

# LOGIA

A JOURNAL OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGY



## LATIN AMERICAN & U.S. LATINO LUTHERANISM

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# εἴ τις λαλεῖ, ὡς λόγια θεοῦ

LOGIA is a journal of Lutheran theology. As such it publishes articles on exegetical, historical, systematic, and liturgical theology that promote the orthodox theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. We cling to God's divinely instituted marks of the church: the gospel, preached purely in all its articles, and the sacraments, administered according to Christ's institution. This name expresses what this journal wants to be. In Greek, ΛΟΓΙΑ functions either as an adjective meaning "eloquent," "learned," or "cultured," or as a plural noun meaning "divine revelations," "words," or "messages." The word is found in 1 Peter 4:11, Acts 7:38, and Romans 3:2. Its compound forms include ὁμολογία (confession), ἀπολογία (defense), and ἀναλογία (right relationship). Each of these concepts and all of them together express the purpose and method of this journal. LOGIA considers itself a *free conference in print* and is committed to providing an independent theological forum normed by the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. At the heart of our journal we want our readers to find a love for the sacred Scriptures as the very Word of God, not merely as rule and norm, but especially as Spirit, truth, and life that reveals Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life—Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore, we confess the church, without apology and without rancor, only with a sincere and fervent love for the precious Bride of Christ, the holy Christian church, "the mother that begets and bears every Christian through the Word of God," as Martin Luther says in the Large Catechism (LC II, 42). We are animated by the conviction that the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession represents the true expression of the church that we confess as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

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The 1503 depiction of the Matthew 2 account shows the visitation taking place at the manger with oxen looking on, whereas the 1511 one shows Mary and Joseph living in a house. Both depictions show other features added by tradition including three kings for the magi, with one of these from Africa, and Joseph as an old man. But the star is also included in both, keeping with the biblical account.

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## FREQUENTLY USED ABBREVIATIONS

AC [CA]	Augsburg Confession
AE	<i>Luther's Works</i> , American Edition
Ap	Apology of the Augsburg Confession
Ep	Epitome of the Formula of Concord
FC	Formula of Concord
LC	Large Catechism
LSB	<i>Lutheran Service Book</i>
LW	<i>Lutheran Worship</i>
SA	Smalcald Articles
SBH	<i>Service Book and Hymnal</i>
SC	Small Catechism
SD	Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord
SL	St. Louis Edition of Luther's Works
Tappert	<i>The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church</i> . Trans. and ed. Theodore G. Tappert
Triglotta	Concordia Triglotta
TLH	<i>The Lutheran Hymnal</i>
Tr	Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope
WA	<i>Luthers Werke</i> , Weimarer Ausgabe [Weimar Edition]
Kolb-Wengert	Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., <i>The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church</i> (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000).

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# CORRESPONDENCE



Dear Editor,

Though not a Lutheran, I happened by chance on David P. Scaer's fascinating and beautifully argued article "Eucharistic Themes in the Gospels" (*LOGIA* 18, no 2 [Eastertide 2009]: 41–48) and write this note as an appreciation from one theologian to another. Scaer notes how "Since the Roman Catholic Church belongs to the Western tradition, as Lutheran churches do, its practices will influence ours" (p. 45), but it might be worth observing (and I write as a Roman Catholic) a subtle influence from late medieval controversies that is rarely noted by any Westerner. Scaer in common with most Westerners refers to the "bread" and the "breaking of the bread" (p. 48) but this assumes that *artos* is translated as the name of a material substance—the concern in disputes about what happened at consecration—rather than as "a loaf." Once we translate it thus, the symbolism of one loaf representing the unity of one body in which we can participate in 1 Corinthians 10 and 11 (see p. 47) and the *Didache* (also p. 47) becomes obvious. In the early church's liturgy, the forms (one loaf and one cup) were more important than the substances (bread and wine). For a fuller account, see my "Translating *panis* in a eucharistic context: a problem of language and theology," *Worship* 78 (2004): 226–35; and on the related issue of "little glasses" (p. 47), see my "The liturgical vessels of the Latin eucharistic liturgy: a case of an embedded theology," *Worship* 82 (2008): 482–504.

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Dear Editor,

The old saying goes that while Rome burned Nero fiddled. The stated purpose of *LOGIA* is the promotion of the orthodox theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the exhibition of a fervent love for the flock of believers in Christ. Yet while the flock of Christ is being abused by the aggressive marshalling of church members by LCMS movements such as Ablaze!, *LOGIA* continues to focus on topics currently of secondary importance to the flock of Christ, such as "Lutheranism in Latin America" and "Mary and Lutherans." The promotion of Ablaze! has led to liturgy, sermons, and church prayers having the primary aim of marshalling every church member into the front line of evangelism, and leveraging them into doing so by implying that the salvation of neighbors hangs in the balance by what they may or may not do. We have been alerted to this possible abusive treatment of the flock of Christ by the prophet Ezekiel (Eze 34:18), the apostle Paul (2 Cor 11:14), and Jesus himself (Mt 7:15). Surely scholarly activity can be applied to show that the good works of church members decrease as they are moved from the domain of God's grace into the domain of forceful personalities demanding good works. Surely scholarly activity can be applied showing that the number of souls saved is not proportional to the degree of aggressiveness with which church leaders marshal their members into action. Surely leadership relying on the will and self-assertion of itself and its church members is more Nietzschean than Christian. Thankfully, some *LOGIA* writers, such as Klemet Preus and Ken Schurb, have stepped up to the plate. At the risk of the ire of church leadership, they have written articles equipping us lay persons to deal better with church leadership infected with the hope of success by aggressive marshalling of their flock. Their efforts would be enhanced by an issue of *LOGIA* addressing the abusive behavior of Christ's sheep by promoters of Ablaze! and its spin-off movements. Such a *LOGIA* issue would be a work of fervent love not only for the flock of Christ but also for church leadership digging itself ever deeper into the ways of this world. Such an issue could have a theme such as "Feed my sheep!" or "Not abuse but love!" Such a *LOGIA* issue would quench the flames of Ablaze! burning down the portal of Christ's grace through which our faith in Christ is deepened and through which we enter the kingdom of God.

Larry Siefken  
Idaho Falls, ID

# Latino and Lutheran?

## Introduction



AS A VICAR IN CARACAS, VENEZUELA, I ventured every so often to one of the largest Roman Catholic bookstores downtown to peruse various collections of dogmatic treatises. On one of my visits, I started a casual conversation with a Venezuelan priest who asked about my background. After learning that I was a Lutheran seminarian, the priest, somewhat perplexed, exclaimed something like, “Latino Lutheran? That is not possible. You cannot be Latino and Lutheran.”

Prior to his ordination into the priesthood, my confounded conversation partner had been a sociologist. Although we did not make time to go a bit more deeply into the topic at hand, I could only imagine how easy it might have been for a sociologist to think of Lutheranism mainly as a German transplant in the Americas, a form of Christianity for a few immigrants of German background, a Protestant movement with no historical or religious roots in the minds and hearts of Latin Americans.

The priest with a sociological streak had not been entirely wrong. If one reads Rudy Blank’s article on Lutheranism in Venezuela, one will find stories of German immigrants or American (meaning South- and North-American) missionaries of German roots establishing Lutheran congregations in predominantly Roman Catholic territory. Some years ago I taught a course at Seminario Concordia in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina, where I was graciously hosted by pastors with last names like Franck, Fischer, and Meyer. Needless to say, similar stories can be told of the origins of the Lutheran churches in Argentina or Brazil.

Where the Venezuelan priest had not been entirely on target was in his somewhat naive assumption that Spanish Catholicism had overwhelmingly won over the hearts and minds of the evangelized peoples of the Americas. Undoubtedly, after centuries of presence in the Americas, the Roman Catholic Church has definitely left marks among the people. Doug Rutt’s article points in particular to the image of the dying Christ who suffers along with us—an image with medieval Roman Catholic roots—as the dominant symbol that historically has captivated especially the suffering masses of Latin Americans. However, Rutt also implies that the popular appropriation of the dying Christ by the people, in spite of its accompanying fatalism and not always clear soteriological meaning, has functioned among the masses as a form of silent protest in the face of oppression. By identifying with us in his innocent human suffering, Christ shows his solidarity with those who suffer unjustly.

Moreover, little recognition had been given by the priest to the decline of Roman Catholic piety itself (or the rise of nomi-

nal or cultural Catholicism) in various sectors of the Americas as well as the modern rise of Pentecostalism of all varieties in the region. Blank refers to these realities of the context today in order to raise the need for a Lutheran confessional identity in a Latino world at odds with the Scriptures, the Confessions, and the gospel. Interestingly, the priest was raising the same issue but from a different angle, namely, by asking how one could actually be Latino and have a Lutheran identity. It is as if the priest had been saying to me, “Dare to show that a Latino Lutheran is possible!” I think that there lies precisely the difficult and ongoing challenge but also opportunity for Lutheranism in the Latino world.

The contributions in this special issue of *LOGIA* on Lutheranism in the Latino world embody in various ways the tension that takes place when “Latino” and “Lutheran” encounter and interact with one another in critical and constructive ways. On the critical side, for example, Blank warns against forms of Lutheranism that become divisive by capitulating to the promotion of political agendas or particular forms of governments and leaving aside her mission to preach the word. Similarly, in my Forum piece on immigration, I warn against allowing a particular position for or against immigration law to get in the way of the church’s unity in Christ or her work of proclaiming the gospel to all people regardless of their legal status. Our comments presuppose a Lutheran commitment to the teaching on the “two kingdoms,” which distinguishes between God’s work in the temporal realm to promote peace and justice through civil government and his work in the spiritual realm to reconcile sinners to God through the proclamation of the gospel.

On the constructive side, Rutt suggests that, although not adequate in its portrayal of the Christ who has already died “for us,” the bloody image of the Christ dying “with us” can nevertheless be seen positively as a Latin American contribution to North American Christians who, under the spell of Protestantism and consumerism, often fail respectively to see God in the face of the crucified Christ (preferring the empty cross to the crucifix) and show solidarity with the crucified peoples of the world today. In my article on hope, I argue that the Lutheran distinction between the “two kinds of righteousness” can aid us to affirm the responsibility of Christians under God’s command to promote the wellbeing of the neighbor and a more just society through vocation (active righteousness)—a matter of utmost importance among theologians and intellectuals in the Latino world—without making those efforts the condition for our righteousness before God through faith in Christ, which

the gospel alone can create (passive righteousness). A nonexclusionist reading of the “preferential option for the poor” in terms of what I would prefer to call a “priority of love” towards our neediest neighbors can help to give some shape to our discussions on what active righteousness actually looks like in a U.S. context where Latinos are statistically speaking the poorest vis-à-vis other ethnic groups.

Anyone looking for relevant demographics on the Latino presence in the United States can take a look at Doug Groll’s contribution to the issue. More likely to ruffle feathers, however, is Groll’s call for the North American Anglo Lutherans (particularly, its leaders) to repent of their consistent inability to back up with resources its manifold public announcements on the importance of making Hispanic missions a priority. Moreover, Groll calls them to repent for their inability to be a faithful model of confessional Lutheran identity to a young Latino church, referring particularly to what he sees as the gradual loss of basic elements of the historic liturgy in Anglo Lutheran churches. Eloy González sees the need for worship to be countercultural, but not on account of some abstract “church culture” notion defined by appealing to ethno-cultural expressions of the faith that presumably transcend all our particular cultures. Rather, González, while affirming the catholicity of the church’s liturgical expression, warns against making any particular “transcendent” expression of the faith in hymnody the reason for the gap between the church and the Latino hearer. Instead, González argues that the liturgy should only create such a gap in its function as a vehicle for the proclamation of the law and bridge the same gap through the proclamation of the gospel. It is entirely possible then to have Lutheran liturgy with “Latino flavor” that is at the same time catholic and does not water down the liturgy’s function as servant of the word. The call to unmask idols, repent, and heal does not only apply to North American Anglos. If one reads Mark Kempff’s Forum piece on the current state of the Latino family, one realizes that no romantic visions of naturally family-oriented Latinos will be able to replace what the law and the gospel alone can do respectively to convict families of their sins and reconcile members of broken families to one another.

Can one be Latino and Lutheran? The short answer to the question is, of course, yes. But it takes some work. It takes faith-

fulness to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, along with the disposition to engage creatively and in an ongoing way in critical and constructive responsiveness to the Latino world. Latino Lutheran identity will have to draw its boundaries but also venture to deal with issues that are not in every way clearly outside of such boundaries. Compare, for example, Conrad and Trovall on the Virgin of Guadalupe. Daniel Conrad draws a boundary on a Lutheran appropriation of the Virgin of Guadalupe in his review of Maxwell Johnson by pointing to the Lutheran Confessions’ warning against the invocation of the saints. Carl Trovall’s Forum piece, where he acknowledges the potential of the Guadalupan symbol to obscure the gospel, also proposes that the same could potentially serve as a bridge and even preliminary sign of the gospel in that the brown Virgin signifies that God’s love in Christ is also for the *mestizo* and the *indio*.

It has been a great pleasure to serve as guest editor for this bilingual issue of *LOGIA*. Many thanks to the editorial staff of the journal under the leadership of Rev. Michael Albrecht and to all the writers who contributed articles, forum pieces, and book reviews. Many of these writers have also contributed in various ways to the mission of the Center for Hispanic Studies at Concordia Seminary to provide leadership and theological education in the Lutheran tradition from and for U.S. Hispanic Latino communities. Their expertise has been valuable in the production of this project. Summaries in Spanish for all articles, Forum pieces, and Rutt’s review of Bustamante were provided by this editor. Rev. Héctor Hoppe provided the Spanish summary of Holst’s review of Blank, and Coles and Conrad provided their own summaries. All editing in Spanish is the sole responsibility of this editor. My hope is that this issue will not only be educational and thought-provoking, but also encourage Lutherans to participate and contribute in their own ways to the proclamation of the gospel among and with Latinos in the United States and Latin America. It is not only possible to be Latino Lutheran, it is also a joyful task to work in the formation of confessional Latino Lutherans everywhere. Above all, to be Latino Lutheran is a gift from our gracious Father, from whom all blessings flow, and a much needed gift to the Latino world itself.

*Leopoldo Sánchez*

*Guest Editor, LOGIA, Volume 19, Number 1*

### CORRESPONDENCE & COLLOQUIUM FRATRUM

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# Luther, Tentatio, and Latin America

DOUGLAS L. RUTT



*Vivendo, immo moriendo et damnando fit theologus,  
non intelligendo, legendo aut speculando.*<sup>1</sup>

WITH THESE BOLD WORDS, Martin Luther unambiguously set forth his understanding of the place of suffering in theological discernment. For Luther, cogitation, reading, and speculating were no substitute for a theological understanding cultivated in a context in which faith and knowledge are put to the test by the realities of life and ministry. The place of affliction in Luther's famous threefold formula—*oratio, meditatio, and tentatio*—which is part and parcel of the theology of the cross, can help to build a bridge to the proclamation of the gospel of forgiveness, life, and salvation in the context of the Latin American experience, which is fraught with images of suffering and persecution. Luther's comprehension of the experiential dimension of theological structure addresses critically our modern Western tendency to separate theory from practice, theology from ministry, to exchange personal knowledge for secondary knowledge, formation for information, and ideology for practicality. Latin Americans can resonate with and benefit from such a critical stance towards modernity in light of the cross.

