

Seminary Ridge Review is published twice per year by the Seminary Ridge Press at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg.

ISSN 1526-0674

© 2013 by Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg.

Subscriptions are free to libraries of theological and divinity schools and to Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg alumni/æ. Individual copies are available for \$9 per issue (includes domestic postage). Contact:

Seminary Ridge Press
Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg
61 Seminary Ridge
Gettysburg, PA 17325

www.seminaryridgereview.org

Seminary Ridge Review is a scholarly journal offering perspectives which highlight the history and theology of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, eastern Lutheranism and issues that emerge in the cross-currents of theological and cultural debates.

Editor: The Rev. Dr. Brooks Schramm bschramm@Ltsg.edu
Managing Editor: The Rev. John Spangler jspangler@Ltsg.edu
Book Review Editor: The Rev. Dr. Maria Erling merling@Ltsg.edu
Design & Production: Katy Giebenhain kgiebenhain@Ltsg.edu

Printed by The Sheridan Press in Hanover, Pennsylvania. Typeset by Phil Wolfé Graphic Design.

On the cover: Schmucker Hall interior, December 2011, prior to renovation as Seminary Ridge Museum, from the Seminary Ridge Press "snake book" *Übergang / Transition*. Photo: Office of Communication, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg.

SEMINARY RIDGE REVIEW

SPRING, 2013 | VOLUME 15, NUMBER 2

CONTENTS

- 1 The Reformation of Marriage in Lutheran Wedding-Predaching
Christopher Boyd Brown
- 26 The Mother of all Earthly Laws: The Lutheran Reformation
of Marriage
John Witte, Jr.
- 44 At Home in the World: Tenure Induction Lecture
Kristin Johnston Lergen
- 64 Martin Luther's Concept of *Sola Scriptura* and its Impact on the
Masses: A Dalit Model for Praxis-Nexus
Surekha Nelavala
- 72 Public History as a Calling
Opening Academic Convocation, 2012
Barbara Franco
- 82 Sites of Conscience
Kathleen Reed
- 88 Book Reviews on
The Better Angels of Our Nature: How Violence Has Declined
by Steven Pinker, *Martin Luther's Anti-Semitism: Against His
Better Judgment* by Eric W. Gritsch and *Defending Faith:
Lutheran Responses to Andreas Osiander's Doctrine of
Justification, 1551-1559* by Timothy J. Wengert
- 102 Poetry + Theology
- 132 Gettysburg Seminary Fine Arts

The Reformation of Marriage in Lutheran Wedding-Preaching

Christopher Boyd Brown

Medieval weddings did not have sermons. The medieval church was in fact rather slow in taking up regulation of the rites surrounding entrance into marriage; the situation was still fluid enough at the time of the Reformation that a universal requirement that Christians should exchange their wedding-vows in the presence of a priest was first made at the Council of Trent in 1563. As in the famous (fictional) case of the Wife of Bath, medieval weddings, insofar as they involved the church, took place “at church door,” outside the church. The marriage was constituted (and made a sacrament) by the free consent of the spouses, and the priest, if present, served only to add a blessing.

It was Lutherans who invented the wedding-sermon. The Lutheran marriage liturgy, as it was described by Luther in his 1529 *Traubüchlein*, appended to the Small Catechism¹ and incorporated directly² or modified³ in many of the Lutheran church orders, followed the exchange of vows with a series of scriptural readings describing the institution, duties, challenges, and comfort of the married estate. The Gen 2 [:18, 21-24] account of the creation of the woman as a “help” to the man and their union as “one flesh” was followed by the “commandments of God concerning this estate” from Eph 5 [:25-29, 22-24], urging husbands to love their wives and wives to submit themselves to their husbands. Then the postlapsarian penalties, described as the “cross which God has laid upon the married estate,” were read from Gen 3 [:16-19]: pain in childbirth and subjection to the husband’s will on the part of the woman, labor in hardship for the man. Finally, the “comfort” that God promised to married people was proclaimed from the divine blessing in Gen 1 [:27-28, 31] and the encomium of the gift of a wife from Prov 18:22.⁴

Though in Luther's order of 1529 these biblical passages stood alone in the liturgy as instruction and exhortation for the bridal pair, by the mid-1530s, it had become customary in Wittenberg for the wedding service to include a sermon as well, and this practice, first informally and then formally by prescription of the church orders, spread across Lutheran Germany. The Lutheran wedding-sermon, as it was developed by Luther's students, came to be a central and distinctive feature of Lutheran weddings.

To be sure, Luther and his students expressed their thoughts on marriage and its theology in many other forms, often in continuity with their medieval predecessors. If medieval clergy had not preached at weddings, they did nonetheless discuss marriage quite extensively in other forums. The church claimed jurisdiction over marriage through its ecclesiastical courts and the canon law. It judged sins against and within marriage in the forum of conscience within the sacrament of penance and in the confessors' and casuists' handbooks that equipped clergy to hear lay confessions. And medieval preachers preached about marriage in other contexts: in series of sermons directed to the various estates of society (*sermones ad status*), which included the "married" alongside the other estates, such as the priests, judges, rich, poor, soldiers, merchants, farmers.⁵ The Gospel text about the wedding at Cana, appointed for the second Sunday after the Epiphany, was also a regular occasion for preaching on marriage in the medieval church.⁶

Lutherans, too, continued many of these genres of discourse about marriage. Though Luther harshly criticized the treatment of marriage under canon law and urged secular rulers to assume jurisdiction over marriage law, he and his colleagues found themselves giving advice on how to handle difficult cases.⁷ Luther and his students produced a ripe crop of sermons, treatises, and books about marriage as well. Luther entered the field of late medieval preaching on marriage with his sermon on the estate of marriage in 1519 (WA 2:166-71; LW 44:3-14). His engagement with the theology and canon law of marriage continued in the *Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520) and the sermon *On Married Life* (1522) (WA 10/2:275-304; LW 45:11-49). His commentary on 1 Cor 7 (1523), and his 1527 sermons on Genesis and especially the great Genesis lectures of 1535-45 contained extended discussions of key texts and examples of married life. Luther preached fifteen sermons on John 2 that have survived, including three in the postils. Luther also encouraged the work of others, composing prefaces to Justus Menius' popular *Oeconomia Christiana* (WA 30/2:60-63) and Bugenhagen's own handbook of casuistry.⁸

But of all these texts, oral and printed, normative and hortatory, it is Lutheran wedding preaching, practiced month after month in the Lutheran parishes of early modern Europe that, I would argue, did most to shape

as well as to react to lay attitudes about marriage. In these sermons, the married Lutheran clergy set forth not so much the legal boundaries as the positive aspirations and norms for marriage and the relation of husbands, wives, and children within it, sought to protect and console consciences, and taught the laity how to understand marriage within the basic structures of Luther's theology, as an estate founded by God to be understood by faith in the Word and lived out under the Cross.

Luther himself, though, who was never a parish pastor, preached only five surviving wedding-sermons, three of which appeared in print. It was primarily up to his students to define and creatively develop the new genre based on resources from their Wittenberg preceptors – Luther, Melancthon, and others – exercising their own creativity in preaching to their local communities and carrying out themselves the reform for which Luther had called.

Preaching About Marriage on the Eve of the Reformation

How did this new Lutheran preaching at weddings relate to medieval discussions of marriage? Though Luther's summary characterization of medieval teaching on marriage was overwhelmingly negative, he was aware of differentiation within the received tradition. In the Genesis lectures, he recalls being scandalized as a monk when he read Bonaventure's opinion that it was indisputably no sin to seek a wife (WA 43:453; LW 5:36). Luther identified (though as exceptional within the tradition) a few passages in which Augustine praised marriage. Or, Luther said, the pope blew hot and cold about marriage (WA 46:141).

In fact late medieval preaching about marriage provided Luther and his students with more ample material than they usually admitted for the praise of marriage as well as ample justification for the more typical Protestant criticism of medieval teaching. The late medieval homiletical literature embodies these tensions, not only across generic lines but also within the same genres and even the same texts themselves.

The *Itinerarium Paradisi* of the Parisian professor and preacher Jean Raulin, published in Paris in 1514, includes a set of twelve sermons *de matrimonio*, surrounded by forty *de poenitentia* and four *de viduitate*.⁹ Raulin preached his sermons in French before a lay audience, but as was usual, he published them in Latin so that a preacher anywhere in Christendom might take them up and render them into the local vernacular (now in the age of printing, the published work was dedicated to and intended for private reading by a learned lay audience as well). Comparison with other sermons on marriage printed in early sixteenth-century Germany (or

manuscript sermons from earlier centuries) shows that Raulin exemplified a widely-established tradition of medieval preaching on marriage, and that he himself was notable primarily for gathering the commonly available *topoi* into an extended series.

The text which serves as *thema* for all the marriage sermons is Heb 13:4, “*Honorabile conubium in omnibus et torus immaculatus* [Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled].” The body of the first sermon sets forth the “twelve dignities of marriage,” developing well-established themes which, with slight adaptation, would later provide grist for many a Lutheran preacher’s mill. Thus marriage was founded by God himself, in contrast to other “orders” which were founded by mere saints, like Augustine or Benedict. Marriage was established in Paradise, all other sacraments outside of it. Marriage was established before the Fall, as an *officium* [duty], and reestablished after the Fall as a *remedium* [remedy]. It therefore excels all other orders and sacraments in antiquity. Only married people were saved in the Flood. The Virgin Mary entered the married estate, albeit with the intention of preserving her virginity, and thus God took flesh from a married woman. Every virtue and every other order takes its origin from matrimony. Christ and His mother honored marriage with their presence at Cana. Marriage is a figure of the union between Christ and the Church, between God and the devout soul, and of the union between God and humanity in the Incarnation. Marriage yields offspring who support their parents with prayers and help in their old age. Marriage is praised and supported by angels. It is a divinely-provided defense against the devil in that very part where the devil attacks the human being most severely [*fortitudo eius in lumbis eius*]. Finally, nature itself reverences and cherishes marriage.

All of this seems at first to support the thesis that there was little new in Reformation preaching about marriage. But Raulin’s praise of marriage is never allowed to stand on its own. Instead, the preacher repeatedly reminds his audience that marriage is fundamentally inferior to the state of virginity. So, though Raulin says that virgins must be produced by marriage, he insists that virginity is vastly superior, quoting Jerome that virgins come from marriage like roses from among thorns or pearls from oysters. And though marriage is also a way to salvation, virgins ascend with two feet while the married limp along with one – though sometimes the lame may enter heaven before the whole. He concludes the sermon by quoting Jerome’s famous dictum that “marriage fills the earth; virginity fills paradise,” and returns to his text with rather faint praise: “if fornication or manifest adultery is abominable, then even so honorable is an undefiled marriage-bed.”¹⁰

Repeatedly in the series of sermons, Raulin raises and answers lay objections related to his theme. “If marriage is so worthy, it is a wonder that preachers and priests are not promoted to such an honor.” He responds, “If matrimony is worthy of praise, much more, nonetheless, is the state of virginity.” The conflicted relation between religious celibacy and the praise of marriage lies behind many of the lay objections which Raulin seeks to anticipate throughout the series of sermons. If marriage is honorable, why is it prohibited at the most honorable times of the church year?¹¹ If marriage confers the grace of diminished carnal concupiscence, then why aren’t religious and priests married? (a good idea, says Raulin, if spiritual works and mortification of the flesh by the religious weren’t a more efficacious remedy for concupiscence than relations with one’s own wife).¹² Here Raulin expands the argument against sacerdotal marriage in terms which leave no doubt that the married are struggling to heaven with one leg. In order to administer the sacraments, priests must be pure and devout to a degree which is impossible in marriage (*quam non ita possunt habere in matrimonio sicut extra*). A married man cannot understand the Scriptures – that is why, according to St. Bonaventure, the Greeks have fallen into so many errors. If priests were married, their wives would urge them to commit theft and fraud with the goods of the church and to break all the commandments of God, just as Eve did with Adam. According to Raulin, the reason Judas stole from the disciples’ purse was to give the money to his wife. Amid the burdens and cares of marriage, it is difficult for a man to be spiritual, or for his conduct to be perfect, or his prayers pure.¹³

Among the lay questions which Raulin addresses is whether indeed a chaste preacher can decently discuss such a coarse [*pinguis*] subject as marriage. But Raulin tells his audience not to worry; his words come from a pure heart, and it is better for married people to be told about their sins and failings in plain language than to have them obscured with ornate words.¹⁴ Though in some cases medievalists have argued that the detailed casuistic discussion of married sexuality found in written Latin sermons was intended for the edification of the preacher, not for the pulpit, Raulin’s rhetorical presentation makes clear that he had preached what he published.¹⁵ Raulin was far from being a rigorist on the questions of sexual ethics which occupied late medieval casuists. He judges, for example, that married people who have sexual relations during prohibited seasons or before receiving the sacrament do not commit a mortal sin, but perhaps only a venial sin “*propter minorem fervorem ad tantum sacramentum*.”¹⁶ Those who seek pleasure in sexual relations, but in such a way that they would not have sought it with anyone but their spouse, likewise commit a merely venial sin.¹⁷

Nonetheless, Raulin raises potentially severe challenges of conscience for married people attending his sermons. Did late medieval laity approaching their spouses for sexual relations place themselves with good conscience among those who preemptively requested payment of the conjugal debt out of charitable and meritorious regard for their spouse's possible temptation and lapse from fidelity,¹⁸ or did they find themselves among the "many who sin in this way in marriage" by seeking the debt from their spouse with immoderate ardor, so that they would have done the same thing with their wives even if they had not been married to them, according to the oft-cited precept, "*omnis ardentior amator propriae uxoris adulter est.*"¹⁹ – anyone who loves his own wife too ardently is an adulterer."

In all, Raulin's popular preaching on marriage leaves little doubt that the model for late medieval lay religious life – including married life – was the monastic life. This was true not simply because of the stock description – half-whimsical – of marriage as an "order," founded by God, with separate rules for men and women, divided neatly into chapters.²⁰ It was reflected in exempla that portrayed the ideal continence of spouses who had sworn celibacy to one another on their wedding-nights.²¹ Even the praise of marriage often incorporated into preaching on the wedding at Cana, the Gospel appointed for the second Sunday after Epiphany, was relativized by the invocation of the tradition that the groom at Cana was the disciple John, who had promptly been led away by Jesus to live the (celibate) life of an apostle.²²

Late medieval preaching on marriage thus sufficed both to provide resources for the Lutheran praise of marriage and also to provide ample ground for the Reformers' attacks. The numerous preoccupations of late medieval sermons also suggest that lay questions about the church's doctrine and practice of marriage were widespread – the "shrewd questions of the laity" did not confine themselves to the honor of the pope. By airing questions about the tension between the praise of marriage and the rule of clerical celibacy, late medieval preachers may unwittingly have prepared the way for the positive reception of a later generation of preachers who could offer different answers to the same lay concerns.

Lutheran Wedding-Preaching

As wedding-preaching spread throughout Lutheran Germany, it did so more quickly as a matter of practice than as a matter of law, appearing earlier in the visitation reports than in the church orders themselves. They remained at least partly under the control of the bridal couple; the Mansfeld preacher Cyriacus Spangenberg notes that the couple chose which pastor

they wanted to deliver the sermon and urged them not to do so at the last minute; it was not so easy as they thought, he said, for a preacher to pull a sermon out of his sleeve!²³ It was apparently the custom at least in Mansfeld for couples to be given a manuscript copy of their wedding sermon to keep; when the wedding sermons of Hieronymus Mencil were published from his literary remains in 1592, the editor called for those with copies of additional wedding sermons by Mencil to send them as well, and published a second edition in 1596 with nearly twice as many.

Though pastors sometimes complained about inattention and drunkenness of the congregation at wedding sermons,²⁴ the sheer number of such sermons preached every year in a moderately large parish, as well as the fact that the congregation in attendance for each would have been largely the same – unlike modern wedding "congregations" – must place the wedding sermon at the center of Lutheran efforts to teach about marriage.

We possess hundreds of examples of such sermons, preached in the second half of the sixteenth century. Many Lutheran pastors published collections of their own wedding sermons as examples (and, one suspects, the occasional direct use) for other preachers. The Joachimsthal pastor Johann Mathesius (1504-1565), Luther's student and table companion from 1540 to 1542, published some ninety-two of his sermons; the Mansfeld town and court preacher Cyriacus Spangenberg (1528-1604), a Wittenberg student from 1542 to 1547 published seventy; the Mansfeld superintendent Hieronymus Mencil (1517-90), at Wittenberg from 1539-42 published seventy-four; and Nicolaus Selnecker (1530-1592), who attended Wittenberg after Luther's death from 1549-1558 published scores of his own – the numbers indicate something of how much of this preaching was going on in Lutheran Germany.²⁵ For comparison, there is a rare collection of post-Reformation Roman Catholic wedding sermons preached by Francis Agricola in Jülich, in an effort to imitate (and counteract) the new Lutheran practice.²⁶ Reprinted in scores of editions through the end of the sixteenth century, the Lutheran sermons provided an important model for other Lutheran preachers and their congregations, and an important filter through which Luther's teaching about marriage was transmitted and adapted for the rhetorical and pastoral purposes of later Lutheran clergy.

How did these sermons differ from (or what did they have in common with) medieval sermons on marriage, and what did they owe to Luther? Many of the topics that Luther and his students deploy in praise of marriage are firmly rooted in late medieval preaching as well – that marriage was founded by God, in paradise before the fall, honored by Christ with his presence and first miracle – all of these tropes are well established already. They nonetheless take on substantially different meanings in Luther because

the comparative context in which they were originally embedded has radically shifted.

Marriage Among the Estates

To talk about marriage as an estate, *status* or *Stand*, was nothing new. But in Luther's standard enumeration, it is one of three rather than one among many as in the medieval *ad status* sermons. In particular, the rhetorical and spiritual competitor of the monastic estate has been removed except as a negative example.

The thousand-year-old scale of values supporting Christian celibacy is stood on its head. Married chastity is purer than monastic celibacy. It is the married patriarchs and matriarchs in Genesis, not the cloistered religious, who "lead an angelic life in the flesh"; marriage, not virginity, fills heaven. When Luther and his students develop the established topos of marriage as an "order," the comparison is no longer between older and younger patterns of life, but between the true, divinely instituted religious order of marriage (1522) and the false, human-made orders of monasticism.

Among the three estates of Luther's system, Luther tends to emphasize the similarity of the domestic estate and the ecclesiastical estate rather than sharply to contrast them. When he calls parents 'apostles, bishops, and evangelists' to their children (1522), he goes beyond medieval exhortations to parents to see to it that their children were brought up religiously.

Finally, Luther and his students saw the household estate not only as the oldest but also as the most permanent of the estates. Alluding to Luther's preface to Daniel, Selnecker exhorted his hearers that they should "pray to God from the heart that he would indeed look with favor upon the dear Hauskirche, since it appears in these last troubled times that the household church will be the best and most certain and enduring, as our German true prophet Doctor Luther foresaw and often prophesied."²⁷

For Luther, an estate is an estate because it is founded on the Word of God. An estate not based on the Word – the papal estate, for instance, or monasticism – is no estate at all. In speaking of the estate of marriage as founded (*gegründet*) on the Word, Luther means not simply that it is mentioned in the Bible, but that it is defined and established by God's Word. It is the Word of God "be fruitful and multiply" that places the desire for marriage in human nature; God honors the estate by protecting it with two commandments (a new topos in praise of marriage, so far as I can tell); God's Word honors marriage even though reason sees only lust and foulness and cannot tell marriage apart from fornication. As Luther insists repeatedly, then, the married estate is one that can only be understood or can only

be undertaken in faith. It is paradigmatic of the life of the Christian lived under the Word and also under the cross.

This insistence on marriage as an estate of faith stands in some (at least rhetorical) tension with insistence that marriage is an external, secular matter. Luther can distinguish between life in the estate as God's unwitting mask and Christian service as willing instruments of God, explaining that though heathen and Christians alike live in the estate, only Christians understand it rightly as God's order. But the rhetoric in the sermons of Luther and his students runs overwhelmingly toward emphasizing the unique Christian understanding of marriage that looks to the Word rather than to natural reason.

Wedding sermons became a show-piece for the superiority of biblical teaching both to papist and monastic inventions and to the at least inconsistent wisdom of the worldly philosophers, whether classical or humanist – who wrote about marriage on the basis of reason²⁸ – though Luther's students may be quicker than Luther himself to cite (though as exceptional) passages from those classical authors who have "considered and thought about nature more accurately."²⁹ Luther and his students presented themselves, on the basis of Scripture, as the unique champions of the married estate.

Married Preachers

One apparently indisputable consequence of the Reformation for marriage in western Europe was the introduction (or reintroduction) of clerical marriage among the Protestant clergy. Scholars have identified the new clerical household as a model for Protestant ideals of marriage. One of the places where the seismic shift from an exclusively celibate to a nearly exclusively married clergy could be felt was in the pulpit, where preachers now addressed their congregations (or, rhetorically, could choose to address their congregations) as married men.

Luther, in his own preaching about marriage, is surprisingly reticent about his own status (since 1525) as a married man. Though he had declined to speak of the joys of marriage as an unmarried man in 1522, "lest somebody shut me up by saying that I am speaking about something I have not experienced,"³⁰ his homiletical references to himself as a husband after 1525 are extremely subtle – no more than the use of a first-person singular or inclusive pronoun when talking about married people. It is Luther's correspondence and table talk that contain the vignettes from Luther's own experience – waking up with a pair of pigtales on the pillow beside him – that enrich modern Luther biography. In the sermons on marriage, Luther is

far more likely to refer to his life as a monk as a negative example than he is to his life as a married man.

It is Luther's students – the compilers and publishers of his table talk – who begin to create an image of the domestic Luther and to project new personas for themselves as married pastors. Mathesius describes and commends Luther's own wedding in his biographical sermons, though he is concerned primarily to insist on the salvation of the former monk and nun with their children and does not give much domestic detail. In his own wedding preaching, Mathesius is more forthcoming about himself and his own marriage. He addresses the bridal pair and his congregation not as a celibate clergyman but as one who is both "a Christian pastor of souls and father of a household" [*wir Christliche Seelsorger und Hausvetter*]. What Mathesius shares of his own married life is not his exercise of patriarchal authority over wife, children, and servants, but his own experience of the joys and trials of marriage – even as a father giving advice to other fathers on how best to host a wedding-banquet.³¹ He recalled how God, as in the case of Adam, had selected and brought him a wife as if while he slept.³² More poignantly, Mathesius in later years referred to his trials as an aged widower, fondly recalling his wife "of blessed memory."³³ Both the public persona and the content of his marriage preaching distinguished the Lutheran pastor from his medieval predecessors.

Sex

Among the medieval genres that disappear from Lutheran discourse is the late medieval confessional manual, with its detailed inquisition into and carefully-weighted penances for the details of a married couple's sexual relations. Though medieval preachers were urged to exercise discretion in public discussion of such matters, there was considerable overlap between the discussion of lay sexual practices in sermons like Raulin's and the equivalent discussion in the confessor's manual. Luther complained in 1522 about the "filth preachers" who "have been shameless enough in this matter [of granting and withholding the conjugal debt] to rouse our disgust." In comparison, Lutheran preaching might seem at first to fall into silence on the subject of married sexuality.

Indeed, though Lutheran preachers are concerned to condemn sexual activity outside marriage – fornication and adultery – they have little interest in analyzing sexual activity within marriage, a topic which had occupied the extended attention of Raulin and other medieval preachers. The crucial line of moral demarcation, which medieval preachers had drawn within marriage, was moved to the boundary of marriage itself.³⁴ As Luther says,

"It is not written that God will judge and condemn the married, but rather the whoremongers and adulterers."³⁵ Schnell's argument that Lutheran statements describing all sexual activity outside marriage as sin express a stern *remedium* theology of married sexuality misses the point of this redefinition.

The indications of this marked shift from medieval sensibilities are many. The text of 1 Pet 3:7, "ihr Männer, wohnet bei ihnen mit Vernunft" (in the Vulgate, *cohabitantes secundum scientiam*), which had been consistently understood as a warning against excessive marital passion, was now in Lutheran preaching consistently understood as an exhortation about how a husband ought to *speak* with his wife. Or again, Paul's exhortation to "possess your vessel in sanctification and honor" (1 Thess 4:4) is now understood as an exhortation to *be* married (and thus in a state of honor) rather than a criterion for how to behave within marriage.³⁶

Notable too is the transformation that befalls the elements of the patristic or medieval tradition of which the Lutheran preachers do make use. Even as Luther and his students appropriate such standard elements of the tradition as Augustine's dictum that marriage after the fall is ordained *propter officium et remedium*,³⁷ Lutheran preaching on married sexuality goes well beyond Augustine, or at least the usual caricature of Augustinian sexuality, sometimes making creative use of Augustine himself for support.³⁸

The transmission of one such Augustinian *sententia* illustrates the flexible treatment of a patristic text according to Lutheran lights (as well as the importance of Luther's homiletical example). In Luther's 1545 published wedding sermon for Sigismund von Lindenau, we read:

St. Augustine writes in one place concerning married people, that even if one of them were somewhat weak, etc., he should not be afraid of the sudden and unfailing Day of the Lord; even if the Day of the Lord were to come in the hour when man and wife were having marital intercourse, they should not fear or be afraid. Why is this so? Because even if the Lord comes in that hour he will find them in the ordinance and estate in which they have been placed and appointed by God.³⁹

In fact, Augustine's sermon on Psalm 47 reads:

If someone takes a wife because of weakness, more lamenting that he is unable to live without a wife than rejoicing that he is married ... someone like this may await the Last Day in safety.... Let him not fear the coming of the Lord, but hope for and desire it, for [the Lord] does not come to him to inflict punishment, but rather to end his troubles.⁴⁰

This is rather different in rhetorical effect from Luther's sermonic version. Luther makes "Augustine" much more concrete in his description of married sexuality ["*ehelich beyeinander schlaffen*"] and removes the penitential tone. An internal and subjective condition of right attitude (lamenting rather than rejoicing) is replaced by an external and objective one (found in the ordinance and estate in which they have been placed and appointed by God).

It is Luther's distinctive version of the Augustinian sentence that appears in the wedding-preaching of his students. So Mathesius preaches, "the marital duty and due affection [Freundschaft] are God's ordinance and creation ... concerning which the devil should give us no bad conscience. Even if the last day should catch us in this work of marital duty (as Augustine says) ... we need have no fear or scruple."⁴¹ He independently imitates Luther's expansive treatment of Augustine elsewhere, as well, even expanding Augustine's clinical description of married intercourse as *remedium* to *Artzney und Ergetzung* – a medicine and a delight.⁴²

Luther's students can apply the same creative revision to Luther's own texts. Luther, too, can speak favorably about married passion, perhaps especially in his table talk. In his preaching and about marriage, though, he generally continues to affirm the Augustinian maxim that all sexual intercourse, even within marriage, is tainted by original sin.

Luther's position here is still differentiated from medieval analysis because Luther associates this sin with original sin, which cannot be avoided, rather than with the analysis of avoidable actual sins as mortal or venial. As in Luther's discussion of confessing original and actual sin in the *Schmalkald Articles*, the point is to minimize anxiety about sexual sin rather than to increase it, not to emphasize sexual sin but to relativize it. Hieronymus Mencil followed this line of thought when he took up the question of the relation between sex and original sin, arguing that the "desire and inclination for marriage" were God's good creation, whose corruption after the fall did not impair their essential goodness, and were no more to be scorned or singled out as sinful than sleeping, waking, and hunger, all of which, he says, are also natural but corrupted by the fall.⁴³

Luther maintains the insistence that even married sexuality is tainted with original sin, at least in part because this premise, combined with the strong praise of marriage as God's ordinance and a holy estate, gives Luther an excellent parallel for his doctrine of justification – a comparison he often makes explicit. Just as marriage and what happens therein are pronounced holy and honorable by God, even though the husband and wife and their sexual relationship remain tainted with sin, so too with all sinners who

are baptized and trust in the Son, whom God pronounces righteous even though they remain sinners.⁴⁴

Some of Luther's students who remain close to him on this question may have had their own theological reasons for doing so. Spangenberg's notably more conservative Augustinianism on the sinfulness of marital sexuality may have been connected to his support of Flacius' teaching on original sin. At least, Mencil, his anti-Flacian opponent as superintendent in Mansfeld, saw evidence of Flacian influence in Spangenberg's wedding preaching, and made a point of arguing against Spangenberg and Flacius in one of his own wedding sermons on Ps 127, saying that "if God gives and creates children, they cannot be original sin."⁴⁵

Mathesius goes further, however, to offer a positive defense even of more extravagant expressions of married sexuality in a sermon that shows both dependence on and independent development of Luther. Both Luther in the Genesis lectures and Mathesius in his wedding-sermon comment on the behavior of Isaac and Rebecca which caused king Abimelech to realize that they could not in fact be brother and sister as claimed (Gen 26:8).

On the one hand, Luther firmly rejects the "Jewish and Cynical opinion" that Isaac and Rebecca were engaged in public intercourse in the garden. They had, after all, been decently brought up and knew about the original sin by which the act of generation has been deformed. At the same time, Luther argues that the Holy Spirit has taken pleasure in recording these silly trifles of married life – not only examples of heroic fasting. Isaac and Rebecca enjoyed embraces and joking not only for consolation amid their adversities but also as an expression of the proper relation of a husband to his wife – not the commanding gravity required in dealing with the servants, but jokes, play, and blandishments. Marriage, Luther says, is not only a union of bodies but also of minds, fittingly expressed in a good marriage through such seemingly inappropriate silliness.

God concedes such indulgence to marriage. Luther says, "We know that marriage is a sacred matter, and we are permitted to laugh, play, and embrace our wives, whether they be naked or clothed, provided only that we abstain from others."⁴⁶ At the same time, however, Luther again emphasizes that this is purely an indulgence on God's part. Those who regard it as a license should know that God has only conceded "this miserable pleasure and embrace" and not imagine that the flesh is pure, for both spouses are still infected by the disease of concupiscence. "We do not say that it is well done [*bene actum*] that I have slept with my wife, but we acknowledge the impurity." God does not impute whatever is foul or unclean on account of the divine institution of marriage, but the uncleanness should not be

defended as good. Again, Luther points out, God's treatment of marriage is a picture of justification, in which those who are unworthy nevertheless enjoy God's good gifts because of the divine ordinance and condescension.

