleigh Hope, *Church Refugees: Sociologists Reveal Why People Are Done with the Church* (Loveland, Colorado: Group, 2015); Alister E. McGrath, *The Twilight of Atheism: The Rise and Fall of Disbelief in the Modern World* (New York: Random House, 2004); and Phyllis Tickle, *The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing and Why* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012).

5. Regarding the Christian community as a means of grace, see Richard H. Bliese and Craig Van Gelder, eds., *The Evangelizing Church: A Lutheran Contribution* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2005), 45-46.

6. Cf. Craig L. Nessan, *Shalom Church: The Body of Christ as Ministering Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010).

7. Liz Mineo, "Good Genes Are Nice, But Joy Is Better," *Harvard Gazette* (April 11, 2017), https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2017/04/over-nearly-80-years-harvard-study-has-been-showing-how-to-live-a-healthy-and-happy-life/ Accessed 5 August 2019.

8. Carolyn Gregoire, "The 8 Most Important Things We've Learned About Happiness In The Past 10 Years," in *The Huffington Post* (Dec 6, 2017), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/23/science-of-happiness_n_7154918.html Accessed 5 August 2019.

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engaged in vigorous deliberation about the nature and purpose of Christian worship. Many have jettisoned historic liturgy in favor of "contemporary" forms which intend to appeal to the unchurched and "seekers." By contrast, ecumenical (mainstream) Protestant church bodies, as with the Roman Catholic Church, have reclaimed the value of the historic liturgical *ordo*, while at the same time providing resources for contextualizing the liturgy through various musical settings and alternative texts to construct the worship order.[9] The Loehe legacy compels us to recover and renew the centrality of Word and Sacrament at the center of the church's life and mission.

Proclaiming

A church schooled in the Loehe tradition remains grounded in its conviction about the efficacy of the proclaimed Word as a means of grace for bringing Jesus Christ to the world. As we consider the requisites of proclamation in the twenty-first century, not only must we devote attention to the traditional practices of preaching and teaching Scripture within the gathered congregation, but even more to proclamation that employs new modes of interpersonal communication, including the mediation of God's angels through social media and other online platforms.[10]

The interpreter/proclaimer of God's Word operates with the fundamental conviction that God is both the One who spoke in previous generations through the biblical texts and the Living One who promises to speak again today to hearers of the Word.[11] A new challenge and opportunity for proclamation involves the use of electronic media as means of grace for the work of the Holy Spirit in communicating God's Word as law and Gospel. Each form of electronic communication offers opportunities for proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There are many aspects to this brave new world and the Loehe legacy provides precedent. Here we can only comment on one facet, digital teaching and learning in service of the Christian faith.

The church has the innovative possibility to gather people for in-depth study of the Bible and the Christian faith through the development and use of digital teaching and learning methods, either asynchronously or in hybrid form including synchronous elements. Increasingly, we are discovering how to deliver highly effective social learning (life-giving relationships!) through the practices of "teaching by design" in a "collaborative and globally-networked pedagogy."[12]

Digital teaching and learning communities offer congregations, church members, and inquirers beyond the church opportunity to participate in a challenging and formative encounter with profound life questions from a Christian perspective.

While theological schools, such as Wartburg Theological Seminary, have innovated with new methods of distance learning, there are also enormous possibilities for introducing new forms of proclamation and worship into use by local congregations.[13] Digital teaching and learning communities offer congregations, church members, and inquirers beyond the church opportunity to participate in a challenging and formative encounter with profound life questions from a Christian perspective.[14] As Loehe was innovative in developing new forms of theological education by establishing an "emergency seminary" to prepare and form teachers and pastors for North America, the Loehe legacy provides precedent for imagining and developing creative new experiments for engaging God's Word for Christian formation and proclamation.

Doing Liturgy

For Loehe, God is the Primary Actor, who encounters us in Word and Sacrament at worship and brings us Jesus Christ. Loehe was a renewer of liturgical worship, who researched ancient sources and reconstructed the worship rite. As we draw upon the Loehe legacy for the renewal of worship, we need to become articulate about a dynamic theology of worship that connects every aspect of the liturgy with formation for the Christian life.

Each of the historic elements of the liturgy involves both worship of God by the gathered people and the formation of the worshipping congregation in Christian life practices, inspired by God in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.[15] For example, the Great Thanksgiving forms the people of God to place the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ at the center of their daily thanksgivings. As we gather with the saints of every time and

9. Department for Theology and Studies of the Lutheran World Federation, "Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture: Contemporary Challenges and Opportunities." (Geneva: LWF, 1996) http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/LWF_Nairobi_Statement_1994.pdf Accessed 26 January 2023.

10. See Deanna A. Thompson, *The Virtual Body of Christ in a Suffering World* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2016).

11. For the following, see Craig L. Nessan, "Chapter 1: Biblical Authority and Lutheran Hermeneutics," in *Free in Deed: The Heart of Lutheran Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2022), 11-26.

12. See G. Brooke Lester, *Understanding Bible by Design: Create Courses with Purpose* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014) and Nathan Loewen, *Effective Social Learning: A Collaborative, Globally-Networked Pedagogy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015).

13. Cf. Kristine Stache and Craig L. Nessan "Adventures into Digital Teaching, Learning, and Formation: A Case Study from Wartburg Theological Seminary," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 17 (Fall 2018): 20-45.

14. One gain from the global pandemic for church mission has been the adaptation by congregations of new methods for digital ministry.

15. For the following, see Craig L. Nessan, *Beyond Maintenance to Mission: A Theology of the Congregation*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), chapter 4.

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place at the Lord's Table, we receive the body and blood of Christ so that we become the body of Christ for the life of the world. Here is a meal where there is amazing welcome and mercy for all, as Christ's body and blood are received in bread and wine. At the conclusion of the meal, we are sent: "Go in peace. Serve the Lord." The church is sent for sharing the good news and being generous to the poor. Live according to who you have become at worship, members of the body of Christ![16] At worship the church is formed and scattered for mission into all arenas of daily life to serve the neighbors God gives us in our families, schools, workplaces, local communities, and around the globe.[17]

"Doing liturgy" is not only what we do as those gathered for worship in a sanctuary but also functions as formation for our being body of Christ in all involvements of daily life. The worshipping congregation becomes the liturgy and performs it every day for the life of the world (cf. Rom 12:1-2). At worship God in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit transforms our lives as we are transmogrified into the very body of Christ. Doing liturgy is who we are!

Dimension Three: Equipping

Loehe provided many resources for Christian formation in his body of work. The equipping of the baptized through catechization is one the most critical educational tasks of the church. Teaching and forming people in the fabric of one holy catholic apostolic faith is the Great Work of the generations. This Great Work is even more urgent in our post-Christian era, when the traditional methods of catechizing (Sunday school, vacation Bible school, confirmation instruction, and Bible study) appear ineffective due to overscheduled lives and competition with other activities. Parents no longer automatically see the value of Christian education for children as it competes for precious time with other activities. Many adults are exhausted by the pace and stress of their lives and choose alternative Sunday activities. The challenges facing the church in its effort to equip the next generation for Christian existence are enormous.

Church leaders need laser focus to intentionally equip church members in the logic of the Christian faith. Ministers of the Word need to keep asking the question: "What does this have to do with Jesus Christ and following him?" If few are willing to gather for Christian education opportunities, ministers of the Word need to re-construe all meetings of the church as occasions for educating and equipping for Christian faith. Indeed, this is what it means to be a "minister of the Word" in our age: on every occasion to make connections between what we are doing and the significance of God's Word, Jesus Christ. Now is a *kairos* for the renewal of what it means to be a teaching and equipping church. Two themes emerge as pertinent from the Loehe legacy: confessing and practicing the Christian faith.

At the conclusion of the meal, we are sent: "Go in peace. Serve the Lord." The church is sent for sharing the good news and being generous to the poor. Live according to who you have become at worship, members of the body of Christ!

Confessing (Orthodoxy)

"Confessing the Gospel of Jesus Christ" can no longer be considered the sole, or even primary, responsibility of those called as pastors but must become the shared responsibility of all the baptized. In the Affirmation of Baptism service, Christians promise to "proclaim the good news of God in Christ in word and deed." Equipping the baptized for discipleship in our post-Christian age involves building capacity for speaking the good news of God in Christ to other people. In the New Testament, the words translated as "Gospel" (*euangelion*) and "proclaiming" (*euangelizomai*) both refer to verbal communication, speaking the promises of Christ one person to another. Paul describes the essential role of the spoken word as a means of grace for creating faith in hearers: "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ" (Rom 10:17). Whereas evangelism has come to encompass various forms of publicity, evangelizing is very specific: speaking Christ to others.

Evangelizing begins with "evangelical listening," deep listening to the stories of others, and only then sharing the promises of God in Christ with others according to what we have heard. This approach requires Christians to be aware of the many ways in which the Gospel can be communicated to others. Just as in the New Testament there are many ways the gifts of Christ are described (as love, mercy, generosity, forgiveness, life, reconciliation, peace, joy, shared suffering, hope, etc.), Christian evangelizing needs to be adept at correlating what we hear through evangelical listening with a very specific expression of God's promises matching the needs of that person.[18]

Confessing the Gospel (justification by grace through faith in Christ alone) has been described as "the article upon which the church stands and falls." Every Christian generation is called to confess this Gospel at the center of its proclamation. The baptized need to be equipped intentionally for speaking the good news to others through modeling by church leaders, building small group

16. Cf. Nessan, *Shalom Church*, chapter 3.
17. Dwight L. DuBois, *The Scattering: Imagining a Church that Connects Faith and Life* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2015).
18. See Norma Cook Everist, *Seventy Images of Grace in the Epistles… That Make All the Difference in Daily Life* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2015)

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We are called to live out the pattern of Jesus Christ in daily life. The disconnect between "churchified" life and daily life occurs from two directions: either by failing to understand that church is about patterning our lives on Jesus Christ or by not extending the pattern of Jesus Christ into all our roles and relationships.

ministries that foster speaking the faith, developing mentoring programs that focus on sharing of faith stories by trained mentors, and introducing the practice of testimony by church members at worship services.[19] Equipping the body of Christ to confess means increasing the proficiency of church members to follow 1 Peter 3:15-16: "Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence."

Practicing (Pietism). Pietism arose as a renewal movement to instill Christian faith into the entirety of a person's life.[20] The leaders of the Pietist movement observed how Christian faith had become compartmentalized into certain times of the week and by conventional religious practices, especially activities organized by the institutional church. By contrast, the pietist movement sought the full integration of Christian existence into every aspect of life. To accomplish this agenda, Pietism engaged in two strategies: 1) etching the pattern of the Christian life on believers through practices such as Bible reading, prayer, singing hymns, and small group meetings; and 2) drawing connections between Christian discipleship and everyday life.

As Orthodoxy and Pietism belong together, confessing the faith through evangelizing and practicing faith in daily life belong inseparably together. We are called to "proclaim the good news of God in Christ *in word and deed.*" This is the meaning of discipleship.[21] Jesus Christ calls us to follow him. The church serves as the agent of God to etch the way of Jesus Christ as the pattern of our lives through worship, preaching, teaching, and spiritual practices. We are called to live out the pattern of Jesus Christ in daily life. The disconnect between "churchified" life and daily life occurs from two directions: either by failing to understand that church is about patterning our lives on Jesus Christ or by not extending the pattern of Jesus Christ into all our roles and relationships.

The Christian life is not about "being good." The Christian life is about serving as "little Christs." Luther writes:

> … as our heavenly Father has in Christ freely come to our aid, we also ought freely to help our neighbor through our body and its works, and each one should become as it were a Christ to the other that we may be Christs to one another and Christ may be the same in all, that is, that we may be truly Christians…[22]

This is baptismal existence, daily dying and rising with Christ. God in Jesus Christ puts to death everything in us that is not of Christ; God in Jesus Christ raises up in us everything that is of Christ. The church is called to equip the members of the body of Christ to "be Christ" for the sake of the world through our words (confessing/evangelizing) and our deeds (practicing/serving).

Dimension Four: Diakonia

Jesus Christ is a diaconal minister. One of the most apt and accurate descriptions of the ministry of Jesus Christ is the ministry of Word and Service. Jesus Christ became incarnate in the form of a servant (cf. Phil 2:5-7a). Jesus Christ commands his followers to live as ministers of Word and Service.

> After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord--and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you servants are not greater than their master, nor are the messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them" (John 13:12-17).

The basin and towel are signs of Word and Service ministry for the whole church. How would our church be transformed by making foot washing a sacrament? Love is the spiritual gift and the washing of feet with water is the material sign, all at Jesus' command.

Diakonia of All Believers

As the New Testament makes clear, Word and Service ministry is not only the ministry of Jesus Christ. Word and Service ministry, made explicit by those serving as deacons and deaconesses, is really the nature of ministry itself as entrusted by God to the *laos*, the whole people of God, the diakonia of all believers. No theme from the Reformation has more potency to contribute to the renewal of the church in the next generation than the universal

19. Bliese and Van Gelder, *The Evangelizing Church*, 129-132.

20. See Roger E. Olson and Christian T. Collins Winn, *Reclaiming Pietism: Retrieving an Evangelical Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015).

21. See Rowan Williams, *Being Disciples: Essentials of the Christian Life* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016).

22. Martin Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian* (1520), trans. and intro. Mark D. Tranvik (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 88.

priesthood of all believers.[23] Luther described faith as "a living, daring confidence in God's grace so certain that you could stake your life on it one thousand times."[24]

The stations where Christians are sent to live out their faith with living, daring confidence are the arenas of daily life where God gives us neighbors to serve in families, schools, workplaces, local communities, and civic engagement for the common good.[25] We stand at a juncture where the decline in church affiliation in the U.S. is gaining momentum. While people are searching for meaning and ways of authentic service, they do not perceive what the church has to offer as a living, daring confidence on which to stake their lives.

How might we reimagine pastoral ministry in relation to the ministry of the whole people of God, a diakonia of all believers? Word and Sacrament ministry exists finally as a ministry of service "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Eph 4:12). Word and Sacrament ministers contribute to this service by so proclaiming the Word and stewarding the sacraments that the *laos* (laity, whole people of God) are *set free from* everything that prevents them from becoming the individuals they were created to be and *set free for* living out their baptismal ordination in all the arenas of daily life—family, school, workplace, local community, and civil society. Word and Sacrament ministry must be renewed as a ministry oriented toward equipping a diaconal church in service to others for the life of the world.

Deacons

With this vision for the diaconal ministry of all believers, the role of those called as deacons becomes as crucial for the church today as it was in the life of the earliest church or for the ministry of Loehe in the nineteenth century. The heart of diaconal ministry involves a dynamic exchange between church and world. Deacons are called to bring the crying needs of the world to the attention of the church and to equip the church for addressing the aching needs of society. Diaconal ministry has two key features: 1) the *exemplary function* to model the character of the ministry of all baptized individuals at the interface of church and world, and 2) the *catalytic function* to equip intentionally all members of the body of Christ to claim their baptismal vocation of service to neighbors in their daily lives.

Deacons fulfill a twofold role on behalf of a diaconal church. First, through the exercise of their own charismatic gifts (with their distinctive specializations), they demonstrate the character of Word and Service ministry as those sent by the church from worship into the world to serve neighbors and by bringing the needs of the world to the attention of the church. Second, deacons serve as catalysts among the whole people of God, equipping others for service that the church become diaconal church. Diaconal ministry involves the ongoing reformation of the church through Word and Service ministry in the name of Jesus Christ: the diakonia of all believers.[26]

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Dimension Five: Open Questions

One of the most intriguing and needed contributions to ecclesiology from the Loehe legacy is the stance of "open questions."[27] This principle anticipates one of the key hermeneutical moves from the ecumenical movement. Already in 1893 Sigmund Fritschel described the Iowa Synod as representing "a strictly confessional as well as ecumenical Lutheranism."[28] During the twentieth century, building ecumenical consensus was fostered when the process shifted from concentrating primarily on those beliefs that divide to attention on the shared convictions of Christian faith. This involves making a distinction between matters which are central and those which may be considered peripheral, even *adiaphora*.

J. L. Neve wrote:

> Iowa, from the very beginning, acted according to the principle that in matters of faith it is essential to agree in

23. Craig L. Nessan, "Universal Priesthood of All Believers: Unfulfilled Promise of the Reformation," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 46 (Jan 2019): 8-15.

24. Martin Luther, "Prefaces to the New Testament," in *Luther's Works* 35: 370-371.

25. See the resources provided by the Life of Faith Initiative, www.lifeoffaith.info Accessed 26 January 2023.

26. Craig L. Nessan, "The Neighborliness (Diakonia) of All Believers: Toward Reimagining the Universal Priesthood," in Kathryn A. Kleinhans, ed., *Together by Grace: Introducing the Lutherans* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2016), 143-146.

27. Cf. Gerhard S. Ottersberg, "The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Iowa and Other States, 1854-1904," PhD Dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1949.

28. Sigmund Fritschel, "The German Iowa Synod," in *The Distinctive Doctrines and Usages of the General Bodies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1893), 62.

> case church-fellowship is to take place, but that doctrinal points, which are not doctrines of faith, must not affect fellowship of faith and church-fellowship. They must be considered "open questions." By this not a theory but a general principle concerning the treatment of differences within the Church in regard to church-fellowship is laid down.[29]

Furthermore, "Iowa…insisted that this principle had always been a confessional declaration of the Lutheran Church, and that the Lutheran Church has always acted according to this principle. Another practice would end in sectarianism, and would be un-Lutheran, since it was just as wrong to add to the confessions as it was to detract from them."[30] The principle of "open questions" remains a lasting contribution of the Loehe legacy to ecumenical understanding, whose articulation deserves more recognition and consideration regarding matters of theological controversy today.

The Ultimate

In his *Ethics*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer described the importance of distinguishing, yet without separating, the "ultimate" from the "penultimate." The ultimate pertains to the doctrine of justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone, while penultimate matters always must be viewed in relation to the ultimate.[31] By placing justification at the very center of Christian faith and teaching, Bonhoeffer sought to secure Jesus Christ as the Center around whom all other matters revolve and in relation to whom all other questions are relativized.

Agreement about Jesus Christ as the ultimate source of our justification before God was crucial for unity in the Christian faith and served to distinguish between the Confessing Church and the German Christians. Bonhoeffer summoned the church to vigilance about the costly discipleship of Jesus Christ against yielding to "cheap grace."[32] By distinguishing without severing the relationship between the ultimate and penultimate, Bonhoeffer acknowledged the existence of a "hierarchy of truths," a term later employed to guide the church in its interpretation of doctrine and involvement in ecumenical relations.[33]

The Penultimate

To describe a point of doctrine as "penultimate" does not suggest that it is unimportant. Deliberating penultimate issues has great significance for understanding the coherence of the Christian faith and for engaging ethical issues. The church needs to give its best analysis of and reflection upon penultimate matters, to represent Christian teaching faithfully and the Christian life with integrity. However, designating certain matters as penultimate allows the church to respect differences of interpretation on a range of issues without putting at risk justification, the ultimate, as the basis for church unity.

The church needs to give its best analysis of and reflection upon penultimate matters, to represent Christian teaching faithfully and the Christian life with integrity. However, designating certain matters as penultimate allows the church to respect differences of interpretation on a range of issues without putting at risk justification, the ultimate, as the basis for church unity.

Loehe and his followers crafted a hermeneutical approach to the Lutheran confessions that distinguished between the ultimate claims of dogma and penultimate matters. Speaking about the doctrinal stance of the Iowa Synod, Sigmund Fritschel wrote:

> On account of this historical view of the Symbols, the Iowa Synod does not see in them a code of law of atomistic dogmas of equal value and equal weight, but an organic expression of the living connection of the faith of the Church. Accordingly, there is a distinction to be made between the dogmas, properly speaking, and other parts of the Symbols; as e.g., the frequent exegetical, historical and other deductions, illustrations and demonstrations. Only the former, i.e., the dogmas, constitute the Confession, whilst the latter partake of this dignity only indirectly, inasmuch as they define the dogmas more clearly. … The Church is bound to accept these doctrines which constitute the Confession in their totality, without exception, whilst the demand of doctrinal conformity by no means includes all unessential opinions which are only occasionally mentioned in the Symbols.[34]

Key to the discussion of open questions in theological debate and ecumenical relationships not only involves agreement about

29. J.L. Neve, *A Brief History of the Lutheran Church in America* (Burlington, Iowa: German Literary Board, 1916), 290.

30. Neve, *A Brief History*, 291. The author cites the Augsburg Confession, article 7 regarding the *satis est* ("it is enough").

31. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics,* ed. Clifford J. Green, trans. Reinhard Krauss, Charles C. West, and Douglas W. Stott (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 6: 159-160.

32. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, ed. Geffrey B. Kelley and John D. Godsey, trans. Barbara Green and Reinhard Krauss (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 4:53-56.

33. Cf. Richard P. McBrien, *Catholicism: A New Study Edition* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994), 1102.

34. Fritschel, "The German Iowa Synod," 65-66.

the principle itself but also consensus regarding which theological or ethical questions should be counted as penultimate. The great breakthroughs leading to ecumenical rapprochement—and especially the adoption of full communion agreements—witness to the fruitfulness of the hermeneutical approach that was anticipated and implemented by the representatives of the Loehe legacy in the Iowa Synod.

Dimension Six: Reclaiming the Missionary

Due to manifest abuses confusing Christian evangelism with Western cultural imperialism and denominationalism in missionary efforts by European and North American churches in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the "missionary" idea is called into question.[35] Attitudes conveying cultural superiority, ethnocentrism, imposition of Western categories, English as the normative language, and the inferiority of other cultures too often were considered the norm.[36] This is not to discredit the faithful service of those who served as missionaries with dedication and cultural sensitivity. It is rather to acknowledge how the churches regularly failed to operate with respect for the cultural matrix of other peoples. Much now has been gained with the practice of the accompaniment model of missionary collaboration, which method involves mutual partnership and enrichment.[37]

Taking this history seriously, the church and theological education nevertheless need to reclaim a missionary impulse.[38] If we have entered a post-Christian era when we can no longer take for granted familiarity with the most rudimentary biblical and Christian teachings among people in the West, then we are living in an explicitly missionary situation analogous to the first centuries.[39] This creates a dilemma for those interpreting the Loehe legacy, insofar as theological education in this legacy has been consistently missionary both in its theological commitments and pastoral-diaconal engagement.

If Loehe's theology is like the beating of the human heart, the diastolic moment is worship and the systolic moment is mission. It is consistent with Loehe's theology that two of the most extensive studies of his thought in recent times have emphasized its missionary character.[40] Christian Weber refers to the Loehe legacy in

> Rooted in the inherited Christian traditions, the new missionary must be a broker of cultures and religions, creative in interpreting and translating the Good News into languages that are understandable to those whose lives are versed in their own cultural and religious tongues.

describing the church's call to mission:

> It is very urgent for the church to start moving. The church must get away from self-centered thinking and protecting its ownership. It needs to find a global and missionary perspective…In Loehe's words: "For mission is nothing but the one church of God in its movement, the actualization of the one universal, catholic church."
>
> This was the vision of Loehe. He drew a picture with words. The church is like a huge pilgrimage ascending a mountain. The first pilgrims have already reached the top. But the top is covered with clouds and cannot be seen from afar. At the end of the pilgrimage, people of all nations and colors join in. The pilgrims are a unity because they share the way.[41]

While the term "missionary" has been rightly criticized, we have entered an age where the recovery and reclamation of the missionary concept is crucial, specifically in the secular and religious milieu of North America.

What are the central features of the missionary mindset needed in our context? First, we need a deep understanding of the faith tradition in which we stand. This begins with clarity about the centrality and the efficacy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Given the multicultural and multi-religious complexity of our context, this theological posture requires genuine appreciation for the diverse voices that have contributed to the formation of the tradition, both in Scripture and in Christian history. Attending to diverse voices provides rich resources in our missionary enterprise of interpreting the faith today.[42] This includes awareness of the value of dissenting voices and even heretical opinions from the Christian past.

Second, the missionary mindset involves a profound capacity to listen. Careful and active listening attends to the nuances

35. David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991), 291-297.

36. For a literary depiction, Barbara Kingsolver, *The Poisonwood Bible* (San Francisco: Harper, 1999).

37. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, *Global Mission in the Twenty-First Century: A Vision of Evangelical Faithfulness in God's Mission,* http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Global_Mission_21.pdf, Accessed 26 January 2023.

38. Craig L. Nessan, "Mission and Theological Education–Berlin, Athens, and Tranquebar: A North American Perspective," *Mission Studies* 27 (2010): 176-193.

39. Cf. Douglas John Hall, *The End of Christendom and the Future of Christianity* (Valley Forge, Trinity Press International, 1997).

40. See Christian Weber, *Missionstheologie bei Wilhelm Loehe: Aufbruch zur Kirche der Zukunft* (Guetersloh: Guetersloher Verlagshaus, 1996) and David C. Ratke, *Confession and Mission, Word and Sacrament: The Ecclesial Theology of Wilhelm Loehe* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2001).

41. Christian Weber, "The Future of Loehe's Legacy," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 31 (April 2004): 100.

42. For example, Martin J. Lohrmann, *Stories from Global Lutheranism: A Historical Timeline* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2021).

of emotion and values expressed by others. The other person is honored, not threatened, by this manner of listening. One is attentive to the religious implications of what is heard and seeks to explore the ultimate concern in, with, and under what is said. A cultivated capacity to listen employs methods of cultural and theological analysis to understand and interpret what has been heard.

Third, missionary work understands itself as service to the holistic well-being of the other person and the community to which the other belongs. It imagines the world communally, not individualistically. Missionary service is lived out in acts of love that attend to the restoration of relationships in community. Concern for the wholeness of the entire community, beginning with the most vulnerable members and including creation, reflects God's own desire for shalom.[43]

Finally, this missionary approach involves the translation of faith traditions into other "languages." Here we mean the ability to speak in the languages of various subcultures (for example, the language of youth culture, contemporary music, or social media). Rooted in the inherited Christian traditions, the new missionary must be a broker of cultures and religions, creative in interpreting and translating the Good News into languages that are understandable to those whose lives are versed in their own cultural and religious tongues. The heritage of the Iowa Synod preserves a missionary identity that has evolved organically from Wilhelm Loehe and been embodied contextually in each succeeding generation, as a living legacy for the future church. We embrace the missionary task of "engaging, equipping, and sending collaborative leaders who interpret, proclaim and live the gospel of Jesus Christ for a world created for communion with God and in need of personal and social healing." [44]

Conclusion

The Loehe legacy affirms repetition of the deep patterns of Christian existence through shared practices. Participation in the liturgy, hearing God's Word, and regular engagement in spiritual practices are chief among these practices that form us as people of faith. The Loehe legacy has valued hearing of God's Word as formative for Christian existence, grounding us in the way of Jesus Christ. Both worship and proclamation are means of grace, whose repetitions over time form our identity through our enactment of the liturgy and the proclaimed Word.

Our existence as Christian people is also tested as by fire through the crucibles that come upon us as we live our broken lives in a finite and sinful world. Our lives are marked by experiences of deep sadness, loss, and grief. We experience the effects of human waywardness, alienation, sickness, and death, as well as other chances and changes of life. For Loehe such experiences included the ordeal of extended waiting to receive his call as a pastor, the death of his young wife, difficulties in the lives of his children, dissent within the Bavarian Lutheran Church, controversies with his mission partners in North America, and conflict with close colleagues in Neuendettelsau. Loehe was profoundly affected by the crucibles known to human beings in this world.

We revitalize ecclesial life by cultivating new and imaginative repetitions of historic Christian practices and by solidarity with others as they endure the crucibles that beset human life.

At the same time Loehe demonstrated how such crucibles may become the occasion for living by faith in service to neighbors in need. Loehe had acute sensitivity to human suffering as demonstrated by pastoral care for the members of his parish, compassion for the misery of the German immigrants in North America, concern for Native Americans, and commitment to care for the needs of the sick, aged, disabled, and other marginalized people through the training of deaconesses and the organization of diaconal institutions.

The Loehe legacy provides historical perspective and practical resources for the contemporary church to reconstitute Christian existence today. We revitalize ecclesial life by cultivating new and imaginative repetitions of historic Christian practices and by solidarity with others as they endure the crucibles that beset human life. We pray this legacy, as it has been lived out among individuals, congregations, and institutions shaped by Wilhelm Loehe, may provide a compass for orienting the future of a church that seeks to be aligned with the mission of the Triune God.[45]

43. Cf. Nessan, *Shalom Church*, chapter 1.

44. Wartburg Theological Seminary, "Mission Statement," https://www.wartburgseminary.edu/mission-and-vision/ Accessed 26 January 2023.

45. This article is based on Craig L. Nessan, *Wilhelm Loehe and North America: Historical Perspective and Living Legacy* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2020), Chapter 8.

Loehe about Himself: What Were Loehe's Key Theological Themes?