Latin American Roman Catholicism, by far the predominant religious power in the region,<sup>2</sup> was forged from the perspective of a version of Christianity that was familiar to Luther. The medieval Christ, familiar to Luther, who is “always dying but never dies,” is the image impressed indelibly in the soul of many Latin Americans. It is not, of course, a totally inaccurate vision of Christ; however, the Spanish Catholicism that was introduced to the Americas was a mixture of the Catholicism of Rome with Moorish, Islamic religiosity born out of Spain's experience of eight centuries of struggle with Islam. Thus, a certain fatalism characterizes the Latin American worldview that has, at least in part, its roots in the influence of Spain's experience of having been the conquered rather than the conqueror.<sup>3</sup>

The classic treatment of the kind of Christianity brought to the “New World” is John Mackay's *The Other Spanish Christ*. Though first published in the 1930s, it demonstrates the importance of understanding “the spiritual history of Spain and South America”<sup>4</sup> in order to begin to discover how not only the

Christ *with us*, but also the Christ *for us*, might be proclaimed in this context. For Mackay, the conquest of the Americas was “the last of the crusades,”<sup>5</sup> in which Spain set off for the New World on a mission from God. He notes the relentless dedication with which the Spaniards went forth:

It is always an impressive spectacle to see a man at work who believes that God has given him a task to do. Such a man is a power to be reckoned with. It is infinitely more impressive to see a whole nation in which everyone, from crowned head and minister of religion to soldier, sailor and beggar, is convinced that his country has been elected by God for a high destiny. Such a nation becomes for the time being invincible.<sup>6</sup>

In the conquest of the Americas a partnership between the sword and the cross was forged, in which “God was above all else a God of battles,” as in Old Testament times, so that “the sword opened the way for the cross, and the cross sanctified the work of the sword.”<sup>7</sup> One cannot say definitively that Ferdinand and Isabella, Charles V, and Philip II were not interested in the true conversion of the Latin American indigenous population to the Christian faith. But there was also what Mackay calls the “secret commission” that each Spaniard carried with him, which was a legal right, explicit or implicit, which stated, “This Spaniard is authorized to do whatever he takes into his head.”<sup>8</sup> The result was an “evangelization,” as Argentinean theologian

1. “Living, rather, dying and being damned make a theologian, not understanding, reading or speculating” (Gordon Rupp, *The Righteousness of God: Luther Studies* [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1953], 102, n. 2).
2. The other growing religious power that is found in Latin America is Pentecostalism. A study of the phenomenon of the growth of this movement in Latin America is a subject unto itself. For more information visit the Pew Forum's website, <http://pewforum.org/surveys/pentecostal/latinamerica>.
3. Rodolfo Blank, *Teología y Misión en América Latina* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1996), 74–75.
4. The subtitle of Mackay's book.
5. John A. Mackay, *The Other Spanish Christ: A Study in the Spiritual History of Spain and South America* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001), 28.
6. *Ibid.*, 25.
7. *Ibid.*, 26.
8. *Ibid.*, 30.

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René Padilla has said, that was carried out “at an incalculable ethical cost.”<sup>9</sup>

There were, of course, Spaniards who deplored the cruelty with which the “evangelization” of Latin America was taking place. One of those, a contemporary of Luther’s, was Bartolomé de Las Casas (1484–1566). The one-cent coin piece of Guatemala bears his image to this day, thus apportioning him an honor given to almost no other Spaniard: *Héroe Nacional* (National Hero). Las Casas, who became a Dominican friar, and, for a time, the bishop of Chiapas, is known as the “Defender of the Indians.” He spent his life lobbying tirelessly among his zealous Spanish countrymen to convince them that the only way to bring the gospel to the native population was through gentle persuasion, that is to say, through the word of God presented to the natives in a peaceable context and manner. He wrote prolifically to propagate his ideas, both revealing the injustice he witnessed in the New World and proposing peaceful means of evangelism.

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*In the minds of many Latin Americans, the suffering Christ, always dying, is a Christ with whom they can identify.*

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One of Las Casas’s most famous accounts is in his *Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies: Or, a faithful Narrative of the Horrid and Unequaled Massacres, Butcheries, and all manner of Cruelties, that Hell and Malice could invent, committed by the Popish Spanish Party on the inhabitants of West-India, Together With the Devastations of several Kingdoms in America by Fire and Sword, for the space of Forty and Two Years, from the time of its first Discovery by them*. The title provides a not-so-subtle hint of the contents. In this document, Las Casas recounts the death at the stake of a chief who dared to take up arms against the Spanish:

While [the chief] was in the midst of the flames, tied to a stake, a certain Franciscan Friar of great piety and virtue, took it upon himself to speak to him of God and our religion, and so explain to him some articles of the Catholic faith, of which he had never heard a word before, promising him eternal life if he would believe, and threatening him with eternal torment if he continued obstinate in his infidelity.

Hatüey, reflecting on the matter, as much as the place and the condition in which he was would permit, asked

the friar that instructed him, whether the gate of heaven was open to the Spaniards; and being answered that those who were good men might hope for entrance there, the *cacique*, without any further deliberation, told him he had no mind to go to heaven, for fear of meeting with such cruel and wicked company as they were, but would much rather choose hell, where he might be delivered from the troublesome sight of such kind of people.<sup>10</sup>

While recent historiography has provided a more balanced and fair view to this *Leyenda Negra* (Black Legend), as the Spanish conquest of the Americas has been called, pointing out that there is more to the story than violent imperialism and cruel racism, there is still no doubt that the psyche of Latin Americans today is formed in great part by this perception of their story, of who they are and where they come from. It is a story of injustice, suffering, cruelty, and death. In the minds of many Latin Americans, the suffering Christ, always dying, is a Christ with whom they can identify.

The context in which ministry in Latin America occurs places us in situations where it is essential to have a clear and comprehensible understanding of how God and his word relate to the concrete realities that are faced in the region. For Latin Americans, the story of the conquest was the beginning of a five-hundred-year history of ongoing violence, inequality, corrupt governments, and military juntas. It seems, therefore, that an understanding of what Luther meant when he spoke of the necessity of *tentatio* as the key to theological understanding, while produced within a specific historical context of some five hundred years ago, has a timeless quality to it because such reality pertains to basic theological truths drawn from Scripture that are true to life. In particular, Luther’s wisdom and comments on *tentatio* are relevant today in contexts where those engaged in the ministry are challenged with an ingrained fatalistic worldview.

Martin Luther’s way of approaching Scripture had much to do with his own life and faith experience. His personal struggles and self-doubt concerning both his faith and his vocation were evident in his interpretation of Scripture. Throughout his life, Luther grew in the conviction that “God continued to tempt his chosen ones.”<sup>11</sup> Luther’s commentaries, lectures, and sermons make it quite obvious that as he interpreted Scripture he was engaged with the text in a dynamic way, projecting many of his own trials and doubts into the struggles of the biblical characters. He commented once: “I find in the Scriptures that Christ, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Job, David and countless others have

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9. C. René Padilla, “The Future of Christianity in Latin America: Missiological Perspectives and Challenges,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 13 (1999): 107.

10. David Jenks, *Six Great Missionaries of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Milwaukee: Morehouse Publishing Company, 1930), 19. For a study of the life and work of Las Casas, comparing him to his contemporary, Martin Luther, see my article, “Bartolomé de Las Casas: A Man of Action,” at [www.LutheranMissiology.org](http://www.LutheranMissiology.org).

11. Warren C. Hovland, “Anfechtung in Luther’s Biblical Exegesis,” in *Accents in Luther’s Theology: Essays in Commemoration of the 450th Anniversary of the Reformation*, ed. Heino O. Kadai (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967), 49.

tasted of hell even in this life.”<sup>12</sup> Luther himself felt that he too had tasted of hell in this life. He was one who felt all things with great intensity and reflected deeply upon the meaning of his experiences. He believed God was involved in every aspect of life, including not only externals but also matters of human thought and emotion. He saw life through *tentatio*.

Luther is obviously describing his own experience as if it were an experience of hell itself in his “Explanations of the Ninety-Five Theses”:

I myself “knew a man” [2 Cor 12:2] who claimed that he had often suffered these punishments, in fact, over a very brief period of time. Yet they were so great and so much like hell that no tongue could adequately express them, no pen could describe them, and one who had not himself experienced them could not believe them. And so great were they that, if they had been sustained or had lasted for half an hour, even for one tenth of an hour, he would have perished completely and all of his bones would have been reduced to ashes. At such a time God seems terribly angry, and with him the whole creation. At such a time there is no flight, no comfort, within or without, but all things accuse. At such a time as that the Psalmist mourns, “I am cut off from thy sight” [see Ps 31:22]. In this moment (strange to say) the soul cannot believe that it can ever be redeemed. . . . All that remains is the stark-naked desire for help and a terrible groaning, but it does not know where to turn for help. In this instance the person is stretched out with Christ so that all his bones may be counted, and every corner of the soul is filled with the greatest bitterness, dread, trembling, and sorrow in such a manner that all these last forever. (AE 31: 129)

According to Luther’s view, God is revealed in the things that men regard as the very antithesis of deity, that is to say, in weakness, humility, and suffering. Luther illustrates this view of life under God with an episode from John 14, in which he identifies Philip as a theologian of glory because he asks Jesus to show him the Father. Luther says, “[Christ] took him with his high-flying ideas of seeking God somewhere else and led Philip right back to himself, saying, ‘Philip, whosoever sees me sees my Father as well.’”<sup>13</sup> The locus of the knowledge of God, therefore, is Christ crucified. In the cross of Christ God is revealed, yet paradoxically hidden. In other words, God is hidden in suffering and death, the very things that are the antithesis of deity.

But God is not to be found except in sufferings and in the cross as has been stated already. Thus the friends of the cross say that the cross is good and that works are evil, because through the cross works are destroyed and the old Adam, who is rather inclined to be made stronger by good

works, is crucified. For it is impossible for a man not to be inflated by his own good works unless the experience of suffering and evil, having previously taken all the spirit out of him and broken him, has taught him that he is nothing and his works are not his own but God’s.<sup>14</sup>

There is, therefore, a functional or practical purpose to the way God reveals himself. For the suffering (or *tentatio*) of Christ, to which the believer also, in a certain sense, is subject, is the avenue to deepened faith in and dependence upon God. Such faith and dependence are in turn requisites for theological understanding, for a theological view of life and the world. Suffering and evil in this world are not merely a bothersome fact of life in a fallen world, but rather the source of tremendous good. For in such things God is paradoxically hidden. Luther, therefore, regarded *tentatio* as coming from God himself. Even if Satan is seen as the instigator of *tentatio*, he carries out his work as an instrument of God, or under God, in order to accomplish God’s *opus alienum* (external work) on God’s behalf.<sup>15</sup>

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*God is revealed in the things that men regard as the very antithesis of deity.*

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When the sinner finds himself driven to despair, loses all confidence in himself or the world, and considers himself to be damned under the wrath of God, he then is ready to receive the blessings of God’s *opus proprium* (proper work). Luther said that *tentatio*, “in so far as it takes everything away from us, leaves us nothing but God: it cannot take God away from us, and actually brings him closer to us.”<sup>16</sup>

It is clear, therefore, that Luther saw the experience of *tentatio* as fundamental to theological formation, without which the sinner will not gain a profound appreciation for the power and sweetness of the gospel. It is in *tentatio* that the power of the gospel is experienced. As David Scaer once said regarding *tentatio*: “It is a bridge that brings the realities of revelation from the biblical history into the personal life of the Christian.”<sup>17</sup>

True theology, then, requires personal engagement. It is learned and carried out in a context of praxis, in the concrete situations of life, especially as those situations impinge upon

12. Ibid.

13. Martin Luther, “Heidelberg Disputation,” in *Luther: Early Theological Works*, ed. and trans. James Atkinson, The Library of Christian Classics 16 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 291.

14. Ibid., 291–92.

15. Alister E. McGrath, *Luther’s Theology of the Cross: Martin Luther’s Theological Breakthrough* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1990), 151.

16. Quoted in McGrath, 152.

17. David P. Scaer, “Anfechtung, Prayer and Resurrection: The 1980 Reformation Lectures, Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minnesota, October 30–31, 1980,” *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* 21, no. 1 (March 1981), 24.

the life of the minister and those to whom he ministers. When the minister learns for himself the power of the gospel, he is then able to communicate that power to those within his realm of influence. This was, perhaps, the great difference between the theology of Luther and that of his contemporary Erasmus. Luther's theology is a living, dynamic theology, which the "armchair theology" of the humanist Erasmus, as Gordon Rupp calls it, is not. Significant is the fact that Luther had the responsibility for the care of souls, while Erasmus never did. As Rupp says, Erasmus

did not understand the great heights and depths of the Christian faith: what it meant, with Luther and Augustine, to peer steeply down into the nauseating "abyss of the human conscience," with Luther and Bunyan to tremble in the Valley of Humiliation, and to weep upon the Delectable Mountains at the brave prospect of distant Zion.<sup>18</sup>

The *tentatio* that came upon Luther as he lived a Christian existence in its concrete reality, with all the flaming darts of Satan, and practiced the ministry in a context of unrest and strife were what taught Luther his theology. They taught him humility, and they taught him the depth of God's grace in Christ Jesus. They taught him the knowledge of God, who works and hides himself in strange ways, but who also restores, renews, and empowers. Luther's *tentatio* also taught him to communicate the message of God's grace to others in a way that was faithful, credible, and meaningful. Only as one learns to reflect theologically on his experience, especially the experience of *tentatio*, will that aptitude be acquired. Luther's last written words attest to the place of experience in theological formation:

Nobody can understand Virgil who has not been a shepherd or a farmer for five years. . . . Nobody can understand Cicero who has not been a politician for twenty years. . . . Nobody can understand the Scriptures who has not looked after a congregation for a hundred years. We are beggars, that's the truth.<sup>19</sup>

How does this theology of the cross, mediated through the word and prayer in dynamic tension with the realities of suffering, relate to the Latin American context? Or, does the theology of the cross even make sense in Latin America? And how is this ethos transmitted into the lived experience of Latin Americans, so that it gives them direction, power, and consolation while they live in a world with so many challenges to their faith?

First, one might affirm that the theology of the cross should resonate with Latin Americans even more than with North Americans. For Luther, God was hidden in suffering. The figure of the suffering, anguishing, crucified Christ is a powerful image that is imprinted in the minds of many Latin American people. Dr. Alberto García joins others in pointing out that

Velázquez's *El Cristo Crucificado* is one of the most important Roman Catholic Spanish artistic expressions of the seventeenth century. It is out of Velázquez's depiction of Christ that the Spanish poet Miguel de Unamuno developed his idea of the "infinite sorrow of God."<sup>20</sup> In Christ, one must see the suffering of God, for, as Jürgen Moltmann points out in discussing Unamuno's Christ: "A God who cannot suffer cannot love either. A God who cannot love is a dead God. He is poorer than any man or woman. . . . The living God is the loving God. The loving God shows that he is a living God through his suffering."<sup>21</sup>

The ubiquitous image of the afflicted, brutalized, and bloody Christ is sometimes contextualized. In many churches and religious sites, such as Esquipulas in Guatemala, or Portobelo in Panamá, *El Cristo Negro* (Black Christ) has features that clearly identify him with the physical features of people of color in the Americas. But, in contrast to the peaceful and serene contemporary Western depictions of Christ as "the Good Shepherd" or as the kind, loving young man staring gently into your eyes, he is inevitably shown with graphic gaping wounds and an emaciated, tortured body nailed to the cross.

This is in many cases the popularly accepted image of Christ in Latin America. It is an image that some Protestant commentators—and a Lutheran commentator such as myself—have misinterpreted as a dead Christ. Yet he is not a dead Christ, but a *dying* Christ. Therein lies the discrepancy in Latin American popular piety. While it is true that Luther could not conceive of a cross without Christ, in a way the Latin American understanding of what is taking place on the cross is somewhat incomplete. Christ says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth *and dies*, it remains alone; but *if it dies, it bears much fruit*" (Jn 12:24). Christ is not only suffering and dying, but he really died. What a difference a death makes!