Mathesius' discussion in a wedding sermon of Isaac and Rebecca in the garden clearly depends on Luther's Genesis lectures. The emphasis on the Holy Spirit's responsibility for the scriptural account and the role of joy and play in the relation of husband and wife are carried over from Luther:

the Holy Spirit is a God of joy, and is therefore pleased with honorable married joy and amusement [*freude und kurtzweil*], and accordingly has caused this, Isaac's play and sport in the garden, to be written down, so that no one may condemn the due right and honorable joy of the married estate. The gravity and sour looks of the Pharisees and nuns are not to be regarded as some special holiness. Therefore honorable housefathers may be followers of Isaac and joyful husbands – not Cluniacs or Carthusians – and with honor and in good conscience, with true reverence to God, laugh, sport, and be of good cheer [*lachen/schertzen und guter ding sein*] in their chaste marriage-bed.⁴⁷

But Luther's explicit rejection of a sexual interpretation of Isaac's activity is set aside. Instead, Mathesius specifically locates the application of the passage in the *Ehebett*. Since God has instituted marriage and blessed bride and groom, Mathesius continues, he is pleased with whatever happens decently therein. If infirmity intrudes, God covers it with the forgiveness of sins. The stern Augustinianism of Luther's description of the inevitable effects of original sin on married sexuality is reduced to a conditional possibility. Provided only, Mathesius says, that each has his own wife and that – perhaps concerned that Joachimsthal's couples might take Isaac's rather public display of marital affection in his garden too far – there be no offense or bad example given.⁴⁸ The unresolved tensions (at least rhetorically) of Luther's lecture are simplified in Mathesius' sermon into an unambiguous encomium of married joy and sexuality.

Mencel, who acknowledges that married sexuality, like every human activity after the Fall, has been tainted by sin, can also argue that the taint of original sin does not destroy the essential goodness of married sexuality: "How could the estate of marriage and the use of marriage be sin in themselves, when God uses them again and again in his holy Word as images of his love toward us, and our spiritual rebirth as the true divine begetting of children."⁴⁹

Genesis

These Lutheran preachers' use of material from Luther's Genesis lectures to create a wedding sermon is not untypical. The demands of preaching a score or more of wedding sermons each year in a moderately busy parish to nearly the same congregation doubtless had some part in encouraging the use of a great variety of biblical texts as the basis for Lutheran wedding sermons. Luther, who preached at weddings far more occasionally (and seldom in the same place twice), used a much narrower and more predictable range of texts (esp. Heb 11:4; Eph 5:22-27) for his wedding sermons. But of Mathesius' published sermons, only a handful share the same text. The first chapters of Genesis provide a great many, as do the histories of the patriarchs and matriarchs, but Mathesius ranges throughout the Bible for examples of married men and women, including not only Isaac and Rebecca but also women such as Abigail and Esther. Perhaps surprisingly, the household tables from the New Testament epistles play only a minor role as sermon texts. Mencel and Selnecker's selections of texts follow similar if less wide-ranging patterns, whereas Spangenberg stays closer to the texts from Genesis and Ephesians that are part of the *Traubüchlein* order, or delivers thematic rather than expository wedding sermons.

The use of such narrative texts, in addition to providing interesting variety, is also a significant break from medieval preaching about marriage, in which such biblical couples appeared almost exclusively as figures in allegory – Leah and Rachel as allegories for active and contemplative life; Ahasuerus and Esther as an allegory for Christ and the church, with Vashti as the rejected synagogue.

Luther's insistence in the Genesis lectures that it is God the Holy Spirit who has delighted to record and to dignify these "trifles" of married life among the patriarchs and matriarchs carries over into wedding-preaching. Marriage does not need to be dignified by being allegorized.

The narratives also gave occasion for sermons that were centered on women as the heroine and focus. In addition to the matriarchs discussed by Luther in the Genesis lectures, other biblical women, including the striking figure of Abigail become prominent exempla and subjects of wedding-preaching among Luther's students.

Abigail's example suggests something else of what made this kind of narrative preaching distinctive from didactic preaching on the table of household duties in the Catechism. The stories reflect not only the usual, divinely appointed order for life in the household, but also give opportunity to explore the application of love and equity in ambiguous situations to

which the rules are difficult to apply. What, after all, were the virtues of Abigail, the “glory and model of all honorable women,” as Mathesius calls her?⁵⁰ She acted without and against her husband’s will to save her household from David’s wrath and then rebuked her husband (in the morning, Mathesius points out, and when he was sober) for his foolishness.

On the other hand, one biblical story that had been prominent, and literally interpreted, in medieval preaching, now nearly disappeared from Lutheran marriage-preaching: the (now-apocryphal) story of Tobit, whose victory over the devil who had slain the first seven would-be husbands of Sarah was based on his having abstained from sexual relations with his bride Sarah after their wedding for three nights, to show that it was “not out of fleshly lust, like the children of the heathen, but out of love for children” that they came together. Luther mentions the story in 1523 and 1524 to reject making Tobit’s abstinence into a general rule. Where Tobit and Sarah’s story does appear in Lutheran preaching, as it does for Spangenberg and Selnecker, it is applied simply as an exhortation not to forget prayer when entering a marriage, and the literal, normative example of their abstinence is rejected. Their model continued to be sternly urged by Catholic preachers upon newly-married couples, with warning of dire consequences for those who failed.⁵¹

Christ, the Church, and Human Marriage

The final and unique biblical example invoked in both medieval and Reformation preaching about marriage is the union of Christ and the Church described in Eph 5. In medieval sermons on the wedding at Cana, it is this marriage – along with other extended interpretations of “spiritual” marriage that are the focus of homiletical development – the relation between Christ and the individual human soul (especially Christ’s relation with the vowed religious) or the relation between the divine nature and human nature in Christ. About half of the thirteen sermons in a recent modern compilation enumerate the “kinds of marriage” among these without mentioning or developing human marriage – Hans and Greta joining hands before the door of the church. Where “spiritual” and “carnal” marriage appear together, the direction of interpretation is clear: the spiritual, divine reality is the model and norm for the physical, human one. Indeed, the Christological use of marriage language seems to have led to the practical canonical insistence on the indissolubility of Hans and Greta’s marriage.⁵²

Though Luther rejects or reinterprets the language of “sacrament” found in the Ephesians passage, both he and his students continued of course to apply the Ephesians text in their discussions of marriage. But the

direction of interpretation begins to shift. When Luther talks about human marriage as an “image” of the “spiritual wedding,” “the high, inexpressible grace and love shown us in Christ” in the “union between him and Christendom,” Luther no longer has a Platonic idea of the relation between image and reality, in which the image is an imperfect or shadowy copy. Instead, Luther’s “images” are Nominalist ones, signs chosen and arranged by the divine painter to convey a meaning. Luther says in his 1528 wedding sermon for Michael Stieffel, “God has undertaken to depict the Kingdom of Heaven through weddings.”⁵³ Human marriage is the example which God has chosen and set forth to illustrate the union between Christ and the church.

That is to say, the starting point of the comparison is reversed. Not only is Christ’s example the norm for relations between husbands and wives, but the relation between husbands and wives are the divinely-willed means of understanding the relation between Christ and the church. Luther explores both directions in his 1536 wedding sermon for Caspar Cruciger (his second marriage).

Among Luther’s students, the tendency is to use Paul’s comparison of marriage with the mystery of Christ’s union with the church not primarily as a text to moralize about how husband and wife ought to behave toward each other, but to encourage them to understand Christ’s love better by considering their own mutual affection.⁵⁴ He assumes that the bridal pair standing before the altar bring such a love into the marriage as a precondition. In marriage, he says, “God has inscribed a lovely house-postil, in which, alongside the Word they [the husband and wife] may sense, recognize, and feel the love of the Son of God toward his dear Bride, worthy Christendom.”⁵⁵

Mencel also urges the husband to understand Christ’s love on the basis of his own relation to his wife: “he can from his own heart toward his good wife and vice versa, from her own faithfulness toward him daily instruct and comfort himself as to how things stand between himself and his dear God, the Lord Christ.”⁵⁶

Mathesius insists that not only the “spiritual” love but also the sexual affection between husband and wife is an image of Christ’s love for the church. “God would have his Son’s heartfelt love and eternal faithfulness to be felt and known in the amicable and chaste marital bed, in ardent and heartfelt married love.”⁵⁷

That love in marriage is passionate is not merely a concession but a central theme for Mathesius.⁵⁸ Such love is natural, implanted in human nature, and he finds the first evidence in Adam’s exclamation, “This now is bone of my bone,” when Eve is brought to him:

As soon as Adam saw his bride and recognized that she was a part of his flesh and bone, and heard moreover that she was the one who would cleave to him and be and remain with him her whole life long, Eve moved his heart, and he felt the holy marital flame in his chaste body. For the Holy Spirit, who dwells in chaste hearts by faith, draws together the bands of love and provokes ardent and amicable thoughts in bride and groom. For when the heart is full, the mouth runs over, and the spark of love in his heart shimmered and shone forth, and Adam said with a glad heart, "This is the right one; she has delighted my heart; now I feel love and love in return. For she is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; here our hearts melt together. For she was built from my heart and sinks back into my heart."⁵⁹

Again, Mathesius is drawing on Luther's discussion in the Genesis lectures. But whereas Luther is concerned not only to describe and praise the purity of Adam's prelapsarian affection but also the corruption of married affections after the Fall, Mathesius emphasizes continuity; it is the same Holy Spirit who provokes ardent thoughts in the bridal pair before the pulpit.

Mathesius does remind the couple that since the Fall, each is marrying a mortal spouse. But this sober reflection, he says, should not lead to emotional restraint but rather to the earnest enjoyment of God's gift. Indeed, Mathesius is aware that the passion and joy of married love is so strong that men and women might forget God and heaven entirely – that is his explanation for Adam's willingness to follow Eve into transgression.⁶⁰ But he never counsels married people to limit their affection. "There is great love and joy in marriage ... and let each delight in the joy he has in his spouse and dear children so long as our dear God grants it."⁶¹

Instead of calling for human discipline, Mathesius points out that God has laid the cross upon marriage after the Fall, especially in withholding children or taking child or spouse away through death, to ensure that husbands and wives will remember that they are not yet in heaven and learn to pray.⁶² Death may tear away a spouse from one's arms, but not from one's heart – a pious motivation, in Mathesius' judgment, for continuing in Christian widowhood or, like himself, as a widower.⁶³

Interpreting Married Life: The Ehecreutz

The interpretation of married life as a "cross," the *Hauscreutz* or *Ehecreutz*, has been identified as a definitive Lutheran innovation in discourse about marriage. For some interpreters, however, it is evidence that in contrast to late medieval, humanist, and contemporary Roman Catholic writers,

Lutherans took a decidedly pessimistic view of marriage.⁶⁴ Whereas medieval preachers on marriage had described marriage as an undertaking whose favorable outcome was "manageable" [*machbar*] based on human capability and effort, Lutherans depicted marriage as a burden whose success and happiness were beyond human control.

The language of "taking up the cross" in Matt 16:24 had been understood in the middle ages as referring to choosing the extraordinary obligations of monastic life – Peter Damian argues that the conditional, volitional form "if any man would come after me" clearly identifies it as a counsel of perfection, not a general commandment.⁶⁵ By extension the term also applied to such alternate forms of service as going on Crusade.

For Luther to talk of marriage and the cross, then, as he does paradigmatically in the *Traubüchlein* rite – "hear now the Cross which God has laid upon the married estate" – he is identifying marriage as a religiously valuable form of life, identifying therefore marriage (rather than monasticism) as the ideal or paradigmatic form of Christian life, the place for suffering according to God's will.

The language of the *Ehecreutz* was also the basis for concrete application of Luther's theology of the cross to the interpretation of daily life in a way that sharply distinguished Lutheran perceptions from Roman Catholic ones. The cross, with Luther's rejection of the distinction between precepts and counsels on which the medieval understanding had depended, was not to be freely elected, but accepted as God imposed it. It was not a sign of God's wrath but of God's fatherly good will, even though it might be indistinguishable in itself from the marks of God's wrath toward the unbeliever. The language and paradigm of interpretation expressed by the terms *Haus-* or *Ehe-*creutz becomes ubiquitous in Lutheran preaching on marriage.

A poignant example of the practical working-out of the late-medieval, Humanist, and Roman Catholic idea of marriage as *machbar* as opposed to the Lutheran notion of the *Hauscreutz* is provided by the interpretation of the birth of deformed or weak-minded children by Lutheran and Roman Catholic preachers. For a Lutheran like Mathesius, children with such infirmities are a part of the *Hauscreutz*, a heavy burden indeed, but one which God may well lay upon the pious and upright. "Dear friends, the greater the saint, the heavier the cross; the dearer the child, the sharper the rod; the more heartfelt the love, the sorer the suffering."⁶⁶ "Whoever wants to marry in the Lord should consider that he and his wife are the children of Adam and Eve ... and that a Christian marriage is a true and holy order of the Cross, and accustom himself with time to recognize in the Word the supreme commander Jesus Christ, his spiritual blessing and saving hand."⁶⁷ If frail children are born, or they are injured, Mathesius calls the Christian

parents not to introspection and penance but to prayer and faith. Cry out to God, he says; old and young alike must be saved by forgiveness of sins.

But for the Roman Catholic preacher Franciscus Agricola, deformed children – as he repeats several times, echoing the warnings of medieval preachers – are indeed avoidable or “manageable”; misformed children are God’s punishment upon married people who enter into marriage out of lust or who are immoderate in their use of marriage, or who have conceived children at forbidden times of the church year.⁶⁸ The essential theological divergence of Luther’s Reformation from medieval theology could have profound implications for the interpretation of daily life. The glory of self-chosen “manageability” – the free and meritorious election of vowed celibacy or matrimony, the prudent choice of spouse, the virtuous exercise of careful self-control and discipline – all could prove a heavier burden than God’s own commanded estate and imposed cross, borne by faith in the Word.

Conclusion

In the new genre of Lutheran wedding sermons, we see the application and working out of Luther’s theology of marriage among the laity, as Luther’s students interpreted and creatively adapted their inheritance from Wittenberg and the medieval church. This preaching about marriage shows the most attractive and socially significant presentation of the Lutheran approach to marriage, drawing from the medieval tradition to be sure but also developing in significant distinction from it. Here can be found that new persona and innovative contribution of the rising second generation of Lutheran preachers who identified themselves as husbands as well as pastors, and in their wedding preaching crossed generic boundaries, recast existing topics in a radically new context and brought a new emphasis on passionate married love into the pulpit. Their sermons reveal that it would be incorrect to regard the more flexible arrangements discovered in correspondence and other sources as isolated exceptions or pragmatic accommodations made despite or in defiance of clerical precept. When we read the affectionate correspondence of sixteenth-century husbands and wives, or the letters of a young Nürnberger informing his parents that God has providentially caused him to fall in love with a girl whom he wishes to marry, or an engaged young man writing in frank and eager anticipation of the consummation of his marriage, we should recognize, in light of Lutheran wedding preaching, laity who were dwelling in the affective world described, shaped, and defended by the Lutheran clergy.⁶⁹

Notes

- 1 *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelischen-lutherischen Kirche* (12th ed; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1998) 528-34.
- 2 E.g., 1539 Albertine KO, in *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts* (20+ vols; ed. Emil Sehling et al; Leipzig: Reisland, 1902-13; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1957-) 1:273-73.
- 3 E.g., 1580 KO, Sehling 1:336-68.
- 4 Cf. *The Reformation of Ritual: An Interpretation of Early Modern Germany* (London: Routledge, 1997) 13-16. The 1580 Saxon church order (Sehling 1:367) added Matt 19:3-9 as a second lection and transposed the readings on “cross” and “comfort,” following the whole series with Ps. 128.
- 5 See Carolyn Muessig, “Audience and Preacher: *Ad Status* Sermons and Social Classification,” in *Preacher, Sermon, and Audience in the Middle Ages* (ed. C. Muessig; Leiden: Brill, 2002); David L. d’Avray and M. Tausche, “Marriage Sermons in *Ad Status* Collections of the Central Middle Ages,” in *Modern Questions about Medieval Sermons* (ed. Nicole Bériou and D. d’Avray; Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull’Alto Medioevo, 1994).
- 6 See David d’Avray, *Medieval Marriage Sermons: Mass Communication in a Culture without Print* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); idem, “The Gospel of the Marriage Feast of Cana and Marriage Preaching in France,” in *Modern Questions about Medieval Sermons*, 135-154.
- 7 His matrimonial casuistry is developed in the 1530 *Von Ehesachen* (WA 30/3:205-248 (=LW 56:259-320) as well as in the numerous *Gutachten* which he authored or signed along with the other Wittenberg theologians.
- 8 Luther preached on Genesis in 1527 (WA 24) and returned to the text in his university lectures of 1535-1545 (WA 42; 43; 44). He preached about marriage in sermons *Von dem Ehestand* of 1519 and *Vom ehelichen Leben* of 1522, as well as in most of his sermons on John 2:1ff (e.g., WA 17/2:60-71, included in the church postil). One of these, however, discussed by Schnell on the basis of the printed version (WA 17/1:12-29; see Rüdiger Schnell, ed., *Geschlechterbeziehungen und Textfunktionen: Studien zu Eheschriften der Frühen Neuzeit* (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1998) 155ff) is, in fact, a 1560 composition by Georg Buchholtz that bears almost no relation to Rörer’s notes on the 1525 sermon Luther preached (WA 17/1:8-12). See also Luther’s preface to Justus Menius’ *Oeconomia Christiana* (WA 30/2:60-63). His matrimonial casuistry is developed in the 1530 *Von Ehesachen* (WA 30/3:205-248 (=LW 56:259-320) as well as in the numerous *Gutachten* which he authored or signed along with the other Wittenberg theologians.
- 9 *Itinerarium Paradisi Religiosissimi patris artium ac sacre pagine professoris Parisien. magistri Johannis Raulin: celeberrimi ordinis Clun. columnae precipue: complectens Sermones de penitentia et eius partibus... Cui adiuncti sunt non minus commendandi sermones eiusdem grauissimi patris de matrimonio: ac viduitate* (Paris: Berthold Rembolt/ Jean Petit, 1514). The volume is dedicated to Louis de Gravelle, Admiral of France (f. aa2r-v). These sermons were considered by Thomas Tentler in his magisterial study *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977). Raulin’s preaching, though not this particular group of sermons, is discussed by Larissa Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ: Preaching in Late Medieval and Reformation France*

- (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).
- 10 Raulin, *Itinerarium Paradisi*, 113r-v.
 - 11 Ibid., 113v.
 - 12 Ibid., 114v-115r.
 - 13 Ibid., 115r.
 - 14 Ibid., 114r.
 - 15 See Rüdiger Schnell, *Sexualität und Emotionalität in der vormodernen Ehe* (Köln: Böhlau, 2002) 280-283.
 - 16 Raulin, *Itinerarium Paradisi*, 132r.
 - 17 Ibid.
 - 18 Ibid., 131v.
 - 19 Ibid., f. 132r. Here Raulin refers to the *glossa*, but the comment (quoted from Sextus [Xystus] the Pythagorean) appears proximately in Lombard's *Sentences* 4 dist. 31, *de excusatione coitus*, PL 192:920; see also Alanus ab Insulis, *Summa de arte praedicatoria* 45 (PL 210:193). The *glossa ordinaria* on 1 Cor. 7 contained the similar assertion, "Incontinentiae malum est, quod vir cognoscit uxorem etiam ultra necessitatem procreandi liberos," PL 114:529. Cf. Tentler's discussion, *Sin and Confession*, 224-232. Luther had cited the maxim in his *Decem praecepta Wittenbergensi praedicata populo* (1518), WA 1:489, but explicitly rejects it in his 1522 exegesis of 1 Cor 7 (WA 12:181). In Roman Catholic preaching after the Reformation, see Agricola, *Ehespiegel*, 88.
 - 20 See Nicole Bériou and David d'Avray, "Henry of Provins, O.P.'s Comparison of the Dominican and Franciscan Orders with the 'Order' of Matrimony," in *Modern Questions about Medieval Sermons*, 71-76.
 - 21 Cyriacus Spangenberg refers to stories of St. Alexius and Conrad II, *Ehespiegel* (Straßburg: Samuel Emmel, 1561) f. 203r. See d'Avray, *Medieval Marriage: Symbolism and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) 181f.
 - 22 Luther refers to this exegesis in the Epiphany 2 sermon included in Roth's 1528 Winterpostille, WA 21:57. See Pierre de Reims, in d'Avray, *Medieval Marriage Sermons*, 101; Aldobrandio da Toscanella, in d'Avray, *Medieval Marriage: Symbolism and Society*, 232.
 - 23 Spangenberg, *Ehespiegel*, f. 158v.
 - 24 Rüdiger Schnell, ed., *Text und Geschlecht: Mann und Frau in Eheschriften der frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997) 219.
 - 25 Johann Mathesius, *Vom Ehestand und Hauswesen* (Nürnberg: Johann vom Berg and Ulrich Newber, 1563; 2nd ed.; Nürnberg: Dietrich Gerlatz, 1569); idem, *Ehespiegel Mathesii* (Leipzig: Johann Beyer, 1591); Spangenberg, *Ehespiegel*; Hieronymus Menzel, *Hochzeit Predigten* (Eisleben: Andreas Petri / Leipzig: Henning Groß, 1592; expanded 2nd ed., 1596); Nicolaus Selnecker, *Ehespiegel* (Eisleben: Petri, 1589). On Spangenberg's wedding sermons, see Thomas Miller, *Mirror for Marriage: Lutheran Views of Marriage and the Family, 1520-1600*, Ph.D. diss, U. of Virginia, 1981.
 - 26 Franciscus Agricola, *Biblischer Ehe-Spiegel. In Siben Catholischen Ehe- oder Braut-Predigen verfasst* (Köln: Bernard Wolther, 1599).
 - 27 Selnecker, *Ehespiegel*, f. ()3r.
 - 28 Mathesius, *Ehespiegel*, sermon 1, ff. 2v-3r; *ibid.*, sermon 5, f. 12r-v; cf. *ibid.*, sermon 10, ff. 26v-27r. Franck is condemned by name along with Jerome in sermon 64, f. 206v. See Luther's preface to Johann Freder, *Ein Dialogus dem Ehestand zu Ehren* (1545), WA 54:171-175 (=LW 60:336-46).
 - 29 Mathesius, *Ehespiegel*, sermon 10, f. 27v.
 - 30 LW 45:43.
 - 31 Mathesius, *Von Ehestand und Hauswesen*, sermon 14, f. Aaa1r.
 - 32 Mathesius, *Ehespiegel* 3, f. 8v.
 - 33 Mathesius, *Ehestand* 9, f. Ee1v, *Ehestand* Pp4r.
 - 34 Cf. Helmut Puff, *Sodomy in Reformation Germany and Switzerland, 1400-1600* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).
 - 35 LW 51:361.
 - 36 WA 41:549. Luther had followed the traditional interpretation in his *Decem praecepta Wittenbergensi praedicata populo* (1518), WA 1:489.
 - 37 Mathesius, *Vom Ehestand und Hauswesen*, f. Eee4r; *Ehespiegel*, sermon 64, f. 207r.
 - 38 On Augustine, see R.A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 45-62.
 - 39 WA 49:801; LW 51:362.
 - 40 Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, Ps. 47, PL 47:1917.
 - 41 Mathesius, *Ehespiegel*, sermon 7, f. 20r. Luther refers to the same maxim in his 1545 wedding sermon, WA 49:801 (=LW 51:362). The WA (49:849) indicates that the Augustinian passage has not been identified. Cf. the similar (also unidentified) Augustinian sentence quoted in the Genesis lectures, WA 43:454, the unauthorized printing of the 1519 sermon *Vom ehelichen Stand*, WA 9:215, and the *Tischreden*, "Unum quidem locum interea locutum invenimus apud Augustinum, cum dicit: Si quis non potest caste vivere, ducat uxorem et securus procedat ad iudicium," WA TR 1:187, no 433; WA TR 3:39ff, no. 2867. Cf. Augustine, *De bono viduitatis* 9.12: "In conjugali quippe vinculo si pudicitia conservatur, damnatio non timetur"; Augustine, *Enarrationes* on Ps. 47 (PL 37:1917), cited in part in Lombard, *Sentences* 4.32, *Quod neuter continere valeat, nisi ex communi consensu* (PL 192:922-923) and Gratian, *Decretum* 2.33.5.c5 (PL 187:1651): "Si propter propriam infirmitatem ducit uxorem, plangens potius quia sine uxore esse non potuit, quam gaudens quia duxit. . . quisquis talis est, securus exspectat diem novissimum. . . Non ergo timeat venturum Dominum; sed speret, et desideret: non enim venit illi ad inferendas poenas, sed ad finiendas molestias."
 - 42 Mathesius, *Ehespiegel*, sermon 64, f. 207r.
 - 43 Mencil, *Hochzeytspredigten* f. 2v-2r.
 - 44 See, e.g., WA 41:518 (1536 wedding sermon for Philipp of Pomerania): "God says with his own mouth that the estate of marriage should be held in honor, and the marriage bed undefiled. If one looks at the Fall, it is not clean, because there was no shameful lust in paradise. . . . But now no man or woman is without the shameful lust and love, and so Ps. 51 says, 'I was conceived in sin.' This is what all the saints confess, that even though they are married, they have not overcome the shameful filth. . . . Nevertheless he says 'it shall be considered clean', and yet it is unclean. But he purposes to honor and adorn this estate so that uncleanness shall not be uncleanness, and [he says], 'I will not see any unholiness.' If you refrain from fornication and other corporal vices, then this which is impure of itself shall be pure. But not of its own nature or in fact or deed, but God covers it with his grace . . . so that when husband and wife love each other, it shall not be impure, and yet the poison remains. Yet he will not impute it to them, but to the ones who commit adultery and fornication. But this is to be purified indeed, when God pronounces it pure. . . . Since God calls this estate pure, holy, and the marriage bed chaste, so we should call it. . . . And so of pure grace he takes away the sin which remains sin in itself. So he does to Christians when they are baptized and believe in Jesus Christ the Savior. God the Father says, 'You

shall be called holy and a son of eternal life, in whom there is nothing unclean.' I am baptized and believe in Christ, and yet I am not fully purified, but full of uncleanness. God makes [this] a cross. But 'I will give the Holy Spirit, who shall purify you, [and] the cross around your neck' – and yet they are not yet perfectly holy. Nonetheless, the verdict from heaven declares me to be holy. Why? Because there is a beautiful heaven above [me], etc., that is, Christ with his righteousness, because I am baptized into him and I believe, and while I do this, God makes a covering over [me], and God does not impute sin, so long as [I am] in Christ. This, therefore, is the richness of his grace: that he forgives us all those sins that still exist, and yet I am I sinner. Yet it is because you believe in the Son and are his little chick. Therefore there is no need of [special] consecration, etc. He closes heaven over them, or the marriage bed, and he says: 'If you avoid adultery and fornication, sin shall not be imputed to you, though in fact it is sin in itself.' This, therefore [applies] to those who are in the marriage bed; let those who are not in it be careful to regard it as a pure and blessed estate.'; also the Genesis lectures (Gen 26:8), WA 43:454.

- 45 Mencil, *Hochzeytspredigten* f. 70v.
 46 WA 43:454.
 47 Mathesius, *Vom Ehestand* 4, f. N4r.
 48 Mathesius, *Vom Ehestand und Hauswesen*, ff. N4r-O1v.
 49 Mencil, *Hochzeyt Predigten* f. 95r-v.
 50 Mathesius, *De profundis*, f. D2r-D3v.
 51 Agricola, *Ehespiegel*, pp. 75-76. Cf. Luther's rejection of making Tobit's example into a general rule, on 1 Cor. 7 (1523), WA 12:102, and his afternoon sermon for Exaudi (8 May 1524), WA 15:560.
 52 d'Avray, *Medieval Marriage: Symbolism and Society*.
 53 WA 27:384.
 54 Mathesius, *Ehespiegel*, sermon 56, f. 183r; *ibid.*, sermon 74, f. 258v; cf. also Spangenberg, *Ehespiegel*, f. 17r.
 55 Mathesius, *Vom Ehestand* 14, f. Aaa2r.
 56 Mencil, *Hochzeit Predigten* ff. 7v-8v.
 57 Mathesius, *Vom Ehestand*, f. A3v. Cf. Schnell, *Sexualität und Emotionalität*.
 58 Contra Karant-Nunn, "Reformation Society, Women, and the Family," in *The Reformation World* (ed. Andrew Pettegree; London: Routledge, 2000) 441.
 59 Mathesius, *Vom Ehestand*, f. B2v.
 60 Mathesius, *Ehespiegel*, sermon 18, f. 43v.
 61 Mathesius, *Vom Ehestand*, ff. Gg1v-Gg2r.
 62 Mathesius, *Ehespiegel*, sermon 69, f. 228v; *idem*, *Vom Ehestand*, ff. Ggg2v-3r.
 63 Mathesius, *Vom Ehestand*, f. Rr2v.
 64 Schnell, *Geschlechterbeziehungen*, 41-42.
 65 Contrast the influential monastic writer Peter Damian's interpretation of taking up the cross as a counsel, not a command—hence part of monastic life: *Sermo 47.1 de exaltatione crucis* PL 144:764; cf. John Cassian's description of monastic life as bearing the cross, *Institutes* 4.34, PL 49:194-195.
 66 Mathesius, *Vom Ehestand* "Aber lieben freunde/ je grösser Heyliger/ je schwerer Creutz/ je lieber kind/ je scherpfper ruthel/ je hertzlicher liebe/ je schmerzlicher leid."
 67 *Ibid.*, f. ZZ1r-v.
 68 Agricola, *Ehespiegel*, 52, 89.

- 69 For such examples, see Steven Ozment, *Magdalena and Balthasar: An Intimate Portrait of Life in 16th-century Europe* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986); Ozment, ed., *Three Behaim Boys: Growing Up in Early Modern Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); *idem*, *Flesh and Spirit: Private Life in Early Modern Germany* (New York: Viking, 1999) 13-52.

Christopher Boyd Brown is Associate Professor of Church History at the Boston University School of Theology. His period of specialization extends from the Renaissance through the Reformation and Counter-Reformation to the period of Orthodoxy and Pietism. His forthcoming book, Singing the Gospel: Lutheran Hymns and the Success of the Reformation, appraises the Reformation in light of the use of vernacular hymns to spread Lutheran doctrine and piety and to form Lutheran identity among the early Protestant laity. Brown's degrees in History & Literature (A.B.) and History (A.M., Ph.D.) are from Harvard University. His M.Div. is from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Mo.

The Mother of all Earthly Laws: The Lutheran Reformation of Marriage

*John Witte, Jr.*¹

Questions of sex, marriage and family life occupied Lutheran theologians and jurists from the very beginning of the Reformation. The leading theological lights in Germany – Martin Luther, Philip Melancthon, Martin Bucer, Johannes Bugenhagen, and Johannes Brenz – all prepared lengthy tracts on the subject in the 1520s. A score of leading jurists took up legal questions of marriage in their legal opinions and commentaries, often working under the direct inspiration of Lutheran theology and theologians. Virtually every German and Scandinavian polity that converted to the Lutheran cause in the sixteenth century had new marriage laws on the books within a decade of its acceptance of the Reformation, which they then heavily revised in subsequent generations.