Rudolf Keller

Extraordinary Professor of Church History
Institute for Evangelical Theology
University of Regensburg
Regensburg, Germany

Translation by Allison Werner Hoenen and Thomas H. Schattauer

Even some of his contemporaries did not really understand Loehe and were therefore unable to seriously engage with his thoughts. He himself presented his view of things in clear words. This cannot be denied. Nevertheless, Loehe has often been misunderstood and therefore inaccurately interpreted, even criticized. In his introduction to the edition of Loehe's letters, Klaus Ganzert said that he "wanted to draw particular attention to those characteristics of Loehe that seemed to him to have remained too much in the background and in the dark in previous portrayals."[1] The attempt to portray Loehe as he saw himself has guided many who have turned to his path and thinking. Even so, it is noticeable that the result is often an image that a later author had of him. How did he express himself about himself and his central concerns? I set out once again to find out what he communicated about himself. To do that, you have to go with him a bit on his path and into his texts.

Loehe hardly speaks about himself in a way that one could learn how he is feeling. Of course, there are the significant wounds in his personal life, such as the deaths in his family: his beloved wife, his little son Philipp, and his mother. There one sees the man, strong with trust in God, suffering from these losses. But this does not really say anything about him because he was not inclined to give information about his condition.

His "self", his own "I," always stood before God, to whom he owed himself and his whole life, and to whom he wanted to give an account of his will and actions. Of his diaries, we now have in print the diary from his time as a student in Berlin in 1828.[2] Another diary from the time of his vicariate in Kirchenlamitz is being edited by Gerhard Philipp Wolf.[3] Loehe notes the events

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of each day very briefly. His remarks about the Berlin lectures are very restrained, ultimately providing little to observe his position on what he heard. He pays little tribute to the famous names among the professors at the University of Berlin at that time. Here, too, it is evident that Loehe strongly pursued his personal theological inclinations in his studies. He studied devotional literature (*Erbauungsschriften*) in order to form and nourish his theology. He wrote down elaborate, free-form prayer texts in his diary. There we see him before us in conversation with his God. Again and again, he reflects on his sinfulness, gives thanks to God for salvation, and asks for further guidance and deliverance from sin. His language—even in these free prayers!—is influenced by thoughts from the devotional literature he studied and, of course, by the Luther Bible, in which he was at home. To appreciate these entries would require a keen sense of pastoral psychology and related knowledge.

I was reminded of Luther's remarks in the Preface to the Psalter. Luther formulated the following about the Psalter:

> In summary, if you would see the holy Christian church painted with living color and shape and put into one little picture, then take up the Psalter. There you have

1. Klaus Ganzert, "Einleitung," in Wilhelm Loehe, *Gesammelte Werke* (hereafter GW), ed. Klaus Ganzert, 7 vols., (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 1951-1986), 1:17.

2. Wilhelm Löhe, *Tagebuch 1828, Berlin*, eds. Dietrich Blaufuß and Gerhard Philipp Wolf. GW, Ergänzungsreihe 6 (Nürnberg: Verein für bayerische Kirchengeschichte; Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 2020).

3. I would like to thank Dr. Wolf for letting me look at his manuscript.

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> a fine, bright, pure mirror that will show you what Christendom is. Indeed you also will find yourself in it and the true *gnothiseauton,* as well as find God in God's self and all creatures.[4]

Luther had found in the Psalms an answer to the old request of the oracle of Delphi: "*Gnothiseauton!*" ("Know yourself!"). This could also be applied to Loehe, even if the Neuendettelsau village pastor and son of a burgher from Fürth did not bring Luther's monastic experience with the Psalms with him and only in the course of time found his way deeper into the prayer of the Psalms. Loehe recognizes himself by praying before God, confessing his sin, and allowing himself to be given strength and forgiveness, perceiving and discovering it for himself. Loehe's self-knowledge, however, does not first revolve around his own ego, but is always connected with the basic questions of determining where he stands in the respective tasks in his position and calling as student, as vicar, as pastor, as teacher of the "pupils for America" and as rector of the deaconesses. All this was, after all, his exercise of the office of ministry to which he was called. I approach Loehe and his self-understanding by asking where his heart beat theologically and where he expressed himself about it. This means I am convinced that we understand Loehe best about himself when we look at the themes that were important to him and note what he wrote about them. He lived so completely for his calling and found fulfillment in it that he hardly noticed how he let himself be taken up by his calling beyond his own powers. So then, what are the key themes for Pastor Loehe?

What did Loehe want?

In the 150th year after Loehe began training deaconesses, the church historian Peter Maser, who is well known for his knowledge of the Awakening Movement (*Erweckungsbewegung*), gave a lecture titled "'Was wir im letzten Grunde wollten'" ("'What we ultimately wanted'").[5] In his paper, Maser wanted to look at Loehe from the outside and to focus on Loehe's concerns without feeling obligated to further developments up to the present. Although the confessional resolve of the Lutheran Loehe was foreign to him, Maser clearly showed its contours and did not blur them. In particular, he emphasizes that Loehe, who was not given a position in the Bavarian *Landeskirche* appropriate to his talents, "created his own world in Neuendettelsau, which in the end was to radiate beyond the narrow village boundaries and his own *Landeskirche*."[6] However, Maser continues with Loehe's well-known oral statement, handed down by his biographer Johannes Deinzer:

> If one wants to know what we actually wanted (i.e., with our ecclesiastical endeavors), then one must look at the deaconess institution, except that one would not have to think only of sisters. We wanted an apostolic-episcopal Brethren Church (*Brüderkirche*). Lutheranism is not a party matter for us. What we are Lutheran about with all our soul is the sacrament and the doctrine of justification. We are not Lutherans in the sense of the Missourians,[7] nor in the sense of the Old Lutherans.[8] We are quite ancient and quite modern. A further development of Lutheranism into an apostolic-episcopal Brethren Church is what we ultimately wanted.[9]

Now, it should be noted that this is an oral statement made by Loehe but communicated twenty years after his death. Loehe, who wrote so much, did not himself put these words on paper for a work intended for print. There may be quite different reasons for this. It is possible that Loehe came up with these formulations only in his last years, and Deinzer remembers them in retrospect. This statement was apparently of such great importance to the biographer that he memorized it and therefore wanted to pass it on to posterity in a significant place. The distancing from the Missourians and the Old Lutherans was of particular interest to Deinzer because as a biographer he strove to remove Loehe from the exposure caused by his association with the "special churches." Regarding circumstances in America and free-church Lutheranism in Germany, Loehe liked to speak of special churches (*Sonderkirchen*), which were churches in the sense of the Lutheran confession without the status of a state church.

The Brethren Church

Let's clarify what Loehe had in mind with the concept of the *Brüderkirche* (Brethren Church). In the summer of 1851, he wrote to his friend Pastor Carl Eichhorn[10] in Baden:

4. Martin Luther, "Preface to the Psalter, 1528 (1545)," in *The Annotated Luther,* vol. 6: *The Interpretation of Scripture,* ed. Euan K. Cameron, trans. Kristen E. Kvam (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), 211; Martin Luther, *Luthers Werke: Deutsche Bibel*, 12 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1906–1960), 10.I:105.5-9.

5. Peter Maser, "'Was wir im letzten Grunde wollten': Ein Blick von außen auf Wilhelm Löhe, seine diakonischen Strategien und ihr kirchlich-theologisches Umfeld," *Zeitschrift für bayerische Kirchengeschichte* 74 (2005): 14-22.

6. Maser, 16.

7. "Missourians" refers to representatives of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Loehe was very important in the founding phase of the synod through the disciples he sent and his contacts.

8. "Old Lutherans" was the term originally used by outsiders to refer to the representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Prussia, which had arisen as a separate church in protest against the Prussian Union. It had important centers in Silesia and especially in Wroclaw. Later this designation was adopted internally and used positively. Loehe occasionally called them just "Silesians," which then was not simply meant geographically.

9. Johannes Deinzer, *Wilhelm Löhe's Leben: Aus seinem schriftlichen Nachlaß zusammengestellt*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Nürnberg: Gottfr. Löhe, 1874), vol. 2 (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1880), vol. 3 (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1892), 3:327-28.; unless noted otherwise, all quotations from the German are translated by Allison Werner Hoenen and Thomas H. Schattauer.

10. Carl (Karl) Eichhorn, 1810-1890, was the most important figure of the Lutheran movement in Baden aligned with the Old Lutherans; see Zscharnack, in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2nd ed. (hereafter RGG²), 2: cols. 47-48.

> It seems to me that a lukewarm air of Union is blowing through all of Germany, that great external victories of the aforementioned direction could be imminent, but that the Lutheran Church will become what it was before Luther, a unity of brothers scattered throughout the world. Next to the powerfully creative Roman Church, a universal church, in which the cruel enemy of all spiritual life would be hidden until the flags of the Lord waved for the last battle. May God grant us great joy when we are worthy to wield his sword, alone victorious.[11]

It is striking that Loehe combines realistic observations about the ecclesiastical situation of his present with a vision for the special mission of wielding God's "sword, alone victorious sword." Loehe took an intensive interest in Eichhorn's resignation from the Church of the Baden Union and his move switch to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Prussia. He had even congratulated him on this step. This wording is not included in the edition of the letters, but it is of great weight. Loehe wrote to his friend in Baden:

> Although more plodding, I am walking with you through the country, with you to prison, into the place of joys known to the world; I feel the melancholy which is attached to such suffering, but also the powerful satisfaction that greets you in the soul, despite all weakness, recognized and unrecognized. I congratulate you on the honor of the disgrace and on the bitterest drop of it, that you, the most loyal subject of your sovereign, had to let yourself be treated as if you were a child of 1848 and 49.[12]

He makes a similar statement on the subject of the Brethren Church to Friedrich Theodor Horning, who was active in Strasbourg.[13] He asks, "whether there will not one day be a Lutheran brotherhood of all countries as opposed to a Protestant universal church."[14] Also in a letter to Karl von Maltzan in Mecklenburg he remarks:

> Throughout the whole of church history from Luther to the apostles, the Brethren Church under various names stands at the center of Christian inclinations. It culminated in the Reformation and was lost in it like a stream in a river. If now on the one hand there is Rome, on the other hand a universal Union church, and in the middle there grows up a thorn-crowned bride of Christ, so be praised the most holy name.[15]

Loehe clearly shapes these thoughts in these letters from 1851. He longed for "true churchly and Christian congregations," whether you call them Brethren congregations (*Brüdergemeinden*) or whatever you like; thus, he wrote in May 1852.[16]

To his friends in America, Loehe also describes what he understands by Brethren congregations. Thus, in 1853 he writes to Grossmann and Deindoerfer how he envisions missionary work:

> We would prefer to try it in the following way: two disciples (*Zöglinge*) [as he calls the young men educated in Neuendettelsau] sharing in ministry and school together with two or three Christian brothers would go to a richly settled area and buy cheap land at our expense, on which they would build a church, parsonage, and farmhouse and live together. One of the disciples would be ordained pastor of the others. They would be a house community, praying, living, studing together and farm the land together (ah, without becoming countryfied!). On Sunday they preach; those from the neighborhood who wanted to come could come. They would hold school and instruction for all who wanted. They would baptize children, bless marriages, give addresses at funerals. But if someone wanted confirmation, absolution, and the Lord's Supper, one would indeed take attested faithful people to the Lord's Supper, but into the closer community of the congregation only people of complete agreement. One would aim at the formation of Lutheran Brethren congregations (*lutherische Brüdergemeinden*), which would not be Herrnhuter, but would live together according to the sense of the Association of Apostolic Life.[17] In this way, one would maintain pure communion fellowship (*Abendmahlsgemeinschaft*) and congregational relationships, and yet could be as beneficial as possible.[18]

This is his vision of missionary work. In this vision, the Brethren congregations play an important role. Of course, it must be kept in mind that this model of Brethren congregations and their impact on the population would not be easy to handle in pastoral practice. People insist on equal treatment and look very critically at any perceived preferential treatment of others. The pastor wielding the shepherd's crook would have to approach his task with a great deal of wisdom and love if he wanted to be understood by people. Who could carry out this differentiation of a core congregation—a Lord's Supper congregation—and the whole congregation in terms of spiritual care? Nevertheless, it is significant that he thinks through the model of the Brethren church also for America and the missionary work and attaches great importance to it.

Of course, these questions are also connected to how Loehe

11. Rudolf Keller, "Wilhelm Löhe und Carl Eichhorn: Ein unbekannter Brief aus dem Jahr 1851," *Zeitschrift für bayerische Kirchengeschichte* 58 (1989): 202-203.
12. Keller, 202n24.
13. Friedrich Theodor Horning, 1809-1882, Alsatian Lutheran theologian; see Anrich, RGG², 2:2017-2018.
14. Keller, Löhe und Eichhorn, 203n29.
15. Keller, 203n29.
16. Keller, 203n29.
17. See Wilhelm Löhe, *Apostolisches Leben: Vorschlag und Katechismus 1848,* ed. Dietrich Blaufuß, Studienausgabe 2 (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 2011).
18. Wilhelm Löhe, Brief an G. M. Großmann, J. Deindörfer, ?.8.53, in *Gesammelte Werke* (hereafter GW), ed. Klaus Ganzert, 7 vols., (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 1951-1986), 2:208.

thinks about the free-church Lutheran congregations that emerged in the struggle against the Union. His fraternal ties with the "separated" Lutherans in other German territorial states are well known.[19] He was helpful in obtaining suitable pastors for the congregations and personally assisted in an ordination in Nassau. Loehe even declared himself willing to visit the vacant Baden congregations of Pastor Carl Eichhorn once every quarter and to hold services there.[20] Yet he did not go this way into separation himself and did not become pastor of such a congregation.[21] Loehe saw the changed attitude of his *Landeskirche* since the appointment of Adolf von Harleß as president of the Oberkonsistorium. So, he remained village pastor in Neuendettelsau, where he could then develop his great effectiveness as founder of the deaconess work and the motherhouse. Loehe wanted, however, that the free churches or "special churches"—as he called them collectively—and the *Landeskirchen* to be unified and bound together in the Lutheran confession.[22] He regarded the Society for Inner Mission as birthing assistant and midwife in the formation of free churches.[23] Visitors from the ranks of free-church Lutheran ministers naturally participated in church services in Neuendettelsau as preachers and liturgists.[24] Loehe practiced pulpit and altar fellowship with them.

One concern he shared with the separated Lutherans was the practice of communion fellowship. Only together with members of a Lutheran church did Loehe want to celebrate the Lord's Supper because only there is the comforting meal of communion with Christ through his body and blood celebrated according to its institution. For this reason, he opposed the practice of "*Abendmahlsmengerei*" ("shared communion") in the Union churches (i.e., participation of both Lutheran and Reformed Christians in the Lord's Supper), and he repeatedly reminded his own *Landeskirche* of this pastoral duty. Loehe was convinced that the unified practice would eventually lead to the loss of the full and rich content of the Lutheran celebration of the Lord's Supper. Therefore, he wanted to consider the designated practice of admission to the Lord's Supper as a "shibboleth."[25]

One concern he shared with the separated Lutherans was the practice of communion fellowship. Only together with members of a Lutheran church did Loehe want to celebrate the Lord's Supper because only there is the comforting meal of communion with Christ through his body and blood celebrated according to its institution.

The Sacrament of the Altar

The doctrine of the Lord's Supper was one of the important reasons Loehe wanted to be and to remain a Lutheran. Already as a student in Erlangen in the summer of 1827, Loehe had written to his friend Gustav Ritter[26] in Ansbach in response to a question of Ritter:

> Yes, dear Gustav! I have often thought about it, even seriously. But thinking about such high things does not get much done. The Holy Communion is not merely a commemoration of Jesus Christ, but a mystery, namely, that the true body and blood of the Lord are given to the communicants in bread and wine. – Therefore, your question—"Are you completely clear? Is everything clear to you?"—you can only take back again. It's not a question of knowledge and clarity, but that I have the faith that Jesus Christ unites with me, even if incomprehensibly, yet most intimately. If I am a true Christian, I must feel this through and through. – You do not have to go around the Lord's Supper with your mind like a microscope! It is no better than the naked eye to see what is there. To ask the question how is useless. It cannot be grasped how we receive with the bread the body that really died on the cross and with the cup the blood that flowed from his holy wounds. Here we must believe. For Jesus, who is the Word, who was and is God, who is truth himself,

19. Rudolf Keller, "Kirche im Sinne des lutherischen Bekenntnisses: Löhes Vorstellung von freier Kirche," in *Wilhelm Löhe: Erbe und Vision,* ed. Dietrich Blaufuß (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2009), 186.

20. Keller,190-192.

21. See Dietrich Blaufuß, "Löhe auf dem Weg in die Separation? Die Korrespondenz Wilhelm Löhe—

Alexander von Wartensleben-Schwirsen Dezember 1848 / Januar 1849," *Zeitschrift für bayerische Kirchengeschichte* 75 (2006) 87-95.

22. See Keller, "Kirche im Sinne," 189-90n42.

23. Wilhelm Löhe, "Über die Geschichte der Gesellschaft für innere Mission" (1856), GW 4:220.

24. See the statements of Wilhelm Eichhorn (Carl Eichhorn's son), later rector of the Deaconess Institute in Neuendettelsau in Keller, "Löhe und Eichhorn," 207n56.

25. "One point from the memory of former times that hurts me most, I must here…not conceal; it is the communion fellowship (*Abendmahlsgemeinschaft)* with those who hold other beliefs.…'The church-dividing disagreement over the Lord's Supper (*Abendmahlsdifferenz*)' is a truth we cannot drop without falling away from the Lutheran Reformation itself, and, like every truth, we must confess most loudly when it is disputed. Something can become a shibboleth through opposition, even if by its nature, it is a hundred times less suitable to be a shibboleth than the call raised above." Wihelm Löhe, "Das Verhältnis der Gesellschaft für innere Mission im Sinne der lutherischen Kirche zum Zentralmissionsverein in Bayern" (1856), GW 5.2:701.

26. Gustav Ritter (1809-1887) from Heldenfingen/Württemberg, attended the Gymnasium in Ansbach, then was a pastor in various places in Bavaria; from information kindly shared by Pastor Wolfgang Huber, who is preparing the Bavarian pastors register.

says: "This is my body, this is my blood."[27]

I find it striking that in *Drei Bücher von der Kirche* from1845, Loehe does not explicitly deal with the Lord's Supper,[28] but only with the liturgy in general: "The true faith is expressed not only in the sermon but is also prayed in the prayers and sung in the hymns."[29] We can assume that with such words he is also thinking of the liturgy of Holy Communion. To be sure, the Lord's Supper is mentioned repeatedly in *Drei Bücher* as well as in regard to the doctrinal differences between the confessions, but it does not have its own section.

The question of church fellowship was also something Loehe only highlighted very clearly in the second edition of *Haus-, Schul- und Kirchenbuch* from1851. This topic became of such importance to him only in the course of time. He held the view that one could not be in communion with a church "from which we have separated, or which has separated from us for the sake of truth."[30] Loehe was very clear on this issue and remained so to the end of his life. In the 1870 preface to his *Beicht- und Kommunionbuchlein für evangelische Christen*, Loehe stated the following about his principles on the Lord's Supper: "Despite the fact that he [i.e., the author] must face the future in silence, he does not deviate in the least from the principles he has always held." [31]

Provoked by Ludwig Feldner,[32] the editor of the *Rheinisches lutherisches Wochenblatt* and superintendent of the Rhenish diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Prussia ("Old Lutheran"), Loehe published a statement in 1868 in the *Korresponsdenzblatt der Diakonissen* under the title "Brüderliche Klage über Gewissensverwirrung" ("Fraternal Complaint about Confusion of Conscience"). There Loehe gave an answer to the question of communion fellowship among the deaconess houses in Germany.[33] The Lutheran deaconess houses in Dresden and Neuendettelsau had co-signed an appeal by all Protestant deaconess houses, including Reformed and Union ones, for young women to join them. Feldner viewed this as a transgression of the limits of church fellowship. Therefore, he asked whether he could continue to send young women members of the Lutheran Church of Prussia to these houses. He had found this to be an offence.[34] Loehe felt compelled to respond to this "fraternal complaint." He recalls that a number of pastors in Bavaria had advocated the "unmixed and unblended administration of the holy sacrament."[35] With this he recalls what had been formulated in the Schwabach petition of October 9, 1851.[36] The congregation of Neuendettelsau had declared it wanted to practice an unmixed communion at the Lord's Supper. The village pastor now professed this anew. With the founding of the deaconess house, he had wanted to stem the tide of the Union movement in matters of inner mission and diaconal ministry. Loehe had no intention of outdoing Wichern or Fliedner. He even admired these men.

He held the view that one could not be in communion with a church "from which we have separated, or which has separated from us for the sake of truth."

> What I wanted and still want, however, is nothing more than to provide proof that the Lord does not exclude my homeland—which is, so to speak, ancestral home of the Augsburg Confession—and us poor Lutherans from the inner mission or from the holy diakonia of the nineteenth century because we upheld the little flag of unmixed communion fellowship; but that the Lord can and will further us in spite of all resistance from near and far. All our actions, however little or much they may be, have had and still have no other purpose than to honor the creative words of our most holy Consecrator in the Sacrament of the Altar. Among all those who serve the Lord and his people anywhere, we poor people of Dettelsau would like to consecrate all our work to his altar as a small, but ever-blooming wreath of thanksgiving and praise.[37]

27. This letter is printed only in abbreviated form in Löhe, Brief an Gustav Ritter, 26.6-2.7.27, GW 1:255-256. The portion quoted here can be found in full in Ganzert, "Einleitung," GW 1:166, although without a complete reference.

28. See Friedrich Wilhelm Hopf, "Wilhelm Löhe als Zeuge des Altarsakraments," *Jahrbuch des Martin-Luther-Bundes* (1947): 69-78; unfortunately published without annotations, but found in an earlier, hectographed version of the 1941 lecture. Wolfhart Schlichting, "Hinführung zum Abendmahl als Einweisung in gelebte Rechtfertigung: Löhes 'Fortschritt' in 'sakramentlichem Leben,'" in *Wilhelm Löhe und Bildung/Wilhelm Loehe and Christian Formation,* ed. Dietrich Blaufuß and Jacob Corzine (Nürnberg: Verein für bayerische Kirchengeschichte, and Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 2016), 1-22.

29. Wilhelm Loehe, *Three Books about the Church*, trans. James L. Schaaf (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 179; Wilhelm Löhe, *Drei Bücher von der Kirche 1845,* ed. Dietrich Blaufuß, Studienausgabe 1 (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 2006), 203.

30. Wilhelm Löhe, "Fragen und Antworten zu den sechs Hauptstucken des Kleinen Katechismus Dr. M. Luthers," in *Haus-, Schul- und Kirchenbuch für Christen des lutherischen Bekenntnisses,* GW 3.2:456. See Rudolf Keller, "Löhes '*Haus-, Schul- und Kirchenbuch*,'" in *Löhe und Bildung*, 35.

31. Wilhelm Löhe, "Beicht- und Kommunionbuchlein für evangelische Christen," 7th ed., (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1894), vii. The preface to the 1870 edition cited here is not included in GW!

32. For Ludwig Feldner (1805 -1890), see *Kirchliches Handlexikon: In Verbindung mit einer Anzahl ev.-lutherischer Theologen*, ed. Carl Meusel, 2:523. In 1858, Feldner resigned from his influential position as a Lutheran pastor in Elberfeld and from the *Landeskirche* and then was pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Prussia in Elberfeld. Soon he became superintendent of the Rhenish diocese of that church. As such, he was editor of the *Rheinisches lutherisches Wochenblatt*.

33. Klaus Kanzert, "Erläuterungen," GW 5.2:1067.

34. Wilhelm Löhe, "Brüderliche Klage über Gewissensverwirrung" (1868), GW 5.2:909-10.

35. GW 5.2:910.

36. Wilhelm Löhe et al., "Schwabacher Eingabe" (1851), GW 5.1:604-605.

37. Löhe, "Brüderliche Klage," GW 5.2: 911-912.

He asks for understanding that he might send representatives of his house to the deaconess day at Kaiserswerth, so that one could learn from them "and appropriate every good experience for ourselves."[38]

These much-quoted sentences must be seen in their own context. Loehe made this statement in 1868, three years before his death. This is the context in which he formulates that diakonia should go forth from the altar and finds its center there in honoring the words of consecration as they are used and understood in the Lutheran Church. He does not hide his disappointment over the weakness and timidity of the Lutherans within the Union churches.[39] On the other hand, he also remains willing to learn something from Kaiserswerth. In the challenge by Feldner, his friend in the Old Lutheran Church, he took such a clear position on the central importance of a clearly defined Lutheran practice of the Lord's Supper.[40] So what significance did the confession have for Loehe?

The Lutheran Confession

On June 25, 1830, the day of the tercentenary of the *Confessio Augustana* (CA), Loehe wrote to his friend Wißmüller[41] that he was preparing to receive Holy Communion:

> This week I had read the Bible passages on this point, in addition the dogmatic history, especially Löscher's *Historia Mutuum.*[42] I had come to the conviction—if that is not to claim too much—that Luther's teaching on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper was truth. Now my mind believes article 10 of our confession [CA 10], and I rejoiced to confess this faith of mine before God and the world while holding my Lord's Supper today.[43]

A good year later, Loehe was ordained in Ansbach. There he entered his curriculum vitae in the ordination register: "The Augsburg Confession—if I, in all humility, may be permitted these words—is also my confession; the other symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in agreement with the *Augustana* are also *norma normata* for me."[44]

His statements about the confession of the Lutheran church in *Drei Bücher* date from the year 1845. There Loehe had emphasized its confessions as the mark of a denomination (*Partikularkirche*). The mark of the church is the confession "because a denomination's understanding of the Word and use of the sacraments must be described in its confession."[45] He goes on to say that the confession must be scriptural and states that "the Lutheran Church has the distinctive mark of a confession which is faithful to the scriptures."[46]

On the other hand, around 1850 Loehe was nevertheless also able to look at the confessional writings in a differentiating way and to distinguish "what is and what is not said confessionally…It does not occur to me to cling to the letter and to be guilty of worshiping the confessions (*Symbololatrie*)."[47] In light of this, Loehe is critical of Luther's *Schmalkald Articles*, claiming that Luther's style lacked objectivity because he wrote in his characteristic originality. Loehe did not want to endorse papal anti-Christianity in his own time. With Loehe, one must always pay attention to the historical context of what he has said.

I consider it necessary to determine Loehe's understanding of the confession not simply from the statements in *Drei Bücher* [48] but to understand these statements in the wider context of his practical decisions.

The Office of Ministry

Loehe considered the understanding of the office of ministry (*Amt*) to be an important topic. It is not necessary at this point to revisit this topic in all its breadth.[49] His understanding of the office of ministry according to its institution was of particular significance to him. Different views clashed with one another in the disputes among Loehe's North American friends, including his Neuendettelsau disciples. In fact, the Missouri Synod, which Loehe initially supported, did not break with him and vice versa on the question

38. GW 5.2: 912.
39. GW 5.2: 913.
40. See also the letter from 1867 in GW 5.2:1331-1332n706.
41. Johann Christian Adam Wißmüller (1804-1875) from Großhabersdorf was a pastor in various places in Bavaria; information from Pastor Wolfgang Huber (see n. 26 above).
42. Valentin Ernst Löscher had published his three-volume *Außführliche Historia Mutuum zwischen den Evangelisch-Lutherischen und Reformierten* starting in 1707; see Horst Weigelt, "Löscher," in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* (hereafter TRE), 21:416.
43. Löhe, Brief an J. Ch. A. Wißmüller, 25.6.30, GW 1:302; see also Ganzert, "Einleitung," GW 1:177.
44. See Ganzert, GW 1:178. Loehe reflects further in the same context: "I do not hate the people who are against this faith of ours, but I have sincere love for them. Nonetheless, with St. Augustine I implore 'you to kill them with the two-edged sword, Hebr[ews] 4:12, that they may no longer be your enemies. I desire they should die to themselves, that they may live to you.' Certainly, I do not hate anyone, but from the depth of my soul, I hate all harmful and corrupt doctrine. With God's help I will preach the true doctrine and not fall silent until the Lord himself takes me, his peace-loving soldier, from the church at battle into the holy silence of the church triumphant! Likewise, let it be my earnest endeavor that my life be like my faith, lest, while I preach to others, I myself become reprobate, 1 Cor. 9:17. Lord, I wait for your salvation Genesis 49[:18]."
45. Loehe, *Three Books,* 106; Löhe*, Drei Bücher*, 98.
46. Loehe, 111; Löhe, 105.
47. Wilhelm Löhe, *Unsere kirchliche Lage im protestantischen Bayern und die Bestrebungen einiger bayerisch-lutherischen Pfarrer in den Jahren 1848 und 1849* (1849/50), GW 5.1:429. This passage is discussed by Gottfried Hornig, "Lehre und Bekenntnis im Protestantismus," in *Die Lehrentwicklung im Rahmen der Ökumenizität*, Handbuch der Dogmen- und Theologiegeschichte, ed. by Carl Andresen, vol. 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 180. Hornig, however, assigns Loehe to the side of a legalistic symbololatry—mistakenly, as it turns out.
48. In this, I am addressing a critical question to Werner Klän, "Bekenntnisrenaissance im 19. Jahrhundert," in *Bekennen und Bekenntnis im Kontext der Wittenberger Reformation*, ed. Daniel Gehrt, Johannes Hund, and Stefan Michel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019), 241-244.
49. See Rudolf Keller, "August Vilmar and Wilhelm Löhe: Historische Distanz und Nähe der Zeitgenossen im Blick auf ihr Amtsverständnis," *Kerygma und Dogma* 39 (1993): 202-223.

of ministry. Loehe and his friends in the Missouri Synod opposed Grabau,[50] who strongly emphasized the divine institution of the office of ministry and did not accentuate the interrelatedness of office and congregation as Loehe did. Regarding the relationship between office and congregation, Loehe spoke of the "dualism of the congregation."[51] He knew that he had already "fallen into the hands" of the Missouri Synod on the doctrine of ministry,[52] but he wanted to continue in fellowship with his Missouri friends. "'The anathema by the Missouri Synod' was probably the most painful of the many disappointments in Loehe's life."[53] Nevertheless, in a letter to friends—his "last true ones"[54]—who sought his counsel and in 1854 founded the Iowa Synod, Loehe writes: "In the end, going [i.e., leaving Saginaw County, Michigan] is more beneficial to our missionary calling than staying. If we go, we can with effectiveness use the experiences we have had and at the same time work in accordance with our doctrine of ministry."[55] Here in conversation with his friends, we can see how much importance Loehe attached to the right understanding of the doctrine of the ministry.[56] Keep in mind that Loehe made his argument for the right understanding of the office of ministry in view of the reordered conditions in North America and at the same time in view of the conditions and doctrinal opinions in Germany.