García urges that rather than seeing the bloody image of the Christ of Latin American popular religiosity as a symbol of the fatalism or masochism of human existence, it should be seen from a soteriological perspective.<sup>22</sup> In other words, Christ's death must be more closely related to his incarnation and, therefore, must take into account the rest of his story, so that the Christ who is embraced is ultimately the one who was "delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (Rom 4:25).

The identification that the Latin American people share with the dying Christ must be taken into account, but it is not sufficient to stop there. It is a starting point—a crucial starting point—but it is not the terminus of the biblical message. The dying Christ is a bridge to a deeper appreciation and understanding of the message of the gospel, namely, that God in

18. Rupp, *Righteousness of God*, 285.

19. Quoted in Rupp, *Righteousness of God*, 285.

20. Alberto L. García, "The Witness to the Cross in Light of the Hispanic Experience," in *The Theology of the Cross for the Twenty-First Century: Signposts for a Multicultural Witness*, ed. Alberto L. García and A. R. Victor Raj (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2002), 189.

21. Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981), 38.

22. García, "Witness," 190.

Christ identifies with and ultimately redeems us from the human condition of suffering and death. It is through Christ, who is God with us, in his human nature that we can know God. As García points out, for Luther, the incarnate and crucified Christ is the starting point for knowing God:

We tend to forget the radical confession of our witness in light of the Council of Chalcedon (451): Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man in one person. We overlook the implications of his humanity. The Gospels reveal Jesus as sharing in reality our humanity in truly human terms.<sup>23</sup>

This should be something that Latin Americans can truly grasp, namely, the humanity of Christ and thus his identification with his brothers and sisters in their suffering. It is precisely the radical perception by Latin Americans of this cruciform dimension of the Christ event that stands as their gift to us.

However, if we in the North American context have run the risk of not seeing Christ in his suffering humanity, if we have not focused enough on the fuller implications of the incarnation for solidarity with suffering peoples, if we have tended to view Christ more abstractly through the lens of what Moltmann calls the perspective of natural theology, which “prevents people from seeing the crucified Christ,”<sup>24</sup> then, perhaps, Latin Americans can provide a healthy corrective so that Christ in his full humanity can be taken seriously. On the other hand, if our image of Christ is merely that of a Christ *with us*, and not also *for us*, then we also are left without the complete picture. In that sense, a balanced understanding of the two natures of Christ is possible as North Americans and Latin Americans engage each other in theological reflection toward a fuller appreciation of the theology of the cross.

A Lutheran theology shaped in the contexts of human existence mediated through the reality of *tentatio*, as Luther taught, which recognizes the paradoxical nature of the cross and the logical inconsistencies of a God who dies, should resonate with the Latin American soul. But such a theological view of the world also calls for a deeper sense and expression of Christian identity in light of the cross. In the United States, the vast majority of the Protestant churches favor the use of an “empty” cross. The message of a God who becomes man and dies on the cross runs counter to human desires and concepts of divinity; however, the image of Christ crucified that is seen everywhere in Latin America is something that need not be rejected but affirmed. And yet such an image must be affirmed with a deeper

understanding of the situation, one in which Christ does not continue suffering and dying forever, but actually and ultimately dies *for us*.

### Resumen

Dado el hecho de lo que René Padilla ha llamado el costo ético incalculable de la Conquista de América, a saber, el legado histórico de opresión y sufrimiento y por ende de violenta evangelización de nuestros pueblos indígenas, el profesor Rutt añade que no nos debe sorprender porqué el alma del latinoamericano tiende a identificarse a menudo (a veces con cierto fatalismo) con el Cristo moribundo que nos acompaña en los sufrimientos. El Cristo Crucificado del pintor Diego Velázquez y las imágenes del Cristo Negro de Esquipulas o Portobelo presentan más que nada a este Cristo que muere con nosotros.

Rutt argumenta que esta presentación de Cristo puede verse como una contribución latinoamericana hacia una ética pastoral de acompañamiento como la que encarnó Bartolomé de las Casas en su defensa de los indígenas. Sin esta visión, el luterano anglosajón, quien vive en un país de abundancia donde además predomina la influencia de iglesias Protestantes que se rehúsan a ver a Dios en la pasión del Crucificado (éstas a menudo usan una cruz vacía, sin el Cristo clavado en la misma), corre el riesgo de reducir la encarnación a un concepto abstracto sin referencia al sufrimiento humano de Cristo o al compromiso solidario del cristiano con el prójimo sufriente.

En la medida que la imagen del Cristo que está muriendo lleve al sufriente a reconocer su total dependencia de la gracia de Dios, ésta funciona además dentro del contexto de una vivencia del cristiano que Lutero denominó *tentatio*. En medio de su sufrimiento, el cristiano siente la ausencia de Dios y es atacado espiritualmente por el diablo para dudar de las promesas de Dios. Sin embargo, de manera paradójica, por medio del sufrimiento, Dios usa *tentatio* como un ataque espiritual para formar al cristiano y llevarlo así a desesperar de su dura realidad y buscar en Cristo su única fuerza y esperanza.

Aunque la imagen del Cristo que siempre sufre tiene sus ventajas, Rutt también hace eco de la observación crítica de Alberto García de que el Cristo moribundo, por muy importante que sea, sólo puede ayudar al sufriente si Cristo en definitiva ha muerto por nuestros pecados para reconciliarnos con Dios. Rutt concluye que si nuestra imagen de Cristo se reduce al Cristo que siempre está muriendo «con nosotros» pero no incluye en fin al Cristo que ya murió «por nosotros» caemos en otro extremo donde la pastoral de acompañamiento y el compromiso ético de solidaridad con el oprimido no da lugar a la dimensión soteriológica (de salvación) del misterio de Cristo. **LOGIA**

23. Ibid., 197.

24. Moltmann, *Trinity*, 38.

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# Lutherans with Hispanics in Ministry

## Lessons Learned and Futures to Behold

DOUGLAS R. GROLL



**M**Y PERSPECTIVE ON HISPANIC ministry in the United States is a result of my having served as the Director of Concordia Seminary's Hispanic Institute of Theology [HIT] (the predecessor of what is now the Center for Hispanic Studies) from 1987 to 2006. Consequently, my view is going to look in two directions. First, I will be reflecting on Hispanic ministries "on the ground" so to speak, trying to interpret what I saw in many ministry sites around the country. Second, I will be opining on the theological and administrative mindsets that at times characterize administrative and academic decision-makers (especially within my own synodical family, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod [LCMS]), mindsets that profoundly affected hands-on ministry.

### UNEXPECTED DEMOGRAPHICS

Throughout the 1980s, in the course of numerous meetings with the Rev. Carlos Puig, then LCMS Counselor for Hispanic ministries in the United States, members of the Institute for Hispanic Studies would hear his predictions and pleadings. The prediction was that we were going to see a dramatic demographic rise in the number of Hispanics, one unprecedented in American history. The pleading was that we had a window of about ten years to be very proactive in ministry toward Hispanics or we would simply be completely irrelevant to that population. Although we thought we understood what he was saying, I do not believe that any of us could or did appreciate the magnitude of the demographic shift that would happen after 1980. It is certainly not my intention to rehearse that data in detail, but rather to highlight significant indicators. Due to a major investment in research by the Pew Hispanic Center over the last ten years, we now have extensive data tracking population growth in all U.S. counties. In 1980 the Hispanic population in the United States was about fourteen million. By 1990 it had grown to twenty-three million. In the year 2000 Hispanics numbered thirty-five million. Finally, in 2007 Hispanics totaled forty-five million.

These global statistics only reveal a part of the shift. The Pew studies point to major areas of Hispanic population concentration: Los Angeles County, 4.6 million; Maricopa County, Arizona, 1.2 million; Harris County, Houston, 1.5 million; Cook County, Chicago, 1.2 million; and Dade County, Miami, 1.5 mil-

lion. There are also metropolitan areas of the country that have seen increasing numbers of Hispanics in traditionally Anglo population areas. Counties with the fastest-growing percentages of Hispanics include Red Lake County, Minnesota; Shannon County, South Dakota; Wapello County, Iowa; Northwest Arctic Borough, Alaska; and the Bethel Census Area of Alaska. Simply put, the Hispanic dispersal is consistent and signals major shifts in regional makeup with consequent implications for spiritual, educational, economic, and social wellbeing.

A concrete example of the implications of these shifts is seen by the increased Hispanic enrollment in U.S. schools. According to a census study released in March 2009, Hispanic children make up about one-fifth of all K–12 school children. Roughly one-fourth of the nation's kindergarteners are Hispanic, an accelerating trend that will see minority children become majority by 2023. This data and the mountains of additional material available can serve at least two purposes. First, the trends can tell us where things have been, where they are, and where they are projected to be in the future. Second, data can also invite us to respond with an evaluation of our own efforts.

Individuals, congregations, districts, and the office headquarters of the LCMS have responded to these challenges in different ways. Busy Christians do not always have time to read census studies. Instead they respond to human need in their own contexts. That has happened all over the country. Throughout the eighties and probably into the mid-to-late nineties, local districts were investing thousands of dollars each year in maintaining either individual congregational subsidies for Hispanic ministries or direct calling of Hispanic missionaries-at-large. During the decade of the nineties, the number of Hispanic ministry new starts grew to over one hundred. At the same time, concerned pastors and laymen from the heartland were asking how to begin and carry out Hispanic ministry in a consistent and sustainable manner. The office of the former HIT often received calls from pastors and lay people from Iowa or Nebraska, seeking guidance on starting Hispanic work. Today the Center for Hispanic Studies receives similar calls. Even as direct subsidies from districts seemed to contract due to new funding models of local circuit or congregational covenants for Hispanic ministry, fine entrepreneur models of Hispanic ministry have evolved. At local levels, Hispanic ministries also involved meeting community needs. English as a Second Language (ESL), daycare centers, early childhood education, immigration counseling, and even driver education training—to name a few

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initiatives—speak to the energy and creativity of Hispanic and Anglo Lutheran Christians working together in mission.

Unfortunately, the denominational response to the statistical challenges has been one of denial, withdrawal, decline, and, perhaps worst of all, self-destructive marginalization of Hispanic ministries. There are many reasons for this response. One reason may be the simple lack of fiscal resources to fund Hispanic ministries. But there is more. One often hears synodical leaders say they want to see effective Hispanic ministry; the last four LCMS presidents have publicly said that Hispanic ministry must be a high priority. Yet the LCMS has eliminated staff positions related to coordination of Hispanic work. Executives in all other areas of the International Center have come and gone. New hiring postings continue for computer specialists, secretaries, and other important administrative positions. Yet following the elimination of the position of Hispanic Counselor in the Board for Missions, there has not been an executive or secretarial support person in any office of the synod charged with study, coordination, and planning of Hispanic ministries. Consequently, there is no systemic tracking of ministry, workers, growth, or failure. Any evaluation of effective or ineffective Hispanic ministry today is purely anecdotal, since institutionally the LCMS has abandoned any responsible study or evaluative process. There is no “presence at the table” for Hispanic ministry in the synod’s planning and vision. Such an absence of Hispanic presence and contribution in forums of daily decision-making for ministry assumes that the Hispanic church has nothing to offer, and the dominant cultural institution has nothing to learn.

In the mid-nineties a film presentation was made at the Northern Illinois District Convention of the LCMS with a representative of the President’s Office in attendance. The ten-minute film was intended to represent a typical day in the life of a synodical congregation. It featured a healthy Anglo congregation outside of the Twin Cities, completely white, completely middle-class, down to planned activities around the use of snowmobiles. One of the Hispanic pastors from Chicago responded to the film by saying, “This is a wonderful glimpse of a Minnesota Lutheran parish, but this is not my world!” The response by the representative of the President’s Office reflected the mindset of that office: “This film is a representation of a Lutheran congregation. Your work is that of mission. Our missions office can help you!” He had missed the point. That statement was taken by minority leaders in the district to mean, “You are not really a part of the real church represented by this Minnesota congregation, but rather the object of our mission toward you!” In other words, “We do not need you to be part of the mainstream family!”

#### A THEOLOGICAL REVOLUTION: A NEW VOICE IN THE ARENA

In late 2006, the Peruvian priest and theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez, considered by some to be the father and most prominent voice of liberation theologies, spoke at a workshop on immigration at the University of Notre Dame. In his presentation he characterized the major shift of the Hispanic presence in the United States with these words: “There was a time in which the

Latino or the Hispanic was content to be Lazarus at the rich man’s table, hoping for an occasional crumb, content to let the master’s dogs lick his wounds. Today Lazarus wants to sit at the table and be a part of the meal!” (author’s paraphrase).

I mention Father Gutiérrez’s statement because it reflects a shift that certainly has taken place in other church bodies but is slowly and belatedly taking place in some wings of Lutheranism, including the LCMS. Forty years ago theological conferences of Latin American Lutheran churches would be dominated by the Anglo missionary mind. The same dynamic was largely manifest in meetings of Hispanic pastors and leaders in the United States. The Anglo spoke and the Hispanic listened. The Hispanic’s role was to be a passive one. Even though in many respects there are still elements of that dynamic evident in the sad reality of the absence of Hispanic leaders at the table in administrative decision-making positions of the synod, districts, and circuits, a contradictory reality is that within the Concordia University System, the St. Louis and Fort Wayne seminaries, and Concordia Publishing House, Hispanics are being encouraged to find their voices and use them.

One of the most obvious areas of growth in Hispanic ministry in the LCMS has been in the quantity and quality of published theological materials. Forty years ago the Lutheran Hispanic pastor had Luther’s Small Catechism and *Culto Cristiano*—a fine mid-century Lutheran hymnal considered by many non-Lutherans to be the best Spanish language hymnal of the last century—and a few portions of *Luther’s Works*. Today, building on the pioneer efforts of Andrés Meléndez, and subsequent Concordia Publishing House Spanish-language editors Carlos Puig and Héctor Hoppe, a rich and growing library of Lutheran resources is being produced for Hispanic ministry: *Libro de Concordia* (Book of Concord); a second complementary hymnal, *¡Cantad al Señor!*; a scholars’ library of original Spanish-language works on various theological themes (Biblioteca teológica Concordia); scholarly commentaries on Scripture; and bilingual VBS and Sunday School materials. Here again in large part these projects were funded by church-related agencies apart from the synod itself. The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) have also produced significant numbers of materials, which for the most part make the work of the Lutheran pastor or church planter significantly easier and theologically stronger.

By the mid-nineties the old HIT, grants provided by Lutheran Brotherhood (now Thrivent Financial for Lutherans), and the Wheat Ridge Foundation brought nationally recognized Hispanic theologians such as Justo González and Eldin Villafañe to Concordia Seminary in St. Louis to voice Hispanic theology in conversation with Lutherans. For almost ten years, the St. Louis Seminary has been a part of the Hispanic Summer Program (HSP), which is a deliberate national effort to allow Hispanic seminarians to study intensive two-week summer courses in a Hispanic context under leading Hispanic professors in a challenging ecumenical setting. HSP also includes workshops aimed at Anglo faculty that introduce them to better knowledge of theological issues and literature from the

Hispanic/Latino world. As a result of the experience, selected students and faculty are better equipped to articulate Lutheran theology in response to U.S. Hispanic/Latino contexts. Each year the Center for Hispanic Studies offers its Annual Lecture in Hispanic/Latino Theology and Missions, which brings leading Hispanic theologians to speak to Anglos, Latinos, and others on a variety of issues. Both Anglo and Hispanic participants are hearing and seeing that theology is not the exclusive exercise or property of St. Louis, Fort Wayne, Mankato, Minneapolis, Mequon, or Wartburg, but is also quite alive and well in San Diego, San Antonio, Harlem, Orlando, and Dade County. Lutheran Hispanics are learning to articulate theology that is faithful to the Great Tradition and the Lutheran Confessions and, at the same time, that is timely and contextualized in a faithful and creative way to the Hispanic/Latino world. In the future—indeed, already now—Lutheran Hispanics will not be easily silenced.