The reformers' early preoccupation with marriage reform was driven in part by their theology. Many of the core theological issues of the Reformation were implicated by the prevailing Catholic theology and canon law of marriage. The Church's jurisdiction over marriage was, for the reformers, a particularly flagrant example of the Church's usurpation of the magistrate's authority. The Catholic sacramental concept of marriage, on which the Church predicated its jurisdiction, raised deep questions of sacramental theology and biblical interpretation. The canonical prohibition on marriage of clergy and monastics stood sharply juxtaposed to Lutheran doctrines of the priesthood and of the Christian vocation. The canon law impediments to marriage, its prohibitions against complete divorce and remarriage, and its close regulations of sexuality, parenting, and education all stood in considerable tension with the reformers' interpretation of biblical teaching. That a child could enter marriage without parental permission or church

consecration betrayed, in the reformers' views, basic responsibilities of family, church, and state to children. Issues of marriage doctrine and law thus implicated and epitomized many of the cardinal theological issues of the Lutheran Reformation.

The reformers' early preoccupation with marriage was also driven, in part, by their jurisprudence. The starting assumption of the budding Lutheran theories of law, society, and politics was that the earthly kingdom was governed by the three natural estates of household, church, and state. *Hausvater*, *Gottesvater*, and *Landesvater*; *paterfamilias*, *patertheologicus*, and *paterpoliticus*: these were the three natural offices through which God revealed himself and reflected his authority in the world. These three offices and orders stood equal before God and before each other. Each was called to discharge essential tasks in the earthly kingdom without impediment or interference from the other. The reform of marriage, therefore, was as important as the reform of the church and the state. Indeed, marital reform was even more urgent, for the marital household was, in the reformers' view, the "oldest," "most primal," and "most essential" of the three estates, yet the most deprecated and subordinated of the three. Marriage is the "mother of all earthly laws," Luther wrote, and the source from which the church, the state, and other earthly institutions flowed. "God has most richly blessed this estate above all others, and in addition, has bestowed on it and wrapped up in it everything in the world, to the end that this estate might be well and richly provided for. Married life therefore is no jest or presumption; it is an excellent thing and a matter of divine seriousness."²

The reformers' early preoccupation with marriage reform was also driven, in part, by their politics. A number of early leaders of the Reformation faced aggressive prosecution by the Catholic Church and its political allies for violation of the canon law of marriage and celibacy.³ Among the earliest Protestant leaders were ex-priests and ex-monastics who had forsaken their orders and vows, and often married shortly thereafter.⁴ Indeed, one of the acts of solidarity with the new Protestant cause was to marry or divorce in open violation of the canon law and in defiance of a bishop's instructions. This was not just an instance of crime and disobedience. It was an outright scandal, particularly when an ex-monk such as Brother Martin Luther married an ex-nun such as Sister Katharina von Bora – a *prima facie* case of double spiritual incest.⁵ As Catholic Church courts began to prosecute these canon law offenses, Protestant theologians and jurists rose to the defense of their co-religionists – producing a welter of briefs, letters, sermons, and pamphlets that denounced traditional norms and pronounced a new theology and law of marriage.

The Case of Johann Apel

Let's begin with a concrete case. Our case comes from 1523. This is six years after Luther posted his 95 Theses, three years after his excommunication, two years after the Diet of Worms. Luther is back in Wittenberg from the Wartburg Castle. The Lutheran Reformation is gaining real revolutionary momentum in Germany and beyond.

Our case involves a priest and lawyer named Johann Apel.⁶ Apel was born and raised in Nürnberg, an important German city, still faithful to Rome at the time of the case. In 1514, Apel enrolled for theological study at the brand new University of Wittenberg, where he had some acquaintance with Luther. In 1516, Apel went to the University of Leipzig for legal studies. Like many law students in his day, he studied for a joint degree in canon law and civil law. He was awarded the doctor of both laws in 1519. After a brief apprenticeship, Apel took holy orders and swore the requisite oath of clerical celibacy. One of the strong prince-bishops of the day, Conrad, the Bishop of Würzburg and Duke of Franken, appointed Apel as a cathedral canon in 1523. Conrad also licensed Apel as an advocate in all church courts. Apel settled into his home in Würzburg and began his pastoral and legal duties.

Shortly after his appointment, Apel began romancing a nun at the nearby St. Marr cloister. (Her name is not revealed in the records.) The couple saw each other secretly for several weeks. They carried on a brisk correspondence. They began a torrid romance. She evidently became pregnant. Ultimately, the nun forsook the cloister and her vows and secretly moved in with Apel. A few weeks later, the couple were secretly married and cohabited openly as a married couple.

This was an outrage. Clerical concubinage was one thing. The surviving records show that at least three other priests in Conrad's diocese kept concubines and paid Conrad the standard concubinage tax for that privilege. Earlier that very same year of 1523, another priest had fathered a child and paid the Bishop the standard cradle tax. Clerical concubinage, even fatherhood, was known and was tolerated by some obliging Catholic bishops of the day. But clerical marriage: that was an outrage, particularly when it involved both a priest and a nun.

Thus upon hearing of Apel's marriage, Bishop Conrad privately annulled the marriage and admonished Apel to confess his sin, to return his putative wife to her cloister, and to resume his clerical duties. Apel refused, insisting that his marriage, though secretly contracted, was valid. Unconvinced, the Bishop privately indicted Apel for a canon law crime and temporarily suspended him from office. Apel offered a spirited defense of his conduct in a frank letter to the Bishop.

Bishop Conrad, in response, had Apel publicly indicted in his own bishop's court, for breach of holy orders and the oath of celibacy, and for defiance of his episcopal dispensation and injunction. In a written response, Apel adduced conscience and Scripture in his defense, much like Luther had done two years before at the Diet of Worms. "I have sought only to follow the dictates of conscience and the Gospel," Apel insisted, not to defy episcopal authority and canon law. Scripture and conscience condone marriage for fit adults as "a dispensation and remedy against lust and fornication." My wife and I have availed ourselves of these godly gifts and entered and consummated our marriage "in chasteness and love."

Contrary to Scripture, Apel continued, the church's canon law commands celibacy for clerics and monastics. This introduces all manner of impurity among them. "Don't you see the fornication and the concubinage?" Apel implored Conrad. "Don't you see the defilement and the adultery in your bishopric – with brothers spilling their seed upon the ground, upon each other, and upon many a maiden whether single or married." My alleged sin and crime of breaking "this little man-made rule of celibacy," Apel insisted, "is very slight when compared to these sins of fornication against the law of the Lord, which you, excellent father, will cover and condone if the payment is high enough." "The Word of the Lord is what will judge between you and me," Apel declared to the Bishop, and such Word commands my acquittal.

Bishop Conrad took the case under advisement. Apel took his cause to the budding Lutheran community. He sought support for his claims from Luther, Melancthon, and other Protestant leaders who had already spoken against celibacy and monasticism. He published his remarks at trial adorned with a robust preface by Martin Luther. This became an instant hot seller.

Shortly after publication of the tract, Bishop Conrad had Apel arrested and put in prison, pending further proceedings. Apel's family pleaded in vain with the Bishop to release him. The local civil magistrate twice mandated that Apel be released, again to no avail. Jurists and councilmen wrote letters of support. Even Emperor Charles V sent a brief letter urging the Bishop not to protract Apel's harsh imprisonment in violation of imperial law, but to try him and release him if found innocent.

Apel was tried three months later and was found guilty of several violations of the canon law and of heretically participating in "Luther's damned teachings." He was defrocked – literally his clerical robes were torn from him in open court – and he was excommunicated and evicted from the community. Thereafter Apel made his way to Wittenberg where, at the urging of Luther and others, he was appointed to the law faculty at the University. Two years later, Apel served as one of the four witnesses to the marriage of ex-monk Martin Luther to ex-nun Katharina von Bora.

Catholic v. Protestant Views of Celibacy and Marriage

Bishop Conrad's position in the Apel case was in full compliance with the prevailing Catholic theology and canon law of marriage and celibacy, in place since the twelfth century.⁷ The medieval Church regarded marriage as "a duty for the sound and a remedy for the sick," in St. Augustine's famous phrase. Marriage was a creation of God allowing man and woman to become "two in one flesh" in order to "be fruitful and multiply" (Gen 1:28; 2:24). Since the fall into sin, marriage had also become a remedy for lust, a channel to direct one's natural passion to the service of the community and the Church. When contracted between Christians, marriage was also a sacrament, a symbol of the indissoluble union between Christ and the Church. As a sacrament, marriage fell within the social hierarchy of the Church and was subject to its jurisdiction, its law-making power. The Church developed a comprehensive canon law of marriage after the twelfth century, administered by a vast hierarchy of church courts and officials throughout Western Christendom, stretching from Italy to Ireland, Portugal to Poland.

The Church did not regard marriage as its most exalted estate, however. Though a sacrament and a sound way of Christian living, marriage was not considered to be so spiritually edifying. Marriage was a remedy for sin, not a recipe for righteousness. Marriage was considered subordinate to celibacy, propagation less virtuous than contemplation, marital love less wholesome than spiritual love. Clerics, monastics, and other servants of the church were to forgo marriage as a condition for ecclesiastical service. Those who could not were not worthy of the Church's holy orders and offices.

This prohibition on marriage, first universally imposed on clerics and monastics by the First Lateran Council of 1123, was defended with a whole arsenal of complex arguments. The most common arguments were based on St. Paul's statements in 1 Corinthians 7. In this famous passage, Paul did allow that it was "better to marry than to burn" with lust. But Paul also said that it was better to remain single than to marry or remarry. "It is well for a man not to touch a woman," he wrote. For those who are married "will have worldly troubles." It is best for you to remain without marriage "to secure your undivided attention to the Lord" (1 Cor 7:1, 28, 35). These biblical passages, heavily glossed by the early Church Fathers, provided endless medieval commentaries on and commendations of celibacy. They were buttressed by newly discovered classical Greek and Roman writings extolling celibacy for the contemplative as well as by the growing medieval celebration of the virginity of Mary as a model for pious Christian living.

Various philosophical arguments underscored the superiority of the celibate clergy to the married laity. It was a commonplace of medieval philosophy to describe God's creation as hierarchical in structure – a vast chain

of being emanating from God and descending through various levels and layers of reality down to the smallest particulars. In this great chain of being, each creature found its place and its purpose. Each institution found its natural order and hierarchy. It was thus simply the nature of things that some persons and institutions were higher on this chain of being, some lower. It was the nature of things that some were closer and had more ready access to God, and some were further away and in need of mediation in their relationship with God. Readers of Dante's *Divine Comedy* will recognize this chain of being theory at work in Dante's vast hierarchies of hell, purgatory, and paradise.

This chain of being theory was one basis for medieval arguments for the superiority of the clergy to the laity. Clergy were simply higher on this chain of being, laity lower. The clergy were called to higher spiritual activities in the realm of grace, the laity to lower temporal activities in the realm of nature. The clergy were thus distinct from the laity in their dress, in their language, and in their livings. They were exempt from earthly obligations, such as paying civil taxes or serving in the military. They were immune from the jurisdiction of civil courts. And they were foreclosed from the natural activities of the laity, such as those of sex, marriage, and family life. These natural, corporal activities were literally beneath the clergy in ontological status and thus formally foreclosed. For a cleric or monastic to marry or to have sex was thus in a real sense to act against nature (*contra naturam*).

By contrast, Johann Apel's arguments with Bishop Conrad anticipated a good deal of the Lutheran critique of this traditional teaching of marriage and celibacy. Like their Catholic brethren, the sixteenth-century Lutheran reformers taught that marriage was created by God for the procreation of children and for the protection of couples from sexual sin. But, unlike their Catholic brethren, the reformers rejected the subordination of marriage to celibacy. We are all sinful creatures, Luther and his followers argued. Lust has pervaded the conscience of everyone. Marriage is not just an option, it is a necessity for sinful humanity. For without it, a person's distorted sexuality becomes a force capable of overthrowing the most devout conscience. A person is enticed by nature to concubinage, prostitution, masturbation, voyeurism, and sundry other sinful acts. "You cannot be without a [spouse] and remain without sin," Luther thundered from his Wittenberg pulpit. You will test your neighbor's bed unless your own marital bed is happily occupied and well used.⁸

"To spurn marriage is to act against God's calling ... and against nature's urging," Luther continued. The calling of marriage should be declined only by those who have received God's special gift of continence. "Such persons are rare, not one in a thousand [later he said one hundred thousand] for

they are a special miracle of God.”⁹ The Apostle Paul has identified this group as the permanently impotent and the eunuchs; very few others can claim such a unique gift.

This understanding of marriage as a protection against sin undergirded the Lutheran reformers’ bitter attack on traditional rules of mandatory celibacy. To require celibacy of clerics, monks, and nuns, the reformers believed, was beyond the authority of the church and ultimately a source of great sin. Celibacy was a gift for God to give, not a duty for the church to impose. It was for each individual, not for the church, to decide whether he or she had received this gift. By demanding monastic vows of chastity and clerical vows of celibacy, the church was seen to be intruding on Christian freedom and contradicting Scripture, nature, and common sense. By institutionalizing and encouraging celibacy the church was seen to prey on the immature and the uncertain. By holding out food, shelter, security, and economic opportunity, the monasteries enticed poor and needy parents to oblate their minor children to a life of celibacy, regardless of whether it suited their natures. Mandatory celibacy, Luther taught, was hardly a prerequisite to true clerical service of God. Instead it led to “great whoredom and all manner of fleshly impurity and ... hearts filled with thoughts of women day and night.”¹⁰

Furthermore, to impute higher spirituality and holier virtue to the celibate contemplative life was, for the reformers, contradicted by the Bible. The Bible teaches that each person must perform his or her calling with the gifts that God provides. The gifts of continence and contemplation are but two among many, and are by no means superior to the gifts of marriage and child-rearing. Each calling plays an equally important, holy, and virtuous role in the drama of redemption, and its fulfillment is a service to God. Luther concurred with the Apostle Paul that the celibate person “may better be able to preach and care for God’s word.” But, he immediately added: “It is God’s word and the preaching which makes celibacy – such as that of Christ and of Paul – better than the estate of marriage. In itself, however, the celibate life is far inferior.”¹¹

Not only is celibacy no better than marriage, Luther insisted; clergy are no better than laity. To make this argument cogent, Luther had to counter the medieval chain of being theory that placed celibate clergy naturally above married laity. Luther’s answer lay in his complex theory of the separation of the earthly kingdom and the heavenly kingdom.¹² God has ordained two kingdoms or realms in which humanity is destined to live, the earthly kingdom and the heavenly kingdom. The earthly kingdom is the realm of creation, of natural and civic life, where a person operates primarily by reason and law. The heavenly kingdom is the realm of redemption, of spiritual and eternal life, where a person operates primarily by faith and love. These two

kingdoms embrace parallel forms of righteousness and justice, government and order, truth and knowledge. They interact and depend upon each other in a variety of ways. But these two kingdoms ultimately remain distinct. The earthly kingdom is distorted by sin, and governed by the Law. The heavenly kingdom is renewed by grace and guided by the Gospel. A Christian is a citizen of both kingdoms at once and invariably comes under the distinctive government of each. As a heavenly citizen, the Christian remains free in his or her conscience, called to live fully by the light of the Word of God. But as an earthly citizen, the Christian is bound by law, and called to obey the natural orders and offices of household, state, and church that God has ordained and maintained for the governance of this earthly kingdom.

For Luther, the fall into sin destroyed the original continuity and communion between the Creator and the creation, the natural tie between the heavenly kingdom and the earthly kingdom. There was no series of emanations of being from God to humanity. There was no stairway of merit from humanity to God. There was no purgatory. There was no heavenly hierarchy. God is present in the heavenly kingdom, and is revealed in the earthly kingdom primarily through “masks.” Persons are born into the earthly kingdom, and have access to the heavenly kingdom only through faith.

Luther did not deny the traditional view that the earthly kingdom retains its natural order, despite the fall into sin. There remained, in effect, a chain of being, an order in creation that gave each creature, especially each human creature and each social institution, its proper place and purpose in this life. But, for Luther, this chain of being was horizontal, not hierarchical. Before God, all persons and all institutions in the earthly kingdom were by nature equal. Luther’s earthly kingdom was a flat regime, a horizontal realm of being, with no person and no institution obstructed or mediated by any other in access to and accountability before God.

Luther thus rejected traditional teachings that the clergy were higher beings with readier access to God and God’s mysteries. He rejected the notion that clergy mediated the channel of grace between the laity and God – dispensing God’s grace through the sacraments and preaching, and interceding for God’s grace by hearing confessions, receiving charity, and offering prayers on behalf of the laity.

Clergy and laity were fundamentally equal before God and before all others, Luther argued, sounding his famous doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. All persons were called to be priests to their peers. Luther at once “laicized” the clergy and “clericized” the laity. He treated the traditional “clerical” office of preaching and teaching as just one other vocation alongside many others that a conscientious Christian could properly and freely pursue. He treated all traditional “lay” offices as forms of divine call-

ing and priestly vocation, each providing unique opportunities for service to one's peers. Preachers and teachers in the church must carry their share of civic duties and pay their share of civil taxes just like everyone else. And they should participate in earthly activities such as marriage and family life just like everyone else.

The Goods and Gifts of Marriage in Lutheran Thought

Virtually all adults, clerical and lay alike, are called to marriage, Luther argued, because this institution offers two of the most sublime gifts that God has accorded to humanity – the gift of marital love, and the gift of children.

Luther wrote exuberantly about this first gift. “Over and above all [other loves] is marital love,” he wrote. “Marital love drives husband and wife to say to each other, ‘It is you whom I want, not what is yours. I want neither your silver nor your gold. I want neither. I want only you. I want you in your entirety, or nor at all.’ All other kinds of love seek something other than the loved one: this kind wants only to have the beloved's own self completely. If Adam had not fallen, the love of bride and groom would have been the loveliest thing.”¹³ “There's more to [marriage] than a union of the flesh,” Luther wrote, although he considered sexual intimacy and warmth to be essential to the flourishing of marriage. “There must [also] be harmony with respect to patterns of life and ways of thinking.”¹⁴

The chief virtue of marriage [is] that spouses can rely upon each other and with confidence entrust everything they have on earth to each other, so that it is as safe with one's spouse as with oneself.... God's Word is actually inscribed on one's spouse. When a man looks at his wife as if she were the only woman on earth, and when a woman looks at her husband if he were the only man on earth; yes, if no king or queen, not even the sun itself sparkles any more brightly and lights up your eyes more than your own husband or wife, then right there you are face to face with God speaking. God promises to you your wife or husband, actually gives your spouse to you, saying: “The man shall be yours; the woman shall be yours. I am pleased beyond measure! Creatures earthly and heavenly are jumping for joy.” For there is no jewellery more precious than God's Word; through it you come to regard your spouse as a gift of God and, as long as you do that, you will have no regrets.¹⁵

Luther did not press these warm sentiments to the point of denying the traditional leadership of the *paterfamilias* within the marital household. Luther

had no modern egalitarian theory of marriage. But Luther also did not betray these warm sentiments to the point of becoming the grim prophet of patriarchy, paternalism, and procreation *über alles* that some modern critics make him out to be. For Luther, love was a necessary and sufficient good of marriage. He supported marriages between loving couples, even those between young men and older women beyond child-bearing years or between couples who knew full well that they could have no children.¹⁶ He stressed repeatedly that husband and wife were spiritual, intellectual, and emotional “partners,” each to have regard and respect for the strengths of the other. He called his own wife Katharina respectfully “Mr. Katy” and said more than once of her: “I am an inferior lord, she the superior; I am Aaron, she is my Moses.”¹⁷ He repeatedly told husbands and wives alike to tend to each other's spiritual, emotional, and sexual needs and to share in all aspects of child-rearing and household maintenance – from changing their children's diapers to helping their children establish their own new homes when they had grown up.¹⁸

In addition to the divine gift of love, marriage also sometimes bestowed on the couple the divine gift of children. Luther treated procreation as an act of co-creation and co-redemption with God. He wished for all marital couples the joy of having children, not only for their own sakes but for the sake of God as well. Childrearing, he wrote,

is the noblest and most precious work, because to God there can be nothing dearer than the salvation of souls [Y]ou can see how rich the estate of marriage is in good works. God has entrusted to its bosom souls begotten of its own body on whom it can lavish all manner of Christian works. Most certainly, father and mother are apostles, bishops, [and] priests to their children, for it is they who make them acquainted with the Gospel. See therefore how good and great is God's work and ordinance.¹⁹

This last image – of parents serving as priests to their children – was a new and further application of the familiar Protestant doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. It added further concreteness to the Protestant effort to soften the hard medieval distinction between a superior clergy and a lower laity: all persons are priests to their peers, and all parents are priests to their children, called to care for them in body, mind, and soul alike.

The education of children fell not only to parents. The Lutheran reformers were pioneers in creating public schools for the religious and civic education of all children, and producing a welter of catechisms, textbooks, and household manuals to assist in the same. For the reformers, each child

was called to a unique Christian vocation, and it was the responsibility of the parent, priest, and prince alike to ensure that each child was given the chance to discern his or her special gifts and prepare for the particular vocation that best suited those gifts. This teaching drove the creation of public schools in early modern Protestant lands – Lutheran, Calvinist, and Anglican alike. It added a crucial public dimension to the parents' private procreation and nurture of their children. Philip Melancthon, the so-called “teacher of Germany,” called the public school a “civic seminary” designed to allow families, churches, and states alike to cooperate in imbuing both civic learning and spiritual piety in children.²⁰

Marriage is not a Sacrament but a Social Estate

While marriage was a gift of God for the couple and their children, for the Lutheran reformers marriage was a social institution of the earthly kingdom, not a sacrament of the heavenly kingdom. Marriage was, in Luther's words, “a natural order,” “an earthly institution,” “a secular and outward thing.”²¹ “No one can deny that marriage is an external, worldly matter, like clothing and food, house and property, subject to temporal authority, as the many imperial laws enacted on the subject prove.”²²

To be sure, Luther agreed, marriage can symbolize the union of Christ with his Church, as St. Paul wrote in Eph 5:32. The sacrifices that husband and wife make for each other and for their children can express the sacrificial love of Christ on the cross. A “blessed marriage and home” can be “a true church, a chosen cloister, yes, a paradise” on earth.²³ But these analogies and metaphors do not make marriage a sacrament on the order of Baptism and the Eucharist. Sacraments are God's gifts and signs of grace ensuring Christians of the promise of redemption which is available only to those who have faith.²⁴ Marriage carries no such promise and demands no such faith. “[N]owhere in Scripture,” writes Luther, “do we read that anyone would receive the grace of God by getting married; nor does the rite of matrimony contain any hint that that the ceremony is of divine institution.”²⁵ Scripture teaches that only Baptism and the Eucharist (and perhaps penance, the early Luther allowed) confer this promise of grace. All other so-called sacraments are “mere human artifices” that the Church has created to augment its legal powers and to fill its coffers with court fees and fines.²⁶

The Catholic Church, Luther continued, has based its entire sacramental theology and canon law of marriage on a misunderstanding of Eph 5:32: “This is a great mystery (*mysterion*), and I am applying it to Christ and the church.” The Greek term *mysterion* in this passage means “mystery,”

not “sacrament.” St. Jerome had just gotten it wrong a millennium before when he translated the Greek word *mysterion* as the Latin word *sacramentum* and included that in the first Latin translation of the Bible, the Vulgate. The Catholic Church has gotten it wrong ever since. In this famous Ephesians passage, Luther argued, St. Paul is simply describing the loving and sacrificial union of a Christian husband and wife as a reflection, an echo, a foretaste of the perfect mysterious union of Christ and his church. But that analogy does not make marriage a sacrament that confers sanctifying grace. The Bible is filled with analogies and parables that are designed to provide striking images to drive home lessons: “Faith is like a mustard seed”: it grows even if tiny. “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast”: it leavens even if you can't see it. Or “the Son of Man will come like a thief in the night.” So be ready at all times for his return. And the examples go on. The marriage analogy is similar: “Marital love is like the union of Christ and the church.” So be faithful and sacrificial to your spouse. Ephesians 5 is not divining a new sacrament here, Luther insisted, but driving home a lesson about marital love that much of the chapter has just explicated.²⁷

Moreover, Luther argued, it made no sense for the Catholic Church to call marriage a sacrament without giving the clergy a role in this sacrament or providing a mandatory liturgy of preparation and celebration.²⁸ Neither the husband nor the wife are clerics -- nor can they be if they seek marriage in the Catholic Church. Yet, regardless of what they know or intend, both perform a sacrament just by making a present promise to marry, or making a future promise to marry and then having sex. And that purported sacramental act binds them for life. This just piles fiction upon self-serving fiction, Luther concluded. The Catholic Church forbids its clergy to marry because it is a natural association beneath them in dignity. Yet it pretends that marriage is a sacrament even if the clergy do not participate in its formation or if the marriage does not take place in the church. “This is an insult to the sacraments,” Luther charged. The church's “real goal is jurisdictional not theological” in declaring marriage to be a canonical sacrament. There is no valid biblical or theological basis for this claim.²⁹

Denying the sacramental quality of marriage, had dramatic implications for how a marriage should be formed, maintained, and dissolved. First, the Lutheran reformers argued, there should no formal religious or baptismal tests for marriage. Parties would certainly do well to marry within the faith for the sake of themselves and their children. But this is not an absolute condition. Religious differences should not be viewed as an impediment to a valid marriage that can lead to annulment, but a challenge to be more faithful within marriage and to induce proper faith in each other.

[M]arriage is an outward, bodily thing, like any other worldly undertaking. Just as I may eat, drink, sleep, walk, ride with, buy from, speak to, and deal with a heathen, Jew, Turk, or heretic, so I may also marry and continue in wedlock with him. Pay no attention to the precepts of those fools who forbid it. You will find plenty of Christians – and indeed the greater part of them – who are worse in their secret unbelief than any Jew, heathen, Turk, or heretic. A heathen is just as much a person – God’s good creation – as St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. Lucy, not to speak of slack or spurious Christians.³⁰

Second, because marriage was not a sacrament, divorce and remarriage were licit, and sometimes even necessary. To be sure, the reformers, like their Catholic brethren, insisted that marriages should be stable and presumptively indissoluble. But this presumption could be overcome if one of the essential marital goods were chronically betrayed or frustrated. If there were a breach of marital love by one of the parties – by reason of adultery, desertion, or cruelty – the marriage was broken. The innocent spouse who could not forgive this breach could sue for divorce and remarry. If there were a failure of procreation – by reason of sterility, incapacity, or disease discovered shortly after the wedding – the marriage was also broken. Those spouses who could not reconcile themselves to this condition could end the marriage and at least the healthy spouse could marry another. And if there were a failure of protection from sin – by reason of frigidity, separation, desertion, cruelty, or crime – the marriage was again broken. If the parties could not be reconciled to regular cohabitation and consortium, they could divorce and seek another marriage.³¹ In each instance, divorce was painful, sinful, and sad, and it was a step to be taken only after ample forethought and counsel. But it was a licit, and sometimes an essential, step to take.

Third, because marriage was not a sacrament, it also did not belong primarily within the jurisdiction of the church, that is, within the law-making authority of the clergy, consistory, and congregation. Luther underscored this several times in his sermons and instructions to fellow pastors:

First, we [pastors] have enough work to do in our proper office. Second, marriage is outside the church, is a civil matter, and therefore should belong to the government. Third, these cases [of marital dispute] have no limits, extend to the height, the breadth, and the depth, and produce many offences that bring disgrace to the gospel.... [W]e prefer to leave this business to civil officials. The responsibility rests on them. Only in cases of conscience should pastors give counsel to godly

people. Controversies and court cases [respecting marriage] we leave to the lawyers.³²

This did not mean that marriage was beyond the pale of God’s authority and law, or that it should be beyond the influence and concern of the church. “It is sheer folly,” Luther opined, to treat marriage as “nothing more than a purely human and secular state, with which God has nothing to do.”³³ Questions of the formation, maintenance, and dissolution of marriage remain important public concerns, in which church officials and members must still play a key role. First, Luther and other reformers took seriously the duty of pastoral counseling in marriage disputes that raised matters of conscience. As pastors themselves, many of the reformers issued scores of private letters to parishioners who came to them for counsel. Second, theologians and preachers were to communicate to magistrates and their subjects God’s law and will for marriage and the family, and press for reforms when prevailing marital laws violated God’s law. As a theologian, Luther published an ample series of pamphlets and sermons on questions of marriage and marriage law, sometimes wincing about how often his interventions were still needed. Third, to aid church members in their instruction and care, and to give notice to all members of society of a couple’s marriage, the local parish church clerk was to develop a publicly-available marriage registry which all married couples would be required to sign. Fourth, the pastors and teachers of the local church were to instruct and discipline the marriages of its church members by pronouncing the public banns of betrothal, by blessing and instructing the couple at their public church wedding ceremony, and by punishing sexual turpitude or egregious violations of marriage law with public reprimands, bans, or, in serious cases, excommunication. Fifth, it was incumbent upon all members of the church to participate in the spiritual upbringing and counsel of all new children, as their collective baptismal vows required.

The Legal Reformation of Marriage and Family Life

While the church still had a role to play in the guidance and governance of marriage and family life, chief legal authority, the Lutheran reformers insisted, now lay with the Christian magistrate. The civil magistrate holds his authority from God. His will is to reflect God’s will. His law is to reflect God’s law. His rule is to respect God’s creation ordinances and institutions. His civil calling is no less spiritual than that of the church. Marriage is thus still completely subject to godly law, but this law is now to be administered by the state, not the church.

This new Lutheran marital theology was something of a self-executing program of action for the creation of a new state law of the family in Lutheran lands. Just as the act of marriage came to signal a person's conversion to Protestantism, so the Marriage Act came to symbolize a political community's acceptance of Protestantism. Hundreds of new state marriage acts or ordinances emerged in Lutheran Germany and Scandinavia in the first decades of the Reformation.³⁴

These new Protestant state laws took over a number of basic principles and rules of marriage inherited from medieval canon law, classical Roman law, and ancient Mosaic law. These laws assumed: that marriage was formed by a two-step process, first of engagement then of marriage; that a valid engagement and marriage contract required the mutual consent of a man and a woman who had the age, fitness, and capacity to marry each other; that marriage was a presumptively permanent union that triggered mutual obligations of care and support for the other spouse, their children, and their dependents; that marriage often involved complex exchanges of betrothal gifts and dowry and triggered presumptive rights of dower and inheritance for widow(er)s and legitimate children; that marriages could be annulled on the discovery of various impediments and upon litigation before a proper tribunal; and that in the event of dissolution, both parents remained responsible for the maintenance and welfare of their children, and the guilty party bore heavy financial obligations to the innocent spouse and children alike. All these assumptions remained common both to the new Protestant civil laws and to the traditional Catholic canon laws of marriage.

