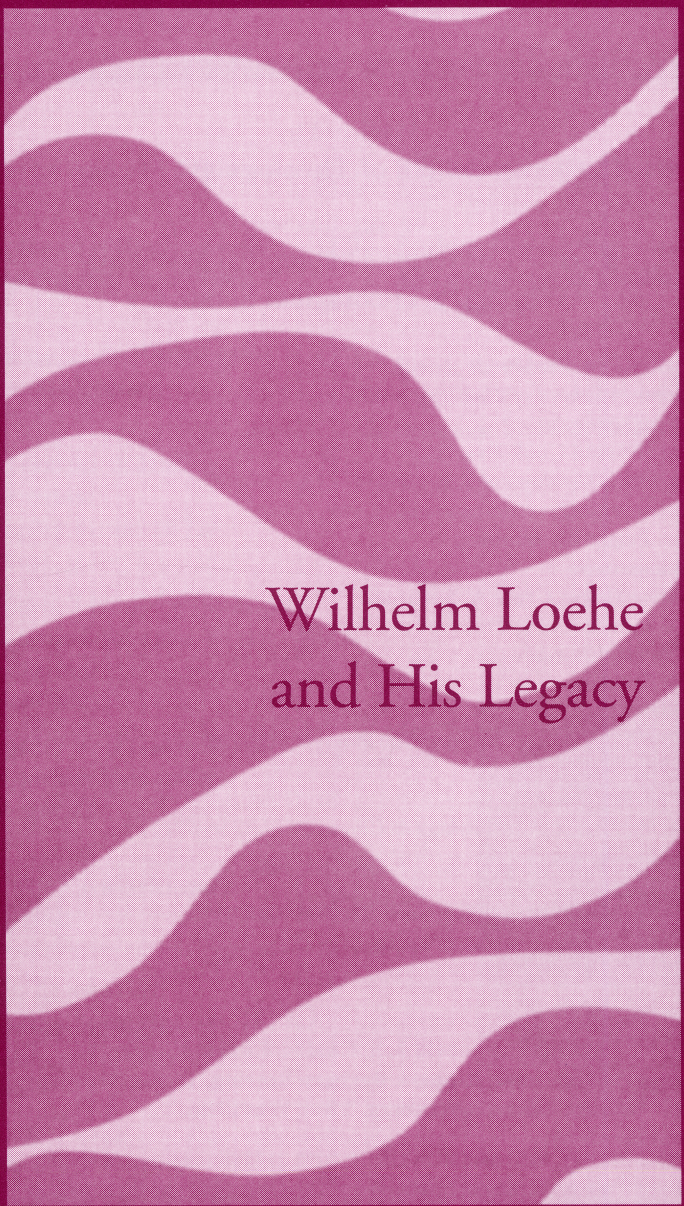
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Wilhelm Loehe and His Legacy

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Wilhelm Loehe and His Legacy

The book of Hebrews urges us to remember our leaders, those who spoke the word of God to us. We are urged to consider the outcome of their way of life and to imitate their faith (Heb 13:7). Many of us would think immediately of our parents, pastors, or lay leaders who served as role models, bishops, and teachers, great figures in church history like Luther or Calvin, or the apostles, including the woman Junia, prominent among the apostles (Rom 16:6). But there are many more who are worthy of commendation, including those whose pioneering work has decisively given shape to North American Lutheranism long before our time. We honor such an ancestor in this issue.

Johann Konrad Wilhelm Loehe was born on February 21, 1808, and died on January 2, 1872. Instrumental in sending countless church workers to North America who became part of the Missouri and Iowa Synods, he also was known for his establishment of a deaconess training institution and a mission society at Neuendettelsau, Germany. His contributions to worship and liturgical life continue to bear fruit in our day. An International Loehe Society has recently been established at Wartburg Theological Seminary, whose origin itself goes back to Loehe followers. Those who would like to consider membership should send a note and $25 to Professor Craig L. Nessan at Wartburg (333 Wartburg Place, P.O. Box 5004, Dubuque, IA 52004-5004) or to Professor John Pless at Concordia Theological Seminary (6600 N. Clinton Street, Fort Wayne, IN 46825). Nessan is Co-President of the Society with German theologian Dietrich Blaufuss, and Pless is Co-Secretary of the Society with German theologian Phillip Hauenstein. The articles in this issue originally were addresses at the founding conference of the International Loehe Society, in Dubuque, Iowa, July 13–15, 2005. The next conference of the Loehe Society will be in July 2008 in Neuendettelsau and will mark the two hundredth anniversary of Loehe's birth.

Erika Geiger relates the biography of Loehe. After study at Erlangen he was ordained in 1831, but because he was criticized by ecclesiastical authorities he had to "settle" for a position at Neuendettelsau. His wife died when she was 24, leaving him with four small children. Loehe gradually distanced himself from the revival movement and committed himself strongly to the Lutheran Church. In 1842 he sent his first two "emergency workers" to Ohio and shortly thereafter initiated mission work among Native Americans. Following a dispute with the Missouri Synod, Loehe's supporters moved to Iowa

with a teachers college, from which Wartburg Seminary was to emerge. Back home in Germany, Loehe struggled with the church authorities because of his desire to maintain the separation between the Lutheran and Reformed churches. In addition to his work in North America, Loehe founded a Deaconess Institute at Neuendettelsau dedicated to providing care for the ill and the handicapped. It was soon surrounded by auxiliary institutions, and the deaconesses he trained proved to be significant workers in society in general and also during Germany's wars. Loehe died of a stroke at the age of 64. Loehe addressed the social problems of his day and was a passionate advocate of the church as the communion of saints. He attempted to maintain a creative tension between those things in the church that should remain unchanged and other things which were in need of development and reform.

Hans Schwarz locates Loehe within the ecclesiastical and theological movements of the nineteenth century and notes that Loehe did as much as Muhlenberg to influence Lutheranism in North America although he never set foot on these shores, probably because he thought a trip would be too expensive. The pietistic awakening in Germany was influenced by idealism, romanticism, confessionalism, and neo-Lutheranism. Other significant, primarily conservative, voices in German Lutheranism at Loehe's time belonged to Claus Harms, August Friedrich Christian Vilmar, Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg, and Friedrich August Gottwald Tholuck. In England the Oxford Movement revolted against reason and religious skepticism. Loehe was also deeply influenced and shaped by the members of his own family and was well known as a frugal manager. He came from a pious home and had early contacts with Pietism. At Neuendettelsau Loehe brought new life to the congregation and reintroduced private confession. He initiated many works of mercy and also developed a theology supporting such work. Loehe opposed the supremacy of the state and advocated the separation between Lutherans and the Reformed. Above all, faith active in love became true in his life and work.

Dietrich Blaufuss traces the fate of Loehe in German historiography since his death in 1872. During his lifetime and thereafter Loehe often was criticized for advocating a free church as an alternative to the state church, but he also was called the great apologist for the people's church. Others wrote that through Loehe's efforts Neuendettelsau had been transformed into a great Christian colony, into a city on the mountain. From that place, it was said, the sanctifying rays of merciful love touched two continents. Accounts of Loehe give him a halo or the hat of a heretic, both of which are distortions. At the centennial of his birth, one of his successors as director of the deaconess motherhouse gave a more balanced picture. He defended Loehe, renounced views of him that were outdated, named those things that were problematic,

and marked that which remained valid, namely: Loehe lived from the Word of God and lived in it, he depicted it, grasped it faithfully, and experienced it in love. There are now two Loehe societies and an extensive collection of his writings—that needs supplementation and indexing. Further gains in understanding Loehe will have to deal extensively and critically with these sources.

Thomas H. Schattauer hails Loehe as a seminal figure in the recovery of liturgical practice. He worked to enrich the reading of Scripture; he sought to restore the Eucharist to the center of Sunday worship; and he encouraged practices of confession and forgiveness. Christian worship is something done together, not alone or in a solitary way. Worship is a participatory act, an act of communion, and an essential element of mission. Loehe sought to engage the congregation in the deepest movements of the liturgy—in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, in the act of praying, and in the offering of gifts for those in need. Communion has both christological and ecclesiological dimensions that can be distinguished but are ultimately not separable. Worship has a missional focus because it deals with life and because word and sacrament are the principal means for mission. Mission is nothing but the one church of God in motion.

John T. Pless traces the history of Loehe and the Missouri Synod and attempts to define his legacy in that church body. F. C. D. Wyneken, an important early leader in Missouri, got Loehe's attention with his urgent appeal for orthodox church workers; he also was influenced by Loehe to distance himself from the Reformed tradition. The men sent by Loehe were soon exposed to "American Lutheranism," the accommodationist movement associated with the name of S. S. Schmucker. Loehe and others broke with the Ohio Synod in a controversy over the Lord's Supper. Many of the Loehe followers participated in the formation of the Missouri Synod in 1847, comprising more than half of its ministerium. By 1853, when the relationship between Loehe and the Missouri Synod ended, 82 of his men had come to the Synod via the Fort Wayne seminary. Loehe was uneasy about the equal representation of clergy and laity in the governance of Missouri and its inherent congregationalism. Loehe tried to mediate a dispute between Walther and Grabau and earned disfavor from supporters of both sides! Walther and Wyneken visited Loehe in Neuendettelsau in 1851 and temporarily closed the rift. Soon the controversy was rekindled, and the eventual split in 1853 involved theological disputes over the nature of the church and the relationship between congregation and office and somewhat unclear disputes involving the Loehe followers in Michigan. It took almost a century for a more positive appreciation of Loehe to emerge in Missouri, thanks in part to the influence of Hermann Sasse. Other Missourians honoring Loehe include John H. Tietjen, Walter Bouman, and

Kenneth F. Korby. The new Missouri hymnal and agenda to be published this summer gives a prominent place to the thought of Loehe.

Craig L. Nessan points out that Loehe was responsible for missionary impulses in Neuendettelsau and other parts of the world in addition to his support for the mission in North America. The teachers' seminary brought from Michigan to Iowa by Loehe followers soon also became a theological seminary and in 1857 gained the name of Wartburg. The rapidly expanding Iowa Synod took seriously the challenge of spreading the gospel among Native Americans. When these efforts proved relatively unsuccessful, the Iowa Synod transferred the remaining funds earmarked for this purpose to assist the Neuendettelsau Mission Society for its work in Papua New Guinea. During its rapid growth among German immigrants the Iowa Synod was repeatedly challenged on such issues as chiliasm (the millennium), the anti-Christ, and predestination by the Missouri Synod. The missionary orientation of Wartburg was furthered by faculty members belonging to the Fritschel family and by the famed J. Michael Reu. When the Iowa Synod merged with the Ohio and Buffalo Synods in 1930, it numbered approximately 212,000 baptized members. The focus on mission in the Iowa Synod lives on in Wartburg Theological Seminary today.

David C. Ratke observes that in important points Loehe departed from Lutheran Orthodoxy and from the Erlangen school. Six themes emerge in Loehe's theology: community and fellowship, catholicity and unity, apostolicity, confession, Word and sacrament, and context. The church witnesses to and proclaims the gospel because of the fundamental human need for community and fellowship. Loehe suggested that women could have a ministry and thereby an identity apart from men. The word gathers all people into the universal church, a catholicity that is broken yet whole. Loehe was attracted to the communitarian elements in the apostolic understanding of the church. His commitment to mission in America was motivated by his awareness of the plight of Germans who had emigrated to America; his commitment to inner mission in Germany was motivated by his awareness of the plight of people in Germany. He was adamant that people ought to experience oneness and wholeness with both God and one another in worship. He urged a return to the values of the early church: care and concern for the powerless; worship that is joyous and generous; reaching out intentionally to those on the other side of our walls. While Loehe was committed to hospitality, he sometimes sought to hang on to what was familiar, to rigid doctrine, or to the German language.

In his sermon at the closing of the Loehe Society meeting at Wartburg, **Larry Trachte** spoke of the great things God accomplishes through election of

little people, like Wilhelm Loehe and you and me. Loehe embraced a theology that was personal, yet communal; intellectual, yet practical; confessional, yet outward seeking. We are all called to witness to the One who became for us wisdom from God.

H. S. Wilson reflects on the significance of the growth in numbers and in passion of the church in the global South. With this growth has also emerged a theological divide, with the North, at least in part, more liberal and secularized and the South maintaining the opposite positions. The world religions contributed to the liberation of the Third World from the Christian colonial West, and at the same time an indigenous Christianity emerged out of Western missionary Christianity. The conservative nature of Christianity in the South was shaped by social circumstances and the failure of the inherited Western Christianity to provide an answer. As the world gets steadily compressed through globalization, cultural clashes and tensions are intensified. Concerned individuals and institutions have raised voices against the new imperialistic tendencies within the elemental forces of globalization and strive to use it for the benefit of humanity.

Wilhelm Loehe was a major leader of North American Lutherans although he never set foot on this continent. He was a child of his times, and some of his opinions and actions were controversial in his own time, and some surely would also be so today. But no one can gainsay his passion for mission and worship and the church. Loehe held together aspects of the church's life that today often appear to be in tension or even opposition: liturgy, pietism, confessionalism, social ministry (diakonia), and mission. We remember him in order to praise him and his God, to learn from him, and to discover what he meant back then and what he might mean for the church and world today.

Ralph W. Klein, Editor

The Biography of Wilhelm Loehe: Insights into His Life and Work

Erika Geiger
Gräfelfing, Germany

Who was Wilhelm Loehe? Today in Germany his name is hardly known outside of theological circles. Many people, however, are familiar with Neuendettelsau, the place of his work, where the "Missions work" and "Diakonie" are located, some of the largest social services in Germany. Both of these institutions trace their founding back to Wilhelm Loehe. His work is thereby much more well known than his name. Therefore it is very welcome that now in Iowa an International Loehe Society should be founded that allows the remembrance of this significant man to be revived. Loehe not only achieved great things in the areas of mission and diaconal work but also left behind a comprehensive theological corpus of writings and almost has become a kind of "church father" for the Bavarian Landeskirche.

For my work on the biography of Wilhelm Loehe the most important sources were his letters and diary in which one encounters a fascinating and impressive personality but also a person with a changing and difficult destiny.

He was born on February 8, 1808, in Fürth. His father, Johann Loehe, was a businessman, and his mother, Maria Barbara, was the daughter of Mayor Walthelm of Fürth. Wilhelm and his six siblings (five sisters and one brother) thus stemmed from a notable middle-class family. When he turned eight years old his father died, and his mother took over the business. She was a very pious woman whose great wish was that her gifted son would study theology, although that meant for her great financial sacrifices. Loehe was grateful to her for this his whole life long. He attended the Latin school in Fürth and later the Melanchthon School in Nuremberg.

After his graduation he began his theological study at Erlangen in 1826. Here two professors were especially important for the student: Reformed pastor Christian Krafft and natural scientist Karl von Raumer. Both belonged to the so-called "revival movement," a counterpoint to rationalism, which after the age of the Enlightment had spread through the Bavarian Landeskirche. The Bible had come to be read according to the standards of human reason, so that all that remained of Christianity was a valued moral teaching.

Loehe already as a child had endured religious instruction according to this reductionism. Now through the revival movement he came to know people who spoke of religious experience and a new life in Christ and who witnessed to their Christianity in deed. The diaconal and missional activities of both professors—the founding of a safe house for children and a mission society—deeply impressed the young Loehe. It was typical for him that he also wanted to become active: he founded a mission circle among family and acquaintances in Fürth

for the support of the Basel Mission and a Literature Society for Christian writings and tracts.

Inwardly, as a theological student he struggled with severe doubts about the faith. Again and again he questioned whether he was worthy to proclaim the gospel as a preacher. Only as he, like Martin Luther, gained the experience "that one must be and remain a sinner and become blessed by grace"[1] did he discover peace with God. Luther's writings became his most important readings during this period.

After a semester in Berlin, Loehe completed his studies in Erlangen and in 1830 performed very well on his exams, which earned from church authorities the comment "Capable of high ecclesial offices." However, his trial sermon was evaluated as too "mystical" by the examiner, although his exposition was based entirely upon the Lutheran doctrine of justification. Because of the rationalistic school to which the examiner belonged, this fell completely into the background. Such an evaluation of his sermon meant for Loehe that from then on he would be judged as a "mystic and pietist," which was not advantageous for his ecclesial career.

Loehe was ordained to the pastoral office on July 25, 1831, in the St. Gumbertus Church in Ansbach. He was required to complete a five-year vicariat, during which he was sent to positions in twelve locations. For example, he spent 2-1/2 years as vicar in Kirchenlamitz and almost a year in Nuremberg where his sermons soon became renowned and some appeared in print. After his employment exams, completed in the summer of 1835, he applied for a position in Erlangen where his professor friends lived. After his good experiences in Nuremberg, he would have been glad to become a pastor in the city. But his application in Erlangen remained without success, as did all of his later inquiries into urban pastorates. The ecclesial authorities always stood with a certain mistrust over against Loehe and wanted to see him not in an influential position but rather in an unimpressive country pastorate.

There remained nothing else possible than for Loehe to apply for such a position. Without great excitement he inquired about Neuendettelsau, where the farmers knew him and gladly would have him as their pastor. Neuendettelsau, located southwest of Nuremberg, was at that time an unknown and remote village. Through Pastor Loehe's thirty-eight years of ministry it became famous far beyond the borders of Germany.

Before his installation in his office, Loehe married on August 1, 1837, his former confirmand, Helen Andreae, the daughter of a businessman he knew in Nuremberg. She was eleven years younger than he. Although Loehe would have preferred to remain single and married only because of practical reasons and pressure from his family, the marriage was very happy and was characterized by deep love. In the Neuendettelsau parsonage four children were born, three sons and one daughter. Then, after six years of fulfilled family life, Loehe faced the most difficult blow of his life: Helen died on November 24, 1843, after a brief illness at the age of 24. Loehe never got over her death and could not ever again decide to get married, although all of his friends and relatives advised him to do so, above all on account of the care for his young children. The youngest son died a year after his mother. Loehe himself raised and educated the other three children.

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1. Wilhelm Loehe, "Briefe 1815–1847, in *Gesammelte Werke* (*GW*), ed. Klaus Ganzert (Neuendettelsau: Freimund, 1951–1986) 1:292.

Alongside his congregational work in Neuendettelsau Loehe undertook intensive theological study. The revival movement out of which he came concerned itself very little about confessional boundaries, and it now appeared to him too much determined by feeling. Through his experience and through the study of Luther's works and the confessional writings of the Lutheran church, he arrived at the conviction that the faith must not rest solely upon feeling but rather finds its strength in the "promises of God's Word," which stand "outside us."[2] The Lutheran church and its confessions became increasingly important to Loehe. In 1845 he published *Three Books about the Church*, in which he described the Lutheran church as the "unifying center of the confessions."[3] According to his view it stands in the center between the Roman Catholic and the Reformed churches. It had the "purest truth" because its confession most corresponds to the Holy Scriptures.

Loehe had become through his inward development a convinced Lutheran. This had implications for his relationship to the Basel Mission, which he had supported since his time as a student. This institution understood itself as a "free society" and held the view that a missionary in the work among the "heathen" must not be committed to one particular confession. The confessional differences in Germany could be neglected in the mission field. Loehe held a different opinion: the heathen clearly should not only be brought "to the origins of Christianity"[4] but also be assembled into congregations where a clear confession is important. For this reason Loehe took leave of the Basel Mission in 1842.

At this time he had already begun his own "missionary" work, namely, to educate preachers for the German emigrants in North America. There was at that time a



large wave of emigration from Germany where many people could find no employment due to the onset of industrialization. They lived in the widely scattered settlement regions of North America without a connection to their church and without the possibility of schooling for their children. In 1840 Loehe read the "Call" of the German-American Pastor Friedrich Wyneken, who pleaded in moving prose for preachers from the native country. Loehe immediately felt himself summoned. Together with his friend Friedrich Wucherer, he took action. After the publication of Wyneken's "Call," donations flowed in. In addition, two craftsmen, shoemaker Adam Ernst and weaver Georg Burger, reported that they wanted to go to America as preachers. Loehe housed both in Neuendettelsau and

2. Loehe, "Vön dem göttlichen Wort als dem Lichte, welches zum Frieden führt," in *GW* 3/1:38.

3. Loehe, "Drei Bücher von der Kirche," in *GW* 5/1:162. This appeared recently as Wilhelm Loehe, *Studien-Ausgabe Band 1: Drei bucher von der Kirche 1845*, ed. Dietrich Blaufuss (Neuendettelsau: Freimund, 2005).

4 . Loehe, "Die Mission unter den Heiden," *GW* 4:50.

undertook their education as teachers and chaplains. Already in July 1842 they were ready to travel to North America. There arose for both the possibility of further preparation at the seminary in Columbus, Ohio. The synod of Ohio was so enthused with both of these "emergency workers," as Loehe called them, that it requested fifty more students for their seminary, who would already have a similarly good preparation. Thus Loehe built up from these beginnings a "Mission Preparation Institute" whose direction was overtaken by his friend, Friedrich Bauer, and which later would become the "Mission Institute." Support for this institute and many other activities was borne by the "Society for Inner Mission in the Sense of the Lutheran Church" (Gesellschaft für Innere Mission im Sinne der lutherischen Kirche), founded by Loehe and his friends in 1849. Loehe called the work among the emigrants, who were baptized Christians, "inner mission" in contrast to "outer mission" among the "heathen."

Through his written works in this period Loehe had in view both his own congregation in Neuendettelsau and the congregations in North America. He had studied many ancient orders of worship and soon constructed an *Agenda for Christian Congregations of the Lutheran Confession,* above all for the "brothers on the other side of the sea." He introduced many portions of this new liturgy in Neuendettelsau. Moreover, Loehe published a *Book for Home, School and Church* that also was designated for use both at home in Germany and in America. It could serve as an aid for parents who wanted to instruct their children in the Christian faith, a kind of "agenda for the laity."

Loehe had never forgotten his original concern about the mission to the "heathen." He had plans to undertake mission among the Native Americans from the base of the Lutheran congregations. Toward this end he configured a "mission colony," and a group of young people eager to emigrate founded the colony, Frankenmuth, south of the Saginaw Bay in Michigan, under the direction of the young pastor, August Crämer, at the border of the Native American areas. Similar colonies, Frankentrost and Frankenlust, followed later. After challenging beginnings, the colonies developed well. Even the mission among the Native Americans had a promising beginning, above all through the work of the missionary Beierlein. It was not, however, to have a lasting result.

The cooperative work with the seminary in Columbus did not run as smoothly as Loehe had hoped. His "emergency workers" separated from the Ohio Synod and made connections with the Lutheran congregations in Missouri. The Missouri Synod was founded in 1847 with a new seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana. To Loehe's great distress there was in 1853 a controversy between him and the Missouri Synod over questions about the pastoral office. Only a few of his former students remained with Loehe. Following his advice, they moved to Iowa under the direction of Georg Grossmann and Johannes Deindörfer. With them came the teachers college, supported by Loehe, that found a new home in Dubuque and from which Wartburg Seminary originated. One year later the Iowa Synod was founded at St. Sebald "at the spring."

During the years 1849 to 1853 Loehe had ongoing difficult exchanges with the authorities of the Bavarian Landeskirche, the Oberkonsistorium. For Loehe it had to do with the separation of the Lutheran and the Reformed churches. He took offense that many of his clergy colleagues too carelessly neglected the confessional differences with the Reformed Church. In Bavaria

there was a minority of Reformed Christians who belonged to the Lutheran Church, even partaking of Holy Communion, but who wanted to receive the sacrament according to the Reformed ritual. Many Lutheran pastors were ready to fulfill this desire. Even the authorities of the Landeskirche saw no great problems with this. According to Loehe's conviction, however, there was a profound distinction between the doctrine of communion in the Reformed Church, where "the true body and the true blood of Jesus Christ are not truly present and distributed,"[5] and the Lutheran doctrine, so that he strictly opposed table fellowship between the two confessions and fought against a "mixed table fellowship."[6] Loehe could not even imagine table fellowship among the "united" church that in Prussia and the Pfalz consisted of the union of the Lutheran and Reformed churches.

Several times Loehe and his friends were very close to leaving the Landeskirche and either joining an existing Lutheran free church or founding their own. The church board became increasingly irritated by the "Loehe circle" and finally filed a charge against the group aimed at their removal from office. A split in the Landeskirche could now only be avoided by a change in the leadership of the Oberkonsistorium. Adolf von Harless, a childhood friend of Loehe, became president of the board in 1852 and was able to smooth out the argument. Loehe and his friends stayed in the Landeskirche.

Besides the emigrant work, Loehe initiated a second social project: the founding of the Deaconess Institute in Neuendettelsau in the year 1854. He was responding, as in the case of the emigrant aid, to an immediate social problem. Care for the sick in rural areas was very bad; there were no suitable hospitals and no educated caregivers. In the same way many mentally handicapped children were neglected; no one cared about their welfare. On the other hand, many unmarried women lived in the country, daughters of pastors, teachers, and craft workers, who had no opportunity to learn an occupation. Here Loehe saw a necessary and important ecclesial responsibility: he wanted to prepare these women as deaconesses for "a female Christian service of charity"[7] toward those in need of care, i.e., care of the sick, care of the handicapped, child care, and so on. He founded in 1853 the "Lutheran Association for the Female Diaconate" in Neuendettelsau, which according to his vision should be followed by many other local associations.

Preparation of the young women was to take place in Neuendettelsau, where the Deaconess Institute was founded on May 8, 1854. Loehe did not want to organize a new "sisterhood," as Theodor Fliedner had done eighteen years earlier in Kaiserswerth. He wanted the educated deaconesses to be engaged in the congregations as independent coworkers. This concept, however, never took hold. It was not normal at that time for a woman to live alone, and the idea created many problems. Loehe therefore decided already in 1856 to undertake elements of a "Diaconal Motherhouse." The Motherhouse in Neuendettelsau would from this time on not only provide the education for the deaconesses but should also be their home and place of retreat in times of illness and old age. The title of "sister" was introduced among the deaconesses, and they also introduced a unified dress.

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5. Loehe, "Kirchliche Briefe," in *GW* 5/2:848.

6. Loehe, "Brüderliche Klage," in *GW* 5/2:911.

7. Loehe, "Bedenken über weibliche Diakonie," in *GW* 4:273.

Soon new houses circled the Motherhouse with its schools: an institution for the mentally handicapped, a prayer chapel, a workshop, a men's hospital, a women's hospital, and so on. The work in Neuendettelsau steadily grew larger. On account of their solid and well-rounded education, the deaconesses were everywhere appreciated. Loehe could not begin to fulfill all the requests for deaconesses from congregations and medical facilities.

Loehe suffered a slight stroke in 1863. Thereafter he could continue his ministry as a pastor in Neuendettelsau and rector of the Deaconess Institute, but his energy steadily declined. He also experienced two wars. The first was the "German War" in 1866 in which Bavaria fought on the side of Austria against France. Many deaconesses were employed in the care of the wounded. After the war Loehe received a medal from the Bavarian king as director of the Deaconess Institute, which generated public notice in all of Bavaria and in the Landeskirche. In the German-French War of 1870/1871 there were again many deaconesses in service in the military hospitals.

After 1870 Loehe became ever weaker. The doctor forbade him to preach; finally he needed to be transported with a wheelchair. He died after a second stroke on January 2, 1872. Written on his gravestone in the Neuendettelsau cemetery are the words "I believe in the communion of saints."

Loehe's significance for church history can be summarized as follows:

He saw contemporary social problems and without hesitation engaged in their solution. He always viewed this as a matter for the church and its missional and diaconal service. This was the motivating force behind all his activities.

The church of God, "the communion of the saints," now and in eternity was Loehe's great love and passion. He often employed for the church the image of the pilgrimage to the heavenly city, Jerusalem.

The "one" church was divided, however, into different confessions. Although Loehe put the Lutheran confession above the others, he was nevertheless not a narrow-minded confessionalist but open to ecumenical developments. Particularly in his later years he repeatedly emphasized that the doctrine of the church would never be "finished." It was his conviction that "As long as the church remains, it will be necessary to study God's Word."[8] Loehe saw a tension between "stability and movement within the church," which remains stable in certain "unchangeable things" but in others "is capable of movement, changeable, and in need of development."[9]

His theological insights and convictions, his writings on mission and diaconal ministry, his liturgical contributions, sermons, and prayer collections were recorded by Loehe in a comprehensive body of work. His collected works that have appeared in print encompass seven volumes printed as twelve books. The first volume of a planned supplemental series has been published.

—Translated by Craig L. Nessan

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8. Loehe, "Kirchliche Briefe," in *GW* 5/2:861.

9. Loehe, "Meine Suspension im Jahre 1860," in *GW* 5/2:834.

Wilhelm Loehe in the Context of the Nineteenth Century

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In a paper commemorating the 125th anniversary of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod James L. Schaaf wrote: "Wilhelm Loehe deserves all the gratitude we Lutherans who live on this side of the ocean are capable of expressing."[1] Even C. F. W. Walther, with whom Loehe certainly had some disagreements, wrote about Loehe in 1852: "Next to God it is Pastor Loehe whom our synod must almost solely thank for the happy increase and rapid strengthening in which it rejoices; it must rightly honor him as its real spiritual father."[2] Indeed Wilhelm Loehe was the co-founder of the Missouri Synod, sending many future pastors to that synod, and also established the seminary in Fort Wayne. He also founded an educational institution in Saginaw, Michigan, in 1852, and moved it to Dubuque, Iowa, the following year because of problems with the Missouri Synod. He then helped to pay for Wartburg Seminary in what was to be the Iowa Synod. As Schaaf correctly stated in his doctoral dissertation, "Without Loehe there would be no Lutheran church in America as we know it today."[3]

Who was this person who, though he never set foot on this continent, still influenced the Lutheran Church in the nineteenth century as much as Henry Melchior Muhlenberg did a century earlier?

A child of his time

Loehe grew up in the time of Romanticism. As a reaction to Enlightenment rationalism, Romanticism considered the romantic as the beautiful without boundary or the beautifully infinite. In the first variety, beauty without boundary, Romanticism led to pantheism, as we notice in the British poets John Keats (1795–1821) and Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822) and their appreciation of Roman and Greek antiquity. The other variety, the beautifully infinite, proved more interesting for theology. It led back to the classical ideal of the medieval period and its Christian roots, as can be seen in the conversion to Roman Catholicism of representatives of the Romantic Movement such as Friedrich von Schlegel (1772–1829) and the development of the art style of the Nazarenes which until today influences popular piety in Europe and North America. It is not accidental that Loehe's hairstyle resembled that of the Nazarenes. The pietistic awakening in

1. James L. Schaaf, "Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 45 (May 1972): 53.

2. Quoted in Schaaf, "Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod," 65.

3. James L. Schaaf, "Wilhelm Loehe's Relation to the American Church. A Study in the History of the Lutheran Mission" (Ph.D. diss., Heidelberg, 1961), 3.

Germany, in which Loehe participated, was influenced by idealism, romanticism, confessionalism, and neo-Lutheranism. It attempted to stem the tide of rationalism and liberalism as can be seen in the case of the Prussian Union.

The Prussian Union of the Lutheran and Reformed churches proclaimed in 1817 was the result of the endeavors of King Frederick William III (1770–1840) to overcome inner-Protestant division. It also was advocated by those coming from the Enlightenment and who saw in confessionalism a relic of the past. The idea was to leave behind the divisive confessionalism among the Protestants and to form one united church. This enforced union led at once to emigrations of Prussians of conservative Lutheran persuasion to found the Lutheran Church of Australia and of like-minded Saxons to establish what later became the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod in North America. Both laity and clergy were involved in this exodus. Also, in the same year that the Union was proclaimed, Pastor Claus Harms (1778–1855) from Kiel published anew Martin Luther's 95 theses and added 95 of his own. He rejected rationalism and advocated an ecclesial doctrine guided by Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions as its norm.

These theses, published at the 300th anniversary of Luther's own theses, intensified the discussions about unionism and made Harms popular far beyond Germany. He received a theological and a philosophical doctorate from the University of Kiel (1834) and was even called to be bishop of St. Petersburg in 1819, a call he declined, as well as a similar call in 1843 to become successor to Schleiermacher at Berlin's Trinity Church.[4] He was by no means a narrow confessionalist but considered Roman Catholics as brothers, though in error. He could even condone intercommunion with nonrationalistic Christians from the Reformed side. He preserved the Lutheran confession for his own Schleswig Holstein church, now part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of North Elbia.

What Harms did for the North, August Friedrich Christian Vilmar (1800–1868) did for his native state of Hesse. He was born and grew up in a country parsonage at Solz, northeast of Frankfurt am Main, and studied theology at Marburg from 1818 to 1820. Through the encounter with rationalism there, he went from faith to unbelief. Yet this move was not long-lasting. From 1823 onward he held various teaching positions. During these years he renounced his rationalism, first expressing the idealist notion that the world is the feeling of God. Then, through his encounters with the church fathers, especially Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Tholuck's *Guido and Julius*, or *Sin and the Propitiator Exhibited in the True Consecration of the Sceptic* (1823, Engl. trans. 1836), he "arrived at an unwavering faith in Christ. . . . Realizing that all he sought was to be found in the Lutheran Church, a process begun by the careful study of the Augsburg Confession and its Apology."[5] Luther's hymn "Dear Christians, one and all, rejoice" (*Lutheran Book of Worship*, #299) and Article 12 of the Augsburg Confession on repentance expressed most exactly his own thoughts on the deep reality of sin and grace.

After this conversion experience, Vilmar was director of the classical high school at Marburg from 1833 to 1850. Then he served for five years as acting

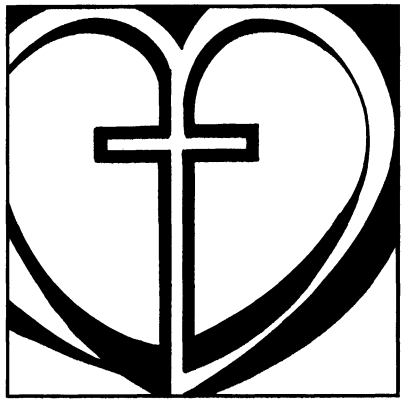
4. Cf. Lorenz Hein, "Harms, Claus," in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* (*TRE*) 14:447.

5. J. Hausleiter, "Vilmar, August Friedrich Christian," in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* 12:190.

superintendent. When the prince elector of Hesse did not approve his election as superintendent in 1855, he was appointed professor of theology at Marburg University. Vilmar became the most influential professor in the university. His program was set forth in *Theology of Facts Against the Theology of Rhetoric* (*Theologie der Tatsachen wider die Theologie der Rhetorik*, 1856), where he stated that the confessions in their entirety are binding and not just a selection of them, because "half confessions . . . are no confessions at all, since they are crumbling and uncertain confessions."[6] Against the impending union between Lutherans and Calvinists he placed the strongest emphasis on Lutheranism, especially when attempts were made to discard the Augsburg Confession. Similar to Loehe, he also advocated the freedom of the church from the state, and he was vigorously involved in the conferences of Lutheran pastors in both parts of Hesse, Hesse-Darmstadt in the South and Hesse-Kassel in the North. At Marburg University Vilmar lectured on homiletics, hymnology, and the Reformation. Central to his theological witness was the certainty of the presence of Christ in the church on Earth. He even predicted the downfall of the nation as a result of its apostasy from the living God and through the rejection of his law.

Then we have in Berlin Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg (1802–1869), professor of Old Testament exegesis, who, as Schaff reported,

> is one of the most unpopular and yet one of the most important and influential men in the kingdom of Prussia. He leads the extreme right wing of the orthodox party in the Established Church, and is the uncompromising opponent of all rationalists and semi-rationalists, all latitudinarians and liberals. He is simply professor, although an editor of a semi-weekly church gazette, and holds no seat [in the church government] nor does he ever preach.[7]



This sums up in a nutshell the significance of Hengstenberg, who was born in Westphalia as son of a Reformed pastor, studied classical and oriental literature and philosophy at the University of Bonn, did intensive studies in Arabic, and got his Ph.D. in 1823. He attended few lectures in theology but nevertheless wanted to be a theologian. Johann August Wilhelm Neander (1789–1850), a church historian and a representative of the awakening, introduced Hengstenberg, who was brought up in a moderate theological rationalism, to the leaders of the awakening in Berlin, such as Baron Ernst von Kottwitz and the Gerlach brothers. Having married Therese von Quast (1812–1861) in 1829, Hengstenberg was even more at home in that circle. When the conservative ecclesial-theological gazette *Evangelische Kirchenzeitung* was founded, Hengstenberg was asked to be its editor.

6. August F. C. Vilmar, *Die Theologie der Tatsachen wider die Theologie der Rhetorik*, 4th ed. (Gütersloh, 1876; reprint: Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968), 79.

7. Philip Schaff, *Germany: Its Universities, Theology, and Religion* (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1857), 300.

As such he exerted considerable influence on church politics in Prussia and beyond. Though he had been charged with a romanizing tendency, because he regarded the Roman Catholic Church as an ally in opposition to rationalism and pantheism, he stood on decidedly Protestant ground. Under his leadership the *Kirchenzeitung* first supported the revival of piety and a vital Christianity in Germany, standing solidly on the basis of the Protestant Union as established in Prussia. But gradually it assumed an exclusively confessional tone, and by 1848 it had become the organ of the Lutheran part of the Protestant Church in Prussia. The Lutheran view of the Lord's Supper was more and more advanced, and with all its privileges the Lutheran confession was guarded within the Church of Prussia. This was not so much a turn against the Reformed church as the fear that both the Reformed and the Lutheran church would be transformed into a more liberal unionistic church.

Then there was Friedrich August Gottwald Tholuck (1799–1877), who had also come under the influence of Baron von Kottwitz. He became a decided supporter of the Protestant Union and deplored the confessional and denominational controversies in Germany. Tholuck considered his own studies of seventeenth-century Lutheran theology as an instruction and warning against any attempt to zealously revive what some considered the best state of the church, i.e., Orthodoxy, but which was then followed by rationalism.[8] His *Hours of Devotion* (1840; Engl. transl. 1853) gives witness to his evangelical piety with fresh enthusiasm. It had a large influence then and is still used today. A variety of commentaries, such as on Romans, the Gospel of John, Hebrews, and the Psalms, came from his pen and were all translated into English. Thousands of students owe to him their spiritual formation. German theologians as different as Julius Müller (1801–78), Richard Rothe (1799–1867), Johann Tobias Beck (1804–78), Albrecht Ritschl (1822–89), Wilhelm Herrmann (1846–1922), and even Adolf von Harless (1806–79) studied with him.

In the same time frame we could also look at the main proponent of American revivalism, Charles Grandison Finney (1792–1875), or in England to the christocentric theology of the heart of Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834). With his poetic sensibility and creative use of the imagination, Coleridge contributed to a movement that became something very different from what it was first conceived to be, the so-called Oxford Movement.[9]

There are primarily three people who contributed something characteristically to the success and the thought of the Oxford Movement: John Keble (1792–1866), John Henry Newman (1801–90), and Edward B. Pusey (1800–82). Generally speaking, the Oxford Movement was more a movement of the heart than of the intellect, concerned more with prayer than with belief. Its members always saw dogma in relation to

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8. Cf. August Tholuck, *Lutherische Theologen Wittenbergs im 17. Jahrhundert* (Hamburg: Friedrich and Andreas Perthes, 1852), and *Das akademische Leben des 17. Jahrhunderts mit besonderer Beziehung auf die protestantisch-theologischen Fakultäten Deutschlands nach handschriftlichen Quellen*, 2 vols. (Halle: Eduard Anton, 1853, 1854).

9. For the influence of Coleridge on the Oxford Movement see Martin Roberts, "Coleridge as a Background to the Oxford Movement," in *Pusey Rediscovered*, ed. Perry Butler (London: SPCK, 1983), who claims that Coleridge had "at least an unconscious influence on the development of the Tractarian tradition" (p. 34). He asserted some influence on Keble and a more implicit one on Newman.

worship, the numinous, conscience, and moral distress. Similar to the romantic poets and novelists, to the evangelicals and pietistic theologians, the Oxford Movement revolted against the predominance of reason and religious skepticism.