#### MISSION IN CONFLICT: ADOPTED CHILDREN OF DYSFUNCTIONAL PARENTS

Over the decades I have concluded that there are two factors that arguably have worked against long-term Hispanic Lutheran growth, both of which have more to do with the dominant Anglo LCMS culture than with Hispanics themselves or those called to Hispanic mission endeavors. First, English-speaking North American LCMS Lutherans and their administrative units are still trying to find an identity within North American religious culture and cannot find peace with themselves. Second, most Lutherans know little about Hispanic/Latino culture and generally pay only lip service to actually understanding it. In essence many Lutherans are like a loving but warring couple who senses their marriage is in danger and concludes that adopting a child will save the marriage. Energy, planning, and investment go into the adoption process rather than learning about or listening to the child's needs. So we are within our synods. We speak about evangelism and church planting but do not project a coherent message of what our gospel and confession are, nor what the church that believes in that gospel and confession should look like. Concretely, I have noted that such confusion becomes most obvious in a consistent projection of mixed signals regarding the office of the public ministry and the ethos of Lutheran worship. In both cases concrete examples best argue the premise.

It would seem that we have not adequately dealt with the tension between our stated desire to evangelize the nations and the need for forming holders of the office of the public ministry who can properly discern and apply the gospel. This tension has been projected time and again into Hispanic ministry. In the early nineties HIT was urged to find ways to accelerate training and placement of licensed district lay workers with the possibility of preparing them for subsequent certification for ordination so that more missionaries could be active in ministry much faster. Within three years a suitable number of lay workers was ready for placement. The surprise came, however, when the very district that had sent the students for training rejected their own candidates and referred them to other districts on the

grounds that they really wanted more fully trained candidates. This reflected an internal confusion about who should do what in ministry. It seems that one side of us, most often personified in synodical and district mission enablers, wants to see a North American Protestant model of verbal (sacrament-less) evangelism carried out to establish groups of disciples.

At the same time, however, that side of us is not sure about how to reconcile the results of its mission strategy with a confessional view of the Lutheran faith that assumes baptism and the Lord's Supper are to be administered regularly by those rightly called to the pastoral office, as essential vehicles of the gospel. The lack of creation of cadres of bicultural-bilingual ordained bishops and supervisory pastors—both Hispanic and non-Hispanic—who complement grass-roots evangelism efforts with solid catechesis and local supervision of workers in formation has placed, and continues to place, dedicated, Spirit-filled Hispanic men and women into evangelistic ministries with a less than complete gospel as their tool for ministry. Continued public apologies by district and synodical staff and elected officials for not speaking Spanish, or for not placing ordained people who do speak the language and know Latino cultures in ministry, have become weak excuses for lack of responsible supervision—after two or three decades—of workers in formation, and of those already in the field.

Moreover, because there is neither a healthy uniformity (I am not talking about an unhealthy homogeneity!) of attitude toward historic Lutheran worship nor a healthy implementation (or creative contextualization) of historic Lutheran worship practices in our English-speaking congregations, it should not surprise us that we project mixed criteria for measuring what Lutheran worship should look like in our Hispanic mission endeavors and newly established congregations. Put another way, what missionary message are we projecting through our worship practices? A few years ago, I was visiting one of our regional instruction sites in a western U.S. state. The Spanish-language service was not scheduled to begin until midday, so I drove to the next city to thank the English-language congregation for its financial support of the Hispanic ministry nearby. It was the Sunday after Easter. In that worship service, there were no Easter hymns, no Creed, no Lord's Prayer, no Lord's Supper, and no coherent preached word. The lessons of the day did not conform to the church year. I returned to the neighboring city where our Hispanic student, who had come out of a Pentecostal tradition, led a remarkably Lutheran liturgical service. Later the brother confided to me how he had struggled for many years precisely to get away from the type of worship event that he knew was sponsoring his ministry. I have since heard similar stories from some other (but not all) students. Hispanics in the United States come from a wide variety of Christian worship traditions. Confusion in our own Anglo worship communities in failing to project even a modest joy in historic Lutheran liturgical worship, and the accompanying biblical and even gospel-centered richness of our best traditions, conveys a certain dishonesty or incongruity as we try so unsuccessfully to convince Hispanics who come from Baptist or Pentecostal traditions to become good Baptists or Pentecostals like ourselves.

### LCMS, AN AVOIDABLE TRAGEDY: HOPE FROM UNEXPECTED PEOPLES

The demographics I presented earlier in this reflection really were only a part of the story. They showed only a small part of how our nation is changing. Hispanics are only one aspect of a shift in population that will place Americans from Northern European origin in the clear minority by the year 2050. Those realities are going to force our traditional Lutheran constituencies to rethink what we have perceived to be a dominant role in North American church culture to that of one cultural participant among many within Lutheran Christianity. If we have not already, we will eventually begin to feel culturally vulnerable. One answer to this shift is to continue to do what we have been doing for some time, namely, tell one another what we should be doing and then continue to do what we have been doing, or talk about how we must be active in Hispanic ministry and simultaneously starve that ministry of funding, or speak about obtaining expertise in the Spanish language without significant follow-up, or positing the need for valid supervision of workers on both national and district levels without securing or forming the human resources to do so. The result of that same old strategy will be evident as each year aging Anglo congregations close and sell their properties to Hispanic, African-American, or Asian independent Christian churches or even mosques. The income from such sales will continue to be diverted to new starts in the few Anglo communities where there seems to be the possibility of raising up viable self-supporting Anglo congregations until they too age out of existence.

An alternative set of actions—hopefully, leading towards a more hopeful future—might involve the following proposals:

1. We must accept our vulnerability in a truly biblical sense. Could we, for example, try to recapture the deeply biblical truth that God's people in this world really do not have a place to call home? Can we admit that we are a pilgrim people and consequently have much to learn from the new Christian pilgrims among us? Could it not be that these people who come surging north out of lands once Christianized by missionaries like Bartolomé de las Casas have something to share with us in our spiritual journey? Listening to them as they speak of keeping the faith through centuries and experiences of poverty, oppression, and daily quotidian living (*lo cotidiano*) could help us not to live and act as masters but as servants.

2. We must encourage a young and vibrant Latino people to hear us share our faith, share their faith with us, and join us in dreaming together of our *mañana*, our "tomorrow" in Christ in this country. Drive by any school in Chicago, Miami, or Los Angeles and see who is there. Delight in the smiles, the energy, the creativity. Dare to see a part of this picture in the joyful smiles of dozens of small Hispanic children who may sometimes be the only children in our VBS or Sunday School programs. Try not to grieve over what has passed. Rejoice with that small Latina child that Jesus is her Savior, too. Let her teach us how to be young in the faith anew.

3. We must insist that every administrative unit of our districts and synods, as well as our educational institutions at all levels, reprioritize, redirect, and perhaps even reduce current corporate models so as to move seriously from lip service to Hispanic and other non-Anglo ethnic ministries to focused communication of the good news for all peoples.

### Resumen

El profesor Groll proporciona una reflexión crítica y constructiva acerca del ministerio hispano en la Iglesia Luterana—Sínodo de Misuri. Más que hacernos conscientes de la dramática realidad demográfica de la presencia hispana en el país, el autor quiere concientizar a la iglesia misma, en particular a su liderazgo anglosajón, acerca de las contradicciones internas de tipo administrativo y confesional que no le han permitido servir respectivamente como genuina promotora de la misión hispana ni como modelo confesional saludable de iglesia luterana. En el plano administrativo, el liderazgo por un lado proclama que se le debe dar prioridad al ministerio hispano pero por otro lado elimina o no apoya económicamente personal de origen hispano que estudie, coordine, planifique, evalúe y proponga una visión para tal ministerio a nivel nacional. La promoción del ministerio hispano se vuelve aún menos genuina cuando se reduce al latino a ser un objeto pasivo de la misión y no se le da un espacio en la mesa de colegas y aliados donde se toman decisiones críticas que afectan a obreros y ministerios hispanos. Tal actitud muestra cierta ignorancia acerca de la creciente capacidad del hispano hoy en día de hacer reflexión teológica y labor pastoral desde y para su contexto de misión. Tal capacidad se refleja concretamente en la creciente revolución que hemos visto en la ardua producción de obras teológicas con un enfoque hispano tanto en español como en inglés.

En el plano de la confesionalidad, el liderazgo desea entrenar rápidamente a obreros laicos que puedan proclamar el evangelio siguiendo un tipo de modelo Protestante del ministerio que se conforma con compartir la palabra sin el uso de pastores ordenados ni los sacramentos, pero no sabe cómo reconciliar esta estrategia con su teología del ministerio pastoral y el uso de los sacramentos como vehículos instituidos por Cristo para la misión de proclamación del evangelio. Otro ejemplo de confusión o contradicción en lo confesional que no permite a la iglesia luterana anglosajona servir como modelo a la hispana se manifiesta en su incapacidad de usar de forma creativa pero a la vez consciente—no se trata de uniformidad rígida—la rica liturgia histórica de la iglesia con sus elementos básicos como instrumento de adoración. Se ve en muchas iglesias anglosajonas luteranas un desprecio por lo litúrgico que a menudo lleva al desuso de partes tan fundamentales de la liturgia como la confesión de pecados, el credo trinitario, el Padrenuestro, la Cena del Señor, himnos y cánticos cristicos o una predicación donde se distingue claramente entre la ley y el evangelio. Ante tal crisis de identidad luterana dentro del propio sínodo, la iglesia anglosajona que termina imitando a la iglesia Bautista o Pentecostal se vuelve simplemente incapaz de proveer liderazgo a una naciente y creciente iglesia latina luterana.

Termina Groll su argumento con tres propuestas a la iglesia nacional, a saber: 1) La iglesia anglosajona luterana debe aceptar su vulnerabilidad y contradicción interna y dejar de actuar como maestra en vez de sierva. 2) Para ello, debe estar dispuesta a dejar a un lado el añoro por la edad de oro del pasado para así poder oír y aprender del testimonio de fe de la joven iglesia hispana luterana en el presente y ver en ella la cara del luterano del futuro. 3) La iglesia de mayoría anglosajona debe laborar en conjunto con los hispanos y dar prioridad en el campo administrativo y en sus instituciones educativas a estrategias que no sólo proclamen la necesidad del ministerio hispano sino que lo apoyen con hechos concretos. **LOGIA**

# The Lutherans in Venezuela

RUDOLPH BLANK



VENEZUELA IS THE NORTHERNMOST country in South America, the only South American territory visited by Columbus during his voyages of discovery and exploration. Upon reaching the Orinoco River delta and observing the four main branches of this mighty river as it empties into the sea, Columbus thought he had discovered the four rivers of paradise mentioned in Genesis chapter two. Consequently he named this territory the “land of grace,” which is the same name that has been given to the experimental farm now operated by the Lutheran Church of Venezuela (*La Iglesia Luterana de Venezuela* [ILV]) in eastern Venezuela.

There exists no consensus as to when and how the teachings and influence of the Lutheran Reformation first reached this northernmost South American territory. It was called Venezuela or “little Venice” by early explorers due to the custom of the Guajiro Indians to build their homes up on stilts over the waters of Lake Maracaibo. Many history books still claim that the first Lutherans to establish themselves in Venezuela were the Welsers. Luther’s old nemesis, Emperor Charles V, had turned the administration of the territory of Venezuela over to this German banking house for thirty years as a way of repaying a large debt he had incurred with the Welser firm in order to finance his campaign to be elected as Holy Roman Emperor. The Welsers, founding and establishing themselves in the city of Coro in the western part of the territory, explored the territory, founded new settlements, launched expeditions in search of gold, and, in the process, cruelly exploited the indigenous population. Since the Welser Banking House was located in Augsburg and one of the Welser-appointed governors came from the south German Lutheran city of Ulm—a city that had declared itself in favor of the Reformation—historians have assumed that the soldiers and other adventurers who came to Venezuela with the Welsers were Lutherans. Roman Catholic historians, eager to pin the atrocities committed by these adventurers on their Lutheran adversaries, have stated categorically that Lutherans came to Venezuela with the Welsers.

This version of Lutheran beginnings in South America was effectively proved erroneous by the Colombian historian Juan Friede in the volume he authored to celebrate the 400th anni-

versary of the death of Bartolomé Welser. According to Friede, if any of the Welsers had any connection with the Reformation, it was not with Luther but rather with the Schwenkfelders. Furthermore, the soldiers sent to back up the Welsers were Spaniards, not Germans. It is therefore advisable to look elsewhere in order to find the first evidence of the Lutheran Reformation in Venezuela. In the journals of the renegade Spanish conquistador known as *El Tirano Aguirre* (Aguirre the Tyrant), we read that this adventurer, who unsuccessfully tried to establish himself as emperor of Venezuela, executed one of his soldiers on the Island of Margarita on the charge of being a partisan of the heretic Martin Luther. However, at that time one of the best ways to eliminate any person viewed as a potential threat to one’s authority was to accuse that person of being a Lutheran. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries scores of non-Lutherans were hung, beheaded, or burned alive after having been denounced as Lutherans.

We are on surer ground in identifying as Lutherans the four Roman Catholic priests from Venezuela who were burned alive on 28 May 1668. All four were accused of being Lutheran heretics. Although they were imprisoned, threatened, and tortured, they refused to recant. Three of the priests had come to Venezuela from the Canary Islands; the fourth, Juan de Frías, a mulatto, was born in Caracas. Although prohibited by the Inquisition, Bibles, catechisms, tracts, and books written by Luther and other reformers were smuggled into Spanish America from the Low Countries hidden in cloth woven in Holland and England. Juan de Frías and his colleagues probably became acquainted with Luther and his theology through reading these prohibited books and tracts. In Latin America as in many countries in Europe the first Lutheran missionaries smuggled theological literature. The theological training program of the Lutheran Church of Venezuela is named *Instituto Teológico “Juan de Frías”* in honor of this first native-born Lutheran martyr in Venezuela.

After Venezuelan independence from Spain and the closing of the three centers of the Inquisition in Spanish America, a number of Lutherans from Germany and Scandinavia established themselves in Caracas, Valencia, and Maracaibo. They came as merchants, planters, engineers, brewers, and construction workers who helped build the railways constructed during the nineteenth century. These Lutheran settlers did not at first attempt to establish a Lutheran congregation, but were rather served by the chaplains of German and Scandinavian ships that

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would frequent the port of La Guaira. Needless to say, all of the services were conducted in German or one of the Scandinavian languages. No attempt seems to have been made to share the gospel with native-born Venezuelans in their own tongue. Finally a succession of German-speaking pastors sent from Europe served the German colony of Caracas from 1894 until 1930.