What can we learn from Loehe?

First, it must be clear that Loehe lived and thought in his own time. He of all people, so keen to embrace new developments, would have rejected the idea that you simply transfer quotations from his writings to the present day. That is why it is important we try to determine exactly what he formulated for his time. In doing so, it should not matter whether it is pleasing and relevant, "usable" for us today.

We need to listen to his arguments from back then and thoroughly examine what can be thought-provoking or helpful for us in our contexts and challenges today. This may be different in Germany in the context of the Evangelical Church in Germany and in America in the context of the various synods. In America, Loehe is discussed across the boundaries between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. This also leads to different emphases. The consequences of what Loehe means for today can only be drawn within these frameworks, but these frameworks must not norm historical research on Loehe, his texts and his decisions at that time.

How can one invitingly proclaim the blessing of the meal, yet also demonstrate the duty of responsible administration of the sacraments, while at the same time preventing the existence of different "classes" in the community of Jesus Christ?

In the era after the adoption of the Leuenberg Agreement, it seems to me that the emphasis on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper according to the Augsburg Confession, article 10, is an important impulse. Unfortunately, in the teaching of the Lord's Supper today, theories being advocated in the practical conduct of congregations have left CA 10 far behind. Those who preside at celebrations of the Lord's Supper should make new efforts to understand the real presence of Christ in the holy meal and to act accordingly in the liturgy.

How, under today's conditions, considerations about admission to Holy Communion can be implemented and how, from a pastoral perspective, participation in Holy Communion can even be refused, requires very thorough consideration. The arguments may be more theologically rigorous among those who preside over the celebration than among those without theological education but who desire Holy Communion as baptized Christians. How can one invitingly proclaim the blessing of the meal, yet also demonstrate the duty of responsible administration of the sacraments, while at the same time preventing the existence of different "classes" in the community of Jesus Christ? In the current times of mobility and migration, these questions are posed differently than in the village of Neuendettelsau from 1850 to 1872.

What from Loehe's accent on the *Brüderkirche* might be important for the formation of spiritual cells and circles in modern Protestantism?

Loehe fought for his ideals in the Bavarian *Landeskirche*. Is that just something particular to back then, or does his voice have an enduring right to be heard in his own church?

By reflecting on key statements from Loehe, I wanted to encourage us to listen and reconsider his statements even when they are not so easy to fit into today's systems of thought. This is how he speaks to us about himself.

We cannot simply imitate Loehe today, but nevertheless we can fruitfully take from him food for thought. Of course, we may also distance ourselves from him, but this should also be carefully considered and not simply done with a wave of the hand. Even today, it is worthwhile to stay on the trail of his thinking.

50. Johann Andreas August Grabau (1804-1879), pastor in Erfurt from 1834, gathered a separated Lutheran congregation around him from 1836, with whom he emigrated to America in 1839. There he founded the Buffalo Synod; see *Kirchliches Handlexikon*, 3:48.

51. Wilhelm Löhe, *Aphorisms on Church and Office, Old and New*, trans. John R. Stephenson (St. Catharines: Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, 2016), 148; Wilhelm Löhe, *Kirche und Amt. Neue Aphorismen* (1851), GW 5.1:562. Loehe comes to the conclusion: "But if the congregation is with the office the dual factor of a single sacred whole, then there is a balance that benefits both parts." Löhe, *Aphorisms*, 154; GW 5.1:567.

52. Deinzer, *Löhe's Leben*, 3:120.

53. Wolfhart Schlichting, "Löhe," in TRE 21:414. Schlichting here refers to Deinzer, *Löhe's Leben*, 3:120.

54. Schlichting, 414.

55. Löhe, Brief an Großmann, Deindörfer, ?.8.53, GW 2:208.

56. On this topic, see also Keller, "Kirche im Sinne," 182.

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The History and Development of Doctrine: Loehe's Posture Toward Nineteenth-Century Theological Trends

James Ambrose Lee II

Assistant Professor of Theology
Concordia University Chicago
River Forest, Illinois

Nineteenth-century Germany was a century of science (*Wissenschaft*). The enamor for science embraced the entire populace, inspiring educational reforms across the German lands and creating popular outlets for scientific knowledge, such as museums and popular journals and books. In Prussia, a new conception of the university was created from the bottom up that became a model for university revisions within Germany and even across the Atlantic. Throughout the German lands, the entire edifice of university education was transformed to become *scientific*.[1] No discipline remained untouched. Not even theology. Especially theology. Thanks to Schleiermacher, despite the valiant efforts of figures such as Kant and Fichte, far from expulsion, the discipline of theology enjoyed a place within the scientific landscape of the university. But membership in the university required every discipline to accommodate itself to the tenets of modern science. While efforts at establishing theology as a legitimate science were many, already by the 1830s the most common expression of the scientific character of theology was as a historical discipline. Amid the rise of history as an academic discipline, the importance of the historical character of the history of Christianity and, more specifically, Christian theology, was a logical turn of events.[2] But theology's historical turn was fraught with challenges. The prevailing historical consciousness threatened to undermine the central claims of Christianity. Already by the end of the previous century, the historical claims of the Old and New Testaments were undermined by academic theologians.[3] By the 1835 publication of David Friedrich Strauss's *Das Leben Jesu*, the historical assumptions of prior generations were already well disputed and, by many, denied.[4]

While efforts at establishing theology as a legitimate science were many, already by the 1830s the most common expression of the scientific character of theology was as a historical discipline. Amid the rise of history as an academic discipline, the importance of the historical character of the history of Christianity and, more specifically, Christian theology, was a logical turn of events.

1. There is an extensive amount of literature on this subject. By no means exhaustive, the following works are representative studies on the relationship between *Wissenschaft,* theology, and the German intellectual landscape: Thomas Albert Howard, *Protestant Theology and the Making of the Modern German* University (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Heinz-Elmar Tenorth, ed., *Geschichte der Universität Unter den Linden 1810–2010*, 6 vols. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag GmbH, 2010–15); Johannes Zachhuber, *Theology as Science in Nineteenth-Century Germany: From F. C. Baur to Ernst Troeltsch* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Chad Wellmon, *Organizing Enlightenment: Information Overload and the Invention of the Modern Research University* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2015); Zachary Purvis, *Theology and the University in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Kevin M Vander Schel and Michael P DeJonge, eds., *Theology, History, and the Modern German University* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021).

2. See Johannes Zachhuber, "Theology and Early Historicism," in *The Oxford History of Modern German Theology*, vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022) *forthcoming*; Zachhuber, "The Historical Turn," in *The Oxford Handbook of Nineteenth-Century Christian Thought*, eds. Joel D. S. Rasmussen, Judith Wolfe, and Johannes Zachhuber (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 53–71.

3. See Michael C. Legaspi, *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

4. In his intellectual biography of Strauss, Frederick Beiser observes that Strauss's next theological work, the 1838 *Glaubenslehre*, sold poorly and did not elicit a reaction similar to his earlier work due to the fact that only a few years later radical authors were no longer novel.

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While not exhaustive, the prominence of theological science and the historical turn of theology were catalysts for the rise and the importance of doctrinal development during the nineteenth century. It was chiefly in wrestling with the historical data of Christian history in their attempt at making theology a science that theologians utilized the concept of development in understanding the history of doctrine and dogma. Schleiermacher, Strauss, and Baur, in engaging the historical narrative of Christian doctrine, became convinced that the history of Christian doctrine revealed a narrative defined by ongoing change and development, in contradiction to narratives that presented the history of Christian doctrine as linear, uniform, and unchanging. The study of doctrinal history, as Ulrich Köpf observes, served to relativize the story of Christian theology.[5] As a science, the study of the history of doctrine was a critical historization that revealed the instability of the legacy of Christian doctrine. Strauss and Baur were keenly aware of the fact that the history of dogma (*Dogmengeschichte*) was a destabilizing force that, if not wholly undermining dogmatic orthodoxy, at least challenged claims of continuity by demonstrating variation and evolution. Baur argued that the history of doctrine revealed Christian dogmatics as little more than a singular moment in the ongoing history of Christian doctrine, a single snapshot from an entire album of images, negating claims of longitudinal uniformity. More negatively, though, dogmatics was the attempt to isolate a single aspect of doctrinal history and claim it as the authentic teaching of the Christian church.[6] Strauss seemed to revel in the fact that the history of dogma, which history reveals to be a history of development, melts the supposed timeless character of ecclesiastical dogma into a host of countless parts. Criticism awakens within the church the need to differentiate the reality of truth from the externalized form given by the church in symbolical texts and dogmatics. History, for Strauss, is the arbiter of truth in sifting the husk from the kernel, for "the true criticism of dogma is its history."[7]

While the narrative of development that the history of doctrine revealed was utilized as a critical tool by scholars such as Baur and Strauss against traditional dogmatic accounts, not all were convinced that the historical record resulted in a critical dismissal or reevaluation of theological orthodoxy. Perhaps the name most popularly associated with doctrinal development—at least in Anglophone contexts—is John Henry Newman (1801–1890) and his *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845). For nearly two decades, Newman wrestled with the historical record of Christian doctrine and the question of how to account for growth and change across history. While Newman could not dismiss the evidence of development, far from forcing him to hold all doctrine as simply accidents of history, Newman became convinced that only the Roman Catholic Church was capable of maintaining doctrinal continuity in the face of development.[8] The history of doctrine and its chronological development produced a critical burden too heavy to bear his justification of the Anglican Church. Far from driving him to an idealistic reimagining of Christianity—à la Strauss—Newman believed that doctrinal development was a validation of the claims of the Roman Church. Newman's idea would eventually find a home within Rome.[9]

It was chiefly in wrestling with the historical data of Christian history, in their attempt at making theology a science, that theologians utilized the concept of development in understanding the history of doctrine and dogma.

Newman's posture toward development, while critical against his understanding of the Anglican Church, was ultimately positive in comparison to Strauss and Baur. But Newman did not stand alone in his positive interpretation of development. Although Germany was home to highly critical and idealistic theories of development, one finds a number of scholars who contested these theories. Figures such as August Neander (1789–1850), August Tholuck (1799–1877), Isaak Dorner (1809–1884), Theodor Kliefoth (1810–1895), and Gottfried Thomasius (1802–1875) promoted their respective theories regarding the nature of doctrinal development. Similar to Newman, these figures illustrate that historical development was not singularly understood as a threat to the Christian church. In fact, each of them was party to the Awakening Movement, and Kliefoth and Thomasius were even figures of the confessional Lutheran revival. For these awakened and confessional theologians, doctrinal development itself did not have to be problematic. History was not an unequivocal critic of orthodoxy.

The question posed here concerning Wilhelm Loehe's posture toward the concept of doctrinal development and his understanding of the history of doctrine seeks to situate Loehe within the century when the history of doctrinal development was, according

See Frederick C. Beiser, *David Friedrich Strauß, Father of Unbelief: An Intellectual Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 147–152.

5. Ulrich Köpf, "Dogmengeschichte oder Theologiegeschichte?," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 85, no. 4 (1988): 455-473.

6. Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Lehrbuch der christlichen Dogmengeschichte*, 3rd ed. (Leipzig: Fues's Verlag, 1867), 1–3; F. C. Baur, *History of Christian Dogma*, ed. Peter C. Hodgson, trans. Robert F. Brown and Peter C. Hodgson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 47–48.

7. David Friedrich Strauß, *Die christliche Glaubenslehre in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung und im Kampfe mit der modernen Wissenschaft dargestellte*, vol. 1 (Tübingen: C. F. Osiander; Stuttgart: F. H. Köhler, 1840), 70–72. This and all subsequent translations of German texts are my own.

8. See Stephen Morgan, *John Henry Newman and the Development of Doctrine: Encountering Change, Looking for Continuity* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 2021).

9. See C. Michael Shea, *Newman's Early Roman Catholic Legacy, 1845–1854* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

to Martin Wallraff, "the king discipline of historical theology."[10] It is within this milieu that Loehe was educated, received his theological formation, served in the office of the holy ministry within the Bavarian *Landeskirche*, and penned a host of theological works. For these reasons, it is not surprising to discover that Loehe held to a belief in doctrinal development.[11] In arguably his most famous work, *Drei Bücher von der Kirche* (1845), there are a number of instances that suggest Loehe's openness toward development without addressing the issue directly. Discussing the oneness of the church across time, Loehe utilized two organic metaphors, which not only underscored the vitality of the church as a living organism but also suggest growth and development.[12] More explicitly, while Loehe dismissed current Roman Catholic doctrine as an example of development from the early ages,[13] he argued that the Reformation occurred as a rejection of accrued errors and the recognition of a proper "development and interpretation of apostolic doctrine through history."[14]

Determining whether Loehe believed in doctrinal development is answered with little challenge. Across a number of his writings, Loehe made utterances similar to those found in *Drei Bücher*, allowing one to conclude that he held to some manner of doctrinal development. What proves more challenging, however, is providing further definition to his understanding of development. Loehe never authored a monograph or essay on the subject. Nor did he ever write an extended history of a specific doctrine that would help illustrate his understanding of doctrinal growth.[15] For these reasons, determining a systematic theory of development—

An important point of distinction between Loehe and others is that he was not an academic. This may appear to be a minor point or even irrelevant, but it is important to recall the fact that doctrinal development emerged within a theological landscape preoccupied with matters of science and the historization of the discipline of theology.

or whether Loehe had even theorized a coherent system—proves to be unworkable. In order to ascertain Loehe's thoughts on development, one must examine his thought in a piecemeal fashion and attempt to synthesize a more coherent picture. This process does not reveal a comprehensive theory of development. Instead, I first sketch an outline drawing upon Loehe's understanding of history, the economy of God's salvific actions, and the historical character of the church.[16] Then, to illustrate Loehe's concept of development, I explore two well-known subjects within his larger corpus: Loehe's thoughts on the Lutheran Confessions and his position on open questions, specifically chiliasm. In examining these subjects, we encounter some of the most nuanced statements that help to illuminate Loehe's conception of doctrinal development.

Loehe's Unhistoric History

Although some theologians utilized development critically against ecclesiastical dogmatic positions, theologians associated with the Awakening and the confessional revival were not antagonistic to the concept of doctrinal development. Loehe's confessionally minded contemporaries Kliefoth and Thomasius, his Bavarian colleague, authored works on doctrinal development. But an

10. Martin Wallraff, "Evangelium und Dogma: zu den Anfängen der Gattung Dogmengeschichte (bis 1850)," in *Biblische Theologie und historisches Denken: Wissenschaftsgeschichtliche Studien aus Anlass der 50. Wiederkehr der Basler Promotion von Rudolf Smend*, ed. Martin Keßler and Martin Wallraff (Basel: Schwabe, 2008), 256–278, 257.

11. One should not conclude that all theologians influenced by the Awakening or the Confessional revival embraced doctrinal development. Pertinent to the study of Loehe, examples of fellow confessional Lutherans who rejected doctrinal development were C. F. W. Walther and the Missouri Synod Lutherans. See C. F. W. Walther, "On Doctrinal Development, 1859" in *Walther's Works: Church Fellowship* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2015), 29–42.

12. Wilhelm Löhe, *Drei Bücher von der Kirche 1845*, ed. Dietrich Blaufuß (Neuendettelsau, Freimund-Verlag, 2006), 26–29.

13. Löhe, 114. "It can be shown that not in one cathedra, least of all the Roman cathedra (*Bischofsstuhle*), has one and the same doctrine been taught and known in an unaltered continuity. It can also be shown that contemporary Roman doctrine could be *no development* from earlier doctrine. For contemporary Roman doctrine contradicts earlier doctrine, and contradictions *are not periods of development* (*Entwicklungsperioden*) of one and the same truth" (emphasis added).

14. Löhe, 160. "One recognized *a development* and interpretation of the apostolic doctrine through history; one understood that the Word, as time progressed, revealed an ever richer abundance" (emphasis added).

15. While Loehe never wrote a history of Christian doctrine, in 1849 he authored a history of the Reformation in Franconia. See Wilhelm Löhe, *Erinnerungen aus der Reformationsgeschichte von Franken, insonderheit der Stadt und dem Burggraftum Nürnberg ober- und unterhalb des Gebirgs* (1847), in *Gesammelte Werke* [hereafter GW], ed. Klaus Ganzert, 7 vols. (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 1951-1986), 3.2:523–683.

16. Friedrich Wilhelm Kantzenbach convincingly argues for the centrality of the concept of organicism (*Organismus*) within Loehe's thought, illustrating that the historical development of doctrine was a consequence of Loehe's commitment to his overarching organic framework. In many respects, I follow Kantzenbach's path, but I seek to expand the framework in which Loehe's conception of development was situated. I believe that Kantzenbach correctly identifies the relationship between development and organicism; however, Loehe's organic thought and his conception of doctrinal development must themselves be interpreted within a larger theological nexus. The relationship between organicism and development is even more interwoven with Loehe's conception of God and God's historical activity. See Friedrich Wilhelm Kantzenbach, "Wilhelm Löhe als organischer Denker," *Gestalten und Typen des Neuluthertums: Beiträge zur Erforschung des Neokonfessionalismus im 19. Jahrhundert* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1968), 66–89.

important point of distinction between Loehe and others is that he was not an academic.[17] This may appear to be a minor point or even irrelevant, but it is important to recall the fact that doctrinal development emerged within a theological landscape preoccupied with matters of science and the historization of the discipline of theology. The history of dogma became one of the most prominent disciplines within theological studies. Doctrinal development was studied primarily as a scientific theological discipline. As many confessional Lutherans within the university had challenged notions of theological science by proffering alternative models, figures like Thomasius and Kliefoth engaged the subject of doctrinal history and development within an academic environment, in a scientific matter, in dialogue and debate with other conceptions of doctrinal development.

In contrast to contemporary historiographical enterprises, Loehe openly scorned modern historiography. Loehe saw an untraversable chasm between modern historiography and what he believed constituted a more Christian sense of history. In his estimation, contemporary academic history was the product of rationalism, and was undertaken from a posture of criticism rather than a posture of faith.[18] Loehe aired his antipathy toward contemporary historical methodology in defense of his controversial devotional work for women and virgins, *Rosenmonate heiliger Frauen* (1860). One of the most common accusations leveled against this work was its wholly uncritical attitude toward history since Loehe had reproduced miraculous and supernatural stories that his antagonists retorted were clearly little more than myths and fables. Loehe averred that contemporary historical scholarship, "inundated and determined by rationalism," was characterized by a critical spirit of incredulity toward the past. Despite many accomplishments of contemporary historicism, its presuppositions about the past were too determined by a posture of incredulity and the absence of faith. Too often the writing of history was interwoven with the interests of particular ideological "parties" influencing historical narratives favorably toward their sensibilities at the expense of the primary sources. Loehe openly admitted to fostering a different "historical judgment" than the historical judgment of his contemporaries.[19] In contrast to the "sins of contemporary criticism," he preferred the historical judgement exercised by the early Lutheran Church, where "Luther and his colleagues who, in general, regarded and treated the reports of earlier ages more faithfully than me, a child of the nineteenth-century, and therefore I am also an heir and participant of the same critical unbelief."[20]

> Loehe's criticism of unbelief in the supernatural was directed against those who dismissed the possibility of the supernatural, not only in Scripture, but within post-biblical church history. Tethering all supernatural activity to the working of God, Loehe was no cessationist. The church's history was not hermetically sealed from God's activity.

Ultimately, Loehe presents himself as less critical and more open to the historical records and accounts of Christian history, specifically in his accounting of the supernatural and miraculous:

> I believe with all my heart that "the Lord alone works miracles," although I also confess that I find no reason, either in Scripture or otherwise, to consider the Lord's hand to be shortened at present, or to assume that the well of his miracles has dried up altogether. I therefore reserve the right, in the stories of the ancients, to pass over with silence some things which are told as miracles, to allow an explanation for some, and also to acknowledge some as testimony of God's assistance to his servants and handmaidens, without putting them on a par with divine miracles, but also without expecting others to hold to my judgment.[21]

One could interpret Loehe's statement as representative of the opposition between the rationalists and the supernaturalists that characterized the late eighteenth and early- to mid-nineteenth centuries.[22] To be sure, Loehe was a supernaturalist. But for the issue at hand, it is important to note that this was not merely another chapter in the discussion about the possibility of the supernatural within Scripture: Loehe was not a new Göze fighting Lessing's heirs. Loehe's criticism of unbelief in the supernatural was directed

17. Although Kliefoth, like Loehe, never occupied an academic post, at the time he authored *Einleitung in die Dogmengeschichte* (1839), he was preparing for academic life, hoping for a university appointment.

18. For a study that situates Loehe within academic context of the German Enlightenment, see Dietrich Blaufuß, "Wilhelm Löhe und aufklärerische 'Zeitbewegungen,'" in *Wilhelm Löhe: Theologie und Geschichte/Theology and History*, ed. Dietrich Blaufuß, (Nürnberg: Verein für bayerische Kirchengeschichte; Freimund-Verlag Neuendettelsau, 2013), 105–132.

19. Wilhelm Löhe, "Eine Konferenzvortrag in Betreff der 'Rosenmonate heiliger Frauen,'" GW 5.2:765–767. In this work, Loehe also admitted to having a different "ecclesial judgment" than those of his contemporaries. This was chiefly manifested in the theological tolerance Loehe exhibited to medieval figures and even post-reformation Roman Catholic figures.

20. GW 5.2:766.

21. GW 5.2:768–779.

22. Kevin Vander Schel provides a thorough overview of the debate between rationalism and supernaturalism and shows how this debate framed many of the contested issues in nineteenth-century German theology. See Kevin M. Vander Schel, *Embedded Grace: Christ, History, and the Religion of God in Schleiermacher's Dogmatics* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 17–43.

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against those who dismissed the possibility of the supernatural, not only in Scripture, but within post-biblical church history. Tethering all supernatural activity to the working of God, Loehe was no cessationist. The church's history was not hermetically sealed from God's activity.

While Loehe's acceptance of the possibility of post-biblical miracles might have made some of his fellow Lutherans uncomfortable—perhaps even suspicious of Romanizing tendencies—it completely segregated him from the proponents of contemporary theological science and doctrinal development. Despite the Hegelian influence, Strauss and Baur maintained an a priori objection to the possibility of the supernatural. Even Schleiermacher's approach could not house the genuinely miraculous and supernatural. This is the central point of departure between Loehe and contemporary historical methodology: credulity versus incredulity toward the supernatural. Modern historiography in its theoretical presuppositionless approach to the study of history objected to any supernatural interpretation. While Baur could maintain that the history of dogma was ultimately "that dogma is only spirit become objective to itself, mediating itself with itself in this antithesis of objective [dogma] and subjective [consciousness]," his was a monistic, Hegelian spirit, excluding the Spirit who is truly other.[23] For Baur, doctrinal development was not a supernatural phenomenon directed by God; rather it was a history of dogma's own "self-movement."[24] Baur could as little understand development as a supernatural activity, as he—or any consistent proponent of modern historiography—could grant the possibility of the miraculous within Christian history.

Development and the Economy of Salvation

Loehe's understanding of the supernatural and miraculous within the post-apostolic history of the church was nested within a more comprehensive vision of the relationship between the church, its history, and God. It was not inconsistent or difficult for Loehe to grant the reality of the supernatural and miraculous within the history of the church because the church and its respective history were for him not divorced from God and his providential activity. After the first century, there was neither chasm nor interruption separating God from the church. If the church was the bride of Christ, in which God was present, then it followed that the church and its history were not separate from God. "From beginning to end," the Christian church is "one holy and blessed community in God almighty. We lack nothing to grasp the fullness of the truth and joy of this thought than that he lives in us, and we live in him."[25]

This brief digression into the *Rosenmonate* controversy and Loehe's openness toward postbiblical miracles, serves to further

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contextualize Loehe's posture toward doctrinal development. The justification that Loehe offered in defense of the possibility of miracles within Christian history grounds more than his understanding of the supernatural. Like miracles and the supernatural, it is necessary to interpret Loehe's conception of doctrinal history and development within the theological framework of his understanding of the church and its relationship with God. As the miraculous was grounded in God's presence and activity within the church, development transpired not as self-motivated activity (a là Baur), but as the consequence of God's activity within the church. Loehe understood the development of doctrine as another feature of the triune God's history of salvific actions for and within the church.[26] A particularly illuminating series of writings were his 1847 sermons at the conclusion of the festival half of the liturgical year. There Loehe explicated a vision of the intimate relationship between the triune God and the church defined by the presence of God within the church. Across five Sundays and feasts—*Cantate*, *Rogate*, Ascension, *Exaudi*, and Pentecost[27]—Loehe articulated an ecclesiological vision by ordering it to the moments of the trinitarian economy presented liturgically in the gospel pericopes of the historic lectionary: texts from Jesus' final discourse to his disciples (John 14–16), which function liturgically to demarcate the transition between Christ's passion and resurrection in preparation for his ascension and the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost.[28] Loehe

23. Baur, *History of Christian Dogma*, 52–54.

24. Baur, 52. "Of course one cannot speak about the object of the history of dogma without dogma already being viewed as something self-moving, shaping itself in this way or that, becoming determinate in a multiplicity of forms."

25. Löhe, *Drei Bücher*, 27.

26. Although Loehe's conception and presentation lack nuance and elaboration, it appears that Loehe held to a *heilsgeschichtliche* understanding of history spanning the Old and New Testaments, encompassing all history, culminating in the eschaton. See Helmut Utzschneider, "Die Bibel und der Sternenhimmel. Beobachtungen und Überlegungen eines Alttestamentlers zum Schriftverständnis Wilhelm Loehes," in *Wilhelm Loehe (1808–1872). Seine Bedeutung für Kirche und Diakonie*, ed. Herman Schoenauer, (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 2008), 279–296.

27. The Third Sunday after Easter, *Jubilate*, is also included in this series of lectionary readings taken from John 15 and 16. Thematically, however, it does not appear to maintain the same level of continuity as found in Loehe's sermons from *Cantate* to Pentecost.

28. The Gospel readings for these Sundays and feasts were as follows: *Cantate* (John 16: 5–15), *Rogate* (John 16:23–30), Ascension (Mark 16:14–20), *Exaudi* (John 15:26–16:4), and Pentecost (John 14:23–31).

utilized this biblical and liturgical context to articulate the nature of the relationship between God and the church and the place of the church in the trinitarian economy of salvation. Within this nexus, Loehe addressed the concept of development.