> Their leaders wanted to find a place for the poetic or the aesthetic judgment; their hymnody shared in the feelings and in the vocations of the romantic poets; they wished to find a place and value for historical tradition, against the irreverent or sacrilegious hands of critical revolutionaries for whom no antiquity was sacred.[10]

Without going into detail here about the Oxford Movement, I want to close this reference with an episode. In 1841 the Prussian King Frederick William IV (1795–1861) in collaboration with William Howley, the Anglican Primate of Canterbury (1828–48), appointed to the seat of Jerusalem an Anglican bishop, Michael Solomon Alexander (1799–1845), an ex-rabbi, who was in apostolic succession. Newman asked himself how the Anglican bishops could reprimand him for moving so close to the Roman Catholic Church, as he believed the Anglican formularies would allow, and on the other hand they fraternized with Protestant bodies "without any renunciation of the errors or regard to their due reception of baptism and confirmation."[11] He wrote in protest to the bishop of Canterbury claiming that "Lutheranism and Calvinism are heresies, repugnant to Scripture, springing up three centuries since, and anathematized by East as well as West."[12] Why, he asked, would his church, which considered itself to be Catholic, connect itself in intercommunion with groups that are strictly sectarian? He wrote: "From the end of 1841, I was on my death-bed, as regards my membership with the Anglican Church."[13]

To round up the picture, we could also include a few Scandinavians such as Nikolai Grundtvig (1783–1872) or Carl Olof Rosenius (1816–68). Considering these different formative persons, the emergence of Loehe comes as no surprise. Yet Loehe was not just a product of his environment.

A child of his ancestors

Many of Loehe's ancestors had been elected to public office. His great-grandfather was twice mayor of the city of Nürnberg; his maternal grandfather had also been mayor several times. Several of his forebears acquired considerable wealth through frugality and clever investments. His maternal grandfather was especially well off. Not surprisingly, Loehe was proud of his family, and family relations meant a lot to him. While we know little of the religious life of Loehe's ancestors, they certainly did not stifle his religious development. One incident from earlier generations seems to have been especially important for him. When his grandfather, Adam Christoph Walthelm, wanted to marry his grandmother, he asked for his mother's blessing. Loehe's great-grandmother, Anna Katharina Walthelm, gave that in a letter of December 4, 1752, and Loehe said that this letter gladdened his heart whenever he read it because

> this same letter contains a good witness of the time of his youth of my grandfather and the

10. So Owen Chadwick in his insightful essay "The Mind of the Oxford Movement," in *The Spirit of the Oxford Movement: Tractarian Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1990), 2. Whether "the 'nature-mysticism' of romantic poetry was determinative of their conception of religion," an idea disclaimed by Eugene R. Fairweather, editor of *The Oxford Movement* (New York: Oxford University, 1964), 4, remains an open question.

11. John Henry Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, ed. Ian Ker (London: Penguin, 1994), 136.

12. Newman, *Apologia*, 138.

13. Newman, *Apologia*, 141.

blessing of my great grandmother, a blessing which through God's and my savior's grace may also be inherited by myself and my poor children. Amen. I wish that the letter of my great grandmother be held in honor by my people and that they honor the ancestors' piety through thankful remembrance.[14]

For Loehe the blessing of his parents was equally important. He remembered well the blessing he received from his father, though his father had died when Loehe was just eight years old, and he hoped that his mother's blessing would uphold the one of his father. When Loehe left his hometown, Fürth, in fall of 1831 to take charge of his first vicariate in Kirchenlamitz, he entrusted to his diary:

Then in God's name and in thick fog into the carriage—and among the bells chiming for prayer driven away. Blessing upon my dear city. In passing blessing of my soul for the graves of my folks and for those who I have blessed into grave and for the aunt living across the way.[15]

Loehe maintained contact with his family throughout his life, especially with his mother but also his brothers and sisters and their relatives and with the relatives of his wife. Both his own mother and his mother-in-law died in his parsonage. His mother-in-law had depressions for a long time, and Loehe was often her counselor. When she died in 1843 in Neuendettelsau, Loehe buried her in the newly dedicated cemetery and composed a moving curriculum vitae. His own mother was a person he both respected and loved: "In all important decisions of his life he counseled with her beforehand. She supported his way and often suffered through it with sorrow since she often did not understand her son."[16] Being the oldest of the remaining sons—there had been six girls and five boys of whom five died in infancy—he felt himself to be the representative of the family for whom Loehe cared all his life. The same is true with regard to his own children. He helped them financially as much as he could, for instance, using the proceeds from royalties to pay off the debts he incurred for them.

But Loehe never made extensive travels and spent most of his years in the small village of Neuendettelsau. It was so decrepit that he exclaimed during his first visit there, not knowing that it would be his home for 35 years until his death: "Not dead I would want to be in that dump."[17] Did he have then any first-hand experience of the wider world, or was he a pious and somewhat naive country parson? It would be contrary to his ancestral heritage of merchants, administrators, and mayors that he would not be interested in the world.

Already in his first vicariate in Kirchenlamitz he was concerned about factory workers and their spiritual needs. This was not just a theoretical concern; he visited the young people working with machines. (This was the beginning of the rapid industrialization in Germany.) While he was helping out as assistant pastor in Altdorf, he wrote to a friend in Kirchenlamitz in 1836:

I live near one of the most important commercial and industrial cities, have my home in a second one, have my office in a country town where I can observe what kind of water flows from those ponds to us. I have more opportunity to observe the concrete of things than you do, dear brother, also more opportunity and a profession to observe how the poor souls besieged from so diverse elements find no way out of the labyrinth and despise the thread of yarn offered to them to trace the way to the exit.[18]

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14. Loehe, quoted in *Wilhelm Löhe. Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Klaus Ganzert (Neuendettelsau: Freimund, 1986), 1:34.
15. Ibid.
16. Ganzert, 1:37–38.
17. Loehe, quoted in Ganzert, 1:87.
18. Loehe, quoted in Ganzert, 1:40.

Note his awareness of the ecological problems caused by rapid industrialization.

Also with a view to Neuendettelsau we notice that he attempted to alleviate the crying needs of his time by establishing places to take care of the sick, schools for small children and factory workers, and boarding houses for female factory workers.[19] There were no factories in rural Neuendettelsau, but Loehe always remained in close contact with his friends and (financial) supporters in Fürth, Nürnberg, and Erlangen and the social problems in these cities. Besides urban poverty, which he attempted to alleviate, there was also rural poverty. Through his many endeavors in Neuendettelsau, he improved the lot of many people who before his arrival there had no prospect for the future.

Regarding politics, Loehe was an astute observer and commentator. Since his youth he had been an avid reader of newspapers and usually read several of them. Klaus Ganzert, editor of Loehe's collected works, comments that Loehe's letters are a treasure trove for contemporary history.[20] He even was chosen as an elector for the 1848 St. Paul's Parliament in Frankfurt. It comes as no surprise in the post-Napoleonic era that he had no appreciation for the French, because they had heavily dominated Germany. Yet he always preferred peace over war. Nevertheless he commented extensively on the wars of 1866 between Prussia and Austria and of 1870–71 between Germany and France. When the Prussians came to Neuendettelsau in 1866, he also realized how to judge the situation in the heartland of Roman Catholic Bavaria:

> Everything is full of hatred caused by religion. But I will not talk about all of this. The Prussian officers were for visit in Heilsbronn. But they tried in vain to be greeted by the Bavarian military. These are our events.[21]

For his numerous charitable enterprises he needed considerable sums of money, and he was quite successful in acquiring it.

With regard to economic matters Loehe was a true descendant of his family. He was an organizer, administrator, and financier. Money played an important role in his life. Yet this was not true for him personally. Like his ancestors, he lived frugally. We may guess that the reason why he never visited America was because he thought that such a journey would have been too expensive. Yet for his numerous charitable enterprises he needed considerable sums of money, and he was quite successful in acquiring it. He had many contacts with influential people and persons of means and never shied away from asking them for money. To build the deaconess motherhouse or to pay for the seminary in Fort Wayne, to mention just two projects, he seldom got big money. In Neuendettelsau, it usually was, as it is still today, that many small contributions add up to large sums. Moreover, he collected books which then were sold on the used-book market, again to obtain money. As already mentioned,

19. For the following see Ganzert, 1:40–41.

20. Ganzert, 1:41.

21. Loehe, quoted in Ganzert, 1:43.

his royalties also helped to defray the costs for his projects.

As he wrote to his brother Max, who was the "accountant" of the *Gesellschaft für Innere Mission,* he was not afraid to die poor. But he wanted to leave no debts behind. Therefore he suggested starting a debt retirement plan to reduce the burdening debt. Because his careful administration of funds was well known, he easily obtained loans when necessary. It was especially important for Loehe that even the smallest amount was accounted for and that no contribution was used in a different way than shown forth in the books.

While Loehe was a person of high self-discipline and order, he was not legalistic. As he wrote in an article "On Order":

> Order is nothing but the appropriate relationship of a part to the whole and to the other parts or the consonance of all parts to the whole; as soon as a part is not in its right relationship, the harmony of the whole is disturbed, and it results in discord. God is the creator of the total whole and all its single parts are ordered to a whole so that they are in complete harmony.[22]

This means that God is a God of order and not of chaos. In being good stewards of his created order we should emulate God. This even goes for Loehe's meticulous handwriting. It shows that indeed he understood himself to be a child of God, following God's plans in his own personal life and his interaction with others.

A child of God

Already in his boyhood Loehe had a religious outlook, as he confessed:

> In our small yard there was a chopping block, I gathered the children of the rent people who lived in our house, put on a black apron to serve as a gown, stepped onto the chopping block, which served as a pulpit, preached, sang, and prayed. Sometimes my mother would say to my father: "A minister is lost in that boy if you don't let him study."[23]

Loehe loved worship from early on, especially the liturgy, the hymns, and the Lord's Supper. It was his father's custom to take his son to the highest loft in St. Michael's church in Fürth, and Loehe remembered with joy the one service he attended with his father at the time of a synod meeting in Fürth that most likely took place before Loehe was even four years old.[24] The week of confirmation was a week of the big festival for Loehe. There was the family gathering, the joyful ringing of the church bells in Fürth, and the private confession. As Kenneth Korby relates, "Receiving the sacrament was an unforgettable moment for him, rounded out by his sister saying, 'Einen Tag wie diesen bekommt unser Wilhelm nicht wieder, bis er die Ordination empfängt'" (Our Wilhelm will not have another day like this one until he receives ordination).[25]

During the first two decades of the nineteenth century, the Elector Maximilian I Joseph (1799–1825) and his secretary, Maximilian Joseph von Montgelas (1799–1817), forcibly introduced Enlightenment precepts in Bavaria and in the newly acquired region, central Frankonia. Wilhelm Loehe could not escape this influence, since the spirit of rationalism had entered the schools. But at home he was spared, because his mother read daily in Johann Starck's *Andachtsbuch* (1712) and in Jo-

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22. Loehe, quoted in Ganzert, 1:51.

23. Loehe, quoted in Theodor Schober, *Wilhelm Löhe. Witness of the Living Lutheran Church* [Ger. 1959], trans. Bertha Mueller, manuscript ed., 5.

24. Kenneth F. Korby, "The Theology of Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe with Special Attention to the Function of the Liturgy and the Laity." Th.D. thesis, Seminex in Cooperation with LSTC (Chicago, 1976), 14.

25. Korby, *The Theology of Pastoral Care*, 38.

hann Arndt's *Paradiesgärtlein* (1612), devotional literature stemming from pietism.[26] In contrast, for instance, to Walther (1811–87), Loehe personally never struggled with rationalistic temptations and therefore had no need of a conversion. He had direct contact with the Basel and Württemberg types of pietism through the *Christentumsgesellschaft* of Johann Urlsperger (1728–1806), which had opened a chapter in Nürnberg in 1781.[27] There also was a group of *Herrnhuter* (descendants of the Herrnhut Community founded in 1727 by Count Nicholas of Zinzendorf in present-day Saxony) there who had survived rationalism and who gathered around the merchant Tobias Kiessling, who, though himself not actually a Herrnhuter, supported Protestant Christians in the Eastern European Habsburg area with money, Bibles, tracts, and moral support.[28] So studying theology was a natural for Loehe.

He began his theological studies at Erlangen in the winter semester 1826–27. He developed a long-lasting friendship with the Reformed theologian Johann Christian Krafft (1784–1845), professor of dogmatics and pastoral theology since 1818. Krafft, a representative of the theology of the awakening, inspired him to read dogmatic theology, and this led him to the writings of David Hollaz (1648–1713), the last great dogmatician of Lutheran orthodoxy. "Hollaz, a professor of dogmatic theology in the 18th century, impressed upon the young theology student a deep appreciation for the Lutheran faith. This faith was not necessarily that of Luther or even of the confessions, but rather of Lutheran Orthodoxy."[29] At that time Erlangen theology was at its height. Besides Krafft there were the professors Adolf von Harless (1806–79), Johann Höfling (1802–53), Gottfried Thomasius (1802–75), and Johann Christian von Hofmann (1810–77). Important for them was a personal faith and a deeper immersion into the theology of Luther through reappropriation of the Lutheran confessions.

During the summer semester of 1828 Loehe went to Berlin, where Schleiermacher's style of preaching impressed him. Loehe discovered that theology was not a dead subject. It was a life issue, individually experienced, but ultimately expressed in the confessional books of the Lutheran Church as a faith of the community. It was not a faith based on "me and my God" but a faith lived out and nourished by the community. When Loehe moved to Neuendettelsau, his first and only actual pastorate, he did not just administer the congregation by conducting funerals, marriages, and baptisms and preaching regularly on Sunday; he set his mind to revive the spirit of this congregation. He reintroduced private confession, which had been neglected due to the Enlightenment. In 1858 alone he administered an estimated 2,250 individual confessions.[30] He concentrated on the upbuilding of the congregation, leading it to the celebration of the Lord's Supper. He introduced a new worship setting, *Order for Christian Congregations of the Lutheran Confession* (*Agende für christliche Gemeinde des Lutherischen Bekenntnisses*,

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26. Korby, *The Theology of Pastoral Care*, 37.

27. Korby, 43–44.

28. Gottfried Thomasius, *Das Wiedererwachen evangelischen Lebens in der lutherischen Kirche Bayerns. Ein Stück süddeutscher Kirchengeschichte (1800–1840)* (Erlangen: Andreas Deichert, 1867), 90–91.

29. David Ratke, *Confession and Mission, Word and Sacrament: The Ecclesial Theology of Wilhelm Löhe* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2001), 20.

30. Wolfhart Schlichting, "Löhe," *TRE* 21:411.

1844). While writing this liturgy he scoured not only the Lutheran tradition but also pre-Reformation and counter-Reformation works and even Greek and oriental liturgies. He was active in pastoral theology and published as a result of his parish work *The Protestant Pastor* (*Der evangelische Geistliche*, 2 vols., 1852–58). He tried to introduce the anointing of the sick but was prohibited in doing that by the church authorities. Nevertheless, we are told that many sick were healed through his prayers. It is not surprising that he had contact with Pastor Johann Christoph Blumhardt (1805–1880) in Bad Boll, who had roots in pietism and who also prayed for the sick.

> Loehe did not just administer his congregation by conducting funerals, marriages, and baptisms and preaching on Sunday; he set his mind to revive the spirit of the congregation.

Because the Roman Catholic king of Bavaria was the actual head of the Lutheran Church in Bavaria, Loehe called "the connection between state and church an unfortunate mismarriage."[31] And with regard to the revolution of 1848, when people were clamoring for more democratic rights, Loehe predicted: "Now it [the union of state and church] is dissolving. What God has not joined together, goes asunder—and now everybody wants to help the church through a constitution." Loehe too was pressing for a constitution of the church. When initially his pleas brought no response, he even considered leaving the state church together with other like-minded pastors.

In 1845 Loehe published *Three Books Concerning the Church, Offered to Friends of the Lutheran Church for Consideration and Discussion.* In this publication he wanted to show what the church actually is.

For Loehe the church is first of all community. It separates itself from the world and "gathers into the indestructible Church of God" as the one church at all times.[32] This church, gathered from all people, has its center in the apostolic word and is both visible and invisible. Because we have many separate churches, their peculiarities are their confessions, and the sign of the purest particular church is the "scripturalness" of her confession: "*The Scripturalness of its Confession is the distinguishing mark of the Particular Church* which has the most Truth or the whole Truth, and therefore she deserves the name of the Church before others."[33] He asked then to compare the confession of the church of which one is a member with the word of God and comes to the conclusion: "*For no one has ever yet proved that our Confessions err even in one single point.* It always

31. Loehe, "Aphorismen über die neutestamentlichen Ämter" (1848/49), in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Ganzert, 5/1:320, for this and the following quote.

32. Loehe, *Three Books Concerning the Church, Offered for Friends of the Lutheran Church for Consideration and Discussion*, trans. Edward T. Horn (Reading, PA: Pilger Publishing House, 1908), 14.

33. Loehe, *Three Books*, 94.

is so—every simple reader who compares our simple doctrines with the clear words of the Holy Scriptures, must justify our Confessions."[34]

The Lutheran Formula of Concord was for Loehe the final point in the doctrinal process. Because the Reformation "is finished in doctrine; it is unfinished in the consequences of doctrine," it needs to be applied, and for Loehe this meant that one must recognize "all that could be done with it for the salvation of the world and the Church."[35] According to Loehe, there was unfinished business, and not just in terms of the practical consequences in everyday life, as he showed with the many works of mercy that he initiated and that emerged out of the little village of Neuendettelsau. Unfinished business also held true with regard to the foundation for these works.

Loehe opted for a strict confessional church. He also wanted independence from the state. The government of Bavaria, through the radical representative of rationalism, Munich city librarian Dr. Ghillany, achieved in 1848 the dismissal of the president of the Munich church headquarters, Friedrich von Roth.[36] Loehe now wanted a church founded on the Lutheran Confessions and a corresponding church discipline. The congregations should be constituted anew, and a synod should elect its own president. There seemed to be no success for such a free church, independent of the state, so he wanted all serious Lutherans to gather independently from the state church as a community of Lutheran Christians for an apostolic life. Many did not want such a split, but Thomasius, professor of dogmatics and university preacher at Erlangen, resonated with Loehe's idea.

At the February 1849 meeting of the General Synod of Bavaria in Ansbach, Loehe again pressured the delegates to push for renouncing the supremacy of the state and advancing the separation between Lutherans and Reformed, in addition advocating strict adherence to the Lutheran Confessions by pastors and teachers of religious instruction. Moreover, he wanted the old hymnal abolished, which contained rationalistic hymnody, and church discipline introduced. Because the synod only vouched its unwavering allegiance to the Lutheran Confessions, Loehe was still contemplating leaving the state church. Von Hofmann admonished him to be patient, because a renewal of the church should not start from the outside but must begin from within. Thomasius, too, appealed to Loehe not to confuse the pious and confessional members of the church of Bavaria by his leaving.

Thomasius and Hofmann met with Loehe and then asked the Erlangen theological faculty to appeal to the royal consistory superior in Munich. Each candidate for the ministry should subscribe to the Lutheran confession as a witness to the facts of Christian faith and life in congruence with Holy Scripture and should also vow to serve the church accordingly. Furthermore, the faculty should state that those who teach heresy, without naming Ghillany, had excluded themselves from the Lutheran Church. The faculty submitted that petition to Munich, a petition that still did not quite satisfy Loehe. Nevertheless, through influential friends, also from the Erlangen faculty, Loehe was persuaded to stay in the church and not start his own separate organization. While still unhappy with the Erlangen mediating way, Loehe complied

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34. Loehe, *Three Books*, 102.
35. Loehe, *Three Books*, 158, 160.
36. For the following see Peter Aschoff, *Die Kirche im Leben und Werke von Gottfried Thomasius (1802–1875)* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1999), 31–44.

and therefore was able to deeply shape the Lutheran Church of Bavaria to this day.

In his childlike faith he always felt he followed God's will, even when it was not according to own liking. Nevertheless, he felt free to seek out help for his cause from influential friends or other people. Being a child of God did not mean for him not to resort to external means to bend God's ear or even God's arm. Like any child, he showed the sinful inclination to have his own way, and therefore, because he was quite human, he can be considered a saint even in the Lutheran tradition.

Conclusion

What makes Loehe so special? In Northern Germany Claus Harms brought the church back to Scripture and to the Lutheran Confessions. The same can be said for Vilmar in Hesse. Hengstenberg in Berlin had a wider influence than these two, but his confessional and theological slant was similar. Loehe also was a confessional theologian with a deep piety. But he was more than that. He was a multi-talented and multi-interested person. He initiated the deaconess movement in Neuendettelsau similar to Fliedner in another part of Germany. He cared for those who were uprooted by the rapid industrialization of Germany in the nineteenth century. In this way he was similar to Johann Hinrich Wichern. He sent young men to various parts of the world, especially to North America, to help emigrants found and strengthen their own Lutheran churches.

His influence on the liturgical life of the Lutheran Church of Bavaria is felt to this day. Reforming the rationalist worship service, he gleaned from the best sources of the Orthodox tradition, the Roman Catholic faith, and from Lutheran quarters. He adapted to this purpose whatever could upbuild and stimulate people to laud and praise God in Christ Jesus. He had a passion for people and therefore a passion for the church and its Lord.

Faith active in love became true in Loehe's life and work. Through his own example and guidance he could inspire others to do likewise. In that respect he was not better than others; God's gifts were just put to greater use through him.

Saint and Heretic: Wilhelm Loehe in German Historiography since 1872

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Loehe is brought home to his church

Wilhelm Loehe died January 2, 1872. Within a decade of his death, in 1881, this statement was inserted into the third edition of the *Realencyklopädie (RE)*, the most prominent German theological reference work: "Wilhelm Loehe is a man of the Church of Bavaria, and that has been fortunate for both this church and Loehe."

Such fortune, however, did not come about without detours. Moreover, one wonders how Loehe can be called there "the great apologist of the people's church [*Landeskirchentum*]" (*RE* 8:582.27).[1] Are there not overwhelming references that invalidate such an assertion?

The main objection, but not the only one, is Loehe's seriously intended endeavor to pursue the way of a free church, leaving the chains of patronization and restriction by the state church. This was still a pretty big sour point in 1881. In the decade after his death those who followed Loehe were still told that Loehe had been an opponent of the territorial church and, moreover, an opponent of "everything which is called people's or state church" (578.14). To put it bluntly, he opposed "the territorial church concept altogether" (578.4). How can he be at the same time the "great apologist of the territorial church"? We could ask how, according to the constitution of the church or theologically speaking, Loehe could turn from a "heretic" or at least "schismatic" to a saint. Let us take a closer look.

Paradoxically, his deep insights into the faults of the church were contrasted without interruption with his glowing view of the splendor of the church (578.6–8). This could only be to the disadvantage of the real and visible church. For that church Loehe had great hopes in the year of the 1848 revolution. This revolution raised the possibility that the ties with the worldly authority could be torn asunder. These ties had become ever more intimate since the Reformation but traced their parentage to Emperor Constantine (578.14–16). Not even ten years after Loehe's death, one already had the fitting heresy labels at hand: his views are permeated by Donatism, they

1. Adolf Stählin† ([Albert] Hauck), "Loehe, Wilhelm, gest. 1872," 3d ed. of *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche [RE³]* (Leipzig 1902) 11:576–86. The first presentation in the 2d edition of *Realencyclopädie [RE²]* (1881) 8:711–25 is more extensive. References in this essay are from the 3d ed.

show an individualistic disease, and are not without "romanticizing" traits (578.42–43).

Is this the picture of a "great defender of the territorial church"? Hardly! But the line of accusations is not yet complete. The most serious one states that in Loehe one finds "a kind of excommunication of all those who hold views different from his own" (579.54).

Here we are confronted with the central issue for Loehe: the sharing of the Lord's Supper with non-Lutherans, which again was an ecclesiological issue. Repeatedly, Loehe wanted to clarify this issue as late as 1861 (582.37–38). But he did not do it by continuously reiterating his already known standpoint. It is admitted that he had the ability to change, to adapt, and to pursue new avenues of thinking. How can we understand that such fundamental criticism against the existing church can, with some legitimization, be introduced as "the great apologetic of the territorial church"?

There does seem to be an explanation. In 1881 one endeavored to integrate Loehe into the history of the Church of Bavaria. His accomplishments were held too much in esteem, his reputation was too significant, to admit that all of this originated only in contrast to and in conflict with the church or even in spite of the church. No, one was also interested in a piece of hagiography, all critical description notwithstanding. This already had become true for Neuendettelsau, the place in which Loehe lived and worked.

> Especially in this lonely and secluded place, Loehe was to bring to blossom his creative powers in an astounding way. This humble village has become a celebrity in the kingdom of God. Through Loehe's efforts it has been transformed into a great Christian colony, into a city on the mountain. From there, the sanctifying rays of merciful love have touched two continents. (577.46–51)

And what is the "saintly" character in Loehe's life? Simply that he had not separated himself from the church. He had not left the office of a pastor in his church "denying himself in a way which honors him" (582/583). In his "whole personality" Loehe was "a celebrity in God's kingdom" (583.20).

But the golden background of this painting of a saint intended for Loehe is not allowed to become too golden. In this 1881 characterization of Loehe, we hear nothing of God's grace or similar items but of the benevolence of the church and the chances the church granted Loehe. The Church of Bavaria has always given protection to Pastor Loehe when he was in conflict (583.6–8), etc. But why do we hear only very briefly that four times Loehe's application was rejected when he was yearning for a pastorate in the city (577.42–44)? Why do we hear immediately of "a higher providential guidance"? With this kind of interpretation we are assured that Loehe has his place in the church with his hagiographic traits and with his evident and undeniable achievements in the upbuilding of congregations, diaconal work, mission, liturgy, and practical ecclesial publications.

This view of Loehe between heretic and saint has been painted by a person of the church, Adolf von Stählin (1823–1892). Very early he endeavored to claim Loehe also for the church in his historical evaluation. Stählin was a brother of two Neuendettelsau deaconesses, one of them the long-tenured head deaconess, Therese Stählin. Stählin wrote this portrait of Loehe as *Oberkonsistorialrat* (chair of a division of church headquarters in Munich). In 1883 Stählin was promoted to *Oberkonsistorialpräsident* (the equivalent to bishop, a title which was taboo for Lutherans under the Roman Catholic kings of Bavaria). In this position he was the successor of Fried-

rich von Roth (1780–1852) and a predecessor of Hermann Bezzel. His prominence assured that Stählin's view had a lasting effect.

This was not the first attempt to portray Loehe and his work and to determine where it belongs. Already in 1873 Johannes Deinzer started a work on Loehe, eventually comprising 1,300 pages, which still today is essential for any Loehe research. It was not completed until 1892. Deinzer does not portray Loehe as a saint. "The composer of this biography did not intentionally want to idealize," writes Deinzer.[2] Personal notes in Deinzer's three-volume work defend Loehe repeatedly, such as in the suspension affair of 1860, when Loehe refused to perform a wedding (2:490–512), or with regard to Loehe's adherence to his strongly Lutheran convictions with regard to the Lord's Supper, and in other developments and changes throughout the years (2:523). Deinzer is inclined to excuse Loehe's stubbornness and not to emphasize unnecessarily his abrasive attitude in the issue of the separation from the Church of Bavaria. Deinzer knows very well the problem of painting Loehe as a figure fitting somewhere between saint and heretic. Some even accused Deinzer of employing not enough "necessary criticism," although he refutes this charge in a few instances with reference to a few "shadows" in Loehe's life and work (3.335–38). Several times he objects to Adolf Stählin's description of Loehe (3.332–33). He does not follow the "ecclesial view" of Loehe that ultimately wants to see something like a misunderstanding in all of Loehe's conflicts with his church.

Distance and closeness to Wilhelm Loehe

The basic lines in depicting Loehe and his work appear to be drawn: both a halo and the hat of a heretic. Both items do not seem to fit this pastor of a Frankonian village, a pastor who had such a far-reaching effect. But one item is evident: Loehe does not fit either of these descriptions exactly. In a historical and theological direction, there is also a remarkable attempt toward a fruitful appropriation of Loehe and his work in a 1908 portrait of Loehe by Bezzel.

In 1908 Bezzel had been for seventeen years Loehe's second successor as *Rektor* of the deaconess motherhouse. Now the occasion had arrived to celebrate Loehe's centennial birthday. This undertaking was not without danger. Bezzel escaped from becoming the tool of an uncritical, non-energetic, and very soon also embarrassing cult of remembrance at a jubilee. But how did he manage that? On first sight, it was his decided fulfillment of his pastoral responsibility to be a teacher. Of the different duties of a pastor—only as a pastor did Bezzel want to serve as *Rektor* in Neuendettelsau—teaching was especially important for him.[3]

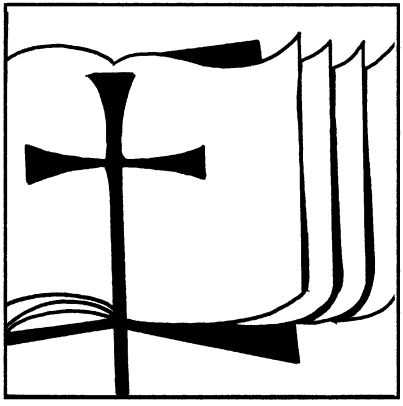
Assuming this responsibility, Bezzel published at least ten items on Loehe and gave a number of lectures about him—the exact number cannot be ascertained precisely. All of this was done in 1907–08. Bezzel escaped naive hagiography and the cult around Loehe through his hard-nosed historical and theological inquiry, using not only the common and readily accessible sources but also many sources that were difficult to obtain and were not yet published. Bezzel moved with ease in the

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2. Johannes Deinzer, *Wilhelm Loehe's Leben. Aus seinem schriftlichen Nachlaß zusammengestellt.* Vol. 1–3 (Nurenberg: Gütersloh, 1872–1892), 3:336.

3. Manfred Seitz, *Hermann Bezzel. Theologie—Darstellung—Form seiner Verkündigung* (Munich, 1960, and Wuppertal, 1987), 31–33, 35–37.

field of research in church history. But as Loehe's successor, Bezzel also had to point out for his own time the evident significance of Loehe. The most critical, most sensitive, and most demanding group to whom this undertaking was directed was not the readers of the approximately ten journals but a group of young women who were to be consecrated in their service as



deaconesses on February 21, 1908. We still have the text of the lectures that Bezzel presented to these women in a dozen class units on the topic "Wilhelm Loehe and His Time." The text is not yet published. Bezzel researched, thought, wrote, and acted in the presence of eyewitnesses of Loehe. His view had to stand up to these witnesses without distorting historical veracity. Loehe was, so to speak, still present in relatives, descendants, family friends, and older deaconesses, especially Therese Stählin, as well as in older members of the congregation. Of course, there also were people who were opposed to Loehe and perhaps were still so in Bezzel's time.

In the more than ten contributions of Bezzel[4] the question emerges: What really are the most fascinating and inspiring ideas in Bezzel, even at points where one would not necessarily agree with him? We find the answer in an unexpected place—the so-called consecration lectures, "Loehe and His Time" of 1908. Bezzel says at the end of the eighth lesson, "The friends who sought out Loehe, were respectful enough *to honor his greatness*, but not great enough, *to restrain his greatness.*"

This assertion is a key. Here somebody confronts Loehe. But how was Bezzel great enough to restrain Loehe's greatness? Very simply, in that he declared that one could not copy him, and therefore one could also not declare him as worthy of being copied. "One should not demand new editions of Loehe. The chorus of the unavoidable, the imitators, is not yet the cloud of witnesses," says Bezzel.[5]

Bezzel, so to speak, releases Loehe for an appropriate evaluation, and that means also for an assessment of his historical and theological significance. For Bezzel, Loehe could become a "figure of church history," and thereby Loehe could be interpreted in his historical context. One need not try to find answers to questions that emerged half a century after Loehe's own activity. Bezzel was very sober at this point. In Bezzel we notice an inextricable synthesis of (1) defending Loehe, (2) renouncing the outdated, (3) naming the problematic, and (4) marking that which, according to Bezzel, remained valid.

We only want to adduce that which, according to Bezzel, remained valid in Loehe. It is not his long line of exemplary

4. Published in 1908, for instance, in *Allgemeine Evang. Luth. Kirchenzeitung, Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift* (*AELKZ*) but also in almost obscure publications. Important, however, is the *Korrespondenzblatt der Diakonissen von Neuendettelsau.*

5. *Korrespondenzblatt der Diakonissen von Neuendettelsau* 51 (1908, Nr. 4/5): 16.

traits and actions in many different fields of activity. No, for Bezzel there is only this one point in which, according to him, everything comes together in Loehe. In 1908 Bezzel sees the development of the church converging on the issue: Do we give credit to the Word of God and the one to whom it points and to whom it witnesses? Or will the transsignification, the transvaluation, and ultimately the emptying of every authority of the Word of God gain the upper hand? In this situation, according to Bezzel, Loehe becomes of immeasurable significance as the one who "lived from the Word of God and who lived in it, who depicted it, grasped it faithfully, and experienced it in love" (*AELKZ* 1908, 739). This is a fundamental assertion.

According to Bezzel's own view, the "Word of God" always preceded the sacrament.[6] Bezzel clairvoyantly sensed a development in his church that demanded from him very soon a discerning pastoral word against liberal theology.[7] Can one not see here in Bezzel a very independent, but in this respect also a real "disciple" of Loehe? He was one who knew where he did not have to check Loehe's greatness, where he also was not allowed to do so, because it was not Loehe's greatness in which he trusted at this point.

Bezzel was thoroughly thankful that his territorial church had found an affirmative relationship to Loehe and his work. As far as I can see, he talks about this only in a nonpublic way, meaning in his lectures to the deaconesses. "The territorial church . . . is beginning to bear Neuendettelsau and to get along with it." We can say that by now Loehe had become fully accepted at the *Oberkonsistorium* (church headquarters), which calls him "the faithful person of God," the "sublime witness in its prophetic anointment and power," "hero of faith," and "example" (!)[8] Does this enunciate a hagiography of Loehe, or is it a whitewashing of the village pastor of Neuendettelsau from every suspicion that he distanced himself from the church? Bezzel confessed that for him Loehe's remaining in the territorial church provided evidence that one can still have hope for this church.

The course of Loehe research

German Loehe research has taken place largely outside the academic realm, and the interpretations of Loehe vary extremely. The great synthesis still appears in the far distance; a valid and comprehensive view of Loehe is still missing. For young theologians and doctoral students there is probably a certain hesitancy to engage in Loehe research. Not everybody has as much courage, perseverance, energy, and clear perception of the issues as does Christian Weber. We can only congratulate him for his work on Loehe.[9]

There are several reasons for the hesitancy to engage with Loehe. Much is demanded because of Loehe's versatility. In which of the classical theological disciplines does he actually belong? They all demand their own right! Should one not be a generalist to present a somewhat adequate and impartial description and evaluation of Loehe? Indeed, this was the case for a long time. Bezzel used approximately fifteen Loehe publications of such general-

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6. Johannes Rupprecht, *Hermann Bezzel als Theologe* (München, 1925), 369/ 7, n. 1, taken from Bezzel's consecration lectures for deaconesses of 1903.

7. Seitz, *Hermann Bezzel*, 43–51.

8. From the word of the *Oberkonsistorium* on the occasion of the centennial birthday of Loehe, reprinted by Bezzel in *Korrespondenzblatt der Diakonissen von Neuendettelsau* 51 (1908, Nr. 4–5): 16–17.

9. Christian Weber, *Missionstheologie bei Loehe: Aufbruch zur Kirche der Zukunft* (Gütersloh, 1995).

ists that extend into the first decade of the twentieth century.

Quite naturally the Loehe literature of this "early time" had sometimes panegyric traits. Occasionally one can summarize them in the category of "pious tracts." Such a popular depiction of Loehe as is printed as a Festschrift of the Bavarian Protestant Association of Pastors was published in 25,000 copies and bore the motto "He has died—yet he still lives."[10] One has to ask very pointedly: What should be transmitted to the congregations with such a Loehe tractate? What were the goals and the contents of such a remembrance? What were the theological and religious concerns? Here sympathetic church historians have an open field in front of them. Yet we cannot quickly pass over such trivial-sounding Loehe literature.

But it also is not bad that the time has progressed even for church historians who are concerned with Loehe research. Until 1945 Hans Kreßel with his work *Wilhelm Löhe als Prediger* (Wilhelm Loehe as a Preacher, Gütersloh 1929) erected a measuring stick for the future: back to the sources! The topic of this book had been suggested from the angle of practical theology by Christian Bürckstümmer of the Erlangen faculty. It is based on difficult foundational work with the sources. Scientific Loehe research reached a new level with this publication. The comment by Martin Wittenberg appears to be correct: "Seen altogether, Kreßel can be regarded as the initiator of modern scientific Loehe research."[11] This was notwithstanding that Kreßel had a deep appreciation for Loehe. This appreciation included the commemoration of 75 years of the deaconess motherhouse and also 75 years of the founding of the Iowa Synod. Careful historical research in Loehe's sermons eventuated in a very optimistic announcement of a new time without "degenerated and secularized sermons": "We greet Loehe . . . and follow him . . . as a teacher of our days" (p. 364). Much there still goes in the direction of hagiography—certainly. In an unbroken tradition Loehe was being obligated to speak to the twentieth century. And this asked too much of him.

With the passing of time, there arose a more realistic view of Loehe. A discerning eye sees whether Loehe's works are "legitimating, affirmative, or presenting an identity," whether the Loehe picture was painted with too little criticism of his ideology. There remains then only the verdict from the liberal side, "conservativism," and from the ecclesial-theological side, "restoration."[12] In this way, one can sort and classify a multitude of important publications concerning Loehe without escaping always from the occasional charge of being prejudiced oneself. But it is helpful to use such rubrics as preliminary, and I emphasize preliminary, in the vast terrain of the approximately 350–400 titles of Loehe publications that were written just between 1945 and 1990.[13] Otherwise one gets lost in the labyrinth of works that are not always divided into the classical disciplines used by Loehe: sermons, catechesis, counseling, liturgy, mission, diaconal work, and congregational governance.

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10. Found in *Concordia: Mitteilungen des Neuendettelsauer Missionskreises* 55 (1967, Nr. 158–60): 647–51, 678–81, 711–16; on pp. 715–16 the motto is explained.

11. Loehe, *Abendmahlspredigten (1866)*, in *GW*, supplementary volumes, vol. 1, ed. Martin Wittenberg (Neuendettelsau, 1991), 13 n. 1.

12. Ulrich Schindler-Joppien, *Das Neuluthertum und die Macht* (Stuttgart, 1998), 48–49.

13. Heiner Schmidt, *Quellenlexikon zur deutschen Literaturgeschichte* (Duisburg, 1999), 19:243–55.

Since then there are also important narrower areas that have been worked on as a contribution to a possible comprehensive picture—for instance, the contested issue of Loehe's attitude toward the Awakening and toward confessionalism.[14] When finally social-historical and historical-feminist problems are introduced into researching Loehe's diaconal thinking and work, there is no possible way to come up with the painting of a saint.

In a review of research concerning the most recent Loehe literature, one can read that concerning the issue of the building up of the church, Christian Weber ultimately arrives at a "positivistic, assenting judgment . . . by making Loehe's sentiment his own."[15] But how can we know for sure what Loehe thought? We owe much to The Society for Home and Foreign Mission in the Intention of the Lutheran Church (*Gesellschaft für Innere und Äußere Mission im Sinne der lutherischen Kirche)*, the old German Loehe Society of 1849, who on January 21, 1946, gave Pastor Klaus Ganzert the charge to edit Loehe's works. From 1951 to 1986 twelve volumes were published, seven by Ganzert and five by Curt Schadewitz. This edition is unique with regard to theological authors of nineteenth-century Lutheranism. It is indispensable for Loehe research. But still today there are publications even in textbooks that do not know and do not mention this work. The amount of original source material presented in this work is gigantic. The intimacy of both editors with Loehe's writings, including his letters and diaries, is astounding and shows up well in the introduction to the texts. Of course, one should not pass over the problems of this edition in silence. Nevertheless one does not overstate it to say that this undertaking from 1951 to 1966 and again from 1985 to 1986 gave a decisive impetus to Loehe research in the second half of the twentieth century and will have a long-lasting effect.