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### *LCMS missionaries concentrated their efforts on Caracas and eastern Venezuela.*

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A sizeable influx of Lutherans entered Venezuela in the years following the Second World War, many of them refugees from Germany, Russia, Poland, Finland, Hungary, and Yugoslavia. Dr. Herman Mayer, representing the mission board of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), visited Venezuela in 1948–49 and made contact with these refugee groups. Their request was that the LCMS send pastors to establish a congregation where they could worship the Lord in their native language. The first missionary to arrive was Dr. Teófilo Strieter, a veteran LCMS missionary who had spent over 40 years in Brazil. Argentinian-born missionary Roberto Huebner, Mexican-American missionary Héctor Lazos, and Fred Riedel, also from Argentina, soon followed Strieter. *El Salvador* Lutheran Church came into being on 9 December 1951. Services were held in three languages: German, Spanish, and English. There was at this time a sizeable contingent of English-speaking Lutherans living in Caracas, many of them associated with the foreign oil companies operating in Venezuela. When the Lutheran Church was legally recognized as a church body by the Venezuelan government, the population of the country was about seven million; the population of the city of Caracas was two hundred thousand. Today it is estimated that Venezuela, with its vast reserves of petroleum, iron, and bauxite, has a population of some twenty-six million people. Of these, six million or more live in the valley of Caracas. One hundred years ago only ten percent of Venezuelans lived in cities or towns of more than fifty thousand inhabitants. Today the nation is 90 percent urban, meaning that urban mission strategies are called for.

In 1952 *Colegio La Concordia* was established as a Christian school not only to serve the educational needs of the Lutherans living in Caracas but to serve as a missionary arm of the Lutheran congregations in Caracas in reaching out to the Spanish-speaking population. *Colegio La Concordia* began as a primary school, but in the 1970s a full high school program was added. Contact with native Venezuelans was also furthered through follow-up contacts made through the Spanish “Lutheran Hour” broadcast and the gospel messages prepared by its speaker, Puerto Rican-American pastor Andrés Meléndez. Much inter-

est and controversy concerning Luther and the Lutheran Reformation was generated in the mid-1950s by the screening of the Martin Luther film in a number of commercial cinemas owned by the Radonsky family in Caracas despite the ban imposed by the Roman Catholic bishop of Caracas.

A second LCMS-affiliated congregation, *La Santa Trinidad*, was established in western Caracas in 1955 among the descendants of the 374 German immigrants from Baden who in the nineteenth century were invited to come to Venezuela by the government and establish an agricultural colony in Colonia Tovar, a small town up in the mountains to the west of Caracas. In the 1950s Colonia Tovar was still isolated and cut off from the rest of the country because of the lack of an accessible road. The road that was finally constructed in the 1960s has turned Colonia Tovar into a highly popular tourist attraction that has tried to maintain the Black Forest German heritage of the original immigrants of 1843. The majority of these immigrants were Roman Catholics, although others identified themselves as Evangelical Lutherans. Eventually many of the Tovar Germans moved to Caracas, La Victoria, and Valencia. When the construction of a new housing project caused the members of this new Caracas congregation to move from their homes in a part of the city known as *Los Flores de Catia*, an old colonial-style house was purchased on Avenida México in Catia and converted into a church. The old house was torn down in 1961 and a new sanctuary was raised in its place. In order to celebrate the dedication of the new building, Spanish-language Lutheran Hour speaker Rev. Andrés Meléndez came for a weeklong series of well-attended evangelistic meetings.

One year after the initiation of LCMS mission work in Venezuela, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) began to establish a number of Lutheran congregations among European immigrants in Caracas and a number of cities in western Venezuela including Valencia, Maracaibo, Barquisimeto, and Turen. Services in these LWF-sponsored congregations were celebrated in German, Hungarian, Swedish, and Latvian. Leaving western Venezuela to the LWF, LCMS missionaries concentrated their efforts on Caracas and eastern Venezuela. In the early years of LCMS mission work in Caracas, work in the German language was the most extensive. However, after the overthrow of the dictatorship of Marcos Pérez Jiménez on 23 January 1959, many Lutheran immigrants from Soviet-dominated countries in Eastern Europe, fearing a Communist takeover of Venezuela, migrated to the United States, Canada, and other Latin American nations. These events led the leadership of the emerging Lutheran Church in Venezuela (*Iglesia Evangélica Luterana en Venezuela* [IELV]) to concentrate its efforts on reaching Spanish-speaking Venezuelans with the gospel.

The Lutheran Church came to the state of Monágas in eastern Venezuela at about the same time that the congregations in Caracas came into being. The state of Monágas in the 1950s was one of the most primitive states in the republic, a vast area without paved roads or electricity outside of the capital city of Maturín. There were only two high schools in the entire state, both located in the state capital. The population of Monágas had been hard hit by a number of epidemics such as yellow fever, malaria,

Chagas fever, and the Spanish fever of 1918, as well as by popular uprisings against the twenty-seven-year dictatorship of Juan Vicente Gómez. The Roman Catholic Church considered the state of Monágas to be the least evangelized state in the Venezuelan republic, which was in turn the one South American territory that had proven to be most resistant to evangelization by Roman Catholic friars.

In the early 1950s a family of German Lutheran refugees was able to purchase a small farm alongside Río Colorado, not too far away from the colonial town of San Antonio de Maturín, which is situated in a mountain valley in the northern part of the state of Monágas. These Lutherans were members of the Enrique Zeuch family, who had come to Venezuela on an Italian refugee ship (in third class). Their home in Berlin had taken a direct hit from an Allied bomb during World War II. Enrique Zeuch had served as an ordained deacon of the Lutheran Church in Germany. Before leaving Germany for Venezuela, Enrique had come into contact with the LCMS while attending the Bad Boll conferences. After spending some months in a refugee camp in the State of Carabobo in Venezuela, Enrique, his wife, three sons, and two daughters moved to Monágas. A third daughter, the eldest, remained in Germany with her husband and family.

Upon establishing themselves in Monágas, Enrique Zeuch and the members of his family began not only to plant their crops but also a growing number of Sunday Schools and small Lutheran congregations. Traveling by horseback and truck, Enrique and the members of his family would first gather together a group of children and begin to teach them Bible stories. Sunday Schools were formed in at least a dozen different locations. Through the children contact was made with parents. The gospel was shared and many humble Venezuelan *campesinos* (farm workers) came to faith in Christ. In many instances the adult converts did not know how to read or write and had to be taught how to read the Bible in their own language. Enrique's wife, Maria, began preparing nourishing breakfasts for the children who came to Sunday School. Enrique was able to acquire new clothes for needy children and babies from a fellow German immigrant who in a few years had been able to establish the *Ovejita* (Little Lamb) clothing factory in Caracas, today one of Venezuela's largest.

It was part of the mission strategy of Enrique Zeuch and his fellow Lutherans in eastern Venezuela not to establish new mission stations in areas in which other evangelical groups were already working. At this time the only evangelical groups working in Monágas were the Orinoco River Mission (ORM) and a dissident group that had broken away from the ORM. Some years later some Pentecostal groups, not interested in respecting comity agreements, would invade the region and seek to proselytize other Protestant groups. Enrique had not wanted to begin work in the town of San Antonio itself because there already was a congregation there begun by the ORM. However, in 1955 a division occurred in this congregation. One faction supported one lay preacher to become pastor of the congregation, while another faction gave its support to a rival candidate. The leaders of the ORM were unable to reconcile the two factions and get everyone to agree on one of the two candidates. However, the

members of both factions told the leaders of their denomination they were willing to accept Enrique Zeuch to be their pastor and become Lutherans in the process. Thus it was that the leaders of the ORM turned the San Antonio congregation over to the Lutheran Church in Venezuela.

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*Enrique Zeuch and the members of his family began not only to plant their crops but also a growing number of Sunday Schools and small Lutheran congregations.*

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It was sometime in the early 1950s that Enrique Zeuch made contact with the LCMS and the Lutheran pastors working in Caracas. According to one account, possibly apocryphal, Enrique found the name and address of a Lutheran layman living in the United States in the pocket of a jacket received as part of a Care Package. Enrique reportedly wrote this layman asking for help in extending his Lutheran ministry in eastern Venezuela. Whether this is really what happened or not, Enrique was visited by a stranger who suddenly turned up one day while Enrique was working on his farm. The stranger identified himself as Dr. Herman Mayer of the LCMS. This led Enrique to enter a colloquy program and eventually to be ordained as an LCMS pastor and missionary. The congregations that grew out of this early missionary work in eastern Venezuela were *El Redentor* (Redeemer) in San Antonio de Maturín, *Betel* in Río Chiquito, *Emanuel* in Aricagua, *Estado Sucre*, and *Roca de la Eternidad* (Rock of Ages) in Quebrada Seca. Members moving from these early congregations to other parts of the country were instrumental in the establishment of Lutheran congregations in Maturín and Ciudad Guayana in the state of Bolívar.

One of the priorities of the Lutheran churches in Venezuela has always been the preparation of their own pastors and church workers. When the Lutheran Church of Venezuela was established there was only one Spanish-language seminary in all of South America affiliated with the LCMS. This was Concordia Seminary in Buenos Aires, Argentina. A small training program with only one professor also existed in Monterrey, México, in order to serve what became the Lutheran Synod of México. In the mid-1950s three students were sent to the seminary in Buenos Aires to study for the ministry. They were the oldest and youngest sons of Enrique Zeuch—Gerhard and Herman—and a student by the name of Tapani Ojasti. Tapani had come to Venezuela with his father and his brother Juan from Finland after the death of Tapani's mother during the war between Finland and the Soviet Union. The Ojasti family settled in the town of Caripe in the high coffee-growing region

of the state of Monágas. All three of the students graduated from Concordia Seminary, Buenos Aires. Tapani was sent to Costa Rica as a missionary and Herman to Guatemala City. Gerhard was assigned to work with his father in the state of Monágas, where he stayed for two years. Gerhard had married a young lady from Paraguay while in Argentina. Herman and Tapani both married wives from Brazil. After a few years all three pastors took calls back to the countries from which their wives came. There they faithfully served their Lord as pastors and missionaries. However, Venezuela was left without candidates for the pastoral office. It became evident that in order to establish a national clergy, the Lutheran Church in Venezuela would need to train its own pastors and church workers within the borders of the Republic of Venezuela.

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*The goal of the program was to prepare church workers for México, Central America, Cuba, and Venezuela.*

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In 1962 the Caribbean Mission District of the LCMS began its own program of theological education in the old colonial city of Antigua, Guatemala. The goal of the program was to prepare church workers for México, Central America, Cuba, and Venezuela. Missionary Robert Hoferkamp of Guatemala and Professor Edgar Keller of Concordia Seminary in Buenos Aires were called to develop the program. At this time the emphasis in LCMS foreign missions was on training catechists and evangelists. A catechist, as the word implies, is a church worker trained to teach Luther's Small Catechism to new converts. To this end, Hoferkamp developed not only a catechism course to be used by the catechists but also a commentary on the catechism in which the student was given a thorough grounding in Lutheran doctrine and practice within the context of Latin America. After finishing the course after what amounted to a year of study, the student was installed as a catechist and authorized to teach the Small Catechism. After finishing his studies as a catechist, the candidate was encouraged to continue his studies and eventually to graduate as an evangelist, that is, a church worker authorized to lead the liturgy and preach under the supervision of an ordained pastor.

The *Distrito Misional del Caribe* (DIMICAR) program of theological education by extension (TEE) functioned through tutors from Guatemala who visited groups of students gathered in study centers in countries where the LCMS was at work in the Caribbean area. The center for Venezuela was in San Antonio de Maturín. The program was launched there in 1962 when Professor Hoferkamp met with a group of twelve students from the state of Monágas in order to introduce the course,

study the first lessons, and give out the assignments. After returning to Guatemala, a local pastor or missionary, serving as tutor, would meet every Wednesday with the students. At about half-term the professor from Guatemala would return to visit the group and encourage the students in their studies and ministries. At least six students completed the program, among them Ángel Félix Lisboa, Luis Aparismo, Domingo José González, Bernardo Aparismo, and Gabriel Brito. During the 1950s, '60s and early '70s it was the policy of LCMS World Missions to help provide salaries for catechists and evangelists not only in the Caribbean but also in many other parts of the world. When this policy was terminated in the 1970s, most of the catechists and evangelists employed by the LCMS in Venezuela left the ministry and sought employment in other parts of the country where jobs were available. In rural Monágas it was (and still is) extremely difficult for persons without land and little education to support themselves and at the same time minister to a group of believers. The majority of rural students upon graduation from primary or secondary school migrate elsewhere to look for work.

It should be noted that the DIMICAR program of TEE was begun a least a year before the inauguration of the much publicized program of TEE pioneered by Ralph Winter, Ross Kinsler, and Jaime Emery of the Presbyterian seminary in San Felipe, Guatemala. This Presbyterian program eventually became the model for hundreds of TEE programs around the world. The DIMICAR program, however, instead of being emulated, began to be phased out with the opening of Augsburg Lutheran Seminary in 1965 as part of the Interdenominational Theological Community in Mexico City. Augsburg Lutheran Seminary, which was supported by the LCMS, the old American Lutheran Church (ALC), the LWF, and the independent German and Scandinavian congregations of Mexico City maintained its own theological faculty but shared library facilities, dormitories, and dining hall facilities with the students from the Episcopal, Baptist, and Congregational seminaries. Professor Hoferkamp was called to become part of the faculty and also dean of students of *Seminario Augsburg*. That left only Professor Keller serving the extension program in Antigua, Guatemala. After Professor Keller left Guatemala to serve a congregation in Texas, the DIMICAR program of TEE was terminated since it was felt that all future pastors could now study at the seminary in Mexico City.

This solution did not, however, satisfy the needs of the growing Lutheran Church of Venezuela. Most men who wished to prepare themselves for service in the ILV lived in the eastern part of the country and, because of the lack of educational opportunities in rural areas, did not have the high school diploma needed for entrance into Augsburg Seminary. The Eastern and Guayana District of the national church formally requested that the theological program still functioning in Venezuela not be terminated but rather expanded. It was thus in 1970 that the Juan de Frías Theological Institute came into being, first to serve the congregations in eastern and southern Venezuela and later, with the closing of Augsburg Seminary in 1981, to serve the entire church.

From the very beginning it was part of the philosophy of the Juan de Frías Theological Institute to prepare not only pastors but also deaconesses, teachers, catechists, and theologically competent congregational leaders capable of leading third-world churches unable to afford the luxury of salaried church workers. This enabled men and women, young and old, and people from all social classes to study together. A strong emphasis on the Scriptures, the Confessions and Lutheran identity was and still is evident in the curriculum. Living in a context where many identify themselves as Roman Catholics but in which Pentecostal and neo-Charismatic groups are growing rapidly, Lutherans in Venezuela need to be sure of who they are and in what they believe. Actually today it is estimated that on any given Sunday more people in Venezuela will be found inside of a Pentecostal or Evangelical house of worship than attending mass.

The latest government statistics still list 80 percent of Venezuelans as Roman Catholics, but most of these are only nominal members of the Church of Rome. Recently Venezuela has witnessed a growing conflict between the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church of Venezuela and the socialist government of President Hugo Chávez Frías, who has accused many of the bishops of the church of being pawns of capitalism and enemies of the revolution. Although the president himself still claims to be a Roman Catholic—not of the bishops, but of the masses—he has openly courted the support of Evangelicals and Pentecostals for his revolutionary agenda. A number of well-known Protestant and neo-Charismatic leaders, including some who identify themselves as Lutherans, have openly campaigned for the present government and in exchange have received government support for their social and other ministries.