But the Lutheran Reformation also made crucial legal changes – beyond the critical shift of marital jurisdiction from the church to the state. Because the reformers rejected the subordination of marriage to celibacy, they rejected laws that forbade clerical and monastic marriage, that denied remarriage to those who had married a cleric or monastic, and that permitted vows of chastity to annul vows of marriage. Because they rejected the sacramental nature of marriage, the reformers rejected impediments of crime and heresy and prohibitions against divorce in the modern sense. Marriage was for them the community of the couple in the present, not their sacramental union in the life to come. Where that community was broken, for one of a number of specific reasons (such as adultery or desertion), the couple could sue for divorce. Because persons by their lustful natures were in need of God's remedy of marriage, the reformers removed numerous legal, spiritual, and consanguineous impediments to marriage not countenanced by scripture. Because of their emphasis on the godly responsibility of the prince, the pedagogical role of the church and the family, and the priestly calling of all believers, the reformers insisted that both marriage and divorce be

public. The validity of marriage promises depended upon parental consent, witnesses, church consecration and registration, and priestly instruction. Couples who wanted to divorce had to announce their intentions in the church and community and petition a civil judge to dissolve the bond. In the process of marriage formation and dissolution, therefore, the couple was subject to God's law, as appropriated in the civil law, and to God's will, as revealed in the admonitions of parents, peers, and pastors.

On account of all these changes, marriages in Lutheran lands were easier to enter and exit. Family life was more public and participatory. Children were afforded greater rights and protections. Abused spouses were given a way out of miserable homes. Divorcees and widow(er)s were given a second chance to start life anew. Ministers were married, rather than single, and better able to exemplify and implement the ideals of Christian marriage and sexual morality.

Many of the legal reforms of marriage introduced by the Lutheran reformers would remain at the heart of the Western legal tradition until the later twentieth century. But not all was sweetness and light in the Lutheran Reformation of domestic life. Yes, the Protestant reformers did outlaw monasteries and cloisters. But these reforms also ended the vocations of many single women and men, placing a new premium on the vocation of marriage. Ever since, adult Protestant singles have chafed in a sort of pastoral and theological limbo, objects of curiosity and pity, even suspicion and contempt. These are stigmata which adult singles still feel today in more conservative Protestant churches, despite the avalanche of new singles ministries to help them.

Yes, the Protestant reformers did remove clerics as mediators between God and the laity, in expression of St. Peter's teaching of the priesthood of all believers. But they ultimately interposed husbands between God and their wives, in expression of St. Paul's teaching of male headship within the home. Ever since, Protestant married women have been locked in a bitter struggle to gain fundamental equality both within the marital household and without – a struggle that has still not ended in more conservative Protestant communities today.

Luther's legal legacy therefore should be neither unduly romanticized nor unduly condemned. Those who champion Luther as the father of liberty, equality, and fraternity might do well to remember his ample penchant for elitism, statism, and chauvinism. Those who see the reformers only as belligerent allies of repression should recognize that they were also benevolent agents of welfare. Prone as he was to dialectic reasoning, and aware as he was of the inherent virtues and vices of human achievements, Luther would likely have reached a comparable assessment.

Notes

- 1 This article is drawn, in part, from my *Law and Protestantism: The Legal Teachings of the Lutheran Reformation* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), ch. 6 [hereafter LP] and *From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion, and Law in the Western Tradition*, 2d ed. (Louisville, KY: WJK, 2011), ch. 7 [hereafter FSC], and is used with permission of the publishers.
- 2 *Triglott Concordia: The Symbolic Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church German-Latin-English* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1921), 639-641 [hereafter TC]; *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, repr. ed., 78 vols. (Weimar, Germany: Hermann Böhlau, 1883-1987), 30/1:152 [hereafter WA]; *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Tischreden* (Weimar, Germany: Hermann Böhlau, 1912-) 3, No. 3528 [hereafter WA TR]; *Luther's Works*, Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann, eds. (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1955-1968), 54:222-223 [hereafter LW]. See similar views in TC 611ff; WA 49:297ff; WA 2:734; LW 44:81ff; TC 363-383.
- 3 See several examples in Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther* (trans. James L. Schaaf; 3 vols; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1985-1993), 2:91-92 [hereafter Brecht].
- 4 One of the earliest examples was the Wittenberg wedding of ex-monk Wenzelaus Linck in April, 1523, a lavish ceremony which Luther and several other early reformers attended and celebrated. See Bernd Moeller, "Wenzel Lincks Hochzeit: Über Sexualität, Keuscheit und Ehe in der frühen Reformation," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 97 (2000) 317. The wedding two years later of ex-monk Luther to ex-nun Katharina von Bora was considerably more modest. See Brecht, 2:195ff.
- 5 See Carter Lindberg, "The Future of a Tradition: Luther and the Family," in Dean O. Wenhe, et al., eds., *All Theology is Christology: Essays in Honor of David P. Scaer* (Fort Wayne, IN: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 2000) 133-151, at 134.
- 6 The case is recounted in Theodore Muther, *Doctor Johann Apell: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der deutschen Jurisprudenz* (Königsberg: Universitäts- Buch- und Steindruckerei, 1861) 14ff., 72ff. Excerpts from the pleadings and court records are included in *Politische Reichshandel: Das ist allerhand gemeine Acten Regimentssachen und weltlichen Discursen* (Frankfurt am Main: Johan Bringern, 1614), 785-795, and in Johann Apel, *Defensio Johannis Apelli ad Episcopum Herbipolensem pro suo coniugio* (Wittemberge, 1523). The quotes that follow in this section are from these two sources. See also Martin Luther's correspondence about the case in WA Br 2:353, 354, 357.
- 7 See detailed account of medieval marriage theology and law, with detailed citations to the literature, in FSC, chap. 4.
- 8 LW 54:31.
- 9 LW 28:27-31; LW 45:18-22
- 10 LW 12:98.
- 11 LW 45:47.
- 12 See LP, chapter 3.
- 13 WA 2:167; see also WA 13:11; WA 17/2:350ff.
- 14 WA TR 5, No. 5524; LW 54:444.
- 15 WA 34:52.5-9, 12-21 using translation of Scott Hendrix, "Luther on Marriage," *Lutheran Quarterly* 14/3 (2000) 335-350. See also LW 31:351ff.
- 16 See, e.g., WA TR No. 4, No. 5212; LW 2:301ff.
- 17 Quoted by Steven E. Ozment, *Ancestors: The Loving Family in Old Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 36-37. See the interesting portrait of

Katharina and other Reformation women in Kirsi Stjerna, *Women and the Reformation* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2009).

- 18 LW 45:39ff.
- 19 LW 45:46.
- 20 See LP, chap. 7.
- 21 LW 21:93.
- 22 LW 46:265.
- 23 LW 44:85.
- 24 See LW 36:11; TC 310ff.
- 25 LW 36:92-93.
- 26 LW 36:97ff.
- 27 LW 36:97ff.
- 28 The Catholic Council of Trent added these clerical and liturgical requirements for Christian marriage only in 1563, well after Luther's passing.
- 29 LW 36:97.
- 30 LW 45:25.
- 31 WA Br 3:288-290; WA 15:558ff; Brecht 2:93-94.
- 32 WA TR 3, No. 4716; LW 54:363-364. See also WA TR 2, No. 3267; LW 54:194.
- 33 LW 21:95.
- 34 Most of these laws are collected in Amelius L. Richter, ed., *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des sechszehnten Jahrhunderts* (repr. ed.; 2 vols; Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1967); Emil Sehling, ed., *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig: O. R. Reisland, 1902-1913), vols. 1-5, continued under the same title (Tübingen, 1955-), vols. 6-16. For overviews, see Hartwig Dieterich, *Das protestantische Eherecht in Deutschland bis zur Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Claudius Verlag, 1970); Roland Kirstein, *Die Entwicklung der Sponsalienlehre und der Lehre vom Eheschluss in der deutschen protestantischen Eherechtslehre bis zu J.H. Böhmer* (Bonn: H. Bouvier, 1966) 39ff; Walter Köhler, "Die Anfänge des protestantischen Eherechtes," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte: Kanonistische Abteilung* 74 (1941) 271.

John Witte Jr. is Jonas Robitscher Professor of Law, Alonzo L. McDonald Distinguished Professor and Director of the Center for the Study of Law and Religion at Emory University School of Law in Atlanta, Ga. A specialist in legal history, marriage law, and religious liberty, he has published 26 books including Sex, Marriage and Family Life in John Calvin's Geneva, 2 vols.; Modern Christian Teachings on Law, Politics, and Human Nature, 3 vols.; The Reformation of Rights: Law, Religion, and Human Rights in Early Modern Calvinism; and Sins of the Fathers: The Law and Theology of Illegitimacy Reconsidered. He has directed 12 international projects with major funding from the Pew, Ford, Lilly, Luce, and McDonald foundations.

At Home in the World: Tenure Induction Lecture

Kristin Johnston Largen

On the Move and at Home

In many ways, my sabbatical was dominated by thoughts of home. This was true on the personal front, as last spring John resigned his call from Southern Seminary, and we consolidated our household here in Gettysburg, making a new home in the process. And, of course, this was true on the professional front, as my Lilly Fellowship took me to Israel and Palestine, India, Japan, and Turkey. I thought of home often while I was away, and the whole idea for this lecture came to me while I was going through a little bout of homesickness in Japan.

As Verlyn Klinkenborg wrote in a brief article in *Smithsonian* magazine in May, 2012, “[home] is more than just a place, it’s also an idea.”¹ I agree with him, and I would argue further that the symbol of ‘home’ is a powerful way of not only organizing and categorizing the world but also of making sense of our own identity, as it enables us to name and understand the connective tissue that links us to people and places, making us who we are. And yet, the way ‘home’ is defined and interpreted varies greatly from person to person. As Klinkenborg notes: “Some people, as they move through their lives, rediscover home again and again. Some people never find another after once leaving home. And, of course, some people never leave the one home they’ve always known.”²

We do well to ask, then, what the idea and symbol of ‘home’ means in our twenty-first century context, a context in which people are on the move, coming home and leaving – or fleeing – home as never before, for reasons of choice and privilege, and for reasons of oppression and violence. Let me start with our own context. In his book, *Globalization: The Human*

Consequences, Zygmunt Bauman begins chapter four, titled “Tourists and Vagabonds,” with the sentence: “Nowadays we are all on the move.”³ He is pointing to more than just physical travel in this statement, but certainly, the act of moving from one home to another is a key aspect of his argument. In the United States, census data reveal that an individual can expect to move roughly twelve times in her lifetime, typically for reasons of her own choosing.⁴ Many of these individuals – in this country in particular as well as in other countries in the Global North – are what Bauman calls “tourists”: “tourists stay or move at their hearts’ desire. They abandon a site when new untried opportunities beckon elsewhere ... tourists move because they find the world within their (global) reach irresistibly *attractive*.”⁵ For those of us in this category, “the world of the globally mobile,” the world is our oyster: “space has lost its constraining quality and is easily traversed in both its ‘real’ and ‘virtual’ renditions.”⁶ For the most part, we move where we want, when we want, and on our own terms, shedding and acquiring new homes as easily as new clothes.

But this does not tell the whole story: in contrast to these “high ups,” there are those whom Bauman calls the “low down,” the “vagabonds” who are characterized by their lack of “freedom to choose where to be.”⁷ The difference between the two groups is stark: “Those ‘high up’ are satisfied that they travel through life by their heart’s desire and pick and choose their destinations according to the joys they offer. Those ‘low down’ happen time and again to be thrown out from the site they would rather stay in.... If they take to the roads, then their destination, more often than not, is of somebody else’s choice; it is seldom enjoyable ...”⁸

As we expand our vision to include more than just the United States, we see that the chance of one being, or becoming, a “vagabond” increases dramatically, particularly when we look to the Global South. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency, as of January 2011 there were 10.5 million “refugees of concern,” almost 1 million “asylum-seekers,” 12 million “stateless people,” and 27.5 million “internally displaced people.”⁹ Most of these populations are found in the Global South, particularly in Africa.

Let me say a word in particular about the category of “internally displaced persons.” By definition, these are persons “who have been forced or obligated to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of, or in order to avoid the effect of, armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border.”¹⁰ Their vulnerability is particularly acute, and their situation particularly dire:

Of the world's populations at risk, internally displaced persons tend to be among the most desperate. They may be forcibly resettled on political or ethnic grounds or find themselves trapped in the midst of conflicts and in the direct path of armed attack and physical violence. On the run and without documents, they are easy targets for roundups, arbitrary detention, forced conscription, and sexual assaults. Uprooted from their homes and deprived of the resources base, many suffer from profound physical and psychological trauma.¹¹

And because we do not define 'home' merely as individuals but rather understand and inhabit home collectively, it is not only those who flee who lose the familiar sense of home: "Many think of displacement as a temporary problem that disappears upon the return home or resettlement of the displaced. On the contrary, it is often a long-term phenomenon that disrupts the lives of not only the individuals and families concerned but also of whole communities and societies.... Those left behind must continue their lives in the vacuum created by the departure of the displaced, while those in areas to which the displaced have moved find their lives altered by major new population inflows."¹²

What does "home" mean in light of such mobility, such transience, such loss? And, of particular concern to those of us gathered in a seminary community: "What does the Christian church have to say about such things?" Is there a word of wisdom, hope, and grace the church might offer the world in this complex, multi-faceted twenty-first century context in which we find ourselves, in which 'home' is such a fluid, tenuous, and fraught concept?

As you might imagine, I think that there is; and what I want to argue is this. In my view, there are three important insights that Christianity – Lutheran Christianity in particular – can bring to bear on a contemporary understanding of 'home', insights that both testify to the loving God we worship, and also promote a more just and loving society, bearing witness to our call to love not only the neighbor, but also the stranger. First, I suggest that a Christian understanding of home points to *a feeling of belonging*, and in light of the incarnation, this feeling of belonging need not – should not, in fact – be limited to a specific nation or geographical location, but instead is grounded in the entire creation, making the whole world, deeply and fundamentally, our home. Second, I suggest that a Christian understanding of home includes inherently a disposition and practice of *hospitality*, such that it is not enough to feel at home oneself, but that one also is called to make a home for the stranger. Finally, I suggest that Christians are called to find *a home in suffering* – not that we seek to manufacture suffering or dwell there

permanently, but rather witness to the presence of God with those who are suffering with our own presence, the presence of the church, in those dark places.

Home: A Feeling of Belonging

First, a Christian understanding of home incorporates a feeling of belonging – but belonging where? We live in a society today where ideas of 'home' often are very closely tied to specific states, or nations, or cultural customs or languages, such that our ability to identify a place as 'home' is dependent upon how well it resonates with our ideas of patriotism, our feelings of familiarity and affinity, and our personal family histories. While there is nothing wrong with this in theory, these customized constructions do become problematic when they limit our ability to envision 'home' more broadly, in creative and fresh ways, and live 'at home' in novel and foreign places. As a counter to this narrowness, I argue that a robust Christian doctrine of the incarnation invites Christians to see the whole world as home, in a way that enables Christians to make their home anywhere God calls or finds them. I argue that the incarnation makes two things possible: first, it enables Christians to see every land as holy, every place as sacred; and second, it enables Christians to embrace this earth as home, rather than simply a way-station on the journey to heaven.

The Christian church confesses that the Word became flesh in a particular time, in a particular place; specifically, in a Galilean Jew, born in Bethlehem roughly 2,000 years ago. When we look at the specific area in which Jesus of Nazareth was born, lived, ministered, died and was raised, we see it is very small – approximately 140 miles [excepting a brief Egyptian sojourn, of course].¹³ Not much, in the grand scheme of the world's geography; yet it is this concrete, physical reality of the God-human that is the foundation of a Christian understanding of Israel and Palestine as "The Holy Land." For Christians, first and foremost this land is holy not because of any inherent quality it possesses but because our holy God took flesh and lived among us there.

Centrifugal and Centripetal Force

However, Christians are not the only ones who call that land "holy" – it is holy to Muslims, particularly Jerusalem, and it is, of course, holy to Jews. And for Jews in particular, the explanation of the holiness of Israel/Palestine has a different orientation, and the contrast between the two cousins here is instructive. The way I would explain this difference is using the distinction

between centrifugal and centripetal force. In Judaism, the holiness of the land is a consequence of *centripetal* force – the force that is directed toward the center, pulling an object toward that center. That center, of course, is the temple, and more specifically the “holy of holies” – the location of the Ark of the Covenant.

This is how this idea is described in the Midrash Tanḥuma to Leviticus:

As the navel is in the middle of the person, so is Eretz Israel the navel of the world, as it is written, “That dwell in the navel of the earth” (Ezek. 38:12). Eretz Israel is located in the center of the world, Jerusalem in the center of Eretz Israel, the Temple in the center of Jerusalem, the *heikhal* in the center of the Temple, the ark in the center of the *heikhal*, and in front of the *heikhal* is the *‘even shetiyyah* [foundation stone] from which the world was founded.¹⁴

Jewish myth around the “foundation stone” is particularly rich. There are many different stories told around its origin. Here is one such story:

In the beginning, when God desired to create the world, He took snow from beneath the throne of Glory and cast it into the waters, where it congealed into a stone in the midst of the Deep. This is the center of the universe, and from it the earth expanded in all directions. God began the creation of His world at that foundation stone and built the world upon it.¹⁵

The same legends tell that eons later, when David decided to build the temple in Jerusalem, he uncovered the stone there, and Solomon “had the Holy of Holies of the Temple built exactly above the Foundation stone, for both the stone and the Temple bore the seal of God’s blessing.”¹⁶ In addition, Muslims believe that Muhammad ascended to heaven from a particular depression in the stone; while the Crusaders believed that same depression to have been made by Jesus when he drove the money-changers from the temple.¹⁷

This mythological understanding of Jerusalem makes clear that “Jerusalem has cosmogonic significance.” In rabbinic sources, “[i]t is the first created place from which the rest of the world grew outward concentrically.”¹⁸ And the foundation stone was said to have “marked the exact spot from which the world developed like a fetus from the umbilical cord.”¹⁹ There is even a tradition that Adam was created using earth taken from the Temple Mount.²⁰ This idea is still present in Judaism today: recently, a Jewish colleague in Jerusalem described the foundation stone as embodying

the “Sistine Ceiling” moment in Judaism: that is, it represents the moment where God’s finger stretches out to touch Adam’s finger, where God and the “stuff” of creation meet.

For Christians, however, the holiness of Israel/Palestine is not focused inward, the source of a centripetal force, but rather pushes outward, like *centrifugal* force, the force that propels an object away from the center. The reason for this is that the particularity of the incarnation is not an end unto itself, such that the ultimate meaning of Jesus Christ rests in his particular ethnicity, nationality, or gender, tying him only to this town, or to that body of water. Instead, the fact that God became human has cosmic significance, as it embeds God in all aspects of creation – not only all humans, but all animals, all places, all rivers, all mountains.

Niels Henrik Gregersen describes this very well in his article on “Deep Incarnation.” He writes: “My proposal is that the divine *logos* ... has assumed not only humanity, but the whole malleable matrix of materiality. By becoming ‘flesh’ in Jesus, God’s eternal *logos* entered into all dimensions of God’s world of creation.”²¹ This means that God’s presence cannot be limited to one specific place or time, nor can any specific place or time be privileged. Instead, Jesus’ particularity turns out to be radically inclusive, with universal ramifications for the entire creation. Either the incarnation has meaning for the whole world, or it has no meaning at all.

Incarnation signifies coming-into-flesh, so that God, the Creator, and the world of the flesh are conjoined in Jesus Christ. God connects with all vulnerable creatures, with the sparrows in their flight as well as in their fall (cf. Mt. 10:29), indeed, with all the grass that comes into being one day and fades the next day. In Christ, God is conjoining all creatures and enters into the biological tissue of creation itself in order to share the fate of biological existence. God becomes Jesus, and in him God becomes human, and (by implication) foxes and sparrows, grass and soil.²²

The basic point is clear: in Jesus, “God joins the web of life, becomes part of Earth’s biology.... God becomes flesh, clay, Earth.”²³

What this means for us today is that Christians do well to be wary of theology that interprets the holiness of the Holy Land as different from, more sacred than, or privileged over other lands, as though “walking where Jesus walked” brings one nearer to God somehow. And this is true in spite of the fact that the sight of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the water of the Jordan River turns even the most cerebral Lutheran into a giddy relic hunter – and has always done so. Mark Twain, in his travelogue *Innocents*

Abroad (from 1869), had this to say about traveling to the Holy Land: “We fell into raptures by the barren shores of Galilee ... we rioted – fairly rioted among the holy places of Jerusalem; we bathed in Jordan and the Dead Sea ... and brought away so many jugs of precious water from both places that all the country from Jericho to the mountain of Moab will suffer from drought this year.”²⁴

Christians know – or should know – that standing in the same spot where Jesus may – or may not – have stood, being washed in water where Jesus may – or may not – have been baptized is not the point of our faith, and in fact takes us away from the central soteriological claim of the incarnation, which is that God chose willingly and in love to be a God-with-us, a God-for-us; and that “us” is all-inclusive, containing all that God created and called good. God will not be without us, without humanity, without the world; and in and through the incarnation, God dwells in every corner, in every heart, in every field. And where God is, so are we called to be; and thus a Christian’s home is anywhere in the world: wherever we go, God is already there, making a place for us, making a home for us, abiding and dwelling with us, from one corner of the earth to the other.

The Earth as our Home

One other aspect of this theology of the incarnation needs to be mentioned as well. As is known, there is a longstanding tradition in the Christian church, nicely summarized in the beautiful hymn sung for us by the Mother Schmuckers, “Long Time Traveler.” The lyrics of this hymn, “I’m a long time travelling here below, I’m a long time travelling away from home,” emphasize that the true home of a Christian is in heaven. She doesn’t belong here, she is a stranger here, she is merely biding time until she gets to her true heavenly home with Jesus. In contrast to this stream of thought, however, I want to assert instead the idea that the earth *is* our home, and it is God’s home too.

Let me use an architectural comparison to make my point. For one who is used to Christian churches, most of which in the west look in many ways like our own Church of the Abiding Presence, it is quite a pleasant shock, I must say, to find oneself in any number of Zen temples in Japan, as they are about as different from traditional Western churches as one can get. In the early centuries of the Christian church – once its legitimacy was legalized – the overarching architectural theme was to suggest a “surrogate heaven that could be walked into every Sunday and feast day, and stood under. The church was the actual house of God, and so obliged to have an appropriate design.”²⁵ The idea was that once you entered a church, you left

this world, and entered the “kingdom of heaven,” the kingdom of Christ, and were surrounded by images that emphasized the contrast between this world and the next.

Interestingly enough, there were some discussions about churches and sacred space during the Reformation, particularly as it related to Catholic theology and practice at this time. “Above all, the radical wing of the Reformation disputed the necessity of a specific designated place of worship and advanced the idea of the omnipresence of God, thereby challenging and countering the belief that God was bound to a specific site.”²⁶ Martin Luther espoused a similar, though less radical view, in his rejection of “the idea of the *Dingheiligkeit* [holiness of the ‘thing’] of the space of the church.”²⁷ There were clear theological reasons for this commitment, particularly in light of Luther’s emphasis on the church as the gathered people of God, rather than on an institution or physical structure. “For Luther, sacrality was constituted not spatially but temporally, through the time of the congregational service of worship.”²⁸

These ideas of the Reformers did not last, however, and other social and ecclesial forces provoked a shift in the understanding of the place and even the function of the church building, particularly in the course of the increasing urbanization in Europe in the seventeenth century. The result was “a stronger boundary between the space of the church and that of its profane surrounding, as well as a stricter overall segregation between the realms of the sacred and the profane. For this space to be polluted or the service to be interrupted did not accord with a town’s self-image and self-presentation as an orthodox and godly community.”²⁹

The fact is that still today most mainline denomination churches continue to reflect physically a theological interpretation of the church that underscores its separation from the world: the church is an ark in a sea of damnation; the church is a safe haven, a sanctuary, in a dangerous city; the church is a refuge from the hordes of devils that fill the land. This is a longstanding vein of theological interpretation in the Christian Church, and H. Richard Niebuhr describes it well in his book *Christ and Culture*. In his chapter on “Christ Against Culture” he cites 1 John 2:15: “Do not love the world or the things in the world. The love of the Father is not in those who love the world,” and comments: “That world appears as a realm under the power of evil; it is the region of darkness, into which the citizens of the kingdom of light must not enter; it is characterized by the prevalence in it of lies hatred and murder; it is the heir of Cain.”³⁰

There is little in our surroundings that actively counteracts that idea, is there? Pretty floral accents notwithstanding, sitting here in the Church of the Abiding Presence, we are shielded from the world around us by decorative

visions of saints, biblical images of divine power and grace, all visual reminders of God's presence in and with the church. What we don't see are the visual reminders of God's presence in the world: the sun, the grass, or the trees – robins, squirrels or sparrows. The connotations of this space and the feeling they impart are unmistakable, even if unintended and unconscious: the church and those in it are separated from the world – in it, but not of it.

Contrast this with a Zen temple, the architecture of which reflects a very different philosophy about the world. “Zen, and its philosophy of direct experience, freedom from attachment, acceptance, impermanence, openness, celebration of the ordinary, simplicity ... naturalness, reverence for nature, and mindfulness, is symbolized to varying degrees by the temples and their entry paths.”³¹ Zen temples have what I would call porous boundaries between inside and outside, between walls and space, between the natural and the human-made: “A harmonious relationship with nature is communicated through the form and materials of the temple, and a blurring of the edge between habitation and nature.”³² In a Zen temple, one can always smell the rain, watch the sun move across the sky, and see the waning of the moonlight in the early hours of dawn.

In a Zen temple, and a Zen temple complex, especially, both “the buildings and the garden surroundings attempted to re-create [a harmonic ideal] which reflected the harmony and balance of the universe.”³³ This visually reinforces an important tenet of Buddhism that emphasizes that “rocks and stones, large and small, are the Buddha's own possessions,”³⁴ themselves also able to “expound the true teachings...” In short, in a Zen temple, “[a]s well as hearing the cosmos as a sermon, one can see, or read, the natural word as scripture.”³⁵

And, in the twenty-first century context in which we find ourselves, this aesthetic and religious commitment has important practical and even soteriological ramifications as well:

Japanese Buddhism adds pedagogic and soteric dimensions by inviting us to regard rocks and other natural phenomena as sources of wisdom and companions on the path to deeper understanding. But nowadays the earth itself is as much in need of saving as are its human inhabitants – and is especially in need of being saved *from* its human inhabitants. To this extend there may be practical and not just aesthetic lessons to be learned from our relations with rock, and compelling reasons to attend to what Goethe calls ‘the mute nearness of great, soft-voiced nature’....³⁶

I want to argue that Christians have a way of articulating similar commitments from within their own tradition, through a robust doctrine of the

incarnation. This is a convincing means by which we might break down the sharp line of demarcation we have firmly established between God and creation, heaven and earth, a line that often has prevented Christians from fully inhabiting, fully engaging, fully dwelling in the earth as our home.

This line has manifested itself in a deep disconnect between God and creation: God is infinite, creation is finite; God is immutable and formless, creatures are locked into specific bodies and places; God is “out there,” and we are “down here.” The earth is not God's home, so clearly it cannot be ours, either: hence, we are just travelers, wayfarers here, waiting to go ‘home’ so we can be with God.

But the question arises, if this is not our home, whose home is it? And if God is not here, what does it mean, really, to say God is anywhere? God may as well be nowhere, if God only exists in some abstract, theoretical, conceptual idea of heaven. It is a nice idea, but it does not really mean anything, except insofar as it serves as a foil for earth – and that is exactly the problem. How can we help but disparage the earth if it is everything heaven is not? How can we help but long to flee from here if God is there? This is a gross misconception Christianity has been perpetuating for a long, long time, and it is time to refute it definitively: not only because it is so destructive to us and to creation, but because it is simply wrong. God *is* here, the earth *is* our home, and the world *is* charged with the grandeur of God – even in the midst of its ugliness and its brokenness.

No less an authority than Carl Braaten argues – or at least, argued at one time – that this idea is central to Lutheran theology. In his *Principles of Lutheran Theology*, he describes what he calls a sacramental understanding of creation, emphasizing the continuity between creation and the incarnation. He argued that “[h]uman life cannot be whole without the whole earth,”³⁷ and that “Christianity ought to stress anew that it is a religion of salvation for humanity and the world. Its primary calling is to proclaim salvation and to bring the forces of healing to bear upon the whole person and the whole earth.”³⁸ Christians do “belong” in this world, and a vigorous, full-bodied understanding of the incarnation helps us to see that belonging as grounded in the entire creation, making the whole world, deeply and fundamentally, our home.

Home: A Disposition and Practice of Hospitality

The second point I want to make is that ‘home’ is a disposition and practice of hospitality: Christians cannot be content with simply feeling ‘at home’ ourselves, but we are called to make a home for the other as well. It is well known that the practice of hospitality has a long history in Christianity, with even longer roots in both Near Eastern culture and Judaism.

In Judaism in particular, the Israelites' own identity as wanderers and foreigners manifested itself in an obligation to care for those on the margins, and show hospitality to the stranger. Indeed, this became a central component of their relationship with God: "Embedded within the covenant between God and Israel was Israel's identity as an alien and its related responsibility to sojourners and strangers."³⁹

Christianity adopted this tradition and built on it. In particular, it was in the fourth century that a specifically Christian doctrine of hospitality was articulated by theologians such as Jerome and Chrysostom. Christine Pohl writes: "Partly in continuity with Hebrew understandings of hospitality that associated it with God, covenant, and blessing, and partly in contrast to Hellenistic practices which associated it with benefit and reciprocity, Christian commitments pressed hospitality outward toward the weakest, those least likely to be able to reciprocate."⁴⁰ The point here is clear: "Rather than entertaining persons who had something to offer, and thereby gaining advantage from their hospitality, Christians were deliberately to welcome those who seemingly brought little to the encounter."⁴¹

However, this counter-cultural and prophetic practice of hospitality did not always last, and by the eighteenth century there was a chorus of voices criticizing Christianity for allowing its practice of hospitality to conform to the norms of society. For example, the Puritan theologian John Owen wrote that while when the church was "younger," hospitality was given to the needy, and to the stranger, "but with us it is applied unto a bountiful, and it may be, profuse entertainment of friends, relationship, neighbours, acquaintances, and the like."⁴²

Certainly, we can see in the United States that the concept of hospitality has diminished, such that "it now chiefly refers to the entertainment of one's acquaintances at home and to the hospitality industry's provision of service through hotels and restaurants."⁴³ Hospitality has become privatized, individualized – another way we exercise our right to choose and our right to our own resources, and an important means of solidifying our social standing. In this country in particular I would argue that our "bowling alone" culture has exacerbated this problem, with its emphasis on the individual, and the general loss of community. In such an environment, the context and space of a 'household' has shrunk dramatically – it has become smaller and more secluded, and more often than not it serves as a place of refuge not for the weary stranger, but for one's family and friends: a place to retreat and seek refuge from a world where there is too much difference, and too many 'aliens'.