In his homiletical explications of John 14, 15, and 16, Loehe presented a christological and pneumatolgical description of God's indwelling of the church. The glorification of Jesus and his ascension to the right hand of God the Father does not deprive the church of the presence of Christ; instead, it ushers in a different mode of Christ's presence among his faithful. Resurrected, glorified, and ascended at the right hand of the Father, Christ is present in the church, chiefly in the sacrament of the altar. There Christ is present "in a more glorious and sublime way" than he had been during his state of humiliation.[29] But the sacramental presence of Christ does not exhaust the triune God's gracious presence within the church. Since Pentecost was "the birthday of the church" and its "spread and foundation" through the gift of the Holy Spirit, the church is formed according to the shape of Pentecost (*die Pfingsgestalt der Kirche*).[30] In its Pentecostal shape, the church as the possessor of the word of Christ through the agency of the Spirit is indwelt by the entire Godhead. The church is the faithful in whom God has chosen to make his dwelling, both corporately and individually, for the indwelling of the triune God is "not merely an article of faith, but also an object of the most blessed experience."[31]

But what does the Pentecostal shape of the church have to do with development? For Loehe, it is the pneumatological foundation upon which his conception of development stands. The indwelling of the triune God within the church and its Pentecostal shape characterizes the reality of the church across time. Within this christological and pneumatological relationship, Loehe located the inevitability of development. Consider Loehe's interpretation of Jesus' discourse on the Spirit's work of remembrance as preached in his sermon for Pentecost:

> [The disciples] had in the words of Christ everything that was necessary for salvation for them and the entire world. And when the Lord says, "I have still much to say to you, but you cannot yet bear it," it is not to be understood as if there were still anything which is new, [or] different from the content of the doctrine that he had already given. Everything that he still had to say and what they could not yet bear, already lay in the words of Christ, *but embedded* (*eingeschlossen*) *not yet interpreted***.** For now must come the time of the Holy Spirit, the beautiful time of spring, the time of growth and flourishing.[32]

The glorification of Jesus and his ascension to the right hand of God the Father does not deprive the church of the presence of Christ; instead, it ushers in a different mode of Christ's presence among his faithful. Resurrected, glorified, and ascended at the right hand of the Father, Christ is present in the church, chiefly in the sacrament of the altar.

In explicating the Spirit's work of remembrance, Loehe utilized the organic metaphor of seed and growth to interpret the relationship between what was given to the apostles by Jesus in his word and their later understanding of what was contained within the previously given word. Loehe preached that with the Spirit's advent would follow germination, growth, and flowering, and that in this action the disciples recognized that "the word of the Spirit was only the unfolding (*Entfaltung*) of the words of Jesus."[33] Loehe had already preached something similar in his sermon for *Cantate* Sunday. In his explanation of Jesus' instruction about the Holy Spirit leading the disciples into all truth, Loehe described this as a transfiguring (*Verklärung*/*verklären*) of Jesus by the Spirit, whereby the Spirit "transfigures Jesus as he interprets his words in [their] full richness."[34] For Loehe, Jesus himself was "the object of revelation" and, therefore, also the "object of the teaching from the Holy Spirit" given to the church for all times. Interestingly, Loehe described this activity as a "progressive knowledge" (*fortschreitende Erkenntis*) to which the Spirit leads Christians in the course of time. But Loehe is clear to provide a christological restriction to the nature of the Spirit's work of ongoing knowledge, which "is nothing else than a bright appearance, given in their hearts, to recognize the clarity of the face and the person of Christ."[35]

To be sure, within these sermons Loehe has not articulated a theory of development. In fact, one might question whether there is even evidence of a notion of development within these sermons. Restricted to the sermon on Pentecost, such an objection would prove possible. In that homily, Loehe appeared to restrict his discussion about growth and development to the time of the apostles, thereby curtailing any conception of transgenerational development. However, in his *Cantate* sermon, Loehe offered no such limitation to the time of the apostles. In fact, as an illustration of the "progressive knowledge" that the Spirit effects, he points to

29. Wilhelm Löhe, "Am Sonntage Cantate," in *Evangelienpostille,* GW 6.2:305.
30. Wilhelm Löhe, "Am Pfingsttage," in *Evangelienpostille*, GW 6.2:339–340.
31. GW 6.2:344.
32. GW 6.2:345; emphasis added.
33. GW 6.2:345.
34. Löhe, "Am Sonntage Cantate," GW 6.2:310.
35. GW 6.2:310.

the Lutheran doctrine of the ubiquity of Christ.[36] In explication of the emergence of the doctrine of ubiquity, Loehe asked: "At what time before Martin Luther would this holy, comforting, wonderful teaching have been recognized as it has been since then?" Similar to his Pentecost sermon, Loehe credits the Holy Spirit as the agent who brought about the recognition of the doctrine of ubiquity:

> Then the Spirit led his [Jesus'] disciples further into all truth, and the same church [the Church of the Lutheran Reformation], which had grasped St. Paul's glorious doctrine of sin, righteousness and judgment, i.e., Christ's further elaborated doctrine, more perfectly than any other time before it, was given the grace also to grasp St. John's favorite doctrine of the divinity of the Son of Man in the most beautiful way, and thus to behold the glory of Christ in the brightest light. More and more, Christ is transfigured; more and more, Christ becomes all in all, so that God may become all in all. More and more, through such knowledge of the person of the Lord, the Holy Spirit draws the hearts that belong to Christ to him, the Bridegroom. More and more, he makes the church adoring before Christ. More and more, the doctrine that raised the apostles so high above all subsequent times, the doctrine of the divine Son of Man and his Person, is again recognized. More and more, this again becomes the favorite doctrine of the elect; and the more this comes to be, the more the church itself is perfected and transfigured into the image of Jesus Christ. Continuation, more complete introduction of the church into the truth, transfiguration of Christ among his own, and completion of his church go hand in hand; this is intended by the Holy Spirit; this is intended by Christ; in this the Father, Son, and Spirit—as in all things— are of one will.[37]

Loehe's explanation is theological, not historical. The Spirit was the agent who guided Luther and his colleagues not into novel truths, but into a deeper and greater understanding of the christological doctrine of the apostles, as an unfurling of the content already latent in the original word and revelation. Within these sermons, Loehe's "progressive knowledge" transpires as an organic unfolding of biblical Christology through the agency of the Spirit within the historical church. While Loehe does not ignore the historical figures, they are minimized. They become merely instrumental agents, working at the direction of the triune God, for whose end development has transpired. For Loehe, the purpose of the path of progressive knowledge was the completion of the church. Doctrinal development is the pneumatological transfiguration of Christ in the body of the church, which is progressively becoming more "perfected and transfigured into the image of Jesus Christ."

By way of summary, in these sermons Loehe has intimated a rudimentary understanding of doctrinal development. Development is the product of the triune God's relationship to the church. Development transpires as a consequence of the Spirit's activity within the church, helping the church to grow in its understanding of the revelation of Jesus Christ, as the church gradually undergoes a christological transfiguration. Loehe situates development within the Trinitarian economy of salvation, following the ascension of Christ and the Pentecostal gift of the Holy Spirit. As a feature of the economy of salvation, the process of development is always Trinitarian, with a strong christological impression shaping its content. Already anticipating features that will be more pronounced in later writings, Loehe believed that the church's growth in knowledge will continue throughout successive ages, until the church comes to possess that knowledge in its fullness:

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> And from one age to another, truth and knowledge continue to flow. Each age that follows a preceding one has its own gift of knowledge, and the closer the church comes to the end and the heavenly transfiguration, the richer and fuller its harmonious knowledge, which originated in antiquity, becomes. Always one, the church always advances from one clarity to another; the longer, the more it becomes similar to the vision, until finally the vision arrives which surpasses everything, even the last, highest level of knowledge. For all knowledge on earth is only piecemeal; but when the perfect comes, then the piecemeal ceases.[38]

The church is part of the economy of salvation. For this reason, Loehe's conception of church history supersedes any mere empirical study of the church. If the church is an agent of the salvation of the triune God, then church history is part of salvation history. The history of Christian doctrine and its development is not simply the study of the development of theological content, it is the history of the Spirit's successive guidance and leadership into greater knowledge and participation in the divine life of the triune God.

36. GW 6.2:310.
37. GW 6.2:310–311.
38. GW 6.2:310.

The Process of Development

With the exception of the 1860 explanation of the *Rosenmonate* controversy, the writings thus far considered originated during the mid 1840s: *Drei Bücher* (1845) and the sermons of Eastertide (1847). At the end of the decade, one sees the persistence of the concept of development within Loehe's thought. Written during the last six months of 1849—but finalized early the next year with the supplemental *Zugabe*—Loehe's critical evaluation of the Bavarian territorial church, *Unsere kirchliche Lage im protestantischen Bayern*, was published in the spring of 1850.[39] While certainly not a treatise on development, key sections of this work engaged the historical character of doctrinal development, if only tangentially. Already within its first pages, Loehe responded to criticisms leveled against him for his criticisms of the Bavarian state church, in particular the lack of doctrinal agreement within the church. His critics had asserted that the level of theological agreement that Loehe—and other like-minded pastors—were demanding was a historical novelty, wholly absent in the early church. Therefore, it was unhistorical and improper to insist upon a level of doctrinal consensus unknown in the early church.

Loehe conceded that there was a less than extensive doctrinal consensus within the first centuries of the early church, but the reason was not due to theological laxity, indifference, or an intentionally less rigorous basis for unity. Loehe argued that the church of the nineteenth century was able to demand greater theological agreement for church unity because the church of the nineteenth century enjoyed greater knowledge of doctrine than the church of previous centuries. The nineteenth-century church was the heir of a development of doctrine that had transpired across the history of the church, resulting in a historical expansion of the church's theological confession. To gaze back into the history of the church and invoke an earlier theological consensus as constitutive would be to discount the fruits of theological development that had transpired within the church's history. Because the historical development that had occurred through controversies resulted in greater and more precise theological knowledge, Loehe admitted that "the unity of the first centuries and that of ours is a completely different kind of unity, and it must be so."[40] But the disparity between doctrine and doctrinal consensus across the centuries was no grounds for indifference to the historical development of the church's doctrine. The church of a particular time was tasked with cultivating its doctrinal heritage:

> The first fathers were united and zealous for the divine truths that, in the first age, were won in heated battle of truthful human conception. And what has been handed on to us from the battles of the ages, what eighteen centuries have achieved and won— upon this we agree; we uphold it, we strive for it, and we do not question it again; we accept it as a grown, living plant that now has to produce new blossoms and not reproduce old blossoms.[41]

Even though he appeared hesitant, even dismissive of the term "development" (*Entwicklung*), Loehe clearly held to a belief in a historical development of doctrine that transpires throughout church history. Loehe maintained that the catalyst for development was theological controversy.

Loehe's evaluation of doctrinal development did not undermine theological awareness of the past, nor did it delegitimize theological growth by imposing an ahistorical authority from an earlier age. Earlier fathers were neither intentionally naïve or simplistic, nor was later development simple accretion or the convolution of an earlier, pristine confession. Historical development of doctrine provided a "richer and more complete" understanding of theology and, subsequently, a foundation for theological unity. Illegitimate and anti-historical were those who endeavored to cast aside the church's creeds and symbolical writings in order to return to the alleged unity of the less embellished Apostles' Creed.[42]

While these statements do not permit one to sketch a comprehensive system of development, still certain points are discernable. Even though he appeared hesitant, even dismissive of the term "development" (*Entwicklung*), Loehe clearly held to a belief in a historical development of doctrine that transpires throughout church history. Loehe maintained that the catalyst for development was theological controversy. In other words, controversy gives occasion for further clarification and more precise articulation of the church's theological witness. Loehe underscored this point in the final section of this document (*Zugabe*), which addressed the heated debates among confessional Lutherans in America (i.e., Grabau versus Missouri Synod). There he observed that, while heated and contentious, "struggles of development" regularly give rise to "the peaceful fruit of righteousness, the pure doctrine over the contentious points."[43]

Loehe maintained that development was a positive occurrence within the church. Like others within his milieu, Loehe under-

39. Wilhelm Löhe, *Unsere kirchliche Lage im protestantischen Bayern und die Bestrebungen einiger bayerisch-lutherischen Pfarrer in den Jahren 1848 und 1849* (1849/50), GW 5.1:371–492.

40. GW 5.1:393–394.

41. GW 5.1:394.

42. GW 5.1:394.

43. Wilhelm Löhe, "Zugabe über den kirchlichen Differenzpunkt des Pastors Grabau zu Buffalo, New York, und der sächsischen Pastoren in Missouri," in *Unsere kirchliche Lage,* GW 5.1:457.

stood genuine development to be organic.[44] Development did not represent a rupture or departure from precedent, but a faithful elaboration and expression of the doctrine confessed within the church. Through its historical expression, the doctrinal heritage of the church represents a tradition within the church that is to be enthusiastically received by later generations. While the notion of a living and organic history entails that one can neither summarily dismiss the past and its theological expressions, conversely, it assumes that one cannot arbitrarily determine one epoch within the history of the church as universally normative in all aspects of the church's doctrinal articulation. There is no single period of church history that can be isolated from its context and elevated as the norm by which to measure all periods of doctrine. Loehe's refusal to standardize any period and its confession is a principle to which he returns in his later ruminations and in the theological controversy that develops around his own understanding of development.

In the second part of this work, Loehe responded to a series of criticisms from the Fürth pastor Lorenz Kraußold (1803–1881) over the nature of confessional subscription. In addressing the issue of subscription, Loehe had occasion to speak concretely on the matter of historical development. While Loehe had objected to those who sought to distinguish the confession of the Lutheran Symbols from the Symbols themselves (e. g., "Confessions and confession," or "the confession is contained in the Confessions"), Kraußold accused Loehe of hypocrisy. While Loehe had challenged those who sought to maintain some level of confessional subscription while not adhering completely to the Lutheran Confessions, Kraußold maintained that Loehe himself had created a confessional differentiation, downplaying some parts by highlighting their historical character over their confessional value. In response to Kraußold, Loehe asserted that within the Confessions he differentiates between "what is confessedly spoken (*was bekenned gesagt ist*) and, therefore, what is not spoken [confessedly]."[45] Loehe even goes as far as to say that an absolute holding to the letter of the Confessions is liable to make one guilty of idolatry of the Symbols. To illustrate why such a distinction was necessary, Loehe took up Luther's *Smalcald Articles*, which as a personal writing of Luther, was written in the style of a personal confession. As such, the *Smalcald Articles* was characterized by a style of "heroic self-indulgence," absent the "objective style" that should characterize a confession. For these reasons alone, Loehe concluded that a *quatenus* subscription "could sometimes be advisable here."[46] But Loehe's criticisms were not simply stylistic. More importantly, Loehe found Luther's confession of faith wanting in two areas. First, Loehe held Luther's identification of the Roman papacy as *the*—not *an*— antichrist impossible to uphold. Loehe did not dismiss the biblical warrant for Luther's position, but he found the exclusivity with which Luther identified the pope as the lone antichrist absurd. In his estimation, Luther's writing was overly characterized by his specific relationship to the pope. While one can and, indeed, must state that the papacy was an antichrist or part of the kingdom of the antichrist, Loehe evaluated Luther's particular theological confession as extreme, and peculiar to Luther, not appropriate as a theological standard of the Lutheran Church. According to Loehe, exchanging Luther's exclusive identification for a more generic one does not undermine the nature of a *quia* subscription, "for who can be bound to stamp the seal upon every original utterance, even if it is Luther's?"[47] Loehe's second objection was directed at Luther's belief that Christ gave the office of the keys to the entire church, rather than to a single person.[48] Characterized by Luther's quips and some of his idiosyncratic theological positions, the *Smalcald Articles* were, in Loehe's view, too determined by "originality and individuality," thereby justifying his distinction to uphold "what is confessedly spoken."

Explaining the difference between himself ("I accept what is confessedly spoken [i.e., spoken in a confessional way] in the confessional writings") and Kraußold ("I accept the confession in the Confessions"), Loehe argued that Kraußold's position was subjective and unhistorical: it subverted the historical character of the Symbols' confession by allowing individuals and "the current generation(s)" to capriciously determine the confession contained within the Symbols. Loehe positioned himself on the side of objectivity—accepting the Confessions as the confession—and history:

> whoever…confesses the Confessions and what is confessedly spoken in them (=what is the fruit of the Lutheran Reformation and its battles), confesses the *result of history, of the historical development*. For the Lutheran confessional writings, in what they confess and maintain, are the historical results of the last significant dogmatic battle of the church. In their results, they have peeled themselves free from the misery and strife of their time, and now, before our eyes, they stand discernable and in beautiful splendor.[49]

The Lutheran Confessions represented the authentic, historical development of the church's doctrine as the result of sustained controversy; they were not simply the theological ruminations

44. See Kantzenbach, "Löhe als organischer Denker," 66–89. For a more detailed overview of organicism, see Charles I. Armstrong, *Romantic Organicism: From Idealist Origins to Ambivalent Afterlife* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Wilhelm Maurer, "Das Prinzip des Organischen in der evangelischen Kirchengeschichtsschreibung des 19. Jahrhunderts," *Kerygma und Dogma* 8 (1962): 265–292.

45. Löhe, *Unsere kirchliche Lage*, GW 5.1:428–429.

46. GW 5.1:429. With respect to the Lutheran Symbols, *quia* (because) and *quatenus* (in so far as) refer to the particular posture of confessional subscription. The former designates a subscription without reservation, while the latter indicates a more limited subscription. One subscribes to the Confessions "because" (*quia*) they are in conformity with the Scriptures or "in so far as" (*quatenus*) they conform to the Scriptures.

47. GW 5.1:429–430. Loehe made a similar argument about his posture toward Luther's position on the papacy in the *Smalcald Articles* in his 1861 *Kirchliche Briefe*; see GW 5.2:852–854.

48. This issue will be addressed later in the essay.

49. Löhe, *Unsere kirchliche Lage,* GW 5.1:432–433; emphasis added.

of individuals. In subjecting the Confessions to his personal evaluation, Kraußold unilaterally dismissed the church's process of historical development.

When these writings are synthesized, a more nuanced depiction of Loehe's conception of development gradually emerges. Loehe maintained that the church on earth is to arrive at a fuller realization of the truth under the guidance of the Spirit through the means of strife and opposition. The Spirit guides the church not so much into new truth—or completely new truths—but into "ever more beautiful development" achieved by "faithful adherence to the development that has already appeared."[50] The immutable source for the church's development is its ongoing engagement with the word of God, from which God continues to shine ever "greater light and a more beautiful clarity."[51] The word of God does not change, but God directs the church to a greater understanding of its unfathomable meaning. This results in an ecclesial identity that is neither rigid, nor indefinite. On the one hand, founded on the word of God, the church is solid and firm (*fest*); but since it has not arrived at the fullness of truth, the church cannot be stagnant, it must also be "flexible" (*fügsam*) and "striving" (*strebsam*).[52]

According to his schema, Loehe considered the confessional writings to be examples of legitimate doctrinal development. They were theological witnesses produced through the fire of controversy, and—with minor exceptions—they expressed the faith of the church, not idiosyncratic positions or mere expressions of theological discourse. "They are the result of [the] history" of the church; but a history that had not ceased because the church on earth had yet to arrive at the fullness of its vision of God. The church's history was still ongoing. In his debate with Kraußold, Loehe was not only concerned with a proper reception of the church's past, but he also believed that one's reception of the past helped determine the present and one's way into the future. "Whoever wants to confess historically now, to stand close together with antiquity, and to have the future for himself must stand on the foundation of the *Concordia*, which mediates the continuity of the past to the new age."[53] The Lutheran Confessions were not a tombstone that marked the end of the history of development; they were a living landmark that witnessed to previous victories, while guiding the church in its future development.

Loehe did not see a contradiction between fidelity to the past and openness toward future development. In the foreword to the second volume of *Der evangelische Geistliche,* Loehe commended his readers to be faithful to tradition without becoming rigid and closed to the ongoing activity of God:

> Remain faithful to your teachers and forefathers, but not in a way that you would not keep proceeding on our way. Keep what you have, but if the Holy Spirit gives new blessings for the older ones or revives among you what we have forgotten, do not imagine that we will be angry with you over this in eternity.[54]

Loehe considered the confessional writings to be examples of legitimate doctrinal development. They were theological witnesses produced through the fire of controversy, and—with minor exceptions—they expressed the faith of the church, not idiosyncratic positions or mere expressions of theological discourse.

Progress is possible because it is impossible for the church to comprehend the infinite God who "is an immeasurable sea of knowledge for the creature." The ontological chasm between the creator and the creature results in the possibility of "an eternal progress in the knowledge of God." But forward development does not happen as a consequence of indifference or dismissal of the past. The church must maintain the "same seriousness and emphasis toward the future (*Vorwärts*) as to the past (*Rückwärts*)." Both the past and the future belong to "the so-called Lutheran, that is to say, the true catholic Christian," but not in the sense that the future of Christian doctrine was to be simply footnotes to the Lutheran Confessions:

> Everything that is true and according to Scripture is his, when, where, and how it is said. And to him the *norma normata* of the sixteenth century is not congruent in the sense of the *norma normans*; the former does not exhaust the latter. And it is not the case that God himself would no longer be allowed to still give something to his church that one either did not have or did not observe in the decisive year 1580.[55]

Adherence to the Lutheran Confessions neither isolated one from the past, nor shut the door to the future. Lutherans were recipients of the entire tradition of the church—including the supernatural and miraculous—and Lutherans were positioned to receive God's continual guidance throughout the course of the church's future. To be Lutheran was not to exist solely within the sixteenth century.

50. Wilhelm Löhe, "Zuruf aus der Heimat and die deutsch-lutherische Kirche Nordamerikas" (1845), GW 4:81.

51. Wilhelm Löhe, "Brf. Löhes an Pastor Gruber v. 13. März 1857," in "Erläuterungen," GW 6.1:833.

52. Wilhelm Löhe, "Warum bekenne ich mich zur lutherischen Kirche?," GW 4:224.

53. Löhe, *Unsere kirchliche Lage,* GW 5.1:433.

54. Wilhelm Löhe, *Der evangelische Geistliche* (1852/1858), vol. 2, GW 3.2:149.

55. GW 3.2:149.

Yet, Loehe's openness to future development was not indeterminate. Development transpired as growth from the church's existing doctrine. Loehe's conception of development was not the open-ended progress of the emergent theology of the nineteenth century. Development was not the process of discarding the empty "husk" of historically contingent doctrine in order to allow the genuine "essence" of doctrine to grow in an accommodation to the spirit of the day.[56] Nevertheless, theological development was real; it was no simple repristination of the past. In other words, authentic development was an organic growth, derived and governed by the church's *norma normans* (*norming norm*) and, secondly, its *norma normata* (*normed norm*), i.e., its Symbols and theological heritage.[57] That the latter could neither supersede nor inhibit the faithful interpretation of the former, in no way compromised their relevance for the church of the future. As Loehe said to Kraußold, the reception of the Confessions as a historical text equally prevents one from the erroneous perceptions of both "superficial Protestantism" and "rigid orthodoxy."[58]

Loehe's comments about the relationship between the past, present, and the future as understood from the perspective of historical development suggest a central conviction of Loehe's that would realize itself in a number of controversies. Loehe's belief in doctrinal development offered an explanation that accounted for the historical emergence of doctrine within the church. However, it was also indicative of his belief that the church's doctrinal confession was not complete. There was further development yet to occur.

Future Development

Determining the extent to which Loehe believed that development was an ongoing characteristic of the church is difficult, especially given the absence of any extended treatment on the subject. Did Loehe believe in a more open-ended development, or did he restrict it to certain doctrinal loci? At times, his language appears somewhat ambiguous, but one may account for his imprecision, in part, because Loehe did not restrict his discourse on development to doctrine. Loehe believed that within the life, practice, discipline, constitution, and external form of the church, development was needed and to be expected.[59]

Loehe believed that within the life, practice, discipline, constitution, and external form of the church, development was needed and to be expected.

With respect to doctrine, Loehe seems to have restricted development to a few theological loci; these are the same loci regularly associated with the so-called "open questions," in particular, eschatology and ecclesiology. The assessment of a topic as an open question was due to the absence of theological specificity and clarity within Scripture and the Confessions.[60] But this category was restricted to only a few subjects, it was not the tolerance of open-ended inquiry for all theological loci. Consequently, Loehe did not see his willingness to entertain open questions as a contradiction of his attitude toward the symbolic texts. As was already evident in his debate with Kraußold, Loehe did not believe that his countenance of open questions was incompatible with a *quia* subscription to the Lutheran Confessions, understood properly.[61] Regarding eschatology and the office of the ministry, Loehe held that the nature of these doctrines lacked final specificity, because the Lutheran Confessions had not adequately addressed them. Hence, he considered these doctrines to be "open" because the church had not spoken conclusively. Room existed for a variety of positions to be taken without the adjudication of error and heresy.

While Loehe's stance toward open questions is well known, reconsidering it in light of his understanding of doctrinal development allows a more nuanced position to emerge.[62] To be sure, these theological loci were "open." They even necessitated the raising of questions and debate since the witnesses of Scripture and the Confessions were unclear. Loehe saw the need for further theological clarification and illumination because open questions were still undergoing theological development. These doctrines had yet to receive their ultimate form. But were open questions indefinitely open? Question and debate were instrumental for achieving clarification, but were they permanent features?

56. The contrast of the interior "essence" (*Wesen*) or "kernel" (*Kern*) in distinction to the exterior "husk" or "shell" (*Schale*) was a common metaphor across the "long" nineteenth century, utilized as a means of distinguishing between the unconditioned principle and the historically contingent aspects of Christianity, relegating the latter to secondary, and consequently, inessential features of the Christianity. This idea is seen in far-ranging figures such as Johann Semler, Friedrich Schleiermacher, F. C. Baur, Ludwig Feuerbach, and Adolf von Harnack.

57. In other words, Scripture functions as the *norming norm*, and the Confessions and other ecclesiastical authorities function as *normed norms*.

58. Löhe, *Unsere kirchliche Lage,* GW 5.1:433.

59. For example, Loehe believed that the Lutheran Church, while possessing "priceless treasures" in its doctrine, possessed the "form of a servant" in its external appearance before the world. He maintained that the church needed to develop its external beauty. See Löhe, "Warum bekenne ich mich?" GW 4:222.

60. This appears to indicate that Loehe underwent a change of mind regarding the completeness of Lutheran doctrine. In *Drei Bücher,* Loehe could opine that while the Lutheran Church was "incomplete in the consequences of doctrine," its doctrine was "complete," having already undergone a reformation of doctrine. While Loehe did not identify any locus of Lutheran doctrine as erroneous, he did maintain the need for future development; see Löhe, *Drei Bücher*, 165–170.

61. Kantzenbach calls Loehe's confessional posture an "open 'quia'" subscription; see Kantzenbach, "Löhe als organischer Denker," 74.

62. See Martin J. Lohrmann, "'A Monument to American Intolerance': The Iowa Synod's 'Open Questions' in their American Context," in *Wilhelm Löhe: Erbe und Vision*, ed. Dietrich Blaufuß (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2009), 294–306.

Loehe's Millenialism

By the end of the 1850s, Loehe had embraced a chiliastic eschatology, wherein he believed in a literal interpretation of the thousand-year reign of Christ's kingdom on earth, preceded by the first resurrection (the resurrection of the faithful), followed by the second resurrection (the general resurrection of all the dead).[63] The influences and sources for some of Loehe's chiliastic thought have already been examined and well demonstrated.[64] Loehe assessed that the Lutheran doctrine of the last things was unresolved. It was an "open question."[65] The formulation of the church's doctrine of eschatology had not come to full articulation. The official doctrinal statements of the Lutheran Church were insufficient; there was no theological consensus within the Lutheran dogmatic tradition; and, more importantly, many of the exegetical interpretations that had become standard within the Lutheran tradition contradicted the clear and univocal testimony of Scripture. Held against the witness of God's word, Loehe judged that the Lutheran eschatological tradition represented an erroneous doctrinal formation. It was a doctrinal degeneration that had calcified, becoming an impediment to authentic theological development. The quintessential expression of this theological devolution was what he witnessed across the Atlantic among his Lutheran colleagues in the Missouri Synod in its staunch opposition to interrogating eschatology: "The Synod of Missouri does not admit any freedom, for them everything is compete (*fertig*), over which their authorities (*Gewährsmänner*) have spoken."[66] Loehe accused the theologians of the Missouri Synod of elevating their own theologians above the Confessions, and more importantly, Scripture. The illegitimate promotion of their own theologians allowed the Missouri Synod to declare that the doctrine of eschatology was complete, when neither the Confessions, let alone Scripture, justified such conclusion. Where "differences in knowledge" persisted, Loehe held that there must be freedom for cooperative, unprejudiced theological research.[67] But, through its unilateral imposition of its theological position and by its issuing of anathemas, the Missouri Synod had preemptively blocked further study and the clarification that comes through the study and investigation into the word of God.

Against the backdrop of his call for development in the locus of eschatology and his evaluation of the Missouri Synod's doctrinal stultification, Loehe's conception of development becomes clearer. A number of descriptive and mechanistic characteristics that contribute to a better understanding of his conceptualization of doctrinal development become apparent. Of these features, three are worthy of mention: controversy, tradition, and Scripture.

By the end of the 1850s, Loehe had embraced a chiliastic eschatology, wherein he believed in a literal interpretation of the thousand-year reign of Christ's kingdom on earth, preceded by the first resurrection (the resurrection of the faithful), followed by the second resurrection (the general resurrection of all the dead).