The reasons that led to the closing of Augsburg Seminary at a meeting in November 1980 (incidentally, on the same day that Ronald Reagan was elected president of the United States) serve to underline some of the major issues that the Lutheran Church has had to face in Venezuela and the rest of Latin America. The major reason given for the closing of Augsburg Seminary was lack of students. There were only four full-time students enrolled at the time it closed; all four of these students were from the Aymara Lutheran Church of Bolivia, a church body affiliated with the World Mission Prayer League and not one of the organizations that supported the seminary financially. The decision to stop providing subsidy to pay the salaries of pastors graduating from the seminary was said to explain the drop in enrollment that began in the mid 1970s. Another factor was the difficulty in securing visas for non-Mexican students to study at the seminary, as was the difficulty experienced by many students in readjusting to life in their countries of origin after having experienced life in the world's largest city. Two of the three Venezuelan students sent to study in Mexico married Mexican wives. One, after serving a number of years as pastor, took a call to serve in Mexico. Another dropped out of the ministry and the other dropped out of the seminary after his first year of study. During the fifty-eight-year history of the ILV some thirteen Venezuelan men and women have received scholarships to study outside of their country in order to prepare for church work. Currently none of them are in church

work. If any lesson is to be learned from the experience of the ILV, it is that a viable program of theological education is best carried out in the same context in which that ministry is to be carried out and not in another country.

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*Venezuela has witnessed a growing conflict between the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church of Venezuela and the socialist government of President Hugo Chávez.*

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The other major factor leading to the closing of Augsburg Seminary was theological. The Baptist Seminary of Mexico, located on the same campus as Augsburg Seminary, was caught up in the revolutionary fervor generated by liberation theology and the civil wars in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. A good deal of this revolutionary theology and praxis spilled over into the thinking of many of the students at Augsburg Seminary and some of the faculty. Growing theological differences between the LCMS, the ALC, and the LWF made it much more difficult for these church bodies to continue working together in supporting a seminary designed to serve the needs of the Lutheran churches in Mexico, Central America, Panama, Colombia, and Venezuela. One by one the supporting ecclesiastical organizations began cutting back on their financial commitment to the seminary program, until it was finally decided to terminate the joint project. By withdrawing from the Theological Community, the LCMS lost its claim upon the sizeable collection of theological works that it had dedicated to the joint library of the community at its founding. That collection contained what was at that time the only complete set of the Weimar edition of Luther's works in Latin America. The closing of Augsburg Seminary in Mexico City was to lead each of the Latin American churches affiliated with the LCMS to develop its own program of theological education, in most instances some form of TEE. Churches affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) or LWF generally opted in favor of sending their ministerial candidates either to the LWF-affiliated seminary in Brazil or to ISEDET in Argentina, once a Lutheran seminary but now an interdenominational one with some Lutheran faculty.

Beginning in the 1960s many Lutherans from the rural congregations in the states of Monágas and Sucre began to migrate to the Guayana region of the state of Bolívar, where Venezuela's two largest rivers, the Orinoco and the Caroní, come together. A series of huge dams constructed on the Caroní generated the hydroelectric power needed to turn the "Iron Zone" into a "South American Ruhr" with its large steel and aluminum

mills. Railroads were built to bring iron ore from the mines of El Pao and Ciudad Piar, while river barges on the Orinoco brought bauxite from the rich deposits upriver. In the twin cities of San Félix and Puerto Ordaz that make up Ciudad Guayana, four Lutheran congregations came into being along with a number of outlying mission stations. LCMS mission policy in the 1980s emphasized the establishment of strong congregations in Venezuela's growing urban areas. This led to the establishment of the *Cristo Rey* congregation in Maturín, capital of the state of Monágas, two more congregations in Caracas, and the beginning of mission work in the western part of the country. Westward expansion began with the city of Barinas and later extended to Valencia, Maracay, and Barquisimeto.

The idea was to achieve a critical mass of Lutherans and Lutheran congregations large enough to sustain a national church body that in turn could sustain its own ministries, expansion, and program of theological education. This required a larger staff of missionaries called from the United States, Canada, and Brazil. The high-water mark of missionaries working in Venezuela at one time reached sixteen. The changing mission priorities of the LCMS have, at the writing of this article, reduced that number to one couple engaged in the *Tierra de Gracia* Lutheran farm project near the city of Aragua in the state of Monágas.

One of the blessings enjoyed by the many LCMS missionaries working in Venezuela from the early 1970s to the present has been a unity of purpose, *misión*, and commitment to the Lutheran Confessions. The Lutheran Society for Evangelism in Venezuela has been graciously spared the sometimes bitter personal and theological struggles that have plagued other mission fields. However, the national church has had its share of controversy and division. The difficulties in the national church began to develop in the wake of the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the ILV in 2001. At that time a group of pastors from western Venezuela formerly belonging to a number of other denominations approached the Lutheran Church of Venezuela and requested that they and their congregations be permitted to form part of the national church. After undergoing a colloquy program, six pastors representing this group were grafted into the ministry of the national church. As things turned out the transplant did not take. The new wine and the old wineskins were incompatible. In 2003 an attempt was made by the newcomers to change the constitution of the national church drastically, take over the properties and financial assets of the ILV, and align the Lutheran Church of Venezuela with the revolutionary program of the new socialist government of the nation. The resultant power struggle served to emphasize the importance of the gospel and the Lutheran Confessions as the norm defining who Lutherans are and what their ministry in the world should be. As most of the LCMS missionaries serving in Venezuela had already been redeployed to other world areas or ministries, the confessional Lutherans had to rely not so much on outside help as on the Lord himself and what they had been taught in the ILV's program of theological education.

As a result of the struggle for the church, the dissenting group decided to leave the Lutheran Church of Venezuela

and form its own Venezuelan Lutheran church that has subsequently suffered its own struggles and divisions. One group that has emerged from the resultant divisions has taken the name "Reformed Catholic Church of Venezuela," an organization with an episcopal form of government that openly identifies itself with and campaigns for the candidates and programs of the revolutionary socialist government of Venezuela. Apparently one of the reasons that led the dissidents to the Lutheran Church in the first place was the desire to obtain ordination in a historic Christian denomination and thereby recognition by national and regional authorities as accredited clergymen in a church body recognized by the government. Such formal recognition would also make these clergymen eligible for government funding for their projects. The Lutheran Church is viewed in Venezuela as a body not adverse to carrying on different kinds of social ministry, and as such, it has in the past attracted persons from more fundamentalist organizations whose social ministry projects have been rejected by the organizations to which they belong. These persons, usually of a theological and political persuasion far to the left of their own church, have sought out the Lutheran Church to patronize various social and educational ministries. This has been true both in regards to the Lutheran Church of Venezuela, affiliated with the LCMS, and even more so with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Venezuela, affiliated with the LWF and the World Council of Churches.

Given the volatile nature of Venezuela's political and economic situation in addition to the winds of globalization blowing over the continent, the future of Venezuela is even more uncertain than that of other nations in South and Central America. In such a climate Lutheranism must continue to maintain its identity as a fellowship of congregations committed to the Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, and the Lord's command to make disciples of all nations. In today's Venezuela, Roman Catholicism is in sharp decline while pagan sects, Pentecostals, the so-called neo-Apostolic movement, and neo-Charismatics, with their theology of prosperity, are experiencing rapid growth. In this atmosphere it is of vital importance that the ILV's program of theological education continue to focus not only on training pastors, but also in orienting the entire church toward a biblical, missiological, and sacramental theology centered in the cross of Christ. In the current climate of declining dependence on the north, there needs to be a growing interdependence among the confessional churches of the world and especially of those located in the so-called majority world (Africa, Asia, and Latin America). The growth of Lutheranism in Venezuela has throughout its history been tied to the activities of unsung laymen and -women who, in moving from one part of the country to another, have carried the seed of the gospel with them and planted it in the most unlikely places. More often than not, the wind of the Spirit, blowing where it wills, has anticipated and often confounded the best-laid plans of missionaries and mission councils. Ultimately the present and future of Lutheranism in Venezuela and the rest of the world will depend on that wind of the Spirit moving through word and sacrament to the ends of the earth.

### Resumen

El profesor Blank nos ofrece un breve bosquejo histórico de la presencia de la iglesia luterana en el territorio venezolano desde el siglo XVII hasta el presente. Nos hace partícipes de una historia que se remonta al martirio en 1668 del mulato luterano de origen venezolano Juan de Frías, en cuyo nombre se fundó el actual instituto de teología luterano en el país, prosigue con los diversos intentos de misión luterana en el país a inmigrantes alemanes y escandinavos primero y luego a la población venezolana, y termina con una síntesis interesante y a la vez crítica de los sucesos de la historia de la misión en el país después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial hasta el presente.

En su recuento histórico, Blank nos abre una ventana que nos ayuda a apreciar los aportes de pioneros como Herman Mayer, Teófilo Strieter, Roberto Huebner, Héctor Lazos, Fred Riedel y Enrique Zeucha la misión en Venezuela. Tal período vio la fundación de la Iglesia Luterana El Salvador en 1951, el establecimiento del Colegio La Concordia en 1952, la fundación de la Iglesia La Santa Trinidad en 1955 (ocasión para la cual predicó el Rev. Andrés Meléndez, orador de La Hora Luterana), el reconocimiento legal de la Iglesia Luterana por el gobierno nacional, la expansión del luteranismo al Estado Monágas (considerado el lugar menos evangelizado en todo el país), y el nacimiento en el oriente de Venezuela de la iglesia El Redentor (San Antonio de Maturín), Betel (Río Chiquito), Emanuel (Aricagua, Estado Sucre) y Roca de la Eternidad (Quebrada Seca). En los años 60 congregaciones luteranas se fundaron en las ciudades de San Félix y Puerto Ordaz, ambas parte de Ciudad Guayana. Los años 80 vieron el crecimiento de más congregaciones en áreas urbanas crecientes como Maturín y Caracas, y además la expansión de la misión a ciudades del occidente del país como Barinas, Valencia, Maracay y Barquisimeto.

De particular importancia para Blank es la historia de la educación teológica en el campo misionero, sus logros y fracasos. Da lugar de honor a pioneros como Robert Hoeferkamp y Edgar Keller por sus esfuerzos y aporte educativo. Pero nos habla francamente también de intentos promisorios pero al fin fallidos de desarrollar un liderazgo pastoral venezolano fuera del contexto local mediante instituciones extranjeras como el Seminario Augsburgiano en la ciudad de México. En algunos casos, los jóvenes seminaristas simplemente se casaron con extranjeras y terminaban sirviendo en el país anfitrión. En otros casos, la práctica de no subsidiar los salarios de pastores recién graduados obligaron a algunos a buscar otros empleos para sobrevivir y a otros a cuestionar su compromiso vocacional. La lección de los primeros intentos llevó a la conclusión de que la educación teológica debía llevarse a cabo sin sacar al estudiante de su contexto nacional, filosofía que llevó a la creación en 1970 del Instituto Teológico "Juan de Frías" el cual todavía hoy en día desarrolla su labor en el país.

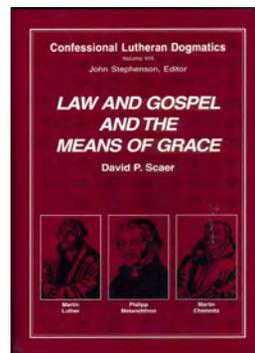
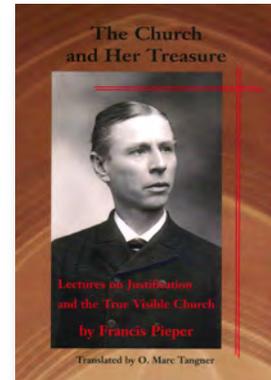
Blank comenta acerca del reto que ha representado mantener en Venezuela una identidad luterana que se ancla en las Escrituras, las Confesiones Luteranas y la Gran Comisión. Han atentado contra tal identidad en el pasado los movimientos de liberación, pero hoy en día ha sido más influyente el creciente número de Pentecostales que predicán teología de la prosperidad en el país y la capitulación de algunas iglesias protestantes y luteranas a la promulgación de la política socialista del gobierno del Presidente como parte de su misión. El autor atribuye precisamente una reciente división en La Iglesia Luterana de Venezuela (ILV) a la prioridad que el grupo disidente puso sobre su agenda política por encima de la proclamación del evangelio. Señala sin embargo que la iglesia luterana en Venezuela existe hoy por la gracia de Dios manifestada en Cristo a muchos laicos y familias venezolanas a través de la historia y seguirá existiendo por la obra del Espíritu Santo mediante la palabra y los sacramentos. **LOGIA**

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# The Struggle to Express Our Hope

LEOPOLDO SÁNCHEZ



## I.

LATIN AMERICAN THEOLOGIANS and Latino theologians in the United States are interested in articulating what it means to be human in the language of hope. To be human is to have hope. In his classic *Theology of Liberation*, Peruvian theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez introduces the chapter on eschatology and politics by saying, “The commitment to the creation of a just society and ultimately, to a new humanity, presupposes confidence in the future.”<sup>1</sup> He assumes that a people without such confidence in the future are probably living in some sort of dehumanizing or at least less than human condition that can be assessed in socioeconomic, personal (psychological), and spiritual terms. Citing Brazilian philosopher of education Paulo Freire, Gutiérrez agrees that thrusting history into the future typically meets resistance from a fixation to “overvalue the past.”<sup>2</sup> The problem lies in approaching history by means of *anamnesis* or remembrance without an accompanying critical reflection on how the traditions and institutions of the past might have failed to generate the “kind of person who critically analyzes the present, controls personal destiny, and is oriented towards the future.”<sup>3</sup>

For Freire, Latin Americans, especially the poor and oppressed, have historically suffered from a “pre-critical consciousness” that looks to the past uncritically for self-definition. However, Gutiérrez believes that there are impulses in Latin American society toward what Freire called for in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, namely, *conscientização* or “conscientization,” meaning a “critical consciousness.”<sup>4</sup> Conscientization is a type of learning that rejects “banking education,” that is to say, the transmission and uncritical reception of knowledge, and instead affirms the need for students to reach levels of critical awareness regarding their place in history that will move them from being mere objects of others to becoming self-determining subjects. For Freire conscientization is an exercise in humanization.

The postcolonial turn in fields as diverse as music and education may be seen as expressions of conscientization. Since I have deep roots in Panama, where I was raised and lived until migrating to the United States, I will offer two examples of *concientización* from Panamanian intellectuals. In his song “Blackamán,” Rubén Blades, singer-songwriter, lawyer, and

most recently minister of tourism in Panama, gives us a sense of precritical consciousness and banking education in the colonial history of the Americas in the struggle between master and slave. He writes:

I was taught how to read and to speak so as to repeat lessons with which to tame my will. That is how I almost learned to forget what I was. Truth is never convenient for a master’s plan. . . . Our history still exists. We have only to rediscover it. . . . Because since childhood they taught us truths that were lies . . . because we were raised like trained parrots to repeat them . . . racism, complexes, machismo, and apathy.<sup>5</sup>

Note how Blades portrays a sense of the slave’s rediscovery of his own lost history and therefore his own voice and human dignity. The hope for freedom entails a critical appropriation in the present of an unfulfilled past. As Blades writes these lyrics, he is conscious of his own history as the paternal grandson of a West Indian man from St. Lucia who came to work in the construction of the Panama Canal at a time when people of color were treated differently from white folk. My own paternal grandfather, Samuel Sánchez, a black man, shared a similar experience as a canal worker.

In his book, *500 años de educación en Panamá* Dr. Culiolis Bayard, professor of education at the University of Panama, offers a critical political analysis of 500 years of education in the country. He argues that Panama’s dependence on colonizing models of education during its three major periods in history—European for most of its life (under Spanish and Colombian rule) and North American in the last half century—has fostered “conditions of dependency, underdevelopment, paternalism, and conformity” in the Panamanian of today.<sup>6</sup> A new indigenous model

1. Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, trans. and ed. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1973; new introduction, 1988), 121.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. For the thirtieth anniversary edition, see Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Continuum, 2000).
5. Rubén Blades, “Blackamán,” on *Agua de Luna*, CD 60721-2 (Elektra Records, 1987).
6. Andrés Culiolis Bayard, *500 años de educación en Panamá: Un análisis crítico-político* (Panamá: Editora Escolar, 1992), 256.