Thus, I would argue that the practice needs to be reanimated and reinvigorated for the Christian church in the twenty-first century, reestablishing the robust practice that the ancient Church knew and treasured. In this way, the

church also can reclaim a key prophetic role in a society that too often disregards and marginalizes those who are different. Again, Pohl writes: "Although we often think of hospitality as a tame and pleasant practice, Christian hospitality has always had a subversive, countercultural dimension. . . . Especially when the larger society disregards or dishonors certain persons, small acts of respect and welcome are potent far beyond themselves. They point to a different system of valuing and an alternate model of relationships."⁴⁴

Welcoming the Stranger

Particularly important here is the concept of 'stranger', and the way in which Christians are called to welcome those who are unknown – 'foreign' to us in many ways. Walter Brueggemann once wrote that "[s]trangers are 'people without a place'."⁴⁵ To this definition, I would add: people without a home, without a community, without a network of family and friends to support them. All this makes them exceedingly vulnerable, and in special need of welcome, the offer of food and shelter, and the hospitality of a community.

Letty Russell quotes Sir Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, who after 9/11 said:

I used to think that the greatest command in the Bible was 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'. I was wrong. Only in one place does the Bible ask us to love our neighbour. In more than thirty places it commands us to love the stranger . . . It isn't hard to love our neighbours because by and large our neighbours are people like us. What's tough is to love the stranger, the person who isn't like us, who has a different skin colour, or a different faith, or a different background. That's the real challenge. It was in ancient times. It still is today.⁴⁶

This difficult, challenging practice of welcoming of the stranger gets to the core of what Christian hospitality should be about. Russell notes that "New Testament scholar John Koenig describes hospitality as "partnership with strangers."⁴⁷ The Greek word here is *philoxenia* – love of the stranger. This word is particularly compelling when juxtaposed with the more familiar *xenophobia* – fear of the stranger.

There is an interesting etymological connection here that emphasizes this point as well. In her book *At Home in the World*, Margaret Guenther notes that "...the words 'host', 'guest', 'hostile', 'hostage', 'hospital', and 'hospitality' all spring from the same Latin root *hostis*, meaning stranger or enemy. To extend hospitality means widening the circle temporarily, perhaps taking a risk."⁴⁸

One way of grounding a Christian practice of hospitality could be through an emphasis on the Lutheran practice of the Eucharist, and certainly, there is much to commend this idea. Food is a central aspect of hospitality all over the globe, for a very good reason: as Ed Loring, founding partner of the Open Door Community in Atlanta observed, “justice is important, but supper is essential.”⁴⁹ The Eucharist is a concrete manifestation of God’s welcome and love, a meal widely shared, hosted by God, which serves as a foretaste of that great feast to come when all will be fed and none will go hungry. And yet, I hesitate.

While the ELCA’s eucharistic practice of welcoming all baptized Christians is an excellent example of a strong sacramental theology, it needs some enhancement from a hospitality standpoint. By inviting only other baptized Christians to the table, we are inviting insiders, basically – those who are already, at least to some degree, “like us.” Clearly, Jesus’ own ministry of hospitality pushes us to a much more expansive practice of hospitality than that.

Perhaps a better way to think about hospitality in our current context is using the metaphor of accompaniment. The ELCA Global Mission unit has adopted this metaphor for understanding its work and partnerships with other countries, and it defines accompaniment as “*walking together in solidarity that practices interdependence and mutuality.*”⁵⁰ At its roots, however, this theological model comes out of both Latin American liberation theology, and Hispanic/Latino/Latina theology. One of its more prominent representatives is Roberto Goizueta, whose book *Caminemos con Jesus*, takes its title from a phrase (“let us walk with Jesus”) found in the liturgy for a Holy Thursday procession at San Fernando Cathedral in San Antonio, Texas.⁵¹ A theology of accompaniment is a theology that takes concepts of ‘place’ and ‘home’ seriously, literally, recognizing that it is not enough to be ‘at home’ oneself when there are so many others desperate for the security and comfort ‘home’ brings.

I want to suggest three ways that Christians might think about this practice of hospitality in our current context. First, is what I consider the most passive and easiest form of hospitality: accompanying others in worship – offering hospitality when the stranger comes to our doors and enters our community. The worshipping community at Gettysburg Seminary is going to be faced with this challenge and opportunity in new ways next year when the new museum opens, bringing what some have estimated to be 75,000 new people to campus every year. Currently, we typically take for granted that there are few, if any, ‘strangers’ in chapel each day: how will our practices change once that assumption is no longer valid? If it is true that hospitality demands attentiveness, “...attentiveness to the *other* who has entered our

tent...,”⁵² how are we preparing to do that in new and creative ways? How will we attend to these new ‘others’ that come to worship with us?

The second form of hospitality requires a bit more of us; that is accompanying others where they are: seeking the stranger out, meeting her in her context, and offering hospitality to her where she is. I think of the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman in this context: Jesus went to her location, met her at her ‘place of business’ so to speak, and acknowledged her, speaking to her of living water and salvation, transforming not only her but many in her community in the process.

We do well to ask ourselves how we might model this Christ-like hospitality today: not waiting for the stranger to come to us, but going out to him, meeting him where he is and offering him the warmth and comfort of home – and all that entails. This might be offering food and a warm place to eat at a soup kitchen; it might be accompanying someone to an abortion clinic or a government office; and it might be meeting a teenager at a coffee shop and offering a listening ear and a supportive presence.

It is not as easy to seek out the stranger in an unfamiliar place: there is risk involved – some lack of control and unpredictability. And yet, at the same time, this practice also embodies an optimism, a trust in the presence of the Holy Spirit and a belief in the *imago Dei* present in another as well. The words written on the marker at Kingman Brewster Jr.’s grave speak to this confidence. He wrote: “The presumption of innocence is not just a legal concept, in commonplace terms; it rests on that generosity of spirit which assumes the best, not the worst, in the stranger.”⁵³ This form of hospitality, then, can be a way of keeping the eighth commandment as Luther understood it: “We are to fear and love God, so that we do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray or slander them, or destroy their reputations. Instead we are to come to their defense, speak well of them, and interpret everything they do in the best possible light.” This form of hospitality assumes the best in those we do not yet know.

Finally, there is one more form of accompaniment that Christians are called to embody in their practice of hospitality, and this is perhaps the hardest of all: it is allowing oneself to be accompanied – receiving hospitality as a guest in the home or the place of the stranger. This is part of the reason why I love the story of Zacchaeus so much, because Jesus not only meets Zacchaeus where he is, and ministers to him; Jesus also honors Zacchaeus by offering him the chance to be a host, the chance to welcome Jesus as a stranger into his home, and show Jesus hospitality.

Even though I do not think we can presume with Jesus’ authority to push ourselves onto the stranger and demand entrance to her home, I do

think we can with perhaps a touch more humility and modesty show ourselves eager to be received, eager to learn, eager to assume the disposition of ‘stranger’ ourselves, and be the vulnerable ones in a strange place. I am reminded of my experience in Istanbul, particularly in visiting the home of several young women, in a part of the city I did not know, for prayer and study in a language I do not speak. It was a little scary, a little anxiety-producing, but also really fun and very interesting. That experience confirmed for me how we make friends in a new way when we meet them in their homes, following their rules, on their terms.

Additionally, this practice of hospitality – of being accompanied – is of particular importance because of the way it honors the contributions and gifts of the stranger. Again, Pohl writes:

The role of host is empowering because it is an acknowledgment that one has rightful access to a place of meaning and value, and that one has the authority to welcome other persons into it. The host role affirms that what you have and what you offer are valuable. An important transformation occurs when people without power or status have the opportunity to be more than guests, when they, too, can be hosts. It is a time when their contributions can be recognized and when they are not defined first by their need.⁵⁴

When Christians allow ourselves to be welcomed, accepting hospitality from strangers – in strange places and in strange forms – we bear witness to the diversity of God’s gifts and riches, the unexpected places where God is found, and the transformative power of Spirit-led encounters. “Simultaneously costly and wonderfully rewarding, hospitality often involves small deaths and little resurrections;”⁵⁵ the death of old prejudices and misconceptions, and the birth of new insights and friendships. In this way, radical practices of hospitality have the power to change the world.

Home: Finding a Home in Suffering

Finally, the last insight a Lutheran Christianity in particular has to offer the world in terms of an understanding of the concept of ‘home’ relates to the very real fact that for so many people, concepts of ‘home’ are interlaced with experiences of grief, loss, and pain. In the face of this reality, I argue that Christians are called to find a home in suffering: not that we are to seek it out in some twisted understanding of martyrdom, nor are we to dwell there permanently, as though the call to follow Christ is a call to masochism. Instead, by our own willingness and ability to ‘make a home’ in and

among those who suffer, Christians bear witness to a God who chose and chooses to reveal Godself in suffering, refusing to abandon the marginalized and rejected by making the place of weakness and vulnerability God’s own dwelling place.

“The Cross Alone is Our Theology”

Of course, this idea is a familiar theme in Lutheran theology. First and foremost, this is the linchpin of a theology of the cross, articulated by Luther most clearly in his Heidelberg Disputation from 1518. There, in his discussion of a “theologian of the cross,” he makes clear that the very understanding of who God is and what God has done for us in Jesus Christ is dependent upon acknowledging the fullness of God’s self-disclosure on the cross. To this end, thesis 20 reads: “That person deserves to be called a theologian, however, who comprehends the visible and manifest things of God through suffering and the cross.” This challenge from Luther serves as a constant reminder to us that we cannot and should not go looking for God where *we* think God should be: the upscale neighborhoods, the upstanding citizens, the upwardly mobile communities. Instead, we need to be willing to seek God where God chooses to be found: in and among the hurting, the despairing, the lost and the outcast. Here is what Gerhard Forde says about that thesis: “God refuses to be seen in any other way” except on the cross. Thus “[w]hat is vital here is absolute concentration on the rejected, crucified Jesus.”⁵⁶ This is how Luther can say “the cross alone is our theology.”⁵⁷ We, like Peter, may want all kinds of other things for the incarnate God – earthly power and prestige, for example – but God rejects all of that in favor of the cross.

And, to emphasize this point, Luther writes in thesis 28: “The love of God does not first discover but creates what is pleasing to it. The love of man [Luther’s language] comes into being through attraction to what pleases it.” Again and again, we choose to love that which is appealing to us, those people who please us, or offer us some advantage: our eyes and our hearts are drawn to the pretty, the polished, and the well put-together. Yet, in so doing, we position ourselves as theologians of glory, in opposition to God, because, as Forde notes, “[t]he problem is that for a theology of glory the bad, poor, needy, or lowly cannot really exist ... they don’t show up on the scale of values and are not regarded.”⁵⁸ And you cannot offer hospitality to those whom you don’t even see.

But God is not like this. Instead, says Luther, God chooses to dwell in suffering with the despised, the exploited, and the ignored. And in so doing, God places immeasurable value on the strangers with whom God makes a home, making them worthy and lovable through the power of God’s own

transformative love and grace. “God is not, as in the theology of glory, one who waits to approve those who have improved themselves, made themselves acceptable, or merited approval, but one who *bestows* good on the bad and needy.”⁵⁹ That is how Christians are to see and be in the world, as well.

The problem for us, of course, is that while all of this is well and good in theory, what does it really mean in practice? What does it mean for us as Christians to live this out – both individually and communally? I do not have a great answer for that. Surely the way looks different in different times and places; and surely the way looks different depending on who we are, and the circumstances in which we find ourselves. However, even in spite of those differences, I would argue that there is one basic common-denominator, one foundational activity that does manifest this commitment to co-suffering with God and with the stranger; and that is *simply showing up*.

Showing Up

While certainly I could offer many examples of what this looks like in our own context, instead, allow me to turn to another, much different context: the country of India. To orient ourselves: in terms of area, actual, physical size – India is roughly equal to Alaska, Texas, and California combined; that is, it is a little more than one third the size of the United States.⁶⁰ However, its population – roughly 1.2 billion as of June, 2012 – is almost four times the total United States population – around 300 million.⁶¹ And, somewhere between 40 to 80 percent of those 1.2 billion people subsist on 50 or 60 cents a day, according to government estimates.⁶² This translates into the almost impossible to comprehend statistic that 41% of the world’s poor – that is, almost half – live in India.⁶³ And what this means is that there is no avoiding the desperate poverty that is in your face and under your feet every time you take a step. In every city and village in India there are countless malnourished women and children begging for food, long stretches of shacks made from tin or blankets, and piles of garbage along the road – in which many people are forced to forage, and without which many of the diseased, ravaged dogs certainly would starve.

And yet, at the same time, on those same long stretches, amongst those same piles of garbage, even down on that same ground with the beggars and the animals, there is God: perhaps not God as you and I know God but certainly God for that Hindu population. Peppering every town, every road – in narrow alleyways, on street corners large and small, everywhere you turn – there are shrines, shrines to Shiva, shrines to Ganesh, shrines to the Goddess, shrine after shrine after shrine, all by their very unobtrusive, unassuming presence testifying to God’s presence in those places of desola-

tion and poverty. And as people come to them, leaving flowers or fruit, and offering prayers, it is clear that this divine presence is no mere empty symbol; instead, it testifies to the living, vibrant relationship people in India have with the divine, and the importance of God in their daily lives – particularly for those who are in the most need of God’s presence.

This resonates nicely with our tradition, does it not? Duane Priebe, professor of systematic theology at Wartburg Seminary, once said something to the effect that a Christian should not fear accompanying someone even through hell – through the valley of the shadow of death, as the Psalmist writes – because we can be confident that Christ is already there, too, and we are not alone in that walk. In this statement, Priebe was giving vivid expression to the twin Christian claims that Christ not only embodied in his life and ministry God’s preferential option for the poor, but also that he has permanently and conclusively “hallowed hell” in his death and resurrection.

In this same vein, Joerg Rieger writes that “Bonhoeffer and many other theologians argued that God has preceded us into the places of tension and trouble in this world, into the toxic places and the places on the underside of history where the churches often do not dare to go.”⁶⁴ Perhaps the twenty-first century church needs to rethink its priorities. If Christians take the call to hospitality seriously – particularly hospitality for and with the suffering – a little more daring clearly will be required of us.

“Another World is Possible”

Let me end where I began. At the end of these reflections, and at the end of my sabbatical, I find that ‘home’ is both the same and different than it had been before. I see many of the same realities, but I do not see them quite the same way. I think many of the same thoughts, but I do not understand them quite the same way. Leaving home is like that, I think. Even when you come back, you find it is not quite the same as it was when you left – and this is both a challenge and a blessing. And in the end, after all the coming and going, I find, in the words of Rieger, that “God turns out to be different from what commonsense theology had assumed, and the world turns out to be different as well. ‘Another world is possible’ . . .”⁶⁵ May we have the courage to see it, to welcome it, and make it a home – not just for us, but for all.

Notes

- 1 Verlyn Klinkenborg, “Home,” *Smithsonian*, May 2012, 14.
- 2 Ibid.

- 3 Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization: The Human Consequences* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998) 77.
- 4 <http://www.census.gov/hhes/migration/about/cal-mig-exp.html>, accessed September 18, 2012.
- 5 Bauman, *Globalization*, 92.
- 6 Ibid., 88.
- 7 Ibid., 86.
- 8 Ibid., 86-87.
- 9 <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c11.html>, accessed September 18, 2012.
- 10 Roberta Cohen and Francis M. Deng, *Masses in Flight: The Global Crisis of Internal Displacement* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution Press, 1998) 18.
- 11 Ibid., 2.
- 12 Ibid., 23-24.
- 13 Rick Carlson, personal correspondence, October 2, 2012.
- 14 As quoted in Philip S. Alexander, "Jerusalem as the *Omphalos* of the World," in *Jerusalem: Its Sanctity and Centrality to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (ed. Lee I. Levine; New York, NY: Continuum, 1999) 114.
- 15 As recounted in Howard Schwartz, *Tree of Souls: The Mythology of Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) 96.
- 16 Ibid., 97.
- 17 Rivka Gonen, *Contested Holiness: Jewish, Muslim, and Christian Perspectives on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem* (Jersey City, NJ: KTAV, 2003) 21.
- 18 Alexander, "Jerusalem as the *Omphalos* of the World," 114.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Niels Henrik Gregersen, "Deep Incarnation: The Logos Became Flesh," in *Transformative Theological Perspectives* (ed. Karen L. Bloomquist; Minneapolis, MN: Lutheran University Press, 2009) 168-169.
- 22 Ibid., 174.
- 23 www.seasonofcreation.com/theology, accessed September 20, 2012.
- 24 As quoted in Joerg Rieger, *Traveling* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011) 8-9.
- 25 Spiro Kostof, *A History of Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) 264.
- 26 Vera Isaiasz, "Early Modern Lutheran Churches: Redefining the Boundaries of the Holy and the Profane," in *Lutheran Churches in Early Modern Europe* (ed. Andrew Spicer; Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2012) 21.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Ibid., 23.
- 29 Ibid., 36.
- 30 H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1951) 48.
- 31 Thomas Barrie, *Spiritual Path, Sacred Place: Myth, Ritual, and Meaning in Architecture* (Boston, MA: Shambhala, 1996) 191.
- 32 Ibid., 209.
- 33 Ibid., 194.
- 34 As quoted in Francois Berthier, *Reading Zen in the Rocks: The Japanese Dry Landscape Garden* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000) 5-6.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Ibid., 142-143.
- 37 Carl Braaten, *Principles of Lutheran Theology* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1983) 99.
- 38 Ibid., 104.
- 39 Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999) 27.
- 40 Ibid., 17.
- 41 Ibid., 18.
- 42 Ibid., 37.
- 43 Ibid., 36.
- 44 Ibid., 61.
- 45 Ibid., 87.
- 46 Letty M. Russell, *Just Hospitality: God's Welcome in a World of Difference* (ed. J. Shannon Clarkson and Kate M. Ott; Louisville, KY: WJK, 2009) 101-102.
- 47 Ibid., 66.
- 48 Margaret Guenther, *At Home in the World*, (New York, NY: Seabury, 2006) 49.
- 49 As quoted in Pohl, *Making Room*, 74.
- 50 <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Global-Mission/How-We-Work/Accompaniment.aspx>, accessed September 29, 2012. Emphasis original.
- 51 Roberto Goizueta, *Caminemos con Jesus* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1995) 1.
- 52 Guenther, *At Home in the World*, 50.
- 53 Russell, *Just Hospitality*, 99.
- 54 Pohl, *Making Room*, 121.
- 55 Ibid., 187.
- 56 Gerhard O. Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross: Reflections on Luther's Heidelberg Disputation, 1518* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997) 79-80.
- 57 Ibid., 81.
- 58 Ibid., 114.
- 59 Ibid., 113.
- 60 <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/in.html>, accessed on October 3, 2012.
- 61 <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html>, accessed on October 3, 2012.
- 62 <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/10/03/clothing-the-poorest-for-survival/?hp>, accessed on October 3, 2012.
- 63 <http://www.ftpress.com/articles/article.aspx?p=1353372&seqNum=2>, accessed on October 3, 2012. "Poor" here is defined as living on less than one US dollar a day.
- 64 Rieger, *Traveling*, 89.
- 65 Ibid., 38.

Kristin Johnston Largen is Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg and editor of Dialog: A Journal of Theology. Largen received a 2011-2012 Lilly Theological Research Grant for Seeking God Among Our Neighbors: Toward an Interfaith Systematic Theology (forthcoming from Fortress Press). As part of her research, Largen traveled to Israel, Turkey, India and Japan, which she chronicled on her blog: happy.lutheran.blogspot.com.

Martin Luther's Concept of *Sola Scriptura* and its Impact on the Masses: A Dalit Model for Praxis-Nexus¹

Surekha Nelavala

As a religious movement the Reformation had an enormous impact on the masses. Its primary leader, Martin Luther, was a biblical scholar whose approach to the Bible and theology was embraced and accepted by the common people. But what was it about Luther's theology and biblical interpretation that caused it to resonate so well with common people? What did he actually address in his theology that enabled him to gain the trust and confidence of the masses? In his capacity as a scholar, how did Luther reach out to the people? How did his theology and biblical hermeneutics become praxis-nexus² in their character? How does Luther's approach compare to contemporary contextual and people-centered theologies and hermeneutics, such as the Dalit perspective, which are yet struggling in their praxis-nexus? How might Luther's approach during the Reformation apply to present day contextual and critical approaches, which attempt to reach out effectively to the masses? In this brief article, I aim to address the above questions as a Dalit feminist reader of the Bible, making particular use of Luther's concept of Scripture and its effectiveness within faith communities.

Martin Luther's Concept and Understanding of Scripture

Martin Luther's principle of *sola scriptura* is widely evoked even today by Christians who believe that the Bible is the word of God and that it serves as corrective and judge for Christian life. Luther was a biblical scholar who both affirmed Scripture and responded to it as a committed person of faith.

His approach to Scripture was not a two-fold interpretive approach that created a binary opposition between scholarship and faith.

It is evident from his works that there was an indissoluble bond between Luther and the Scripture that he loved and studied so fiercely. He could often use 'the word of God' as a synonym for Scripture, without making any major distinction between them. However, when keenly observed, he chose to use Scripture and 'the word of God' in particular contexts with a distinct purpose.³ Luther's sense of 'the word of God' includes both the oral and the written word that proclaims Christ. His theology is undoubtedly Christ-centered, and for him, therefore, Scripture's sole purpose is to proclaim Christ. Thus "*sola scriptura* – Scripture alone" is in fact his conviction and dedication to "Christ alone." For Luther, "Scripture alone" is based entirely upon the biblical proclamation of "Christ alone." Therefore, he grants the utmost authority to Scripture, because of its function.⁴ Luther did not have any reservations about seeing Scripture as the word of God,⁵ as opposed to a perspective that says that the Bible *contains* the word of God, a position of much contemporary critical hermeneutics. For him, however, Scripture is judged by its theological content, not by the canonization process or by tradition. Luther presents the relationship between Scripture and Christ in a peculiar way, that is, Scripture as 'servant' and Christ as 'King'.⁶ Thus for Luther, Scripture is not at the center of his Christian understanding but rather "Christ alone", and "Christ alone" is possible because of his belief in "Scripture alone." His usage of Scripture is absolutely Christocentric, that is, Scripture exists with the sole purpose of proclaiming Christ.⁷ Thus Luther's scholarship and his faith were integral to all of his proceedings as an ecclesiastical person. In presenting himself primarily as a member of a faith community, Luther followed a methodology of biblical interpretation whereby his intellectual analysis and his spiritual beliefs formed an indivisible part of his hermeneutics.

Luther's principle of "*sola scriptura*" had significant influence on his method of biblical interpretation, because he did not place tradition on par with Scripture but instead asserted that Scripture must be the sole authority and doctrinal guide for the church.⁸ For Luther, sacred Scripture is not essentially a literary work or a historical document but rather a book of faith that is given in faith and must be received in faith. Therefore, Luther treats Scripture as part of his spirituality rather than merely as literature that is open to critical approach and interpretation. His affirmation of "*sola fide* – by faith alone" is inseparably related to his spirituality, which is also connected to the word of God/Scripture.⁹ Thus Luther in his hermeneutical principle provides a scope for identifying a Canon within the Canon,¹⁰

qualifying Scripture for its purpose of being a witness of and to Christ, which he claims is Scripture's primary function.

According to Luther, however, 'gospel' is not restricted to Scripture but extends beyond it. Thus Luther grants authority to oral tradition as well as to biblical interpretation while maintaining his Christocentric hermeneutic. He gives equal importance to the spoken word of God and to written Scripture in terms of proclaiming Christ. He states:

And the gospel should really not be something written, but a spoken word which brought forth the Scriptures, as Christ and the apostles have done. This is why Christ himself did not write anything but only spoke. He called his teaching not Scripture but gospel, meaning good news or a proclamation that is spread not by pen but by word of mouth.¹¹

Luther is not bound or limited in his approach to Scripture, but rather he qualified Scripture through his Christian understanding and faith. Thus according to Luther Scripture exists for Christ, not the other way around, and similarly Christ exists for Christ's teachings that promote the values of equality, freedom, love, liberation, peace, and justice. Any text that speaks against these Christian values cannot be counted as Scripture, because Scripture cannot proclaim Christ on the one hand and injustice on the other. A text must be qualified in order to become Scripture, and thus Luther's hermeneutic of "Scripture alone" can also serve as the foundational and normative basis for all liberationist approaches that turn to Scripture for their proclamation.

At this intersection, as a liberationist, Dalit feminist reader, I see the points of convergence with Luther's principle of "Scripture alone," although his interpretations may differ in some ways from modern-day interpretations that use contextual, cultural, and ideological hermeneutical perspectives. As a liberationist reader, however, who comes from a Lutheran confessional background, I uphold Luther's concept of "Scripture alone" because Scripture proclaims Christ, and therefore Scripture perpetuates liberation and justice. As a Dalit feminist and liberationist scholar, I affirm that any text or scripture that proclaims Christ will by default advocate for liberation and justice. To compromise on the values and teachings of Christ is to compromise on Christ himself. Trusting that God's word advocates for freedom, liberation, and justice, but not for bondage or injustice, it is liberating for me to regard "Scripture alone" as the normative principle of Dalit feminist hermeneutics, as it seeks, through Scripture, for liberation and justice to prevail in society.

Dalit Theology towards Praxis-Nexus: An Analysis

Contextual theologies are particularly liberationist in their perspective, but they have not been assertive in their deliberations about the "Scripture alone" concept on the same level as Luther's affirmation. Contextual hermeneutics emphasizes the primacy of the reader and the reader's context in biblical interpretation,¹² while liberationist hermeneutics qualifies a text as Scripture only when it has the potential for gleaning a liberation motif from it. Thus each method projects a different explicit agenda in its methodology of the proclamation of Christ, although this is implicit in all readings of Scripture. Even though contextual perspectives and the liberationist readings of the Bible are people-centered, they have not come across effectively with the masses, particularly among the faith communities which, for the benefit of their spirituality, should be the primary audience and practitioners of people-centered hermeneutics. As a Christian, a member of a faith community from the Lutheran ecclesiastical tradition, and as a Dalit feminist reader of the Bible, I propose the need to follow Luther's model of uplifting Scripture, by saying that "Scripture alone" is the essential point of connection to the masses. This approach places the scholars together with the people to create a praxis theology that is meaningful to their lives and communities.

It comes as no surprise that the Bible is at the center for a practicing Christian. More Christians than we know begin and end their days by paying tribute to Scripture, by reading, reflecting, and meditating on the word that Scripture contains. However, the method that each one uses for this personal reflection or meditation differs, influenced by numerous factors that create a highly individualized Christian spiritual formation. Although many claim that their reading is literal, they tend to read the text through the lens that was given to them, a lens reiterated by preachers from their understanding of spirituality or bhakti practices of Christianity. Popular Christians on the one hand honor the Bible as their sacred scriptures, a faith document, but on the other hand they also tend to believe that it is historically accurate and that everything that is written there is, in fact, historically factual. Any deviation from this scripture-centered point of view is deemed hurtful to their spirituality and, therefore, a popular Christian resists critical interpretations of the Scripture that do not confirm and affirm such scripture-centeredness. Thus in order to make contextual, feminist, and liberationist perspectives realistic and to create praxis-nexus hermeneutics and theology, it is mandatory to affirm the authority of Scripture as the norm and as central to biblical interpretation and theology.

This situation makes it even more pressing for trained biblical readers to approach the Bible in faith and respect and with a willingness to verbalize the same, while also approaching it critically and systematically so as to

interpret Scripture in such a way that it can come alive for existing faith communities. Therefore, I deem it necessary to approach the Scriptures, first as a Christian in faith, then as a Lutheran by tradition, a biblical scholar by education, and a Dalit-feminist-liberationist reader. Generally, the tendency is to approach the text from only one identity while the other identities take a back seat, thus creating a bifurcated or even dualistic approach to the Bible rather than a holistic one. My aim is to address and discuss the needed interconnectedness of all these perspectives – namely, Christian, traditional (ecclesiastical), critical/scholarly, and ideological – such that together they are active in producing the outcomes of each biblical interpretation. I aim to do this by taking Luther's faith affirmation, "*sola scriptura*", as the foundation for Christian understanding of Scripture.

While Dalit theology itself has evolved in the last four decades,¹³ it has always affirmed that Dalit theology is a people-centered theology directed towards justice and liberation. Similarly, Dalit theology has always been Bible-centered, seeking liberative motives to develop its theology while claiming the experiences and pathos of Dalits and marginalized people as the quintessential normative factor. K. P. Kuruvilla summarizes Dalit theology in a three-fold definition. He writes: "First of all, it is a theology about Dalits or theological reflection upon the Christian responsibility to the depressed classes. Secondly, it is theology for the depressed classes or the message addressed to the Dalits to which they seem to be responding. Thirdly, it is a theology from the depressed classes, that is, the theology they would like to expound."¹⁴ Although various theologians use a different methodology to do Dalit theology and biblical interpretation, the above definition sums up the objective of the Dalit approach to theology and Scripture.

Since its emergence, a paradigm shift in theological studies in India has taken place under the influence of Dalit theology, but it has had negligible impact on ecclesiastical faith communities. Even though Dalit theology is, without question, a people-centered theological phenomenon, it has not reached out to the masses and thus has not yet proven to be effective in its praxis objective. It is a popular opinion that scholarly or intellectual theology fails to be effective in ecclesiastical communities of faith and can be used only in classroom settings. If this opinion is true regarding Dalit theology, which, as it makes particular use of the suffering of the people, is a people-centered theology, it is time to evaluate the objectives and methods of Dalit theology. If it cannot appeal to the masses, what then is its purpose? If its core objective is to do praxis-nexus, that is, to bring theology into practice, Dalit theology must use the tools that bring Scripture to life in the reality of suffering people. Dalit theology must claim Scripture as its basis and the ecclesiastical faith communities as its location for praxis-nexus.

Dalit theology has a specific role to play that is different from Dalit social activism, as it approaches Scripture and has religious significance and spiritual importance. Therefore, it is critical to evaluate its significance for the Christian masses as we move forward with the commitment for seeking justice and liberation for Dalits through Scripture and theology. Therefore, first, I strongly affirm the need to emphasize the scriptural base for Dalit theology by saying "*sola scriptura*" as strongly as Martin Luther did. Second, it is mandatory that Dalit theology and Dalit hermeneutics be praxis-oriented. Third, it is not enough that Dalit experience is used as the normative factor for doing theology. Actually taking this theology to the masses for evaluation and practice ought to be equally normative, because doing that will make the Dalit perspective the praxis perspective also.

Tat-Siong Benny Liew states: "Interpretation or reception of texts is not private and individual, but public and communal. Such public and communal reception also has a public effect or affect on communities."¹⁵ Contextual readings carry both obligation and accountability to their communities. Therefore, contextual hermeneutics must be praxiological, as opposed to self-imposed, as a reader represents the people of a particular context. Similarly, each contextual reading has to be context specific, and therefore it is important to describe the particular context in which the hermeneutical process happens. If Dalit theology and Dalit feminist-hermeneutics aim to reach out to the people, and if Dalit theologians and biblical scholars have a role to play in faith communities, it is then important to take their context into consideration from all angles, including their faith tradition.