Controversy

Loehe believed that theological controversy was an immediate catalyst for theological development. Conflict over doctrine forced the church into heated debate from which the church would arrive at "the pure doctrine over the contentious point."[68] In fact, Loehe could even say that the history of dogma is nothing other than a history of theological conflict:

> Is not the entire history of dogma nothing other than the history of an ongoing conflict of heavenly truth with lies; and is not the ecclesial formulation of each dogma only a sweet fruit of these often bitter conflicts, which in its individual stages and in its entire course can end with nothing other than the bright, clear light, with perfect transfiguration of our spirit and our knowledge through the Spirit of the Lord.[69]

The history of doctrine is a messy narrative of controversy and debate, but one that is ultimately positive: clarity and precision of theological knowledge are the "sweet fruits" of the history of controversy. But while Loehe saw theological strife at the center of doctrinal development, he did not reduce the history of theological development to a history of human conflict and progress. Loehe did not partition the mundane events of historical doctrinal formulation and tradition from the activity of God. Reminiscent of his Eastertide homilies, Loehe interpreted the history of doctrinal development as the graduated progress of the pneumatological transfiguration of the church. Doctrinal development was ultimately positive, not only by bringing about greater precision of knowledge, but through advancing the church's relationship with the triune God.

63. See Wilhelm Löhe, "Das Entgegenkommen zur Auferstehung der Toten. Predigt über Phil. 3, 7–11 (1857)," GW 6.1:695–706.

64. See Jacob Corzine, "Loehe as an Example of 19th-Century Lutheran Chiliasm," in *Wilhelm Löhe: Theologie und Geschichte/Theology and History*, 87-103; Gerhard Müller, "Wilhelm Löhes Theologie zwischen Erweckungsbewegung und Konfessionalismus," *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 15, no. 1 (2009): 28–32. See Kantzenach, "Löhe als organischer Denker," 79–81.

65. Löhe, "Brf. an Pastor Gruber," GW 6.1:834.

66. GW 6.1:834.

67. GW 6.1:834–835.

68. Löhe, "Zugabe," GW 5.1:457.

69. Löhe, *Unsere kirchliche Lage*, GW 5.1:393.

Tradition

If controversy was the catalyst for research and investigation, resulting in doctrinal clarification, then it presupposes that development transpires within a doctrinal tradition. As shown in his 1861 *Kirchliche Briefe*, Loehe insisted that his eschatological thought did not undermine Article XVII of the Augsburg Confession.[70] Clearly, Loehe is aware that he moved beyond AC XVII, and believed that AC XVII was insufficient as a comprehensive expression of the church's doctrine of the last things, but Loehe did not state that it was an erroneous statement. To be sure, there were reasons that might have motivated him to downplay any disagreement with the Augsburg Confession, most obviously that any denunciation or open contradiction with the Augsburg Confession would have opened him to ridicule and attack, undermining his efforts at improving the character of the Lutheran confession within the state church of Bavaria. But there is evidence to suggest that Loehe's acceptance of AC XVII was sincere, even though he considered it deficient as a comprehensive expression of doctrine.

Loehe maintained that as the official confession of the church, ecclesiastical symbols carried authoritative weight that was not to be cast aside. Unity with the church's symbols was required.[71] Within the Lutheran Confessions, Loehe ranked the Augsburg Confession as the premier symbolical text that best expressed the catholicity of the Lutheran Church.[72] But no ecclesial standard answered every question. Even the Lutheran Confessions left open certain questions to be answered by a later time.[73] No symbol was finally ultimate. All ecclesial confessions must witness to the authority of Scripture; symbols always remain *norma normata*, determined by the *norma normans*. Moreover, since each symbol was the product of the church during a particular time and controversy, no symbol was able to authoritatively express all that was to be said about all theological loci. No symbol may be accorded the absolute and final say.[74] There was no tradition that completely expressed the revelation of Scripture; there was no period within the church where its theological knowledge was complete. Theological knowledge accumulates throughout history, but always in a "piecemeal" fashion. Each generation's theological knowledge was always "only an imperfect attempt to humanly set up and bring into a system the content of the divine words and the Symbols."[75] This appears to inform his frustration with Missouri. Despite his *quia* subscription to the Confessions, Loehe was cautious of imposing upon the confessional texts an improper authority. The Confessions were not the "Protestant paper pope."[76] If the Confessions could not be set up as the final authority for the church, Loehe would not tolerate the imposition of particular dogmatic traditions. In his opinion, the Missouri Synod was guilty of searching "less in Scripture… than in the theologians," evaluating "the theological view of its authorities (*Gewährsmänner*) to be infallible.'"[77]

For Loehe, the path toward completion was accomplished through Scripture; and this path was worked by God, who guides the church into all truth through ongoing study and explication of Scripture.

Scripture

While symbols and tradition are the fruits of doctrinal development and instrumental for guiding further development, Scripture remains the ultimate source from which all doctrinal development emerges. But it is important to properly understand Loehe's position. The Bible is the *norma normans*, the ultimate standard against which all other norms in the church are judged. Scripture evaluates all traditions and teachings, discerning error and offering correction, but as the *norma normans*, Scripture's evaluative power is not only as a corrective to erroneous explication on behalf of the church, as in reforming error by returning to biblical precedent. To be sure this happens, but Scripture's norming authority also lies in its ability to supersede ecclesiastical doctrine and symbols, not only where they have erred, but where they are insufficient. The Reformation was not simply a corrective, but also a development. Loehe believed that the church was not stagnant, it always continues to grow, "Whoever desires to be must become. Whoever does not want to always remain in the process of becoming ceases to be. The church is comparable to a river, to whose nature it belongs to flow and to always move forward."[78] The church must proceed along "the way of completion and out of its incompletion."[79] For Loehe, the path toward completion was accomplished through Scripture; and this path was worked by God, who guides the church into all truth through ongoing study and explication of Scripture.

Consider how in a letter to the Rev. Gruber, Loehe narrated his embrace of millennialism. He begins by stating that he was formerly of a similar disposition to the leaders of the Missouri Synod:

> As I was younger and recognized that the way of the Lutheran Church was correct, I acted just like the brothers in Missouri. I accepted everything on account of a great and deserved trust. Even if everything was not inwardly

70. Löhe, *Kirchliche Briefe*, GW 5.2:851. See also Löhe, "Brf. an Pastor Gruber," GW 6.1:834. See Kantzenbach, "Löhe als organischer Denker," 80.
71. Löhe, *Unsere kirchliche Lage*, GW 5.1:388–391.
72. Löhe, *Kirchliche Briefe*, GW 5.2:852.
73. Löhe, *Unsere kirchliche Lage*, GW 5.1:389–390.
74. Wilhelm Löhe, "An meine Freunde in Neuendettelsau" (1860), GW 5.2:755–757
75. Löhe, *Kirchliche Briefe*, GW 5.2:856.
76. GW 5.2:858–859.
77. Löhe, "Brf. an Pastor Gruber," GW 6.1:834–836.
78. Löhe, „An meine Freunde," GW 5.2:751.
79. GW 5.2:754–755.

> sufficient for me, I dared not trust my own eyes when I read the word of God. My authorities (*Gewährsmänner*) had to be right because I could not trust my own judgment. In the course of time, however, I could not resist the light of the divine word and the more I was convinced of the purity of the Lutheran doctrine in the chief articles, the more I recognized that God the Lord, in these days of ours, wanted to give the poor church greater light and a more beautiful clarity, than that of our fathers. To these points belonged eschatology, especially concerning the hope of Israel, the thousand-year [kingdom], and the second coming of the Lord. Generally, as in exegesis and history, so particularly in the knowledge of the prophets and of the prophetic vision of history, the modern day is blessed and more richly endowed than the sixteenth century and its successors. It appears to me not as derogatory, but rather as faithful when I accept the gift God extended and not despise it because my fathers did not possess it. I believe only to go their way when I follow the word itself and accept it rather than the arbitrary spiritualistic interpretation of former days.[80]

Loehe understood himself to be the faithful heir of the church's tradition, who through the ongoing study of the word of God, concluded that the church's hitherto theological reflection on eschatology was underdeveloped; it was an insufficient expression of the revelation of God's word.[81] He held Scripture above the church's symbols, doctrine, and theological tradition, because Scripture was the word of God and, therefore, the source from which God continues to lead the church into the fullness of all truth.

Perhaps one of the most interesting features of Loehe's thought on development is that he saw himself not primarily as a scholar or theorist of development, but as an instrument of the church's development of doctrine. Development arises from doctrinal controversy through a return to Scripture, the source from which God grants the church greater knowledge of truth. Loehe never penned an essay or treatise on doctrinal development, but he did not shy away from theological contention in support of the furthering of doctrines that he felt were inadequately understood and professed within the Lutheran Church. Loehe readily challenged longstanding tradition, when he assessed that the church had neglected to form its doctrine in correspondence with God's word, even going as far as to say that the Lutheran Confessions, while not wrong, were inadequate in their interpretation of Scripture. Moreover, as a participant calling the church to return to Scripture rather than "resting upon the laurels of the Fathers," it seems that Loehe saw himself as instrumental to a positive development of the church's doctrine, building upon tradition through recourse to the source from which ecclesiastical tradition emerged and is nourished.[82] Loehe differentiated himself from his colleagues in that his theological development followed a path different from theirs. Loehe believed that his colleagues' theological maturation had begun with Scripture but culminated with the Lutheran Confessions. In contrast, his theological formation began with the dogmaticians, then moved to the Symbols, and from the Symbols Loehe proceeded to Scripture. While many of the results that he and his colleagues came to might be the same, the effect of the paths taken accounts for an important distinction. The strongest theological influence on his confessional colleagues was the Lutheran Confessions, while for him it was Scripture. For this reason, Loehe saw his path of theological development as suitable in leading the church to greater "truth, veracity, equity and justice" because "Scripture is more brilliant and clearer than the human word."[83] So it was that Loehe, guided by Scripture and not by any "paper pope" believed himself to be better suited to help lead the Lutheran Church into a more faithful articulation of biblical doctrine, a more comprehensive exposition of the "imbedded, [but] not yet interpreted" truth of God's word.

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Other Examples of Development

In light of the absence of a formal exposition on doctrinal development, the examination of Loehe's millennialism concretely illustrates how he understood the process of development. However, one might object that this study does not evidence Loehe's belief in doctrinal development. Perhaps, given his chiliasm, Loehe's thoughts were employed only for the purpose of justifying his divergent eschatology? To be sure, Loehe's theory of development was used to defend his particular eschatological positions but given that some features of his understanding of development predate his eschatology, it is doubtful that he embraced development only

80. Löhe, "Brf. an Pastor Gruber," GW 6.1:833.

81. Loehe's claim that his chiliastic theology was derived from Scripture has long been considered suspect. Scholars have hypothesized a variety of sources that inspired his eschatology from German romanticism and idealism to the Irvingites to his commitment to organicism. For a detailed investigation into his eschatological sources, see Corzine, "Loehe as an Example."

82. Löhe, *Kirchliche Briefe*, GW 5.2:858.

83. GW 5.2:859.

as a post hoc justification. Moreover, Loehe did not restrict development to the study of the last things. In fact, Loehe employed a similar understanding of development with respect to another "open question," the office of the holy ministry.

Like his understanding of eschatology, Loehe did not openly disagree with the Lutheran Symbols' theology of the office of the ministry; rather, he found its theological exposition incomplete. It was one of the doctrinal propositions in need of "a more well-rounded and purer formulation."[84] Specifically, the Confessions required clarification because they did not speak in an unequivocal manner. The Symbols' ambiguous position on the ministry had permitted the development of two distinct theological "directions" within the Lutheran Church. Such ambiguity and the coexistence of alternative conceptions of the ministry, evidenced the need for further theological development. In fact, Loehe believed that such development was already underway as a result of the theological controversy between Johannes Grabau and the Missouri Synod. In Loehe's estimation, the respective positions in the North American debate illustrated the different theological directions that had emerged out of the ambiguous doctrinal witness of the Lutheran Confessions. Although this debate transpired across the Atlantic, Loehe believed that these competing theological directions also characterized Lutherans in Germany. These were unresolved questions that the Lutheran Church had endured for three centuries.

Loehe admonished both sides of the North American debate to seek peace and cease their contentious fighting. While they need not merge and form a single synod, fellowship between their respective synods could exist in the face of their divergent positions if they could agree to refrain from vicious arguments. His counsel for peace, however, was neither a call to ignore the issue, nor to simply arrive at a harmonious indifference. Caustic rhetoric was to be set aside, but "beginning with love and peace, amid prayer and supplication" both sides were to "begin an examination of the contentious issue from the standpoint of a simple love of truth and the longing for complete unity."[85] Loehe heralded this debate as necessary and timely because the question of the ministry had yet to receive the attention that such a topic merited. In the absence of territorial churches, the freedom of the American context finally allowed this unsettled issue to come to the table:

> Every question has its time when it can no longer be pushed back but asserts itself until it is accepted and settled with dignity. Such struggles of development (*Entwicklungskämpfen*) were again and again a blessing. In the end, out of heated controversies—often through the unrighteousness of the parties—came the peaceful fruit of righteousness, the pure doctrine regarding the contentious point.[86]

The three-century long ambiguity in the Lutheran theology of the office of the ministry and its corresponding two directions that "had slumbered for a long time in the womb of the church" had realized itself in transatlantic debates.[87] This debate was necessary for debates are incubators for the development of doctrine.

The final example to consider points to Loehe's broader conceptualization of development extending beyond the confines of doctrine to the entire life of the church. Loehe became convinced that the Lutheran Church suffered from an inadequate understanding of the Lord's Supper. The Reformation had succeeded in effecting a necessary correction regarding the matter of the bodily presence of Christ. The medieval doctrine of transubstantiation was a unilateral extension of the early Christian belief in the transformation of the body and blood of Christ in the Supper, but at the loss of the early Christian belief in the reality of the presence of bread and wine. The Lutheran Reformation succeeded in recovering the lost teaching of Scripture and the early church and correcting the overextension of medieval doctrine, without forfeiting the teaching of the bodily presence in the Supper as in the Reformed Church. Unfortunately, in his polemical reaction to the Reformed dismissal of the sacramental presence of Christ in the Supper, Luther had objected to a sacramental interpretation of John 6. While sympathetic to Luther's defense of the sacrament, Loehe held that Luther had gone too far in denying any sacramental interpretation of the Johannine text. Luther's reading succeeded in creating a deficient articulation of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper by underemphasizing the fruits of the Lord's Supper and its centrality in the life of the church. Further development was needed to properly elevate the fruits of the sacrament.[88]

As with eschatology and the office of the ministry, Loehe stated that he did not find the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper to be in error. Loehe did not advocate for a radical alteration or transformation of the church's received doctrine. Luther and the early Lutheran reformers had successfully championed the doctrine of the Lord's Supper over and against medieval Catholicism's transubstantiation and the rejection of Christ's bodily presence by the Reformed. This was simultaneously a genuine development against earlier error and the avoidance of erring in the opposing extreme. Yet, this doctrinal articulation was not complete. This corresponds with Loehe's belief that the fullness of theological truth could not be adequately recognized and stated at a single moment in church history, as he stated in his homily on John 6:51–71:

> All truth does not come at once, but is gradual; it goes like the Sun. From the night the dawn arises, and out of the dawn the sun rises high and rises till noon. Only then does it send its magnificent *white* light, which illumines everything because it descends from the highest point.[89]

Development need not only occur in light of pronounced error

84. Löhe, *Unsere kirchliche Lage*, GW 5.1:389–390.
85. Löhe, "Zugabe," GW 5.1:489.
86. GW 5.1:457.
87. GW 5.1:490.
88. Wilhelm Löhe, "Predigt am 5. Oktober. Johannes 6, 51 bis 71," in *Abendmahlspredigten (1866)*, ed. Martin Wittenberg (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 1991), 109–119; see also "Predigt am 12. Oktober. Johannes 6, 54 bis 71," 120–127.
89. Löhe, "Predigt am 5. Oktober," 118; emphasis original.

but also as a gradual growth into the fullness of truth. The Lutheran Church had not failed at confessing the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament; rather, it had inadequately developed a sacramental centrality that permeated the entire life of the church.

For Loehe, the desired change appears to correspond to his own personal evolution, in what Deinzer identifies as "not a change, but a healthy development from a Lutheranism more measured by dogmatics and the Confessions to a more 'sacramental Lutheranism.'" As Loehe explained,

> I am still the same good Lutheran as before, but in a more interior way. In the past, Lutheranism was so much for me a confession of the Symbols from A to Z. Now the whole of Lutheranism is contained for me in the sacrament of the altar, in which demonstrably all the chief doctrines of Christianity, especially the Reformation, have their center and focus. The main thing for me now is not so much the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper but sacramental life and the experience of the blessing of the sacrament made possible by abundant enjoyment alone. My progress is described in the words "sacramental Lutheranism."[90]

Did Loehe believe that he exemplified the development that was necessary for the Lutheran Church to undergo? Possibly. But what can be said is that Loehe was no disinterested party; he did not play the role of passive observer or simple narrator of theological disputes. Whether it was eschatology, the office of the ministry, or the sacrament of the altar, Loehe was active in conversations and debates regarding these doctrines. Intentional or not, Loehe positioned himself as a catalyst for the theological development that he believed was needed in the church. "Light after light will be given from the word [of God] to those who would like to learn it according to the needs of their day."[91] Loehe did not believe himself to be the light that was needed in his day, but he saw himself as a messenger of the light.

Conclusion

In works on the history of doctrinal development, Loehe's name will never stand alongside of Baur, or even his confessional colleagues Thomasius or Kliefoth. Loehe never gave voice to his understanding of development, and it is questionable whether he even conceptualized a comprehensive vision of development or the history of dogma. Nevertheless, while his theory of development is incomplete and, as a theory, hardly merits attention in comparison to the more elaborated and technical theories of his contemporaries, its study proves worthwhile for at least two reasons. In the first place, Loehe's thinking further evidences how widespread the concept of doctrinal development was during this period of the nineteenth century, even among the confessionally awakened Lutherans. Unlike some of their contemporaries who traveled to the United States, they appeared less hostile to the possibility of doctrinal development. The significance of Loehe's openness, shows that the acceptance of doctrinal development was not only a feature among academics. Loehe was not a professor offering a competing framework to challenge the critical projects of Baur, Strauss, or other professors. Loehe's embrace of development was, at least in part, related to his pastoral concerns. The development of doctrine corresponded to his larger theological framework, first, encompassing the relationship between the Trinity and the church, and second, serving his desire for recovery and improvement within the church.

Loehe understood development to be a natural and necessary feature of a living reality. In one word, development was organic. As a living reality, an organic entity, it is natural and expected that development occur within the church.

Loehe's conception of development was positive. Development was not an indication of irreconcilable contradictions between the past and present, nor did the presence of development evidence a departure from the past in evolution from the simple message of Christ to a convoluted and overworked dogma. Loehe understood development to be a natural and necessary feature of a living reality. In one word, development was organic.[92] As a living reality, an organic entity, it is natural and expected that development occur within the church.

Here it is important to note two other differences from his contemporaries. First, Loehe's development was far-removed from the idealistic extremes that posited a development of God and the divine life. While the thoughts of Hegel and Schelling loom large against the backdrop of development, and the work of Baur was an inspiring—if antagonistic—model, Loehe circumvented any connection between development and God's identity unlike his contemporary Hofmann.[93] While God was instrumental in guiding the church through the process of development, God was removed from development itself. Second, although Loehe employed the terms "development" and "continuation," he was cautious in his employment of the concept of development. Loehe balanced

90. As quoted in Johannes Deinzer, *Wilhelm Löhes Leben. Aus seinem schriftlichen Nachlaß zusammengestellt*, vol. 2 (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1880), 523. See also, Gerhard Müller, "Wilhelm Löhes Theologie zwischen Erweckungsbewegung und Konfessionalismus," *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 15, no. 1 (1973), 33.

91. Löhe, *Kirchliche Briefe*, GW 5.2:861.

92. Kantzenbach, "Löhe als organischer Denker," 71–75.

93. See James Ambrose Lee II, *Confessional Lutheranism and German Theological Wissenschaft: Adolf Harleß, August Vilmar, and Johannes Christian Konrad von Hofmann* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2022), 234–254.

and restricted development by the fact that he believed the fullness of revelation had already been given. Development occurs within the church's understanding and explication of revelation. Loehe dismissed any notion of the development of revelation. Additionally, he established development as the organic growth of the truth that the church already possessed, rather than locating truth on a distant horizon only attainable through a dialectic movement. Moreover, progress itself is circumscribed, limited to a few open questions. Development was not conceived of as an indefinite process that all Christian doctrine must continually undergo.

Furthermore, the study of Loehe's understanding of development is important because it affords some beneficial context to the topic of open questions. The coordination of open questions with development shows that Loehe did not understand open questions to be open in the sense that any theological articulation was ultimately legitimate. More importantly, it suggests that Loehe might have understood "open question" to be a temporary designation, at least with respect to certain questions. These questions were open only till the point that the church arrived at further clarity through a development of doctrine. Consider his remarks in *Unsere kirchliche Lage*. After stating that the locus of the ministry had undergone insufficient deliberation during the Reformation and that even the Symbols suffer from a deficiency in this locus, Loehe stated:

> I believe in a possible development of the Lutheran Church also in this point, and I see its future precisely in this, at least in part. But what right has a person . . . to put open questions, which are propositions capable of further development—and in this way also of purification—in a series with those articles that already have been truly in the fire of contestation and have emerged from the struggle of the church with complete and definite clarity? In these articles there must be unity among the faithful followers of a confession.[94]

Far from according this locus with theological ambivalence, what Loehe seems to desire was that the open question of the office of the ministry would undergo a rigorous theological examination similar to those loci whose doctrinal orthodoxy had already been proven across the history of the church through controversy. At least in a few instances, "open question" seems to have been a temporary designation assigned to those doctrines that Loehe believed were underdeveloped. Development would bring about a more nuanced and precise theological articulation, ostensibly more concordant with the revelation of Scripture. Moreover, it is presumed that the process of development would eventually terminate with the revocation of the status "open question." In other words, the end result of theological development, tested through the purifying fires of controversy and debate, is that an open question becomes closed, no longer tolerating equivocal and heterogenous positions. Like the propositions that had undergone development and purification during the Reformation, unity in confession would be required. This observation may not hold true with every open question, but it evidences that in some circumstances, Loehe envisioned doctrinal development as the instrument by which an open question would become closed.

Loehe balanced and restricted development by the fact that he believed the fullness of revelation had already been given. Development occurs within the church's understanding and explication of revelation.

94. Löhe, *Unsere kirchliche Lage*, GW 5.1:390.

Loehe's Liturgical Imagination: Inspiration for Christian Identity and Mission

Thomas H. Schattauer

Professor Emeritus of Liturgics
Wartburg Theological Seminary
Dubuque, Iowa

Introduction

"I don't make statements. I make pictures."

Those are the words of the young artist Kurt Barnert toward the end of the film *Never Look Away* by the German filmmaker Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck (German title: *Werk ohne Autor: Sieh niemals weg*). Kurt's enigmatic, photographic paintings have generated some interest. At an exhibition of his work, a gathering of journalists and critics question Kurt about the images he has painted: Where do they come from? What are they about? His answers are—as we say in English—"curt" and not enlightening. Annoyed by the questions, Kurt says, "I don't make statements. I make pictures."[1]

There is much that could be said about the subject matter of this film. The plot unfolds during the artist's young life, beginning in the Nazi era, then in post-war Germany, first in the East, and finally in the West. The film has much to say about artistic imagination and the power of images. But it was Kurt's response to his questioners that struck me, and it has kept me thinking about imagination in theology and the role of images in the Bible, in liturgy, and in every kind of theological discourse.

In the arenas of church and theological school, we do indeed make many statements—statements about God, human beings, the world and all its peoples, and the purpose of God in all things. We should not, however, overlook imagination in theology and the foundational role of images in the Bible, in liturgy, and in theology. Is it not the case that faith itself—"the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen," as the Letter to Hebrews has it (Heb 11:1)—is in good part the gift of an imagination? Faith entails an imagination guided by the Spirit, shaped by the scriptures and preaching, nourished by the sacraments in the community of God's people, and engaged in God's unfolding purpose in the world. Such Spirit-led, ecclesially formed, and eschatological imagination gives shape to Christian identity and directs Christian life and mission. Quoting the prophet Joel in his sermon to the crowd at Pentecost, the Apostle Peter speaks of the dreams, visions, and prophecy that come with the outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh in the last days (Acts 2:14ff.). The Spirit of God poured out on the disciples of the risen One, then and now, inspires imagination for the fulfillment of God's life-giving purpose.

Faith entails an imagination guided by the Spirit, shaped by the scriptures and preaching, nourished by the sacraments in the community of God's people, and engaged in God's unfolding purpose in the world. Such Spirit-led, ecclesially formed, and eschatological imagination gives shape to Christian identity and directs Christian life and mission.

We need to pay more attention to the pictures that help us to see and to trust God-with-us, God-for-us, and God's unfolding purpose for the whole world. At the same time, we must beware how pictures can mislead, how they can be or become false images that malform the imagination and distort God's intention. Like every human capacity, imagination is limited by the human condition and our enduring captivity to sin, death, and evil.

The Christian assembly, the congregation at worship, is a privileged arena for the pictures that give life to faith. Images,

1. Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, *Never Look Away,* screenplay (2018), 129, https://www.sonyclassics.com/awards-information/2018-19/screenplays/neverlookaway_screenplay.pdf. The film is loosely based on the life and work of the German artist Gerhard Richter.

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especially biblical images, are foundational for Christian liturgy, and imagination immersed in the world of biblical images is crucial to liturgical-theological work. The American Lutheran liturgical theologian Gordon Lathrop has explored what he calls the "saving images" of Bible and liturgy. "The purpose of Christian worship," he writes, "like the Christian use of the scriptures generally, involves both setting out images that draw us into salvation and rescuing images themselves from misuse."[2] According to Lathrop, the scriptural images at work in Christian worship—with their focal point in the person of Jesus Christ—are means for the ongoing "conversion of the imagination."[3] They refigure our identities and ways of life. They refigure the way we see God and the world.[4] Craig Nessan, another American Lutheran theologian, offers an interpretation of worship as "imagining the kingdom of God" in his worship-centered theology of the congregation. In Nessan's words:

> What Jesus did in his ministry was to tell stories that invite people to imagine what it meant to have a living God who made a real difference in the way things are and the way things turn out. Jesus appealed to the human imagination to envision an alternative world, a world where God makes all things new. …
>
> When we worship, we enter just such an alternative world. …. While we ourselves engage in "imagining" the kingdom of God, God is in the very act of enacting the kingdom in our midst![5]

Such imagination is a "dimension of faith"[6] alongside the dimensions of trust and belief, and the imagination of the worshiping community shapes congregational life in both its identity and mission.[7] Through my own years of teaching Christian worship, I came to understand my aim as "training the liturgical imagination" in its several dimensions: scriptural, sacramental, ecclesial, eschatological, contextual, and ritual.[8] The liturgical imagination is a dynamic interaction of all those things.[9]

Is there a legacy to us in Loehe's liturgical imagination that can inspire our engagement with matters of Christian identity and mission today?

All of this is an extended prelude to what I want to explore in Wilhelm Loehe's liturgical work and legacy. I want to look for evidence of Loehe's liturgical imagination and to begin to think about the impact of that imagination on his engagement with matters of Christian identity and the crises of his own time. The horizon of this exploration is a question: Is there a legacy to us in Loehe's liturgical imagination that can inspire our engagement with matters of Christian identity and mission today?

The method of this exploration of Loehe's liturgical-theological imagination will be to offer three "soundings"—to use an image from the nautical world, where sounding is the process of measuring the depth of the sea. In his writing, Loehe often used images to help his readers see something that was not immediately apparent or to see beyond the way things are to how they might be. The three soundings into Loehe's liturgical imagination involve images that have to do with 1) participation in the life of the triune God, 2) eucharistic community, and 3) living liturgy—that is, the liturgy that continues in the Christian life, both personal and communal, what the Orthodox call "the liturgy after the liturgy."[10] With each sounding, we will consider two dimensions of Loehe's liturgical imagination in relation to each other. Loehe's liturgical imagination holds both 1) imagination *from* the liturgy and 2) imagination *for* the liturgy. Imagination from the liturgy is what worship helps us to see about God, one another, and our world. Imagination for the liturgy is about vision for the act of worship itself—what we do, what we say, and how it unfolds. With these soundings, I intend to paint some pictures of Loehe's liturgical imagination, pictures that I hope will help us to see something of Loehe's liturgical contribution and its potential value for a critical

2. Gordon W. Lathrop, *Saving Images: The Presence of the Bible in Christian Liturgy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), 81.

3. See Lathrop, 61-64, 71, 185-86. The reference to "conversion of the imagination" comes from Richard B. Hays' characterization of the Apostle Paul's interpretation of scripture and proclamation of the gospel: "We find Paul calling his readers and hearers to a *conversion of the imagination.* He was calling Gentiles to understand their identity anew in light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. … Such a thoroughgoing conversion could be fostered and sustained only by a continuous process of bringing the community's beliefs and practices into critical confrontation with the gospel story;" *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 5-6; quoted by Lathrop, 62.