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of education should not fall captive to the political ideologies of particular groups (whether Catholic, Marxist, fascist, liberal, or socialist) but rather serve “the well-being and progress of the society to which education belongs and which education serves critically and creatively in the promotion of the human person and society.”<sup>7</sup>

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*In Culiolis there is an openness to the possibilities of the future.*

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The hope for a promising future of social progress, justice, and peace entails a critical appropriation of the past through a denunciation of certain (at times, even well-intentioned) dehumanizing ideas and practices as well as through a proposal for the formation through education of a new man with a critical mind and a say in the future direction of his history. In Culiolis there is an openness to the possibilities of the future and this openness may be seen as a dimension of what it means to be authentically human.

## II.

A fatalistic worldview is characterized by a lack of confidence in the future and a life devoid of hope of any enduring significance. In her short story *Clarisa*, Chilean novelist Isabel Allende portrays the rationale that feeds Clarisa’s fatalism, namely, a “theory of compensations” that defines her destiny. Clarisa believes:

God maintains a certain balance in the universe, and just as he creates some things crooked, he also creates other things straight, for each virtue there is a sin, for each joy there is a misfortune, for each good evil and in this way, in the eternal turning of the wheel of life one thing compensates for another for all ages.<sup>8</sup>

Significantly Clarisa’s fatalism—her “theory of compensations” and its cyclical view of the world—arises out of a situation of suffering. She has given birth to four children; two were born healthy, two were not. Her theory is a theodicy—an attempt to justify God in the midst of tragedy—that leads to a subtle fatalism. Clarisa believes that God is active in all of life’s events but she also ties God to the inevitability of these events. Similarly many Latin Americans and United States Latinos, coming from a nonatheistic religious background, affirm that God is present and active in history, though neither in a new

nor personal way but rather in a predictable and detached way. Such a worldview gives birth to a conformist view of life that allows oppressed persons—from battered women to underpaid farmers to exploited children to drug addicts in the city—to resign themselves to their destiny without seriously considering the possibility of changing their situation or of the hope of a better future. “God loves us,” they might say, “but he does not intervene in our everyday lives.” When an uncritical fixation with the past goes hand in hand with a fatalistic view of the world, not only is lack of confidence in the future likely to shape one’s life, but also a skeptical attitude toward the future. Nothing has changed; therefore, nothing will.

In Chilean theologian Juan Noemi’s most recent treatment on hope, *Esperanza en busca de inteligencia*, he explains that the negative value placed on hope as a human phenomenon is nothing new. Such a skepticism toward the future can be traced back to a classical Greek view of time as an anomaly. This engenders a consciousness that sees history in terms of decay, on the way to death; therefore such a consciousness prefers to hold on to a supposedly golden past over an obscure and punishing present.<sup>9</sup> In this view of time and history there is a fixation with the past but hope is at the same time a dubious dimension of humanity precisely because its future orientation in time takes humans farther away from the past and closer to decay and death. Therefore there is nothing positive about the future.

Within this classical Greek perception of time, it is not impossible to imagine why St. Paul might contrast the Christian hope in the coming resurrection of the dead—and therefore in Christ’s final victory over death—with a misplaced hope in the present that resigns itself to saying, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” (1 Cor 15:32). We sense the despair, fatalism, and hopelessness behind these words. The future is seen as the enemy. We also hear similar words among our people: *No dejes para mañana lo que puedes hacer hoy* (Do not leave for tomorrow what you can do today). Why? Because there might be no tomorrow. We are on our way to death, to the future; better to do and get done today while time is on our side and the future has not yet come to impose on us, to do away with us. Tomorrow is dubious; tomorrow means death.

However, just as the reality of precritical consciousness has been mitigated or at least complemented by the rise of a critical consciousness or conscientization, our people’s fatalism and skeptical view of the future has also been met by their hope in *mañana*, in tomorrow, in what is yet to come. The future is not merely seen as an enemy, as the harbinger of death, but also as the possibility and fulfillment of life. In his book *Mañana: Christian Theology from a Hispanic Perspective*, Cuban American theologian Justo González contrasts a denigrating popular use of *mañana* by people in the dominant Anglo culture “to imply that we are lazy folk who never get anything done” with another popular use of the same word by impoverished

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7. Ibid., 271.

8. Isabel Allende, “Clarisa,” in *Cuentos de Eva Luna* (New York: HarperLibros, 1989), 40–41.

9. Juan Noemi, *Esperanza en busca de inteligencia: Atisbos teológicos* (Santiago: Ediciones Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 2005), 23.

yet hardworking Latinos “who have learned, through long and bitter experience, that the results of their efforts seldom bring about much benefit to them or to their loved ones.”<sup>10</sup> However, none of the aforementioned takes on *mañana*—negative, denigrating, or realistic—refers us to a positive future hope.

### III.

González, one of the founders of United States Latino theology, argues that *mañana* can only become a hopeful reality when it is tied to the Christian conception of the new life in the Spirit. This life does not see the world in terms of the classic Greek separation between nonmaterial spirit and evil matter; instead the world is the sphere of the Holy Spirit’s work of bringing the old nature and age to an end in order to create anew and “make things what they are not.”<sup>11</sup> The Spirit is the firstfruits—the down payment—of the coming reign of God, which is “not yet” fully in the midst of believers’ lives but which they have “already now” by promise. It is important to note that the reign or kingdom of God of which the Holy Spirit is the firstfruits must be understood eschatologically in terms of the distinction between the present age and the coming age and not ontologically as the distinction between spirit and matter.<sup>12</sup> In other words God’s reign is not something “up there” or “beyond” the material realm but rather “out ahead” as the language of “the last days” and “the day of the Lord” in Scripture suggests.<sup>13</sup> This means that life in the Spirit does not dwell in the old but rather thrusts the Christian into the hopeful new. But that is not all, because life in the Spirit also leads the Christian to live the “already now” in light of the “not yet,” to live in the present world in light of the coming kingdom, to live today as the new creation. The church that lives in the Spirit of *mañana* must therefore be concerned with the present world by denouncing sin and the reign of the devil in all its manifestations and by announcing and living in accordance with the hope of the age to come.

González’s discussion of the church’s life in the Spirit of *mañana* expresses a concern for affirming a spirituality of hope that is future-oriented without losing the church’s commitment to “living *in*” the gospel by faith and “living *out*” the gospel by “making faith the foundation of action and structure” in the world today.<sup>14</sup> As suggested above this move prevents what González sees as a Gnostic temptation to think of hope in terms of what is “up there” and “beyond” the material world, which in turn would entail a form of spirituality that “somehow involves rejecting matter, or leaving aside those concerns that have to do with material things.”<sup>15</sup> Furthermore a “spiritualist eschatology . . . certainly undercuts any understanding of Christian responsibility that would lead believers to engage in

social or political action.”<sup>16</sup> González brings up the powerful role of Christian hope played in the African-American struggle for justice. There is no question that such hope for ultimate freedom in Christ, expressed so powerfully in the spirituals, led to the denunciation of the oppressive structures of slavery that were the result of the institutionalization of human sin and promoted the annunciation of a new sociopolitical order in United States history.

Years earlier Gustavo Gutiérrez had also picked up on the dangers of what he called “a Christianity of the Beyond” while also acknowledging the problem of “a Christianity of the Future.” More recently Noemi does the same in his treatment of hope, particularly in his discussion of various models of history as *fuga temporis*, or the evasion of time and history.<sup>17</sup> Both types of Christianity—“of the Beyond” and even “of the Future”—can easily forget the here and now, the actual realm where Christian witness takes place in word and deed. Gutiérrez writes:

The death and resurrection of Jesus are our future, because they are our perilous and hopeful present. The hope which overcomes death must be rooted in the heart of historical praxis; if this hope does not take shape in the present to lead it forward, it will only be an evasion, a futuristic illusion. One must be extremely careful not to replace a Christianity of the Beyond with a Christianity of the Future; if the former tended to forget the world, the latter runs the risk of neglecting a miserable and unjust present and the struggle for liberation.<sup>18</sup>

Gutiérrez’s criticism is not against the idea that the kingdom of God is a gift from above nor against the future coming of the kingdom of God in all its fullness but rather against the inability to see its implications for liberation at all levels in the here and now. For Gutiérrez, liberation means liberation from socioeconomic structures, from bondage to a precritical fatalistic mentality, and ultimately from sin, which “gets to the very source of social injustice and other forms of human oppression and reconciles us with God and our fellow human beings.”<sup>19</sup>

It should be noted that Gutiérrez’s suspicion of the potentially docetic tendency toward “a Christianity of the Future” is an acknowledgment of an earlier criticism directed at Jürgen Moltmann’s *Theology of Hope* by Brazilian theologian Rubem Alves. In his book *A Theology of Human Hope*, Alves sees Moltmann’s assertion that God’s future promises lead to man’s awareness of his unfulfilled present as a somewhat subtle negation of “the crisis of the present that gives birth to hope for a promising future.”<sup>20</sup> What is under criticism here is a theology of the future promise that is not sufficiently mediated through a serious look at the painful present. Alves writes:

10. Justo L. González, *Mañana: Christian Theology from a Hispanic Perspective* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 164.

11. *Ibid.*, 158–60.

12. *Ibid.*, 161.

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Ibid.*, 157.

15. *Ibid.*, 161.

16. *Ibid.*, 165.

17. Noemi, *Esperanza*, 46–49.

18. Gutiérrez, *Theology*, 124.

19. *Ibid.*, xxxviii.

20. Rubem Alves, *A Theology of Human Hope* (Washington: Corpus Books, 1969), 60.

## IV.

For political humanism it is not a promise and a hope from a transcendent realm that make man aware of the pain of his situation. Man is aware of the pain of his situation simply because he is a human being and feels in his flesh the inadequacy between his world and himself and his community. . . . Hope, thus, is historical and related to the form of pain into which man is inserted. For Moltmann, however, the situation is different: there is one transcendental hope (because not related to any specific situation) that makes man aware of the pain of his present.<sup>21</sup>

According to Alves, Moltmann's theology of hope forgets that human suffering as such is enough to make one aware of his deplorable situation and hope for something more human. More to the point, one cannot have a theology of promise that points to the future but neglects working through a painful present—the flesh and blood context in which people actually suffer and come up with their theodicies. Otherwise, as Noemi points out, the result is a future-oriented model of eschatology that evades time. Such an eschatology might be called “alternative futurism”—a model in which transcendence has a future trajectory but is insufficiently related to the present and in which a “juxtaposition between intrahistorical time and eschaton” takes place.<sup>22</sup>

Significantly Alves also criticizes the messianic pretensions of technology as the fulfillment of human hopes. Technologism attempts to provide the future in the present, thus turning man into a passive consumer of goods rather than a self-determining subject, a conformist rather than a person capable of critical thinking and action. Technologism conquers man through the conquest of science. The goal of Alves's critique, of course, is not to demonize technology but to humanize it by making it a tool at the service of subjects committed to the creation of a new tomorrow.<sup>23</sup> While it may be true that oppressed peoples in underdeveloped nations tend to have an uncritical fixation on the past, Gutiérrez also questions developed countries' so-called openness to the future because too often it “is an openness to the control of nature by science and technology with no questioning of the social order in which they live.”<sup>24</sup> Gutiérrez's comments on this point echo Alves's criticism of technologism. Both warn against misplaced human hope in the illusion of such future utopias. In a first-world context like the United States, which Alves experienced as a graduate student, not only the rich and the middle class but also the poor are tempted to put great hope in technological progress and understand their identity as consumers of goods as a hopeful situation. If Latinos in developing nations must be careful not to make poverty into an idol, Latinos in developed nations such as the United States should be careful not to make riches and possessions their hope.

The preceding survey of various voices from the Hispanic/Latino world has given a sense of the struggle of our people to express their hope. These voices share a basic recognition that hope is a necessary dimension of being authentically human, but there is also a critical awareness that where a realistic confidence in the future is lacking in humans there is probably an accompanying dehumanizing or at least less than human condition at work. Such a condition is most likely fostered by an uncritical fixation on the past (Freire, Gutiérrez, Blades, Culiolis), an accompanying fatalistic worldview (Allende), and a negative take on the future (Noemi). Furthermore, the question has been raised concerning how a future-oriented hope relates at all to our present realities of suffering and marginality, as well as to our present aspirations. Conceptions of hope that evade history are summarily rejected as *fuga temporis* (Noemi), “Christianity of the Beyond” (Gutiérrez), and “spiritualist” eschatology (González). In philosophical terms, there is interest in the question of how hope relates to the task of humanization through education (Freire, Culiolis) or political vocation (Alves, González). In theological terms, this concern for man's thinking and living today in light of what is yet to come leads to comprehensive views of God's saving activity in the world under the language of liberation (Gutiérrez) or kingdom/reign (González). In short, these are the concerns that some voices in the Hispanic/Latino world bring to the table as they attempt to articulate the struggle of our people for expressing their hope.

Where do we go from here? What can a Latino Lutheran contribution bring to our people's struggle to articulate their hope? To approach this question, I propose to turn to the arguably recent rediscovery of the Lutheran distinction between the two kinds of righteousness, which has received considerable attention at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis since 1999, especially in the teaching and writing of the faculty in the Systematic Theology department.<sup>25</sup> In particular this distinction is often seen as a Lutheran contribution to theological anthropology because it involves an inquiry into what it means to be human both in relationship to God (*coram deo*) and in relationship to the neighbor and the world (*coram hominibus, coram mundo*). If indeed the main concern of the Lutheran distinction is to explore what it means to be human then the distinction might prove useful for discussing hope precisely as an essential dimension of human existence.

21. *Ibid.*, 59.

22. Noemi, *Esperanza*, 47.

23. Alves, *Theology*, 17–27.

24. Gutiérrez, *Theology*, 122.

25. See, for example, the following articles: Charles P. Arand and Joel Biermann, “Why the Two Kinds of Righteousness?” *Concordia Journal* 33 (2007): 116–35; Charles P. Arand, “A Two-Dimensional Understanding of the Church for the Twenty-First Century,” *Concordia Journal* 33 (2007): 146–65; Robert Kolb, “God and His Human Creatures in Luther's Sermons on Genesis: The Reformer's Early Use of His Distinction of Two Kinds of Righteousness,” *Concordia Journal* 33 (2007): 166–84; Charles P. Arand, “Two Kinds of Righteousness as a Framework for Law and Gospel in the Apology,” *Lutheran Quarterly* 15 (2001): 417–39; Robert Kolb, “Luther on the Two Kinds of Righteousness: Reflections on His Two-Dimensional Definition of Humanity at the Heart of His Theology,” *Lutheran Quarterly* 13 (1999): 449–66.

This distinction begins with the assertion that God originally created humans as righteous persons, creatures in communion with God and one another. Sin is the human attempt to rebel against God's design for human life and relationships. It is what Dietrich Bonhoeffer calls a negation of creatureliness, the attempt to be God-like (*sicut Deus*) instead of being precisely a creature made to reflect God's image to be—to exist—in loving communion with him and others (*imago dei* in a relational sense).<sup>26</sup> Sin is the breaking of the bond of fellowship or relatedness between humans and between individuals and God. In the language of the Lutheran Confessions, "Original sin is the absence of original righteousness," which includes not only what the second table of the Decalogue demands but also "fear of God, trust in God, and the like" (Ap II, 15–18; Kolb-Wengert, 114–15).