The effect that Luther had on the masses, the praxis-nexus that he was able to achieve, challenges my own hermeneutical principle as a contextual reader, particularly as a Dalit feminist scholar and particularly as Dalit and feminist theologies and hermeneutics have not been able to make their way to the people. Thus I believe that in order to reach out to the critical masses of faith communities, it is important to recognize and establish the essential aspects of spirituality while continuing to be theologians and scholars, all the while following Luther's model of bringing his theology into practice.

Notes

- 1 [Editor's note: This article derives from the author's work on a project entitled, "The Future of Lutheran Theology and the Lutheran Communion in India," sponsored by the *Gurukul Journal of Theological Studies*. The objective of the project is to interpret/reinterpret some of the key theological insights of Luther in light of the diverse theological challenges in Indian churches in general and in Lutheran churches in particular.]

- 2 'Praxis-nexus' refers to the interconnection between theory and practice, when a theory is used as a successful strategy to bring about desired change.
- 3 David W. Lotz, "Sola Scriptura: Luther on Biblical Authority," *Interpretation* 35/3 (July 1981) 258-273.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 See LW 34:112. "The Scriptures must be understood in favor of Christ, not against him. For that reason they must either refer to him or must not be held to be true Scriptures." Note that Luther disqualifies as Scripture any text that is not self-revealingly christological.
- 6 Martin Luther, "Lectures on Galatians" (1535), LW 26:295.
- 7 Martin Luther, "A Brief Instruction on What to Look for and Expect in the Gospels" (1521), LW 35:123.
- 8 See LW 26:57, 66; LW 30:166.
- 9 Kenneth Hagen, *Luther's Approach to Scripture as seen in his "Commentaries on Galatians: 1519-1538"*, (Tübingen: Mohr, 1993) 69.
- 10 Gary M. Simpson, "'You Shall Bear Witness to me': Thinking with Luther about Christ and Scripture," *Word and World* 29 (Fall 2009) 380-388.
- 11 Luther, "A Brief Instruction," LW 35:123.
- 12 See Fernando Segovia, "Cultural Studies and Contemporary Biblical Criticism: Ideological Criticism as Mode of Discourse," in *Reading from This Place: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in Global Perspective* (ed. Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995) 7.
- 13 See A. P. Nirmal, ed., *A Reader in Dalit Theology* (Madras: Gurukul, 1992); G. Koonthanam, "Yahweh the Defender of the Dalits: A Reflection on Isaiah 3.12-15," *Jeevadhara* 32/128 (1992) 112-123; G. Soares-Prabhu, "The Table Fellowship of Jesus: Its Significance for Dalit Christians in India Today," *Jeevadhara* 128 (1992) 140-159; M. Gnanavaram, "Dalit Theology and the Parable of the Good Samaritan," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 50 (1993) 59-83; David M. Carr, "A Biblical Basis for Dalit Theology," in *Indigenous People: Dalits* (ed. James Massey; Delhi: ISPCK, 1994) 231-249; James Massey, *Towards Dalit Hermeneutics: Re-reading the Text, the History and the Literature* (New Delhi: ISPCK, 1994); M. Arul Rajah, "Towards a Dalit Reading of the Bible: Some Hermeneutical Reflection," *Jeevadhara* 25/151 (1996) 29-34; V. Devasahayam, ed., *Frontiers of Dalit Theology* (Chennai: Gurukul, 1997); Sathianathan Clarke, *Dalits and Christianity: Subaltern Religion and Liberation Theology in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998); Monica J. Melanchthon, "The Indian Voice," in *Reading the Bible as Women: Perspectives from Africa, Asia, and Latin America* (Semeia Series 78; Atlanta: SBL, 1997) 151-160; M. Arul Raja "Reading Bible from a Dalit Location: Some Points of Interpretation," *Voices From the Third World* 23/1 (2000) 71-91; George Oommen, "The Emerging Dalit Theology: A Historical Appraisal," *Indian Church History Review* 34/1 (2000) 19-37; J. Susaimanickam, "Dalit Hermeneutics: A Proposal for Reading the Bible," *Vaiharai* 5/3-4 (2000) 3-24; K. Jesurathnam, "Towards a Dalit Liberative Hermeneutic: Re-reading the Psalms of Lament," *Bangalore Theological Forum* 34/1 (June 2002) 1-34; Surekha Nelavala, *Liberation Beyond Borders: Dalit Feminist Hermeneutics and Four Gospel Women* (Cologne, Germany: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2009); Peniel Rajkumar, *Dalit Theology and Dalit Liberation: Problems, Paradigms and Possibilities* (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2010); Sathianathan Clarke, Deenabandhu Manchala and Philip Vinod Peacock, eds., *Dalit Theology in the Twenty-First Century: Discordant Voices, Discerning Pathways*

- (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010); Monica J. Melanchthon, "Dalits, Bible and Method," Cited Online: <http://www.sbl-site.org/Article.aspx?ArticleId=459>; Evangeline Rajkumar, "Skin, Body, Blood: Explorations for Dalit Hermeneutics," accessed Online: http://www.womenutc.com/evangeline_anderson_rajkumar_3.htm; Surekha Nelavala, "Jesus asks the Samaritan Woman for a Drink: A Dalit Feminist Reading of John 4," *Lectio Difficilior* 1 (June 2007), accessed online: http://www.lectio.unibe.ch/07_1/surekha_nelavala_jesus_asks_the_samaritan_woman.htm. The list of works cited here is not exhaustive.
- 14 K. P. Kuruvilla, "Dalit Theology: An Indian Christian Attempt to Give Voice to the Voiceless," accessed online, <http://www.csichurch.com/article/dalit.htm>
- 15 Tat-siong Benny Liew, "More than Personal Encounters: Identity, Community and Interpretation," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 56/1-2 (2002) 41-44.

Surekha Nelavala is Pastor/Mission Developer at Global Peace Lutheran Fellowship in Frederick, Md. She is ordained in the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church (AELC) and Rostered in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Her Ph.D. in Biblical Studies, NT, is from Drew University. Nelavala has authored two books and published several articles internationally. She has delivered presentations at academic and church forums that include the United Nations, World Council of Churches, and Lutheran World Federation on topics related to religion, church and social justice.

Public History as a Calling Opening Academic Convocation, September 5, 2012

Barbara Franco

It is an honor to be asked to speak at the 2012 Opening Academic Convocation of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg as we mark both the beginning of a new academic year and the launch of a new museum in historic Schmucker Hall. The Seminary is acknowledged as a place steeped in history and committed to training religious leaders – a place at the crossroads of history and hope. It is a place where I have felt welcomed and comfortable in my role as a public historian among so many esteemed academics devoted to public theology.

When John Spangler introduced me as the Founding Executive Director for the new Gettysburg Seminary Ridge Museum in February – he described the position as my new calling. That characterization was probably more appropriate than he ever imagined. Historians do not often admit it, but our work involves a commitment to seeking truth, extrapolating meaning, and making sense out of the human condition that is not unrelated to the religious mission to which you are committing yourselves. Public historians seek to make the past accessible and meaningful to public audiences; public theologians help people make connections between their faith and the practical issues facing society.

While the opening of a new museum designed to educate the public may at first seem a departure from the core responsibility of the Seminary, possibilities abound for collaboration that can strengthen the Seminary community and insure the ability of the museum to tell a deeper and more engaging story about the American Civil War. The crossroads of history and hope may turn out to be a more interesting place than any of us might have imagined.

I wish to speak this morning not just about specific programs and plans for the museum but also about the broader context for the intersections of history and religion from my perspective as a historian and to explore with you how those intersections can foster new relationships between the work of the seminary and the museum.

Narrative

History and religion share a basic grounding in narrative – the accounts, stories, myths and parables that help explain questions of moral behavior, identity, and larger meaning. Stories, whether religious or historical, speak to essential questions of personal and collective identity, such as: “Who are we?” “Where do we come from?” “Where are we heading?” Creation stories and myths start with “in the beginning...” From the Book of Genesis to the Chinese creation story of Pan Gu or the Navajo accounts of “Changing woman”, stories help explain both continuity and change. Historical narratives about the past also have themes and trajectories. Some highlight progress and change while others convey permanence or connections to an idealized past.

Organizing experiences and memories into narratives that can be saved and shared is a distinctive human characteristic and one that unites all peoples of the world over time. In his book, *The Storytelling Animal: How Stories Make Us Human*, Jonathan Gottschall draws from science and history to explain how a story that engages us emotionally makes it easier to absorb and retain information.¹ Great public speakers like Abraham Lincoln were also accomplished storytellers. Religious texts convey moral instruction through stories. Families, communities, and nations use stories to bind members together. All of these stories – told and retold – help us to be successful as humans by defining identity, coordinating behavior, and encouraging cooperation among individuals and groups. Storytelling may be one of the human skills most essential to our survival.

Stories allow us to feel empathy and compassion for others. How many of us have been brought to tears just by listening to a Story Corps broadcast on National Public Radio? It is not surprising that compassion is an integral part of the world’s religions, because without it we would not be able to function as social animals and interact successfully with others. The Dali Lama’s contention that individual experiences of compassion radiate outward and increase harmony for all, assumes that acts of compassion have the power to change the world. In his recent *New York Times* article, “Compassion Made Easy,” David DeSteno presents the findings of a series of experimental sessions that tested whether the experience of compassion

toward a single individual can shape our actions toward others.² The studies' results suggest that if we make an association with someone – even something as simple as tapping in unison – we increase our capacity to feel empathy and compassion in that situation and beyond.

While compassion is central to the teachings of most religions, history is often undervalued as an impetus for developing empathy. Understanding history requires “rethinking past thought”, literally putting ourselves in someone else’s situation.³ When we make a connection between our lives and the experiences of people of the past, we form associations with people who may be widely separated from us by time, geography, and cultural differences. Museums have learned through audience research that visitors to history museums eagerly seek out and appreciate opportunities to exercise their empathy and their humanity in exhibits that connect them to people from the past. First person accounts, reenactors and museum theater are some of the ways that history museums create learning experiences that enhance empathy and compassion.

These techniques have also proved to be effective ways to convey difficult or controversial subject matter in historical presentations, because they elicit emotional and empathetic reactions that prepare people to consider multiple perspectives and new ideas. The Lower East Side Tenement Museum in New York, for example, is making a conscious effort to engage visitors in dialogue after their visit. The purpose is to help visitors extend their emotional and empathetic feelings toward nineteenth and twentieth-century immigrant residents of the tenement apartments to present-day immigrants of different ethnic backgrounds who are now the residents of the neighborhood and experiencing similar problems of uprootedness, prejudice, and acculturation.

Let me offer a personal and recent example of how empathy can enhance historical understanding. As I took on my new responsibilities as director of the museum, I wanted to reacquaint myself with the facts of the battle to better understand the events of the first day on July 1, 1863, that took place here at the Seminary. The guidebooks I consulted provided regimental positions, numbers of combatants, arrows showing tactical maneuvers, and the names of commanding officers. Like many people, I found the information hard to digest and follow. I read the facts but did not connect to them. One of the items found in the building during renovation was a letter addressed to Noah Koontz at the Seminary hospital. Holding that letter and reading the words that were written to him in July 1863, was a totally different experience. I found out that he was a sergeant in the 142nd Pennsylvania Regiment that fought outside the Seminary on July 1 and that he was a patient in the Seminary hospital after being wounded. Suddenly,

those regimental numbers meant something entirely different to me. How many other members of his unit were wounded? What happened to Noah Koontz after Gettysburg? Did he survive? Seeing his letters, connecting with him as a person, made me more interested and empathetic toward all the soldiers wounded and treated in the Seminary field hospital. He was no longer a statistic, but a person with a family, a life before Gettysburg and a life after Gettysburg. Connecting with Noah Koontz also forced me to think about how these Civil War stories of wounded soldiers and amputated limbs connected to the experiences of current day soldiers who have made similar sacrifices in the line of duty. If we do our job, the museum has the potential for visitors to make these same kinds of personal connections.

The post-modern world of the twenty-first century is experiencing a rediscovery of narrative, because stories remain the most effective way to extract meaning from the overwhelming amounts of data and information now available to us. For museums that collect and interpret history, a new emphasis on personal narratives, rather than objective and theoretical accounts, opens new possibilities and new responsibilities. Collecting stories as well as objects requires different skills and new understandings about our work and how we do it. Distinctions between facts and meaning, issues of voice and multiple perspectives, must all be considered. The Seminary Ridge Museum’s permanent exhibition, “Voices of Duty and Devotion,” reflects this trend and depends heavily on the memories and accounts of real people and their experiences.

The enormous power of stories also comes with a responsibility that historians and theologians share – to use those stories in ways that are trustworthy and respectful. Narratives can forge bonds, but they can also reinforce or create conflict. On one level, the American Civil War can be explained as a tale of two stories, with North and South developing two separate narratives to explain slavery and its role in American history. Narratives of exclusion or inclusion, individualism or mutual support, progress or decline, shape our understanding of the kind of society in which we live or want to live.

I did not truly understand the power of stories until some years ago when I participated in a joint meeting with the Psychoanalytic Institute of Minneapolis and the Minnesota Historical Society to discuss the subject of memory. Historians and psychoanalysts were intrigued by the fact that both sets of professionals deal with the subject of memory but rarely meet to compare the commonalities and differences of our work. The psychoanalysts approached memory as healers, using clinical and even physiological terms. They understood that an individual who came to them without a story was clinically ill. Their work was to help that patient construct a story in order to be well. Between patient and doctor, they reminded us, there is an under-

standing that although the facts may not all be correct, the meaning of the story must be true. Expanding on this approach, families who do not tell stories about themselves are often dysfunctional and communities that do not share an understanding of their collective stories do not thrive.

For the historians in the audience – myself included – the use of memory and story as tools for individual and collective meaning-making, reminded us that our work cannot ignore the needs of public audiences. As historians we are taught to stay focused on the accuracy of facts, but we sometimes forget about the meanings that are embedded in the stories, artifacts, and manuscripts that we collect. The authenticity of history, the rigors of research, and factual accuracy are of course crucial, but sometimes it is not enough for historians just to get the facts straight – who made or did something and when it happened. Sometimes the communities that we work with, not unlike the psychoanalysts and their patients, are looking for the meaning beyond the facts.

The perspective of the psychoanalysts has challenged me over the years to do a better job of understanding the differences between facts and meanings and of seeking both in the stories and the objects that become part of the collections and exhibitions in history museums. In doing history with the public, I have learned that while historians focus on getting the facts straight, public audiences are seeking narratives that have larger meaning for them. These goals are not mutually exclusive but come from different needs. Just as clinical and pastoral care may use narrative as a tool for healing rather than fact-finding, the authenticity of history is essential to reconciliation, identity, and meaning-making.

Experiencing the Past

History is never only about the past. The Bible recounts the history of ancient peoples through parables and stories that are used to teach good conduct and morality in a modern world. Politicians and pundits are fond of reminding us that we must not forget the lessons of history to solve the problems of the present and insure a better future. Families trace their genealogy to extend family ties and understand who they are. History can help people connect with the past, make decisions about the present, and try to imagine or influence a better future.

David Thelen and Roy Rosenzweig published a groundbreaking study of how Americans interact with the past in their book, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*. The goal of the study was to understand how Americans understood and used the past in their daily lives through a national survey of telephone interviews conducted in 1994. In

the introduction, the authors describe what they learned about how people “engage the past to live their lives.”

Individuals turn to their personal experiences to grapple with questions about where they come from and where they are heading, who they are and how they want to be remembered. Again and again, the Americans we interviewed said they wanted to make a difference, to take responsibility for themselves and others. And so they assembled their experiences into patterns, narratives that allow them to make sense of the past, set priorities, project what might happen next, and try to shape the future. By using these narratives to mark change and continuity, they chart the course of their lives.⁴

While most of those interviewed focused their historical narratives on an intimate personal past of family and friends, including interest in family genealogy, a significant minority reported religious communities and religious narratives as the primary way they used and understood the past. This was particularly true among evangelical Christians. Learning about the history of particular denominations helped these respondents situate themselves in larger historical trajectories beyond their families. The Bible was most often named as the historical book most recently read, and Bible study groups were the second most common type of historical organization they had joined. A retired Wyoming man explained that he studied biblical characters because of “what they have to show – what they show us, what we can learn from their past mistakes and their right decisions.”⁵

For the majority of respondents who did not mention a specific religious connection, the study found that they used history in similar ways. “By thinking about the past as a reservoir of experience they could use it in their own lives and understand it in the lives of others.”⁶

Connecting Past and Present

As people strive to live successful lives, make good choices, and take responsibility for their actions, they draw on their faith and past experiences for the tools they need. Faced with tragedies, life passages of birth, marriage, and death, people reach out for help in understanding their present challenges in a larger context. Religion and religious faith clearly play a role in many people’s lives, and your own study of pastoral care will provide you with the tools to assist others in understanding their own stories through a spiritual lens. But history can also provide powerful opportunities for healing for both communities and individuals.

When I worked for the Historical Society of Washington, D.C., more than a decade ago, the city was a textbook case for a community in need of a story. By all reckonings – social, economic, political – the local residential community of Washington, D.C., both black and white, suffered from a lack of local identity, without a story that it could claim as its own apart from the federal government. Could Washington become a better place, a stronger community, if it could construct a story about itself? Could the Historical Society of Washington, D.C., assist in giving voice to a community's story?

The Historical Society decided to create a collecting project and exhibit on the subject of “Growing Up in Washington” based on the experiences of people who had grown up in the city from 1900 to 2000. The exhibit was based on more than 50 oral history interviews with people of different races and backgrounds, economic status, and gender. From those oral histories we chose two “poster children” from each quarter century and created a notebook of quotes drawn from all the oral histories and organized around childhood activities of Belonging, Learning, Playing, Celebrating, and Working. From the individual stories, photographs and objects that were collected for the project, a larger story emerged. People who gave interviews talked about how Washington as a place had shaped their lives and the role that specific places played in their growing up. We learned about the importance of movie theaters – both black and white – segregated schools, and parallel lives that never intersected during segregation. The oral histories provided new meaning for their childhood memories. At public programs, people who had grown up in a segregated city met, compared stories, and realized for the first time that they shared similar childhoods and a common story.

Communities often seek meaning from history in response to external threats of change or trauma experienced within the community. Changing demographics may spur a community to be concerned about documenting its history when newcomers or a generational shift threaten the loss of personal and community memories. If change is accompanied by loss of iconic structures through demolition and development or natural disaster, the need to preserve history can become a social necessity for community survival or revival. In cases where a particular community has been denied a voice in the majority narrative, history provides legitimization. Interest in African Americans, women, and ethnic groups are all examples of setting the record straight by identifying pioneers and firsts to reclaim a past that is seen as previously ignored or suppressed. Publishing a community history, exhibiting at a local museum, or creating a new institution are some of the ways that communities seek to assert their importance in national or local history. Telling their story and having it recognized in some public forum to share

with others serves as affirmation for the members of the community and as legitimization in the larger community.

Some museums and historic sites have become more explicit about their responsibility to use history proactively by addressing difficult past events and their present day legacies. In 1999, a group of nine historic sites and museums joined together as the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience with the statement that “...it is the obligation of historic sites to assist the public in drawing connections between the history of our sites and their contemporary implications. We view stimulating dialogue on pressing social issues and promoting humanitarian and democratic values as a primary function.”⁷

Among the founding sites were the District Six Museum in Cape Town, South Africa; the Lower East Side Tenement Museum in New York City, and the Gulag Museum in Russia. Today the Coalition has over 300 members in 47 countries. What sets these institutions apart is their desire not only to preserve the past but to use it to address contemporary issues. The District Six Museum, for example, came into existence to reconstruct memories of Apartheid and through that process restore civic places of healing, forgiveness, and reconciliation. The Seminary Ridge Museum plans to participate in this world-wide network of sites dedicated to remembering past struggles and addressing their contemporary legacies – connecting past to present and memory to action.

Gettysburg Seminary Ridge Museum: Looking Forward

The Gettysburg Seminary Ridge Museum has the capacity not only to interpret the casualties and suffering of the Battle of Gettysburg but also to explore issues of freedom and faith, war and religion, which can help visitors connect the past in meaningful ways to their own lives. As a partnership between the Adams County Historical Society and the Seminary, the museum has articulated multiple goals that embrace both historical and religious themes. The permanent exhibition of the museum, “Voices of Duty and Devotion”, uses the voices of real people to tell the story of the first day of the battle on July 1, 1863, the care of the wounded as a field hospital, and the issues of faith and freedom that divided the nation. The Battle of Gettysburg, its aftermath of suffering and death, and the causes that led people to such carnage are all deeply rooted in religious beliefs of the nineteenth century and 150 years later are still described in religious terms of hallowed ground, sacred trust, sacrifice, and redemption.

The Civil War was a transformative experience for those who lived through it. Farmers became soldiers, slaves became free, women became heads of households, children became orphans. The Civil War also transformed

the nation, and how we remember and interpret it continue to shape the present and future. We hope that visitors to the museum will also leave changed, able to think about war not just as regimental numbers and arrows on maps but as men of flesh and blood who suffered and died. We hope that learning about the efforts of the caregivers who volunteered and worked to save lives, patched shattered bodies, and raised broken spirits will inspire visitors to be more compassionate in their own lives. We hope that understanding how people in the nineteenth century used their faith to grapple with issues of loyalty to country, the morality of slavery, individual conscience, and religious participation will help make them better able to face issues of faith today in their own lives.

We hope that visitors will leave understanding the power of stories. Biblical verses for and against slavery were quoted by both sides of the slavery issue. Harriet Beecher Stowe's best-selling novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, enflamed public sentiment against slavery. A generation later, Elsie Singmaster wrote stories that memorialized and romanticized the Battle of Gettysburg for her readers. The South developed a powerful narrative of heroism, sacrifice, and redemption that was celebrated as the civil religion of the Lost Cause. The voices of the museum's exhibit include less told stories of African Americans and ordinary soldiers, nurses and doctors, who have often been overlooked. Many visitors will take away their own stories of their visit, of a rediscovered ancestor or new insights.

Visitors to Gettysburg already describe their experience as spiritual – the spirit of the place, the spirits of the dead, the spirit of compassion. We hope that a museum in this historic building, interpreted through innovative exhibits and programs, will help them explore that spirituality by not only remembering the past but also reconsidering their own lives, aspirations, and beliefs.

The partnership of the Adams County Historical Society and the Lutheran Theological Seminary provides a unique opportunity for public history and public theology to come together at this crossroads of the Civil War. An article for the Historical Society newsletter co-authored by Bradley Hoch, former Chair of the Board of the Adams County Historical Society and Co-Chair of the Voices of History Committee of the Seminary Ridge Historic Preservation Foundation, and Gerald Christianson, Emeritus Professor of Church History at the Seminary, notes that "*Schmucker Hall offers an unprecedented opportunity to interpret the role of religion in the Civil War and the shaping of the American experiment in democracy ... in ways that no other museum, including a government agency such as the National Park Service can do.*"⁸

More recently, Leonard M. Hummel, Professor of Pastoral Care here at the Seminary, outlined a post-modern vision for how "Openness to the World" through the new museum and the history of Gettysburg can contribute to the seminary's work. "*I suggest that Gettysburg Seminary has a call to develop and teach a local theology about Gettysburg ... that the proposed exhibits within the museum itself around war and peace, church and state, freedom and slavery, suffering and consolation for suffering become venues for preparation in leadership in public ministry for the church and the world.*"⁹

At the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg, have we come to a moment when religion and history can find common ground on this great battlefield of the Civil War? From their roots in metaphysics, history and theology embarked on separate paths in the modern era. In a post-modern world it seems possible that their paths may intersect again on Seminary Ridge.

Notes

- 1 Jonathan Gottschall, *The Storytelling Animal: How Stories Make Us Human* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012).
- 2 David DeSteno, "Compassion Made Easy," *New York Times Sunday Review* (July 15, 2012) 12.
- 3 R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1956) 215.
- 4 Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1998) 12.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 121.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 38.
- 7 www.sitesofconscience.org.
- 8 Gerald Christianson and Bradley Hoch, "The Last Full Measure of Devotion: The Battle of Gettysburg and the New Museum in Schmucker Hall," *Adams County History* 16 (2010) 5.
- 9 Leonard M. Hummel, "Openness to the World: Some Suggestions for Its Pastoral Bearing," *Seminary Ridge Review* 14/1 (Autumn 2011) 70-71.

Barbara Franco is the Executive Director of the Gettysburg Seminary Ridge Museum. A graduate of Bryn Mawr College and the Cooperstown Graduate Program, Franco has led museum programs in Massachusetts, Minnesota and Washington, D.C. Most recently, she served for nearly 8 years as the executive director of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Visit www.seminaryridgemuseum.org/.

Sites of Conscience: A Sermon at University Lutheran Church, Cambridge, Mass.

Kathleen Reed

Looking back after the wrap up off one thing and teetering on the threshold of the next, I find I can usually make a long list of unexpected things I have learned along the way.

For example, at the outset of my service at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg I never dreamed that I would learn so much about museums.

What I learned as Gettysburg Seminary has been turning its oldest building into a state of the art Civil War museum is this: There are museums and then there are museums.

There are repositories for artifacts with glass cases for the display of embalmed versions of the past, and then there are crucibles curated for the setting loose of memories to inhabit and shape new chambers in contemporary minds.

There are museums ... and then there are sites of conscience.

On July 1, of this year the Seminary Ridge Museum will officially open. It is only the latest of many re-purposings of the 1832 building. In the days leading up to the Battle of Gettysburg, the army of Robert E. Lee turned the Seminary into a military objective, a structure perched on high ground to be seized. By the end of the first day of the battle, July 1, the building that had served as dormitory, dining hall, classroom, library and chapel got re-purposed into a field hospital and at the same time a detention center for wounded prisoners of war. At the end of the first day's fighting, the Union wounded were prisoners. By the end of Pickett's Charge on July 3, the POWs were the Confederates.

One hundred and fifty years later, under the joint stewardship of historians and Lutheran theologians, a museum will open that views its mission within the framework of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, a network under the banner of "Memory and Action," with a mission *dedicated to remembering past struggles and addressing their contemporary legacies.*

Sites of Conscience – You will Find Them all Over the World:

In Lowell, the textile mills;
in Arkansas the Central High School of Little Rock;
in Memphis the Lorraine Motel;
in Russia the Kolyma Gulag;
in Cambodia the Tuol Sleng Security Prison 21.

In Gettysburg, a Lutheran seminary where 50,000 fell within sight of its cupola, now a site of conscience for thinking anew about freedom, slavery, war, reconciliation and where in that mix to locate God.

There are museums and then there are sites of conscience, like in the Gospel According to Luke, in Jerusalem where the Roman governor mixed the blood of Jews with their temple offerings. And where the Siloam tower collapsed claiming 18 victims. Sites of conscience in the Gospel according to Luke whose late first century Jewish audience hear the these horrors recounted and cannot help superimposing their own vivid recent memories of the destruction of Jerusalem by Romans of the entire city inclusive of the Temple.

Just as today we cannot help superimposing our own most vivid contemporary memories:

the collapse of twin towers in Manhattan,
the breach of levees in New Orleans,
the flattened homes on Staten Island,
the 20 empty desks in Newton.

Jesus asked them, do you THINK that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? Think again.

Or those 18 who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them – do you THINK that they were worse offenders than all others living in Jerusalem? Think again! (For clues to the most likely tone of Jesus' voice, read ahead in the chapter where Jesus wails as the mother hen desperate to warm her coldblooded chicks).

Unless, says Jesus, you re-think, unless you re-orient and turn in my

direction, the way you fixate on death will define you now as well as at the last. Everything breaks and everyone dies.

But meaningless suffering need not define you nor death get the last word.

And then Jesus told the story of a fruitless good for nothing good as dead fig tree and the gardener who put his identity as a gardener on the line for the sake of a future that would not be a repeat a fruitless past. As if to say just as there are museums and sites of conscience there are different ways people can relate to the past. One way, the old-school museum approach: as something fruitless, dead and hopeless to which only blame can be assigned. Or the new way, the site of conscience route, an opportunity to think, reorient and entertain the possibility of a different future.

Steve and I encountered such a person, a living breathing site of conscience with a special relationship to a particular fig tree while vacationing in Freiburg Germany when we were grad students. We were in the Freiburger Cathedral which the guidebook noted had the oldest cast bell in Europe in its steeple, a crypt in the basement filled with jeweled worship paraphernalia and marvelous stained glass in the nave in between. Having entered by a side door, the proper entry for tourists, we stood in the center aisle in front of the chancel waiting for our eyes to adjust to the dim light. A voice off in the distance called

“Bitte! Kommen Sie Her! Kommen Sie Her! Bitte!” The voice was coming from the far end of the nave at the opposite end from the chancel, so we walked toward the voice which kept repeating the invitation until we found the wiry little old man to whom the voice belonged standing in front of a huge set of doors. “Everyone assumes the front doors are locked,” he said to us, “but they’re not.”

And he demonstrated by pulling the handle and swinging the door wide open. “Since from the outside the entrance of the cathedral is fenced off,” he said, “this is the only way to get to view it.” Again our eyes had to adjust now to the bright noonday sun as we followed this man through the door. He explained that there over the front door of the cathedral were carvings of artistry not to missed. And he should know, as he went on, because he was himself a sculptor, introducing himself as Herr Holzhauer.

For the next hour Herr Holzhauer pointed out the various element of the sculpture arcing over the door, biblical depictions, parables related to the theme of the Final Judgment: “There you see! The 10 bridesmaids, 5 foolish and 5 wise, and ... the fig tree!”

And woven into this religious art history lesson, Herr Holzhauer told his own story. As a young student he had always dreamed of studying philosophy at the university in Heidelberg. In 1938 he was on the threshold of

achieving that dream as he began to study philosophy in Heidelberg. One day there appeared on the bulletin board a notice for all philosophy students to attend a meeting the following day. And he said that while the purpose of the meeting was not stated, he knew what it was about: He would be asked to name names of students and faculty who might be Jewish.

To go and refuse to name names, he said, would not just be the end of his studies. The consequences could be dire. And so he made the decision to leave Heidelberg that night, to give up his dream.

He turned and pursued a new path that led to sculpture, and to bearing witness in a dark cathedral, a museum of sorts, in a way that shed light on more than carvings over a doorway, including a fig tree that would bear fruit again one way or another.

Herr Holzhauer was a site of conscience, a practitioner of the repentance Jesus speaks of here in Luke 13. A re-thinker and re-orienter, inviting others to join him in the dance of opening doors presumed locked, and letting in light.