We must not forget that these editors, and even Martin Wittenberg, who since 1933 researched Loehe intensively, still held that Loehe's thoughts, and especially his liturgical decisions, would speak immediately to Christians—for instance, that his worship setting of 1844/1852–53/1859 should still be practiced in 1953.[16] But one did not paint a picture of a saint. Editions of sources do not fit such a picture. And the edition itself survives such an overwhelming demand pretty well. The method of editing, including the comments, this nearly unbroken access to Loehe, showed results: Loehe was not presented as a "figure of church history" in an unmitigated way.

To present Loehe as a saint or a heretic . . . may miss what is available in the sources.

In conclusion, I want to mention some concrete Loehe research programs that perhaps can be pushed forward through the

14. Anne Stempel de Fallois, *Das diakonische Wirken Wilhelm Loehes* [...] *1826–1854* (Stuttgart, 2001), 24–25.

15. Ibid., 29, n. 118.

16. Martin Wittenberg, "Loehes Agende ist wieder zu haben!," *Concordia. Mitteilungen des Neuendettelsauer Missionskreises* 41 (1953, Nr. 103): 70–74, 74: Es "[s]ollte [...] die Agende [...] für die kirchliche Arbeit von heute möglichst bald benutzbar sein!"

decisive promotion of the two Loehe Societies now in existence: the previously mentioned one and the most recently founded International Loehe Society. Here one can see where the use of the *Gesammelte Werke* (Collected Works) of Loehe is difficult. For instance, *GW* will be supplemented by a series of supplements (*Ergänzungsreihe*; *GW.E*) in which texts will be published that are still missing in the *GW*. For example, in 1991 the *Sermons on the Lord's Supper* of 1866 were published. Then a bibliography on Loehe's writings will be published including secondary literature. We hope that in the *GW.E* also an "Index of the Correspondence by Wilhelm Loehe" can be included. Three thousand items of the approximately nine thousand present in the Loehe archive of the Society for Home and Foreign Mission in the Intention of the Lutheran Church have been included in a data bank. To complete this index, more intensive research outside Germany is needed. In the *GW.E* also an index can be included of the items that are available in the archive of the Society for Home and Foreign Mission in the Intention of the Lutheran Church. A *Wilhelm Loehe Study Edition* will be started in 2006 with a new edition of Loehe's *Three Books on the Church* of 1845 including a commentary. Finally, in the *Collected Works: Appendix*, indices for the volumes of the *GW* will appear to unlock more easily the treasures contained in these volumes. An index of "Where do I find what in the *GW*" will also appear.

A necessary emphasis of Loehe research consists in scientific engagement with the sources about Loehe. Without question Loehe has become a "figure of church history." To correspond to that figure, editions of his works must be drafted and supplemented.

For a valid Loehe depiction, a discourse with the sources is an unquestioned presupposition of all sober interpretive portraits of Loehe. To present him as a saint or a heretic—to paint the golden background or show the dark sides of this pastor from Neuendettelsau—may miss what is available in the sources. This is forbidden to any responsible historiography that wants to do justice to Loehe.

—Translated by Hans Schwarz

"Sung, Spoken, Lived": Worship as Communion and Mission in the Work of Wilhelm Loehe

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For Lutherans, Wilhelm Loehe, the nineteenth-century German pastor and renewer of the church, is a seminal figure in the recovery of liturgical practice. The Lutheran confessions make clear that word and sacrament are the means by which the Spirit of God creates faith in Jesus Christ, the faith that justifies (*Augsburg Confession*, art. 5), and that the church is an assembly gathered around the means of grace (*AC, art. 7*). There is among us, then, solid confessional ground for a liturgical and sacramental understanding of how faith happens and how the assembly of the faithful gathers for worship.

Loehe was concerned that this be something more than a doctrinal commitment, more than a theological idea written on paper or even inscribed in our hearts and minds. He wanted this claim to be carried by and manifest in the patterns and practice of worship, evident in all that we do with our bodies at worship—our speaking, singing, praying, washing, and eating and drinking in Jesus' name. So, among his many initiatives in liturgical practice, he worked to enrich the reading of Scripture and its proclamation, sought to restore and renew the Eucharist at the center of Sunday worship, and encouraged practices of confession and forgiveness. All of this was about fashioning the church, first, as a distinctive community in the face of its institutional and cultural captivity and, second, as a responsive community in the face of real human needs.[1] Loehe was a practical theologian who understood that practices—in this case liturgical practices—bear and shape theological claims and that theology is at root a reflection upon the practices of the faith.

Over the years of my study of Loehe, I have repeatedly returned to some words that get at the heart of his liturgical-practical theology. They appear in the extended introduction to the orders of worship collected in the second volume of his *Haus-, Schul-, und Kirchenbuch*:

> The church has put together according to holy orders not only individual prayers but entire services of various kinds and esteems them to be understood by all the faithful as the highest harmony of earthly life (*Leben*) and not only to be sung (*mitgesungen*) and spoken (*mitgesprochen*) but to be lived (*mitgelebt*). At the head of these holy orders stands the Communio, i.e., the churchly principal service, called in ancient

1. See Thomas H. Schattauer, "The Löhe Alternative for Worship, Then and Now," *Word and World* 24 (2004): 145–51.

speech and still in our Lutheran confessions, the mass. . . . Daily morning and evening prayer, or to speak in an older way, matins and vespers, take the second place among the holy orders. . . . All other services are nothing other than variations of these already named.[2]

The received orders of the church's worship—chiefly the Holy Communion and daily prayer, morning and evening—are something done, something practiced in the bodies of living persons. They are not merely a collection of theological ideas or doctrines thought out and written down. The unfolding act of worship involves persons actively singing and speaking, and, moreover, singing and speaking *together*. The *mit-* in the German is significant. Christian worship is a communal and participatory act, something done together, not alone or within oneself in a solitary way but outwardly and with others. Furthermore, this *mit-*, the "together" of worship, points to a claim that worship is an act of communion, a being and belonging together in Christ.

Furthermore, the liturgical work of the church—its singing and speaking according to these ordered patterns and practices—is about life. Christian worship is, Loehe says, "the highest harmony of earthly *life* (*Leben*) . . . not only sung and spoken, but *lived* (*mitgelebt*)." At worship, we are established in a way of life, in the way of God's life for the world. This connection of worship to life in Loehe's thinking points toward the claim that worship is about mission; it has to do with God's life-giving purpose for the world, a purpose in which we live and for which we live. From this, it should be clear that Loehe's interest in worship is not fundamentally doctrinal, historical, or ceremonial but missional.

There are three things for us to work with here as we explore Loehe's liturgical work: (1) worship as participatory act, something done and engaged by the entire assembly of persons gathered for worship; (2) worship as communion, our being and belonging together in Christ; and (3) worship as mission, a participation in God's life-giving purpose for the world. These ideas are integral to Loehe's understanding of the practice of worship and its theological significance.

Worship as participatory act

The congregation in Loehe's day was largely silent and immobile at worship. The pastor did almost everything. He prayed the prayers, read the scriptures, preached the sermon, and blessed the people; at the seasonal celebrations of the Lord's Supper, he consecrated and administered the bread and cup. The people received all of this with little response, except for the singing of some hymns, and twice a year an individual would leave his or her place to receive communion.[3]

Loehe encouraged his congregation to participate at worship. In contrast to the priest-centered celebration of the Roman

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2. "Von den heiligen Personen, der heiligen Zeit, der heiligen Weise und dem heiligen Orte," *Haus-, Schul- und Kirchenbuch für Christen der lutherischen Bekentnisses* (1859), in Wilhelm Loehe, *Gesammelte Werke* (*GW*), 7 vols., ed. Klaus Ganzert (Neuendettelsau: Freimund, 1951–1986) 3/1:570.

3. For fuller description and documentation of liturgical practice in Loehe's day and the practice that he promoted in his parish, see Thomas H. Schattauer, "The Reconstruction of Rite: The Liturgical Legacy of Wilhelm Löhe," in *Rule of Prayer, Rule of Faith: Essays in Honor of Aidan Kavanagh, O.S.B.*, ed. Nathan Mitchell and John F. Baldovin (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), 243–77; see also my dissertation, "Announcement, Confession, and Lord's Supper in the Pastoral-Liturgical Work of Wilhelm Löhe: A Study of Worship and Church Life in the Lutheran Parish at Neuendettelsau, Bavaria, 1837–1872" (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 1990).

mass, Loehe noted that the evangelical mass, in the Reformers' intention as well as his own, was to be an action of the assembled congregation:

> We do not say, "The pastor celebrates the Lord's Supper," but "The congregation!" The holy Supper is a celebration of the congregation, and it is shaped by the pastor and by Christ present and by the one or the many who receive—even at the communion of the sick—by the congregation. The pastor does not act alone, but the congregation acts with him.[4]

So Loehe promoted dialogue in the liturgy with congregational responses and Amens to prayers and blessings, the singing of liturgical songs like the Gloria and Sanctus, the recitation of the Creed, and a more vigorous hymn singing. More than that, he sought to engage the congregation in the deepest movements of the liturgy: in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, in the act of praying, and in the offering of gifts for those in need. He regularly instructed the people in their participation in these things and provided devotional books and prayer books that they might better prepare themselves for worship, hold the liturgy in their hands, and take an active part in the services.

Visitors to Sunday worship at Loehe's parish in Neuendettelsau noticed the difference and commented on the level of congregational participation. Loehe was pleased to report the comment of one visitor who said, "You have a liturgical people."[5] But there was resistance to Loehe's encouragements to participation. In a series of sermons on the Lord's Supper given in the year 1866, we can at times hear the exasperation of a pastor moving against the grain of longstanding habits. Some come late to worship and arrive after the pastor has already begun; Loehe wants them in their places by the time the church bell stops ringing and the organ begins to play. Some leave as the celebration of the sacrament begins; Loehe wants the whole congregation to remain, even those not receiving communion, and so he dispenses with the customary dismissal after the sermon and prayers of intercession. Some talk with each other during the service; Loehe wants their attention directed to the matters of worship.[6] And some remain silent during the liturgical responses and the hymn-singing; for Loehe genuine participation involves a visible external act of praise as well as the internal disposition: "Whoever wants to praise God must do it not only with his spirit, but also with his voice."[7] David's full-bodied praise of God is the model for active participation at worship: "David . . . sang with his mouth, played upon the harp with his hands, and what is more he leapt and skipped because his body and soul rejoiced in the Lord. Worship has to happen both inwardly and outwardly."[8]

The outward and visible participation for which Loehe provided in his orders for worship and toward which he prodded his congregation was most fully realized in the deaconess chapel. The sisters were subject to Loehe's direction and more receptive of

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4. *Abendmahlspredigten* (1866), *GW*, Ergänzungsreihe, ed. Martin Wittenberg (Neuendettelsau: Freimund, 1991) 1:173–74.

5. Johannes Deinzer, *Wilhelm Löhes Leben. Aus seinem schriftlichen Nachlaß zusammegestellt*, vol. 2 (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1880), 130–31.

6. *Abendmahlspredigten*, 173. Elsewhere, Loehe gives instruction to families about how to walk to church together in a respectable fashion and not "like geese in a row;" from a sermon by Loehe, quoted by fellow pastor and contemporary Theodor Schäfer and cited by Hans Kressel, *Löhe als Katecht und Seelsorger* (Neuendettelsau: Freimund, 1955), 163.

7. *Abendmahlspredigten*, 66.

8. *Abendmahlspredigten*, 66.

his efforts. With the deaconesses, Loehe had regular opportunity to form the assembly in its understanding and practice of worship. In both arenas of Loehe's pastoral activity—parish church and deaconess community—the participatory character of Christian worship became more evident. For Loehe, the "singing together" and "speaking together" of the assembly at worship were linked to the deep theological impulses of Christian life, its "living together": communion and mission.

Worship as communion

The concern for congregational participation at worship and engagement with the unfolding movement of the liturgy is connected to Loehe's interest in worship as communion. "Communion" translates the German *Gemeinschaft* and refers to being bound together in relation; specifically, in the context of Loehe's liturgical work and writing, it encompasses both the relation to God and to others that is established at worship. Loehe's notes on the collect in the second edition of his *Agende* (1853) show his understanding of the relation between participation and communion. Here he offers several comments on the liturgical structure salutation-*oremus*-prayer-Amen:

[on the salutation]
With the greeting taken from Ruth 2:4 and the response derived from 2 Tim. 4:22, which are repeated so often, the knot of love and concord between pastor and congregation is tied anew. The consciousness of churchly belonging together is renewed with each repetition.

[on the *oremus*—"Let us pray"]
The *oremus* is the sign of communal prayer and may not be missing from any collect.

[on the collect proper]
The collect is the prayer of the assembled congregation and encompasses all its prayer for the day on which it is prayed.

[on the Amen]
The Amen belongs to the congregation.[9]

From start to finish the collect is a thoroughly corporate act conducted by those who gather for worship. The very structure of praying, as well as its content, displays the unity of pastor and congregation and the awareness of a belonging together within the church. It is an act of communion that shows forth the church as a communion. Furthermore, this communion is no mere human fellowship. It comes about in relation to Christ, which Loehe makes clear in his citation from a Latin commentator: it is a communion "by which the faithful are joined (*copulantur*) in Christ by faith and love."[10]

The concept of communion in relation to worship has this double sense—the Christological, i.e., the communion that we have with Christ, and the ecclesiological, i.e., the communion of persons with one another in Christ. Commenting on 1 Corinthians 10, where the apostle Paul talks about the bread and cup of the Lord's Supper as a communion in the body and blood of Christ, Loehe makes this point:

> There we read clearly that the bread and wine are the communion (*Gemeinschaft*) or the means of communicating (*Mitteilungsmittel*) the body and blood of Christ, that therefore at the Lord's Supper, we eat, drink and are wonderfully united with the humanity of Jesus. But we also read that those who eat of the Lord's Supper themselves enter into communion with one another. They become, as it were, one bread of God. Thus, at the Lord's Supper, there is a double communion, first with Christ, and then with other communicants. . . .[11]

These two senses of communion can be distinguished, but ultimately they are not separable. Together they form the

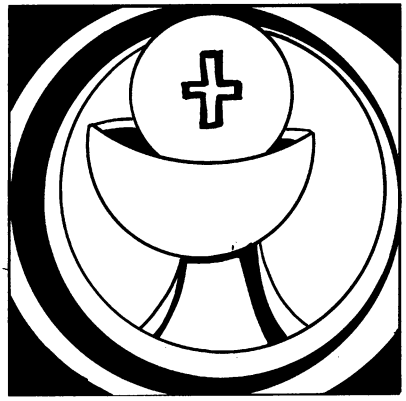
9. *Agende für christliche Gemeinden des lutherischen Bekenntnisses* (1844/ 2d ed., 1853–59), *GW* 7/1:55–56.

10. *Agende*, *GW* 7/1:56.

11. *Prüfungstafel und Gebete für Beicht- und Abendmahlstage* (4 eds., 1837–1858), *GW* 7/2:286.

complete meaning of the communion that is received and practiced in Christian worship. In a poetic depiction of worship in his *Three Books about the Church*, Loehe captures this double unity in its completeness:

> Just as the stars revolve around the sun, so does the congregation at its services, full of loveliness and dignity, revolve around its Lord. In holy, childlike innocence which only a child's innocent heart understands properly, the multitude of redeemed, sanctified children of God dances in worship around the universal Father and the Lamb, and the Spirit of the Lord of lords guides their steps.[12]



Loehe thus describes the liturgical assembly of the church as a unity of persons in the dance-like communion of the Triune God.

Loehe often called the principal service in the system of the church's worship the "*Communio*" (communion). In Loehe's time, the principal service was more likely to be called "*Predigt*" (sermon), because the Lord's Supper was celebrated only on occasion and often for only a portion of congregation. Loehe, however, understood Christian worship, indeed the whole Christian life, as a continual movement to and from the Lord's Supper. This perspective guided his work on orders for worship (see his *Agende*) as well as his efforts with liturgical practice in the parish church and deaconess community. Very early in his liturgical study, he wrote:

> The goal of the principal service of the church has always been the celebration of the Communio or Lord's Supper. The observance of the Lord's Supper was the core; the parts of the service before and after always stood in relation to it. This is the case in the eastern churches, in the Roman Church, and also in the evangelical church. A principal service without the celebration of the Lord's Supper was not considered complete; it looked like a column in ruins, like a flower stem without its crown.[13]

The Lord's Supper is the goal because it is the fullest form of communion with God in Christ in this life and a foretaste of heavenly communion: "Even in the Lutheran service, the greatest observance is not the sermon but the holy Lord's Supper! The sermon itself leads to the holy Supper as the most intimate and mystical union of Christians with their Christ."[14] Loehe understood worship as communion and sought a practice of worship that placed the Lord's Supper at its center.

It is not surprising, then, that the nature of the Supper as a communion is a central theme in the series of sermons on the Lord's Supper that Loehe preached in 1866.[15] In the course of several sermons, Loehe moves from the external celebration as a sign of unity toward the inner reality of communion. In the first place, Loehe observes that simple obedience to the Lord's command

12. *Drei Bücher von der Kirche* (1845), *GW* 5:176–77; English trans. (ET): *Three Books about the Church*, trans. and ed. James L. Schaaf (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959), 177.

13. "Vorwort," *Sammlung liturgischer Formulare der evangelish-lutherischen Kirche*, vol. 3 (1842), *GW* 7/2:698; see also *Agende*, *GW* 7/1:84.

14. *Der evangelische Geistliche*, vol. 2 (2 eds., 1858–1866), *GW* 3/2:243–44.

15. *Abendmahlspredigten* (see n. 4).

"Do this" creates unity among Christians (*Predigt am 10. August*). It is "a lofty sign of the great unity of the whole of Christianity."[16] This is so despite the profound differences among the churches, which Loehe himself took very seriously when it came to the practice of intercommunion. Nonetheless, there remains a unity of practice in obedience to the Lord's command:

> They are yet united in this one piece, that they celebrate the Lord's Supper. There is no Christian body on earth that would not agree with the others about this. Catholics, Lutherans, and Protestants, and all the various parties of eastern Christianity are all obedient to the Lord in celebrating his Supper, and all are in agreement that the Supper has to be celebrated and that no one may completely give it up.[17]

This simple unity in obedience to the Lord's command among the separated churches carries with it an even deeper unity, what Loehe calls "the invincible knowledge of belonging together" and a corresponding "feeling of belonging together." This knowledge and feeling of belonging together direct us ultimately toward "the communion of saints."[18] There exists, in Loehe's view, a fundamental unity among Christians based upon the observance of the Lord's Supper, and this unity in practice points to their deeper communion.

In the next sermon Loehe reflects upon the possibility of greater unity in the external celebration of the sacrament if all the churches were to the follow the Lord's actions as well as apostolic tradition (*Predigt am 17. August*). According to Loehe, something is lacking in the practice of each of the confessional-liturgical traditions. The Roman disobedience is to withhold the cup from the people; the Reformed disobedience (shared by some Lutherans) is to leave out the blessing (or thanksgiving) of bread and cup; the Lutheran disobedience is to omit the breaking of the bread. The unity achieved in attending to these practices will be, in Loehe's words, not a unity "with the Roman church and with the Reformed . . . but . . . with [the Lord] and his apostles and his first church. This is the true unity, upon which the Lord looks and which will remain with us to the end!"[19]

From the unity of external celebration, which for the moment remains a kind of disunity (except, as Loehe reports, in the practice of the Lord's Supper in his own congregation), Loehe moves to the unity in the proclamation of the Lord's death at the celebration of the Supper (*Predigt am 24. August*). Here he is reflecting on both the Lord's command "Do this in remembrance of me" and Paul's words "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor 11:23–26). There is already a certain measure of unity among Christians in the proclamation of the Lord's death; the whole act of celebrating the Lord's Supper is itself an external remembrance of Jesus. Loehe has in mind, however, to further the specific form of "solemn *liturgical* anamnesis" and "solemn proclamation of [Jesus'] death" that is part of eucharistic praying.[20] This is something Loehe had introduced at communion services outside the principal service with the use of a section from the Alexandrian Anaphora of St. Basil, an early Eastern eucharistic prayer.[21] From Loehe's perspective, there was no reason not to

16. *Abendmahlspredigten,* 46.
17. *Abendmahlspredigten,* 48.
18. *Abendmahlspredigten,* 49.
19. *Abendmahlspredigten,* 63.
20. *Abendmahlspredigten,* 67.
21. *Abendmahlspredigten,* 66. For an English translation of this early eastern anamnesis as it was adapted by Loehe, see Schattauer, "Reconstruction of Rite," 267; note there as well the account of Loehe's

pursue a greater unity in the apostolic and early Christian practice of formally proclaiming the Lord's death until he comes.

Finally, Loehe considers the inner reality of communion in the celebration of the Lord's Supper (*Predigt am 31. August*). The focus of Loehe's reflection is upon Paul's words in 1 Cor 10:16–17, where Paul speaks about the many who become one body through their communion in Christ's body and blood in the bread and cup at the Lord's Supper. The Supper is a communion of persons; they become one body:

> Those who eat of one body become one body, even if they are many, even if they make up one entire congregation, or the whole church on earth; it is one thing; they become one body. . . . All who go to the table of the Lord are one body, and as often as they do it together, they can see with their own eyes and recall to themselves: I am one body with you; you are a member, and I am a member, and we all are members; and together we form one body, the body of the one who is the head of the body, namely Christ.[22]

This communion of persons happens because of their communion in Christ's body and blood in the bread and the cup of the Supper. Here we see again the double sense of communion that Loehe finds in this text and consequently in the Lord's Supper itself—both the ecclesiological and the Christological dimensions.

There are further lines of thought on worship as communion that could be pursued in these sermons on the Lord's Supper and in relation to Loehe's larger thought and work. The two most important would be the connection, first, to Loehe's confessional commitment to Lutheran teaching about the real presence (*Predigt am 14. September; Predigt am 28. September*), and, second, to his commitment to church discipline and the maintenance of unity in faith and life (*Predigt am 9. November; Predigt am 7. December*). There also is the relation of the communion at worship to the whole communion of saints, living and dead (*Predigt am 16. September*).

What should be clear is the centrality of the concept of communion to Loehe's thinking and practice of worship, especially in relation to the Lord's Supper. This is Loehe's great contribution to a tradition that had become dominated in its theology and liturgical practice by a penitential piety narrowly focused on the forgiveness of sins. Christian worship is primarily a *communio*—with Christ and with all those joined to Christ—in the abundant life that God gives, including the gift of forgiveness.[23]

Worship as mission

Loehe is well known for his thinking about mission and perhaps even more so for his efforts to invigorate the church and its mission in his own time and place, especially through the mission school and society that he founded and the deaconess community that he started. And, as should be apparent from our explorations here, worship was central to his understanding of the church and his own pastoral work in the Neuendettelsau parish and deaconess community as well as in the mission congregations he supported. Anyone who studies

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shaping of the eucharistic action, pp. 264–67. See also Frieder Schulz, "Der Beitrag Wilhelm Löhes zur Ausbildung eines evangelischen Eucharistiegebetes," in *Gratia Agamus: Studien zum eucharistsichen Hochgebet für Balthasar Fischer*, ed. Andreas Heinz and Heinrich Rennings (Freiburg: Herder, 1992), 457–67.

22. *Abendmahlspredigten*, 69–70.

23. See Schattauer, "Reconstruction of Rite," 275–76. Loehe moved beyond a narrowly penitential understanding of the Lord's Supper in part through his interpretation of John 6; see *Predigt am 5. Oktober, Predigt am 12. Oktober, and Predigt am 16. November*, in *Abendmahlspredigten*.

Loehe's writings, however, will not find much explicit connection between worship and mission. For example, there is no discussion of mission in Loehe's Lord's Supper sermons. Nonetheless, I contend that Loehe understood worship as mission. To support that claim, I want to suggest the connection among a number of ideas related to worship and mission in Loehe's work:

- *Worship has to do with life.*
- *God's purpose for life is communion—with God and with one another.*
- *Mission is the church of God in motion.*
- *Word and sacrament are the principal means of mission.*

Loehe makes a clear connection between liturgy and life. The liturgy is something sung and spoken together but also lived together (*mitgelebt*). It sets out a pattern for life, for the life that God gives.

The life that God gives is precisely a life of communion with God and with others. God's purpose for human life is not a solitary existence but communion (*Gemeinschaft*) with God and one another. In the opening section of his *Three Books about the Church*, Loehe says this much clearly: "There is no solitary earth and no solitary heaven."[24] From both anthropological and theological perspectives, human life is destined for communion. The church is the life-giving communion that God intends: "The church is the eternal community founded by God and the communion of elect souls with one another and with him."[25] As we have seen, the church in its worship is about just such a communion.

"Mission is . . . the one church of God in motion." With those words, Loehe connects the understanding and work of mission to the communion of the church. Mission is the realization of the communion that the church is. It is worth citing the following whole passage on church and mission from *Three Books about the Church* to see the unity of communion and mission in Loehe's thinking:

> The church of the New Testament is no longer a territorial church but a church for all people, a church which has its children in all lands and gathers them from every nation. It is the one flock of the one shepherd, called out of many folds (Jn 10:16), the universal—the truly catholic—church which flows through all time into which all people pour. This is the great concept which is still being fulfilled, the work of God in the final hour of the world, the dearest thought of all the saints in life and in death, the thought for which they lived and still live, died and still die. This is the thought which must permeate the mission of the church or it will not know what it is or what it should do. For mission is nothing but the one church of God in motion, the actualization of the one universal, catholic church. Wherever mission enters in, the barriers which separate nation from nation fall down. Wherever it comes it brings together what previously was far off and widely separated. Wherever it takes root it produces that wonderful unity which makes "the people of every tongue" able to understand one another in all things. Mission is the life of the catholic church. Where it stops, blood and breath stop; where it dies, the love which unites heaven and earth also dies. The catholic church and mission—these two no one can separate without killing both, and that is impossible.[26]

The communion that is the church catholic and mission cannot be separated. They are, in Loehe's view, two aspects of a single reality: the communion that is God's purpose for human life. To the extent that worship itself is about this communion, it is also necessarily about mission.

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24. *Drei Bücher, GW* 5/1:89; ET: *Three Books*, 49.

25. *Drei Bücher, GW* 5/1:90; in this instance, the translation of *Drei Bücher* is my own.

26. *Drei Bücher, GW* 5/1:96; ET: *Three Books, 59.*

Loehe comes close to making an explicit connection between worship and mission later in *Three Books about the Church* when he explains that Word and sacrament are the only means by which the church acts and the source of all its good works:

> The Lutheran church knows that the Lord gives his Holy Spirit only through his Word and sacraments, and therefore it recognizes no other effective means than Word and sacrament. . . .
>
> The church has various activities . . . even though the means through which it performs them and encourages all good things are the same—Word, sacrament, the holy office of the ministry.[27]

By the Holy Spirit, Word and sacrament create a communion of persons who live in Jesus Christ and establish persons to live within this communion. Furthermore, Word and sacrament are directed toward the communion that is God's purpose for all human life. The specific activities of the church, what we might call its missional activity, flow from the church as a communion established in Word and sacrament and toward the communion that is God's ultimate purpose for the world.

I am not a logician, but I think there is a syllogism buried in these ideas from Loehe that goes something like this:

- *Mission is about the life of communion that God gives.*
- *This communion is what the church is, most especially in its worship.*
- *Therefore, worship is about mission.*

Let's try saying it for ourselves, perhaps this way: communion and mission are the heartbeat of Christian worship.[28] There is the diastolic movement of communion, the ingathering of persons into relation with God and with one another. Then follows the systolic movement of mission, the sending of persons into relation to further the communion that is God's life-giving purpose for the world. At the nexus of both movements is Jesus Christ—present in Word and sacrament—the source of communion and the impulse for mission.

Communion and mission are the heartbeat of Christian worship.

Loehe has helped us to this insight about worship as communion and mission. It is now for us to sing it, to speak it, and to live it together in our own time and place.

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27. *Drei Bücher, GW* 5/1:168–70; ET: *Three Books*, 164–67. On worship in Word and sacrament and Loehe's theology of mission, see Christian Weber, *Missionstheologie bei Wilhelm Löhe: Aufbruch zur Kirche der Zukunft* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1996), esp. 306–12; see also his "The Future of Loehe's Legacy," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 31 (2004): 100.

28. Craig L. Nessan uses this same image to describe Loehe's missionary theology; see "Missionary Theology and Wartburg Theological Seminary," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 31 (2004): 85–86. I am grateful to Nessan for his encouragement to my study of Loehe and for his partnership in founding the International Loehe Society.

Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod: Forgotten Paternity or Living Legacy?

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The same year that Wilhelm Loehe began his pastorate in Neuendettelsau, more than 600 emigrants under the leadership of Martin Stephan departed Germany to establish their Lutheran Zion on the Mississippi. It had been twenty years since Claus Harms issued his own ninety-five theses provoking a resurgence of Lutheran confessionalism in the face of the Prussian Union.[1] This confessional revival shaped both Loehe and the Missouri-bound Saxons, and it would provide common ground for their eventual contact and cooperation even as unresolved issues of church and ministry within nineteenth-century Lutheranism[2] would ultimately lead to a parting of their paths.

While C. F. W. Walther would give the Missouri Synod its theological and ecclesial shape, Loehe's influence was essential to the confessional orientation and the missionary character of the Synod in its early years. It is not without reason that Wilhelm Loehe is hailed as "the father from afar,"[3] even though leaders of the fledgling synod would come to see him as a prodigal father. Hermann Sasse identifies the rift between Loehe and Walther as "one of the most

1. See Robert C. Schultz, "The European Background," in *Moving Frontiers: Readings in the History of The Lutheran Church: Missouri Synod,* ed. Carl S. Meyer (St. Louis: Concordia, 1964), 47–89, and Theodore Tappert, *Lutheran Confessional Theology in America 1840–1880* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 3–37.

2. For the broader context of this debate, see Holsten Fagerberg, *Bekenntnis, Kirche, und Amt in der deutschen konfessionalellen Theologie des 19 Jahrhunderts* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells Boktryckeri, 1952), and Walter C. Conser Jr., *Church and Confession: Conservative Theologians in Germany, England, and America 1815–1866* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), 3–96. Also see Walter Sundberg, "Ministry in Nineteenth-Century Lutheranism," in *Called and Ordained: Lutheran Perspectives on the Office of the Ministry,* ed. Todd Nichol and Marc Kolden (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 77–92. For a helpful overview of Loehe's place in nineteenth-century Lutheranism, see Hans Schwarz, *Theology in a Global Context: The Last Two Hundred Years* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2005), 91–98.

3. James Schaaf, "Father from Afar: Wilhelm Loehe and Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* (January–April 1996), 427. Schaaf borrows the phrase "Father from Afar" from a 1958 article on Loehe in the *Lutheran Standard* by Charles Lutz.

grievous events in the history of the Lutheran Church in the 19th century."[4]

How did a relationship so full of promise emerge between this Bavarian pastor and his emigrant counterpart? How did Loehe contribute to the founding of the Missouri Synod? What factors contributed to the decline and severance of Loehe's ties with the new American Synod? How did the influence of Loehe continue in the Missouri Synod after 1853? And finally, how does the legacy of Loehe show itself in The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod today? These are the questions that I take up in this essay.

Christian Weber maintains that Loehe's missionary vision stands behind all of his other projects.[5] Inner and outer mission are always in motion. The church gathered around the apostolic Word is always caring for the baptized so that they are maintained in the unity of the faith while at the same time seeking those who do not confess Christ Jesus. Loehe's soul was stirred by the appeal of Friedrich Conrad Dietrich Wyneken in his *Distress of the German Lutherans in North America*. Reading Wyneken's plea while at the home of his former professor, Karl von Raumer, in Erlangen late in 1840 would move Loehe to make contact with Wyneken.

F. C. D. Wyneken, two years Loehe's junior, was the son of a Lutheran pastor in Hannover. His father, like Loehe's, had died at an early age. Wyneken would study theology at Goettingen and Halle. While at Halle he came under the influence of Friedrich August Tholuck[6] and was led away from Rationalism toward an understanding of positive Christianity.[7] Not a confessional Lutheran at the time of his ordination in 1837, Wyneken was sent to Baltimore under the auspices of the unionistic Stade Bible and Mission Society. Arriving in Baltimore early in 1838, Wyneken affiliated with the Pennsylvania Ministerium and was sent as a missionary pastor to Indiana to gather scattered German Protestants into congregations.

Surveying the tremendous spiritual needs among German emigrants on the frontier, Wyneken made an impassioned appeal to the homeland for aid. Painting a bleak picture of churchless Germans in America who "give reign to their animal drives there without any awe for that which is holy, no longer restrained even outwardly by any discipline,"[8] Wyneken urged faithful Christians to rise up and assist in rescuing their fellow Germans. Lamenting the lack of orthodox pastors, Wyneken noted how many Germans had been snatched from the Lutheran fold by sectarian preachers. He wrote of villages that in spiritual

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4. Hermann Sasse, "Ministry and Congregation," in *We Confess the Church*, ed. and trans. Norman E. Nagel (St. Louis: Concordia, 1986), 69.

5. Christian Weber, "The Future of Loehe's Legacy," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 31 (April 2004): 101. Also see Weber's definitive study of Loehe's missiology, *Missiontheologie bei Wilhelm Loehe: Aufbruch zur Kirche der Zukenft* (Guetersloh: Guetersloher Verlagshaus, 1996), and David Radtke, *Confession and Mission, Word and Sacrament: The Ecclesial Theology of Wilhelm Loehe* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2001), 137–205.

6. For an assessment of Tholuck's relationship to the Awakening, see Karl Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 494–504.

7. For an account of Wyneken's life and contributions, see David Gustafson, *Lutherans in Crisis: The Question of Identity in the American Republic* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 109–15, and Norman J. Threinen, "F. C. D. Wyneken: Motivator for Mission," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* (January–April 1996), 19–45.

8. Meyer, *Moving Frontiers*, 91–92.

desperation "hired" self-made clergy without theological training or ordination. Wyneken related several instances where he personally encountered such preachers and the harm that they had inflicted on gullible settlers. Carnal living and spiritual apathy had dulled the souls of many. "No preacher comes to rouse them from their earthly thoughts and pursuits, and for a long time the voice of the sweet Gospel has no longer been heard."[9] Children were growing up without baptism and catechism instruction. Worldly concerns crowded out and stifled the desire for heavenly things, and "many thousands die away into eternity unprepared and unconsoled."[10]

Wyneken challenged his readers:

> I myself have had to baptize at one time 12 or more children of greatly varying ages, often 10 to 12 years old. But who gives instruction to those who have been baptized? How can the washing of regeneration continue its action, grow and become powerful when preaching or instruction is missing? Who will confirm the children? Who will administer Holy Communion to them afterward? Perhaps their parents of German extraction are themselves heathen, unbaptized; just imagine—*German heathen!*[11]

Noting that thousands of German emigrants reached the shores of the United States each year, Wyneken appealed to both German and Christian sentiments:

> What will become of our brethren in 10 or 20 years if help does not come? To the disgrace of the German name, to the shame of the church, and to the eternal reproach before the Lord a German population that knows nothing of its God and Savior will inhabit the West, and subsequent centuries will point the finger at the people and church which in the midst of plenty in its own house has left its children to perish.[12]

Loehe published an energetic article in the *Sonntagsblatt* shortly after reading Wyneken's appeal. Together with newspaper editor Johann Wucherer, Loehe began collecting funds to assist the ministry among German Lutherans in America. The two would found the Neuendettelsau Society for Home and Foreign Missions. This society would be the sending agency for the *Nothelfer,* or "emergency helpers," who would be instrumental in the formation of the Missouri Synod.

By the time Wyneken wrote his *Distress of the German Lutherans in North America,* his Lutheran convictions and consciousness were becoming more solidly formed, even though the congregation that he served in Fort Wayne was one of mixed confession, both Lutheran and Reformed. Before his visit to Germany in 1841, Wyneken was still open to pastors who were either Lutheran or Reformed. In a letter to F. Schmidt, he stated "As a confessional basis the Augsburg Confession or, where the people are Reformed, a Reformed confession should serve."[13] His visit to Germany in late 1841 and early 1842 would provide him with an opportunity to meet Loehe. The contact with Loehe deepened Wyneken's Lutheran instincts. When he returned to Fort Wayne, Wyneken would begin to preach on the differences between the Lutheran and Reformed confessions, leading the Reformed members of his congregation to withdraw and organize a congregation of their own.

Loehe's literary activities would robustly echo Wyneken's appeal. In response to Loehe's publicity of the dire needs in America, Adam Ernst and George Burger presented themselves as candidates for service on the frontier. Loehe provided training for these two men in a variety of

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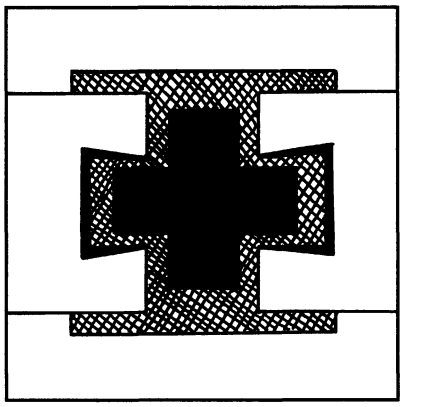
9. Meyer, *Moving Frontiers,* 93.
10. Ibid., 95.
11. Ibid., 96.
12. Ibid., 97.
13. Threinen, "F. C. D. Wyneken: Motivator for Mission," 25.

theological and secular subjects. In the summer of 1842 Ernst and Burger were sent to the United States after agreeing to a set of stipulations that would govern their work and affiliations. Only in the event that they came to a territory without a Lutheran pastor were they to aspire to the ministerial office. They were to serve primarily as teachers in German schools. They must vow their allegiance to the Book of Concord, promise to affiliate only with a genuine Lutheran body, and agree to submit regular reports of their work.

Ernst and Burger arrived in New York and established contact with Pastor C. H. Stohlman of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church. Stohlman was not optimistic concerning their plan to serve as teachers among the German population in the Midwest. At Stohlman's urging, the young men journeyed by canal boat to the Evangelical Lutheran Theological Seminary in Columbus, Ohio. This, they believed, was still within the bounds of the agreement with Loehe.

When Ernst and Burger arrived in Columbus in the fall of 1842, they enrolled in a seminary with a student body of around twenty students.[14] As most of the students were sons of German emigrants, the transition to English was already beginning. Loehe knew of the Columbus seminary from Wyneken, who had given him a favorable report.

After learning from Ernst and Burger about their arrival in Columbus, Loehe addressed a letter to the Ohio Synod containing five questions: (1) Can you accept Ernst and Burger as students in your seminary? (2) Is it acceptable to you for us to send more men for this purpose? (3) Does your synod subscribe "quia" or "quantenus" to all the symbolical documents contained in the Book of Concord? (4) In what manner do the synods in America cooperate and



work together? (5) Should we send you hymnals, service books, and other similar literature?[15]

The question of confessional subscription was uppermost for Loehe. The seminary had a stronger attitude toward the Confessions than did its parent synod. Loehe was satisfied with the response he received and proceeded to direct his energies toward providing monetary support, books, and students for the seminary. More men were to follow, including a convert Jew, Paul August Baumgart,[16] and F. Lochner,[17] whom Loehe called his best student,

14. James Schaaf, "Wilhelm Loehe's Relation to the American Church: A Study in the History of Lutheran Mission" (Th.D. diss., University of Heidelberg, 1961), 35.

15. Ibid., 40.

16. For the story of Baumgart's life and work, see James Schaaf, "Paul August Baumgart," in *Missionary to America: The History of Lutheran Outreach to Americans-Essays and Reports of 1992 Meeting* (St. Louis: Lutheran Historical Conference, 1994), 92–112.

17. See Otto F. Hattstaedt, "The Life and Works of Pastor Friedrich Lochner," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* (January 1949), 169–74.

Almost from the very beginning, Loehe's men would be drawn into the controversy known as American Lutheranism.

as well as Dr. Wilhelm Sihler[18] and August Craemer,[19] who came to play prominent roles in the Fort Wayne seminary and the Missouri Synod. The next year, five more men would be sent from Neuendettelsau. Seven more would be sent in 1845 and twenty-two in 1846. Most would eventually become ordained pastors, although several would serve in other capacities.