4. The scriptures read in the assembly are a rich source for the images used in preaching and liturgy. For an extensive survey of images in the ecumenical three-year lectionary, see Gail Ramshaw, *Treasures Old and New: Images in the Lectionary* (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2002).

5. Craig L. Nessan, *Beyond Maintenance to Mission: A Theology of the Congregation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 42.

6. Nessan, 42.

7. Nessan, 8-10, passim.

8. Thomas H. Schattauer, "Training the Liturgical Imagination," *Living Lutheran* 4, n. 8 (December 2019): 44-45, https://www.livinglutheran.org/2019/12/training-liturgical-imagination/.

9. Among some in the field of practical theology, the development of pastoral imagination describes the broad aim of theological education in the practice of ministry. See Charles Foster et al., *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006); also Craig Dykstra, "Pastoral and Ecclesial Imagination," in Dorothy C. Bass and Craig Dykstra, eds. *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 41-61; and Christian A. B. Scharen and Eileen R. Campbell-Reed, "Learning Pastoral Imagination," *Auburn Studies* n. 21 (Winter 2016).

10. See Ion Bria, *The Liturgy after the Liturgy: Mission and Witness from an Orthodox Perspective* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996).

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appropriation in our own time as we engage matters of liturgy, identity, mission.

First Sounding—Participation in the Life of the Triune God

We begin our look into Loehe's liturgical imagination with the remarkable images in this passage from *Three Books about the Church:*

> The church is not only an assembly that learns but also an assembly that prays. It prays not only as individual members in their closets but also together as large gatherings in its houses of assembly. It worships as it speaks and as it sings, and the Lord dwells among its songs of praise with his sacraments. Its approach to him, his approach to it—these holy forms of its approach and of his coming, we call the liturgy.
>
> These forms are free. Few of them are commanded. Yet despite this freedom, from the very beginning the church has been pleased to select certain forms. A holy variety of singing and praying has grown up, and a lovely pattern of approach to and withdrawal from the Lord of Lords has been established. Just as the stars revolve around the sun, so does the congregation in its services, full of loveliness and dignity, revolve around its Lord. In holy, childlike innocence which only a child's innocent heart understands properly, the multitude of redeemed, sanctified children of God dances in worship about the universal Father and the Lamb, and the Spirit of the Lord of lords guides their steps.[11]

> Die Kirche ist nicht bloß eine lernende, sondern auch eine *betende*. Sie betet nicht bloß in ihren einzelnen Gliedern in den Kammern, sondern zusammen in Haufen in ihren Versammlungshäusern. Sie betet sprechend, sie betet singend an. Und der Herr wohnt unter ihren Lobgesängen mit seinen Sakramenten. Ihr Nahen zu ihm, sein Nahen zu ihr, — die heiligen Formen ihres Nahens, seines Kommens nennen wir die Liturgie. —
>
> Diese Formen sind frei, wenige Stücke sind gebotene Sache. Aber trotz der Freiheit hat sich die Kirche von Anfang her für gewisse Formen mit Wohlgefallen erklärt. Eine heilige Manchfaltigkeit des Singens und Betens hat sich gebildet und ein lieblicher Gedankengang des Nahens und Fernens von dem Herrn Herrn hat sich beliebt gemacht. Wie die Sterne um die Sonne, so wandelt die Gemeine in Gottesdiensten voll Lieblichkeit und Würde um ihren Herrn. In heiliger, kindlicher Unschuld, die nur ein kindliches, unschuldiges Herz recht versteht, bewegt sich die Schar erlöster, geheiligter Gotteskinder feiernd um den allgemeinen Vater und um das Lamm, und der Geist des Herrn Herrn führt ihren Reigen.[12]

There are three consecutive images here in Loehe's presentation of the liturgy. The first is an image of personal relationship, in fact two connected images. Loehe pictures the relationship between God and God's people at worship as a living together: the Lord dwells in the assembly's house of song and prayer with his sacraments. In this, Loehe draws on the deep well of biblical images of God dwelling among God's people: the ark of the covenant in tabernacle and temple, Jerusalem, incarnation—Word become flesh, body of Christ.[13] Loehe further elaborates this image of relationship with a related picture of worship as the mutual approach or coming together of the Lord and the church. The forms of the liturgy are "the lovely pattern of approach to and withdrawal from the Lord of lords." Here Loehe's depiction of the assembly's encounter with the divine at worship resonates with the scriptures' own use of sexual and marital imagery for the relationship of God and God's people; for example, in The Song of Solomon, and the prophets Jeremiah (31:31-34) and Hosea (2:14-20), as well as in Ephesians (5:21-33—Christ and the church as husband and wife) and Revelation (21:1ff.—the marriage of the Lamb).[14]

Following these related images of personal relationships, Loehe further elaborates his picture of the liturgy with two more images. First, a cosmic image: the assembly gathered in the presence of God is like the stars revolving around the sun. Then, a social image: the movement of worship is like a ring dance led by the Spirit and circling the presence of God. Both images relate to Loehe's reference to the vision of heavenly worship in Revelation (4-5, 7), where the redeemed, together with the whole creation, gather in song and prayer around the throne of God and the Lamb.

This latter image of the circle dance deserves further attention.[15] Despite Loehe's expressed reservations about dancing in connection with drinking and frequenting

11. Wilhelm Loehe, *Three Books about the Church*, trans. James L. Schaaf (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 176-177. For an alternative translation and discussion of this passage, see Gordon W. Lathrop, "What Is Liturgical Theology: One North American Lutheran View," *Worship* 87 (2013): 45-63. Lathrop is especially interested with Loehe's concept of the liturgy's pattern (*Gedankengang*) in relation to what it means to do liturgical theology.

12. Wilhelm Löhe, *Drei Bücher von der Kirche 1845, in Gesammelte Werke* (hereafter GW), ed. Klaus Ganzert, 7 vols., (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 1951-1986), 5.1:176-177; emphasis in the original. See also the critical edition of the text in Wilhelm Löhe, *Drei Bücher von der Kirche 1845*, ed. Dietrich Blaufuß, *Studienausgabe* 1 (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 2006).

13. See Ramshaw's discussion of "temple" and related biblical images in *Treasures Old and New,* 379-386.

14. See Ramshaw's discussion of "marriage" and related biblical images in *Treasures Old and New,* 269-276. The gendered speech of Loehe's German, where the church is feminine, makes this imagery even more apparent. The expression "Nahen zu" in the German reflects the words of James 4:8.

15. For a historical summary and critical appraisal of the modern use of dance imagery in trinitarian theology see Riyako Cecilia Hikota, "Beyond Metaphor: The Trinitarian Perichōrēsis and Dance," *Open Theology* 8, no. 1 (2022): 50-63, https://doi.org/10.1515/opth-2022-0192. It bears noting that Loehe's cosmic image of the stars circling the sun historically carries a connection to classical and medieval notions of the celestial dance.

taverns,[16] he does not hesitate to use the folk tradition of the circle dance to characterize worship in the presence of the triune God. The image underscores several things about the liturgy: its communal and social dimensions, its character as a participatory and embodied act, and its joyful solemnity. Loehe's use of this image helps us to see worship as a participation in the circle of God's own life, in the mystery of the Trinity.[17]

In this compact set of images set forth in *Three Books about the Church*, Loehe's liturgical imagination encompasses the three interwoven dimensions of meaning enacted in all liturgical celebration: the personal, the social, and the cosmic. Loehe's use of these images suggests that Christian worship functions in each of these dimensions. Liturgy refers to the human person within the community of the church in relation to the whole created order, all of it drawn into the dance of the triune God. Loehe's images present a liturgy that shapes imagination for our life together with God, indeed for our life together within the dynamic of God's very own life.

To this point we have been exploring a piece of Loehe's theological imagination *from* the liturgy: the liturgy as it helps us to see our lives in relation to God and one another, specifically as participation in the life of the triune God. Such imagination from the liturgy corresponds to a piece of Loehe's imagination *for* the liturgy and its performance. Throughout his liturgical work—in congregational life and the diaconal community as well as in his liturgical orders and prayer books—Loehe encouraged the active participation of the assembly and sought to shape a "liturgically minded and liturgically formed" congregation.[18] He was critical of the clerically oriented worship of his day and the generally passive role of the congregation:

> We do not say, "The pastor celebrates the Lord's Supper," but "the congregation!" The holy Supper is a celebration of the congregation, and it is shaped by the pastor and by Christ present and by the one or the many who receive, the congregation—even at the communion of the sick. The pastor does not act alone, but the congregation acts with him.[19]

The image [of the circle dance] underscores several things about the liturgy: its communal and social dimensions, its character as a participatory and embodied act, and its joyful solemnity. Loehe's use of this image helps us to see worship as a participation in the circle of God's own life, in the mystery of the Trinity.

For Loehe, the inherited patterns of praying at the liturgy themselves demonstrate the communal character of liturgical prayer. For example, the collect, although voiced by the pastor, was in fact the prayer of the whole assembly. The pattern of praying—from salutation (the unity of pastor and congregation in churchly fellowship) to *oremus* ("Let *us* pray") through the prayer itself to the Amen (which properly belonged to the congregation)—make this clear.[20] In his teaching of worship and its practice, Loehe sought to engage congregational participation in what he regarded as the deepest movements of the liturgy: word and sacrament, prayer and offering.[21]

Loehe's imagination *for* the liturgy and his imagination *from* the liturgy inform one another. Assembly participation at worship mirrors our participation in the life of the triune God. At worship we embody and practice our relationships with God, with one another in the community of the church, and the world. The movements of the liturgy enact our cosmic circle dance with God.

16. See Wilhelm Löhe, "Erklärung vom 21. November 1856,"und "Erklärung vom 7. Januar 1857," GW 5.2:708-714.

17. The assembly's participatory movement in the life of God is evident in classic trinitarian shape of Christian prayer to God—through Christ—in the Spirit and in the structure of eucharistic praying, most especially in the Syro-Byzantine tradition, the source of many contemporary eucharistic prayers. Also note use of the dance image in contemporary hymnody: e.g., "Come join the dance of the Trinity" and "Lord of the dance." The modern revival of interest in the doctrine of the Trinity in systematic theology has heightened awareness of the social character of the trinitarian *perichoresis*, its reflection in the community of the church, and its impact on the social imagination of Christians.

18. Wilhelm Löhe, "Vorwort," in *Laienagende* (1852), GW 7.2:703. See Thomas H. Schattauer, "A Liturgical People: Liturgical Formation for an Apostolic Community in the Work of Wilhelm Loehe," in Wilhelm Löhe und Bildung/Wilhelm Loehe and Christian Formation, ed. Dietrich Blaufuß and Jacob Corzine (Nürnberg: Verein für bayerische Kirchengeschichte, and Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 2016), 53-58; see also Thomas H. Schattauer, "The Reconstruction of Rite: The Liturgical Legacy of Wilhelm Löhe ," in *Rule of Prayer, Rule of Faith: Essays in Honor of Aidan Kavanagh, O.S.B.*, ed. Nathan Mitchell and John F. Baldovin, S.J. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996), 268-270; and "'Sung, Spoken, Lived': Worship as Communion and Mission in the Work of Wilhelm Loehe." *Currents in Theology and Mission* 33 (2006): 114-116.

19. Wilhelm Löhe, *Abendmahlspredigten (1866)*, ed. Martin Wittenberg, GW, Ergänzungsreihe 1 (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 1991), 173-174.

20. Wilhelm Löhe, *Agende für christliche Gemeinden des lutherischen Bekenntisses*, 2nd ed., 2 pts. (1853/1859), GW 7.1:55-56.

21. In Loehe's view, these four liturgical movements correspond to the "principal components of New Testament worship: the apostles' teaching (word), fellowship (offering), the breaking of bread (sacrament), and the prayers (prayer)" (Acts 2:42); Löhe, "Vorwort zur Laienagende," GW 7.2:702-704. See also Wilhelm Löhe, *Der evangelische Geistliche* (1852/1858), GW 3.2:250-251. For an English translation, see Wilhelm Loehe, *The Pastor,* ed. Charles P. Schaum, trans. Wolf Dietrich Knappe and Charles P. Schaum (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2015), 279-281.

Second Sounding—Eucharistic Community

This second sounding focuses on another rich passage from *Three Books about the Church* and sets it in relation to Loehe's imagination for a eucharistic community:

> The church of the New Testament is no longer a territorial church but a church for all people, a church which has its children in all lands and gathers them from every nation. It is the one flock of the one shepherd, called out of many folds (John 10:16), the universal—the truly catholic—church which flows through all time and into which all people pour. This is the great concept which is still being fulfilled, the work of God in the final hour of the world, the dearest thought of all the saints in life and in death, the thought for which they lived and still live, died and still die. This is the thought which must permeate the mission of the church or it will not know what it is or what it should do. For mission is nothing but the one church of God in motion, the actualization of the one universal, catholic church. Wherever mission enters in, the barriers which separate nation from nation fall down. Wherever it comes it brings together what previously was far off and widely separated. Wherever it takes root it produces that wonderful unity which makes "the people of every tongue" able to understand one another in all things. Mission is the life of the catholic church. Where it stops, blood and breath stop; where it dies, the love which unites heaven and earth also dies. The catholic church and mission—these two no one can separate without killing both, and that is impossible.[22]

> Die Kirche des neuen Testamentes, nicht mehr eine Landeskirche, sondern eine Kirche aller Völker, eine Kirche, die ihre Kinder in allen Landen hat und aus allen Landen sammelt, die Eine Herde des Einen Hirten, aus mancherlei Stall zusammengeführt (Joh. 10, 16), die *allgemeine,* die *wahrhaft katholische* Kirche, die alle Zeiten durchströmt und aus allen Völkern Zufluß hat, — *sie ist der große Gedanke, der noch in der Erfüllung ist, das Werk Gottes in der letzten Stunde der Welt, der Lieblingsgedanke aller Heiligen im Leben und im Sterben, für den sie lebten und leben, starben und sterben, — der Gedanke, welcher die Mission durchdringen muß, oder sie weiß nicht, was sie ist und was sie soll.* Denn die Mission ist nichts, als die Eine Kirche Gottes in ihrer Bewegung, — die Verwirklichung Einer allgemeinenen, katholischen Kirche. Wohin die Mission dringt, da stürzen die Zäune nieder, die Völker von Völker trennen; - wohin sie kommt, macht sie nahe, was vorhin ferne und weit getrennt war; — wo sie Platz greift, erzeugt sie jene wunderbare Einigkeit, welche "das Volk aus aller Welt Zungen" fähig macht, einander zu verstehen in *allen* Stücken. Sie ist das *Leben* der katholischen Kirche, – Blut und Atem stoken, wo sie stockt, — und die Liebe, die Himmel und Erde vereinigt, stirbt *da*, wo sie stirbt. Die katholische Kirche und die Mission, die beiden trennt niemand, ohne — was am Ende unmöglich ist — beide zu töten.[23]

The passage offers a vision of the unfolding purpose of God in the church and its mission to be and to become a communion of all people. Here the scriptural sources for Loehe's imagination refer to the oneness of all people in Christ's church. The scriptural references include the "one flock of the one shepherd, called out of many folds" from the gospel of John, cited in the passage itself, and three more citations from the immediately preceding passage, all of which resonate throughout our focal text: the "[breaking] down of the dividing wall of hostility" between Jew and Gentile from Ephesians (2:13-22); Jesus' sending words in the gospel of Matthew (28:18-20) to "make disciples of all nations;" and the gathering of the people of Israel together with "a the great multitude . . . from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues" from John's vision in Revelation (7:2-12).[24]

Though there is no mention of worship, this vision of the communion of all people is in fact very much a piece of Loehe's imagination from the liturgy. As Loehe makes clear in *Three Books,* the communion of all people that the church is and that remains the aim of its mission is created by God's Word.[25] The apostolic Word stands at the center of the church and provides the impulse for its mission of communion. This Word is the power of God at work in word and sacrament. Word and sacrament are the means of God's mission unfolding in the church and its activities:

> The Lutheran church knows that the Lord gives his Holy Spirit only through his Word and sacraments and therefore it recognizes no other effective means than Word and sacrament. …
>
> The church has various activities … even though the means through which it performs them and encourages all good things are the same—Word, sacrament, the holy office of the ministry.[26]

22. Loehe, *Three Books,* 59.
23. Löhe, *Drei Bücher, GW* 5.1:96; emphasis in the original.
24. Loehe, *Three Books,* 58-59; GW 5.1:95-96. The phrase "'the people of every tongue'" quoted in our text carries a clear resonance with John's vision in Revelation. In German, the words are a direct quotation from the first stanza of Luther's chorale *Komm, heiliger Geist, Herre Gott*; see Löhe, *Drei Bücher*, ed. Blaufuß, 32, n. 69. Loehe's further description that this people are "able to understand one another in all things" carries a reference to the Pentecost story in Acts (2:5ff.)
25. Löhe, 61-87; GW 5.1:97-115.
26. Löhe, 164-167; GW 5.1:168-170. See Christian Weber's

In the preaching of scripture and the celebration of the Lord's Supper practiced in the forms of the liturgy, including the assembly's prayer and song, the mission of God unfolds. That mission is to build up the church catholic as a communion of all people and to set it in motion for the sake of healing all human division. As Loehe's opening reflection in *Three Books* shows, this mission of communion (*Gemeinschaft*) is the completion of God's creative purpose: the desire for God and the desire for communion with others born in every person.[27]

Such imagination *from* the liturgy is grounded in Loehe's imagination *for* the liturgy, specifically in his efforts to re-center liturgical practice on the Lord's Supper and so to renew the church as a eucharistic community (*Abendmahlsgemeinschaft,* the communion or fellowship in the Lord's Supper).[28] In the practice common to his time, the Lord's Supper was relegated to two communion seasons, spring and fall (*Frühlingscommunion, Herbstcommunion*), and people generally received the sacrament at most twice a year. Loehe's study of liturgical sources from the early church through the Reformation led him to understand that such a limited sacramental practice was an aberration. Earlier Christian practice shows a regular, weekly celebration of the Supper every Sunday as well as on major festivals:

> The goal of the principal service of the church has always been the celebration of the Communio or Lord's Supper. The observance of the Lord's Supper was the core; the parts of the service before and after always stood in relation to it. This is the case in the eastern churches, in the Roman Church, and also in the evangelical [i.e., Lutheran] church. A principal service without the celebration of the Lord's Supper was not considered complete; it looked like a column in ruins, like a flower stem stripped of its crown.[29]

Note the images for the principal service of the church without the sacrament—"a column in ruins" (*eine abgebrochene Säule*), "a flower stem stripped of its crown" (*ein Blumenstengel, dem man seine Krone nahm*). In Loehe's estimation, the distortion of eucharistic practice had diminished the church in its faith and life. To elaborate on these images, we might say it this way: Loehe worked to restore the broken column of worship in word *and* sacrament and so to build up the living stones of the church; he worked to cultivate the flower of worship in the fullness of its bloom in the Supper, that the church might bear the fruit of love. In the forward to his *Agende*, Loehe used the image of climbing a mountain with two peaks—sermon and Supper—to describe the course of the principal service among Christians. In Loehe's view, the Supper was the higher of the two, the goal of the liturgy, and the place on earth closest to heaven.[30] The Lord's Supper completed the movement of the liturgy toward communion: the communion in the body and blood of Christ, which is at once a communion with God, a communion among the people of God, and a foretaste of the fuller communion that is God's purpose for the world.

In Loehe's view, the Supper was the higher of the two [sermon and Supper], the goal of the liturgy, and the place on earth closest to heaven. The Lord's Supper completed the movement of the liturgy toward communion: the communion in the body and blood of Christ, which is at once a communion with God, a communion among the people of God, and a foretaste of the fuller communion that is God's purpose for the world.

In Loehe's view, the Lord's Supper established and enacted the communion of the church: the fellowship or communion (*Gemeinschaft*) of persons in their communion (*Gemeinschaft*) with Christ.[31] Let me say it this way: Loehe imagined the church as a eucharistic community (*Abendmahlsgemeinschaft*). It was not a territorial church (*Landeskirche*), defined by geographical boundaries and culture, but rather by its relation to the presence of Christ among his people, and as such a catholic church. As a eucharistic community, the church was for Loehe sign and agent of God's larger, eschatological purpose for communion, for the healing of the world. In Loehe's liturgical imagination, eucharistic community reflects the movement of the church in mission toward the communion God intends.[32]

magisterial presentation of Loehe's theology of mission in his *Missionstheologie bei Wllhelm Löhe: Aufbruch zur Kirche der Zukunft* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1996), especially 262-397; on word and sacrament as the means of mission, 306-312.

27. Loehe, *Three Books*, 47-51; GW 5.1:88-90.

28. See Schattauer, "Reconstruction of Rite" pp. 249-268. This essay provides a summary of the research in my dissertation "Announcement, Confession, and Lord's Supper in the Pastoral-Liturgical Work of Wilhelm Löhe: A Study of Worship and Church Life in the Lutheran Parish at Neuendettelsau, Bavaria, 1837-1872," PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN, 1990, 180-293, 314-317.

29. Wilhelm Löhe, "Vorwort," in *Sammlung liturgischer Formulare der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, vol. 3 (1842), GW 7.2:698.

30. Löhe, "Vorwort zur ersten Auflage" (1844), in *Agende,* GW 7.1:13; "Vorwort zur ersten Auflage" (1852), GW 7.1:18. For an English translation, see Wilhelm Löhe, "Prefaces to the *Agende für christliche Gemeinden des lutherischen Bekenntisses*," *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology* 17, no. 3 (Holy Trinity 2008), 31-38.

31. See Wilhelm Löhe, *Prüfungstafel und Gebete für Beicht- und Abendmahlstage*, 4th ed. (1858), GW 7.2: 286; also Löhe, *Abendmahlspredigten,* 69-77.

32. For a fuller account see Thomas H. Schattauer, "Reclaiming the Christian Assembly as *Communio:* The Significance of the Lord's

Some might argue that this picture of eucharistic community in Loehe's liturgical imagination is more my picture than truly his. I recognize that for Loehe *Abendmahlsgemeinschaft* (the communion or fellowship of the Lord's Supper) was also about the protection of confessional boundaries in relation to Reformed and Union churches and the preservation of a common faith and standards of life in the practice of church discipline (*Kirchenzucht*).[33] The term was associated with restrictions on access to the Lord's Supper: restrictions of confessional alignment placed on pastor and congregation and restrictions of faith and life placed upon individual communicants. In this, Loehe was reacting to forces in the Enlightenment that had blurred confessional distinctions and diminished the importance of well-formed faith and integrity of life. I would argue, however, that the picture of eucharistic community I have drawn does have a basis in Loehe's liturgical imagination. Alongside his clear commitment to confessional discipline at the Lord's Supper, Loehe could also speak eloquently about the profound unity (*Einigkeit*) of Christians in the observable fact of the practice of the Supper across the separated traditions.[34] Such unity in eucharistic practice carries implications for the deeper reality of the communion or fellowship (*Gemeinschaft*) of all Christians in Christ. Regarding Loehe's practice of church discipline at the Supper, it should be remembered that the aim of warning an errant parishioner away from participation in the sacrament was ultimately reconciliation and restoration to the communion of the church. Furthermore, the communion of the church was a significant and positive impulse in Loehe's efforts in the North American mission to German Lutheran immigrants as well as in his vision for a mission to native Americans. In the first case, Loehe sought to maintain the bonds of the church as a eucharistic community beyond national boundaries. In the second Loehe sought to extend the bonds of eucharistic community beyond ethnicity, admittedly according to his own delimited understanding of God's purpose for the communion of all people. Consequently, I believe my picture of eucharistic community in Loehe's liturgical imagination is a defensible construal of his legacy to us.

Third Sounding—Living Liturgy

This third sounding into Loehe's liturgical imagination takes its starting point from the way that Loehe pictures the relation of liturgy and life. The following passage from Loehe's *Haus-, Schul-, und Kirchenbuch* provides our reference point for his conception of living liturgy:

> The church has put together according to holy orders not only individual prayers but entire services of various kinds and esteems them to be understood by all the faithful as the highest harmony of earthly life, not only to be sung and spoken but to be lived. At the head of these holy orders stands the *Communio, i.e., the churchly principal service,* called the Mass in ancient speech and still in our Lutheran confessions. … Daily morning and evening prayer, or to speak in an older way, matins and vespers, take the second place among the holy orders. … All other services are nothing other than variations of these already named.[35]
>
> Die Kirche hat übrigens nicht bloß einzelne Gebete, sondern ganze Gottesdienste verschiedener Art, nach heiligen Ordnungen zusammengereiht, und wert als die höchste Harmonie des irdischen Lebens von allen Gläubigen verstanden und nicht bloß mitgesungen, mitgesprochen, sondern mitgelebt zu werden. An der Spitze dieser heiligen Ordununngen steht die *Kommunio, d. i. der kirchliche Hauptgottesdienst,* in der alten Sprache, sogar noch in unseren lutherischen symbolischen Büchern die Messe genannt. … Die zweite Stelle in den heiligen Ordnungen der Kirche nimmt der tägliche Morgen- und Abendgottesdienst ein, oder nach alter Weise zu sprechen, *die Matutin und Vesper*. … Alle übrigen Gottesdienste sind weiter nichts als Abarten der bereits genannten. [36]

Here we see in full display Loehe's vision of the foundational rites of the church: the *Communio*, the principal service of Sundays and feast days, also called the Mass, and the daily services of morning and evening prayer, also called matins and vespers. Loehe portrays these liturgical orders as "the highest harmony of earthly life (*Leben*)." In the picture that Loehe draws, the assembly of God's people— the congregation with its pastor—sings and speaks these rites, and something more: it lives them. "Sung, spoken, and lived" (*mitgesungen, mitgesprochen, mitgelebt*), the liturgy comes to life in our singing and speaking and in our living. The *mit-* of the German carries both the sense that the liturgy is something we follow and something we do together with others. We live with it together, just as at worship we sing with it together and speak with it together. The liturgy is a living thing and a thing for living. As we know, Loehe labored long and hard for the ways liturgy comes to life in its ritual embodiment, but that was not the end of his interest. His aim was the embodiment of the liturgy in the life of God's people as church community as well as in the daily lives of the faithful.

In his writings, Loehe often emphasized his concern for the life of faith (*Leben*), not only faithful doctrine or teaching (*Lehrer*).[37]

Supper in the Work of Wilhelm Löhe" in *Wilhelm Löhe: Erbe und Vision,* ed. Dietrich Blaufuß (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2009), 50-66; also published in *Worship* 84, no. 3 (2010): 219-236.

33. See Schattauer, "Reconstruction of Rite," 270-273; also "Announcement, Confession, Lord's Supper," 41-105, 304-312.

34. Löhe, *Abendmahlspredigten*, 45-77.

35. My translation.

36. Wilhelm Löhe, "Von den heiligen Personen, den heiligen Zeit, der heiligen Weise und dem heiligen Orte," in *Haus-, Schul- und Kirchenbuch für Christen des lutherischen Bekenntnisses,* pt. 2 (1859), GW 3.1:570; emphasis in the original.

37. For a more extended presentation of this point, see Schat-

In his time he witnessed the dangers of what he called "dead orthodoxy" and a "professors church."[38] While Loehe was clear about his confessional commitments and understood the Reformation to be complete in doctrine, he recognized the deficiencies of "churchly consciousness, life (*Leben*) and work" among Lutherans[39] and sought to do something about it in all the arenas of his pastoral activity, including liturgy, mission, diaconal service, and the formation of individuals and communities in Christian life, what he called the apostolic life (*apostlisches Leben*).[40] As we have already seen above, the church's mission to overcome division and unite all nations and peoples is, in Loehe's words, "the life (*Leben*) of the catholic church." For Loehe, the centrality of the Lord's Supper was about "sacramental life (*sakramentaliches Leben*) and the experience of the blessing of the sacrament that is possible only through partaking of it abundantly," much more than a matter of right doctrine.[41] All of these references to life are finally about the gift of God's abundant life in the church's life and through the church for the life of the world. As the "the highest harmony of earthly life," the liturgy bears this gift and witnesses to it.[42] Loehe's imagination for living liturgy helps us to see that the abundant life the Spirit of God bestows at worship is the abundant life that God promises in all the arenas of life.

Loehe's imagination *from* the liturgy to life corresponds to his imagination *for* the liturgy in the ways he connected its practice to the realities of life. A complete account would take us into an examination of Loehe's preaching, his formulation of intercessions (*Fürbitten*) and use of the general prayer (*allgemeines Gebet*), his preparation of announcements (*Abkündigungen*), and his aims for collecting an offering.[43] All of these things are moments during worship when the realities of life in the world are brought into the symbolic, sacramental realm of the liturgy and its biblical images. There we come to see ways to live our lives in the world in the new ways of God's life-giving purpose. Loehe scripted these moments to give substance to the connection between liturgy and life. In Loehe's imagination for living liturgy, the liturgy provides orientation and pattern for our living, and our lives give concrete shape to liturgical meaning.