A quick sidebar on unanticipated discoveries and epiphanies even in Lent: I have only just learned that there is a full-size replica here at Harvard of Herr Holzhauer’s Freiburger doorway, also known as the Frieberg Golden Gate, in the Busch-Reisinger Museum. There are museums and then there are museums. Glass cases of embalmed versions of the past and spaces for fresh engagement with what’s past for the sake of a new future.

Here in the Gospel, Jesus points out that most especially in the midst of tragedy and destruction there are unexpected things to be learned along the way. Rethinking, reorienting, repenting, turning away from death toward the voice that calls “Bitte! Kommen Sie her!” (Please oh please come here!) with a voice that promises a future stronger than death. No matter what.

What if. See if you can imagine this: What if you and I are called to be sites of consciences? Not old-school museums filled with glass cases of embalmed version of the past. Sites of conscience, grace-forged crucibles fired in the kiln of the Three Great Days of Jesus’s suffering death and resurrection for imagining with Jesus a new way through and beyond suffering.

And what if we would try out this crucible call together, to live together, turning together as sites of conscience as the UniLu community of conscience in Christ?

And every so often, maybe every year on this teetering Sunday in the middle of Lent, we will look back to name, ponder, even celebrate the totally unexpected things we are learning along the way. Amen.

Kathleen Reed is pastor of University Lutheran Church (UniLu) in Cambridge, Mass. She is the former Chief Advancement Officer at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. Reed has served congregations in Connecticut, Vermont and Massachusetts. Between 1992 and 2000, she served as Assistant to the Bishop of the New England Synod. Her B.S. is from Boston University. Her M.Div. is from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. This sermon was preached March 3, 2013 at UniLu.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Better Angels of Our Nature: How Violence Has Declined

Steven Pinker (New York: Viking, 2011)

Reviewed by Karl Runser

The world in which today's children are growing up is less violent than it has ever been. Would anyone who followed the story of the school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, ever believe such an assertion? Media coverage of that atrocity and America's sociopolitical reactions to it gives the impression that violence is on the rise. Leaving aside Sandy Hook Elementary School, or the July, 2012 shooting at a theater in Aurora, Colorado, no news cycle is complete without a story of armed conflict, murder, or less lethal cruelty.

"If it bleeds, it leads," is the cliché of broadcast news, and so it appears the world is constantly bleeding. But Steven Pinker, Professor of Psychology at Harvard University, makes a persuasive case that humanity is less blood-thirsty now than at any time. Across categories and continents, measured in spans of decades, centuries, or millennia, the trend is away from murder, warfare, and assaults of all kinds.

Pinker acknowledges that his argument may be hard to swallow and even offensive to his readers. The first test of his claim is what he calls a "sanity check" – an informal survey of violence as depicted in a variety of sources, including sacred texts, histories, handbooks of etiquette, and print advertisements. His survey spans the history of human culture from Homer to the Hebrew Bible to "The Honeymooners" and beyond – a showcase of brutality, in acts small and large, away from which most of the world has turned.

Pinker credits a rise in our regard for our fellow humans for the ebb in acts of bloodshed. As our ancestors began to profit from trading with one another, they became more valuable to one another alive than dead.

A gradual but recognizable “humanitarian revolution” inspired people to recognize their neighbors’ intrinsic worth, and as that recognition increased, violence declined. This trend has continued in recent generations, as international attention has focused on a universal understanding of and advocacy for human rights, which has brought a corresponding decrease in assaults against the Other.

War continues to shroud humanity, but Pinker, drawing on sociological studies, historical records, and the work of international agencies, makes a strong case that wars are decreasing in number, intensity, and lethality (even allowing for the destruction of the two World Wars). This has been good news for industrialized nations, which have profited from better and longer-lasting security. Our less prosperous global neighbors have not been so fortunate, as thirty-two sites of armed conflict plotted on a 2008 map show (Pinker, 306).

What of the conventional wisdom that the world is more violent now than in the past? Pinker notes that cognitive psychologists have shown that the easier it is to remember an event, the more likely it seems to be (193). Recall the sheer amount of information delivered non-stop after the Newtown shooting: from that coverage it is easy to conclude that schools are in unrelenting mortal danger. But Pinker’s evidence paints a different picture: statistically, our children and their teachers are today less likely to die by violence, at school or anywhere else, than at any point in history.

The Better Angels of Our Nature is a provocative and superbly written book, an important argument (if at times a privileged one) arriving at a time of heightened sensitivity to violence in America, and controversy about how to address it. Pinker presses his case, but never callously, and often with a wit that lightens the load. His section on the historiography and psychology of mass murder (“The Trajectory of Genocide,” page 320ff) is essential reading for everyone who would attempt to understand violence in the human experience.

Hopefully that audience will include the Church’s leaders and teachers. We all know the conventional wisdom that ours is a violent world, and getting worse. We listen as acts of violence are named “senseless” with little additional reflection. Mass shootings in Newtown and Aurora, not to mention hundreds of scattered killings, might indeed defy speech at first. But “senseless” need not be our final word on murder, assault, or war. Surely the Church, which confesses a mixed history of war and peace, hearkens to a violent redemption story, and professes trust in a God who promises to turn swords into plowshares, has plenty more to say about brutality. Pinker’s book, a clear-eyed look at an emotional subject, will help us think and speak about violence in our time.

Karl Runser is pastor of the Southern Clinton County Lutheran Parish in Lock Haven, Pa. He graduated from Ohio University with a degree in Music History and Literature. His M.Div. is from Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. Runser has served on the councils of the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod and the Northumberland Presbytery, as well as the Policy Council of Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania, the ELCA’s state public policy office in Harrisburg.

Martin Luther's Anti-Semitism: Against His Better Judgment

Eric W. Gritsch (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2012)
 Reviewed by Brooks Schramm

Since World War II the topic of 'Luther and the Jews' has been one of the most – if not *the* most – investigated topics in Luther research, and that trend shows no signs of coming to an end.¹ Though not planned as such, with his death in December 2012 *Martin Luther's Anti-Semitism: Against His Better Judgment* turns out to be the final major publication in the estimable scholarly career of Eric W. Gritsch, Professor Church History at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg for 33 years (1961-1994). Gritsch himself was a regular contributor in the ongoing debates about 'Luther and the Jews,'² and this monograph represents his own clear statement on this ongoing neuralgic topic. Noting the interesting irony that the International Congress for Luther Research has yet to focus on the specific topic of 'Luther and the Jews', he wrote the book as an appeal for an "international discussion" (xi).

Gritsch organizes his work in three chapters of roughly the same length, plus a concise conclusion. Chapter 1, "The Riddle of Anti-Semitism," builds toward the forceful claim that Luther "is not just 'anti-Judaic'... but genuinely 'anti-Semitic' in accordance with the broad, contemporary definition of anti-Semitism as 'hostility to or prejudice against the Jews'" (xi). In chapter 2, "The Luther Evidence," Gritsch deftly leads the reader through a plethora of key moments in Luther's writings on the Jews, demonstrating via this chronological presentation both continuity as well as evolution in Luther's thought. The subheadings in the chapter provide a crisp summation of Gritsch's formal analysis of the question: "A 'Christian' Old Testament and Judaism"; "Traditional Polemics (1513-1521)"; "An Interlude of Pastoral Evangelism (1521-1537)"; "A Tragic Conclusion (1538)"; "Demonizing Attacks (1539-1546)". Chapter 3, "After-Effects," is a masterful tracing of the complex reception-history of Luther's writings on the Jews from his death to the end of World War II, followed by a critical assessment of post-WWII scholarship. In the "Conclusion," Gritsch provides ten points that emerge from his study, all of which are captured by this central claim:

Luther's anti-Semitism is an integral part of his life and work, clearly evidenced in his literary legacy. But his anti-Semitism is neither in harmony with the core of his theology nor with the stance of the Apostle Paul regarding the relationship between Jews and Christians. Consequently, Luther's attitude to the Jews is against his better judgment (138).

This is the type of book that can only be written by someone who is in command of his/her subject matter, combining as it does the accumulation of insights derived from a lifetime of scholarly pursuits in Reformation Church History and a style of presentation that makes the work accessible to a broad audience. For anyone interested in the question – student or scholar – *Martin Luther's Anti-Semitism* is clearly a must-read. Gritsch's thesis, that "Luther's attitude to the Jews is against his better judgment," deserves vigorous debate, especially given that Luther himself would surely have disagreed.

Notes

- 1 See, e.g., Thomas Kaufmann, *Luthers 'Judenschriften': Ein Beitrag zu ihrer historischen Kontextualisierung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011); Brooks Schramm and Kirsi I. Stjerna, *Martin Luther, the Bible, and the Jewish People: A Reader* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012).
- 2 See, *inter alia*, Eric W. Gritsch, *Martin – God's Court Jester: Martin Luther in Retrospect* (3rd ed.; Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2009 [1983]), chap 7: "The Gospel and Israel"; idem, "Luther and the Jews: Toward a Judgment of History," in *Stepping Stones to Further Jewish-Lutheran Relations* (ed. Harold H. Ditmanson; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1990) 104-119; idem, "The Jews in Reformation Theology," in *Jewish-Christian Encounters Over the Centuries: Symbiosis, Prejudice, Holocaust, Dialogue* (ed. Marvin Perry and Frederick M. Schweitzer; American University Studies 9/136; New York: Peter Lang, 1994) 197-213.

Brooks Schramm is Professor of Biblical Studies at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. His scholarly interests include the history of the Hebrew language, Jewish biblical interpretation, and biblical theology. His most recent book, edited with Kirsi Stjerna, is *Martin Luther, the Bible, and the Jewish People: A Reader* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012).

Defending Faith: Lutheran Responses to Andreas Osiander's Doctrine of Justification, 1551-1559

Timothy J. Wengert (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012)

Reviewed by Eric H. Crump

Wengert's meticulously researched and detailed monograph is a re-examination of the published record of the intra-Lutheran dispute concerning Andreas Osiander's "heretical" interpretation of the doctrine of justification, the article on which the church stands or falls, an interpretation put forth by the reformer of Nuremberg who had attended the Marburg Colloquy [1529], the Diet of Augsburg [1530] ("thus having worked with Master Philip on the Augsburg Confession itself" (p. 192), and the signing of the Smalcald Articles [1537]. It is chiefly an examination of the reactions to and condemnations of Osiander's position between 1551 and 1559 (some posthumous given Osiander's death in 1552) rather than an exposition of his thought. Begun as "a footnote to a larger work on Philip Melancthon" (p. 2), it has morphed into a volume examining Lutheran theological and doctrinal debates and the ways in which Lutheran theologians publicly promulgated and articulated their positions, enabling them to attain a remarkable consensus.

Quite rightly, the Osiandrian controversy's "uniqueness" makes it an excellent candidate for an examination of the process of "confessionalization [*Konfessionalisierung*]." Wengert sees three aspects to this uniqueness. Firstly, all participants understood themselves to be debating what they regarded as the central doctrine of the church concerning the gospel. Secondly, other theological controversies emerging in the decade after Luther's death "did not involve such a wide variety of theologians from so many different traditions within the Evangelical camp – all lining up on the same side" (p. 4). And, thirdly, "bitter enemies in other controversies nevertheless defended one another and united in their rejection of Osiander and his followers", such that "the traditional (and sometimes questionable) categories of gnesio-Lutheran (genuine Lutherans) and Philippist (followers of Melancthon) do not obtain in this dispute" (p. 4). For Wengert, the extent of this theological consensus presents the occasion for a presentation of confessionalization

from a specifically theological perspective that avoids the possible social and political reductionisms in modern historical considerations of confessionalization in early modernity. The process of confessionalization in the formation of consensus through argumentative discussion of theological topics and the acknowledgment of agreement was not simply a matter of social or political compulsion, especially given the involvement of different territorial churches controlled by different, independent princes.

Wengert critically notes the examination of the process of confessionalization in the Osiandrian controversy requires an approach honoring "the very specificity of the theological debate" (p. 4). This necessitates methodologically the avoidance of narrowness of concentration upon only a few figures in the debate and/or territorial regions and churches: "Unless the full scope of Evangelical reactions to Osiander comes under balanced scrutiny, however, analysis of theological consensus building becomes lopsided" (p. 6). Historical inquiry also must recognize the full scope of the struggles in the debate concerning the role in theological argumentation of the use of Scripture, Luther, the Wittenberg doctorate, and the judgments and decisions of the various individual church bodies as authorities. He rightly demonstrates that concern for the multifaceted character of theological authority "far from being a given consistently trumped by political authority, marks another important theological facet of confessionalization" (p. 6). The chronological contours of the published record (and its diversity in forms of writing, e.g., open letters, speeches, biblical commentary, etc.) also enables the recognition of the "differentiated consensus" between different treatments of justification that permitted the emergence of unanimity in the theological rejection of the Osiandrian interpretation of justification.

But, most significantly, for Wengert, the process of confessionalization involved the longing to confess the faith and its "intimate connection" to publication through printing ["Indeed, whatever the role of the printing press in spreading Martin Luther's thought, this study demonstrates that without the printing press any process of confessionalization is unimaginable" (p. 8)]. The articulation of this longing to confess the faith not only involved the concern for definition of and agreement in right doctrine concerning justification, but also the declaration of comfort and consolation of assurance. In opposition to Osiander, the confessing theologians "always included in their line of argument how comforting the forensic understanding of justification really was.... To be pronounced righteous by another on behalf of God is itself a public event, an act of saying aloud to the sinner the divine judgment of forgiveness. When this very public act comes under attack, the only viable defense is to go public – early and often – against any view bent on silencing the very gospel (and ipso facto its comfort) that

stood at the center of all Evangelical church life and theology” (p. 9).

In terms of the structure of the monograph, the historical treatment of the early stages of the controversy [Chapters 1: “Why Some Pastors Should Not Become Professors: The Origins of the Osiandrian Controversy” (pp. 1-25) and 2: “Protesting Osiander (1551-1552): How Lutherans Fight in Public” (26-67)] and the chronological contours of the published record of the controversy [Chapter 8: “Writing Against Osiander: A Bibliographic Essay” (352-430)] frame the core aspects of the theological controversy and the process of confessionalization.

Chapter 3: “Debating the Basics in Lutheran Doctrine: “Justification by Grace, through Faith, on Account of Christ”” (68-100) presents the central features of the debate concerning justification (e.g., being made righteous through Christ’s divine indwelling [Osiander] versus being declared righteous through divine imputation, essence [Osiander] versus “relation”, and the question of the relation between grace and gifts), the relation between justification and consolation, the role of the person, natures and the atoning work of Christ in relation to justification *propter Christum*, and the debate between philosophical versus Scriptural methods in understanding the nature of theological discourse. Wengert explicitly notes that this chapter does not investigate in detail Osiander’s theological position. For consideration of Osiander’s position, readers are referred to studies by Emanuel Hirsch, Martin Stupperich, Anna Briskina, Jörg Rainer Fligge, and Gottfried Seebaß. Wengert states that “this study’s interest is *not* to compare Osiander’s position to his opponents’ but to make clear how his opponents constructed their own theological positions (and Osiander’s!) and thereby expressed their basic agreements with one another. Thus, references to “Osiander’s position” here do not mean so much what Osiander said as what his opponents took him to be saying” (70-71 [see also p. 4: “In this work, only chapter 1, which introduces the dispute, and chapter 6, which compares Osiander’s use of Luther to his opponents’, will examine Osiander’s texts in detail. Even in those chapters, however, the purpose of investigating Osiander is simply to elucidate his opponents’ points of view”]).

Chapters 4-7 provide greater historical specificity to the general contours of the theological debate in the course of the process of confessionalization and the emergent consensus. Chapter 4 [“True Lutherans, Joachim Mörlin, Matthias Flacius and Nicholas Gallus against the Prussian Gods” (101-190)] gives an exposition of the positions of those figures who wrote thirty-two of the approximately ninety publications in the controversy. Chapter 5 [“Johannes Brenz and Philip Melanchthon against Osiander: Differentiated Consensus in the Sixteenth Century?” (191-241)] traces the interaction between Melanchthon and Brenz, the Lutheran reformer of

major stature who was the most sympathetic of Osiander’s opponents, in the consensus formation of a differentiated unity in criticism and condemnation of Osiander’s interpretation of justification. Chapter 6 [“The Authoritative Luther for and against Osiander” (242-316)], after briefly examining Osiander’s use of Luther’s writings in support of his position, details the invoking and use of Luther as authoritative against Osiander by his opponents. And, finally, Chapter 7 [“Melanchthon’s Theological Response to Osiander” (317-351)] traces the course of Melanchthon’s reactions to Osiander, especially underscoring his dual concerns regarding the proper meaning and effect of the doctrine of justification, namely, divine imputation or the purely forensic character of justification on account of Christ and the consolation of the terrified conscience. For Wengert, these dual concerns form the “very backbone of Evangelical theology, the morphology of Lutheranism” (351).

As a purely historical-theological examination of Lutheran responses to Osiander on the issue of justification in the sixteenth century, within the limits he himself has circumscribed, Wengert’s rich and detailed study is superb. Yet there is another feature in the book that raises questions, especially in relation to possible contemporary implications of the issues raised in the course of the Osiandrian controversy. Wengert himself notes that the theological motive, besides the historical motive concerning the process of confessionalization, for the study lies in the provocation raised by the Finnish school of Luther research (involving Tuomo Mannermaa and his students) attempting “to revise or attack standard Lutheran understandings of justification” (p. 2), especially the forensic understanding of justification as divine imputation in distinction from justification as involving “sanative” features of an “ontic” or ontological description of justification as an effect of faith fellowship with Christ, union with Christ, or being in Christ. Wengert contends that “[i]ndeed, there is reason to suspect that Karl Holl’s thesis on Luther’s doctrine of justification (that Luther discovered a sanative doctrine only to have it usurped by Philip Melanchthon’s forensic doctrine) ... influenced the Finnish approach” (p. 3). The possibility of being legitimate theological heirs of Luther appears to be impossible for those who do not accept or hold a purely forensic understanding of justification, when Wengert, in the midst of his historical presentation in Chapter 8, summarily and tendentiously declares (p. 378): “Moreover, viewing this dispute from its publication record should finally put to rest the powerfully influential claims of Karl Holl that Melanchthon distorted Luther’s view of sanative justification with his own forensic notions. The dreams of a justification that made Christians moral people (also championed by later Pietists, then affixed to Lutheran doctrine by nineteenth-century German Liberalism and revived more recently by Finnish scholars) had nothing in common with

Luther's (or Melanchthon's!) rediscovery of the external, divine address that worked to put to death the Old Creature and bring to life the New Creature of faith." In referring to Heinz Scheible's fine study, "Melanchthon und Osiander über die Rechtfertigung: Zwei Versuche, die Wahrheit zu formulieren" [in Heinz Scheible, *Aufsätze zu Melanchthon* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010)], Wengert states that Scheible "notes the Osiandrian approach to Luther implicit in the Finnish school of Luther research and describes Osiander's own theology as, in the final analysis, *schwärmerisch*" (p. 324, n. 40). Parenthetically, it should be noted that Scheible actually characterizes the Finnish interpretation as "an Osiandrianism critically corrected by Luther [... *einen an Luther kritisch korrigierten Osiandrismus* (Scheible, p. 216)]." Is it being strongly implied that not only the Finnish school of interpretation but any position that does not hold a purely forensic understanding of justification are illegitimate heirs of the Luther and the Lutheran Reformation? Or is the implied criticism of the Mannerma school of interpretation in favor of a purely forensic position a call to return to an earlier Finnish voice, namely, one similar to that of Uuras Saarnivaara in his defense of imputation apart from sanative views (see *Luther Discovers the Gospel: New Light Upon Luther's Way from Medieval Catholicism to Evangelical Faith* (St. Louis, MO.: Concordia Publishing House, 1951)?

Wengert refers to a foreshadowing of the Osiandrian controversy in the epistolary correspondence between Melanchthon, Brenz, and Luther in 1531 (see pp. 68-69). In response to Brenz ("who was more faithful to Augustine in this regard, imagined that God pronounced sinners righteous on the basis of their becoming righteous in the future" [68]), Wengert sees both Melanchthon and Luther correcting Brenz in that "both placed justification by faith in the word and the comfort it afforded the sinner, not in the sinner's renewal or supposed participation in God's essential righteousness but in God's declared promise" (69).

Is justification purely forensic imputation, extrinsic to any notion of sanative renewal or participation? Or could justification involve both renewal/participation and imputation? Could justification involve both divine imputation and some renewal/participation, not necessarily every notion of renewal/participation (such as Osiander's particular interpretation)? Could the answer to a proper understanding of justification as involving both be one that is neither purely forensic nor purely sanative? In part it is Luther himself in his 1531-1535 *Lectures on Galatians* that serves as the occasion for raising this question when he states that "[f]aith begins righteousness, imputation perfects it [*Quare fides iustitiam incipit, imputatio perficit usque ad diem Christi* (WA 40¹:364,27 [LW 26:20])." This dual char-

acter appears to be further underscored in the following later statements concerning righteousness in the same lectures: (1) "Christian righteousness consists in two things: heartfelt trust [*fide cordis*] and the imputation of God. Faith is indeed a formal righteousness, but it is not enough because even after faith remnants of sin still cling to the flesh. ... The second part of righteousness, which perfects it, must be added; and that is the divine imputation" [WA 40¹ 364,11 (LW 26:229)]; (2) "..., these two things perfect Christian righteousness. One is heartfelt faith itself, which is a divinely given gift and formally believes in Christ. The other is God's reckoning this imperfect faith as perfect righteousness for the sake of Christ, his Son, who suffered for the sins of the world and in whom I have begun to believe. Because of this faith in Christ God does not see the sin that is still left in me" [WA 40¹ 366,27ff. (LW 26:231)]; and (3) "These are the two things in which Christian righteousness consists: first, faith that attributes glory to God; second, God's imputation. For faith is weak, as I have said. Hence the reckoning [*reputationem*] of God has to be added, because God does not choose to impute the remnant of sin: he does not choose to punish it or to damn us on its account, but rather to cover it and overlook it as though it were nothing – not for our sakes or for the sake of our worthiness of works, but for the sake of Christ himself, in whom we believe" [WA 40¹ 38,20ff. (LW 26:231)].

The examination of these questions would demand that explicit attention be given to the question formulated by Wolfhart Pannenberg: "Are we to explain the forensic account in terms of a faith fellowship with Christ that underlies justification, or is it a separate and competing view [Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, III:217]?" Wengert has demonstrated that the consensus in the process of the emergence of confessional Lutheranism in the sixteenth century favored imputation alone. But perhaps the truth lies in the emergent ecumenical differentiated consensus in the meantime that justification involves both. Perhaps we must consider not only the process of confessionalization, but also its limits and possible abuse. One might say that reformation necessitates the moment of confessionalization, but is neither exhausted nor defined solely by confessionalization. Perhaps one must "rule out any idea that the reformation account, or one or other of its various presentations, is definitive or a priori beyond criticism. The Reformation doctrines of justification, not just Melanchthon's understanding in terms of declaring righteous, nor the imputation theory of the *Formula of Concord*, but also Luther's statements, all have their inner defects and difficulties that call for criticism in the light of the biblical testimonies" (*Systematic Theology*, III:221). Perhaps one must ask concerning the truth

of justification in the words of Quintus Aurelius Symmachus (with which Scheible concludes his aforementioned essay) –

*What does it matter what practical system we adopt in our search for the truth?
Not by one avenue alone can we arrive at so tremendous a secret.
Quid interest, qua quisque prudentia verum requirat?
Uno itinere non potest perveniri ad tam grande secretum.*

Many voices will have to be considered and re-considered in critical humility, even those we often arrogantly believe to have surpassed.

Eric H. Crump holds a Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from the Divinity School at the University of Chicago. An independent scholar, he currently resides in Gettysburg and is engaged in theological research and writing.

POETRY + THEOLOGY

Wish You Were Where?

Katy Giebenhain

At a Marriott south of Nashville I am walking on a treadmill in the fitness center wearing a Luther Bowl t-shirt (go Gettysburg!) while reading a chapter from Bruce King's *Modern Indian Poetry in English*. As in any conference hotel, on any given weekend, several events are simultaneously underway. Here, one of them is a symposium for type 1 diabetes co-sponsored by southern chapters of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. Type 1 diabetes (T1D) also known as insulin-dependent or juvenile diabetes, is an autoimmune disease. The name creates great confusion because we are more familiar with the metabolic disorder called type II diabetes. Type II is what 90-95% of "diabetics" have. A symposium like this, for both adults and children with type 1, is unusual. There is a fabulous, comfortable energy outside the conference rooms with children checking blood glucose, comparing insulin pumps and grabbing snacks before the start of the next session. In addition to research updates, technology Q&As and other presentations, the symposium includes a concert with a T1D country singer (it's Nashville after all) and the brother of a T1D as well as visits to the kids and youth by a T1D cyclist and a T1D fireman.

Adjusting the incline on the treadmill I'm thinking of writers in contemporary India, the diaspora of writers living in other countries, the sheer number of languages spoken in India and the incredible upheaval of Partition, the subdivision of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 and independence from British rule. Poet and journalist Menka Shivdasani is one of the writers discussed in this chapter on Indian women poets writing in English. She is also one of the founding members of the Bombay Poetry Circle and co-editor and translator of a collection of Sindhi Partition poetry. We are fortunate to be able to include "The Atheist's Confessions" on page 115 of this issue. Imtiaz Dharker is also discussed in this chapter. (See the Fall 2012 *Seminary Ridge Review* for book recommendations on Dharker.)

Today, while being more aware than usual of T1D and those living with chronic illness, and through Shivdasani's effective use of bodily images in her poems, I'm thinking about how chronic illness can be a kind of physical exile. I do not use the word lightly. States of exile can be some of the most devastating experiences human beings go through. Where does the Luther Bowl t-shirt come in? In an exile neither as severe as the redrawing of national borders nor as intimate as the bodily exile from one's healthy self that accompanies disease, what about being a Christian in the United States in 2013? What does it mean in newspapers and blogs and on radio and television? What voices are listened to? Extreme behavior sells. What does this mean to church traditions I remember from childhood? I am a Protestant feminist, but the "C" word has other implications in our society which I do not identify with. Sometimes, I feel like I'm in foreign territory as a person of faith. A writer like Menka Shivdasani gets me thinking about the layers of chosen and forced exile each of us lives in, and how much I don't know about my brothers and sisters. It reminds me to pay attention and to take a deep breath before I categorize others and identify them by who they are at the moment. I sure don't like it when others categorize me.

All of this reminds me of an installation I saw at the Manchester Art Gallery this fall. (Connecting the dots between themes is a poet/preacher thing. We're always on the lookout.) *Wish You Were Where?* by Debbie Goldsmith and Hilary Jack is old-school interactive. Visitors were invited to take a manila luggage/shipping tag and write down where they most would like to be at that moment. Then, they were asked to tie their tag by its string to the layers of others where the artists had assembled a wall of stacked suitcases, trunks and bags. The leather, wicker and plastic handles were thick with tags. A few months after seeing the installation I still have the title *Wish You Were Here* in mind. Remember the lettering on old post cards from friends on vacation (in the days before smart phones)? Hearing Pink Floyd yet? The phrase is so common that, even when seeing title, we finish it differently.

Participation could be as a viewer perusing what others had written, or actively writing a tag, or just taking in the installation as a whole. Here are a few responses I jotted down from the tags other museum-goers had written up. They make a kind of found poem:

The Pyramids, Egypt
 Anna and Marta Right Here from Catalonia
 Hogwarts ♥
 Somewhere to eat
 St. Petersburg Russia

South America! I will get there.
 Sitting on a cornflake waiting for the van to come
 My own boss & a mum
 Ideal place would be somewhere sunny ☺
 Where I lay my head is my home
 If I go anywhere right now I would go to KOREA
 I am sexy and I know it
 Africa
 Someplace high
 Out there
 To the moon
 To Japan
 I am content
 Cyprus
 Also at the pub, but with a Jeremiah weed root beer ☺
 I wish I was playing an harmonica on a crocodile's back
 Bamberg

The flavor of these responses is what you expect from a random crowd. Some wanted to be elsewhere geographically, others wanted to be in another life phase or situation. Others simply wanted to write something – anything – to participate. The installation spoke to them as a park bench, bridge railing or tree trunk would when other messages had already been scratched into their surfaces.

What's in Bamberg? Why write "Korea" in all caps? I love that the person who wants to go to South America also promises that they will, really, do it. Stating this publically may have helped reinforce that inner resolve. Who knows. We often pray with that impulse, don't we? Voicing our spontaneous wishes mixed in with our promises and petitions? Is exile an appropriate term for the luxury of choosing where or how we would like to be?

An Exercise

Try this the next time you are looking to kick-start a sermon. It is good in the wild phase of writing, before the editing and shaping. We underestimate how helpful a change in our writing routine can be. Get a stack of manila shipping tags (readily available at office supply stores or, while supplies last, in the Communication Office at the Seminary), and list what you are thinking of. Get concrete. Write the first thing that comes to mind. And the next. And the next. Hang them up in the room where you are writing. Tie

them, tape them, line them up. If you like authenticity, cover a suitcase or backpack with the tags like a miniature *Wish You Were Where?* Try a clothes hanger or the edge of your bookshelves or a lampshade. Unlike the one in the Manchester Art Gallery, your installation is not viewed by others. Just begin.

Now, put yourself in the position of someone you just read about in the lectionary texts you're preaching on. Write up several tags. Don't stop at one. Go beyond the obvious. That's when it gets interesting. Try a central figure or a bystander (someone watching Jesus and the woman at the well, one of Joseph's fellow prisoners, the mother of the prodigal son or a Pharisee). Or, instead of someone from the Bible, put yourself in the position of someone in your town or government or synod facing a big change. Write up some more tags from their perspective. This is one of the great parts of writing. There are surprises and learning in the process – for you – not just what those listening to the final version learn or see in a new light.

The exercise is brainstorming, of course. But you might be surprised at how a change of format takes you in different directions than simply typing a list. If nothing else, think of the uncomplicated beauty of the artist's invitation. By asking people to express and hang together their individual tags side-by-side they made something more, an international and collective "something more" which which keeps changing.

We Welcome our Poets

This issue includes book recommendations for *Imago Dei: Poems from Christianity and Literature*, *Raging for the Exit* and *Prayers of a Young Poet*. We have wonderful poems from Joseph Bethanti (North Carolina), Laura Shovan (Maryland), Marjorie Stelmach (Missouri), Pamela Wynn (Minnesota), Michael Chitwood (North Carolina), Menka Shivdasani (India), Patrick Cabello Hansel (Minnesota), and translations of poems by SAID (Germany) brought to us in English by Mark Burrows (New Mexico and Germany).

Book Recommendations

Prayers of a Young Poet

Rilke-lovers who recognize in these early versions more famous poems they know well, will be delighted with this book. Those who are new to Rainer Maria Rilke and perhaps intimidated by the way his work is held up in awe by contemporary poets will find it the perfect way to get acquainted with him. Written in 1899 after Rilke returned from his first trip to Russia, and before he wrote his letters to the aspiring poet Franz Kappus in *Letters to a Young Poet*, the early collection *Prayers of a Young Poet* is available in English for the first time in its original form.