Almost from the very beginning, Loehe's men would be drawn into the controversy known as American Lutheranism. This movement, identified with the General Synod organized in 1820[20] and especially its most eminent spokesman, Samuel S. Schmucker, sought to shape Lutheran identity with an emphasis on principles held in common with other Protestants. English-speaking Lutherans should acculturate to the world of American Protestantism by shaping the confessional witness contextually. The context, as Schmucker and others saw it, demanded the radical redefinition if not abandonment of elements that were seen as remnants of a lingering Catholicism carried over from Reformation times. In this way, the American Lutherans saw the Reformation as a movement that was ongoing and certainly not complete. Hence there was an antipathy to the confessional theology and liturgical forms recovered in the confessional revival in Germany. American Lutheranism held sway in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Loehe knew of Schmucker and others associated with American Lutheranism. He saw it as an American version of the theology that led to the Prussian Union. Loehe's staunch rejection of the use of English in work among German Americans stems in part, at least, from his fear that linguistic accommodation would lead to doctrinal accommodation. Certainly he saw evidence of this in Schmucker and Benjamin Kurtz. The "new measures" adopted by the American Lutherans appalled Loehe, as they did Walther.

The conflict between the American Lutherans and the "Old Lutherans" was embodied in the Ohio Synod in the controversy of the distribution formula in the Lord's Supper. The Old Lutherans insisted on the removal of the words "Christ said" ("Christus spricht") from the liturgy, as this formula was used in the Prussian Union as a way of providing space for either a Lutheran or Reformed interpretation of the sacrament. The Reformed could use this formula to mean that while Jesus uttered

18. See Lewis W. Spitz Jr., "Professor Wilhelm Sihler: Founding Father of Lutheranism in America and First President of Concordia Theological Seminary," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* (April 1999), 83–96.

19. See Erich Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1989), 42–53, and Lawrence Rast Jr., "Friedrich August Craemer: Faithful Servant in Christ's Church," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* (January 2000), 39–60.

20. For a description of American Lutheranism, see Gustafson, *Lutherans in Crisis*, 62–103.

the words "This is my body," it did not necessarily mean that the consecrated bread is the very body of the Lord. The Ohio Synod upheld the use of this formula at their 1845 convention. They refused to use the traditional Lutheran distribution formula "This is my body/ This is my blood." Loehe was not surprised at this refusal, which he took as a deliberate act of doctrinal ambiguity and confessional compromise. He and his men would now look elsewhere. The break with Ohio would also parallel the movement of Loehe's colonies in the Saginaw Valley away from the Michigan Synod.

Twenty-two men gathered in Cleveland September 13–18, 1845, to draw up a declaration of separation from the Ohio Synod. Eleven of them had been sent to America by Loehe. The document adopted by the assembly listed several reasons for their departure from the Synod: Ohio's favorable disposition toward unionism, the retention of the problem distribution formula in the Lord's Supper, the refusal to require a vow to the Book of Concord in ordination, the practice of licensing candidates for a specific period of time rather than issuing a call, and the toleration of some Reformed congregations in the membership of the Synod. The conference in Cleveland would lay the foundation for a new synodical body that was marked by complete loyalty to the Lutheran Confessions and a renunciation of unionism. Potential members of this new synod included not only Loehe's men but other pastors who had left the Ohio Synod, the Prussian emigrants under the leadership of J. A. A. Grabau as well as the Saxons from Missouri.

Loehe knew of both the Saxons in Missouri and the Prussians in New York and Wisconsin. In a letter to Ernst in October 1843, Loehe expressed his mistrust of Grabau's hierarchical approach to the governance of the church.[21] Likewise, Loehe deplored the absolutistic claims made by Martin Stephan. In another letter Loehe wrote to Ernst:

> One recognizes that the scattered Saxons in Missouri have been purified and strengthened through the fire of tribulation, and certainly our hope is not in vain that friends over there may be able to unite completely with them in *one* holy communion. In this the work of the church there will flourish more and more.[22]

When Wilhelm Hattstaedt was sent to the United States in 1844, Loehe provided him with a set of questions for the Saxons and directed him to go by way of New Orleans and visit Missouri before taking up his work. Because circumstances surrounding Hattstaedt's call to Michigan prevented him from making the visit, the task was assigned to Ernst, who had already exchanged some correspondence with Walther.

Ernst's positive impression of the Saxons was gained by his reading *Der Lutheraner*, a church paper edited by Walther. When Ernst first saw the paper during a visit to Wyneken in Fort Wayne, he is reported to have remarked: "Thank God, there are still real Lutherans in America."[23] Loehe likewise was impressed by the sturdy confessional and churchly nature of the paper. Ernst was encouraged to go to St. Louis for a meeting with Walther. This trip had to be delayed because of the upcoming gathering in Cleveland.

Walther was invited to attend the Cleveland conference, but because of illness he

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21. Schaaf, "Wilhelm Loehe's Relation to the American Church," 105.

22. Schaaf, "Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod" *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* (May 1972), 58.

23. Schaaf, "Wilhelm Loehe's Relation to the American Church," 107–8.

was unable to go. Instead Walther drafted a letter to Ernst expressing his support for a new synod and the desire of the Saxons to enter into a body of genuinely Lutheran character. In this letter Walther noted that such a body should be marked by six characteristics: (1) it should be based on the Lutheran Symbols as contained in the Book of Concord and, if possible, the Saxon Visitation Articles[24]; (2) it should eschew all syncretistic activity; (3) it should guard and promote the unity and purity of Lutheran doctrine; (4) it should be a consultative, not a judicial, body; (5) it should give the laity rights as well as the clergy; and (6) it should allow each congregation to pass judgment on the synod's decisions.

Those meeting in Cleveland authorized Ernst, Lochner, and Sihler to undertake a trip to St. Louis for a meeting with Walther. In May of 1846, the party arrived in Missouri. The meeting resulted in a draft of a constitutional proposal drawn up chiefly by Walther but signed by Ernst, Lochner, Sihler, Walther, and six of the Saxon pastors. This document became the basis for a more formal constitution adopted in Fort Wayne in July. Since some potential synod members could not be present at this meeting it was decided that the constitution would not go into effect for a year in order that it might be studied by those who were absent. The next meeting would be held in Chicago in April 1847. It was at this meeting that the Missouri Synod was actually established with all but one of Loehe's men joining the new synod.[25] Over half of the ministerium of the newly organized Missouri Synod was composed of Loehe's men.

James Schaaf mistakenly asserted that of the Loehe contingent only Craemer was elected to a leadership position in the new Synod.[26] In fact, the constituting convention elected Sihler to serve as vice president. While Walther clearly emerged as the theological and organizational leader of the Missouri Synod, Loehe's men exerted considerable influence in its formation.

The Fort Wayne seminary predated the founding of the Missouri Synod by a year. With the number of students volunteering for service in America on the increase and ties with Columbus severed, Loehe turned his attention to the establishment of an American seminary that would serve to bring to completion the initial training that he provided the men coming to America. Fort Wayne was chosen as the site for the seminary and Wilhelm Sihler as its president. With Fort Wayne being the locale of Sihler's congregation as well as its proximity to Michigan, it was deemed a logical choice. Land was purchased, and the school formally opened with the arrival of seven men from Neuendettelsau along with four theological candidates who were to serve as teachers on October 10, 1846. By 1853 when the relationship between Loehe and the Missouri Synod ended, 82 of his men had to come to the Synod by way of the Fort Wayne seminary.

At the organizing convention in April 1847, a resolution was passed requesting Loehe to transfer the Fort Wayne seminary to the Synod while at the same time continuing to support the institution with funds

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24. The Saxon Visitation articles were drawn up by Philip Melanchthon with the assistance of others in 1528 (see "Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors in Electoral Saxony" in *Luther's Works* 40:263–320). This document would be used to assess ecclesiastical and pastoral conditions in the churches of electoral Saxony and would serve as a prototype for later Reformation church orders. Walther desired to stand in this tradition.

25. Schaaf, "Wilhelm Loehe's Relation to the American Church," 109.

26. Ibid., 110.

and books. After consulting with Wucherer, Loehe replied affirmatively to the request with three provisions: (1) that the seminary serve only the Lutheran Church that accepts the entire Book of Concord; (2) only German will be used in instruction; (3) the seminary will not alter its mission of speedy preparation of pastors for German-speaking congregations.[27] While the seminary was now out of his hands, it was perhaps his greatest gift to the Missouri Synod.

Loehe had reservations about the constitutional foundation of the Synod from the beginning. He was especially uneasy regarding the notion of equal representation of clergy and laity in church governance. This seemed to him to reflect a democratic form of church life more reflective of American principles than the ecclesiology of the New Testament. Such a democratic approach, Loehe feared, would subordinate the pastor to the will of the congregation. But at this early stage, Loehe was unwilling to protest too strongly, believing that over time the weaknesses of this approach would be realized and appropriate adjustments made in the constitution. Schaaf observed that for Loehe "The desire for unity with confessionally minded Lutherans was stronger than the fear of congregationalism."[28]

In the months after the constituting convention, Loehe expressed his reservations in a number of letters. In September 1847 he wrote to Walther:

With heartfelt sorrow we have noted that your synodical constitution, as it now stands, could not completely meet the model of the first congregations and we fear, certainly with complete justification, that the fundamental strong mixing of democratic, independent, congregational principles in your constitution will cause greater damage than the mixing of princes and secular authorities in our homeland. Careful attention to many teachings of the holy apostle about the organization of the church and the *Seelsorge* in general would have taught the dear lay brethren something different. A constitution is a dogmatic adiaphoron, but not a practical one. [29]

Loehe had reservations about the constitutional foundation of the Synod from the beginning.

A few months later, in December, Loehe wrote to his German pastoral colleague, L. A. Petri:

One thing is regrettable. When our good people arrive over there and breathe the American air they become imbued with democracy and one hears with amazement how independent and congregational they think about church organization. They are in danger of forgetting the high, divine honor of their office and becoming slaves to their congregations."[30]

These letters point to a conflict that would emerge in the coming years and ultimately lead to a rift between Loehe and the Synod that he had helped to father.

Casting shadows over the Synod's organizing convention in 1847 were two factors. First, there was the fresh and painful

27. Ibid., 114. On the issue of the use of the German language, it is important to remember that little confessionally sound Lutheran literature was available in English. The first English translation of the Book of Concord would not appear until 1851 due to the efforts of Ambrose and Socrates Henkel.

28. Ibid., 118.

29. Schaaf, "Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod," 60.

30. Ibid.

memory of the Stephan debacle and the spiritual anguish that it had inflicted among the Perry County colonists, even to the point of creating doubt as to whether they were still members of the *una sancta*.[31] Then there was Pastor J. A. A. Grabau[32] and his authoritarian defense of the pastoral office. Walther had come into conflict with Grabau as early as 1840 at the time the Prussian pastor had published his *Hirtenbrief*. The two groups had experienced opposite threats. For Walther and the Saxons it was the threat of abused episcopal authority in the hierarchical attitude of Stephan. For Grabau it was the threat of conventicles that would circumvent the ministerial office.[33] There was heated literary exchange between the two men, complicated by the unwillingness of the Missouri party to recognize excommunications enacted by Buffalo pastors unjustly to the Missourians' point of view.

In October and November 1851, Walther and Wyneken were guests in Loehe's parsonage.

Loehe's attempt to mediate this dispute earned him the disfavor of both groups. Pointing out what he believed to be errors in the approaches of both Grabau and Walther, Loehe urged each of the parties to something of a truce, leaving the disputed issues as "open questions" until they could be resolved in an amicable manner and in such a way achieve reconciliation.

The debate was not resolved but continued to simmer. At the 1850 convention, the Missouri Synod asked Walther to prepare a document clearly stating the Synod's position on church and ministry. The same convention petitioned Loehe to visit the United States in order to inspect the field cultivated by his labor and, most important, to meet with Walther and his associates to discuss the questions of church and ministry. Because of circumstances in Bavaria, Loehe declined this invitation. Walther and Wyneken were deputized by the Synod to travel to Neuendettelsau to meet with Loehe.

The two men traveled to Germany, where Walther spent more than a month using the library at Erlangen to examine the writings of the old Lutheran dogmaticians on church and ministry in preparation for the book *Kirche und Amt*. In October and November 1851, Walther and Wyneken were guests in Loehe's parsonage for extended discussion of both the situation of Lutherans in America and the debated questions surrounding church and ministry. Upon their arrival at Neuendettelsau, Wal-

31. See Walter Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi: The Settlement of the Saxon Lutherans in Missouri 1839–1841* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1953), 411–534.

32. See Alfred H. Ewald, "From a German Jail: Who Has Authority in the Church?" in *Church Roots: Stories of Nine Immigrant Groups That Became The American Lutheran Church*, ed. Charles P. Lutz (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985), 41–59.

33. For an account of the early relationship of Grabau and the Saxons, see William Cwirla, "Grabau and the Saxon Pastors: The Doctrine of the Holy Ministry 1840–1845," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* (Summer 1995), 84–99. For a spirited defense of Grabau, see Lowell C. Green, "Grabau and Walther: Theocentric versus Anthropocentric Understanding of Church and Ministry," *Logia* (Eastertide 1996), 25–40.

ther noted how positively he and Wyneken were received:

> Mindful of the crucial nature of this visit, as to its success or failure, we stepped into the Neuendettelsau parsonage with anxious hearts. But the cordiality, candor, and uprightness with which Pastor Loehe greeted us banished all uneasiness from our hearts.[34]

No minutes or official reports were submitted from these conferences, but it appears that the meetings were successful, judging from the reports made by both Loehe and his visitors. Just prior to departing Germany, Walther wrote a letter of thanks to Loehe stating

> I can and must confess to you that the unhappy prejudices with which I entered your house have completely dissipated; that I am taking with me a heartfelt trust in your fidelity to our dear Lutheran Church, and the strongest conviction of the unity of the spirit in which we Lutherans in North America stand with you. . . . I have seen how precious the welfare of our Church, which is largely a plant of your faithful care, lies to your heart, therefore, I do not have to beg you to do all your conscience will permit, that our orphan church in America may ever be able to extol her closest unity with you before the whole world.[35]

Upon his return to the States, Walther praised Loehe in the May 25, 1852, issue of *Der Lutheraner:*

> We may assure our dear readers that a reconciliation in the truth and in love has by the grace of God been attained which is of far greater value than one which gets its guarantee from a subscription to certain strictly formulated theses, attained through insistent demands.[36]

Loehe likewise gave a positive evaluation to the meetings. He lauded the fraternal love and goodwill expressed by his Missouri visitors:

> Such a spirit requires no haste to become one in formulas and theses. Hand in hand they go to the school of the Holy Spirit, where they see over the doorway the inscription: "the longer, the more love; the longer, the greater unity and faithfulness."[37]

Loehe extolled the progress made:

> We do have a common fundamental concept of the Church; we are one in the acknowledgement of a divinely instituted pastoral office; the practice of our American brethren . . . is known to us and recognized by us as altogether good and proper; so that we joyfully desire to, and shall send our students to them and none other. We repeatedly found ourselves acknowledging to each other that we are fundamentally one.[38]

Loehe also included a reproof of Grabau's reckless handling of excommunication and rebuked his harsh words against the Missourians. Loehe added that he rendered this judgment against Grabau on his own accord and not at the prompting of his guests.

Neither Walther or Loehe thought that all disputed points had been resolved. Loehe listed four points he believed his American counterparts needed to address: (1) the relation of the invisible church to the visible, the necessity of a living expression and form of the invisible church to the visible; (2) the God-pleasing connection of the individual congregation with the whole church, the presentation of the doctrine of the body and its members in the pilgrim church; (3) the difference between Law and apostolic institution, and the full recognition of the latter for guidance of the visible church; and (4) the proper recognition of the progress and victory of the Lutheran Church in the Pietistic and related controversies of the previous centuries.[39]

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34. Erich Heintzen, "Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod, 1841–1853" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois–Urbana, 1964), 201.
35. Ibid., 204.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., 207.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid., 207–8.

In this same article, Loehe declared his intention with the Missouri Synod but reserved for himself certain independence for future activity in the States.

The positive sentiments expressed by Walther and Loehe would be short-lived. The appearance of Loehe's *Neue Aphorismen* in 1851 and Walther's *Kirche und Amt* the following year would painfully demonstrate that the earlier dispute had not been solved. The two key points that led to a fracture had to do with the nature of the church and the relationship between congregation and office.[40]

In the preface to his *Neue Aphorismen* of 1851, Loehe noted that his position on church and ministry had been sharpened and clarified since he first published his *Aphorismen*. Loehe now revisited and elucidated themes he had set forth in 1849.

Walther and Loehe both used the conceptuality of visibility and invisibility in their discussions of the church. Loehe used the analogy of body and soul:

> The soul is the life of the body; the invisible church is the soul of the visible, its corporeality. . . . Only in the visible church lies the possibility to perceive and feel community; and the communion of saints proves its presence to its members only through the visible churchly presence. Also the invisible Church finds its completeness here on earth only by virtue of the visible church.[41]

Walther, on the other hand, asserted that the church is essentially invisible. In Thesis V of his *Church and Ministry* he asserted:

> Though the true church in the proper sense of the term is essentially (according to its true nature) invisible, its existence can nevertheless be definitely recognized, namely, by the marks of the pure preaching of God's Word and the administration of the sacraments according to Christ's institution.[42]

For Loehe, the invisible church is made known only through the visible church. For Walther, the visible church concealed the invisible church which is known only by its "marks," the pure preaching of the Word and the right administration of the sacraments. Loehe worried that Walther made of the church a "Platonic Republic," to use the words of Melanchthon, while Walther accused Loehe of "Romanizing tendencies" for his insistence of a particular institutional form for the church.

Tied up with the debate over the visibility/invisibility of the church was the question of office. Again both Loehe and Walther confessed that the office of the ministry is not an arbitrary human arrangement but a divine office, distinct from the royal priesthood of believers. The controversy rather had to do with which comes first—church or ministry. Walther answered in Thesis VI that "the ministry of the Word is conferred by God through the congregation as the possessor of all ecclesiastical power, or the power of the keys, by means of its call, which God Himself has prescribed."[43] For Loehe this sounded per-

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40. For an analysis of the differences between Walther and Loehe on the doctrine of the ministry, see Thomas Winger, "The Relationship of Wilhelm Loehe to C. F. W. Walther and the Missouri Synod in the Debate concerning Church and Office," *Lutheran Theological Journal* (Fall/Winter 1994), 107–32.

41. Wilhelm Loehe, *Gesammelte Werke,* ed. Klaus Ganzert (Neuendettelsau: Freimund, 1954) V/1:527.

42. C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry,* trans. J. T. Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia, 1987), 20. For a helpful study of Walther's theological method in *Church and Ministry,* see Norman E. Nagel, "The Doctrine of the Office of the Holy Ministry in the Confessions and in Walther's *Kirche and Amt,*" *Concordia Journal* (October 1989), 423–46.

43. Walther, *Church and Ministry,* 22.

ilously close to Friederich Schleiermacher's description of all ecclesiastical power "derived ultimately" from the congregation.[44] Loehe instead argued that Christ himself is the first bearer of the apostolic office (Heb 3:1) and that he bestows the office to selected apostles who then proclaimed his Word which creates a congregation of hearers.[45]

Walther and Loehe viewed ordination differently. A concise presentation of Walther's view is given in Thesis VI of his *Church and Ministry:*

> The ordination of the called (persons) with laying on of hands is not a divine institution but merely an ecclesiastical rite (*Ordnung*) established by the apostles; it is no more than a solemn public confirmation of the call.[46]

Loehe maintained in his *Neue Aphorismen* that

> this setting apart and conferral of both office and the grace and authority needed for it is called ordination, and although they are never lacking, the essence of ordination does not consist in them; on the contrary, its essence is the conferral of office, authority, and grace of office. The gifts for the holy office can also be purified, lifted up, strengthened, and increased through ordination, but this is something accidental rather than something necessary, and what the Lord gives the called servant in ordination is something that has already been said.[47]

The visit of Grabau and Heinrich von Rohr to Germany in 1853 would accelerate the rift between Loehe and Walther. The Buffalo leaders sought to obtain *Gutachten* from various theologians in Germany that would support them in their struggle against the Missouri Synod. A conference in Leipzig in September 1853 criticized Missouri for accepting excommunicated members from the Buffalo Synod while noting that both synods had gone too far in opposite directions over ordination.[48] Another pastoral conference in Fürth also attended by Loehe attempted to mediate between the

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44. Friederich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith,* trans. J. S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1956), 667.

45. Loehe writes: "One could reject the first part of the question, by saying that the congregation is brought into existence by the Word regardless who proclaims it (i.e. from either an ordained or unordained person). However, if one considers the order which God followed and revealed, then it was like this: Christ is the great Apostle of His Father (Heb. 3:1). He is not only the cause and substance but also the first bearer of the office. In Him the Word and Office are united. From His Word and Work arose the first congregation; from this congregation in turn He chose His apostles and entrusted them with His Word both before and after His resurrection. To them, especially after His resurrection, He spoke the words of John 20:21 and Matthew 28:16 (The Great Commission). On the basis of this development, the twofold question may be answered as follows: Just as Adam was not taken from Eve, but Eve from Adam, so the Lord, the Apostle of His Father, is not of the congregation but from God (Luke 3:38), and the congregation from Him, thus from the office. Just as Adam's children came not from him as Eve did, but were born of and through Eve, so the following generation of office bearers come always from Him; though from and through the congregation. The congregation, therefore, in its first beginnings would be from the office, because it came from Christ; thereafter, the office would not come the congregation, but from Christ. But the office would take office-bearers from the midst of the congregation and through its service. Thereby that which belongs to Christ's order would be protected, without denying to the Word proclaimed outside the office its power and efficacy. The discussion is entirely of Christ's order." Translation from Heintzen, "Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod," 213.

46. Walther, *Church and Ministry,* 22.

47. Loehe, *Gesammelte Werke* V/1:545.

48. Schaaf, "Wilhelm Loehe's Relation to the American Church," 157.

The significance of Loehe's work was often overlooked in the first hundred years of the Missouri Synod's history.

two sides. Loehe had an amicable meeting with Grabau in which he expressed sympathy for much of his teaching on the ministry while urging moderation of expression. Grabau, like Loehe, was willing to concede that the exact nature of the issues of church and ministry were "open questions."[49]

Coupled with the disputed theological issues of church and office, a friction that had developed in Saginaw would lead to the break between Loehe and Walther. In addition to the four colonies Loehe had established in Michigan, he established a seminary in Saginaw in 1852. The Michigan seminary, unlike the Fort Wayne institution, was not handed over to the Missouri Synod. The director of the seminary, Georg Grossmann, elected not to affiliate with the Missouri Synod even though he was a member of Holy Cross congregation in Saginaw. Grossmann was involved in a dispute with another Loehe man, Ottomar Cloeter, the pastor at Holy Cross, on the doctrine of church and ministry.[50]

There also were tensions surrounding the last of the Loehe colonies established in Michigan, Frankenhilf, under the leadership of Pastor Johannes Deindoerfer who remained sympathetic to Loehe's position on church and ministry. Schaaf observes: The actual incidents in the Michigan colonies which led to the break with Missouri are shrouded in silence; the participants were loath to discuss the painful details and contented themselves with presenting generalities. Apparently no one single item led to the decision to leave Michigan; the final break was a result of hard feelings and dissatisfaction which had been building for years.[51]

The break came in the summer of 1853. Grossmann and Deindoerfer decided to relocate in Iowa. Loehe sent a letter to F. Sievers bordered in black, bidding farewell but also rebuking the Missourians for what Loehe identified as their "papistical territorialism."[52]

The remaining nineteen years of Loehe's life would be largely devoted to work in Germany. He continued to send men to Iowa but the Iowa Synod would develop, in large part, independent of Loehe.[53] There would be occasional contact between the Missourians and their former mentor. For example, Johann Streckfuss wrote Loehe saying that he did not wish to be counted among his ungrateful pupils.[54] Sievers and Ernst are among those who remained on amicable terms with Loehe. Friedrich Wyneken's son, H. C. Wyneken, took an extended trip to Germany in 1869–70. In his diary of June 23,

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49. Ibid., 159.

50. For the details of this dispute, see ibid., 168.

51. Ibid., 165.

52. Heintzen, "Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod," p. 233.

53. Todd Nichol observes that "The Iowa Synod, as its history makes clear, learned much at the knee of Wilhelm Loehe, but not his doctrine of the ministry." Todd Nichol, "Wilhelm Loehe, the Iowa Synod and the Ordained Ministry," *Lutheran Quarterly* (Spring 1990), 24.

54. Heintzen, "Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod," 237.

1869, he wrote of his visit with the aging Pastor Loehe:

> I will not forget how he greeted me with a warm handshake and a sweet-melancholy smile, after having read my name on Mr. Volck's card. And my heart ached when he said: 'Yes, there is friendship between me and your father, which seems to have been forgotten, though.' My silly heart's emotion only allowed me to say 'No, not at all.' I have retained my immense love and respect for this man from the very first moment I saw him."[55]

Loehe's eschatological speculations, his teaching on ordination, his opinions on certain liturgical practices such as confirmation, and his developmental approach to the Lutheran Confessions[56] drew fire from the Missourians in the remaining two decades of his life. When he died in 1872, his death was announced in the February 15 issue of *Der Lutheraner* with little comment: "From *Lutherische Zeitung* we learned the shocking news that Pastor Loehe of Neuendettelsau, 'after a brief illness' died at five forty-five o'clock on the evening of January second."[57]

The significance of Loehe's work was often overlooked in the first hundred years of the Missouri Synod's history. Walther Baepler's *A Century of Grace: A History of the Missouri Synod 1847–1947* gives a positive but scant treatment of Loehe's role in the formative stage of the Missouri Synod's life.[58] The few references to Loehe in Franz Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics* are all negative in identifying him as one given to "Romanizing tendencies,"[59] echoing commentary often made in *Lehre und Wehre* in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Only in the 1950s and 60s does a more appreciative picture of Loehe begin to emerge in the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. This may come in part from the influence of Sasse, who himself came to a Lutheran confessional position through his reading of Loehe's *Three Books about the Church* while doing graduate studies at Hartford Seminary in 1925–26. Many of Sasse's essays make positive use of Loehe.[60] In 1949 Sasse wrote an article titled "Walther and Loehe: On the Church"[61] in which he argues that Walther and Loehe shared much more in common than is often realized and that each failed to apply his own principles in relation to the other.

In 1964 Erich Heintzen authored a Ph.D. dissertation on "Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod 1841–1853." Heintzen concluded with Walther's tribute to Loehe in 1852:

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55. Heinrich Christian Wyneken, *A Journal of Travels in Germany 1869–1870*, trans. Erika Bullman Flores (privately printed, 1999), 57.

56. On this issue, see Charles Arand, *Testing the Boundaries: Windows to Lutheran Identity* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1995), 119–30. Walther states the classic position of the Missouri Synod in his 1858 convention essay, "Why Should the Confessions of Our Church Be Subscribed to Unconditionally Rather Than Conditionally by Those Who Wish to Become Ministers of the Church?" in *Essays for the Church*—Volume I (1857–1879), ed. August Suelflow (St. Louis: Concordia, 1992). In this essay, Walther observed that Loehe espoused a conditional form of subscription (23).

57. Heintzen, "Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod," Preface.

58. Walter Baepler, *A Century of Grace: Missouri Synod 1847–1947* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1947), 65–74.

59. Franz Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. III, trans. Walter W. F. Albrecht (St. Louis: Concordia, 1953), 447–49.

60. See Hermann Sasse, *The Lonely Way* (Vols. I–II), trans. Matthew C. Harrison (St. Louis: Concordia, 2002).

61. Hermann Sasse, "Walther and Loehe: On The Church," *Springfielder* (December 1971), 176–82. A fresh translation by Norman Nagel appeared in Sasse, *We Confess the Church* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1986), 69–83, under the title "Ministry and Congregation."

Next to God, it is only Pastor Loehe to whom our Synod is indebted for its happy beginning and rapid growth in which it rejoices; it may well honor him as its spiritual father. It would fill the pages of an entire book to recount even briefly what for many years this man, with tireless zeal and in the noblest unselfish spirit, has done for our Lutheran Church and our Synod in particular.[62]

Then, significantly, Heintzen writes,

These words, it is true, were written when the romance between Loehe and the Synod, though threatened, was still in bloom. After it faded, such acknowledgements became noticeably restrained, and Loehe gradually forgotten. The tribute, however, still remains what it was. Like any monument, though largely ignored, it stands for all to see if they will but look.[63]

A condensed and popular version of Heintzen's dissertation appeared in print in 1973 as *Love Leaves Home: Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod.* When Concordia Theological Seminary celebrated its 125th anniversary in 1971, an anniversary issue of its theological journal, *The Springfielder,* prominently featured the legacy of Loehe.[64] Other popular works such as Richard Stuckwisch's *Johannes Konrad Wilhelm Loehe: Portrait of a Confessional Lutheran Missiologist* published by Concordia Theological Seminary Printshop in 1993 and A. M. Bickel's *Our Forgotten Founding Father* served to accent Loehe's contributions to the Missouri Synod. The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod's Concordia Publishing House published David Ratke's *Confession and Mission, Word and Sacrament: The Ecclesial Theology of Wilhelm Loehe* in 2001.

While there seem to be some parallels in the thinking of Arthur Carl Piepkorn to Loehe, especially in relationship to ecclesiology and the Lord's Supper, Piepkorn appears never to have produced any published essays invoking Loehe. However, a number of Piepkorn's students would go on to write on Loehe. In 1954 John Tietjen would submit an STM thesis to Union Seminary on "The Ecclesiology of Wilhelm Loehe." Walter Bouman wrote his doctoral dissertation on "The Unity of the Church in Nineteenth Century Lutheranism" for Edmund Schlink at Heidelberg, devoting a significant portion of this project to Loehe. Most significantly, Kenneth F. Korby authored his dissertation on "Theology of Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Loehe with Special Attention to the Function of Liturgy and the Laity" at Concordia Seminary in Exile in 1976.

Korby, a professor for many years at Valparaiso University and then as adjunct professor for Concordia Theological Seminary, stimulated a renewed interest in Loehe. His instruction of future deaconesses at Valparaiso connected them with the diaconal tradition of Neuendettelsau. As adjunct professor at Fort Wayne and frequent conference lecturer in the 1980s and 90s, Korby challenged stereotypical renderings of Loehe and presented Loehe as a model for pastoral theology and mission in contrast to the therapeutic approaches of pastoral counseling and "church growth" paradigms for mission that were becoming increasingly popular in The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. Among other things, Korby urged a recovery of the practice of private confession and absolution as the heart of pastoral care.[65]

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62. Heintzen, "Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod," 249.

63. Ibid.

64. This issue contains the above-mentioned article by Sasse as well as contributions by Max Loehe and F. W. Kantzenbach.

65. See Kenneth F. Korby, *Theology of Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Loehe with Special Attention to the Function of Liturgy and the Laity* (Ft. Wayne: Concordia Theological

In the early years, Loehe was a source of abiding influence on the liturgical life of the LCMS. His *Agenda* of 1844, dedicated to Wyneken, would serve to shape liturgical practice in the frontier congregations until the adoption of the *Saxon Agenda* of 1856. The practice of every Sunday communion preceded by private confession in Frankenmuth and the surrounding area would continue for several decades. What Lochner learned from Loehe in the way of liturgics he transmitted to his students at Springfield and published in his book, *Der Hauptgottesdienst der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche* in 1895. This book shows signs of Loehe's historical and confessional appreciation of the liturgy. It remained in print until 1935 and was used as a text in liturgics at both LCMS seminaries into the twentieth century.

Loehe's imprint will also be seen in the Missouri Synod's new hymnal, *Lutheran Service Book,* and its accompanying Agenda to be released in the autumn of 2006. Not only is Loehe's "heavenly birthday" (January 2) included on the calendar of commemorations, but the hymn that he wrote less than a year before his death, "Wide Open Stands the Gates Adorned with Pearl," will find its place in an American Lutheran hymnal for the first time. The suggestions for daily prayer from Loehe's *Seed Grains* will also be included, as it is hoped that the new worship book will be a prayer book for the Christian home as well as a book for corporate worship. Loehe's influence is especially apparent in the Agenda as the introduction lays out an approach to pastoral care that is centered in confession/absolution and framed by the liturgy. Loehe's liturgical formula for anointing the sick, which provoked both Bavarian and Missourian reaction in the nineteenth century, has found its way into the new LCMS Agenda.

Loehe's imprint will be seen in the Missouri Synod's new hymnal, *Lutheran Service Book,* and its accompanying Agenda to be released in the autumn of 2006.

While the appreciation of Loehe's legacy is far from universal in either the ELCA or the LCMS, I am grateful to be on the faculty of a seminary that has its origins and its present existence in the liturgical and missional vision of this pastor from Neuendettelsau. I trust that the International Loehe Society will also serve to strengthen a discerning appreciation of its "father from afar" in The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod.

Seminary Printshop, n.d.), 236–72, and Kenneth F. Korby, "Loehe's *Seelsorge* for his Fellow Lutherans in America," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* (November 1972), 227–46. For Loehe's influence in the young Missouri Synod in regard to the practice of private confession and absolution, see Fred Precht, *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1993), 347–51.

Loehe and his Coworkers in the Iowa Synod

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If the heartbeat of Loehe's theology is like that of the human heart, the diastolic moment is worship and the systolic moment is mission. In worship the people of God encounter Jesus Christ in Word and Sacrament, confessing their faith, and are taken up into the *missio Dei* as they are propelled into the world as agents of the gospel's mission. The life of Loehe testifies how from his earliest engagement in public ministry to the very end of his life his pulse beat with a passion both for liturgical renewal and for spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. Already during his time of university study and in his first parishes, Loehe became notorious for organizing missionary circles and missionary societies.

Between the years 1826 (when during his studies he became captivated by the pietistic theology of Professor Johann Christian Krafft) and 1837 (when he arrived as pastor of the village church at Neuendettelsau), Loehe's missionary theology acquired new accents, i.e., that mission requires praxis, mission necessitates the church, mission entails confessional loyalty, and mission involves pastoral care.[1]

All of his early involvements made Loehe ripe to respond when in 1840 he read an appeal by Pastor Friedrich Wyneken for help with the mission in North America. Almost immediately Loehe responded to this plea for financial support and volunteers in mission for the German immigrants in North America by writing an article, "Die lutherische Auswanderer in Nordamerika: Eine Ansprache an die Leser des Sonntagsblattes [The Lutheran Emigrants in North America: An Appeal to the Readers of the Sonntagsblatt]."[2] Along with his partners, Loehe was faced with the task of organizing a strategy for disbursing the funds and preparing the volunteers who soon were made available for this missionary work in North America.

After an initial period of offering support for the work of the Ohio Synod and its seminary in Columbus, Ohio, Loehe turned to the Missouri Synod as a mission partner more in line with his own confessional commitments. The missionaries sent by Loehe were instrumental in the formation of the Missouri Synod in 1847 and through his initiative and financial support a semi-

1. See Christian Weber, *Missionstheologie bei Wilhelm Loehe: Aufbruch zur Kirche der Zukunft* (Guetersloh: Guetersloher Verlagshaus, 1996), 44–161.

2. Wilhelm Loehe, "Die lutherische Auswanderer in Nordamerika: Eine Ansprache an die Leser des Sonntagsblattes," in Wilhelm Loehe, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Klaus Ganzert. 7 vols. (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 1951–1986), 4:16–19. Cf. also Loehe's sermon comments in *Gesammelte Werke* 6.2:640–41.

nary was founded at Fort Wayne, Indiana. In 1849 Loehe founded the *Gesellschaft fuer innere Mission im Sinne der Lutherischen Kirche* to sustain this work among the German immigrants.

Of particular interest for the history of Wartburg Seminary, Loehe also helped to organize colonies in the vicinity of Saginaw, Michigan, sending colonists from Germany to populate them and religious leaders for their spiritual care. Loehe envisioned not only that these colonies would provide ministry to the German immigrants but also that they would develop missionary work among the Chippewa people who lived in the surrounding area. Among the religious leaders, Johannes Deindoerfer was sent as pastor to the colony at Frankenhilf in 1851 and Georg Grossmann as director of a teachers' seminary at Saginaw in 1852.

As conflict emerged over the nature of ordained ministry between the Missouri Synod and the founder of the Buffalo Synod, Johannes Grabau, those who defended the mediating position of Loehe, chiefly Deindoerfer and Grossmann, found themselves accused of doctrinal error by the leaders of the Missouri Synod. This conflict eventually prompted those loyal to Loehe to leave behind the work begun in Michigan and seek out a territory not yet under development by the Missouri Synod. That destination was Iowa.

This brief sketch of Loehe's early outreach to North America leaves unmentioned the other missionary impulses of his work in Neuendettelsau and other parts of the world. In the same year that Loehe's emissaries moved on from Michigan to a new mission field in Iowa, he founded the *Lutherischer Vereinfuer weibliche Diakonie* in 1853. The organizing of an association of Lutheran deaconesses with their charitable work for the weakest members of society required an increasing amount of Loehe's attention in the subsequent years. Nevertheless, Loehe continued to support the work of mission in North America, especially through the efforts of the Iowa Synod, until the end of his life in 1872.

It is totally consistent with the pulse of Loehe's theology that two of the most impressive recent studies of his work have emphasized the missionary character of his thought. Christian Weber's comprehensive study is titled *Missionstheologie bei Wilhelm Loehe: Aufbruch zur Kirche der Zukunft*, and David Ratke's insightful study bears the title *Confession and Mission, Word and Sacrament: The Ecclesial Theology of Wilhelm Loehe*.[3] Speaking at Wartburg Seminary in October 2001 at the event celebrating the founding of the Center for Global Theologies, Weber quoted Loehe in describing the church's call to mission:

> It is very urgent for the church to start moving. The church must get away from self-centered thinking and protecting its ownership. It needs to find a global and missionary perspective. . . . In Loehe's words: "For mission is nothing but the one church of God in its movement, the actualization of the one universal, catholic church."
>
> This is the vision of Loehe. He drew a picture with words. The church is like a huge pilgrimage ascending a mountain. The first pilgrims have already reached the top. But the top is covered with clouds and cannot be seen from afar. At the end of the pilgrimage, people of all nations and colors join in. The pilgrims are a unity because they share the way.[4]

This momentum for mission found new expressions in the ministry of the Iowa Synod.

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3. David C. Ratke, *Confession and Mission, Word and Sacrament: The Ecclesial Theology of Wilhelm Loehe* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2001).

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

Missionary Synod with a mission

The last coin that belonged to the estimated 22 persons who came to Iowa under the leadership of Grossmann and Deindoerfer was spent fording the Mississippi River. As they struggled to overcome a desperate financial situation, immediately the impulse toward missionary work took root in Iowa soil. While Deindoerfer and the lay leader G. Amman went to Clayton County, near Strawberry Point, to break ground for a settlement, Grossmann immediately went into action in Dubuque with the task of reestablishing the teachers' seminary. The missionary vision was to establish schools in cities and towns with significant populations of German immigrants. This would naturally lead to a second missionary goal: the formation of Lutheran congregations in those localities.

This course of events rapidly unfolded, and almost immediately the teachers' seminary became also a theological seminary. Wartburg Seminary, which formally received its name in 1857, traces its origin to the expansion of the teachers' seminary to incorporate theological studies for the preparation of pastors in 1854. This was the same year that Sigmund Fritschel arrived to assist Director Grossmann in the instruction at the seminary.

The Iowa Synod was itself founded at St. Sebald in Clayton County on August 24, 1854, with four charter members: Deindoerfer, Grossmann, Fritschel, and a theological candidate, M. Schueller. The first missionary endeavor of the synod was in the area of "inner" mission, through the organization of preaching points that would be developed into congregations. While at its founding the synod consisted of only two congregations, at St. Sebald and Dubuque, one year later there were sixteen locations where the gospel was being preached. Friendly relations soon commenced with the Buffalo Synod, and the Iowa Synod began to provide pastors for vacant Buffalo congregations. In 1857 the Iowa Synod thereby extended its work to Michigan and Ohio. Fritschel himself went for two years to Detroit to serve as pastor, taking along the senior seminary class to complete their education there.