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Conclusion

In these three soundings, I have begun to sketch a picture of Loehe's liturgical imagination. It is far from a completed painting. I have attempted to delineate the contours of three major features of Loehe's imagination *from* the liturgy in connection to his imagination *for* the liturgy: 1) a vision for our participation in the life of God in connection to the communal and participatory character of worship; 2) a vision of church as communion for all people transcending human divisions in connection to the eucharistic community established in the regular celebration of the Lord's Supper at the principal service on Sundays and feast days; and 3) a vision for living liturgy—God's abundant life embodied in the life of the church community and in the lives of all the faithful—in connection to the pastoral use of sermon, intercessions, announcements, and offering to show the intersection and interaction of liturgy and life.

With focus on the Christian assembly around word and sacrament, Loehe's liturgical imagination funded his imagination for a distinctive and responsive church community.[44] The church Loehe envisioned and worked for was to be a visible community defined by its *communio* in the triune God and freed of its captivity to the territorial limits of the state and the disintegrating forces of Enlightenment culture and industrial society. The church Loehe envisioned and worked for was to be a community responsive to the human needs set before it—physical, social, and spiritual—as in the service of mercy provided by his diaconal community and his efforts in support of emigrants to North America. Loehe's liturgical imagination funded his imagination for Christian identity and mission amid the crises he saw and experienced in his time and place.

What shall we make of this legacy? How might a robust liturgical imagination fund our imagination for Christian identity

tauer, "Reconstruction of Rite," 247-254; also "Announcement, Confession, Lord's Supper," 301-303.

38. Wilhelm Löhe, *Vorschlag zu einem Lutherischen Verein für apostolischen Leben samt Entwurf eines Katechismus des apostolischen Lebens* (1848), GW 5.1:219.

39. Löhe, *Three Books*, 155; GW 5.1:162.

40. Löhe, *Apostolisches Leben*, GW 5.1:213-225. See also the critical edition of the text in Wilhelm Löhe, *Apostolisches Leben: Vorschlag und Katechismus 1848,* ed. Dietrich Blaufuß, Studienausgabe 2 (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 2011).

41. From Loehe's remarks at a pastors' conference, October 3, 1865; as quoted by Johannes Deinzer, Wilhelm Löhe's *Leben: Aus seinem schriftlichen Nachlaß zusammengestellt*, vol. 2 (Gütersloh: Bertlesmann, 1880), 523. Loehe goes on to refer to his stance on the centrality of the Lord's Supper in churchly life as "sacramental Lutheranism."

42. See also Wilhelm Löhe, "Eine protestantische Missionspredigt innerhalb der Gemeinde" (1853), GW 5.2:673. There he says that "there is no higher view of earthly life—and therefore no more perfect blossom of earthly life" than in partaking of the Lord's Supper (my translation).

43. See Schattauer, "Reconstruction of Rite," 260-261; also "Announcement, Confession, Lord's Supper," 266-276.

44. For a fuller treatment of this point, see my "The Löhe Alternative for Worship, Then and Now," *Word & World,* 24.2 (2004): 145-156.

and mission today? The picture I have drawn of Loehe's liturgical imagination is something to contemplate and inspire us as we draw our own pictures of liturgy and life in the service of God's mission in and for the world. May Loehe's imagination encourage us in our dance with the triune God amid the crises of our own time and place.

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Why Bother with Dusting Off and Updating Deinzer? Reflections on Writing a New Biography of Loehe

John R. Stephenson
Professor Emeritus of Historical Theology
Concordia Theological Seminary–St. Catharines
Ontario, Canada

History without biography is apt to degenerate into soulless statistics or at best yawn-provoking generalizing sketches of broader or narrower trends over certain periods of time. Worse still, history without biography might provide fodder for deterministic views of history. Enacted properly and understood aright, the genre of biography flashes a light on free human agency, the surprise factor that infallibly renders futurology an imprecise discipline. The world held its breath to discover whether George W. Bush would invade Iraq or Vladimir Putin attack Ukraine. With apologies for lumping our saintly Wilhelm Loehe together with such questionable characters, I must observe that there was nothing predetermined about the career that Wilhelm Loehe would enter or about the kind of Lutheran he would become, in some ways to his own professional detriment. Had he wanted to, he—rather than his younger brother—could have taken over the family business; he had a knack for financial management, after all. Moreover, if he had only been a conservative Biblicist who sloughed off a few Pietist skins, he could have broadly aligned himself with the Neo-Lutheran movement and still have enjoyed a more prestigious parish than St. Nicholas, Neuendettelsau. Hence, I double down on the assertion that biography focuses attention on free human personality and its unique historical effects in a way that no other scholarly pursuit can achieve.

We remain indebted to Alan Bullock for his biography of Hitler,[1] which opens our eyes to one of the most unmitigatedly evil forms of totalitarianism, but in the realm of church history biographers must surely have some sympathy with their subjects. Diarmaid MacCulloch admittedly mixes the genres of secular and ecclesiastical history in his recent 728-page biography of Thomas Cromwell,[2] but I find it odd, even troubling, that he shows sympathy for one of the coldest fish who ever swam the seas of human life. Wilhelm Loehe was fortunate to be able to choose as his supremely gifted biographer a long-time protégé who was a close ministerial associate in his final years. In the opening sentence of the first edition of his first volume, Johannes Deinzer (1842-1897) highlights how his readers hold in their hands something "written by a friend of the blessed Loehe for friends of the same."[3] Marking Loehe as *selig* puts him on the road to inclusion in the calendar of saints, which, despite his famous spat with C. F. W. Walther, is precisely where Loehe is to be found in the Missouri Synod's *Lutheran Service Book*. A few years ago, a German Roman Catholic participant in the now concluded talks held between the Vatican and the International Lutheran Council told me that, had Loehe been Catholic, he would be canonized by now. Of how many other figures of the nineteenth-century Lutheran *Erweckung* (Awakening) could this be said? Another distinctive quality

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1. Alan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny*, rev. ed. (London: Penguin, 1963).
2. Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cromwell: A Revolutionary Life*. (New York, New York: Viking, 2018).
3. Johannes Deinzer, *Wilhelm Löhe's Leben: Aus seinem schriftlichen Nachlaß zusammengestellt*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Nürnberg: Gottfr. Löhe, 1874), vol. 2 (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1880), vol. 3 (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1892), 1:3. All translations from German are my own.

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of Loehe in the firmament of nineteenth-century Neo-Lutherans is the catholicity of his sympathies, not only in the direction of the historic churches of East and West, but also seeping out into all nooks and crannies of Christendom. The Independents better known as Congregationalists have a point,[4] and he has a warm place in his heart for medieval sectarians such as the Waldensians and the Bohemian Brethren;[5] and he much appreciated partaking in Anglican worship when visiting his convalescent daughter in Cannes.[6]

Two things need to happen for Loehe studies to flourish aright in the Anglosphere. First, we need a full-length biography that tells his whole story from cradle to grave in due depth and detail. The translation of Erika Geiger's work[7] provides us with an enticing hors d'oeuvre that leaves the scholarly reader hungry for more. And, secondly, more primary works need to be rendered into English: the *Three Books about the Church*,[8] the third edition of the *Agenda*,[9] and even the publication of *Der evangelische Geistliche* under the misleading title *The Pastor*[10] whet the appetite but do not fully satisfy it. For the anniversary year 2008, I was able to issue a translation of the 1849 *Aphorisms* and have now published a rendition of the 1851 successor volume.[11] Anyone attacking Loehe's understanding of the office of the ministry needs to go to the source and avoid tabloid caricatures like the plague. Viewing the two sets of *Aphorisms* as a whole, I am mystified by Missouri Synod's breach with Loehe in 1853. The two sides in the debate may have had different emphases and drawn from different streams of the Lutheran tradition, but I wait to learn from diehard followers of Walther why Loehe should be cast outside the pale.

As I made other preparations to mark the anniversary year 2008, teaching two elective courses on Loehe back-to-back at the St. Catharines seminary, Loehe impressed me with great force as the Lutheran forebear with the most to say to a North American Lutheranism spoiled for three centuries by a sympathetic surrounding culture but now itself part of a shrinking Christian culture barricaded on all sides by a militant secularism that seems to have come out of nowhere. Of course, it helped that Loehe's gut instincts dovetailed so neatly with my own. In the good company of Deinzer, I declare myself his friend:

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> At a conference of like-minded brethren in office (on 3 October 1865), he said among other things, "I am still the same good Lutheran as previously, but in a more *inward* way. Earlier, Lutheranism was to me tantamount to confession of the symbols from A to Z, but now the whole of Lutheranism is contained for me in the Sacrament of the Altar, in which all the chief doctrines of Christianity, especially those highlighted by the Reformation, have their center and focus. The main point for me now is not the Lutheran *doctrine* of the Supper but sacramental *life* and the experience of the blessing of the sacrament that is only made possible by abundant participation [in the sacrament]. My progress is marked in the words 'sacramental Lutheranism'."[12]

However closely attuned a potential biographer might be to Loehe's most cherished aspirations, perhaps the best argument against the effort involved in researching, writing, and publishing a new biography of our hero in either English or German is that the end product would be the very opposite of a bestseller. A German speaker pondering such a task would also have to justify the presumption involved in endeavouring to replace Johannes Deinzer's three-volume biography, of which Hermann von Bezzel remarked that it "belongs to those biographies that are still studied with great success centuries later."[13] Granted, so long as Deinzer's labor of

4. Wilhelm Löhe, *Aphorisms on Church and Office, Old and New*, trans. John R. Stephenson (St. Catharines, Ontario: Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, 2022), 4.

5. Löhe, 110.

6. Deinzer, *Löhe's Leben,* 3:308; on the Sunday in question, Loehe 'bopped around a bit,' also taking in the services of a French Evangelical and a Scottish Free Church congregation.

7. Erika Geiger, *The Life, Work, and Influence of Wilhelm Loehe (1808-1872)*, trans. Wolf Dietrich Knappe (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 2010). Originally published as *Wilhelm Löhe (1808-1872): Leben-Werk-Wirkung*, (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 2003).

8. Wilhelm Loehe, *Three Books about the Church,* trans. James L. Schaaf (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969).

9. William Loehe. *Liturgy for Christian Congregations of the Lutheran Faith*. 3rd ed., ed. Johannese Deinzer, trans. by Frank Carroll Longaker, (Newport, Kentucky: publisher not identified, 1902).

10. Wilhelm Loehe, *The Pastor*, trans. Wolf Dietrich Knappe and Charles P. Schaum, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2015). This work would be better titled *The Protestant Clergyman*; a *Geistliche* is a member of the clergy as distinct from a lay person, and Loehe deliberately chose the wider term *evangelisch* over the more specific *lutherisch*.

11. Both translations are now available in Löhe, *Aphorisms, Old and New.*

12. Deinzer, *Löhe's Leben,* 2:523.

13. Quoted in Siegfried Hebart, *Wilhelm Löhes Lehre von der Kirche, ihrem Amt und Regiment: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert* (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 1939), 7.

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love remains available,[14] German-speaking scholars may continue to draw directly from this literary goldmine while recommending to inquirers Erika Geiger's popular but meaty biography of 2003.

The lay of the land is vastly different in our Anglosphere, though, where Deinzer's *Wilhelm Loehes Leben* is largely confined to a few specialist libraries, and even then, accessible only to the shrinking minority of readers fluent in German. My own copy, given by a pastor's widow during my first weeks at Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, had been procured by her military chaplain husband as he scoured theological bookstores in Germany shortly after the Second World War to furnish resources for the seminary of what he hoped would be a single Lutheran Church in Canada. The ecclesial hopes of Colonel the Reverend Harold Merklinger, D.D., were dashed as the Canadian synods increasingly took different routes after 1970, but his widow's kindness made it possible for me to teach the elective courses just mentioned during the 2008 anniversary year. Rushing to stay several steps ahead of the students, I threw data from Deinzer into the word processor, ending up with a 170-page print-ready file which I provisionally titled *Deinzer Distilled*.

Fourteen years later, having been distracted with teaching, administration, and other avenues of research but with retirement now looming on the close horizon, I am wondering what, if anything, to do with the just-mentioned *Deinzer Distilled*. In the first drafts of this paper, I argued that a summary of Deinzer's work would be quite insufficient for our time and place, and that a totally fresh approach would be in order, involving years of immersion in primary sources and hence to some extent bypassing the achievement of Loehe's last curate. But the more I dipped back into Deinzer's pages and reviewed the file that has long been marinating in the entrails of my computer, the more evident it has become that, while further research into primary and secondary sources would be called for, the modestly conceived *Deinzer Distilled* could still form the skeleton and supply much of the flesh of the in-depth, critical biography of Loehe that is needed to put him well and truly on the map for students in the Anglosphere. Deinzer, the learned classicist who became Director of Neuendettelsau's Mission Institute, produced a masterpiece of biography that should never be allowed to gather dust. As von Bezzel pointed out, Deinzer not only depicted Loehe's life but also gave a sympathetic and informed account of his thought: "He expounded Loehe's literary legacy with astonishing diligence."[15] Deinzer's almost two decades' long close personal contact with his subject, which blossomed into a close friendship across the generational gulf, rendered him the best of choices as the biographer granted access to all Loehe's literary remains. The end product manages, with a remarkable lightness of touch, to combine intimate and often touching personal detail with an account of Loehe's thought that never becomes arcane or overloaded.

Deinzer's ordained father belonged to the strict Lutheran group that coalesced around Loehe's positions at the Bavarian General Synod of 1849. Born in 1842, Deinzer first made his hero's acquaintance when he came as a grieving orphan with his mother and five surviving younger siblings to Neuendettelsau in or shortly after 1856. Himself orphaned at the age of eight, Loehe was ideally placed to be a substitute father figure in Deinzer's life. In Loehe's own case, the giant gap left by his father's unanticipated death was remedied partly by Rector Roth of the Nuremberg Gymnasium and to a greater extent by the Reformed Professor Kraft, then to be dramatically addressed by the close relationship he developed with Erlangen's Professor Karl von Raumer. Noting that at an earlier stage in his life Loehe had been very close to von Raumer,[16] Deinzer includes an appendix in his first volume made up to no small extent of Loehe's correspondence with von Raumer,[17] who left the Reformed for the Lutheran Church under the influence of the younger man. It is striking how a Herr Professor dutifully addressed as *Sie* suddenly turns into a familiar *Du*; this can only have happened at the older man's invitation. Quite stunning, though, is how a veritable adoption takes place as von Raumer's vocative becomes *Vater*, with Frau von Raumer being referred to as *Mama*. Yet, throughout the long life of Barbara Maria Loehe, her older son and presumably all her children respectfully addressed the no-nonsense businesswoman as *Sie*. A psychologist might have a field day analyzing these relationships. The developing psychology of a stunned eight-year-old cannot have been benefited by having to put his hands between those of his expiring father, promising never in later life to disgrace his name.[18] Meanwhile, Deinzer's unique relationship with Loehe stands forth from his being the

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14. The 2009 reprint seems to have sold out, but the whole text is available online.

15. Quoted in Hebart, *Löhes Lehre von der Kirche,* 7.

16. "The intense relationship with Raumer that Löhe eagerly cultivated *at that time* ….": Deinzer, *Löhe's Leben,* 1:vi (emphasis mine). Deinzer delicately avoided the distance wrought between them when Fräulein Sophie von Scheurl proved disinterested in becoming the second Frau Loehe. See Dietrich Blaufuß, "Löhe und Karl von Raumer: Briefe 1833 bis 1864," *Zeitschrift für Bayerische Kirchengeschichte* 84 (2015): 4, esp. 31: "Sophie [still single daughter of the von Raumers] would be the only one of my acquaintances with whom I would again dare it [viz., marriage]."

17. Deinzer, *Löhe's Leben,* 1:305-394.

18. Deinzer, 1:19. Deinzer is here reproducing an autobiographical fragment written by Loehe around 1850; the memory was sunk very deep into his soul.

cleric who administered to the ailing pastor his last Communion as well as from the high emotion with which he wrote a pamphlet describing Loehe's death in 1872, published by Gottfried Loehe that same year.[19] No twenty-first-century biographer can duplicate or even come close to Deinzer's relationship with his subject.

If Deinzer should not simply be summarised or rehashed, a future biographer might nevertheless include substantial excerpts straight from the existing classic. I already have some englished pages of Deinzer's gripping account of exorcisms and supernatural healings wrought through Loehe's ministry.[20] Along with August Vilmar, with whom he seems never to have enjoyed direct personal contact, Loehe stepped out of the Lutheran mainstream by holding that the charismata of the apostolic age never totally died out, should rightly be prayed for, and might confidently be expected to return in force as the end times intensify.[21] Likewise worthy of focus is Loehe's awareness of events that he could not have known by regular empirical means: at New Year 1816 he cried out, *"Mein Vater stirbt!"* ("My father is dying!")[22] And as a high school student in Nuremberg, he was aware of his eldest sister Anna's death before the post arrived next morning.[23] Rather than acknowledging Loehe as a so-called psychic, I prefer to think of his "supernatural" side as a matter of charismatic endowment.

Another facet of Loehe's piety and theological reflection that merits highlighting is the awareness he enjoyed from an early age of the real link between the struggling flock here below and the church on the other side of the altar. Throughout his life Loehe displayed keen awareness of and interest in the intermediate state of blessed souls, a topic on which Luther had suspiciously little to say. In this focus Loehe displays similarity with John Keble, the long-time vicar of Hursley, who is his counterpart whenever we compare the Lutheran Awakening with the contemporary Oxford Movement in the Church of England. Loehe focussed much on the actual communion experienced with the faithful departed through partaking of Holy Communion. *"Auf ewig ist verschwunden/Was Erd und Himmel trennt/Denn Gott hat sie verbunden im heilgen Sakrament."* ("Behold the heavens and the earth/No longer marred by sin's great rent/For they are bound forevermore/Here in the Holy Sacrament.")[24] This emphasis obviously relates to his painful experience of early widowhood, but it deserves targeted theological reflection as we consider the topics of prayer for the departed and the intercession of the saints.

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Another way in which I should be happy to emulate Deinzer is by following the method he articulated as he set about writing his superior's biography. Charged by the aged Loehe with the task of writing his life, being given access to all his papers for the purpose and bidden to involve Marianne Loehe as much as possible in the process, Deinzer noted that the biographer's

> guiding thought was to let Loehe speak as much as possible through information from his diaries and letters and, without much input from himself [Deinzer], to set forth the records of a significant life, in order to enable readers on this basis to appraise Loehe's personal and churchly significance for themselves.[25]

When my wife and I were in Neuendettelsau for a few days in October 2015, Dietrich Blaufuß introduced us to Wolfgang Frieß, a great-great grandson of Loehe resident in nearby Ansbach. Herr Frieß brought to our meeting an original letter in Loehe's hand, written in tiny script covering both sides of a large sheet of paper. Even so recently as the twenties of some of us present at this conference, handwritten letters were a prime means of communication between absent family and friends. Such missives took time and effort and imparted self in a way that is impossible through the medium of email, texts, or tweets. From the earliest days of his literacy, Loehe was a great letter writer, and the author of any volume that could be titled *Deinzer Distilled, Updated, and Expanded* is going to have to go through the first two volumes of Loehe's *Gesammelte Werke* with a fine toothcomb, receiving help in the process from the almost two hundred pages of introduction supplied by Klaus Ganzert, who offers a treasure trove of unsourced biographical information while studiously avoiding

19. Johannes Deinzer, *Letzte Stunden, Tod, und Begräbniß des Herrn Pfarrers Wilhelm Löhe in Neuendettelsau* (Nürnberg: Gottfried Löhe, 1872)

20. Deinzer, *Löhe's Leben,* 2:201-213.

21. Deinzer, 2:201.

22. Deinzer, 2:18.

23. Deinzer, 1:7.

24. For the German text of the hymn "Weit offen steht des Himmels Perlentor," see *Lutherisches Kirchengesangbuch: Ausgabe für die Evangelisch-Lutherische Freikirche in der DDR*, 3rd ed. (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1988), #43 (p. 59). Kurt Reinhardt's translation quoted above captures Loehe's poetical imagery with an accuracy sadly lacking in *Lutheran Service Book* (2006), #639. See Kurt E. Reinhardt, *My Life and My Salvation*, 2nd ed. (St. Catharines, Ontario: Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, 2020), 32.

25. Deinzer, *Löhe's Leben,* 1:iii.

writing a biography.[26]

Mention of Dietrich Blaufuß causes me to rejoice over the opportunity of making this Erlangen scholar's personal acquaintance when he drove over to Neuendettelsau to spend a couple of days with my wife and me, dining with us at the Gasthaus zur Sonne, taking us to the Sunday service at St Lorenz, introducing us to Herr Frieß, and then taking us on a memorable afternoon drive through parts of the neighboring Franconian countryside, including Windsbach, where Dietrich had himself attended the orphanage school, and Wolframs-Eschenbach, where one steps back into a magic world of Counter Reformation Catholicism. Should I bring a Loehe biography to fruition, I need to know more about Franconia/Franken, a process that should surely involve more than immersion in books and articles. Reading about Neuendettelsau is no substitute for arriving by train, walking by the Deaconess House and along Hermann von Bezzelstraße to arrive at the old parsonage and then amble down to St Nikolai with the Gasthaus zur Sonne just across the street. One picks up a sense of the old village to which Wilhelm and Helene came in the summer of 1837, and notes the diplomatic distance between the established village and the newfangled Deaconess institutions. A twenty-minute walk in one direction takes the visitor to tiny Wernsbach and the little chapel of St Laurentius, and I still remember the surprise of a lady whom we asked for directions: *"Sie kommen aus Kanada! Was machen Sie in Wernsbach?"* ("You come from Canada! What are you doing in Wernsbach?") Meanwhile, a short drive in the other direction takes one to Reuth, incorporated in the Neuendettelsau parish in the late 1840s, a place usually accessed by Loehe on foot.

As one resident for over a year in Tübingen and thus familiar with the local flavor of Swabia, I appreciated the South German ethos of Franconia, where the greeting "Grüß Gott" and "gel," the equivalent of the Canadian "eh," raise no eyebrows. If we cannot understand Loehe without a historical sense for his *time*, neither can we get into his shoes without a deep sense of his *place*. A little after halfway through the *Three Books about the Church*, he writes lovingly of Franconia as "God's own ancient little hill country (*das alte Wellenländchen Gottes*),"[27] and he even produced a full-length church history of Franconia,[28] of which von Ranke is said to have remarked that Loehe could have made a mark for himself as a church historian.[29] He remembered learning in school that his native Fürth had been one of Germany's four great villages;[30] what, pray, were the other three? Politically fractured till incorporated into the new kingdom of Bavaria, and religiously divided since the Reformation, Franconia, a sometime Circle of the Holy Roman Empire, still enjoyed a great measure of cultural cohesion. A detailed grasp of constitutional history cannot be denied to the humble country parson:

> To the Franconian Circle there used to belong: the sovereign territory [*Erzstift*[31]] of the archdiocese of Bamberg, the bishoprics of Würzburg and Eichstätt, the possessions of the German Order [*Deutschorden*[32]], the burgraviate of Nuremberg above and below the mountains [*Burggraftum Nürnbergs oberhalb und unterhalb Gebirgs*], the county [*Grafschaft*[33]] of Henneberg whose ruler had princely status[34] and to which belonged the region of Meiningen [*meiningischen Lande*], the county of Schwarzenberg whose ruler had princely status, the counties of Castell, Dernbach, Erbach, Hohenlöhe, Limburg, Löwenstein and Werthelm, Reineck, Schönborn, the knightly cantons [*Ritterkantone*[35]] of Odenwald, Steigerwald, Gebirg, Altmühl, Baunach, Rhön and Merra, the imperial cities of Nuremberg, Schweinfurt, Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Windsheim and Weißenburg in the Nordgau. The principality of Coburg lies in Franconia, although it was reckoned to Upper Saxony. This writing will focus especially on the burgraviate above and below the mountains and on the city of Nuremberg.[36]

At the time of writing his *Recollections of the Church History*

26. Wilhelm Löhe, „Einleitung," in *Gesammelte Werke* (hereafter GW), ed. Klaus Ganzert, 7 vols., (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 1951-1986), 1:15-240.

27. Wilhelm Löhe, *Drei Bücher von der Kirche 1845*, ed. Dietrich Blaufuß, Studienausgabe 1 (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 2006), 132.

28. Wilhelm Löhe, *Erinnerungen aus der Reformationsgeschichte von Franken, insonderheit der Stadt und dem Burggraftum Nürnberg ober- und unterhalb des Gebirgs* (1847), GW 3.2:523–683.

29. Deinzer, *Löhe's Leben,* 2:246.

30. Deinzer, 1:3.

31. For an explanation of *Stift* and *Erzstift*, in which *Stift* is much more than "foundation"(!), see John R. Stephenson, "Towards an Exegetical and Systematic Appraisal of Luther's Scattered Thoughts on Episcopacy," in John R. Stephenson and Thomas M. Winger, eds., *You, My People, Shall Be Holy: A Festschrift in Honour of John W. Kleinig* (St Catharines, Ontario: Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, 2013), 285, n. 39.

32. Usually known as the Order of the Teutonic Knights, the Order of Brothers of the German House of St Mary in Jerusalem was founded by the reigning pope in 1190 in the setting of the Third Crusade. The Order never fully recovered from the blow it sustained in 1525 when Albert of Brandenburg-Ansbach (see Löhe, *Reformationsgeschichte von Franken,* GW 3.2:528) secularised its largest territory, Prussia, switching his title from Grand Master to hereditary duke. The beautiful town of Wolframs-Eschenbach, 11 km (5 mi) distant from Neuendettelsau, belonged to the *Deutscher Orden* until taken over by Prussia in the 1790s.

33. Not a simple geographical division as in North America (and even in the UK), but an area under the sovereign rule of a *Graf* (= count, earl).

34. *Gefürstete Grafschaft*, where the emperor had elevated the hereditary count to rank among the princes (*Fürsten*) of the empire.

35. The order of imperial knights was historically a force to be reckoned with in Franconia.

36. Löhe, *Reformationsgeschichte von Franken,* GW 3.2:527n. The thought has struck me with some force that Loehe's constitutional world of thought remained strongly influenced by the Holy Roman Empire, a structure that fostered simultaneous acknowledgement of extensive interconnectedness and local uniqueness and autonomy. Such multi-layered gradation was a far cry from the top-down universal abstractions imposed by the various forms of totalitarianism that have succeeded the French Revolution.

of Franconia, Loehe passionately protested any suggestion that Franconians were rightly Bavarians. Yes, pray for the king and be taught in school the deeds of the dukes of Bavaria, but never surrender an ounce of Franconian territorial pride![37] Yet by the middle of the 1860s his heart had softened toward the reigning Wittelsbachs,[38] and he countered the absent Marianne's incredulity by stating that he had wept over the death of King Max II, father of Ludwig the Mad.[39] Born within walking distance of Nuremberg, educated at its Gymnasium, and having served in some of its parishes, it went without saying that Loehe accepted as a secondary theological authority the Nuremberg Agenda of 1533, an original copy of which we have in our seminary library at St Catharines. Ontario also enjoys a personal connection with Loehe inasmuch as the first president of the Ontario District, now Region, of Lutheran Church—Canada was Adam Ernst, one of the first two *Sendlinge* sent from Neuendettelsau to the New World; the house in which he and Ernst Buerger lodged still stands. True history is by necessity biographical, and biography is rooted in time and space; so, I hope to spend more time in Franconia before I am too old to appreciate the experience, which would help me to enter ever closer into the world of the great church father and luminary in the constellation of glorified saints, Johann Konrad Wilhelm Loehe.

True history is by necessity biographical, and biography is rooted in time and space.

37. "It is quite right that the names and good works of our Bavarian kings are recounted to and impressed on our children in the schools, for Christian children should honor kings according to God's command and learn to pray for them. Nor need we object if people find it praiseworthy to impress on them the names and deeds of all Bavarian dukes from time immemorial. But that the children should learn nothing of the heroes and deeds in the land of Franconia, where they are born and live; that they should not even get to know the tribe to which they belong; and that they should end up supposing themselves to be not just Bavarian subjects but also of Bavarian origin—this we cannot praise. The rich and manifold Franconian days of old offer our children memories as worthy to be gratefully cherished as the memories of any German tribe and territory. Why should our days of old be buried? Why should knowledge of their olden times make it impossible for the people to understand the present and nobly and self-reliantly to strive for the future God has shown them? May these "recollections" serve to bring someone—be it a youth or a man—to a living awareness of the harmless, ungrudging truth that we were not born yesterday, and that we still have something to do and to achieve before the world's evening comes and the tribes come to the city that is to gather them all according to the number of their elect!"; GW 3.2:526; the first three sentences are quoted in Deinzer, *Löhe's Leben,* 2:245.