These prayer-poems, all written in the voice of a monk to God "You" reminds me of *Bucolics*, a collection of prayer-poems written in the voice of a field hand to God "Boss" by the poet Maurice Manning. In both cases the results are more than the sum of their parts and the depth of the monologues reaches out to readers one by one. The alias monk and the alias field hand are kindred spirits.

Mark S. Burrows translated the poems as well as the accompanying notes from Rilke and he offers a great introduction. Translation is a terribly slippery task. It demands a constant wrestling that has parallels to sermon writing. It's about getting the truth of something from one language, culture, time, context to be understood in another. Burrows opens all the doors and gives us proper, light-filled access. In the afterward he emphasizes:

Readers who approach this translation of Rilke, even if they cannot read German, know something of a double space facing both translator and reader: namely, the gap separating a text in its original language from that of its translated version, as well as the gap distinguishing both of these from the "thing" each gestures toward. "You're so vast that nothing's left of me / when I stand anywhere near You," Rilke declares, and yet elsewhere he insists, "I want to recount You. I want to gaze upon You and describe You." [28, 61] How one enters into these spaces with poems like these reminds us that language has the capacity to reach toward what it recognizes cannot be grasped. (118)

Frequent notes about where he is and on what day are kept separate, at the end or beginning of the prayers. Therefore, in the poems, we have only the monk's voice. The notes lend intimacy and give us clues to his state of mind, the weather, the time of year, the atmosphere. For example "30th of September, before the day's work had begun." (77) "The 24th, late" (58) or "2nd

of October, early in the morning in the forest, and among deer wandering through groves of trees golden with the day's first light, like sounds rising from the strumming of sun-soaked strings." (90). "In his cell, hunched over books in the day's first light, the monk wrote:" (91)

"Seeking God as Rilke here envisions frees us to desire what we do not understand and what we cannot understand" says Burrows (18). This freeing is beautifully rendered. Here is a stanza from prayer 55:

You're the soft evening hour
that makes all poets alike;
You enter darkly into their mouths,
and with the sense of discovery
each surrounds You with rich array. (92)

Here is the middle stanza from prayer 60:

Grow like a fire behind things
so that their shadows, spreading all about,
cover me always and utterly.
Let everything happen to you: beauty and dread. (97)

I'll stop now, before I begin listing every poem. I highly recommend *Prayers of a Young Poet*. Visit Paraclete Press at www.paracletepress.com.

Imago Dei: Poems from Christianity and Literature

In *Imago Dei*, editor Jill Peláez Baumgaertner has assembled a hearty sampling of poems from six decades of the Journal *Christianity and Literature*. Many well-known ecclesial writers are included in the anthology. What the range of styles and scenes and explorations presented have in common, Baumgaertner explains, "is an awareness of human experience as a part of a grand narrative, of the *imago dei* embedded in human nature, and of the sense of connection to something much larger than themselves." (16)

A few stand-outs for me are "The Pastor's Wife Considers Transparency" by Nola Garrett, Roger Martin's "Prayer, Christmas Eve, for Recovery of my Dog," "Our Lady of the Millennium, Astoria, New York" by Nicole Cooley and "At Four in the Morning" by Paul Willis. "On the First Day" by Jill Alexander Essbaum tangibly imprints the scene outside Christ's tomb "An ox-sized boulder marked / the spot of it ..." (87) upon the reader. "Women shined their faces with tears. Friday / grew colder than ever it was meant for.

/ Peter suggested it was time to leave." (87)

Martha Serpas's poem "Insufficient, Ineligible Loss" takes its title from the FEMA designation for denied disaster-related claims, which is "Insufficient – Ineligible Damage (IID)." It's a powerful naming of "loss that doesn't kill" (183). This is where many of us can relate, when the loss and damage are not dramatic *enough* by other standards to be counted. How do we measure loss? How do we describe it? A similar sense of proportion between internal and external measuring is found in "What I remember" from the series "Poems of a Survivor" by Kathleen Henderson Staudt "I lie on the table in the bright, normal light / Of other people's morning routine." (196) A patient ready for surgery is vulnerable to the routine of others. How many times are others at the mercy of *our* routines?

Baumgaertner is the poetry editor of *The Christian Century* and is Dean of Humanities and Theological Studies and Professor of English at Wheaton College. *Imago Dei* is published by Abilene Christian University Press. Visit www.acupressbooks.com.

Raging for the Exit: A Commonplace Book

If you feel like a ride on a tandem bike with a couple of sharp poets and contemporary thinkers, a lively read awaits in *Raging for the Exit: A Commonplace Book* by David Breeden and Steven Schroeder. The book is inspired by sixteenth and seventeenth century theological commonplace books. Poems alternate responsively, one in italics and one in roman text throughout the collection: one by Schroeder, one by Breeden and so forth. Readers drop in on their conversations. The tone is voice-driven and uninhibited. You'll find fresh takes on familiar voices such as a letter to Titus from Paul signed "Peace / Waiting on tiptoe in Philippi." (109)

"Uncle Woody Zen" stands across from "Program or be Programmed" in response. The first poem begins "My Uncle Woody was the last man / In the county working oxen. / People would stop their cars by / Just to watch..." (74) The poem continues and the response begins "I've seen an ox working a plot on a mountain / in Tibet where a tractor could not go / and a farmer's feet could not be / trusted alone on the slope / with a machine." (75) Between the two poems we consider the identities of the ox, the farmer, prophets, the passing of time and who is a tool or who is in control.

Here's the last stanza of "If Only Evil"

If only evil
Weren't just

Ourselves
 On a bad day
 Acting badly
 For all the
 Right reasons. (113)

And the first stanza of the response poem “one day is as good as” directly after it:

turning, always
 about turning, not
what we do on a bad day (113)

In “Nothing but Middle, Beginning to End” we begin: “Between Anselm and Saint Ralph, Leonard / there are always cracks / for light enough / to blind us / while we curse the darkness / on the latest road to our Damascus. (48) We continue on the next page with “Popeye Takes a Boat.” Not the answer you might expect. Hop on the tandem for a thought-provoking ride with these two and the many traditions they reference along the way, including paraphrasing the likes of Li Bai, Zhuangzi, Leonard Cohen, Philipp Melanchthon, Stanley Hauerwas and others.

Seminary Ridge Review readers will recognize Schroeder from earlier issues of *Seminary Ridge Review* where his poems appeared. He teaches in Asian Classics and the Basic Program of Liberal Education for Adults at the University of Chicago. Visit <http://stevenschroeder.org/>. David Breeden is a poet and Unitarian Universalist minister in Minnesota. He is the author of numerous books including, most recently, *They Played for Timelessness (with Chips of When)*.

Visit Resource Publications, an imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers at www.wipfandstock.com.

Fearsome

Michael Chitwood

She believed in being afraid.
 She was the afraidest person
 I've ever known.

Thunder storms.
 You had to sit on the couch
 and be quiet.
 Apparently in her world
 noise attracted lightning.

And snakes.
 Copper-mouth, water-headed rattlers.
 Their diamonds encrusted
 every tree limb and ditch lip.

Nails. Rusty nails
 fanged floor boards
 with lockjaw.

And most of all, her God.
 Big Man Rumbler,
 Sin-hater, Hell-thrower.

See her there in the kitchen.
 Serrated tin can tops grin.
 Quiet knives wait.
 The pressure cooker hisses.
 She goes about her life's work.
 To be brave,
 you must be afraid.

God of

God of
the slick, wet, underneath, the part coming apart

God of
iridescent, spoiled slices of ham

God of
the rain-soaked carcass of a dog
beside Route 40,
its teeth scattered like pearls around its head

God of
making a living off the dying,
the cancer patients in their flimsy gowns
smoking on the hospital's loading dock

God of
the sellers of burial plots and burial insurance

God of
deer carcasses hung on swing set frames

God of
gut piles, manure lagoons, feed lots

God of
grease under fingernails, those black quarter moons

God of
the yellow fat of chicken trimmed before frying

God of
crimped crusts for meat pies

God of
low water bridges, the debris and moccasins gathered there

God of
getting even, getting by, getting over it

God of
glass jars of change on convenience store counters
for the child with leukemia

God of
home-cooking restaurants and fast food bags in floorboards

God of
truck beds with tool boxes, mud flaps

God of
Yes a whale really did swallow Jonah

God of
praying for a healing miracle, a win, rain, the end of rain,
fuel oil enough to last all winter,

God who speaks
from ax handles, scissors, the ferny creek bank, the jon boat swamped in
back water, the brown oak leaves rifled by wild turkey, the choking,
beautiful wisteria, the used condom in the roadside ditch, the beer can
beside it, the hornet's nest like an escaped hair-do in the corner of the
elementary class room, the pots at a pot luck, the blue blazers on the
backs of chairs at the Jaycees meeting, the seed packets in the junk
drawers, the pocket knife with the broken blade, the dog lots and dump
trucks and swollen mattresses left in the woods

Hear us now
in our time of fear and joy, grief and sickness

Beneath logs, beneath leaf mat, in brown simmer,
the white shoots begin to lift,
the tiny pale hands of your congregation
raised in rapture, roots hot in the earth.

Michael Chitwood was born in the foothills of the Virginia Blue Ridge. His B.A. is from Emory and Henry College. His M.F.A. is from University of Virginia. He worked as a science writer for a number of years at the University of Virginia Medical Center. Books include the poetry collections Salt Works and Whet (Ohio Review Books), The Weave Room (University of Chicago Press), Poor-Mouth Jubilee and Spill (both from Tupelo Press). His prose books are Hitting Below the Bible Belt: Baptist Voodoo, Blood Kin, Grandma's Teeth and Other Stories from the South and Finishing Touches. Chitwood teaches at University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. Visit www.tupelopress.org/.

The Atheist's Confessions

Menka Shivdasani

At thirteen I believed in rose petals
strewn at the earth-god's feet.
Agarbatti aromas made me heady
and I ate *prasad* only after a bath.

At fourteen my purse got slashed
in the temple crowds.

At fourteen-and-a-half, I began to wonder.
The gods no longer smiled
when I prayed. They couldn't.
They were idols of stone.

Fifteen, and the Beatles
became my gods. I grew heady
on Chanel 25, and ate
fish-fingers between sips of gin.

On World Religion Day,
I made a speech.
God didn't exist, I said.
I was eighteen, and worshipped myself.

At twenty, the rose petals were on my cheeks
and in my hair and in the bouquets
he brought when he took me out to dinner.

Then he took a blade and cut
the flowers from their stems.
I wilted – he grew heady
on the scent.

Twenty-two. I no longer worship
myself, or him.

I look at the sculptures
 in the *puja* room
 and wonder: are the gods faintly
 beginning to smile again?

Menka Shivdasani currently heads The Source, an editorial consultancy in Mumbai. "The Atheist's Confessions" is reprinted from Nirvana at Ten Rupees with permission of the author. The poem has also been translated into Marathi and Malayalam. A new edition of the collection was printed as Stet in 2001. Shivdasani is co-translator of Freedom and Fissures, an anthology of Sindhi Partition poetry, published by the Sahitya Akademi. As Mumbai coordinator for the global movement "100 Thousand Poets for Change," she organized a four-day festival of poetry in September 2012. She is a Founding Member of the Asia Pacific Writers & Translators Association. Shivdasani's poems appear in many journals and anthologies in India and elsewhere.

Four Psalms

SAID

Translated by Mark S. Burrows

lord
 i refuse
 to engage prayer as a weapon
 i wish it to be like a river
 between two shores
 for i seek neither punishment nor grace
 but new skin
 that can bear this world

banish
o lord
the prophets of the day
who only want to tame me
abolish the laws
the blunt handiwork of the sated
and lead me into a place
that soothes my brokenness
that listens to me
without demanding loyalty

lord
support me
in my plots
against sober gods
with their meager warmth
let me never arrive
for every stranger
is a messenger from the land
he left behind

lord
 give me hearing
 for i want to hear the prayers of others
 even if they wound my eyes
 see to it
 that i remain barefoot and
 listen to my own steps
 don't let me live beyond my times
 and let me die
 before pride blinds me

SAID, a native of Iran, has lived in Germany since 1965. He has published eight volumes of poetry, several collections of essays, children's books, and radio-plays in German. Among his writings translated into English is a memoir, Landscapes of a Distant Mother (University of Chicago Press). He has won numerous awards for his writing, and is widely known and celebrated for his work on behalf of writers facing political repression for their work. His Psalmen, from which these four poems were taken, was first published by Verlag C. H. Beck in 2007. The complete collection will be published this spring as 99 Psalms, translated by Mark S. Burrows (Paraclete Press, 2013). Visit www.said.at.

Mark S. Burrows is currently on the faculty of the University of Applied Sciences in Bochum, Germany. For the last quarter century, he taught at theological schools in the U.S. and in Germany. A scholar of the history of Christianity, his research and writing has focused on medieval mysticism as a form of poetics, and the intersection of theology and the arts more generally. Recent publications include his new translation of Rainer Maria Rilke's Prayers of a Young Poet, as well as SAID's 99 Psalms, which is forthcoming from Paraclete Press. He is poetry editor for Spiritus: a Journal of Christian Spirituality. Burrows is the recipient of a Witter Bynner Fellowship under whose auspices he will be writer-in-residence at the Santa Fe Art Institute this summer to complete work on a translation of Hilde Domin's poems. Visit www.msburrows.com.

Jesus's Body is Removed From the Cross

Joseph Bathanti

My father, Paul, and Ronnie Villani
 laddered up to cut Him down at 3 sharp
 in flouts of lightning. This Allegheny
 caught on fire, its banks brimmed in boiled carp.
 With claw hammer and crowbar, my dad pried
 the spikes from His hands and feet. In the end
 he hack-sawed the rusted pig iron, and cried,
 working quickly because the Pinkertons
 the strike-breakers had hired to execute
 the Union Christ sped back to Golgotha
 to jail them. Ronnie bore Him to the boot
 of Paul's blood-red Oldsmobile Electra.
 They drank to the Savior: *Corpus Christi*.
 Shots of Black Velvet chased with Iron City.

Joseph Bathanti is the Poet Laureate of North Carolina. Visit www.ncarts.org/poet_laureate.cfm. He is Professor of Creative Writing at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC. He is the author of six books of poems, the last of which, Restoring Sacred Art, won the Roanoke Chowan Prize, awarded annually from the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association for the best book of poems in a given year. His first novel, East Liberty, won the Carolina Novel Award. His latest novel, Coventry, winter of the Novello Literary Award, was published in 2006. Bathanti's book of stories, The High Heart, won the 2006 Spokane Prize and was published by Eastern Washington University Press.

The Parable of the Piano Bench

After Jelaluddin Rumi

Laura Shovan

A girl came to her grandmother. "Nana, tell me a story," she begged.
"For my mother was once a girl, and her life before is hidden from me."

The grandmother began,

A mother and daughter argued.

Who remembers the cause? The girl left her mother
to sit at a fine piano. As she played the keys, white and black,
music opened in her like the sky at dawn. The voice that calls out
"My mother! My mother!" drifted away on the notes.

There is a way that leads from anger to silence,
but the mother took a different path. The music fanned her anger.
She became like a dancer who stripes her arms and legs
with red dust, lost in the wildness of dance.

This woman forgot her child,
saw only the one making music. The voice that says
"My child! My child!" was still.

When she slapped the girl,
it was like a curtain flung open. Night rushed out.
She wanted to empty that girl. Instead, light came in.
Who can say what happened? There was her daughter on the floor.
There was the empty piano bench.

Now, the grandmother said to the girl,
remember the slap. Is not an open palm a sign of love?
Love like this can knock you off your seat. It takes years
to get up again.

The girl came to her mother
with the parable. Her mother said, it is not the slap,
but the piano you must remember. Music is a painted cave
for the soul in turmoil. The notes are like red sandstone, layer upon layer.

To herself, the girl said, this is a fairy tale!
Neither my grandmother nor my mother has such a piano bench
in her possession.

But oh to see their faces,
the great startled girl, sitting on the floor. The sorrowful mother.

A voice inside the story says, "I know. I know."
But what it knows, who can say?

Don't answer!

Pass this story to the next daughter
like a set of silver knives.

"The Parable of the Piano Bench" was inspired, in part, by the article "A Contextual Reading of the Parable of the Persisting Widow: An Indian Perspective," by Surekha Nelavala from the Autumn 2011 Seminary Ridge Review.

Editor of Little Patuxent Review, Laura Shovan was a finalist for the 2012 Rita Dove Poetry Award. Her chapbook, Mountain, Log, Salt and Stone, won the 2009 Harris Poetry Prize. She edited Life in Me Like Grass on Fire: Love Poems and co-edited Voices Fly: An Anthology of Exercises and Poems from the Maryland State Arts Council Artist-in-Residence Program, for which she teaches. Visit <http://littlepatuxentreview.org/>.

We Did What We Had To

for Yehuda Amichai

Pamela S. Wynn

after everyone's hands were dirty
the money counted
the poor clean
out of sight

after mourning
all the suicides
all the war dead
anonymous and named alike

the people we loved
riddled with cancer
lived with
died with

we did what we had to
dressed on days there was no reason to dress at all
poured a bowl of Cheerios in weak morning light
telephoned friends and strangers
read *Moby Dick* late into night
lived our lives the way Bosch painted it

listened to the quiet pik of the downy woodpecker
to the screech of the hawk
the caw of the raven that wraps his claws
around the rough bark of a branch

we did what we had to
judged repented lamented
the fleeting *self* torn
crumbling like rice paper
fragile flakes
fluttering from our hands

we did what we had to

Pamela Wynn is an Adjunct Professor of Poetry, Writing and Theological Interpretation at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities in New Brighton, Minn. She is author of Diamonds on the Back of a Snake. Her poems appear in Water-Stone Review, Bryant Literary Review, Christian Century, Chest Journal: Official Publication of the American College of Chest Physicians, Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality, ARTS – The Arts in Religious and Theological Studies and elsewhere.

Ash Wednesday, Again and Again

*Someday they'll tell
how we stood in quiet lines
to approach the altar,
how we knelt
to take the ash upon us
trying to believe
in death.*

•

My thumb-smudged cross
glints in the convex mirror above
the pharmacy register: reminder of
the liturgical circle coiled
inside the world's
long haul.

•

Tonight, when I've rubbed off
the soot, I'll press
three stained fingers into the cup
of my palm, imagining
nails. Press until it hurts
enough.

•

How quickly the crescent-dents
will disappear, and still,
in this pale reckoning is everything
I'll ask him – as I soothe my skin
with expensive creams meant
to keep me young –
to please forgive.

Marjorie Stelmach's third volume of poems is Bent upon Light (University of Tampa Press). Her poems have recently appeared in Image, Rock & Sling, Kenyon Review Online, Prairie Schooner, Iowa Review, Boulevard, and Saint Katherine Review, as well as twice on Poetry-Daily. Stelmach has won many awards for her poetry and taught English at the high school and university level and served as Director of the Howard Nemerov Writing Scholars Program at Washington University. Visit the University of Tampa Press at www.ut.edu/tampapress/.

Paschal Loaf

Patrick Cabello Hansel

What is bread but bones ground fine,
 the cassava that slaves dig up with sticks
 in the hours when masters sleep,
 heaven hidden in flesh?
 Hands uncensored by grief
 pound the dough, stretch it,
 make it breathe the waste
 of yeast. Yesterday, my wife
 found honey in the old cupboard,
 sat it in boiled water, made it sing.
 She fed the tiny hordes of leaven
 and waited for the rising.
 The sky seemed to bend down and kiss it.
 Then oats, flour, salt, water, time.
 With Talia's little hands helping,
 she formed the dough into sheaves
 of wheat, drizzled egg over the stalks,
 left them to die and rise
 on top of the radiator. Then the oven,
 hard and forgiving, the aroma
 of sacrifice, the hot crust breaking.
 By the time of the feast,
 we had earth itself to eat: gravel
 in the soil and in the voice, calling
 us to take off our cloaks
 and carry the towel. What is bread
 but water and earth and flame
 married, buried in our mouths?

Patrick Cabello Hansel's poems, short stories and essays appear in Turtle Quarterly, Main Channel Voices, The Cresset, Fire Ring Voices, Parachute, Alalitcom, Sojourners and Painted Bride Quarterly. He was one of four poets selected for the 2008-2009 Mentor Series at the Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis. Cabello Hansel received a Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Initiative grant and a Pushcart Prize nomination. An ELCA pastor, he serves St. Paul's Lutheran in south Minneapolis, a bilingual (Spanish-English) parish, with his wife Luisa.

GETTYSBURG SEMINARY FINE ARTS

The Built Environment of Seminary Ridge: The Art of Living on Sacred Ground

John Spangler

“To be human...is to be placed” – T.J. Gorringe

When beginning to create something new on a familiar landscape, it is difficult to avoid thinking about the master of the organic lines of landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead who sculpted Central Park and countless other public and private greenways out of a wild space. There is also the deeply emotional tension in the work of Maya Lin, creator of the Vietnam Memorial on the Mall in Washington, D.C. When thinking of the impact of landscape changes on communities, Lewis Mumford and Jane Jacobs, experts in debate about the city as living breathing works of art, come to the fore. A happy recent discovery is a book by T.J. Gorringe that grappled with such thoughts in his study *A Theology of the Built Environment: Justice, Empowerment, Redemption* published by Cambridge University Press.

Gorringe's exploration was more than a little helpful in recent months when the Seminary scraped the mown sod of the eastern slopes of the campus to begin building a new pathway, and this winter cut scores of trees to make way for the trail's completion and the reconfiguration (and expansion) of parking on the western side of the Ridge.

The Seminary community has been looking out over the acreage of its Seminary Ridge campus for a long time now, 181 years and counting, since it moved from the academy building known as Linwood on High and Washington streets in 1832. Historically we know that the campus has borne farming, hay making, some animal husbandry, orchards and gardens, wells, fencing, lots of pathways, a trolley and some tree stands. We know that it has taken on the

roadways that anticipated automobile touring of the battlefield, and the recreational history of tennis, croquet, more gardens as well as nearly fifty years of flag football, hosting the YWCA and Adams County Historical Society.

The school's one and only move took the Seminary out of the little village that Gettysburg was at the time. Knowledge of the 19th century seminarians' schedule points to the intentional formation of the students of theology in a place set apart from the mundane world. Chronicler A.R. Wentz tells us that the founder Samuel Simon Schmucker's intentions for the cupola were to provide a pleasant place for seminarians to reflect on their reading and classroom lectures amidst the pastoral landscapes.

On the Ridge, the Seminary was physically set apart rather than carved out of the Borough. Unmown hay fields and a "grassy sward"¹ buffered the campus from the town to its east. The Borough of Gettysburg wouldn't reach the campus for many decades, but the Cavalry of the Union Army did, arriving at the end of June of 1863, anticipating the violent clash of armies on the campus July 1.

Some who focus upon Civil War history call the Seminary Ridge landscape sacred ground because of what happened in those July days. And while the Seminary would likely have always asserted that the ground that makes up the campus *is sacred*, it hasn't always appreciated the pervading presence of the National Military Park and all that it represents. Generations of students, especially those in the latter half of the 20th century frequently tell us that they paid little attention to the battlefield, its history, and the claim it made on the iconic seminary structure known for that last century as "Old Dorm." They were students with a different focus, often integrated with contexts far afield from the neighboring battlefield.

Beginning a decade ago, architect A. Donald Main of MM Architects began to assist Seminary Ridge Historic Preservation Foundation representatives in the design of a significant new feature for the campus that would change the lines of the landscape as it has been known for much of the 20th century. The design was for a one mile pedestrian pathway looping through the campus, with interpretation of significant history of the place on waysides spread throughout. This trail was a response to the challenge set forth by the Gettysburg "Interpretive Plan" from the late 1990's which sought enhanced pedestrian experiences to highlight one of Gettysburg's under-developed features. The Seminary Ridge trail would be one of several to make the walkable scale of the town more available to visitors and residents alike. Nearly 20 waysides would provide walkers with seminary history, battle history, literary and cultural information along the way.

We know more about the campus than ever thanks to archeological studies that were required for the eastern and western pathways and the

Schmucker Hall rehabilitation. The broken glass found within the vicinity of the "Old Dorm" was of such a volume that archeologists told us that they usually see this only when a building has been demolished on the site. The glass finds confirmed the fact that a lot of glass was broken in the campus July 1, 1863. Archeologists also helped determine where some of the most intense fighting lines were on the western side of the campus, which is often a focus of the interpretation of the first day of the Battle.

But the Battle of Gettysburg isn't the only major impact upon the landscape we know as Seminary Ridge, with housing and libraries and chapels and facilities for boilers and fuel tanks being added over the decades. Students petitioned for and in 1844 installed a wider, tree lined pathway connecting it to the Borough. And, in fact, the creation of the roadway across Seminary Ridge by the Federal Government had the greatest impact of all land development in and around the campus. What for the longest time was hay and grain growing gave way to mown expanse. And the auto tour, at last count, brings more than 800 vehicles and busses through the campus on an average day.

On the way to preparing the ground for the historical trail, the rehabilitation of Schmucker Hall as a state-of-the-art interpretive museum emerged as a project that would make the iconic building a destination for many visitors. The development of the pathway and the Seminary Ridge Museum together signaled that the campus was no longer going to be so set apart from the world around it. But the changes that are underway now will undoubtedly create a new kind of energy for those of us living and working within the campus.

Places, as well as churches and nations, have what is sometimes an almost tangible inner spirituality, which marks them off from every other place and puts its impress on its citizens. Architecture can be an especially eloquent expression of this inner spirituality. (Gorringe, p. 22)

The team of people who have worked to design and conceive the mile-long historical pathway through the campus cannot help but see the campus and its theological educational mission as connected to it place.

"What you have there is sacred ground" said a civil war enthusiast to a seminary staff member in a serious tone and without irony. This young man was convinced that the Seminary didn't know its place, lacking the proper appreciation for the many soldiers who died somewhere on the 52-acre campus.

What this campus enjoys is unusual scrutiny by individuals and interest groups with many ideas about what should and should not appear within



Early pen and ink drawing, mid-19th century, shows a view of the east approach to the Seminary campus, featuring the tan path with planted trees on either side.

the campus. Some students advocate for doing whatever it takes to reduce traffic. Others worry about security in view of increased traffic. Local voices worried out loud about changes of any kind interrupting the vistas of the green eastern slopes, defending their assumption that those acres had always been kept like a formal front lawn. Those with different historical interests would have put additional parking on that slope rather than on the western side where trees had to be removed. One civil war historian was delighted by the clearcut view of Schmucker Hall from the west, exclaiming “I came up the hill toward the stop sign and saw the Seminary! It’s totally awesome!” Another Gettysburgian called the tree removal “shameful.” More surprising were the conflicting voices from within National Park Service and other interested historians of the battlefield about what it means to preserve “view sheds.” The Seminary has included its voluntary mid 1990’s agreement to keep Schmucker Hall visible from both East and West at the request of the Gettysburg National Military Park (GNMP) staff, reflecting the discussion and dialog of the park service’s last major master planning effort.

In the end, the project underway has taken all imagined and known interests into account while considering the way in which people must and may interact with the land and its view sheds. The lines of the newest part of the pathway in the Northeastern quadrant will remind you of an Olmstead creation, while the tan path offers for the first time in multiple generations the chance to walk side by side, approximating its 1844 look. Dense parking areas will be hidden and 81 trees to be planted later this year will reflect the signature idea of Journey Through Hallowed Ground to

plant 620,000 trees, once for each fatal casualty of the American Civil War. Campus planners have incorporated some of the principles of this planting schematic in the master plan for ongoing tree restoration and replacement.

Whether or not the additions to the Seminary landscape is art, or even artfully done will be determined by those who come after us. This project intends to employ organic lines among its pathways, both naturalized and intentionally placed. Its concept grapples with competing and sometimes conflicting demands of historic restoration, trees and planting schematics, and the ways people and communities interact with the land. Some believe that laying a pathway into the landscape, even in the most artful way, even for the purpose of increasing access to the landscape, is too intrusive and should not be done.

It turns out that a 10-foot wide pathway founded a few inches into the soil is not a superficial addition. The design and intended effect that the Seminary has in mind is to invite more people to linger, to walk the spaces heretofore not open to the visitor. And if it works correctly, the pace and experience of walking the ground will deepen the encounter, perhaps even making pilgrims out of visitors. And the pathway will provide a pilgrim with the reminder of what has occurred here and encourage the reverence due to hallowed ground. It will encourage the reverence for those who died within a short distance from either side of the top of the Ridge, and at the same time, increased reverence for the teachers and students and writers who broke barriers of race, theology and culture before and after one day of one battle in one war.

That which gets people out of their cars, off the buses and outside of the tourist bubbles will literally reconnect them to the land and at least temporarily bring them into the range where nature, beauty and historical significance can “place” them once again. Seminary Ridge is and will continue to be a place set apart, still impressing its “almost tangible inner spirituality” upon those who will walk there.

A local historian and critic of the pathway when it was under construction later reported back to me a conversation he had with his very young daughter after some time had passed and the pathway was in place and grass growing again: “Dad, it doesn’t look so bad.” We think it is a work of art, where people and place interact in meaningful and even spiritual ways.

Notes

- 1 Abdel Ross Wentz, *Gettysburg Lutheran Theological Seminary. Volume I: History 1826-1965* (Harrisburg: The Evangelical Press, 1965) 315.



The northern segment of the Seminary Ridge Historic pathway under construction (right side of photo), artfully curves through the landscape in a September 2012 aerial photo.



Pathway close-up.

OPENING JULY 1, 2013



info@seminaryridgemuseum.org
www.seminaryridgemuseum.org
(717) 339-1300

MUSEUM OF BIBLICAL ART

MOBIA

“...perfect...”
—THE NEW YORK TIMES

1865 Broadway at 61st Street
New York, NY 10023
TEL 212-408-1500
FAX 212-408-1292

www.mobia.org
www.artthebiblicandthebigapple.org
www.rarebiblesatmobia.org

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Wordpress




Seminary Bookstore

Übergang snake books, cards, theological books, pectoral crosses,
ELW materials, stoles, icons, Fair Trade coffee



61 Seminary Ridge • Gettysburg, PA 17325 • (717) 338-3005 • www.Ltsg.edu

Summoned Toward Wholeness

A Conference On Food, Farming, and the Life of Faith

With Primary Speakers:
Joel Salatin, Ellen Davis
Scott Cairns, Matthew Sleeth

Music by:
Charles Pettee & FolkPsalm

Workshops on:
Developing a Local Food System
Church Supported Agriculture
Starting a Community Garden
Moral Meat Eating?
An Introduction to Bio-Intensive Gardening
Teaching for Faithful Eating
Growing Food in Impoverished Communities
Farmworker Justice And Much More

September 27-28, 2013 (DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL)

For Registration and Event Information:
www.summonedtowardwholeness.com