Pastors who had finished at the seminary went out to form and serve congregations at places as distant as Des Moines, Jonesboro (Illinois), and Pocahontas (Missouri). Meanwhile mission fields were extended to the areas surrounding both St. Sebald and Dubuque. By 1858 there were 17 pastors, 19 congregations, and 12 preaching points. In 1864 these numbers had increased to 41 pastors, 50 congregations in 7 states, and many more preaching points. Loehe continued to encourage and send candidates for ordained ministry for preparation at Wartburg Seminary throughout this and subsequent periods.

While the greatest gains of the Iowa Synod's early missionary efforts were among the steady stream of immigrants from Germany, the vision for "outer mission" in the form of outreach to Native American people continued to inspire its founders. Already in 1856 efforts were underway to organize missionary work among Indians in Canada through the leadership of Pastor John Jakob Schmidt. While these initiatives met insurmountable obstacles, Schmidt learned of an alternate possibility from a government agent named Redfield among the Crow tribe in Montana. Redfield led Schmidt to Montana in the spring of 1858, accompanied by Moritz Braeuninger from Wartburg Seminary. The two missionaries came to live for several months among the Crow, building relationships and learning the language. When they departed in November of the same

year to return to Iowa to report on their findings, the Crow pleaded with them to stay.

The encouraging report given that winter generated contributions from supporters not only from the Iowa and Buffalo synods but especially from mission societies in Germany. In July 1859 Schmidt, Braeuninger, two other missionaries, and two colonists set out for Montana. The goal was to establish a colony as the base of operations for the missionary work. After suffering a difficult winter throughout which there was no contact with the Crow, Schmidt returned with one of the other missionaries to Iowa for additional provisions, while Braeuninger and the others erected a mission station on the banks of the Powder River. Here tragedy struck. Thinking they had built their log house in Crow territory, they instead were located in the border area between hostile tribes. According to the most likely reconstruction of events, Braeuninger was killed by representatives of another tribe that resisted the settlement of whites in the region. His death was a deep blow to the missionary efforts among the Native Americans.

Additional missionary work nevertheless did follow among the Cheyenne at a mission station constructed at Deer Creek, Wyoming. Between 1861 and 1863 various missionary ventures were explored, including preaching services for Native Americans near the Deer Creek station. Three orphaned Cheyenne boys were entrusted to the missionaries in 1863 and baptized shortly thereafter. Whatever encouragement this might have generated was soon dissipated during a new wave of Indian insurrections. By January 1865 the entire missionary team had withdrawn. One further attempt to resume the Native American mission work was attempted in 1866, but this was short-lived. In 1885 the Iowa Synod transferred all remaining funds from Native American missions to the Neuendettelsau Mission Society for its work in Papua New Guinea. In this indirect way the Iowa Synod and Wartburg Seminary have participated since the late nineteenth century in the missionary work in Papua New Guinea.

Many reasons can be cited for the failure of the Iowa Synod's mission to the Native American people. Gerhard Schmutterer and Charles Lutz name the following:

> . . . the involved chain of command from Bavaria via Iowa to the frontier; the haphazard planning, lack of funds, and inexperience of the synod's mission board; the faulty logistics and exhausting travel routes to the frontier; the intertribal conflicts among the Indians; the dishonesty of many whites with whom the Indians dealt; the routine violation of treaties by whites in general; the untimely outbreak of the Civil War and the concomitant withdrawals of military forces in the West; and finally the inexperience, isolation, and naiveté of the German-speaking missionaries operating in a twice-foreign environment.[5]

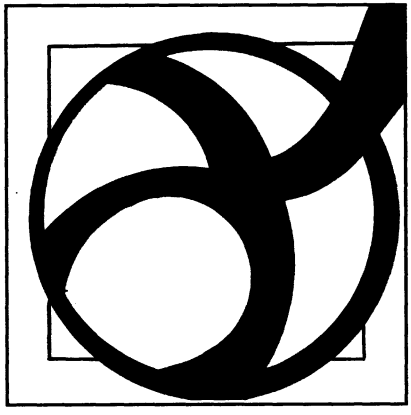
Perhaps the most promising moment in this entire enterprise occurred in the summer of 1858 when the two missionaries, Schmidt and Braeuninger, asked the Crow chieftain if they could travel along with the tribe and live as they lived.[6] The next six weeks were spent traveling among the Crow in the Powder River valley, learning the language, becoming familiar with Crow culture, and engaging in theological

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5. Gerhard M. Schmutterer and Charles P. Lutz, "Mission Martyr on the Western Frontier: Can Cross-cultural Mission Be Achieved?" in *Church Roots: Stories of Nine Immigrant Groups That Became The American Lutheran Church*, ed. Charles P. Lutz (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985), 140.

6. See ibid., 132f.

conversation with Indian leaders. As a result of this period of "accompaniment," the Crow were reluctant to let them depart, and, as Schmidt reported, "A thousand times they asked us if we would really return when the winter had passed. . . ."[7] How



might the history of Native American missionary endeavor by the Iowa Synod been different had the missionaries chosen to persist in this approach rather than returning the next year to build the ill-fated mission station?

In the latter portion of the nineteenth century, the Iowa Synod continued its trajectory of steady growth in the number of pastors and congregations among its ranks. In 1896 the synod roster listed 334 pastors, 40 parochial school teachers, 534 congregations, and 149 preaching points. After its merger with the Texas Synod in 1896, the number of pastors swelled to 400 and congregations to 600, with a confirmed membership of nearly 65,000. Although its doctrine came under repeated challenge from representatives of the Lutheran Church –Missouri Synod involving issues as divergent as chiliasm, the anti-Christ, and predestination, the synod never wavered from its central purpose of extending the ministry of the gospel to the large number of German immigrants continuing to flow into the Midwest.

Wartburg Seminary was instrumental in serving the needs of the synod for pastors and teachers during this period. Twice the seminary was compelled to move because it outgrew its facilities, in 1874 to Mendota, Illinois, and in 1889 back to Dubuque. Whatever the seminary's location, it continued to initiate mission in the surrounding area and to graduate candidates prepared for ordained service in the Iowa Synod's congregations. During their years of service as the faculty of Wartburg Seminary, brothers Sigmund Fritschel (1854–1900) and Gottfried Fritschel (1857–1889), prepared hundreds of students for pastoral ministry, nearly all the pastors who belonged to the Iowa Synod. Their influence as teachers of the church was extended through their publications, including two books and the editing of the *Kirchen-Blatt* from 1858 to 1871 (by Gottfried) and many articles in various periodicals, especially the *Kirchliche Zeitschrift*. Besides their endeavors as educators, both brothers served the mission of the church as synod leaders, preachers, and "ecumenical" representatives to the General Council in the pursuit of confessional faithfulness and unity among Lutherans.

Throughout the next period of Wartburg's history, the strong relationship with the mission of the Iowa Synod continued under a new generation of faculty, including Max Fritschel (son of Sigmund), George Fritschel (son of Gottfried), and especially through the influence of Professor J. Michael Reu. Max Fritschel served on the faculty a total of 48 years and George Fritschel for 30 years. The preparation of

7. Ibid., 133.

pastors for service in the synod remained central to Wartburg's mission under their leadership. It was during their tenure that the construction of the present Wartburg Seminary building was undertaken, with the setting of the cornerstone in 1914.

Another significant venture during this period was the organization of a synod committee for foreign missions in 1917. This became a vehicle for supporting the work of the Neuendettelsau Mission in New Guinea (at a time during World War I when German missionary work was being curtailed), as well as other missions in East Africa. By 1930 the Iowa Synod had sent 23 persons to Papua New Guinea as missionaries, seven of these ordained ministers prepared at Wartburg Seminary. In addition five other ordained pastors had spent at least a portion of their studies at Wartburg prior to their setting out as missionaries to Papua New Guinea. This significant missionary connection has continued through subsequent years up to the present day through Wartburg's theological preparation of students from Papua New Guinea.

The teaching ministry of J. Michael Reu deserves its own chapter in this account of missionary theology and Wartburg Seminary. Reu was a teacher, scholar, and prolific writer who between 1899 and 1943 shaped not only the ministry of the students who sat in his classroom but countless others through his vast array of publications. Reu was deeply committed to preservation of the Lutheran tradition, as can be seen through his choice of topics for publication: the life of Luther, Luther's German Bible, Luther's Small Catechism, and the Augsburg Confession. He edited the journal *Kirchliche Zeitschrift* for nearly 40 years and was its primary author, including 3,631 book reviews. His commitment to the publication of this journal and his role in founding the Luther Academy in 1936 underscore his concern for the continuing education of those serving as pastors. This is the very same Luther Academy that has evolved today into the Luther Academy of the Rockies.

Perhaps the greatest missionary contribution of Reu was his role as a Christian educator, not only for pastors but especially for the congregational members who employed the curricular materials he prepared on the Bible and catechism. Reu was dedicated to the biblical and catechetical literacy of the members of Lutheran congregations. To this end he stressed the retelling of the biblical story through a method of questions and answers that probed the meaning of those stories for the Christian life. In this way Reu not only fostered the mission of the church through his seminary lectures on dogmatics, homiletics, catechetics, ethics, and virtually every other discipline in the curriculum but also by his considerable influence over Christian education in the parishes of the Iowa Synod and beyond.

At the time of the merger with the Ohio and Buffalo Synods in 1930 at the formation of the "old" American Lutheran Church, the Iowa Synod had grown to consist of 9 districts including 915 congregations, 638 pastors, and approximately 212,000 baptized members. Wartburg Seminary had been a key partner in this development that began with two congregations at Dubuque and St. Sebald in 1854. While in retrospect it is possible to criticize the limited focus on mission to German-speaking immigrants during this period, impulses toward foreign missions and outreach to Native Americans have been noted. When the history of the Iowa Synod was written in 1929 just prior to the merger forming the old ALC, it was particularly fitting that the author, Professor G. J. Zeilinger of Wartburg Seminary,

Wartburg Seminary claims the Loehe tradition by remaining centered in the worship of the Triune God who continues to be alive in the world in mission.

selected this title for the book: *A Missionary Synod with a Mission.*[8]

The early missionary impulses of Loehe and his coworkers (*Mitarbeiter*) in the Iowa Synod persist in the commitments of Wartburg Theological Seminary to this day. The motto by which Wartburg has become known is this: "The place where learning leads to mission and mission informs learning." Through the formation of candidates for ministry in the church today through its degree programs, renewed cooperation with its historic partners at Wartburg College, global accompaniment with many international churches, and the work of the three centers (Theology and Land, Youth Ministries, and Global Theologies), Wartburg Seminary claims the Loehe tradition by remaining centered in the worship of the Triune God who continues to be alive in the world in mission.

May this initiative of the founding of an International Loehe Society contribute in ways we cannot yet imagine to a new chapter in the missionary theology that began in Neuendettelsau more than 150 years ago!

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8. G. J. Zeilinger, *A Missionary Synod With a Mission: A Memoir for the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Iowa and Other States* (Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, 1929). The membership statistics given in the preceding section are chiefly taken from this book.

The Church in Motion: Wilhelm Loehe, Mission, and the Church Today

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In recent years there has been much scholarship into those historical figures who have largely disappeared and been forgotten but who are now being retrieved so that their wisdom might be shared with the church. Wilhelm Loehe is one of those figures. Although there has been a resurgence of interest in Loehe, he still remains an obscure, shadowy figure in Lutheran history.

I want to explore some themes in his theology of mission. Although it is not my main purpose, I hope to lay to rest some misconceptions about Loehe's theology. Nearly everybody who has heard of him and has a passing familiarity with him assumes that his theology is largely either that of the nineteenth century Erlangen School (Neo-Lutheranism) or a repristinated version of Lutheran Orthodoxy.[1] Both of these interpretations are true only in so far as they mislead. At important points in his theology Loehe departs from Lutheran Orthodoxy and from the Erlangen school. Furthermore, both of these movements are about doctrine, and, as Christian Weber rightly points out, "the church had not only a teaching obligation, but also a 'gathering' obligation."[2] His theology is creative and innovative. Finally, I intend to consider possibilities for retrieving Loehe's theology of mission for the beginning of the third millennium.

Loehe always had a strong evangelical sense of mission. As a student at the university he organized a mission society and distributed religious tracts.[3] On the day of his ordination he prayed that he would receive a sign, a word, from the mouth of

1. Consider for instance, Eric W. Gritsch, *A History of Lutheranism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 180, who writes that "a model parish for Neo-Lutheranism was organized by Pastor Wilhelm Loehe in 1837 in Neuendettelsau, a small Bavarian town." This statement is misleading in at least one respect: there are important differences between Loehe and Neo-Lutheranism as represented by the Erlangen school. Gerhard Müller demonstrates that the relationship is not so clean-cut in "Die Erlanger Theologische Fakultät und Wilhelm Löhe im Jahr 1849," in *Dem Wort Gehorsam: Landesbischof D. Hermann Dietzfelbinger DD. Zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Wilhelm Andersen et al. (Munich: Claudius Verlag, 1973), 593–601.

2. Christian Weber, *Missionstheologie bei Wilhelm Löhe: Aufbruch zur Kirche der Zukunft* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1996), 262.

3. James L. Schaaf, Introduction to Wilhelm Loehe, *Three Books about the Church*, trans. James L. Schaaf (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 5, n. 13.

God. He opened his Bible and three times was confronted with the commissioning text in Isa 6:8–10 which speaks of going out to the people with a message that they will not hear. Loehe responded, "Here I am, Lord, send me."[4] This pietistic sense of service in the work of mission and proclamation was a predominant motif in Loehe's own discipleship and in what he asked of others.

In 1840, he read an appeal for help in North America. The Lutheran church in North America was in desperate need of pastors and others willing to serve the German emigrants there. Almost immediately Loehe wrote an article, which generated a missionary enthusiasm that he had not foreseen. Loehe was flooded with donations. This was the beginning of Loehe's missionary activity in the U.S. At first Loehe and his colleague Johann Wucherer did not know what to do with the money that they received for the "German mission in North America." The problem was soon solved by the appearance of a volunteer, Adam Ernst. Loehe decided to train Ernst in the basics of theology and provide him with a general education so that Ernst could serve as a school teacher. Soon after, Ernst was joined in his instruction by another volunteer, Georg Burger. These two men were instructed and in 1842 commissioned for missionary service in North America.

In the final decade of his life, Loehe turned his attention to a quiet reformation and renewal of the church by establishing diaconal orders or associations. Already in 1849 he was instrumental in the founding of a missionary society, the Society for Inner and Outer Mission in the Sense of the Lutheran Church, and, four years later, the founding of a female diaconate, the Lutheran Association for Women's Diaconal Service, which consecrated its motherhouse a year later in 1854 in Neuendettelsau. These two societies aimed to quietly (and sometimes not so quietly) reform and renew the Lutheran church in Bavaria.[5]

The women's diaconate had a twofold aim. Its more specific aim was for the awakening and formation of a sense of service to those who were suffering among the Lutheran population in Bavaria, particularly among women. Its second and broader—and one might say more subversive—aim was the continuing formation of the "apostolic-episcopal church." Its life was organized around service and worship, specifically Lutheran worship.

Despite his earnest efforts to develop "apostolic" communities (notably the communities in Michigan), Loehe did not succeed. He died in 1872 a disappointed man whose goals, he felt, for the Bavarian church had not been adequately realized.

Themes in Loehe's theology of mission and ministry

There are many themes or motifs that could be discussed. However I want to focus on a few that I think are particularly significant for his understanding of ministry and

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4. Johannes Deinzer, *Wilhelm Loehes Leben: Aus seinem schriftlichen Nachlass zusammengestellt* (Nuremberg: Gottfried Loehe, 1874), 1:109.

5. Anne Stempel-de Fallois argues persuasively that the impulses for Loehe's interest in diaconal ministry stem from his early association with the Awakening movement (above all through Christian Krafft) and Pietism. Regarding the impact of the Awakening movement and its theology, see Anne Stempel-de Fallois, "Die Anfänge von Wilhelm Löhes missionarisch-diakonischem Wirken im Bannkreis von Erweckungsbewegung und Konfessionalisierung (1826–1837)," *Pietismus und Neuzeit* 23 (1997), 40–45; regarding the impact of Pietism through his reading Spener's *Pia desideria* see Stempel-de Fallois, 47–48.

mission: (1) community and fellowship, (2) catholicity and unity, (3) apostolicity, (4) confession, (5) Word and sacrament, and (6) context.

1. Community and fellowship

Loehe wrote:

> A landscape painted with the most bewitching brush of a master artist leaves us unsatisfied, no matter how beautiful it is, if there is no human form in it. There is a strange melancholy and anxiety which seizes a person when they see that they are forsaken by their fellow human beings, even if only in a painting. Naturally a person feels this anxious melancholy even more when he views an actual spot in nature which is devoid of humans. Yes, the more beautiful the spot in which we find no one like ourselves, the more bitter is our loneliness. Such a spot is more like a wilderness than a paradise. For those who are lonely all the treasures of the world are no substitute for companionship. Narrower than a prison is the wide earth to those who are abandoned and lonely. From the very beginning humans were so created that they cannot be happy alone.
>
> I shall say more. As long as a person is alone they cannot even be blessed.[6]

It was this understanding of the utter human need for companionship, community, and fellowship that impelled Loehe in his ministry in Neuendettelsau and his support of mission endeavors in North America. The church *ministers* to people because of their fundamental need for community and fellowship. The church *reaches out* to people because of the fundamental need for community and fellowship. The church *witnesses to and proclaims the gospel* because of the fundamental human need for community and fellowship.

All of this speaks to those to whom the church ministers and evangelizes mostly outside the church. But in a very important sense Loehe's deep conviction that humans need community and fellowship shaped his understanding of the church in its self-organization, self-understanding, and self-identity. The church must be a place where community and fellowship are central. Community and fellowship shaped his understanding of the nature of the church. Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12 were important to Loehe for how they suggested a church ought to understand itself. Each member has gifts—prophesying, evangelism, pastoring, teaching, equipping, etc.—that form a community, that are necessary for building bonds of fellowship. As Weber says, "every congregation needs multiple ministries."[7] Moreover, these individual gifts are not hoarded; they are shared. The value of each member is lifted up and celebrated not just because they are given to us from God but also because they are necessary for the community. Thus a community built around and upon fellowship reaches out to others who are lonely and abandoned so that they too might experience the community and fellowship that surpasses all understanding.

Loehe developed—or, perhaps better stated, retrieved—two offices of ministry in order to better utilize the fullness of the community's gifts. The first of these "offices" was that of the deaconesses whose field of mission was primarily that of inner mission. During his ministry at Neuendettelsau he became acutely conscious of a number of things. First, he was persuaded

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6. Wilhelm Loehe, *Drei Bücher von der Kirche,* in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Klaus Ganzert (Neuendettelsau: Freimund, 1951–1986), 1:88; trans. adapted from James Schaaf.

7. Christian Weber, "The Future of Loehe's Legacy," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 31 (2004): 100. Weber here says that the church is a "living community with a biblical structure." I would suggest that Loehe might say that the church has an apostolic structure. "Apostolic" and "biblical" (or New Testament) mean practically the same thing for Loehe.

that women had a ministry that extended beyond the household. Second, while certainly some women had a vocation or ministry to be wives and mothers, not all did. Some women, Loehe was convinced, had ministries in the world that did not include marriage. This was contrary to societal expectations and norms of the period. At that time, women did not have the option of not marrying and living an independent life and having an independent career; women's identities (and vocations) were linked to the men in their lives. Their identities were first linked to their fathers and brothers, then to their husbands and sons when they married. If their husband died, their identity was linked to their sons or other family members. The idea that women could have an identity separate from that of the men in their lives was foreign. Loehe suggested that they could have a ministry, and thereby an identity, apart from men. Thus the office of deaconess was born. Third, Loehe was aware of the need for a special type of ministry in his society. The social conditions were appalling in the midst of the industrial revolution in Germany. People were moving from rural areas to urban areas only to discover famine, disease, and unemployment there. In this setting there was an immense need for missionaries to serve in hospitals, soup kitchens, orphanages and other social ministries. Deaconesses, as he saw it, were well suited for this.

A second type of missionary or minister is that of the "helper in need" (*Nothelfer*). This ministry, unlike that of the deaconess, does not have a parallel to the apostolic structure described in the New Testament. This ministry developed out of the context in which Loehe lived. I already have given a brief account of Adam Ernst's and Georg Burger's response to Loehe's plea for help. At first Ernst and Burger were trained with the idea that they would respond to the need for teachers in America who could also provide lay ministry leadership there. That is, they would teach by day, and in the evenings and on weekends they would lead worship and hold Bible studies. When they arrived in America, however, they were soon ordained, as they already were adequately prepared for the needs of new immigrants in America. There are two senses in which these helpers in need were a response to the context: (1) they had gifts that were not being used for the good of the whole community, and (2) the community had needs that were not being met.

Another element of community and fellowship that ought not to be overlooked was that of social justice. Without going into the whole story of the Michigan colonies and for that matter the ministry to Iowa, it is enough to say that Loehe was moved by the plight of impoverished farmers in Bavaria to make arrangements for them to emigrate to America and farm land there. The establishing of the deaconess society and the deaconess houses throughout Bavaria has to do with not just the unused gifts of women but also the social needs of Bavarians.[8] One must feed the bellies as well as the souls. One can hardly feast at the table of the Lord when the belly of the person next to you is rumbling with hunger. Hungry, thirsty, and impoverished people are a sign of the brokenness of the community to which Christians are called.

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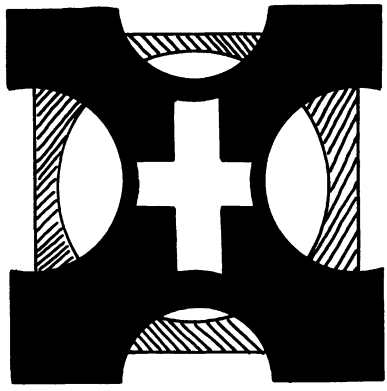
8. In at least two places in his writings Loehe mentions that the mission of the deaconesses is to minister to and serve those who are suffering in Bavaria. See "Statuten: Lutherischer Verein für weibliche Diakonie," *Correspondenzblatt* 5 (1854): 15; *Etwas aus der Geschichte des Diakonissenhauses Neuendettelsau*, *GW* IV:262; "Die bisherigen Satzungen der Diakonissenanstalt Neuendettelsau," *GW* IV:342; and "An die ausgesegneten Diakonissen," *GW* IV:443.

This brokenness is a call for Christians to participate in the evangelization of the world.

2. Catholicity

Loehe's understanding of catholicity goes hand in hand with the centrality of community and fellowship in his theology. People of very diverse backgrounds share one thing in common: the need for community and fellowship. When people of diverse backgrounds recognize this, they can gather together as a community. It is this sense of loneliness or abandonment that binds them together. Not only this, Christians, who are already in this community gathered together in order to proclaim the gospel of the One who overcomes abandonment and actively, seek to connect with other communities all over the world who are gathered to celebrate unity and fellowship. A church in Minnesota is in community with churches in North Carolina, Neuendettelsau, Germany, Tanzania, Brazil, and throughout the world.[9] Just as an individual is not isolated, neither is a church isolated. The point is that the church should look less like a factory-made blanket and more like a patchwork quilt: different colors, patterns, and textures.

The community that is the church is not limited to those who live in the same neighborhood and belong to the same congregation. Community does not refer to people of the same nation or the same ethnic or cultural background. Community, for Loehe, extends to all of humankind. Like the Samaritan in Luke's account, we are to love all humans regardless of gender, race, culture, or language. In fact, Loehe went further than Luke and pointed to the example of Christ. Christ loved our bodies and our souls. He redeemed our bodies and our souls. He loves them still and sanctifies them. In like manner, Christians care and love for the bodies and souls of others.[10] Christians do good works and care for one another as Christ did as a sign of and participation in the mission and ministry of Christ.



Clearly there is an eschatological dimension to the catholicity of the church. The Eastern Orthodox like to say that catholicity is not just a matter of geography but of history as well. By that they mean that the church is in union with the church of the apostles that convened at the ecumenical councils of the first millennium. Loehe seemed to be aware of this. His well-known statement, alluded to in the title of this essay, that "mission is nothing but the one church of God in motion," is closely related to an eschatological view that takes seriously the notion that the fullness of the kingdom of God is realized in the present,

9. Wilhelm Loehe, "Warum bekenne ich mich zur lutherischen Kirche?" *GW* IV:221–26, esp. 225. The relationship of catholicity to community is apparent also in *Three Books about the Church.*

10. Loehe, *Vorschlag zu einem Lutherischen Verien für apostolisches Leben samt Entwurf eines Katechismus des apostolischen Lebens*, *GW* V/1:245.

albeit incompletely. The Word, he said, gathers all people into "the universal—the truly catholic—church which flows through all time and into which all people pour."[11]

I suggest that the catholicity of the church also refers to the church in its fullness that will be revealed at the end of time when Christ returns in glory. This church is Pentecostal. It will include people of all races and tongues (see Acts 2 but also Rev 21:24, 26). This church will be a community where there will be no more suffering, a place where God "will wipe every tear from [people's] eyes. . . . Mourning and crying and pain will be no more" (Rev 21: 3–4). This church will be a place where the thirsty will be welcomed and nourished (Rev 22:17). Of course, already there is a proleptic experience of this community. This catholicity is broken but yet whole.

3. Apostolicity

In a time and place marked by the upheaval of the Industrial Revolution, Loehe sought constancy, stability, and permanence. People in rural areas often moved to cities only to be trapped in unemployment or underemployment. Germany was painfully moving toward unification both politically and ecclesially. Often people look toward the past or the "good old days." Loehe and his contemporaries were not any different; they yearned for a better and simpler time. So he looked back—way back. The instinct of many of his churchly contemporaries was to look toward Luther and the Reformation. Poets and writers and artists often pined for the age of chivalry. Loehe looked back even further. He looked to the apostles. He was especially attracted to the vision and experience of the church as described in the Acts of the Apostles, passages like Acts 2:44–47 (NRSV):

> All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Or Acts 4:32–34 (NRSV):

> Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold.

How could anybody not be moved by the vision of the church in these two passages? The people freely shared all that they owned. They spent time together. They celebrated together. And the Lord blessed them with more. Many of us in mainline Protestant circles have a tendency to look down at numbers. We hear "Saddleback Church is growing at the rate of 8 percent every year." And we scoff, "Yes, but are they growing in faith?" Nonetheless, that people want to join you and spend time with you and dedicate themselves to doing what you are doing is an affirmation that what you are doing is important and valuable to somebody. The church in those early years, Luke tells us, grew. Apparently there were people who valued what the apostles were doing and what they had to say. But it is not just that they spent time together and shared their possessions and that they grew in numbers and in friendship. After all, any fraternity on any college campus aspires to this same kind of

11. Loehe, *Three Books about the Church*, 59.

community—and sometimes even attains it! But there were no needy people among them, and the Lord blessed them and bestowed grace upon them.

Who would not be bewitched by this vision? Certainly not Loehe, who encountered everything but community, care, and compassion. There were needy and poor people. The Lord's Supper was celebrated perhaps quarterly, not daily. Most people were not glad. And there seemed to be a dearth of powerful preaching. He yearned for the good old days of the apostles.

Loehe was attracted to "the communitarian elements in the apostolic understanding of the church."[12] He was impressed by how the New Testament church cared for the poor. Poverty and a loss of community (sound familiar?) were things he understood and saw around him everywhere.

4. Confession

One could hardly talk about Loehe, his ministry, and his theology without mentioning the role of confessional theology. By confessional theology I mean theology that is located within a particular community and its faith. Most of you probably already know about Loehe's relationship with confessional Lutheranism, especially in its neo-Lutheran expression in the nineteenth century. His understanding of church and the church as a community is closely connected to his confessionalism. The church is a community with a common faith and therefore a common confession. To be confessional is to have something concrete to say. To be a confessional Lutheran or a confessional Christian is to have a particular message to proclaim. This message is obviously the saving gospel revealed, embodied, and proclaimed in Jesus of Nazareth who died on a cross on Golgotha and was raised into life three days later.

5. Worship—Word and Sacrament

Craig Nessan says that "the heartbeat of Wilhelm Loehe's theology is like that of the human heart. The diastolic moment is worship, and the systolic moment is mission."[13] Nessan is right. Worship and mission are clearly at the center of Loehe's theology. Community and fellowship are clearly seen in his writings on both of these. One cannot read more than a few pages of his writings on worship without noticing the centrality of community and fellowship in his theology of worship. In his *Agende* he touches on this theme of community over and over again. He says that each component of the liturgy expresses either the need for community (as is the case, for example, in the order for confession and forgiveness) or the experience of community in Christ (as, for example, in the sacrament of the table).[14] Worship is also the hour of the week in which the church is

Worship and mission are clearly at the center of Loehe's theology.

12. David C. Ratke, *Confession and Mission, Word and Sacrament: The Ecclesial Theology of Wilhelm Löhe* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2001), 67.

13. Craig L. Nessan, "Missionary Theology and Wartburg Theological Seminary," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 31 (2004): 85.

14. Wilhelm Loehe, *Agende für christliche Gemeinden des lutherischen Bekenntnisses*, *GW* VII/1:90; see also Ratke, *Confession and Mission*, 112–13.

nourished and replenished for the task of mission.

The concern for justice among all peoples is seen in worship. For example, Loehe writes about the litany that it includes prayers for the peace of the world.[15] The Lord's Supper is perhaps the clearest, most emphatic, call to care for those in need.

> The obligation remains for us to care for our poor brothers, and if we do not hold an agape feast like the ancient Christians, we are not released from mercy. Undoubtedly we go in an unworthy manner to God's table if we do not care for our brothers at the altar, if they do not have, in addition to the heavenly riches of the Sacrament, their allotted share of earthly food also.[16]

Loehe's understanding of the Lord's Supper and the community was that it placed demands upon us.

6. Context

Loehe was aware of his context. Indeed, I think it is nearly impossible to make sense of Loehe's motivations without understanding something of his context. His confessionalism and nationalism within Germany had to do with his membership in a minority church in Bavaria. His commitment to mission in America was motivated by his awareness of the plight of Germans who had emigrated to America. His commitment to inner mission within Germany was motivated by his awareness of the plight of people in Germany. He noticed those who had no job, no money, and no possibility of getting married (because of their impoverishment). He noticed that men and women often were forced to live together unmarried and unchaste, thus falling into sin. Understandably they had children who faced the same bleak prospects and were therefore driven to stealing and other sins.[17] Loehe established the mission colonies in Michigan because he was very aware of the world around him. The colonies provided an opportunity for Bavarians without prospects to make a life for themselves. The Michigan colonies were a way to respond to the perceived mission needs of the Native Americans living in the area. The colonies did not fulfill Loehe's expectations, but that is not my point here. My point is that they were a creative solution to a problem that Loehe noticed as a consequence of his attention to his own context.

As Weber notes, Loehe was well read. He subscribed to and read newspapers from all over Germany. "He tried to understand the complex developments in society."[18] While some theologians and church leaders of his generation either uncritically accepted social developments or immediately rejected them, Loehe tried to think through and understand the developments. It is because of his attempts to understand the world around him that Loehe was involved in both foreign mission and inner mission and developed such creative ministries.

Implications

What follows are some short theses on mission and ministry.

1. *The church and those who minister and evangelize—all of us who are baptized—must actively seek partnerships with churches around the globe.* This thesis arises out of at least two points in Loehe's theology. The first has to do with the

15. Loehe, *Agende*, *GW* VII/1:168–69.

16. Loehe, *Prüfungstafel und Gebete für Beicht- und Abendmahlstage: Beicht- und Kommunionbüchlein für evangelische Christen (Zum Gebrauch sowohl im als außerhalb des Gotteshauses)*, *GW* VII/2:287.

17. Loehe, *Etwas über die deutsch-lutherischen Neiderlassungen in der Grafschaft Saginaw, Staat Michigan*, *GW* IV:176.

18. Weber, "The Future of Loehe's Legacy," 101.

confessional and apostolic characteristics. Loehe adhered to the confession of the apostles. Central to the content of the apostolic Christian faith is the doctrine of the Trinity.

In recent years many theologians—Wolfhart Pannenberg, Jürgen Moltmann, Robert Jenson, Ted Peters, and Catherine M. LaCugna, to name a few—have noted the relational dimension of the doctrine of the Trinity. Following Rahner's rule—the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity—these theologians have noted that the Trinity is a way of talking about God's relationality, a way of saying that God is fundamentally and intrinsically relational in character. God desires relationships with people, indeed with all of creation. To be a confessional and apostolic Christian is be in relationship with God and with the body of Christ and indeed all those with whom God is in relationship.

The second characteristic of Loehe's theology has to do with the centrality of community in his theology. The church—and churches—can no longer think of itself as being constituted of people who look and act and think like one another. The church is the African-Americans who attend the Pentecostal church a block from my house as well as those who attend the white Lutheran church across the street from my campus. It is the suburban German church I worshiped at when I lived in Germany as well as the rickety buildings and storefronts where Christians across the nation and around the world worship.

Loehe was convinced that Christians are to go "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Nobody should be excluded from the blessings of the gospel. He spoke of humanity as "one family of God."[19] Elsewhere he speaks of proclaiming the gospel "to all creatures."[20] This partnership with others unlike ourselves is a way of identifying with them. This identification with all humans, all creatures, necessarily leads to my next thesis.

2. *The church and those who minister and evangelize—all of us who are baptized—are called to reach out to others in their loneliness and abandonment even while we too are lonely and abandoned.* Our loneliness and abandonment take many forms: estrangement from spouse or children or parents; lack of meaningful employment; lack of fulfilling friendships; lack of food and sufficient nourishment for the day; threats to body and spirit, to name but a few.

One of Loehe's motivations for mission had to do with his sense of justice for those in need. He developed mission colonies in Michigan for Germans who were too poor to buy land or otherwise get meaningful employment. The idea was that land in America would be bought and sold to German emigrants who would repay the mission society, which would then use the proceeds to buy more land for more German emigrants.[21] One problem confronting Loehe was that some young people were consigned to a life of poverty and either unemployment or underemployment. This was unacceptable as well as unjust. The scriptures were unequivocal in commanding us to care for our neighbor.

A second problem for Loehe had to do with the situation of the Native Americans

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19. Loehe, "Die Mission unter den Heiden," *GW* IV:41; see also *GW* IV:39, where he says that Blacks are children of the Spirit just as Whites are.

20. Loehe, "Predigt am 2. Pfingstfeiertag 1843," *GW* IV:64.

21. For more on this and the mission to the Indians discussed in the following paragraph, see Ratke, *Confession and Mission, Word and Sacrament*, 148–49.

The community of faith needs to provide worship that both satisfies and creates thirst.

in North America. They had been driven out from the land of their birth, and all manner of horrific atrocities had been committed against them. Even though German Lutherans had not necessarily been directly responsible for these sins, they shared in the guilt of the mistreatment. As such, they should correct and pay for those sins. Sin, in Loehe's view, was social and communal. This sense of a human predicament that is shared and communal corresponds, of course, to his sense that salvation, at least as it is in an anticipatory way experienced in the Lord's Supper, is shared and communal. All humans are broken, alienated from others, and lonely. All Christians are called to reach out to others who are likewise broken by sin. In this reaching out and in the proclaiming of a healing gospel, humans experience the wholeness of God's reign. This experience of the wholeness of God's reign—what God wills for us—is found in worship.

3. *The church and those who minister and evangelize—all of us who are baptized—need to be more intentional and thoughtful about worship.* Individual believers need deeper devotional or worship lives in order to resist the demons of our society: unemployment and underemployment (lack of meaningful, fulfilling, satisfying work), racism, sexism, domestic violence and neglect, consumerism and materialism, and uncritical nationalism and patriotism, to name but a few. The community of faith needs to provide worship that both satisfies and creates thirst. Too many people leave worship having merely "put in time." Too rarely have they said to each other at Sunday brunch, "Were our hearts not burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" (Lk 24:32)

Loehe was adamant that people ought to experience community in worship. They ought to experience oneness and wholeness with both God and with one another:

> . . . the worshipping people . . . know themselves as the Bride of the Lord, their hearts' longings are satisfied in him and through him; but not only through him, also through fellowship with one another; they are the people of God—a unit in their inner life and experience. In the fullness of divine grace they bear in mind the needs of one another, as well as those of the whole world.[22]

Of course, this satisfaction or quenching is temporary and momentary in many respects. We experience the fullness of community, and by the time we leave the sanctuary the experience is but a memory. We can only look forward to the next worship service when once again we will experience fleetingly this community. Only in the heavenly realm with the cloud of witnesses will we experience community fully and lastingly.

Worship ought to inspire us in another sense, however. Worship ought to educate. It ought to teach us something not only

22. Loehe, *Liturgy for Christian Congregations of the Lutheran Faith*, ed. J. Deinzer, trans. F. C. Longaker (Fort Wayne: Repristination Press, [1902] 1995), xiv–xv (= *Agende für christliche Gemeinden des lutherischen Bekenntnisses*, *GW* VII/1:14–15).

about the community to come but also of the things of Christ, faith, and the church. The knowledge of the community of Christ and of the saints as well as of the teachings of the Christian faith enables individual believers to resist the demons in their lives.

4. *The church and those who minister and evangelize—all of us who are baptized—need to return to our roots and our heritage.* I mean not in the sense of repristinating a "golden age" of the church but in the sense of returning to the values of the early church: care and concern for the powerless (widows, orphans, the poor); regular and frequent worship that is joyous and generous; regular and frequent worship that is characterized by passionate and powerful preaching; reaching out actively and intentionally to those on the other side of our doors and our walls (all are in need, all need to be welcomed); intentionally and intensively building community and connections where all too often isolation and separation prevail.

Loehe consistently returned to the sources and traditions of the Christian faith for guidance. There were times that he attempted to repristinate and replicate the experience of a "golden age" in the church. However, at his best, he returned to the sources and traditions of the church so that they could serve as a guide and companion in the difficult task of ministry and mission in a tumultuous and uncertain era. When he wrestled with the nature and order of the church's ministry, he embarked on two detailed studies of the New Testament: *Aphorisms about the New Testament Offices of Ministry* (1848–49) and *Church and Ministry: New Aphorisms* (1851).[23] It is reported that by the time he published his *Agenda* he had researched approximately 200 worship books and services. He focused his energy on the first Lutheran liturgies developed during and immediately following the Reformation as well as older Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox liturgies.[24] All of this is to say that the past is not a burden but a gift. The past, the traditions and theology of the church, is a gift that can enrich and enhance our mission and our ministry if we mine its depths.

5. *The church and those who minister and evangelize—all of us who are baptized—need to reclaim the biblical tradition of hospitality.* Loehe's ministry, while he probably did not think of it this way, was one of hospitality. He reached out to others and ministered to them. He was their servant. He cared for them and learned from them. When Ernst and Burger appeared at his doorstep, he welcomed them in and cared for them as his own family. It is reported that he visited Roman Catholic churches and befriended neighboring priests. He established deaconess houses to care and provide for disadvantaged women. He established houses and schools to care and provide for mentally and physically handicapped people. In short, he was hospitable.

It is not easy to be hospitable. Loehe was no exemplary saint in this respect. He expected German Lutherans to retain the German language in the New World and to teach the German language to the Native Americans in Michigan. In a time when the world was changing rapidly, Loehe sometimes sought to hang on to what was familiar, to circle the wagons, so to speak, whether it was behind rigid doctrine or the German language. It is no easier in our day and age.

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23. Loehe, "Aphorismen über die neutestamentlichen Ämter," *GW* V/1:253–330; and "Kirche und Amt," *GW* V/1:523–88.

24. Deinzer, *Wilhelm Löhes Leben*, 2:132, 138–39.

As Herbert Anderson notes, "hospitality is likely to be increasingly important *and* difficult as societies become more pluralistic."[25] Difficult as it may be, however, there is no escaping this obligation, in my view. The biblical witness is extensive: Abraham's reception of the three guests (Genesis 18); Lot's reception of the same guests (Genesis 19); the commands to the Israelites to welcome the stranger because "you too were once aliens in a strange land" (e.g. Exod 22:21–27; Deut 10:17–20); the meals Jesus shares with outcasts; the welcome that the prodigal son receives from his father (Luke 15); the judgment of the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25). Racial and political and economic and social homogeneity is an indictment on the inhospitality of our churches. There are very few churches where the stranger who is other is welcomed among us.