38. "With the passage of time I've become increasingly glad to be a Bavarian subject;" to Karl von Raumer, 12 April 1864, in Blaufuß, "Löhe und Karl von Raumer," 52.

39. "I've privately shed many tears for him, although my daughter won't believe it of me;" Blaufuß, 52.

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Wilhelm Loehe: Preaching and the Lord's Prayer

Joshua Pfeiffer

Pastor, Lutheran Church of Australia
PhD Candidate, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri

Wilhelm Loehe, the German Lutheran pastor of the nineteenth century, is remembered most prominently for his contributions to mission, diaconal work, and liturgical renewal. His great emphasis on ecclesiology binds these three together, whether that be the church gathered in worship or the church being sent out into the world in proclamation and works of mercy. Although Loehe never left Germany, his influence has been global through his missionary endeavors, primarily the training and sending of pastors. Amid all this, however, less attention has been given to Loehe the preacher, and the place of preaching within his wider theological and churchly program.[1] This lack of attention is striking given that Loehe was widely held to be a great preacher in his time, once compared to his more famous contemporary Charles Spurgeon,[2] and even described in somewhat hagiographic terms as Chrysostom of his century.[3]

This article contributes to the scholarship surrounding Loehe's preaching by investigating one aspect of his homiletic work, namely his catechetical sermons on the Lord's Prayer from 1835. More specifically, the focus provides a rhetorical and theological analysis of Loehe's opening sermon in that series on the introduction and address of the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father who art in heaven." The analysis takes place within the Christian preaching tradition broadly, but more particularly in relation to Lutheran catechetical preaching. I will argue that Loehe can be seen as faithfully embodying and enacting this heritage, while also incorporating particular accents consistent with his personal piety and wider ecclesiological vision.

1. The classic work is Hans Kressel, *Wilhelm Löhe Als Prediger* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1929). Other articles and sections of books which deal with Löhe's preaching include: Dietrich Blaufuss, "Löhe Preaches the Psalms," *Logia* 17, no. 3 (2008): 7–11; Jacob Corzine, "Wilhelm Loehe's 1866 Sermons on the Lord's Supper," *Lutheran Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (2022): 151–165; Theodor Schober, *Wilhelm Löhe: Ein zeuge lebendiger lutherischer Kirche*, trans. Sister Bertha Mueller (Giessen, Germany: Brunnen-Verlag, 1959), 84–88.

2. Quoted in Kressel, *Prediger*, 93.

3. Wilhelm Loehe, *Three Books about the Church*, trans. James L. Schaaf (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 14.

By investigating [Loehe's] catechetical sermons on the Lord's Prayer from 1835, the focus provides a rhetorical and theological analysis of Loehe's opening sermon … on the introduction and address of the Lord's Prayer.

Who Was Wilhelm Loehe?

We begin with a brief biographical account of Loehe's life, especially as it pertains to his development as a preacher. Loehe was born in Franconia on February 21, 1808, as one of seven children. His father died when Wilhelm was only eight years old, an event which had a lasting impact. Loehe's upbringing, education, and spiritual formation were left to his mother whose faith was influenced by Lutheran pietism.[4] She also continued to hold her pastor and church in high esteem, and encouraged and made it possible for Loehe to study toward the ministry.

After completing the initial stage of his education, Loehe began theological study at Erlangen in preparation for the pastoral ministry. There he was influenced by a number of professors connected to revival movements and pietism. His theological studies also took him to Berlin, where he encountered famous thinkers such as Hegel, yet was not drawn to the philosophical side of theological study. Loehe's biographers note the significant influence of the famous preachers he was able to listen to in churches around Berlin. Loehe was especially impacted by the preaching of Frederick Schleiermacher and Gerhard Friedrich Strauss, both

4. Erika Geiger, *The Life, Work and Influence of Wilhelm Loehe*, trans. Wolf Dietrich Knappe (St Louis: Concordia, 2010), 9.

of whom had a reputation as fine preachers.[5]

Loehe successfully completed his theological studies and was ordained as a pastor in 1831. He then spent several years in various pastoral appointments under the supervision of senior pastors. He soon gained a reputation for his preaching, both positively and negatively. On the positive side, people were drawn to Loehe's passionate preaching in large numbers; reports exist of his holding a congregations' attention for hours on end.[6] On the negative side, some of the church authorities were concerned about the intensity of his preaching, especially his willingness to confront particular sins from the pulpit and thereby create public unrest.[7] This reputation was arguably a major factor in his inability to gain a long-term pastoral call in a significant city location.

In 1837, Loehe was called to the small village of Neuen-dettelsau, where he began a pastoral ministry which spanned the rest of his life. Although in his early years, he served there somewhat reluctantly and attempted to gain calls elsewhere, eventually he accepted this as a long-term call from God and stayed for over thirty-five years. Shortly before beginning, he married Helena Andrae and they were blessed with four children. Tragically, Helena died after only six years of marriage, and their young son died one year later. The death of Loehe's wife had such a devastating impact that some have argued the eschatological emphasis in Loehe's ecclesiology can be explained in part by the grief over his wife.[8]

At Neuendettelsau, as in his earlier years, Loehe gained a reputation as an outstanding preacher. Reports abound of visitors travelling to hear his sermons from neighboring villages. Kressel describes "sermon hikes," where people would set off on Saturday afternoon, collect people from villages along the way, arrive in Neuendettelsau, and stay with local farmers overnight, all just to hear Loehe preach on Sunday morning.[9] After worship they attended further Christian instruction with Loehe and sometimes spent time with him at his home before beginning the walk home. There are records of many others travelling to hear Loehe as well, such as fellow pastors, teachers from the theological faculty of Erlangen, and even nobility and professors of philosophy and mathematics from other universities. One description of Loehe's preaching gives further color to the portrait painted here:

> Both friend and enemy had to agree that the great village pastor belonged to the foremost pastors of his time. His appearance, his natural noble conduct, and above all his glorious voice full of manly force and overpowering kindness, capable of being modulated to fit all manner of feelings, of a musical pleasing sound —quite exceptional. Professors and peasants, strangers and deaconesses, children and old people, all were held as if by magnetic force, so that the tension increased to the end. Here was the Spirit of God with its gifts, the external and the internal.[10]

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Here we are granted a glimpse of what cannot be captured in his written sermons through a firsthand account of elements, such as his voice and general presence in the pulpit, both very significant aspects of his reputation as a preacher.

Loehe made another contribution to the history of preaching by training and sending pastors internationally. Loehe's long-standing interest in missions was aroused by calls from the United States, where pastors especially were needed for the many German migrants. Loehe also understood this as a means toward reaching the Native American population. Loehe organized fundraising, training, and logistics for pastors to be sent. This work led to his being recognized as founding father of two different synods in the U.S., as well as a significant influence as far as South America and Oceania.[11] One Australian Lutheran theologian paid tribute to the Loehe influence in his country, mentioning "thorough sermon preparation"[12] as a part of this legacy.

Matrix for Analysis

It is helpful at the outset to note the paradigms and perspectives which guide this analysis of Loehe's preaching. In terms of rhetoric, attention is given to features of Loehe's sermons which are indicative of his wider approach and are of significance for the history of preaching. These elements include his overall structure, the use of imagery, repetition, and rhetorical questions. While some of these are standard rhetorical categories, others are noteworthy

5. Geiger, *Loehe*, 33.
6. Loehe, *Three Books*, 4.
7. Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church, vol 6, The Modern Age* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 121.
8. Loehe, *Three Books,* 37.
9. Kressel, *Prediger*, 69.
10. Schober, *Witness*, 85.
11. Loehe, *Three Books,* 1.
12. Max Loehe, "Wilhelm Loehe: Neuendettelsau Influence in the Lutheran Church of Australia," *Springfielder* 35, no. 3 (December 1971): 189.

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specifically as characteristics of Loehe's preaching. One of these is its image-rich quality. Thereby we read of his "flourishing imagination,"[13] which attracted many to hear his preaching or references to his sermons as "masterpieces of poetic imagination."[14] In analyzing the sermon's progression, we will reflect on the significance of these features.

I will utilize several perspectives which will interact, forming a matrix for analysis. The first locates Loehe's preaching within the tradition of catechetical sermons that have a long pedigree in church history. By definition, catechetical preaching does not focus on expositing a biblical text, but rather a teaching or practice of the Christian faith in a thematic way. Most commonly, these have focused on the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer, although other categories, such as virtues and vices, also have been prominent. These sermons were preached throughout church history but became prominent in the Middle Ages. One scholar argues catechetical sermons incorporated the function of the catechumenate from the earlier periods of the church.[15] It is worth noting that catechetical sermons have often contained a strong emphasis on moral exhortation.

At the time of the Reformation, Luther's catechisms became a crucial dimension of his reform efforts. Catechetical preaching was also utilized by the Lutheran Reformers. This has been documented and analyzed by Mary Jane Haemig.[16] Haemig's findings provide part of the analytical template for Loehe's preaching. Haemig notes three common misconceptions about catechetical preaching:

> One misconception is that preaching the catechism is meant primarily to teach and convey information. Another misconception sees the primary reason for preaching the catechism as to improve the moral level of the listeners. Still another misconception is that the catechism replaces or competes with scripture.[17]

Haemig demonstrates that these misconceptions do not accurately describe the practice of catechetical preaching at the time of the Reformation. I will demonstrate that neither do they apply to Loehe's catechetical preaching.

Another perspective involves Loehe's theological outlook that was able to hold various competing Lutheran impulses in tension. Corzine references this in his analysis of Loehe's Lord's Supper sermons, stating: "Another noteworthy aspect of his legacy is the inherent tension between depictions of Loehe as an heir of Pietism, on the one hand, and the already mentioned primacy of emphasis on the sacraments, on the other."[18] Nessan explores this point throughout his work on Loehe and broadens it further, noting how the Loehe legacy incorporates emphases often thought to be at odds with one another, such as confessional orthodoxy, pietism, liturgical worship, diaconal service, evangelical proclamation, and missionary endeavor.[19] Taking into account the polarity between confessional orthodoxy and pietistic devotion, another theme for our analysis explores how this manifests itself in Loehe's preaching.

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The final perspective by which Loehe's preaching will be evaluated is doxological, or "preaching as worship." Several scholars have noted this distinctive feature of Loehe's preaching. Old describes Loehe's sermons as "a doxological symphony. They take the theme of the text and weave around it harmonies from the whole of Scripture."[20] One particular Christmas Day sermon "becomes not only an exhortation to praise God but a hymn of praise itself."[21] Similarly, Blaufuss notes on Loehe's preaching of the Psalms how his treatment moves from proclamation to prayer: "Loehe's sermon does not merely preach about the text, but lets the text speak for itself, manifest its shape, and reach its goal. This allows the hearer to be brought into active movement toward God in prayer."[22] This is an intriguing dimension worth analyzing in relation to Loehe's Lord's Prayer sermons as well.

These perspectives provide elements of the matrix for my rhetorical and theological analysis. The analysis begins with the

13. Schober and Mueller, *Wilhelm Loehe*, 88.
14. Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*, 123.
15. Green, Eugene A., "Aelfric the Catechist," in *De Ore Domini: Preacher and Word in the Middle Ages,* eds, Thomas L. Amos, Eugene A. Green, and Beverly Mayne Kienzle (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 1989), 64.
16. Mary Jane Haemig, "The Living Voice of the Catechism: German Lutheran Catechetical Preaching 1530–1580" (ThD thesis, Harvard, 1996).
17. Mary Jane Haemig, "Preaching the Catechism: A Transformational Enterprise," *Dialog* 36, no. 2 (1997): 101.
18. Jacob Corzine, "Wilhelm Loehe's 1866 Sermons on the Lord's Supper," 152.
19. Craig L. Nessan, *Wilhelm Loehe and North America: Historical Perspective and Living Legacy* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2020), xv, 118–145.
20. Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*, 123.
21. Old, *Reading and Preaching*, 123.
22. Blaufuss, "Löhe Preaches the Psalms," 9.

preface and an overview of the collection of sermons, before looking at the opening sermon's progression from introduction to conclusion, as we weave throughout our analysis utilizing the matrix.

Loehe's Sermons on the Lord's Prayer

Preface and Overall Collection

Loehe's sermons on the Lord's Prayer are from 1835 in Nürnberg, which is quite early in his preaching career. There are nine sermons in the series, one for each of the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer together with an introductory sermon on the address, "Our Father who art in heaven," and a concluding sermon on the word "Amen." It is difficult to ascertain the time and setting for these sermons. We know that Loehe preached at Sunday morning services, Sunday afternoon services, and during the week.[23] One imagines these catechetical sermons would be more suited to either the Sunday afternoon or weekday settings. However, in the preface Loehe makes mention of the fact that the reader will notice that some of the sermons were for Holy Communion days and one for a Holy Communion service at which only young people were attending Communion.[24] As such, the exact setting is difficult to say for sure.

One observation about Loehe's preface is worth noting for its significance in the history of preaching. Loehe describes the process by which the sermon collection came into being. He says that the sermons reflect the oral proclamation which happened on each occasion, but they have also been edited by him for use by a wider audience in a sermon collection. This is consistent with the tradition of sermon collections and postils throughout church history. It is noteworthy that there are actually three prefaces for three separate published editions of these sermons, demonstrating their popularity and influence. One author notes how this particular sermon collection came to Australia from the 1860s onward.[25]

It is of interest that Loehe reflects on this process and the difference between written sermons and the actual event of preaching. He speaks of the preached word as the "living Word," which cannot be truly depicted in writing, and compares the preached sermon over against the written one as a "fragrant rose in the valley" compared with one that has been painted in a picture.[26] Loehe values highly the actual event of preaching God's word to his people; the collected written sermon form, as useful as it may be, is always one step removed from the actual event.

Analysis of Sermon on "Our Father who art in heaven"

23. Nessan, *Wilhelm Loehe*, 13.

24. Wilhelm Loehe, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Klaus Ganzert and Curt Schadewitz (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 1951-1986), 6.1, 283.

25. Dean Zweck, "The Influence of Wilhelm Löhe/Neuendettelsau on the Lutheran Church of Australia," in *Wilhelm Löhe: Erbe und Vision*, ed. Dietrich Blaufuss (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2009) 311.

26. Loehe, *Gesammelte Werke*, 281.

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We move next to our detailed analysis of the opening sermon on the address of the Lord's Prayer. Broadly speaking, the sermon falls into a three-part structure together with an introduction and conclusion. In the introduction Loehe focuses first on the fact that it is God's will that we pray and, secondly, on the reality that the Lord's Prayer is short and simple. Therefore, it is memorable, but also deep and profound so that no one can exhaust its depths. Loehe uses several rhetorical features to engage his hearer, such as the image of prayer as a heavenly chariot leading up to God and the image of the Lord's Prayer as a deep body of water.

Regarding images for water, Loehe utilizes the imagery of the sea in several ways. First, it is an image for the depth and profundity of the Lord's Prayer. Loehe emphasizes how we should not be fooled by the brevity or simplicity of the prayer into thinking it is shallow. Rather, no person has ever "prayed it out" and no preacher has exhausted its meaning.[27] Loehe uses the image in a creative way by subverting the metaphor in pointing out that this "sea" is actually full of "sweet, living water" which can satisfy. This leads him to employ the sea imagery as an invitation to hear this sermon, and in fact the whole series of sermons on the Lord's Prayer, as he says, "Gather to the shore of this fullness of grace!"[28] Finally Loehe highlights one more aspect of this rich image and gives us insight into his concept of the preaching task. He says that he will draw the water for them and give it out, so that together they can be filled by the Lord and rejoice.[29] Loehe imagines his task as preacher to go to the "waters" of God's word on behalf of the people, in order that they together can experience the blessings of God.

The first main section of the sermon deals with why we can pray to God as Father. Here Loehe says there is a difference in how we name God as Father in the Lord's Prayer as compared

27. "Kein Prediger es ausgeredet oder nach dem vollen Sinn erklärt." Löhe, *Gesammelte Werke*, 287.

28. "Sammelt euch her ans Ufer dieser Gnadenfülle." Löhe, *Gesammelte Werke*, 287.

29. Loehe, *Gesammelte Werke*, 287.

to the Creed. In the Creed, we are calling God Father primarily because of his relationship to Jesus Christ as his Son, whereas in the Lord's Prayer we name God as Father primarily because we are his children in Christ. Here we encounter the first example of how Loehe embodies the Lutheran tradition of catechetical preaching as he takes the opportunity early in the sermon to speak a clear word of law and Gospel to his hearers.

Somewhat surprisingly, Loehe moves from mentioning God as our Father because we are his children in Christ, to issuing a warning to unrepentant sinners presuming to call on God as Father. In a series of rhetorical questions, Loehe asks whether the person who rejoices in sins—or who has no remorse or longing for forgiveness, or who does not long and pray for deliverance from sin, or has becomes a blasphemer, or various other situations—whether they will dare to stand before the holy God and call on him as Father? Loehe insists the answer is an emphatic "No!" as God will not be mocked.[30] Even from the written sermon, one gets a sense of the intensity and specificity of Loehe's preaching of the law, as well as a glimpse into the ways he brought offense to church authorities of a more rationalist mindset.

However, this word of law is not an end in itself but prepares the way for Loehe to proclaim the universal and gracious invitation of God to all people in Christ, enabling everyone to call on God as Father. Speaking of the need for permission to call on God as Father through the Spirit, Loehe preaches: "All people shall receive this permission. All shall come to call upon the great God in heaven as Father! For all shall become His children in Christ Jesus. All shall receive the Spirit of His Son, and cry out in the same: Abba, Dear Father!"[31] Loehe then poses a series of rhetorical questions about how Christ died for all to make them God's children in relation to the rhetorical questions about the law a paragraph earlier. Far from being merely didactic or moralistic, Loehe uses catechetical preaching to warn the unrepentant, and to proclaim Christ and the Gospel to his hearers.

Surprisingly, Loehe does not simply move on to more instruction on the Lord's Prayer, but repeats this law-Gospel homiletic with even more intensity. This time he has in mind not faithful Christians who need to be reminded of their sin, but unbelievers or those who have fallen away from the faith. He speaks to those who cannot rightly be called God's children but want to become so.[32] He uses this to issue a personal invitation to his hearers that they take this opportunity to repent and pray in faith to the Father. He pleads with his hearers to accept God's gift of adoption as children and points them to God's Son who paid the price on the cross "to purchase you as children."[33] Loehe includes emotive language, encouraging his hearers to "weep that they have stayed away so long,"[34] an example of what could be called a pietistic flavor to Loehe's preaching of law and Gospel. Loehe concludes the section by assuring his hearers that the Son will rejoice to bring all lost children back home to his Father.

Not only do we never pray alone, but that we should not pray only for ourselves but for all our brothers and sisters in Christ. The plural, collective address of this prayer prompts us to remember the needs of those in the church whether spiritual or bodily.

In the second section, Loehe dwells on the significance of praying *Our* Father rather than *My* Father and makes two subpoints. The first serves as encouragement to us to know that the whole church on earth and heaven prays with us, with Christ himself leading us all in prayer as our Head. Loehe stresses that even when we are alone in our closet, we are never truly alone in Christian prayer. Here he uses a memorable image from the Old Testament in Moses, Aaron, and Hur. Loehe says that the support and encouragement we receive from knowing that we never pray alone is like Aaron and Hur supporting Moses' hands as he holds them up. The second point is that not only do we never pray alone, but that we should not pray only for ourselves but for all our brothers and sisters in Christ. The plural, collective address of this prayer prompts us to remember the needs of those in the church whether spiritual or bodily.

Loehe is drawn to the ecclesial dimension of prayer already in his early years, which is consistent with the later development of his theology. Loehe's famous work, *Three Books on the Church*, was published in 1845, ten years after these sermons, and is understood as indicative of his gradual shift toward a more confessional and liturgical Lutheranism. The pietistic movements, on the other hand, tended to emphasize the individual soul before God.[35] Yet here we see that already in his early years Loehe's ecclesiological emphasis flowers, simply from meditation on the single word "Our." It is noteworthy that this occurs shortly after the section focusing on the repentance, faith, and conversion of the individual soul. We find here an example of what Nessan describes of Loehe holding together impulses within Lutheranism which are sometimes played off against one another.

There is one further example of the doxological character of Loehe's preaching or preaching as worship. Preaching is about

30. Loehe, *Gesammelte Werke*, 288.

31. "Alle Menschen sollen diese Erlaubnis empfangen, alle dahin kommen, den großen Gott im Himmel als Vater anzurufen! Denn alle sollen sie in Christo Jesu Seine Kinder werden, alle den Geist Seines Sohnes empfangen und in semselben schreien: Abba, Lieber Vater!" Loehe, *Gesammelte Werke*, 289.

32. Loehe, *Gesammelte Werke*, 290.

33. Loehe, *Gesammelte Werke*, 290.

34. Loehe, *Gesammelte Werke*, 290.

35. This characterization should not be stressed too much though as communal gatherings outside official church structures were a very important part of pietistic movements.

proclaiming God's word to God's people, and happens most often within a worship service. The basic conception of preaching in relation to worship is that in the sermon God's word is spoken and, subsequently, the people respond in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving. The characterization of Loehe's preaching as doxological, however, points to a more complex relationship, as within the sermon itself the people of God are drawn into the act of worship. This occurs in several ways in this sermon. Loehe not only speaks about praying to God but actually prays over and over again. For example, at one point when discussing the needs of fellow Christians for whom we should pray, Loehe models the sort of prayer the Father admonishes us toward, implicitly inviting his hearers to join their hearts to his words as he says:

> We have only one and the same common refuge and help: that is You alone! Hear our words, work on our speech, hear our cry, our King and our God: help us and save us! A father is the comfort and protection of his children! You, then, are our comfort and protection, for you are called "Our Father."[36]

Although Loehe is preaching to the people gathered, he is addressing God at the same time. Thus, his sermon functions in a doxological manner and this is truly a striking dimension of his preaching.

The third main section of the sermon considers the phrase "who art in heaven." Loehe provides a nice transitional paragraph where he asks a question that he then answers. The question is why our Lord would teach us to pray to the Father "in heaven" when we know he is omnipresent and always with us here on earth. To this question Loehe answers in a fourfold way. First, this phrase teaches us not to cling to earthly fathers, or earthly things in general. Second, the presence of the Father in heaven is to be distinguished from his presence on earth. In heaven the Father's presence is "immeasurable and unspeakable glory,"[37] whereas on earth he is not revealed in his full glory. Third, to pray to the Father "who is in heaven" is to awaken in us the desire for our heavenly home. Finally, this phrase is an implicit promise of our own future ascension to heaven, where our Lord prepares a place for us.

This second point returns us to Haemig's third misconception about catechetical sermons, namely that they replace or compete with Scripture. Loehe makes it clear how he understands himself as an heir of Luther as he sets out to preach on the catechism. He writes in his preface that no one has spoken more excellently and beautifully than Luther on the Lord's Prayer,[38] and after his preface includes Luther's meditative prayer from 1518 based on the Our Father titled "God and the Soul."[39] What is striking about Loehe's sermons is that they are far from a recapitulation of Luther's catechetical material. In fact, Loehe refers to Luther's explanations of the Lord's Prayer only a handful of times throughout the sermons, while expounding many themes and accents that are not emphasized in Luther's catechisms. The significance of praying to the Father "who art in heaven" and the nature of heavenly glory is a motif that does not appear in Luther's small or large catechisms (as far as I am aware) and is a good example of how Loehe prioritizes the Lord's words in Scripture, even as he self-consciously stands in the tradition of Luther.

Loehe here gives the image of a lark flying up into the air, fleeing from the world below. This is an image of the praying soul seeking Christ at the Father's right hand. …The hearers' imaginations are vividly engaged as Loehe leads them to meditate on the flight of a bird as a representation for the mystery of prayer.

In the third main section of the sermon, there is another example of Loehe's use of imagery, where the believing soul at prayer is depicted as a bird. As Loehe answers the question of why the Lord added the words "who art in heaven" to the address "Our Father," Loehe emphasizes that this phrase detaches us from earthly fathers—and from earthly attachments more generally—and draws us to heaven, specifically to the heavenly Father. Loehe here gives the image of a lark flying up into the air, fleeing from the world below. This is an image of the praying soul seeking Christ at the Father's right hand.[40] Later in his sermon Loehe reintroduces this imagery, when he speaks of the phrase "who art in heaven" reminding us of the great promise of our future heavenly home. He depicts the realization of this promise and our own ascension to the Father as "growing wings to return home."[41] Here the hearers' imaginations are vividly engaged as Loehe leads them to meditate on the flight of a bird as a representation for the mystery of prayer.

This sort of imagery has a long and rich history within Christian preaching, going back at least as far as the *Fifty Spiritual*

36. "Nur Eine und dieselbe gemeinsame Zuflucht und Hülfe haben wir: das bist Du alleine! Höre unsre Worte, werke auf unsre Rede, vernimm unser Schreien, unser König und unser Gott: hilf uns und errette uns! Ein Vater ist ja seiner Kinder Trost und Schutz! Sen du also unser Trost und Schutz: denn du bist und heißest: „Unser Vater!" Löhe, *Gesammelte Werke*, 292.

37. "…unermesslicher, unnennbarer Herrlichkeit", Löhe, *Gesammelte Werke*, 293.

38. "Uber Gebet und Vater Unser hat wohl niemand so vortrefflich geschrieben als Luther, von dessen Schriften über diesen Gegenstand eine immer schöner ist, also die andre.„ Löhe, *Gesammelte Werke*, 281.

39. Loehe, *Gesammelte Werke*, 285–286.

40. Loehe, *Gesammelte Werke*, 293.

41. "…wo uns die Flügel zur Heimkehr gewachsen sein werden!" Löhe, *Gesammelte Werke*, 294.

Homilies of Macarius of Egypt, to which Loehe refers in the section on homiletics in his book, *The Pastor*.[42] This raises the intriguing question about Macarius as one of Loehe's homiletical influences. In Macarius, the imagery is connected to Psalm 55:6, where the psalmist prays for wings to escape danger, and is used in his homilies to link to the work of the Holy Spirit, as participating in the divine nature and even the crucifixion of Christ.[43] Here we find evidence of Loehe as a preacher drawing from very ancient sources in the homiletical tradition and making them his own.

Loehe concludes his sermon with a crescendo of promises, Bible verses, and appeals that revolve around the certainty of the believer's future hope, the need to patiently bear the cross, and the call to be prepared and watch for the Lord Jesus to come again. Far from a carelessly thrown together miscellany, these elements are beautifully woven together as in a tapestry. At the end of Loehe's sermon, the hearer is not left with a simple exhortation to pray the Lord's Prayer more often or more devoutly. Rather, Loehe seeks to leave his hearers with a note of encouragement and comfort, and in a doxological manner, to lift their hearts to their Father in heaven.

Summarizing the key elements of our analysis, Loehe's sermon has a clear, easy-to-follow structure that closely follows the words of the text, "Our Father who art in heaven." He utilizes imagery arising from the Scriptures and Christian tradition in creative ways. There is an effective use of rhetorical questions throughout, and not only for didactic purposes but to preach law and Gospel. Loehe faithfully embodies the tradition of Lutheran catechetical preaching, where he does more than merely convey information, indulge in moralism, or replace the Scriptures with catechetical explanations. Instead, his preaching is thoroughly rooted in the words of the Bible, full of Gospel proclamation, and eager to relate to the lives of the hearers.

Loehe's reputation as one who holds both to a confessional orthodoxy and a certain pietistic devotion is borne out, for example, as he emphasizes the reality of the church at prayer through time and space, calling the individual soul to repentance and faith with intensity and fervor. Finally, Loehe demonstrates preaching as worship in drawing his hearers up into prayer, praise, and thanksgiving, even as he speaks of these very things.

His preaching is thoroughly rooted in the words of the Bible, full of Gospel proclamation, and eager to relate to the lives of the hearers.

Conclusion

Wilhelm Loehe's contributions to the life of the church in mission, diakonia, and liturgy are rightly celebrated and studied. In particular, his preaching is a significant part of his legacy that needs further attention. There are few preachers who have spent their entire ministry in a village as small as Neuendettelsau, about whom it can be said they are truly significant in the history of Christian preaching. Yet for Loehe this is true. Just as Nessan referenced the differing ecclesial commitments held together by Loehe, he further argues that these themes in Loehe are a rich resource that can "contribute dynamically to the vitality of the future church."[44] I believe the same could be said of Loehe's preaching. The insights gained from this historical study provide fodder for ongoing reflection on the nature and art of the preaching task in our time.

42. Wilhelm Loehe, *The Pastor*, trans. Wolf Dietrich Knappe and Charles P. Schaum (St Louis: Concordia, 2015), 217.

43. George A. Maloney, tr. and ed., *Pseudo-Macarius: The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 45, 74, 192, 225, 233.

44. Nessan, *Wilhelm Loehe,* 118.

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