Moreover, too often our churches are closed to the stranger in our midst. By this I mean that rarely do we take pains to open our "private world to the stranger."[26] Admittedly this is difficult. One need only read Chris Rice's compelling account of life in the interracial Antioch Community, *Grace Matters*, to see how difficult.[27] Paul's letters and the Acts of the Apostles show the difficulty of this kind of hospitality. Yet I see no way of escaping this obligation.

These theses for mission and ministry are some ways in which Loehe's theology might be fruitfully appropriated and serve as resources for the challenges before us. May God bless our efforts and our endeavors as abundantly as Loehe's were blessed and rewarded!

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25. Herbert Anderson and Susan B. Johnson, *Regarding Children: A New Respect for Childhood and Families* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 74. See also John D. Lottes, "Toward a Christian Theology of Hospitality to Other Religions on Campus," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 32 (2005): 26–27.

26. Patrick Keifert, *Welcoming the Stranger: A Public Theology of Worship and Evangelism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 9.

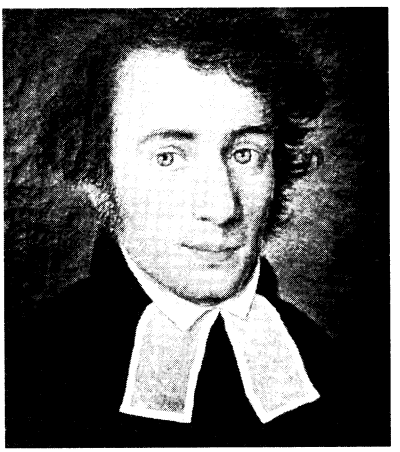
27. Chris Rice, *Grace Matters: A True Story of Race, Friendship, Faith in the Heart of the South* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002).

Wilhelm Loehe, Disciple

Larry Trachte
Wartburg College Pastor

Sermon at the closing worship
International Loehe Society
July 13, 2005

The Director of the Neuendettelsau Mission, Hermann Vorländer, loves to tell the story of an African traveler making his first trip to Germany. Upon arriving in Frankfurt he is awed by the sights and sounds of this ultramodern banking and commercial center. He is heard to remark, "If Frankfurt, a city I have never even heard of, is so great, how big must Neuendettelsau be!"



Indeed. How big must Neuendettelsau be? While it may not be Frankfurt am Main, Neuendettelsau is big far beyond its physical size and single Autobahn Ausfahrt (exit). For Wartburg College alumni and student tours that visit there, Neuendettelsau is invariably a highlight of the entire trip, far surpassing sites and cities much more famous and outwardly grand.

While the symbol of Wartburg College is the castle in Eisenach, and our athletic teams are the "Knights," the heart and soul of our college and its mission is to be found in the spirit of this little Franconian village. The place where Loehe first said "I would not even want my dog to be buried here" has become great beyond his wildest dreams. Today the name Neuendettelsau is synonymous with diaconal ministry throughout Germany and around the world. In Lutheran circles this name is known from Papua New Guinea to Africa to the United States.

In Matthew 13 we read, "A sower went out to sow." As Jesus tells the story, a bountiful yield of a hundredfold was the most that could be expected. Yet the harvest that grew from the sowing of Wilhelm Loehe from that modest village of Neuendettelsau far exceeds even that miraculous yield. Clearly God has richly blessed the church and the world through the call to that lowly Franconian sower and his passionate response, which is why a study of Loehe and his legacy ought to be encouraging and empowering for us all.

"Consider your own call, brothers and sisters." For most of us that's an invitation that is not immediately affirming. Like the Apostle Paul, "not many of us are wise by human standards; not many of us are powerful in the eyes of the world; not many of us are of noble birth."

And what's true for us as individuals is also true for us as institutions. Ron Matthias, Wartburg College historian, when researching our sesquicentennial history, remarked, "It's a miracle that we still exist at all! There are so many times and so many places where Wartburg College could have just 'gone under.'" It is humbling for us today to realize that six of the seven former college sites consist merely of a plaque—or a cornfield! But God chose Israel, a wandering people in search of a homeland; God chose Moses, who couldn't speak clearly; God chose David, a conniving adulterer; God chose a manger in Bethlehem, a band of ignorant, smelly fishermen, with a tax collector thrown in for good measure; God chose a bloody cross on a hill outside the city as the ultimate "Means of Grace." God chose a troubled Augustinian monk who could find no peace, teaching at a struggling university, to reform and renew the church. God chose an outspoken pietist named Loehe, with a zeal for mission so suspect to church authorities that he could not get a first call (and who never did get a second), to spread God's love to the world. And in our own baptism into Christ we dare to believe that God has also chosen us—not wise, not powerful, not noble by human standards, but chosen nevertheless!

This is not an easy time to be chosen, especially not an easy time to be a chosen Lutheran. Nondenominational megachurches are booming, building shopping centers, coffee shops, gymnasiums, and swimming pools, while many humble Lutheran churches struggle to remain alive. Theologically, this is a time when being confessional is often equated with being narrow-minded or, worse yet, judgmental. On college campuses students are far too eager to exchange a theology of the cross and the awe and mystery of the gospel for a theology of absolutism and triumphalism.

At a recent Northeastern Iowa Synod convention I had a breakfast conversation with a lay couple, who were lamenting the imminent demise of the Lutheran Church. They shared that they had recently attended one of the "fastest growing Lutheran churches in Iowa" with a worship band and a dynamic "jeans and flannel shirt pastor." The entryway and parking lots were overflowing. It was exciting! "But did you hear

the gospel proclaimed?" I queried. The reply was hesitant: "Well, not exactly. It was more a lesson on how to be happy and successful in life."

Those of us who are blessed in the tradition of Wilhelm Loehe have a mission and a message that is larger than "the wisdom of this world." Mark 10:35–45 is a reminder that our baptism is not a baptism into earthly greatness and success but rather a call to suffering service and compassion. The root meaning of the Latin "compassion" is often lost to us. In the German, *Mitleid*, "suffering with," is direct and clear.

To "suffer with" is not a popular calling that quickly fills parking lots and entryways, yet to this age of instant success and "either/or" absolutism (what I have often called the idolatry of certainty) the rich heritage of Loehe brings a "both/and" word of grace. Loehe embraced a theology that was personal, yet communal; intellectual, yet practical; confessional, yet outward seeking.

This is not to suggest that we can or should merely seek to imitate Loehe. Two years ago a number of us invited our sons-in-law to join us on our annual fishing trip to Canada. After several days of fishing all of the old haunts and holes with limited success, and after listening to many fish stories from bygone trips, a less-than-impressed son-in-law lamented, "You're fishing memories!"

It is not enough to merely go back to the same old places, using the same old methods, whether our task is fishing or Christian mission. It is not enough to resign ourselves that the way it used to be is the way it ought to be today.

Loehe, like Paul, challenges us to witness to the One "who is the source of our life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—righteousness and sanctification and redemption." This is the

Loehe embraced a theology that was personal, yet communal; intellectual, yet practical; confessional, yet outward seeking.

One who pours out upon us grace upon grace in the Word, in the Water, in the bread and cup, in the community of faith.

Here we meet the one who calls us again and again to consider our own call. Faithful to the tradition of the one who ministered in that little Franconian village, we take up our particular cross in our own particular time and place, and we faithfully follow him.

Amen. May it indeed be so!

Embracing Global Christianity: A Missiological Challenge

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Challenge of the time

What reform is the Christian community mostly in need of today? In this essay I focus on the need for Christians to reclaim and live out their global belonging for the sake of affirming and sharing the richness of God's creative presence among humanity and the whole of creation.

Like everyone else, Christians are not just imitative beings. Our distinct trait as humans is that we are reflective beings. Reflective insight will help the community reexamine the historical determinants of social reality and move beyond routine and habitual acts to conceive a new sense of being global Christians.[1]

The new millennium started with a significant gathering of religious leaders of the world. This event did not get much publicity in Christian circles. For the first time the United Nations summoned a religious and spiritual leaders meeting in New York City just before the millennium Assembly of the heads of states and governments from September 6–8, 2000. The so-called Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders took place August 28–31, 2000. More than 1,000 religious and spiritual leaders from around the globe were present for this gathering. It was a recognition by the world political leadership that people belonging to historic faith traditions have a significant role to play in global peace and justice. Religious bodies are, to use Peter Berger's term, "mediating institutions" between peoples and communities who make a difference in the affairs of the world.

At the end of the Summit the participants unanimously adopted a "Commitment of Global Peace," affirming their role in peace and justice in the world in cooperation with the United Nations stating: "[W]e declare our commitment and determination: To collaborate with the United Nations and all men and women of goodwill locally, regionally, and globally in the pursuit of peace in all its dimensions."[2]

In some sense the outcome of the Summit actualized what United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan has envisaged about the religious and spiritual dimension of the work in the United Nations.

> The United Nations is a tapestry, not only of suits and saris but of clerics' collars, nuns' habits and lamas' robes; of miters, skullcaps, and yarmulkes. . . . There is a basic affinity between the teachings of the great religions of

1. Ann L. Cunliffe and Jong S. Jun, "Reflective as Intellectual and Social Practice." Paper prepared for the annual meeting of the Public Administration Theory Network, May 29–31, 2002, Cleveland, Ohio (*www.pat-net.org/Ann.html*).

2. Found at *www.millenniumpeace summit.com/mwps_about.html.*

the world and the values of the Charter of the United Nations.[3]

The Summit also was an acknowledgment of the global resurgence of religions in the post–Cold War environment and the role they are playing in shaping the lives of people and communities locally and globally. In *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler state that the resurgence of religions especially outside the West is compelling scholars to give serious consideration to religions in the international relations theories and recognize their social and political influence:

> Religion is rarely included in most major theories of international relations and when it is addressed, it is usually through viewing it as a subcategory of some topic that is considered more important such as institutions, terrorism, society or civilizations. In the few cases where it is addressed directly, "religion tends to be characterized as fundamentalist, extreme, radical or militant" rather than as a normal element of political process.[4]

The changed world situation makes the inclusion of religion as a variable in future research on international politics unavoidable.

The prevalence of globalization calls Christians, especially in countries like the U.S.A., to focus on the world church, engage in Christianity as a global fellowship, and promote it locally. Parochialism is a strong tendency among almost all Protestant denominations and groups. Ethnic, linguistic, and cultural territoriality is a common constraint among historic Christian communities. There is always a great temptation for a Christian community to get too focused on the local and regional affairs and thereby miss its larger belonging and commitment.

A new way of being a global Christian community is possible today through the growing strength of Christianity in the non-Western world, the migration of a section of these Christians to the Western hemisphere, and the easy interconnectedness made possible through the modern phenomenon of globalization.

Emergence of Christian vitality in the south

In 1974 Walbert Buhlmann (for some time a Swiss missionary of the Capuchin Order in then Tanganyika, now Tanzania) published *Coming of the Third Church: An Analysis of the Present and Future of the Church*. He coined the term "Third Church" on the analogy of Third World to refer to Christian communities in Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America. In the introduction to the book he noted:

> There is far too much talk about crisis in the Church, far too little about the opportunities we are offered. In the course of history, if it were not so, the Church would not have survived. The outstanding opportunity of the present time is the coming of a Church which I would like to call the "Third Church", that is to say, the Church of the south as distinct from the Churches of east and west. This coming is an epoch-making event within the one Church of Christ.[5]

According to Buhlmann, the demographic shift in the Catholic Church had contributed to this coming of the Third Church. He observed that by 1970 the Roman Catholic Church reached a critical point: "by then 51 percent of all Catholics were living in the southern continents: Latin

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3. From *www.millenniumpeacesummit.com/item4.html*.

4. Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 9.

5. Walbert Buhlmann, *The Coming of the Third Church: An Analysis of the Present and Future of the Church* (Slough, England: St. Paul Publications, 1976), ix.

America, Africa, Asia-Oceania. Until 1980 the proportion went on rising to 57.76 percent. By the year 2000 a good 70 percent of all Catholics will be living in the southern hemisphere."[6] Because of this demographic tilt to the South, Buhlmann concluded, "the Catholic church no longer simply *has* a third world church, it *is* now a third world church—with Western and European origin."[7]

In 2002 David Jenkins published a book somewhat similar to that of Buhlmann, which also covered the Protestant and independent church bodies. Titled *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, the book pointed to the fact that over the past century Christian populations as a whole in the global North (Europe and North America) have either held steady or declined, while in Africa, Asia, and Latin America—the "global South"—the numbers have risen significantly and in some cases dramatically.[8] For example, in 1900 the continent of Africa had about 10 million Christians out of the total population of 107 million, or about 9 percent. In 2000 the African Christian population had risen to 360 million out of 784 million, about 46% of the population. Today there are more Christians living in the global South than in the North (Europe, North America, Russia, and Japan). By 2025 the Christian population in Africa and Latin America is expected to account for 50 percent, and an additional 17 percent will be in Asia.[9] So, even the Protestant family has become a third-world church.

It is not only the numerical strength but also the passion with which Christianity is lived out in the global South that is making an impact on world Christianity. Jenkins notes that the faith expression of Christians from the South predominantly resembles that of pre-Vatican II, as far as Roman Catholics are concerned, and neo-orthodox to conservative as far as the mainline Protestant denominations are concerned, with the strong influence of rapidly growing Pentecostal, charismatic, and independent churches.[10] Within a century (since its founding in 1906) the Pentecostal movement has the following of 400 million people, mostly in the global South, and it is predicted that by 2050 that number will reach one billion.

On moral and theological issues there is already a divide between the liberal attitudes of Christians in the North and the predominantly traditional or conservative attitudes in the South. The historical process the two regions have gone through and the existing societal situation in these parts of the world has contributed enormously to that divide. Jenkins sketches the scenario as follows:

> These newer churches preach deep personal faith and communal orthodoxy, mysticism and Puritanism, all founded on clear scriptural authority. They preach messages that to a Westerner appear simplistically charismatic, visionary, and apocalyptic. In this thought-world, prophecy is an everyday reality, while faith healing, exorcism, and dream visions are all basic components of religious sensibility. For better or worse, the dominant churches of the future could have much in common with those of medieval or early modern European times.

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6. Walbert Buhlmann, *The Church of the Future: A Model for the Year 2001* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1986), 4–5.

7. Walbert Buhlmann, *With Eyes to See: Church and World in the Third Millennium.* Trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1990), 8.

8. Phillip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: the Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 8.

9. Phillip Jenkins, "A Christian Revolution Is Rising in the Third World," *Arizona Daily Star* (January 5, 2003), B10.

10. Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, 8.

On present evidence, a Southernized Christian future should be distinctly conservative."[11]

The key issue in the South is the prevailing worldview that subscribes to a belief in direct divine intervention in the daily lives of people. The divine power that is mediated through Christianity can provide healing of mind, body, and soul, and these three entities of a person cannot be separated. Besides, the age-old local beliefs about visions, prophecy, and healing also have contributed to Southern Christianity's distinctive supernaturalism. Such worldviews prevailed against the expectation that modernity, through Western education and technological know-how, would defuse and decimate them. On the contrary, in many communities the opposite was the case. Peter Berger comments:

> The world today is massively religious, is *anything but* the secularized world that had been predicted (whether joyfully or despondently) by so many analysts of modernity. There are, however, two exceptions to this proposition, one somewhat unclear, the other very clear. . . . In Western Europe, if nowhere else, the old secularized theory would seem to hold. . . . The other exception to the desecularized thesis is less ambiguous. There exists an international subculture composed of people with Western-type higher education especially in the humanities and social sciences that is indeed secularized. This subculture is the principal "carrier" of progressive, Enlightened beliefs and values.[12]

Even though Jenkins concludes that these distinct developments in the South and North seem to be very divisive, there does exist, as Berger observes, a certain level of solidarity between the conservative leadership in the South and the North as well as a certain level of comradeship between the liberals of the North and the South.

The issue here, Fox and Sandler point out, is that

> Social scientists in general and political scientists in particular envisioned that modernity would marginalize primordial loyalties. By creating the powerful territorial state, modern man would throw off his need to turn to God to supply his basic material and spiritual needs. . . . Surprisingly primordial loyalties survived the onslaught of the modern state.[13]

The primal traditions and religiosities managed to survive in spite of the Westernizing ethos promulgated by colonization, sometimes resurfacing as indigenous Christianity.

The emergence of Christianity in the global South, especially in Africa and Asia, is in fact closely associated with the resurgence of the so-called Third World countries in the middle of the last century. In the words of Thomas Scott,

> The global resurgence of religion also manifests the search for authenticity and development in the Third World. The global resurgence of religion in developing countries can be seen as part of the "revolt against the West."[14]

The resurgence of world religions and the indigenous expressions of Christianity in these newly independent countries were closely associated with the struggles for political independence from the colonial regime and its imposition of Western culture. Hinduism in India; Islam in a wide range of countries in Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa; Buddhism in countries

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11. Ibid.

12. *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, ed. Peter L. Berger (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1999), 9–10.

13. Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 3.

14. Thomas Scott, "The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Changing Character of International Politics," in *God and Globalization*, Vol. 3, ed. Max L. Stackhouse with Diane B. Obenchain (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 2002), 114.

such as Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and others in the South East and North East Asia were able to provide the needed spiritual stamina and political courage to fight colonial rule. Indigenous Christian movements include the Kimbanguist church, which came into being in 1921 in what was then the Belgian Congo, now the Democratic Republic of Congo; the Musama Disco Christo Church (MDCC), which started around 1922 in Gold Coast, the present Ghana; several other African Independent Churches (AICs);[15] the Hindu Church of the Lord Jesus, founded in 1858; the Calcutta Christo Samaj, founded in 1887; the National Church of Madras, founded around 1887 in India;[16] Mukyokai, "We-Need-No-Church-Principle" (No-Church), a movement attributed to Kanzo Uchimura (1861–1930) of Japan;[17] and the China Christian Council with its compatriot "Three Self Movement."

It is an irony of history that the political freedom of a large section of humanity in the twentieth century was gained from the Western "Christian" countries through the ethical, spiritual, and communitarian strength of the prevailing world religions and that an indigenous expression of Christianity emerged out of or was inspired by Western missionary Christianity. The attempt by the colonial rulers and missionaries to subdue such efforts eventually did not succeed.

The end of colonial rule in many of the newly independent countries resulted in the loss of the protection of the colonial powers and in some cases even loss of support from European and North American missionary societies. Local Christians had to survive on their own. Christian leaders of the global South had to step in and continue the ministry in a lingering situation of poverty, disease, hunger, persecution, and exile with steadily dwindling mission support from overseas.

The leadership crisis was acute. With the departing of overseas missionaries, the institutional and management center eroded rapidly, and the indigenous leadership on the margins was forced to move to the center to protect the ecclesiastical and mission structure from collapsing and the fellowship from disintegrating. Whether the inherited infrastructure needed to be maintained as it was or reformulated to suit the local need and resources was debated relentlessly. Theological and leadership training was severely disrupted due to the lack of trained personnel and the dearth of literature and finance. In many circumstances the crisis was further escalated by economic hardships resulting from the process of reconstruction of the newly independent nation states. Furthermore, the demands made by the emerging political forces and the challenges of localized religions and faith traditions were mild to severe depending on the local standing of Christianity and its mission history.

These new realities forced the Christian communities in the South to develop their own ways of organizing and sustaining local faith communities. New ways of

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15. John Pobee and Gabriel Ostitelu II, *African Initiatives in Christianity* (Geneva: WCC, 1998), 23; Veli-matti Karkkainen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical, and Global Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2002), 194–98.

16. Kaj Baago, *Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity* (Bangalore: CISRS/CLS, 1969), 11.

17. John F. Howes, "Japanese Christianity and the State: From Jesuit confrontation /competition to Uchimura's Noninstitutional Movement/Protestantism," in *Indigenous Responses to Western Christianity*, ed. Steven Kaplan (New York University Press, 1995), 83–94; Karkkainen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 166–74.

engaging with the Bible and local cultures/traditions were necessary. Rereading the Bible contextually and indigenizing Christian faith and practices to suit the local need were revived. As R. S. Sugirtharajah has shown, "The major phase in the development of hermeneutics in the colonies began with the anti-colonial and national rehabilitation movements of the nineteenth century."[18] There were no other easy options to bring the Christian message of hope and to motivate people in facing boldly the socio-economic hardships with courage. In that task they found the worldview of the New Testament to be much closer to their reality than what was taught by the missionary Christianity from the North. Therefore, to a large extent, the so-called conservative nature of Christianity in the South was shaped by social circumstances and the failure of the inherited Western Christianity to provide an answer.

Ecumenical endeavors of the south

In order to venture into ecumenical and global relations, Southern Christians had to navigate carefully through the newly imposed loyalty to nation states as well as with the inherited ecclesiastical structures and missionary mindset.

There are several positive expressions of self-assertion by churches and Christians in the South. They are pursued with a spirit of indigenization, inculturation, contextualization, and ecumenism. Some amount of daring soul searching and reflection facilitated the creating of new fellowships and institutions. These include the formation of the united churches that go beyond the constraints of the inherited denominations by being rooted in the local contexts, incorporating the richness of local socio-religio-cultural heritages. United churches in some sense were a witness to the catholicity of the church in the South as well as a challenge to the Northern churches to reconsider their historic captivity. Regional conferences of churches were established—such as the All Africa Council of Churches, Caribbean Council of Churches, Christian Conference of Asia, Pacific Council of Churches, Latin American Council of Churches, Middle East Council of Churches—for the sake of common witness and acting cooperatively in facing the local issues and regional/global challenges. The establishment of the regional Association of Theological Schools, to strengthen theological education and ministerial formation, gives attention to local needs and challenges. The formation of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) in 1976 at Dar es Salaam as a world forum for theologians around the world, especially from the South and minority/marginalized Christian communities in the North, gives voice to theologies and missiological concerns from the underside.[19]

Even global ecumenical bodies were challenged to open up to the issues of the South and appoint leadership from the South in order to create an ethos of global culture and fellowship in these institutions. That includes the World Council of Churches, YMCA and YWCAs, World Christian Student Federations, and world confessional bodies, missionary societies and boards. Much was accomplished through these attempts and experiments. The recent practice of inviting theological teachers and

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18. R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Reconfigurations: An Alternative Way of Reading the Bible and Doing Theology* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2003), 1.

19. One of the EATWOT program highlights was the meeting of Third World Theologians and Western Theologians held in Geneva, Switzerland, in January 1983.

ministers to come and serve in Northern institutions, national church offices, and congregations for longer or shorter periods of time is another attempt toward affirming ecumenical commitment and upholding the catholicity of the Christian faith.

Expanding horizon

The church is placed in the midst of the world as a messenger of God's good news. Christianity, which started its journey at a location, Jerusalem, has come full circle. To use Karl Rahner's imagery, the "planetary diaspora" of Christianity is complete, giving birth to the world church.[20] The first apostolic church of the Mediterranean and North Africa gave way to the second church of Northern Europe, eventually embracing the Northern hemisphere of the Euro-American tradition. The world mission outreach of the last two centuries has enabled Christianity to embrace the Southern hemisphere, creating a grand human family of Christians drawn from the East and West, North and South, joined together in a new tapestry of world Christianity. We do not have a full picture of that Christianity, as many pieces still have to be lifted up and integrated into that larger picture. However, we are able to witness its signs of unfolding and flowering. Perhaps, as Hans Kung has noted, there exists a "polycentric Christianity in a polycentric world."[21]

Christianity needs to work on its global perspective, not for the sake of profit making but for the sake of being enriched with the gifts and talents of the other. The good news is that the world of humanity is reshaping itself. Today it is hard to find a newspaper or magazine without columns or sections dealing with the world at large. Radio and television flood us with stories and pictures from around the globe, although they often are selected according to the ideology of the management and in many cases provide negative images, except for some of the documentaries aired through public broadcasting and nonprofit channels. Malls and shopping centers are making commodities from around the world easily available to their customers. Most metropolitan areas are adorned with eating places offering foods from a variety of countries and ethnic communities, some authentic and some poor imitations.

Already a number of schools and institutions of higher learning are either adding courses or reorganizing curriculum in order to inculcate a sense of human solidarity and global community among their graduates. When a question was put to the entering class at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia about how many of them had taken courses, undertaken field trips, or done independent study of cultures, societies, and/or religions other than their own, a majority and almost all those who were straight from colleges answered affirmatively. The number of people being exposed to global realities is expanding. How are these students going to experience the preparedness of their congregations and communities for being connected to the richness and beauty of the wider human community? How the Christian community is going to build on such emerging global consciousness is a missiological challenge.

The changed geographical and demographic situation calls for a reformation of the church's role in this emerging new global era. Most Christians belonging to the Protestant tradition tend to understand their church community narrowly in association with their respective nations. The Protestant Reformers' close collaboration

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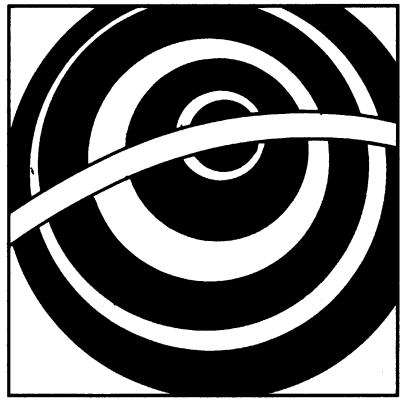
20. In Buhlmann, *With Eyes to See*, 8.

21. Hans Kung, *Christianity* (New York: Continuum, 1995), 793.

with the emerging nation-states in Europe in the sixteenth century was a political necessity in achieving their task of reforming. Although denominations (that emerged out of the Reformation) were mostly named for a place (Church *of* England, *of* Germany, *of* Scotland, *of* India), the Christian community should not be narrowly understood as a nation-state entity. Such a reference to social reality neither wholly defines nor exhausts its authentic global and universal nature. A dialectic between social and theological realities of the Christian community should always be maintained to uphold its true nature.

For Christians, it should not be difficult to comprehend the global dimension of the human community. Christianity is not a status of birthright. It is a gift of grace. It is through baptism that an individual is privileged to join a community of the faithful. However, what many do not realize is that while through baptism one becomes a family member of the existing local Christian community, one also thereby becomes a member of the global Christian community and becomes connected to those who have gone before and those who are yet to come—the one holy catholic and apostolic church. Unfortunately, to stretch the imagination to that level may be a daunting task. It is easy to think that by baptism one is just becoming a member of a local congregation or at most the denomination. Since most of the Protestant denominations operate within the framework of a nation-state, one's imagination of a Christian community often takes on that same limitation.[22]

Christians carry that mindset even when they migrate to a new country. At baptism, in fact, Christians are called for a life of adventure as disciples of Jesus Christ in God's world. However, they are not going to be in control of this adventure or of its outcome. As Anthony Gittins states,



"An adventure is, by definition, associated with risk and uncertainty in a way other journeys are not."[23]

When Jesus taught his disciples the "Lord's prayer," he began with a generic word, "Our Father." Addressing God as Father, or relating to God as a parent, signifies the universal character of Christian faith. Parent is a biological category, an easily understood metaphor in all human circumstances. This metaphor not only speaks of the close relationship between God and humans but also binds the human community together as a family.

In the same prayer, there is another globally and even universally embracing phrase: "Your kingdom come." The citizenship of Christians is in God's kingdom, which transcends all earthly borders and human-created barriers. Even though it is difficult to fully comprehend the global and universal dimension of this petition,

22. H. S. Wilson, "Globalization for Global Community: A Challenge to Ministerial Formation," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 30 (2003): 175.

23. Anthony J. Gittins, *Ministry at the Margins: Strategy and Spirituality for Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002), 4.

every Christian is called to be a part of such a reality. When Christians are motivated to ponder their status as children of *one* God, creator of the *one* common world for all humans to share, they will be able to think beyond their congregation, region, or nation and recognize the need for solidarity among Christians, near and far, in order to be faithful to God's mission in the world.[24]

Above all, the central confession of the church is that through incarnation God embraced the whole of humanity/creation in a special way. In the light of that affirmation, if any intolerance and indifference toward other humans is promoted intentionally by a Christian community, preventing its members from embracing the global family, such a practice is surely a counterwitness to the truth of incarnation and the core vision of Christianity.

Global consciousnesses and globalization

If the nineteenth century was predominantly a Western European century, the twentieth century has been preeminently a North American one, with the United States possessing strong economic and military power. As far as the twenty-first century is concerned, it is projected to be the beginning of a global millennium. There is little scope for communities to live in isolation today. Nation states, financial institutions, and business enterprises are more interconnected and interdependent than ever. So it is also with other organizations, be they government or nongovernment, academic or cultural, business, military, or civil, sports or entertainment, even religious or other nonprofit bodies. The continued success of any of these organizations, institutions, and enterprises depends on its current and anticipated participation in the world communities. Political and economic interests have made nation states create large forms of mutual interest such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), European Union (EU), Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), African Union (AU), and Arab League. Regional and global forums are cropping up everywhere, formed by human associations and organizations committed to similar goals, to be more effective and beneficial for a larger section of humanity, for a better utilization of resources, and to involve persons from a wide spectrum of communities.

Globalization has an upper hand in shaping global human relations. We can hardly have serious conversation on issues relating to church and society without reference to the power of globalization. Robert Schreiter summarizes the phenomenon of globalization thus:

> Globalization is . . . first of all about extension. It extends the effects of modernity (*and with it elements of Western culture*) throughout the entire world via the communication technologies that create a network for information flow. Computers, modems, faxes, and the Internet make possible this swift transfer. . . . It has a compressing effect as well. Technological innovations compress both our sense of time and our sense of space. Events happening around the world are now experienced instantaneously.[25]

The consequences of globalization are very mixed. As the world gets steadily compressed through globalization, cultural clashes and tensions are intensified in spite of the fact that it contributes to the "expanding and deepening consciousness of the world as a whole," observes Roland Robertson.[26] Consequently, it creates an

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24. Wilson, "Globalization for Global Community, 175.

25. Robert Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and Local* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1999), 9–11.

26. Roland Robertson, "Globalization and the Future of 'Traditional Religion,'" in

atmosphere of *globophobia,* to use Robertson's term, on the part of some. The issue is whether religious communities should be globophobic, terrified by the changing world, or should minister in such an environment with a positive global vision of humanity.[27]

Christianity from its inception had a vision of reaching out to all people and becoming a religious metaculture.[28] In that sense globalization was at the heart of Christianity. According to Christian traditions, disciples of Jesus spread out widely in the then known world. The miracle of the day of Pentecost was the disciples' opening up to the wider community. David Roozen states this as follows:

> For the Christian church "globalization" is, in many respects, a late 20th century equivalent of Pentecost (Acts 2:1–3; 6–12). To be self-conscious about globalization is to be amazed and perplexed by the growing interdependence of the world's diversity and disparity. To open oneself to globalization is to be confronted with a new reality and to ask: "What does this mean?"[29]

To overcome the present atmosphere of defeatism in the North due to the steady loss of members in mainline churches and to connect with the vitality of the South, the perspective of global belonging can be of a help. For example, the ELCA may be better able to handle the loss of membership provided it stops thinking about itself primarily as a national church. If it shifts its imagination and sees itself as a global family, there is a lot to celebrate, as Lutheran membership is increasing the world over. Further, if it courageously relates to new local and yet global/transnational Christians in its neighborhoods and opens its congregations to these disciples of Jesus with a genuine spirit of catholicity, there is even less reason to mourn. Such courage calls for a radical shift in the ethno-communal mindset for the sake of embracing the hitherto considered "problematic other," who are in reality fellow disciples. In India and Asia as a whole, in spite of the presence of Christianity there for 2,000 years and the intense mission work in the last five hundred years, official Christian population still remains less than 3 percent. But that does not dishearten Indians or Asians who are Christians. Their sense of being a minority in their immediate locale does not immobilize them as they focus on their wider global family and cherish being part of the world Christian community, their extended family. Without such a sense of belongingness, Christians in a given locality can fail to draw on the abundance of richness they possess as a global Christian community.

Community of communities

Christian communities through the centuries have evolved many models of the church. In *Models of the Church* Avery Dulles groups them into five broad categories demonstrating their uses and limitations[30]—church as Institution, Mystical

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God and Globalization, Vol. 1, ed. Max L. Stackhouse with Peter J. Paris (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 2000), 53, 61.

27. Tim Dearborn, "A Global Future for Local Churches," in *The Local Church in a Global Era,* ed. Max L. Stackhouse et al. (Grand Rapids, MI.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2000), 209.

28. Even though the metaculture tendency has been challenged from the beginning, right at the first Jerusalem Council.

29. David Roozen, et al., *Changing the Way Seminaries Teach: Globalization and Theological Education* (Hartford, CT: Hartford Seminary, 1996), 11, 22f.; Wilson, "Globalization for Global Community," 177.

30. Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, [1974] 1988). For more information see *www.mcauley.acu.edu.au.*

Communion, Sacrament, Herald, and Servant, as well as the later added Community of Disciples, Body of Christ, and Pilgrim People of God. Veli-Matti Karkkainen traces a number of them from different church traditions and denominations,[31] including Communion of Saints, Priesthood of All Believers (1 Pet 2:9), Household of God, Graced Covenant Community, Exodus Community, Fellowship of Believers, Charismatic Fellowship, Elected Community, the Community of the Holy Spirit, Gathered People of God, Assembly, Women-church, Cyber church, Universal, Messianic, Participatory, and Missionary ecclesiologies.

> Christianity is not a status of birthright. It is a gift of grace.

It is likely that all of these ecclesiologies include reference to the global dimension of Christian community and its larger societal responsibility. For example, here is a familiar quote from Bonhoeffer:

> The Church is Church only when it exists for others. To make a start it should give away all its property to those who need. The clergy must live solely on the free-will offerings of their congregations, or possibly engage in some secular calling. The Church must share in the secular problems of ordinary human life, not dominating, but helping and serving.[32]

In spite of similar strong pleas for public engagements, in most ecclesiologies the global inclusion and catholic fervor of embracing global Christianity unconditionally do not hold a central place. It is understandable. Like other doctrinal formulations these ecclesiologies are also shaped by the social, political, philosophical and ecclesiastical realities of the time and place.

In recent decades the demand for global solidarity has intensified. Serious debates and concrete plans are proposed and implemented by different forums like the United Nations Summit mentioned earlier and the well-known Willy Brandt Commission Report, *North-South,* published in 1980. Global consciousness is on the rise. It was only in 1968 that the photograph of the earth as a big blue-and-white marble in the blackness of space, taken by astronauts of Apollo 8, contributed to a new awareness that beyond one's village, town, city, and country, the planet is the common home of us all. In 1964, communication theorist Marshall McLuhan popularized the concept of the "global village."[33] McLuhan was optimistic that through radio and television the world would be closely connected and everyone would become neighbors in a global village. Digital technology and the Internet have furthered McLuhan's vision.

As already mentioned, these breakthroughs in communication and the phenomenon of globalization make it almost impossible for societies and communities today to be isolationist. Nonetheless, it is a recognized fact that the present functioning of globalization is not value free and

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31. Karkkainen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology.*

32. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison,* ed. Eberhard Bethge (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 203–4.

33. Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), 8, 31.

does not function without some people and communities benefiting more than others. Concerned and knowledgeable individuals, institutions, and organizations have raised voices against new imperialistic and colonialist tendencies within the elemental forces of globalization and strive to use it for the betterment of humanity.

Can the Christian community do better? I think we can, provided we take our global connectedness seriously and do not stoop to easy compromises. A community that enjoys a following of about 33 percent of the world's population and possesses abundant talents and resources can make the key players of the world take its voice seriously if concerted effort is devoted and the needed resources are channeled to this missiological calling of our time. A number of such engagements of solidarity have been carried out ecumenically in the recent past, and they need to be lifted up even as similar attempts are promoted.

The goal of Christianity (according to St. Paul) is to strive toward the unfolding of the new cosmic community (reign of God) in which God intends to gather all things (Eph 1:10) and reconcile all things (Col 1: 20) and in which God will be all in all (1 Cor 18:28).[34] It is to affirm the cosmic *communio* nature of Christians, that is, their existence shaped by "deep communion between God, human creatures, and the broader community of life."[35] The New Testament understanding is that while the local congregations live out their catholicity (global and universal nature) in their faithfulness to the gospel of Jesus Christ, they are cognizant of their connectedness to other disciples of Jesus Christ far and near. They are related to one another because they are serving the same Lord, the head of the one body, the church. Differences that may crop up have to be discussed and sorted out in a conciliar spirit.

The local and the global are not opposed to one another but rather flow from one to another with complementary ease, a "glocalization."[36] People may not be aware of its functioning, but that does not deny the reality. It refers to the dynamic of catholicity that was in operation from the inception of the church. Such catholicity is affirmed when the members of a congregation remember that they are part of the global *koinonia* (fellowship) and carry on their congregational life from such a perspective and commitment. The divine foundation of the church makes it imperative that its universal dimension is not forgotten in spite of the fact that the Christian faith is exercised and experienced in local *koinonia*.

These proposals are not an outcome of nostalgia for a new type of Christendom or a new triumphalistic global Christian civilization. It is recognizing that "The global era now upon us is a new *kairos* with new demands."[37] It points a way forward for Christians to reclaim their authentic identity as a global community. It is a call for giving up self-imposed and unexamined isolationism. Every congregation and church body has a personality. That corporate personality, beyond verbal messages, constantly sends out nonverbal communication heard by the communities surrounding it, and contributes to views others have

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34. *Globalization and Its Victims as Seen by the Victims*, ed. Michael Amaladoss (Delhi: ISPCK, 1999), 218.

35. Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, *Healing a Broken World: Globalization and God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 103.

36. Robertson, "Globalization and the Future of 'Traditional Religion,'" 56.

37. Diane B. Obenchain, "The Study of Religion and the Coming Global Generation," in *God and Globalization*, Vol. 3., ed. Max L. Stackhouse with Diane B. Obenchain (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 2000), 106.

of it. The credibility of the gospel message is at stake when there exists a glaringly visible gap between what is preached and what is practiced. As an old wisdom saying goes, if people find what Christians say to be truthful and useful, probably they will try to embrace and practice it: "Christianity is not always taught but often caught."

Global Christian community becomes a reality when Christians are prepared for new ways of being community and begin to reappropriate Christianity *as a community of communities of disciples of Jesus Christ among all human communities both religious and nonreligious.* My inspiration in framing this formula comes from a somewhat similar proposal arrived at during a mission conference of the Christian Conference of Asia. The conference articulated the place of Christians as the people of God within a world community as follows: "The people of God among all God's peoples."[38] Such a new reality is possible if Christians would begin to assert their global belonging and commit themselves to a concerted effort to build trust relationships between communities across nations and continents. This entails not just tolerating but embracing differences through open conversation, negotiation, and experimentation. Charles Foster and Theodore Brelsford state that "The capacity to trust in the gracefulness of an open-ended future has an eschatological dimension to it."[39]

To begin this process in North America, I concur with the prophetic plea of Douglas John Hall that Christians disestablish and disengage themselves socially and ecclesiologically from current values that have perpetuated a narrow way of understanding themselves and reengage with others with a global perspective, reappropriating the sense of being "the disciple community described by the Scriptures and treasured throughout the ages by prophetic minorities."[40] Christianity in fact has become a world religion, and the church has become a world church. The missiological challenge therefore is how Christians will live out that global belonging and embrace global Christian community.

The United States as a laboratory of global Christianity

As it is now, U.S. churches have a great opportunity to be an exemplar and model for Christians everywhere in this new missiological challenge of reappropriating Christianity as a global fellowship. Two factors contribute to that possibility: first, the U.S. is the home of the world's largest Christian community; and second, a steady flow of migrants from all corners of the world has enriched the U.S. with a unique global ethos/culture, which has prompted Molefi Asante to state, "Once America was a microcosm of European nationalities. Today America is a microcosm of the world."[41]

The U.S. has the largest Christian population in the world—around 235 million Christians, accounting for 85 percent of the total population.[42] According to projections, even half a century from now, in

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38. *The People of God among All God's Peoples: Frontiers in Christian Mission*, ed. Philip Wickeri (Hongkong: CCA, 2000), 9.

39. Charles R. Foster and Theodore Brelsford, *We Are the Church Together: Cultural Diversity in Congregational Life* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press, 1996), 19.

40. Douglas John Hall, *The End of Christendom and the Future of Christianity* (Valley Forge, PA.: Trinity Press, 1997), 51.

41. Ken Uyeda Fong, *Pursuing the Pearl: A Comprehensive Resource for Multi-Asian Ministry* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1999), 28.

42. *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 2d ed. (2 vols.), ed. David B. Barrett et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 772.

2050, the U.S. will retain this status with a Christian population of 330 million forming 82 percent of the total population.[43] However, immigration will change the ethnic composition of the Christian community along with the rest of the population. Some of the early signs are already on the horizon. In the Boston-Cambridge area, about half of the congregations that are active today worship in languages other than English.[44] The Hispanic population has already reached the rank of being the second largest ethnic community in the U.S., with a population of 37 million, and the Asian and the Middle Eastern populations are showing a steady increase. With the continuing migration of Afro-Caribbeans and people from Africa, even the African-American identity is in the process of being redefined.

Already in 1991 Ben Wattenberg pointed to the fact that the U.S. has emerged as the "first universal nation" and that accepting the reality of multiculturalism is its only option. Wattenberg based his proposal on certain demographic changes:

> Until 1960, about 80 percent of American immigration had come from Europe; since 1960, about 80 percent came from places other than Europe. They are predominantly Hispanics, Asians, Moslems (Middle-Easterners) and Caribbean and African blacks. We are becoming what we had professed to be, the first universal nation, and we're very successful at it. It is very much in the American interest—commercial, geopolitical, demographic, and ideological—to encourage this tendency toward diversity. We ought to encourage it, even if it itches a little. It's one big reason America is, and will be, the omni-power.[45]

Therefore one cannot think of a country other than the U.S. being a possible exemplar for unveiling this authentic nature of Christianity as a global community by embracing Christians both at home and abroad. The needed reformation, for Christianity to reclaim its global belonging, is anticipated to happen in the U.S. This vision can be accomplished in cooperation with Christians at home and around the globe. Missiologist Andrew Walls narrated this as follows:

> The great issues of twenty-first century Christianity . . . will be about how African and Indian and Chinese and Korean and Hispanic and North American and European Christians can together make real the life of the body of Christ. The principal Christian significance of the United States may now be in the fact that—thanks to the immigration law of the 1960s—nearly all the main Christian discourses have functioning congregations there. More than in any other nation in the world, the body of Christ could be realized—or fractured—in the United States.[46]

With this missiological possibility imminent, if a national flag is still to be kept in the sanctuary, it is time that the United Nations flag complements it or replaces it. Better still, symbols representing the diverse global community need to be appropriately displayed and affirmed, giving a signal to the world that the reformation to become a world church is on and forthcoming from the United Sates. As in the days of Martin Luther, the world is writing the agenda, and church is called to respond appropriately.

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43. Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, 90.
44. Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, 101.
45. Ben J. Wattenberg, *The First Universal Nation: Leading Indicators and Ideas about the Surge of America in the 1990s* (New York: Free Press, 1991), 45–46.
46. Andrew F. Walls, "From Christendom to World Christianity: Mission and the Demographic Transformation of the Church," in *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002), 69.

Book Reviews

Ending Hunger Now: A Challenge to Persons of Faith. By George McGovern, Bob Dole, and Donald E. Messer, with a Foreword by Bill Clinton. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005. xiv and 114 pages. Paper. $12.00.

The Spirit is stirring the waters. For the first time in human history it is possible to imagine a world where all people are fed. This is not only a dream in the imagination of the faithful but a sober judgment on the part of politicians and economists (cf. the arguments of Jeffrey Sachs, *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time* [Penguin, 2005]).

In this book Donald Messer teams with one-time presidential candidates George McGovern and Bob Dole to argue forcefully for the urgent priority of ending hunger in this generation. Both McGovern and Dole have strong track records in their political careers of promoting legislation to eliminate hunger. Given their differing political party affiliations, a strong case is made that the ending-hunger agenda can and must be a bipartisan effort. The endorsement by Bill Clinton in the book's Foreword makes the argument even more forceful.

Messer's chapters provide the theological foundation for the book. He establishes the global context for the problem of hunger, offers biblical and theological perspective, and argues passionately for the urgency of the cause. McGovern and Dole, long-time supporters of anti-hunger bills such as food stamps and WIC (Women, Infants, and Children—supplemental food assistance), have recently advocated the adoption of the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition plan. At the heart of this proposal is the implementation of a school lunch and WIC program on a global scale. Where pilot projects of this kind have been implemented there have been dramatic reductions in chronic malnutrition. Needed now is stronger financial commitment on the part of the U.S. government and the world community to give priority to this initiative. The chapters by McGovern and Dole offer seasoned political wisdom and leverage for the adoption of such programs. Chapter 4 is a trialogue between the authors that explores many of the ethical and political facets pertaining to the end of hunger.

With the adoption by the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in August 2005 of a resolution to confront the scandal of hunger as a core dimension of living out the Christian faith, the time has arrived for rostered leaders, congregations, and synods to incorporate ending hunger as an essential dimension of the church's ministry at every level. We need to be developing, sharing, and implementing models of church life that demonstrate how we can effectively bring the ending-hunger agenda to the forefront of our domestic and international policies.

This book, complete with reflection questions for discussion groups and listing of resources, can offer another critical resource for the inauguration of God's kingdom where all have daily bread.

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The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity. By Philip Jenkins. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. 146 pages. Paper. $15.95.

Jenkins, writing from his extensive travels, searching of missionary reports, and conversations with indigenous converts, wants readers to know that Christianity is indeed alive and well across the world today. He frames his supporting arguments by reviewing the origins of the mission work of the "western church." He reminds us that after the East/West schism of 1000 C.E. the West became isolated and cut off from the thriving churches of the East as well as the historical Christian churches of Africa and Asia that even today are growing exponentially. Refactoring this back into church history and into an analysis of the church results in a different understanding of the church today.

To help get the reader into a new mindframe when considering the global church, Jenkins does not use the traditional East-West language to talk about patterns. Rather, he refers to the emerging church as the "global South" and the North American/European church as the "global North." He then debunks the myths about the spread of Christianity as being exported solely from the global North to a reluctant or hesitant global South. He reminds us of the historical churches of the global South such as the Ethiopian church and that these and other newer Christian churches are growing exponentially. "Over the last two centuries, at least, it might have been the [global North] that first kindled Christianity around the world, but the movement soon turned into an uncontrollable brush fire" (p. 53).

With the population shifts and the clearer understanding of the world as a global village, the author contends that Christianity in the U.S. is not in decline; rather, the definitions of what it means to be Christian are changing and expanding (p. 7). This makes it essential for the global North and the global South church to make peace with and accept these changes realizing that the church has always been in flux. We must learn from one another. "It would be singularly dangerous if religious stereotyping takes hold. The global North would [become] secular and rational, the South primitive and fundamentalist" (p. 162).

There are several small sections I particularly liked: the discussion of the difference between pagan and syncretistic Christian, the difference between a church and a sect, and the global North/South language. I would not argue with the data, trends, and materials presented. However, Jenkins looks at the church in the farthest corners of the global village, as well as the place of the American and European church within the village, and exudes great optimism; I do not share his overall positive analysis of Christianity.

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Reading the Bible from the Margins. By Miguel A. De La Torre. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002. xii and 196 pages. Paper. $20.00.

De La Torre, a Cuban American who teaches at Hope College in Holland, Michigan, has written an important and provocative book highlighting the significance of a reader's social location for understanding the Bible. He points out how our interpretations of the Bible are culturally conditioned and not infrequently self-interested. He calls for a return to the text itself (lest we confuse our interpretations with the Bible itself) and invites the reader to consider interpretations from the perspective of the marginalized.

In the introduction, he explains his purpose as exposing "the reader to a new way of 'seeing' biblical texts." By "reader" he has in mind white Euroamericans who, in the United States, typically enjoy a variety of privileges afforded them by the present social structure. He includes among the new perspectives those of African Americans, Asians, Hispanics, women, women of color, and gays. De La Torre writes: "It is not my intention to try to convince the reader of the validity of scriptural interpretations arising from the depths of oppression. Instead, the book provides persons of the dominant culture with a window into a world with which they are unfamiliar, even when this world is but a few blocks away from where they live" (p. 11). His fundamental thesis is that reading from the margins is not just an interesting alternative "to the way we've always done it," nor is it no more than what some more cynically minded folks might refer to as the politically correct thing to do these days. Rather, he suggests that "to read the Bible from the margins is to grasp God in the midst of struggle and oppression" (p. 4).

The strength of the book lies in the first four chapters. In chapter 1, De La Torre discusses the social process of reading, defines key terms and concepts for his study, and demonstrates how sometimes modern readers have a tendency to impose meanings on ancient biblical texts that are anachronistic. Chapter 2 notes how readings from the center/dominant culture serve to defend and reinforce the center's power and privilege at the expense of minority groups and encourages a material rather than a metaphoric or spiritual

approach to the Bible in order better to enter into the real-life experience of the marginalized. Chapters 3 and 4 address the issue of how the Bible has been used to justify racism, classism, and sexism. In chapter 5, "Who Do You Say That I Am?" De La Torre follows Matt 25:40 and considers how Jesus is a woman, gay, black, poor; that is, how Jesus is all of those (the lost, the least, the last) whom the dominant culture marginalizes. The last two chapters draw attention to the public witness of the Christian community on behalf of and in solidarity with the marginalized, drawing on biblical texts and images to help readers be more Christlike.

Throughout the book, De La Torre provides illustrations from his own experience as an Hispanic male in the United States.

Reading the Bible from the Margins encourages us to think critically about our own social location: how *who* we are and *where* we live help shape the way we read and understand the Bible. Here is an invitation to rethink the Bible and to contemplate the possibility that what we have always assumed the Bible says or means is not necessarily the case; sometimes, the Bible looks and sounds different when viewed through other lenses. Fine examples include his discussion of the sabbath commandment (pp. 6–8) and of the Parable of the Vineyard Owner (pp. 76–81).

Some may find De La Torre's ideological approach to the Bible unfamiliar and discomforting. Nevertheless, it is clear that the author affirms both the authority of the Bible and the centrality of the gospel for Christian faith and life. The reader will not always agree with De La Torre's conclusions or his interpretations of the biblical text, but the interested and thoughtful reader will be rewarded by engaging his ideas. While the book is intended primarily for undergraduate students (it grew out of a class he teaches at Hope College), seminarians, parish pastors, and congregations would benefit from De La Torre's alternative perspectives on the biblical text as the global church continues to wrestle with how to be faithful to the gospel in diverse settings.

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Concordance to the Greek New Testament. By W. F. Moulton and A. S. Geden. 6th ed., fully revised, ed. I. Howard Marshall. London and New York: T & T Clark (Continuum), 2002. xxi and 1,121 pages. Cloth. $100.00.

The first edition of "Moulton-Geden," as it is usually known, appeared in 1897. It has been in print ever since. As a seminary student I purchased my first copy in 1949, used, from England, and gave it away when I purchased a later revision. It has been a desktop friend ever since.

This new edition is the result of five years of work by a team under the direction of I. Howard Marshall, bringing the concordance up to date. It now is based on the 27th edition of the *Novum Testamentum Graece*, edited by Kurt Aland, et al. (= the 4th edition of the UBS text), while preserving the variant readings of Westcott-Hort, Tischendorf, and the Greek text underlying the English Revised Version. At the same time it preserves the values of the five earlier editions; the Hebrew text of any citation of the Old Testament is printed along with the Greek New Testament citation. Thus the concordance includes all text that might have a claim to being an original reading. In this respect it is superior to all other Greek concordances presently available, whether in print form or as computer databases.

The concordance is complete except for the definite article, *de*, and *kai*. Symbols, listed on p. xvii, indicate items not found in the Septuagint or earlier Classical Greek. The Supplement in earlier editions that gave an index of prepositions is now incorporated in the main body of the text. If a term occurs twice in the same verse, they are printed on separate lines to enable easier numerical vocabulary counts. Finally, new Greek fonts make for clear printing, a boon to tired eyes.

This completely revised edition should make Moulton-Geden-Marshall the standard concordance for the next generation. Anyone who uses the Greek New Testament will want a copy of it.

Edgar Krentz

Preaching Helps

The Day of Pentecost—Ninth Sunday after Pentecost, Series B

Advice for Preachers

"So, what advice would you give preachers today?" I've been asked this question repeatedly during the last few months—in my classroom, at continuing education events, even at a cocktail party. The question comes from interested lay folk as well as from pastors and seminarians. I sense a growing consensus that preachers today need advice.

"What advice would you give preachers today?" My standard answer: Preach good news! I join David Bartlett and many others in contending that "preaching is always good news. Preaching is news; it is fresh, involving, surprising. It is not the repetition of tired formulas or one more self-serving plug for [some] program. . . . It is always the herald's announcement of God's victory" (*What Is This Good News?* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003], 2). After all, we are called to preach the gospel. Bartlett observes that some congregations may need to hear more about the freedom of the gospel and others may need to hear more about responsible living under the gospel. But the preacher's task is always to discover and proclaim the gospel—God's good news.

"So, what advice would *you* give preachers today?" While I did not pose this question to our contributor, reading through this series of Preaching Helps I find that **George C. Heider** offers sage advice for preachers as well as keen exegetical insights for the pericopes from Pentecost through Proper 13. Although Heider did not—and I'd say would not—use this term, I found myself compiling a collection of preaching "correctives" as I worked my way through these pages. I find these correctives particularly helpful, because they put into words things I know to be true but sometimes forget. I snatched some of them out of his reflections and bring them together here as additional advice for preachers, myself included. I summarize Heider's advice in italics and add my own comments.

Pentecost calls us to preach the corporate as well as the corporal dimension of new life in Christ. In a culture and even a Christian tradition that so focuses on the individual that we can be tempted to claim a personal relationship with Jesus that makes no demands on our relationship with the world, the Spirit of Pentecost permits us to hear the gospel challenge contemporary speech that distinguishes between church and state, personal and social, public and private, sacred and secular as Christ makes all life new. As it was for the crowd that listened to the

apostles, Pentecost is a time to question our assumptions as the Spirit opens us to God's new speech.

Preach about the Holy Trinity not as God in se *but as God in relation to humanity, as God in relation to us.* What difference does it make to these people on this day that we know God as Triune? What is the good news in each Person of the Trinity? Rather than explaining a doctrine, celebrate our God!

When we pray "Thy kingdom come," what do we think we are asking for? And is that what we really want? My immediate answer is No. To be honest with myself, I want God's reign as I want it, as I envision it. My confession leads me to Scripture, where I can wrestle again with the reign that Jesus embodies and proclaims, with what I need to give up, and how I need to change. Only by engaging in this struggle can I rightly pray, let alone preach, "Thy kingdom come."

The answers we get depend upon the questions we ask—of Scripture, of the Christian faith, and of life. I hear a lot of anthropocentric preaching. Preachers seem to be asking lots of questions about "us." If the questions we ask are about God ("What is God doing in this text?"), our preaching will be more theocentric, and the result will be the gospel.

John Wayne theology ("God helps them what helps themselves") is not Christian theology. "Bear one another's burdens" (Gal 6:2) is. I wonder what other theologies are running around our congregations (and our church) today: everything happens for a reason; faithfulness leads to (and is measured by) success; *we* can build the kingdom of God; this expression of the church must continue forever.

It is integral to both the biblical and the American tradition to speak truth to power. Amen! —so long as the truth we speak is God's truth and not our own agenda. And when we speak truth to power, we need to be prepared to face the consequences. I worry about preachers eager to assume the prophetic mantle and then shocked when wearing it costs them.

George C. Heider has served as a pastor in The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod for 26 years, primarily in the higher education ministries of the church. He currently is Visiting Professor of Theology at Valparaiso University in Indiana, where he teaches Bible, Old Testament, Hebrew, and the Freshman core courses. In addition to advice for preachers and solid exegesis and thoughtful insights for your preaching, you will find scattered throughout these pages his commentary on the Revised Common Lectionary.

"What advice would you give to preachers today?" If we preachers asked this question of our hearers, what do you suppose *they* would say?

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The Day of Pentecost 4 June 2006

Acts 2:1–21 or Ezekiel 37:1–14
Psalm 104:24–34, 35b
Romans 8:22–27 or Acts 2:1–21
John 15:26–27; 16:4b–15

"New life in Christ!" By the time of Pentecost, the "Eighth Sunday of Easter," God's people should have caught the connection between the resurrection of Jesus and God's gift of new life now and forever to all the baptized. However, especially in our highly individualized American culture, and above all in Protestant circles, we can all too easily overlook the corporate implications of history's axial event. This year's lessons for Pentecost offer a rich remedy to that one-sided (mis)understanding.

Ezekiel 37:1–14 provides the first opportunity since Easter for the people to hear a reading from the Old Testament (for some of us an abiding source of irritation with the three-year lectionary). Ezekiel 37:1–14 is the familiar story of the Valley of the Dry Bones. But perhaps it's too familiar. Many Christians reflexively associate it with resurrection and therefore with Easter, and, sure enough, it is one of the readings for the Easter Vigil. We can forget that this pericope promises *corporate, not corporal,* resurrection ("these bones are the whole house of Israel," v. 11)—i.e., not the "resurrection of the body."

To be sure, there are echoes in these verses of the original creation of "the man" (*ha'adam*) in Gen 2:7, as God's breath enters inert matter and brings it to life. But it is worth noting that there is little overlap in vocabulary between the two passages and, more important, that the emphasis even in the Genesis text is on the creation of *humanity* rather than a specific individual (a point that Paul emphasizes in Romans 5 with respect to human sin). The focus of the Ezekiel text is on God's gifts of life to a people who thought themselves dead and of hope to those who said "our hope is lost." And by what means would the Spirit work? The old Negro spiritual knew: "Hear the word of the LORD."

Acts 2:1–21 picks up where Ezekiel leaves off. A mighty host of "devout Jews from every nation under heaven" has been gathered from their lands of dispersion. As in the first lesson (and appropriately for Pentecost), God's Spirit (a.k.a. wind or breath) is at center stage, conveying life. Again, that Spirit vivifies an entire people, only this time it is "all flesh" that God has in mind, explicitly obviating distinctions of sex, age, and social status (v. 17, quoting Joel 2:28; cf. Gal 3:28). All are called to "hear the word of the Lord," as tongues *of* fire yield tongues *on* fire, speaking in the tongues of all. To be sure, Acts depicts Pentecost as but the first step in the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome and from the descendants of Abraham to the gentiles. But all of this happens on the Jewish Festival of Weeks, marking the beginning of a new and abundant harvest (Lev 23:15–21; Deut 16:9–12).

John 15:26–27; 16:4b–15 speaks further of the Spirit's work, particularly as "Advocate" (παράκλητος). Again, the emphasis is on what Luther termed the *viva vox Dei*, the living voice of God, as the Spirit "testifies," "convicts," "guides," "declares" the future and what is Christ's, and "glorifies" Christ. It is this lesson that draws the (theo)logical conclusion from the first two: having been brought to life by the Spirit, God's people are called to "testify [on Christ's behalf] because you have been with me from the beginning"—the very beginning of our lives in God. And God does not bring us to life as a people and then abandon

us: we have the "Spirit of truth" with us, every word of the way.

These lessons present the preacher with an extraordinary opportunity to speak words of both judgment and grace. In a world that is increasingly dominated by an individualistic focus on success via unbridled market forces (and the devil take the hindmost), these pericopes remind us that as both the creation and re-creation of God in Christ, we share a mutuality in our existence. Even in today's individualistic culture, most people acknowledge a responsibility to help even strangers when all are in straitened circumstances like the desert or the sea (or a desert island in the sea, as in the current TV series *Lost*). On the only plane of existence that really matters, we are each and all as dead and without hope as the bones on the valley-plain of ancient Babylonia but for the life-giving grace of God. We both need and bear responsibility for one another.

Another angle that one might take is to see in these texts a distinctive perspective on God's overall plan of salvation. Briefly, Genesis 1–11 summarizes God's initial interactions with humanity as a whole, which end in failure, as people are scattered into peoples at the Tower of Babel. God's "Plan B" (or God's ultimate plan all along, from the perspective of texts like Eph 1:4) was to work through one man, Abraham, and through his descendants to bring blessing to all (Gen 12:3b). The remainder of the Bible may be understood (from a Christian perspective) as God's establishment of a *modus operandi* by which God rescues a people, binds them to himself, and refuses to let them go, for all their efforts to go their own way, so that "when the fullness of time had come" (Gal 4:4) God might rescue humanity as a human child of Abraham. At that point, Plan B reveals its genius, as the slain and scattered of the nations are given life and common purpose. Today's texts depict God's commingling of his creative and redemptive work in the Spirit, so that humanity might again know fully the life and hope and truth in which God intends them to live. It is to this plan of God that we bear (literally) *inspired* testimony in word and life. GCH

The Holy Trinity
11 June 2006

Isaiah 6:1–8
Psalm 29
Romans 8:12–17
John 3:1–17

"Don't try this at home!" A warning along these lines ought to be attached to any preaching notes for The Holy Trinity. Preachers do well to avoid attempts to explain the triune being of God, as human language inevitably fails in such attempts and, if history is any guide, leads more often than not to heresy as either the "oneness" or the "threeness" is overemphasized.

Today's lessons reinforce the wisdom of this warning and show a more fruitful path. In point of fact the Bible says very little about God *in se*. One of the few exceptions is the Old Testament's designation of God as "holy" (that is, at base, "wholly other" than anything else that exists). Otherwise, both testaments consistently describe God in relationship to creation and particularly to humanity. Indeed, even in today's Old Testament lesson, in which God is declared thrice-holy, it is the effect of that holiness upon the prophet that comes to the fore. So there is biblical warrant to focus this day's proclaimed word on the meaning of God's being for the lives and living of God's people.

The lesson from Isaiah (6:1–8) was most obviously selected because it is the

source of what the Eastern Church calls the "*Trisagion*," the "Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD of armies" that begins the Sanctus in the Western Church's mass. From early times, Christians have seen in these words an implicit reference to the Trinity, and from the perspective of the entire Christian canon (as opposed to a more historically based analysis) such a reading has merit.

Again, the primary benefit of the text lies not in the nature of God *in se* but in the implications of that nature for human beings. Specifically, this text stresses God's *transcendence* and thereby provides an important corrective to our tendency as moderns (and postmoderns) to "fear" God in no sense of that word. Isaiah is overwhelmed by what he sees and particularly by the qualitative gulf between what is on his lips and who is in his eyes. Only God's direct intervention via fire (as a live coal is borne to him by one of the *seraphim*, or "burning ones") prevents his immediate annihilation (cf. Exod 19:12; 20:18–21). By visible (yea, sacramental) means, Isaiah survives to respond to God's call to use his lips to proclaim God's word to a "people of unclean lips."

Romans 8:12–17 immediately drops the proverbial other shoe, so far as God's being-in-relationship is concerned. Four times in two verses (v. 16f.) Paul employs verbal forms containing the prefix "with" (Greek συν-). The emphasis here is on God's *immanence*: this is a God whose Spirit bears witness *with* our spirit and makes us joint heirs *with* Christ, since we suffer *with* him so as also to be glorified *with* him. (Note: I take εἴπερ as "since," rather than "if," as more in keeping with Paul's thought—against most translations, but allowed by BDAG, p. 279.) The awesome God of Isaiah delivers us from fear and enables us to call him "Daddy" (Aramaic *Abba*) in token that we are God's children.

A brief word of commendation is in order here, given my criticism of one feature of the three-year lectionary in last Sunday's notes. The same lectionary did well to change the terminology for the "church's half-year" from Sundays after Trinity to Sundays after Pentecost. As the Romans text makes abundantly clear, it is the Spirit of Pentecost who makes those "with-es" come true, so to speak, as we move from death to life.

The Gospel reading (John 3:1–17) performs its proper office by bringing together the lessons and setting the day in the light of Christ. Jesus tells Nicodemus (and us) that we must be born ἄνωθεν: both "from above" (like Jesus in his transcendence as God; cf. v. 13) and "again" (like Jesus, first begotten of God and then born of woman, or God in his immanence). (I leave to others the historical implications and complications of a wordplay that works in Greek but not in Aramaic or Hebrew.) Our birth "of water and the Spirit" is modeled on the very being of God! Yet, like Luther's drunken donkey-rider (and Nicodemus), we tend to misapprehend both God and ourselves by perceiving half-truths—and even those wrongly (for "we," see especially v. 11f., with its plural "yous"). It is God's Spirit who must engender in us both life and understanding. Like the wind, the Spirit (and God, for that matter) is not bound by our expectations or rules of engagement: as the Augsburg Confession, Art. V, puts it, the Spirit works *ubi et quando visum est Deo*—where and when it pleases God.

Jesus then takes another run at explaining things to Nicodemus (and us) as he stresses that bringing a new start at life is not something that a previously wrathful God came up with just recently. Way back in Numbers 21, during Israel's wanderings in the wilderness, God had saved by use of a visible (yea, sacramental) sign that was lifted

up. Now God is at it again, and we see that the sacramental is inextricably bound up in the incarnational: once more, God's visible sign will be lifted up, and Jesus will draw all to himself (Jn 12:32). (One must never forget that in John's Gospel the crucifixion is the coronation of the Christ, not his passion, *pace* a recent movie ostensibly based chiefly on that Gospel.)

As has long been observed, v. 16f. provides a "nutshell" summary of the gospel of Jesus Christ. But these two verses do more: they represent a clear summation and explanation (via the repeated γὰρ, "for," at the head of each) of the figurative and mysterious dialogue that precedes them—whether they were spoken by Jesus, as in the NRSV, or added by the evangelist, as in the RSV. These verses lay out in the plainest possible terms how God brought his very nature to bear on the future of the entire cosmos. As is common in Semitic heightened speech (i.e., poetry), these verses contain a chiasm: v. 16 moves from the positive ("God loved") to the negative ("not perish"), while v. 17 moves from the negative ("God did not send") back to the positive ("that the world might be saved"). All bases are covered, and all stands revealed: God will stop at *nothing* to bring a perishing and condemned world to life and salvation.

Naturally. GCH

Second Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 6) 18 June 2006

1 Samuel 15:34–16:13 or Ezekiel 17:22–24
Psalm 20 or Psalm 92:1–4, 12–15
2 Corinthians 5:6–10, 14–17
or 2 Corinthians 5:6–17
Mark 4:26–34

With the Second through Ninth Sundays after Pentecost, the lectionary changes in a couple of notable respects. First, at least in its most recent incarnation, the lectionary links these "green" Sundays with those that follow Epiphany earlier in the year, labeling them "Proper #*x*." (There's a certain terminological irony to be noted here, as the same Sundays are called "Ordinary Time" in the Roman Catholic lectionary. Traditionally, "propers" and "ordinaries" were antithetical terms in liturgics, with the former referring to elements of the mass that changed by season and day and the latter pertaining to elements that did not change, like the Kyrie and Gloria. But Bob Dylan was more right than he knew: "The times they are a-changin'." In any event, this is all vastly too esoteric for a sermon.)

Second, these Sundays begin a series of *lectio continua* in both the Epistle and Gospel lessons, while the Old Testament lesson continues to be linked thematically with the Gospel. The Epistles for the eight Sundays before us are taken in sequence from 2 Corinthians and Ephesians, while the Gospels are largely from Mark (as expected in Year B), with the beginnings of a five-Sunday-long excursion in the "Bread of Life" chapter, John 6. As a result, the preacher cannot count on the presence of a common theme among all three lessons, as was the case in the prior two festival Sundays, Pentecost and The Holy Trinity. But

one can be alert for serendipitous overlap or simply for a confluence in some specific way around the *was Christum treibet* ("what urges Christ") interpretive principle of Martin Luther.

Ezekiel 17:22–24 is the conclusion of an oracle that was addressed originally to Judah (the Southern Kingdom) in the final years of its existence. The first ten verses of the chapter present a riddle, or allegory, that is then explained in vv. 11–21. In the allegory a great eagle (the king of Babylon) carries off the top of a cedar tree (the king of Judah and the Judean elite, exiled in 597 B.C.) to a land and city of commerce (Mesopotamia and Babylon, respectively). He then plants a seed (the new puppet king and the people still in Judah) that grows into a luxuriant vine. Another great eagle (the pharaoh of Egypt) then comes along, and the vine reaches toward it, to the point that the vine is transplanted—but (according to the Lord GOD) resulting in its death, not prosperity. The prophet is warning all Judeans, but particularly those who were not yet exiled, that they should keep their covenant of vassalage to the king of Babylon (called "my covenant" by God, because such covenants called upon the gods of the parties as witnesses and enforcers) and not attempt an alliance with Egypt for the sake of independence from Babylonian hegemony. (For the record, the prophet's warnings were ignored, Egypt proved to be a "broken reed" [cf. 2 Kgs 18:21], and Jerusalem was destroyed in 587/6 B.C.)

Today's lesson follows this oracle of judgment with an oracle of hope for an unspecified time following the judgment, as is common in the prophetic writings. Again, a "sprig from the lofty top of a cedar" (a later Davidic king and/or a renewed city or nation of God's people) is taken, but this time by God, and God plants it "on the mountain height of Israel" (Mt. Zion). There it will grow great, to the point that "under it every kind of bird will live" and all other trees (all the nations and peoples of the earth) acknowledge the LORD (cf. Isa 60:5–14). This is an all-powerful yet unconventional God who reverses the places of the high and low trees and the green and the dry. When God's plan is fully revealed and implemented, conventional assumptions will fail. In God's reality—God's kingdom—things are not as they now seem.

Mark 4:26–34 employs the first lesson as a foil, via two of Jesus' "kingdom of God" parables. Again we are in the figurative world of flora. First, Jesus likens the kingdom of God to the agricultural process: the farmer can plant but then can do little to move things along until harvest time. Growth is in the hands of God! Jesus then compares the kingdom to a tiny mustard seed that grows into so mighty a shrub as to shelter every bird on the wing. As J. D. Crossan has observed elsewhere, the radicality of this parable lies in the simile of the mustard seed: Jesus employs not the mighty cedar of Ezekiel but a common weed—indeed, the bane of the Israelite farmer's existence—as the image for God's rule over all. Ever the master teacher, Jesus intends to provoke his hearers to ask, "Now whatever do you suppose he meant by *that*?"

As explained above, the Epistle lesson (2 Cor 5:6–17) was not selected for its thematic congruence with the other two readings. But for whatever reason overlaps are not far to seek. Paul draws a strong contrast between what is seen and known in the present age and what is real in God's "new creation" in Christ. Consequently, "we walk by faith and not by sight," so that the opposite of faith, here as often in Scripture, is not so much doubt as certainty. God is bound by God's promises, not by our expectations or rules, to the point that those whose lives "the love of Christ urges . . . on"

(that is, whose priority lies other than in the self) may well be thought insane. As in the Gospel, Paul is using language that intends to provoke radical rethinking of reality; he might as well say that in the new creation (or kingdom of God) things fall up!

With this Sunday we begin in earnest the "church's half-year," a time in which we focus at length on the implications for our present lives of the events recalled since Advent (God incarnate, baptized, transfigured, suffering, crucified, risen, ascended, and Spirit-giving in Jesus Christ). One who seeks to preach on one or more of these texts must necessarily begin with the example of all three as much as with their content. It is the preacher's task to provoke the hearer to ask such questions as "In what ways have I simply assumed that my cultural reality is both how things truly are and how God wants (or is at least content) for them to be?" Moving specifically to the language of the Gospel lesson, such provocation might be made explicit in a challenge like "When we pray 'thy kingdom come,' just what do we think we're asking for? And is that what we really want?" Upon serious reflection, many of us might well reach for the weed killer at the first sign of a sprouting mustard seed.

But the fact is that, as Luther put it in his Small Catechism, "God's kingdom comes indeed without our prayer." Those of us who are baptized citizens of that kingdom have an incredible advantage: to us the true nature of God's will and plan has been made plain, and not merely in figures (Mk 4:33f.). We know that the closed system of values in the culture around us is anything but congruent with the kingdom of God. For us as surely as for ancient Judah, God's final intention is that we should serve as his own pleasant planting (Isa 5:7a), to give succor and shelter to all people. It is for us to "scatter seed" (Mk 4:26) and to "try to persuade others" (2 Cor 5:11) of the good news of the new creation in Christ, but it is God who gives the growth (1 Cor 3:6f.). We are freed from vassalage to the penultimate (that which is most highly valued in our culture), because the ultimate human reality (that which our culture will do anything to avoid thinking about, namely, death) is securely in hand (2 Cor 5:8f.). In the popular phrase, "It's all good." Why? As the verse following today's Epistle lesson explains, it's all a gift: "all this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor 5:18). GCH

Third Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 7) 25 June 2006

1 Samuel 17:(1a, 4–11, 19–23) 32–49
or Job 38:1–11
Psalm 9:9–20 or Psalm 107:1–3, 23–32
2 Corinthians 6:1–13
Mark 4:35–41

"Jesus is the Answer!" proclaims a billboard seen through much of the American "Bible Belt." A wit is said to have scrawled on one such display, "What was the Question?"

It is a truism in debate that one is at least halfway to victory if one is able to define the terms of the question to be decided. More generally in life, it is true that we cannot hope to make good decisions if we don't ask the right questions. If the driving question of our life is "How can I make my pile as big as I can as fast as I can and retire as early as I can?" our life's course will take a very different shape than if that key question is "How can I use my gifts and resources most effectively to the glory of God and the service of my neighbor?"

The same claim for the priority of questions can be advanced in the interpretation of Scripture. Consider, for example, how many of the key issues of the Christian faith arise out of the Bible's first three great questions: "Did God say . . . ?" (Gen 3:1); "Where are you?" (Gen 3:9); and "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen 4:9). (I gratefully acknowledge my childhood pastor, C. S. Mueller, Sr., as the source of this insight.)

Today's Old Testament and Gospel lessons also feature questions that can express both ultimate life issues and the gentle, guiding touch of God's Spirit. The Gospel lesson (Mk 4:35–41) relates in seven pithy verses Jesus' stilling of the storm, but within that brief account are three important questions. The first is one that comes easily to our lips when we find ourselves in real trouble: "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" The second is Jesus' challenging response: "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" The third is an awed response to God's deliverance: "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

A brief look at a few of the Greek words in these questions will clarify their intent and sharpen their application to our own lives. What the NRSV renders as "afraid" is, in fact, more "timid, cowardly" (Gk. δειλός). "Fear" (Gk. φόβος) is implicitly commended in the disciples' response (NRSV "And they were filled with great awe" for Gk. καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν φόβον μέγαν). Mark's Jesus hereby contrasts faith (πίστις) not with fear but with timidity. Thus understood, the import of Jesus' question is not "Why were you so scared?" but "What took you so long to wake me up?" Like the sinking Peter in another account on the same sea, it is only once we've exhausted all other options and resources that we cry "Lord, save me!" (Mt 14:30). Faith reaches to the God whom we know is always there; indeed, it is paganism that thinks God must be awakened in the extremity of need (cf. 1 Kgs 18:27).

Yet even faith cannot grasp the sheer enormity of God's power and grace. The Old Testament lesson (Job 38:1–11) shows why the disciples were overawed specifically by Jesus' ability to still the sea. Again, questions predominate. This time, the questions are asked by God of Job, who has been demanding for more than thirty chapters that God appear and give account for Job's unjust suffering. In a sense, this lesson (together with the rest of Job 38–41) represents Job's triumph: God does appear, as Job demanded. But, as befits what is arguably the most theologically complex book in the Bible, it's not all that simple. God appears, but God asks Job a series of rhetorical questions, all of which make it clear that Job doesn't even know what he doesn't know. Only the God who created the universe can say with assurance whether it is operating as designed. (We note in passing the oft-overlooked existence here in Job, as well as in some psalms, of biblical creation accounts in addition to those familiar from Genesis 1–2.)

Specifically, God states that it was he alone who midwifed the sea (Heb. *yam*) and "clothed" it within limits. The enormity of this claim becomes clear when we consider the power that the (divinized) Sea had in Canaanite mythology, where *Yammu* was a rival with the great god Baal (cf. the sea monster Tiamat from the Mesopotamian creation myths, cognate with the "deep" [Heb. *tehom*] in Gen 1:2). In both the OT and NT the sea has been demythologized and is under the control of God—but of God alone, as otherwise it remains a powerful symbol of the chaos that forever tests the created order. Therefore, when the disciples ask "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" they ask (and imply an answer to) the ultimate question

that dominates the Gospel according to Mark—a question that Jesus himself answers explicitly only when explicitly asked at his trial by the high priest "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" (Mk 14:61f.). "I am," says Jesus, with all of the freight carried by the Greek Ἐγώ εἰμι (cf. Exod 3:14).

There's not a question to be had in the Epistle lesson (2 Cor 6:1–13), and, in keeping with the caution at the beginning of last Sunday's Helps, we should not construct a Procrustean bed to force this lesson into a single theme with the other two. Our entrée into this lesson is the one often required as we read Paul's letters (and, for that matter, the prophets of the OT): we must play the "telephone game"—not the party game of whispering a message around a circle for the sake of humorous distortion but the everyday "game" in which we can hear only one end of a telephone conversation and must conjecture what the other party is saying. Paul's words, like those of the prophets, can often be understood only as we can reasonably conjecture what were the views of others (usually opponents) to whom Paul is responding. In this case, it is clear that someone has accused Paul of being a self-promoter, a false apostle, and perhaps even a profiteer from the gospel ministry. Paul responds with a degree of candor that few preachers would want (or dare) to match, citing both the sufferings that he has undergone in God's service and the virtues that he has displayed along the way. Paul's point is that he has simply modeled his life and ministry on that of the Master, to the point of offering more love that he has known in return, so that he is simultaneously making himself vulnerable to abuse and inviting reciprocal openness and affection. His words here are in keeping with one of the major themes of 2 Corinthians, that God would use us even in our present imperfection (the "clay pots" of 4:7) as instruments of reconciliation of people to God and to one another.

In the context of the other two lessons (and with due caution about forcing connections), we can say that the Epistle lesson offers answers to some of the major questions asked in Job and Mark. Only God, Paul says, is Lord of time and life (v. 2) and our deliverer from evil (v. 4f.). As servants of God, we are able to move beyond our native timidity to the boldness of vulnerability (v. 11f.), all to the end that no one may "accept the grace of God in vain."

As a concluding note, this day (25 June) is also the commemoration of both the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession in 1530 and the death of Philip Melanchthon, renewer of the church, in 1560. As primary author of the Augsburg Confession (and of its Apology, or Defense) and, more generally, "*praeceptor Germaniae*" (teacher of Germany), Melanchthon understood the value of framing questions with care and testing all teachings against the fundamental question of how sinful humans can be made right with God (AC and Ap IV). He, like Job and the disciples in the boat and St. Paul, lived long enough to understand that fidelity rather than timidity has its price, yet there stands at the head of the Augsburg Confession this bold verse from the Psalms (119:46): "I shall also speak of your decrees before kings, and shall not be put to shame" (Kolb/Wengert, *Book of Concord*, p. 31). GCH

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 8) 2 July 2006

2 Samuel 1:1, 17–27
or Wisdom of Solomon 1:13–15; 2:23–24
Psalm 130 or Psalm 30
2 Corinthians 8:7–15
Mark 5:21–43

It is all too easy to overlook God's interest in human physical well-being. This is so for a number of reasons, from a misunderstanding of Paul's contrast between the flesh and spirit in Romans 8 to the continuing philosophical influence of Plato and his epigones. The upshot is that, quite without intending it, we become, at best, "so heavenly minded that we're no earthly good" and, at worst, functional Gnostics.

We ought to know better, of course. Our incarnational and sacramental theology provides a strong push in the other direction, as does our confession of "the resurrection of the body." The role that Lutheran Christians have taken in health and healing ministries (including responsibility for an astounding proportion of the hospital and long-term care beds in the United States) bears witness to the deep roots of concern for the physical in our theological praxis. Most important, the Gospels make it clear that a significant proportion of Jesus' ministry was occupied by acts of physical healing.

Two such incidents are featured in today's Gospel lesson (Mk 5:21–43), arranged in an "envelope" structure, in which one begins and ends the account, while the other is in the middle. They represent what we today would call an instance of "urgent care" and one of a "chronic condition." Contrary to our modern expectations, Jesus appears to take his time with the former case, while the latter is dealt with in a single moment. Yet in both cases Jesus is concerned not merely to heal but to do so gently and in such a way as to lift up the holistic dimension of his acts, tying them directly to the faith-life of the healed and their loved ones. Thus, despite the urgency of an important leader's case, Jesus is at pains to speak directly to the hemorrhaging woman who has imposed herself on him, including an address of endearment ("daughter"), a blessing of peace, and a commendation of her faith. In the instance of Jairus' daughter, Jesus acknowledges the fear of the parents (v. 36: Μὴ φοβοῦ literally means "Don't be afraid any more") and calls on them to believe in the face of others' despair. He clears the room of all but three disciples (as witnesses) yet includes the parents (for how could they be excluded from their daughter's presence?). Again, he uses an endearing address to the stricken one, the colloquial Aramaic *talitha*.

And we dare not overlook the gentle and gracious *touches* in these stories (pun intended). The woman touches Jesus' robe; Jesus takes the little girl by the hand. Speaking more figuratively of "gracious touches," Jesus reinforces his claim that the little girl was but sleeping when he tells the awe-struck parents, in effect: "Hey, you've got a growing, twelve-year-old kid here. They're always hungry—so feed her already!"

Yet the challenge to preachers has only begun, once we recognize the central significance of holistic healing—including the physical—in the ministry of Jesus. What is one to do with the immense gap between healing as practiced in the first century of our era and as we know it today?

First, we do well to get to know physicians, particularly those of faith. Among the deleterious effects of our divorce of body and spirit has been the effective concession of bodily matters to a modern "priesthood" of experts now termed "medical providers."

Yet they need the partnership of "physicians of the spirit" as much as patients and their pastors depend upon those physicians of the body. Competent physicians, whether or not they are people of faith, acknowledge that their work is art as much or more than science and that healing is far more than a protocol of procedures imposed upon the body (as the bleeding woman in the text had learned to her sorrow, v. 26). On the other hand, what is needed is not "faith healing," at least in any sense of an attempt to manipulate God's power to heal, but rather exactly what we see evidenced in the Gospel lesson: external compassion and skill, internal faith, and, when all is said and done, the gracious providence of God.

Lamentations 3:22–33 assures those who have undergone the greatest trauma in the history of Israel (the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of 587/6 B.C.) that the aforementioned gracious providence of God is as reliable as the sunrise. Formally speaking, these twelve verses represent four stanzas of an acrostic hymn, each three-line set of which begins with a succeeding letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The lesson acknowledges the reality of human pain, even going so far as to say that "[the LORD] causes grief (Heb. root *yagah* [Hiphil])," yet immediately follows that assertion with a repeated assurance of God's pity and grace, concluding with the bald statement that, literally, God's heart (*leb*) is not in afflicting, "for he does not . . . grieve (again, Heb. root *yagah*) anyone" (so NRSV; alternatively: "although he may grieve mortals"—cf. Luther's *opus proprium* and *opus alienum* for God's acts of grace and judgment, respectively).

To be sure, this lesson does not explicitly focus on physical ailments or healing; rather, as is typical of the OT, it simply speaks of people as holistic entities, both in suffering and in salvation. (Note that v. 23 of this relatively obscure passage is the source of the popular twentieth-century hymn "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" [*WOV* 771].)

2 Corinthians 8:7–15 appears at first glance simply to be the ideal text for Stewardship Sunday—and so it is. For the pastor who for whatever reason avoids "preaching about money," this is all the biblical warrant one should ever need. Yet stewardship is not simply about money any more than healing is simply about physical wellness. Paul deals almost playfully with the concepts of "rich" and "poor," by turns using them to speak of the financial condition of individuals or churches and then employing them to speak of the "happy exchange" between Jesus and us, "that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich." The latter statement is by no means to be taken as license for a theology of glory (or success). Rather, it ties that most quotidian of worship activities—the gathering of the offering—to the very essence of the gospel. Our care for one another, as others have need and we have resources, is likened to the *kenosis* of the Christ (cf. Phil 2:6f.) by which we become "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom 8:17).

The possible directions for preaching on one or more of this Sunday's texts are manifold, enabling the preacher to consider with care in what way(s) the Word can best be applied to the local hearers' situation (to be sure, an activity that one does well to undertake in preparation for any trip to the pulpit). The Old Testament lesson is a cry "*de profundis*" (Ps 130:1) that takes seriously the reality of grim times in our lives, of the possibility that God may be beckoning to us in acts of judgment, and of the terribly difficult posture of patience, as we wait on the Lord. Yet surer still than any affliction is God's mercy/grace/steadfast covenant love (Heb. *chesed*) toward us, which is God's first and final word (cf. Hos

11:1–9). The Gospel brings these general principles to bear on the specific realities of physical disease and death, identifying both as both objects of God's concern and opportunities for our growth in faith. The Epistle then adds a horizontal dimension to the issue of concern for others in their whole-human (including specifically physical) needs: "John Wayne theology" ("God helps them what helps themselves") is not Christian theology; "bear one another's burdens" (Gal 6:2) is. That "bearing" may be done through institutions (such as the aforementioned health-care facilities) or locally, even one on one. But it is as surely a part of God's "economy of salvation" as is what Jesus did in Nikolaus Herman's great Christmas hymn (*LBW* #47):

He undertakes a great exchange,
Puts on our human frame,
And in return gives us his realm,
His glory, and his name,
His glory and his name.

Finally, to put a bow on the package (and a red thread through all three lessons), it's worth recalling that our word "salvation" comes from the Latin *salus*, which means first of all "health, well-being." As we experience *salus* and share it with others, we recall that it was for this purpose that our Lord "has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases" (Isa 53:4a) in his own physical body on the cross. Somehow, no matter what we're preaching about, we end up back there. GCH

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 9)
9 July 2006

2 Samuel 5:1–5, 9–10 or Ezekiel 2:1–5
Psalm 48 or Psalm 123
2 Corinthians 12:2–10
Mark 6:1–13

For better or for worse, dodgeball has been removed from the repertoire of many grade school playgrounds. But there remain plenty of places in life where it can be decidedly uncomfortable to be caught in the middle.

Yet that is exactly the position in which God repeatedly puts chosen individuals, according to the lessons for this Sunday. Ezekiel 2:1–5 begins the content of God's call to Ezekiel, following immediately on the mysterious and complex (indeed, baroque) Chariot Vision in which God arrived in the preceding chapter. There is nothing mysterious or complex about what God has in mind for the prophet. Twice, in vv. 3 and 4, God tells Ezekiel that he is "sending" him, using the technical verb for an ambassadorial appointment, *shalach*. Further, Ezekiel's commission is absolutely clear: "You shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD'" (v. 4). But Ezekiel will be playing to a tough house. Six times in three verses (vv. 3–5) God informs Ezekiel that his audience has a history of attitudes and actions at cross-purposes with the will of God.

At first, it seems that God is simply setting in place justification for the horrific judgment that will follow later in the book, when God leaves Jerusalem and even becomes the enemy of his own people (chaps. 11, 3, and 33): "Whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house), they shall know that there has been a prophet among them." The parenthetical remark makes apparent which way God thinks things

will go, such that a devastated people will have to admit in retrospect that God had dealt fairly with them and had done his best by sending a prophet. "So they are without excuse," as St. Paul said in another context, centuries later (Rom 1:20). Nevertheless, there is a chance: The people may just listen, despite their past history and present proclivities. But the outcome is not Ezekiel's burden. It is enough that Ezekiel proclaim God's message, as the man in the middle.

In Mark 6:1–13, at first Jesus is on the spot—in his own hometown, of all places! His old neighbors concede that Jesus has both wisdom and power, but they cannot get past their cognitive dissonance based on their knowledge of his family and of his lower-class origins. (Increasingly, NT scholars are seeing τέκτων, "carpenter," as socially beneath both farmers and skilled laborers, something like a "journeyman handyman.") So they "take offense." Jesus responds by grouping himself with the prophets and, like many prior prophets, finds himself "amazed" at people's preference for their own distorted preconceptions to God's appointed message and messenger.

In light of this setback Jesus goes elsewhere to resume what he had attempted in Nazareth (i.e., teaching) and sends out ambassadors of his own—prophets of the prophet, as it were. Interestingly, Jesus sends them in teams of two. Whether for mutual support or accountability or both is not said. Jesus specifically directs them to travel light. Like Ezekiel, their assignment is to bear testimony, not ensure results. Yet it is more than a little intriguing that the twelve appear to have enjoyed greater success in their work than Jesus did in his, at least in Nazareth: Compare v. 5 ("And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them") with v. 13 ("They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them").

2 Corinthians 12:2–10 then takes us to the man whose sufferings for service "in the middle" are described in detail at a length second within the NT only to Jesus', namely, St. Paul. In the chapter prior to today's lesson Paul provides the most complete roster of his travails (2 Cor 11:23–28). Today's Epistle begins with the account of an ecstatic revelatory experience, apparently as a trump-card played on those who continued to challenge his credentials as a true apostle (Gk. ἀπόστολος, literally "ambassador, delegate, messenger"). Paul immediately backs away from taking any ensuing credit, however, clearly conscious that any resultant boasting would inappropriately spotlight the messenger in place of the sender. In fact, Paul notes (perhaps ruefully) that God had intervened in his life to prevent excessive egotism by giving him a "thorn . . . in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me." Thus, the messenger himself receives a messenger at God's behest, to which he responds by pleading thrice with God—in effect: "I get the point of your thorn; now please remove it" (cf. Jesus' pleas in Mt 14:32–42). But the point, God says, is that the point must remain, so as to give Paul no alternative to utter reliance on God's grace and Christ's power. The lesson concludes with an example of what we might term Pauline *jujitsu*, in which weakness is leveraged into strength (cf. the converse application in Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8, in his adjudication of the "meat offered to idols" issue: The strong position demonstrates its strength by deferring to the weak position). Paul thereby makes his peace with the costs of apostleship.

What is the preacher to make of this day's pericopes? We do well to begin by applying them to ourselves. They warn us against surprise at "alligators" and similar fauna among our hearers, even as they com-

fort us with the limits of our calling: to proclaim with faithfulness (and all the skill that we can muster), leaving success to the Spirit of God. They encourage us to collegiality (remember "two by two" in Mk 6:7). At a time when at least some congregations are now compensating their pastors at a level commensurate with peer professionals, they remind us to travel light. They drive us back in hard times to God's call and sending and, beyond that, to a divine grace that, paradoxically, can be most evident when we feel that we are least responsible for any successful reception of the gospel among our hearers. We are most faithful, when we act both with ἐξουσία ("authority," Mk 6:7) and in ἀσθένεια ("weakness," 2 Cor 12:10).

Particularly the Gospel lesson also reminds us of one of the greatest challenges of effective ministry: the achievement of the right balance between personal and professional distance and engagement vis-à-vis those whom we serve. As Jesus himself experienced, familiarity can breed offense; yet, as Paul realized, constant emphasis on one's distinctive place in the community of faith risks confusion of the messenger with the message. We might even dare to suggest a likeness here to the need for balance in our own relationship with God as both transcendent and immanent (cf. reflections above for The Holy Trinity). Overemphasis on either distance or engagement (and most of us tend by nature one way or the other) puts us, respectively, either too much in the middle or too little for faithful ministry.

What, then, do these lessons have to say to our hearers? Look first at the points offered above with respect to preachers: many of them are immediately transferable. In this regard, it is imperative for the preacher to invite all to reach back to God's call and sending as the basis for living transformed rather than conformed lives (Rom 12:2). The fundamental calling and sending for all Christians—pastors included—happens in baptism. If anything, it is the *laos* who most need this assurance, as it is they who are most often most firmly caught in the middle, tugged between participating in a world of "rebels who have rebelled against me" (Ezek 2:3) and conveying God's message of judgment and grace to that same world.

How important is it *really* that we sent ones act on our calls? A story that I heard early in my ministry (and whose source I have long forgotten) makes the point nicely:

> Upon his ascension, Jesus was welcomed to heaven by myriad angels. One of them, seeing the disciples still looking up with mouths agape, turned to Jesus with a worried look: "Are *these* the only ones you've got to carry on your work on Earth? What if they fail? What's your backup plan?"
>
> "There is no backup plan," Jesus replied. "I'm counting on them."

For the brief span of our lives, we're it (or It, to return to the world of childhood games), right in the middle of the action. But, as Luther liked to say when he felt spiritually hemmed in, "*Baptizatus sum*" ("I am baptized!"). For the baptized, called, and sent, the middle is not simply an uncomfortable place. It is also a place of opportunity to speak and act in the name of God and thereby to enlarge the middle ground and the host of those who live and serve there. GCH

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 10) 16 July 2006

2 Samuel 6:1–5, 12b–19 or Amos 7:7–15
Psalm 24 or Psalm 85:8–13
Ephesians 1:3–14
Mark 6:14–29

Two weeks ago today marked the 230th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence by the Continental Congress on 2 July 1776. The annual celebration of that document's promulgation on July 4th is the occasion for much celebration in the United States. From the outset, those involved in establishing the new nation were conscious that they were up to something special: *Novus ordo seclorum* ("A new order of the ages"), says the Great Seal (as on the dollar bill). Yet, like any human institution—the institutional church included—our system of governance and (even more) those who govern display the age-old imperfections of the human condition. Lord Acton had it right: Power corrupts. So did the centurion in Luke 7:8: All of us, even those in authority, are set under authority. But power does not like to be called on its corruption or reminded of its penultimacy.

The Old Testament and Gospel lessons for today bear out these observations. Amos 7:7–15 relates an incident in the life of the prophet in which he confronts both the political and spiritual leadership of the Northern Kingdom, Israel. (Such biographical accounts are relatively rare in the prophets, especially the "minor" prophets.) Following a vision in which God pronounces judgment on both Israel's worship places and its royal house, we learn that Amos has gone to Bethel, one of two main sanctuaries in the North, just over the border from Amos's native Judah. There he has relayed God's words, and there he confronts the priest of Bethel, Amaziah.

Actually, the priest plays something of a double game. On the one hand, he faithfully reports Amos's words to King Jeroboam II (seen more pejoratively, he tattles on him). On the other hand, he then seeks to defuse any ensuing confrontation by advising Amos to go back home, implying that Amos is there on his own initiative and perhaps even to profit as a prophet. Implicitly, we see that Amaziah cannot imagine why anyone would speak as Amos does at the risk that Amos is taking. While being duly cautious about psychologizing across millennia, we can fairly conclude that Amaziah has simply projected his own categories and anxieties onto Amos. But Amos will have none of it. Amos states that the sole cause of his presence and proclamation is the direct directive of God. He then adds to God's earlier judgments on the houses of worship and the house of Jeroboam an additional divine curse on Amaziah and his house.

This incident finds an eerie echo in the Gospel lesson. John the Baptist plays the part of Amos, with King Herod (Antipas) in the role of Amaziah. John condemns Herod for violating the Mosaic law against marrying his brother's wife (Lev 18:16—ironically, the very passage cited by England's King Henry VIII in support of a much-belated annulment of his first marriage). But it is that brother's wife, Herodias, who truly takes umbrage. Herod plays the double game of arresting John "on account of Herodias," while simultaneously fearing and protecting him. In fact, it is possible that John's effect on the king was still more profound: most ancient NT manuscripts read, "when [Herod] heard [John], he did (Gk. 'εποίει) many things," while some of the most important codices (and the NRSV) have,

"when he heard him, he was greatly perplexed (Gk. ἠπόρει)." In any event, the parallel to Amos breaks down when, thanks to the machinations of Herodias and her daughter, both Herod and then John lose their heads.

In its context this account is a flashback from the current events related in vv. 14–16, as reports of Jesus as teacher and healer begin to circulate in Herod's territory, and people speculate whether Jesus is John *redivivus*, Elijah, or a prophet like those of old (including Amos!). For his part, Herod is certain that "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised"—and there follows the story. Particularly interesting is that this very sequence of speculations is repeated by the disciples in Mk 8:28, when Jesus asks them "Who do people say that I am?" By contrast with Herod's hopeless conjecture, Peter comes through with the right answer: "You are the Messiah" (Mk 8:29). Herod is entrapped in his own categories and anxieties, as surely as was Amaziah, so that all he manages to do is pronounce judgment on himself (cf. 2 Sam 12:5).

Today's Epistle lesson begins a new series of readings from the Pauline correspondence, this time from Ephesians (1:3–14). Following the formulaic introduction in v. 1f., the apostle lyrically presents a high Christology, as he states that since "before the foundation of the world" it has been God's plan to redeem his elect ones "in Christ"—a phrase that occurs with minor variations eleven times in twelve verses. Within the vast span from pre-creation to the present day, it is the Ephesians' extraordinary privilege to be alive at the decisive moment of the plan's implementation, "in the fullness of time" (*kairos*; cf. Gal 4:2, usually translated the same way, but from the Gk. *chronos*). The passage is replete with gospel joy, as it repeatedly credits what has happened "to [or for] the praise of his glory [or glorious grace]." The language is almost Johannine, as the Ephesians are told that "in Christ" they are adopted children of God (cf. Jn 1:12f.; 1 Jn 3:1f.). As a "pledge of our inheritance toward redemption," they "were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit"—a clear reference to baptism (cf. Rom 6:4; Gal 2:27).

As Paul asked in a different context (Rom 8:31a), "What then are we to say about these things?" As citizens of history's most powerful and wealthy nation, Americans are well reminded regularly of the inevitable failings and contingency of all earthly authority. (Those in authority within the institutional church need to recall the same, so there is a natural "hook" to ensure that the sermon is preached to "us," not "you" or "them.") Indeed, the preacher need not be grinding any political axe to say clearly that it is integral to both the biblical *and* the American tradition to speak truth to power. And neither preacher nor hearer is compelled to be obnoxious or simplistic, if they understand from today's Old Testament and Gospel lessons that one's witness must be clear and direct rather than compromised by concern for consequences that grow out of their (or others') prior categories and anxieties.

We can only live in the moment and bear witness in our times, but the Epistle lesson reminds us that all moments and times (and authorities and powers, for that matter) must be viewed *sub specie aeternitatis*, "under the aspect of eternity." For the Christian, such a perspective does not simply (or even mainly) entail God's authority and power over all realms and rulers. Through the lens of baptismal water the Christian sees all things in the context of God's eternal plan of "goodwill toward people" (Lk 2:14 var.) 'εν Χριστῷ. The first and last words that God wants his people to hear are those of grace. (In this

connection, it is important for the Lutheran Christian preacher to note that the double reference to predestination [προορίσας] in the Epistle [vv. 5 and 11] can be understood *only* in the context of grace, as simply one more way of saying that our adoption papers are in order [cf. Formula of Concord, Art. XI].)

As has often been observed, the Greek *kairos* is distinctive vis-à-vis *chronos*, in that the former often denotes "a period characterized by some aspect of special crisis" (BDAG, p. 498). The Epistle lesson teaches that we, as surely as the Ephesians, live in the *kairos* of Christ's appearing. Taken together, then, today's lessons both urge us to engagement with the powers of this world and assure us that not "anything . . . in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8:39). GCH

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 11) 23 July 2006

2 Samuel 7:1–14a or Jeremiah 23:1–6
Psalm 89:20–37 or Psalm 23
Ephesians 2:11–22
Mark 6:30–34, 53–56

The theme of leadership continues into this Sunday's lessons, today using the image of "shepherd" and emphasizing not the failings of leaders (and the need to confront them) but the important role that leaders play in meeting human needs and pursuing God's goals for humanity.

Because both the Old Testament and the Gospel (and the Psalm of the Day, the beloved 23rd) all feature the shepherd metaphor, a few introductory words on the use of the image in the ancient Near East, including the Bible, are appropriate. As far back as the region's first great ruler, Sargon of Akkad (ca. 2300 B.C.), the title of "shepherd" was employed for kings to emphasize the absolute authority of the king over his "flock," the ability of the king to provide direction (what a recent U. S. president termed "the vision thing"), and the capability of the king to protect his people from harm. In sum, to call a ruler "shepherd" was to connote a person of the polar opposite character and function to the meek figure often depicted in popular art based on Psalm 23.

The Old Testament lesson (Jer 23:1–6) contains three parts. Verse 1 begins a "woe oracle" against the shepherd-kings "who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture." Verses 2–3 make it clear that the "scattering" is a literal reference to the past, present, and future exiles of Israel and Judah, for which the kings are held responsible (as also in the "Deuteronomistic History," e.g., 2 Kgs 23:26). Verse 3f. then describes God's plan personally to undo the damage, after which God will establish faithful and effective shepherd-kings. Finally, v. 5f. specifically promises a future Davidic king over a reunited Judah and Israel. As such, this is literally a "messianic prophecy," as it promises the rule of a future heir to David, the prototypical "anointed one" (1 Sam 16:12f.).

A few points merit special emphasis. First, one of the results of God's bringing the scattered flock back to the fold will be that "they shall be fruitful and multiply." This direct allusion to Gen 1:28 suggests that among the shepherd-king's core responsibilities is for his people to realize God's intentions for them as those created in God's image. Second, among the results of the Davidic king's reign is that he "shall execute justice (*mishpat*) and righteousness (*tsedaqah*) in the land" (v. 5), the very

qualities that God said he was seeking in Isaiah's Song of the Vineyard, nearly two centuries earlier (Isa 5:7). Third, it is surely no accident that the future Davidic ruler will be called "The LORD is our righteousness" (*YHWH tsidqenu*). The king of Judah at the time, Zedekiah (*Tsidqiyahu*, "YHWH is my righteousness") had utterly failed to live up to the name that the Babylonian king [!] had given him (2 Kgs 24:17).

The narrative of the Gospel lesson from Mark (6:30–34, 53–56) picks up where it left off two weeks ago, as the disciples return to Jesus and tell him "all that they had done and taught" (cf. Mk 6:13). Jesus invites them to take some much-needed time apart to rest, but his intentions are thwarted by the crowds, who intercept the would-be vacationers as they head by boat for a "deserted place." Jesus responds with gut-deep compassion (ἐσπλαγχνίσθη) and begins teaching them, but it is his rationale that is of special interest to us at the moment: "because they were like sheep without a shepherd." The lectionary then omits vv. 35–51, the feeding of the five thousand and the stilling of the storm, likely because next week's Gospel from John 6 contains parallels to both. Whatever the reason, the resumption with vv. 53–56 is felicitous, as it picks up on the details of Jesus' "shepherding" the multitude. In these latter verses he heals the sick, a fitting complement to his teaching in v. 34.

It is clear that Jesus understands and seeks to practice the principle of rest (*shabat*) that God had built into the fabric of creation (Gen 2:2) and Israel's society (Exod 20:8–11; Deut 5:12–15)—a principle that many Americans, including especially pastors, ignore at their peril. Second, it is interesting that Jesus' response to his observation that the crowds were "like sheep without a shepherd" was to teach them, feed them, and (later) heal them. Robert Greenleaf may have coined the term "servant-leadership," but Jesus certainly demonstrates the concept. Third, we note the reappearance of "touching his garments" as a means of healing (cf. Mk 5:28). In typical Semitic style, that reiteration is not simply repetition but a "see you and raise you": it is the mere *fringe* of his cloak this time.

The Epistle lesson continues the series of readings from Ephesians (2:11–22). Today's focus is on the essential point of Paul's calling as "apostle to the gentiles" (Gal 2:7–9): Christ is the "peace" (Gk. εἰρήνη; cf. Heb. *shalom*, "wholeness, health, salvation") of Jews and gentiles, viz., he has united them "in his flesh" and has "broken down the dividing wall" of hostility between them. Christ accomplished this "through the cross," by which he "reconcile[d] both groups to God." In a world in which citizenship counted for much (cf. Acts 21:39; 22:25–29), Christ has made the gentiles co-citizens (συμπολῖται) in the church and "members of the household of God" (as the Jews had long been). All together make up God's "holy temple" and "dwelling place," equaling (or replacing?) the temple in Jerusalem.

Although Paul's tone is positive and inclusive throughout the lesson, he does raise a couple of long-term, sticky issues. The first is the question of the full and direct inclusion of the gentiles, which, as we know well from Acts 15 and Galatians, was the first major bone of contention in the "Jesus movement" (a term used advisedly, to stress that Christianity was, in fact, a group or sect within Judaism until at least A.D. 70). Jesus himself had said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt 15:24). Lacking sufficient space to pursue the matter in detail, we may suggest the (ironic) application of a rabbinic hermeneutical principle, viz., the citation of a third passage of Scripture to resolve an apparent contradiction between two others. In this case, we

note Jesus' words in Jn 10:16 (also appropriate in view of the other lessons): "I have other sheep who do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd." However we may resolve this question (or not), what absolutely must not be lost is our amazement as gentiles that Jesus is for us, too (cf. Rom 11:17–20).

A second, more difficult, issue lies in Paul's claim that "[Christ Jesus] has abolished the law." Again, this is at apparent odds with Jesus' own words: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law . . ." (Mt 5:17–19). This question has been far more problematic than the first throughout church history. An initial compromise solution was reached in Acts 15:28f., but the question has persisted to the present day (e.g., Seventh Day Adventists and the Sabbath). Lutheran Christians, too, have struggled, as evidenced by the ongoing debates over the "third use of the Law" (cf. Formula of Concord, Art. VI).

These two issues only skirt one that has haunted Christianity from its beginnings as an entity separate from Judaism. As suggested by the "(or replacing?)" above, to what degree is the NT teaching, especially in texts like today's Epistle lesson and the book of Hebrews, that Judaism has been superseded by Christianity? A large literature exists on this question, and recent years have seen commendable efforts on the part of Jews to acknowledge that Judaism is not the faith of the Tanak (i.e., OT) pure and simple, as well as equally commendable efforts on the part of Christians to work through the exegetical implications of texts like Romans 9–11 and the historical implications of Christian anti-Semitism and of the Holocaust. Dealing with issues like these three is difficult, at best, in a sermon, but part of shepherding the people of God is teaching them (cf. Mk 6:34)!

Little space remains for additional homiletical suggestions, but "what I have I give you" (Acts 3:6—again out of context). Preachers with nerve enough might start with the first couple of verses of the OT lesson from the KJV: "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!" (v. 1). Through the happenstance of archaic translation, the KJV offers a valid application of the text: there is such a thing as a "charge of souls" (cf. Ezekiel 3 & 33). Conversely, those charged with the selection of leaders (i.e., "citizens" of state and church) receive notice from today's lessons of the gravity of their task. Above all, however, all three texts affirm that Jesus, the promised Messiah, is God's model and means for both leaders and the led toward his objectives for them, including justice, righteousness, health, and peace. GCH

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 12) 30 July 2006

2 Samuel 11:1–15 or 2 Kings 4:42–44
Psalm 145:10–18 or Psalm 14
Ephesians 3:14–21
John 6:1–21

"Give us this day our daily bread." With these words, two thousand years' worth of Christians have called upon God's providence to supply one of the few truly absolute needs for human life. More precisely, as Luther put it in his Small Catechism, "In fact, God gives daily bread without our prayer, even to all evil people, but we ask in this prayer that God cause us to recognize what our daily bread is and to receive it with thanksgiving" (Kolb/Wengert, *Book of Concord*, p. 357).

So just what *is* "our daily bread," and what does it mean "to receive it with thanksgiving"? Today's lessons both challenge and guide us, as we seek answers.

The three verses that make up the Old Testament lesson (2 Kgs 4:42–44) relate the miraculous feeding of a hundred from twenty barley loaves and fresh ears of grain (a biblical-era "loaf" was considerably smaller than the 24 oz. variety to be found in today's markets). The lesson establishes a number of elements that will recur in the far more familiar Gospel account of the Feeding of the Five Thousand: (1) a small supply of food is at hand; (2) Elisha directs that a large group be fed with that supply; (3) a servant objects that the supply is insufficient; (4) the distribution proceeds anyway at Elisha's direction; and (5) there is enough to feed the group, plus leftovers.

While Elisha is often viewed as a lesser light to Elijah (even at the time: 2 Kgs 3:11), and some of his acts parallel those of his master (e.g., an unending oil supply for a widow [2 Kgs 4:1–7//1 Kgs 17:8–16] and raising the son of his hostess [2 Kgs 4:8–37 //1 Kgs 17:17–24]), Elisha establishes himself as a distinct and even superior "man of God," as an advisor to kings (2 Kgs 3:13–19; 6:9) and mentor to prophets (4:38–41; 6:1–7), and as the performer of unique miracles, including this one. The careful reader of John's Gospel, from which today's Gospel lesson is taken, will observe similar differentiation and establishment of superiority of Jesus vis-à-vis his predecessor, John the Baptist (1:19–42; 3:22–30). Second, it is noteworthy that the "small supply of food" in Elisha's miracle is presented to him as a Pentecost offering, as provided in Lev 23:15–21. This suggests that the miracle was in keeping with the spirit of that festival: the blessing of the growth and harvest to come (just not usually this fast!). By contrast, as we will see, Jesus performs the corresponding miracle at Passover, with different connotations.

We turn then to that "corresponding miracle" recorded in John 6. The elements of the miracle (or "sign," to use the Johannine term) are the same as in the OT lesson but in a slightly different order and with greater elaboration. In fact, the miracle is heightened in a number of ways. The first is literally so: Jesus goes up a mountain, where both ancient Near Eastern and biblical tradition experienced encounters with the divine (e.g., OT Sinai and Zion and NT Golgotha). Second, Jesus feeds not 100 but 5,000. Third, the text advises us that Jesus raised the issue of feeding the multitude with his disciples even before the small supply of food appeared and that he did so "to test [Philip], for he himself knew what he was going to do." As always in John, Jesus is unambiguously in control. And there are twelve baskets of leftovers, as one wag put it: "One for every disciple who said it couldn't be done."

Then there is the change from Pentecost to Passover. In John's Gospel, this is the second of three Passovers during Jesus' ministry (cf. 2:13; 18:28); in fact, these three Passovers are the chief source of the tradition of a three-year ministry for Jesus. The other two find Jesus in Jerusalem, but for this one he is in Galilee. The exegetical effect is to give this chapter special prominence (as the Year B lectionary has done with a vengeance) and to place Jesus' words and acts in this chapter in the context of redemption, in keeping with the chief theme of Passover. Specifically, vis-à-vis the other two Passovers in John, chap. 6 is thereby laid alongside the events of chap. 2, where Jesus declares his body to be the temple (or dwelling place) of God, where God and God's people were reconciled via the sacrificial system, and those of chap. 18f., where Jesus is shown on the cross to be exactly what John had called him, "the [Passover] lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world" (1:29). In this light, and given the discourse that follows, "when he had given thanks" (6:11) may simply reflect the Jewish practice of prayer before meals ("Blessed are you, O Lord our God, king of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth"), or it may be an allusion to the Eucharist (cf. the Words of Institution). One suspects that Jesus' act has some special significance for the evangelist, as v. 23 calls special attention to it once again.

A second event follows in the Gospel lesson, and it ought not be ignored. Jesus withdraws after the Feeding, lest he be conscripted as a "bread king" (cf. the Roman emperors' "bread and circuses" and the first temptation of Jesus in Mt 4:3f. and Lk 4:3f.). He then crosses the Sea on foot, while his disciples are rowing across. As in Mk 4:35–41, this certainly demonstrates Jesus' Lordship over the sea (see comments on Pentecost 3 Gospel), but it is also the occasion for the second of many "I am" (Ἐγώ εἰμι) sayings by Jesus in John's Gospel.

What Word of God can one bring from these lessons? Preachers should not overlook the obvious: God wants people fed! As a life's challenge to most Americans, that would be "dukedom large enough" (Shakespeare, *Tempest* I.ii). But both lessons build on that point to make others. Some are again obvious, e.g., that God's overflowing plethora of gifts is no occasion for waste. Others are more subtle, e.g., that the line between the creative and sustaining acts of God and God's redemptive acts is no more hard and fast than the distinction between physical and spiritual "daily bread." Reflection on and thanks for the one leads naturally and seamlessly to the other.

A brief comment is in order about a feature of the Year B lectionary that I have mentioned a couple of times now, namely, the inclusion of five consecutive Sundays' worth of Gospel lessons from John 6. Since the three-year lectionary's promulgation, more than a few preachers have found it a challenge to bring a fresh and distinct word from God for so long a period, when the subject matter remains so similar. Three words of counsel may be helpful.

First, the preacher does well (even more than usual) to consider texts and themes for several Sundays out beyond the next. Second, even granted the dominance of the Bread of Life idea, there are differences among these lessons, so that the preacher might take the hearers through a purposeful sequence of angles or facets, perhaps by considering the Gospel lessons through the eyes of the disciples, the crowd, "the Jews" (a problematic translation of οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι—see discussion in BDAG, p. 479), and even Jesus himself. Third, remember that all three lessons are potential texts.

Finally, the Epistle lesson (Eph 3:14–21) continues Paul's unrelenting praise of

God's grace and glory in Christ. Verses 14–19 report Paul's prayer on behalf of his hearers, that they would grow in their faith and in their knowledge of God, all the while conceding that knowing the love of Christ (both as received and as shared) ultimately surpasses human capacity (cf. Phil 4:7). These verses stand as a model of prayer for pastors on behalf of their people and, indeed, for all Christians on behalf of one another.

The final two verses contain one of the great Pauline doxologies (cf. Rom 11:33–36; 16:25–27). As in Romans 11, Paul appears moved to high and heartfelt praise upon reaching the limits of human language as he expresses himself on the immediately preceding topic. It is "indeed right and salutary" to remind all Christians (but especially ourselves as theologians) that God's grace in Christ is finally beyond not merely our comprehension but even our expression, as Paul Gerhardt put it well:

What language shall I borrow
To thank thee, dearest friend,
For this thy dying sorrow,
Thy pity without end? (*LBW* #116, st. 3)

So it is with our ability to grasp the full nature and quantity of our "daily bread" and fully to thank God for it. Yet here, too, God is ready to help in a way especially appropriate for this Pentecost season: "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom 8:26).

That's "synergism" that even a Lutheran could love. GCH

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 13) 6 August 2006

2 Samuel 11:26–12:13a
or Exodus 16:2–4, 9–14
Psalm 51:1–12 or Psalm 78:23–29
Ephesians 4:1–16
John 6:35, 41–51

Some years ago, while visiting Istanbul, my wife and I bought a lovely, hand-woven carpet. Even from the back, one can make out the basic design and get a sense of the colors. But only by seeing and touching the top side of the carpet is it possible to know fully the carpet's design, its rich dyes, and especially its depth of texture.

Something of the same kind occurs when we move from last week's Gospel lesson to this week's. Last week we heard of Jesus' feeding of the five thousand and of his walking on the sea. The multiplication of the loaves and fishes clearly played a major role in the earliest Christian understandings of Jesus, as it is the only miracle to find a place in all four canonical Gospels. But only John's Gospel follows up by "connecting the dots" with the discourse on bread that follows. The result is a magnificent view of Jesus not merely as provider of the staff of life but as the very bread of life himself. John shows us the top of the carpet.

The form of the Gospel reading is a function of the culture in which Jesus lived (and which continues in the Middle East even today). As opposed to a matrix of status and values based on guilt (as in the West), the culture of Palestine is based on honor and shame. Characteristic of honor/shame cultures is the "honor challenge," which often takes the form of a verbal exchange in which each side seeks to demonstrate its credentials within that culture (and

simultaneously to expose the pretense of the other). John's Gospel is full of such challenges, and they are not unknown in the Synoptics, either. (A particularly fascinating example is the only one that Jesus "lost": his conversation with the Canaanite/Syrophoenician woman in Mt 15:21–28//Mk 7: 24–30.) In today's specimen, by its end the conversation has moved from yesterday's bellies full of bread, through a duel over status linked to ancestors, to the crowd's request for the "true bread from heaven . . . which [or who] . . . gives life to the world." At that point Jesus is able to make the climactic claim of the chapter: "I am (Ἐγώ εἰμι) the bread of life." *Voilà*, the carpet!

Here, briefly, is another particularly fruitful entrée into the text: It is fascinating to lay this Sunday's conversation alongside that between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4. The elements of the two challenges are in almost exact parallel, except that the latter does not conclude with an explicit statement by Jesus, "I am the water of life." Actually, another difference is that the Samaritan woman does not demand a sign. The *Samaritan woman* (two strikes) comes off better than Jesus' Jewish, presumably male interlocutors in chap. 6.

At the pivot point of the conversation in today's text is a discussion of "manna in the wilderness," the bread that was both physical bread and "spiritual food" (1 Cor 10:3). The crowd quotes from today's Old Testament lesson (Exod 16:2–4, 9–15) to point to the bread sign in the wilderness *non pareil*, and they connect themselves with it via their ancestors: "He gave *them* bread from heaven to eat" (Exod 16:4 and 15, conflated). Jesus cleverly shifts the emphasis to the identity of "*He*" (left ambiguous by the crowd): not Moses, but "my Father"—an ancestor whom they did not share with him. Game, set, match.

Several points from the Old Testament lesson bear additional explication, given the importance of bread from heaven as the aforementioned pivot point in the Gospel. The text is one of the "murmuring traditions," but, as was uniformly the case before Israel bound itself in covenant at Sinai, God responded without punishments but with a gift to relieve the people's complaint. God is even present in visible form, the "glory of the LORD" (*kebod YHWH*), as he presents what he calls "bread from heaven" but the people name "manna" (v. 31, from Heb. *man hu'*, "What [is] it?"). There is a certain grim humor to the situation: for the next forty years Israel survives on this visible (yea, sacramental) gift of God's grace, but all Israel can think to call it is (in effect) "What's that stuff?"

Tempting as it is to rush headlong into the Eucharistic allusions to be found already at this point in John 6, the preacher is advised to hold off. Two Sundays hence (Pentecost 11/Proper 15), the Gospel lesson will be Jn 6:51–58, complete with "Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life" (v. 54a). This day is well spent in the spirit of the Gospel lesson, in transition from Jesus' gift of bread in the wilderness to Jesus as the bread of life, via manna, the ancient bread from heaven.

One issue that begs emphasis is the ease with which the crowd (and we today!) confuse the signs of God's grace—including bread from whatever source—with that which they signify: God's immortal love for us in the mortal Christ. For what do we truly hunger and seek?

Second, with the crowd, we assume that the key question in response to divine encounter is "What must we do to perform the works of God?" (and "When is enough enough?" we add out of our guilt culture). Jesus responds to us as to the crowd: "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." Dietrich Bonhoeffer

figured out what that means: so defined, the work of God requires nothing and costs everything.

Ephesians 4 also represents a transition, betrayed by the little Greek word οὖν, "therefore." For three chapters Paul has rung the changes on how God has in Christ replaced death with life, hostility with peace, and hidden plan with revealed glory. With "therefore" Paul gets down to business with the implications for the lives of his hearers. As the old line has it, "he's quit preaching and gone to meddling." With eight versions of the word "one" in four verses (vv. 3–6) Paul makes his agenda abundantly clear: God has made you one in Christ, so "maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

"But" (δὲ), he goes on to say in v. 7, unity does not mean identity. The risen and ascended Christ has showered his people with gifts as various as apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor/teachers, all to equip and build up the saints into a united, mature body. The metaphor is one of human growth and development, very much like a baby who must "grow into" a head that is proportionally too large for the rest of the body (v. 15).

Neither Paul nor anyone else in the NT era knew anything of "denominations" within the church, but he was well enough acquainted with the scandal of division. From prison Paul "begs" his hearers "to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called," characterized by humility, gentleness, patience, love, and, above all, unity. Paul would yield to no one as a "defender of the faith," but his bottom line was a passion for the oneness that Christ died to effect. Translating Paul's passion into modern (and postmodern) terms is necessarily done with fear and trembling, but it is safe to assert that he would be equally uncomfortable with "least common denominator" ecumenism and with a concession that unity is a given in the church, but one that can seldom if ever be manifested for the sake of the truth. (Having given a tug on the beam in my own tradition's eye, I leave to others how best to judge the mote of "reconciled diversity.")

T. S. Eliot wrote in "Little Gidding":

> We shall not cease from exploration
> And the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time.

After ten weeks of wrestling with texts and how best to hear and proclaim them, we find ourselves in today's church where we began on Pentecost, standing alongside Ezekiel among disarticulated, dry bones on the valley-plain floor. Paul envisions "the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself in love." God, we wonder, can these bones live? "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause Spirit to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put Spirit in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD" (Ezek 37:4–6). Fed by such words of promise and by the meal of the bread from heaven, we can preach and live in the hope that doesn't just wish, but knows. GCH

Responses *are welcome!*

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