How then are sinful human beings restored to their creatureliness, that is to say, to their being-in-communion with God and neighbor? It takes nothing less than an act of re-creation. God must kill the old man in order to create out of nothing a new man. In a sense this is a view of God's re-creation in Christ and through the Spirit as a work of *humanization*, of creating a new humanity—an issue of critical importance in the Hispanic/Latino world for articulating meaningfully what hope is. God crucifies the old nature with Christ and raises it with Christ to new life. God does this eschatological work of new creation and renews sinners in the same in the present—with all its sorrows and joys—through his Spirit-breathed word in absolution, in baptism, in the Lord's Supper, and in the mutual consolation of the brethren. When God speaks his creative word, past, present, and future are no longer conceived in a linear fashion but are rather intertwined into one saving reality where the old and new ages overlap. Oswald Bayer describes the view of time and history this perception of reality implies as follows:

Our modern understanding and theology of time fails to see the distinctive intertwining of the times that characterizes the theology of both Paul and Luther. The future of the world derives from the present-day newness of the presence of God; the new creation now disclosed in Baptism and the Lord's Supper turns the old, perverted world into the past and restores the original world as creation.<sup>27</sup>

God's eschatological work of humanization restores relationships. Sinners are pronounced and made righteous before God (*coram deo*) through faith in Christ. This is passive or vertical righteousness. It corresponds to justification, to receiving Christ as gift through faith. In terms of human identity passive righteousness *coram deo* is what makes one human again before God through the merits of Christ the Savior. For Luther, Christ as gift makes one a Christian.

But there is another dimension to being human, what Bayer calls "the institutional side of the event of justification."<sup>28</sup> Having been pronounced and made righteous before God through faith in Christ, Christians are also made righteous before others to live in service to them. This is active or horizontal righteousness. It corresponds, at least for the Christian, to new life in the Spirit or sanctification, to imitating Christ as example through good works on behalf of neighbor and society. In terms of human identity, active righteousness *coram hominibus* or *coram mundo* makes one human again before the neighbor. For Luther, Christ as example does not make one a Christian (that is, it does not make one righteous before God), but it does make one a responsible neighbor who suffers all things for the needy as Christ has given himself even unto death for you.<sup>29</sup> The concern for promoting social justice and socioeconomic liberation—also a critical concern in the struggle to express hope in the Hispanic/Latino world—belongs precisely to this realm of active righteousness.

## V.

When seen in its anthropological and eschatological trajectories, the Lutheran distinction between the two kinds of righteousness allows God's work of humanization to be seen from two perspectives. On the one hand, humanization in terms of the Christian's human identity before God (*coram deo*) must be seen completely as a gift from above. The righteousness of faith is the creation of God's Spirit-breathed word that enters time in Christ, the anointed One who goes to the cross, and bestows upon sinners the righteousness of Christ their hope, the first-born among many brethren. In passive righteousness, it may be said that faith and hope are almost indistinguishable. Hope is trust in God's salvation and protection. It is "hopeful trust."<sup>30</sup>

Therefore humanization *coram deo* must be seen apart from our attainment of a critical consciousness—or our living out today in light of the coming reign or kingdom of God, or our commitment to liberation in socioeconomic terms—as important as these things might be in service to our suffering neighbor. The gratuity of our human identity *coram deo* is obscured when we reduce redemption from sin to only one dimension—even if the foundational one—of a broader saving reality such as the kingdom of God, or liberation, or more recently (in some Pentecostal circles) prosperity or healing. Humanization *coram deo* on account of Christ our hope becomes obscured when we make redemption from sin so intertwined with our work of mercy, political vocation, commitment to prosperity, or mission strategies that we no longer see the provisionality of the present and our total dependence on God for all things. When

26. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall; Temptation: Two Biblical Studies* (New York: Touchstone: 1997), 76–85. Also see p. 38–43.

27. Oswald Bayer, *Living By Faith: Justification and Sanctification*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2003), 65.

28. *Ibid.*, 59.

29. For Martin Luther's distinction between Christ as gift and example see "A Brief Instruction on What to Look For and Expect in the Gospels" (AE 35: 117–24).

30. See Rudolph Bultmann's discussion of the Old Testament view of *ἐλπίς* (*hope*), in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964), 2:522.

God in Christ is no longer our hopeful trust, we are bound to be disappointed and disappoint others when our efforts bring no results; or we are bound to be arrogant and make others trust our works when our efforts seem to pay off—at least for a time. We should heed the warning that “such confidence is irresponsible security which God will suddenly overthrow and change into fear and anxiety.”<sup>31</sup>

The Lutheran distinction between the two kinds of righteousness also allows us to see God’s work of humanization from the perspective of human responsibility in service to the neighbor—not to earn salvation, but for the sake of love. Active righteousness *coram mundo* (also called the righteousness of reason) promotes a more just and human society. This is not social gospel but is social activity that flows out of the gospel, the institutional side of justification. It asks how we might work our hardest and use our brightest for the sake of protecting and promoting the neighbor’s well-being. In the sphere of active righteousness hope does not only give love a future orientation but actually gives love its sense of realistic discontent with the present *status quo* and its expectation of and working toward a better future for the neighbor and society. Active righteousness is not primarily concerned with individual holiness but is above all “social,” concerned with the neighbor and society. If the language of “hopeful trust” can be used to describe the fullness of being human *coram deo* then perhaps the language of “hopeful love” can describe what it means to be human *coram mundo*.

In Latin American and United States Hispanic communities the neighbor is above all the “poor.” Any discussion of active righteousness in our communities must take account of this concrete neighbor. With this in mind it is not surprising that Latin American Roman Catholic theologians in some cases have entered into dialogue with the Marxist analysis of society in terms of the struggle of classes—the poor versus the rich. Such theologians also have worked from a reading of the Second Vatican Council’s statements on the church’s solidarity with the joys and grief of the poor and afflicted of the world and her commitment to reading the signs of the times in light of the gospel for the sake of helping humans find meaning in this life and the life of the world to come.<sup>32</sup> While the “preferential option for the poor” was not finally or generally defended on the basis of a Marxist analysis of society, it was nevertheless accompanied by a particular reading of Vatican II that would promote the commitment to deal with the institutional effects of sin in the world (systemic sin) and therefore with liberation from socioeconomic structures of oppression. The systemic nature of sin and the institutional aspect of liberation directed the church to the poor as the primary object of God’s love and the church’s mission. The unintended consequence, however, was the tendency to romanticize the poor by seeing them as amoral and somehow closer to God on the basis of their status and con-

dition in life. This romanticism was offset by an equally strong emphasis on the *concientización* of the poor as the agents of their own destiny and liberation.

Pentecostal theologians have not dealt with the poor much in dialogue with Marxist analyses of society or through a theology of the kingdom of God with sociopolitical implications but rather through the broader concept of healing. Just as liberation for Gutiérrez encompasses at the fundamental level liberation from sin as the root of all problems, Pentecostals see forgiveness of sins as the foundational dimension of the broader and more holistic reality of healing or prosperity. In a conference on Global Pentecostalism I heard Ann Bernstein of the Centre for Development and Enterprise in South Africa—and to my knowledge, an outsider to Pentecostalism—speak somewhat positively but tentatively on the potential impact of the Pentecostal theology of prosperity in poor urban neighborhoods. Does prosperity teaching lead one out of poverty? Similar studies on the impact of religion in economic development could be undertaken in Latino neighborhoods. Just as liberation theologians see poverty as the work of systemic sin—the institutional effects of individual sin in the world—the theologians of prosperity or healing see poverty as the work of the devil. Christians, then, are encouraged to move beyond their poverty. Yet the tendency is to think of the richer (typically, though not exclusively, in material terms) as being closer to God so that once again status or condition in life becomes a guarantee of God’s saving presence and activity in the neighborhood.

In the examples mentioned above, particular readings of society (via a kingdom of God/liberation or a prosperity/healing theology) intended to help the “poor” neighbor *coram mundo* are employed to make the neighbor’s status or condition in this world (whether poor or prosperous) the guarantee for his righteousness *coram deo*. This is a confusion of the two kinds of righteousness. That being said, we must still practice a hopeful love for others.

As we ponder the shape our responsibility before the suffering neighbor should take in the sphere of active righteousness, a few considerations must guide our task. First of all, the practice of active righteousness allows us to be critical of an unfulfilled past and sensitive to the aspirations of people for recognition, an affirmation of their dignity, and, yes, their full inclusion in the church and her structures where decision-making takes place. For example, for United States Hispanics/Latinos in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), such aspirations are clearly delineated in the recent report of the LCMS Blue Ribbon Task Force for Hispanic Ministries.<sup>33</sup> Among its recommendations, the report lists the hope for a director of strategic development for Hispanic ministries, educational access to form church workers and leaders, the inclusion of Hispanic voices in forming the church’s future, the need to address theologically and pastorally the issue of immigration, and the need

31. *Ibid.*, 2:523.

32. See the preface and introduction to *Gaudium et Spes* in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery, New rev. ed. (Northport, NY: Costello, 1992), 903–11.

33. *Blue Ribbon Task Force on Hispanic Ministry Report: Una Misión, Un Mensaje, Un Pueblo*, <http://www.lcms.org/graphics/assets/media/Office%20of%20the%20President/2007%20BRTF%20Hispanic%20Ministry%20Report.pdf>.

to strengthen the National Hispanic Mission Society. These are expressions of our collective hope.

Second, the practice of active righteousness does not only allow us to be critical of our past and sensitive to our aspirations but also to go to work with the best God has given to us in order to bring about critical changes that will serve our neighbor. Here the notion of priority is not only necessary but a matter of love. This is what the now classic idea of the “preferential option for the poor” should mean. It teaches a priority of love toward the neediest neighbors in our midst. If everybody is your neighbor then nobody is your neighbor, as it were. Therefore active righteousness is not afraid to stand up and fight for the concrete neighbor(s) that God has placed before us in our various vocations. It is in the context of our vocations (for example, mother, pastor, business person, lawyer) that we are likely to find our neediest neighbors. The “preferential option for the poor”—language encourages us to think also of the neediest people who do not always seem to fit within one of our vocations.

Finally, the practice of active righteousness is realistic in that it avoids utopian dreams and the illusion of perfect sanctification or inevitable progress. Newyorican<sup>34</sup> theologian Samuel Solivan, a Pentecostal scholar critical of his own tradition, puts it well when he says that the Spirit can make the church certain of her resurrection hope in the midst of an uncertain present full of suffering without a total eradication of social, political, or economic structures.<sup>35</sup> In this present life, in the contemporaneous overlapping of the old nature and the new creation, of the past and the future, we can expect what Bayer calls “ethical progress without metaphysical pressure” or a “secular progress” that “takes place in small but definite steps.”<sup>36</sup> Such ethical progress “is no longer a salvation concept,” that is to say, it does not establish human identity *coram deo*. Moreover, such realistic progress “loses its fanaticism in the area of politics” (in other words, it is not an elusive but a concrete form of being human *coram hominibus* that is content with doing what lies at hand).<sup>37</sup> Lutheran theology holds that active righteousness is not perfect and cannot make us righteous before God, but also teaches that such activity still is demanded and even rewarded by God in this life.<sup>38</sup>

### Resumen

Presentando un popurrí de voces del mundo latino, el profesor Sánchez nos informa acerca del interés que teólogos latinoamericanos han mostrado en el tema de la esperanza como dimensión constitutiva del

ser humano. Tanto teólogos como intelectuales en otros campos de la cultura latina han sugerido que cuando el ser humano ha perdido toda su confianza o fe en el futuro es probable que estuviendo en algún tipo de condición deshumanizante causada por estructuras injustas y opresivas. Tal desesperanza nace o se nutre de una fijación acrítica con el pasado (o como diría Paulo Freire, una falta de «concientización»), una cosmovisión fatalista, una negatividad acerca del futuro o alguna combinación de estas posturas.

En el área de la escatología, campo de la teología que toca el tema de la esperanza cristiana, teólogos del mundo latino como Gustavo Gutiérrez, Justo González o Juan Noemise han preguntado cómo se relaciona la esperanza en el futuro con realidades de sufrimiento y marginación en el presente. Nociones de la esperanza que intentan evadir esta historia se rechazan. Existe a la vez entre intelectuales cristianos interés en la cuestión de la relación entre la esperanza y la labor de «humanización» (término que utiliza Rubem Alves) en la sociedad, ya sea por medio de la educación o la vocación política. Intentos de pensar lo escatológico en función de tal proyecto de humanización dentro de la historia se aprecian en descripciones de la obra salvífica de Dios en el mundo en términos bastantes amplios y ya conocidos como «liberación», «construcción del reino» o aún «humanización» en sí.

En contra de escatologías de tipo espiritualista o gnóstica, tales descripciones toman en serio el papel histórico de la esperanza en la construcción de una sociedad más justa para todos. Sin embargo, por la gran amplitud teológica con la que se describe tal proyecto—amplitud en la que el progreso histórico o humano pasa a ser un signo de la salvación o el establecimiento del reino de Dios en Cristo—se confunde la dimensión soteriológica de la obra de Dios por medio del perdón de los pecados con sus efectos prácticos o éticos en el mundo mediante las buenas obras en beneficio del prójimo.

Para evitar tanto la tentación de reducir la esperanza cristiana a algo del más allá como la tendencia más común hoy en día de reducirla al progreso histórico, Sánchez argumenta que la iglesia luterana tiene un tesoro en su teología de los «dos tipos de justicia» la cual le permite enfatizar la importancia de la obra de humanización desde dos perspectivas que se complementan y distinguen a la vez. Como contribución a la antropología, la enseñanza de los dos tipos de justicia promueve, por un lado, la realización de la criatura en su relación ante Dios (*coram deo*) por medio de la fe en Cristo y aparte de las obras de la ley. Ya que Dios establece una relación «justa» o recta ante Él de forma gratuita por medio del perdón de los pecados y sólo a causa de los méritos de Cristo, y por ende sin la ayuda o mérito del ser humano, se denomina «pasiva» a este tipo de justicia. Ésta viene a nosotros «desde arriba», como don de Dios, quien nos humaniza haciéndonos nuevas criaturas en Cristo.

Por otro lado, existe la justicia «activa» que tiene que ver con la realización de la criatura en su relación ante los seres humanos o ante el mundo (*coram hominibus, coram mundo*). La justicia activa promueve el desarrollo de la relación «justa» ante el prójimo y por ende nos llama a ser miembros responsables de la sociedad y a hacer las buenas obras para beneficio del prójimo (en particular, los más necesitados). Ciertamente, la teología luterana enseña que la justicia activa no es perfecta ni nos hace justos ante Dios. Sólo la justicia pasiva merece tal honor. Por ello no se apoya la teología luterana en la inevitabilidad del progreso ni busca construir el cielo en este mundo. Pero la teología luterana tiene la capacidad de fomentar con gran ahínco el progreso ético en el campo de las relaciones humanas, no para salvarnos sino por amor al prójimo, y de hecho nos enseña que Dios demanda la justicia activa y aún premia la práctica de la misma en esta vida. Desde la perspectiva de la justicia pasiva, el cristiano vive por la «fe esperanzadora» en Cristo a pesar del estado del mundo y la presencia de sus estructuras opresoras. Desde el punto de vista de la justicia activa, el cristiano tiene la responsabilidad de manifestar en el presente un «amor esperanzador» que lo impulse a la tarea de humanizar, es decir, de laborar por medio de sus vocaciones para cambiar en lo posible estructuras injustas que no promuevan el bien del ser humano. **LOGIA**

34. [Editor's Note: *Nuyorican* is a blend of “New York” and “Puerto Rican” and signifies the members or culture of the Puerto Rican diaspora (or its descendants) in New York, especially near New York City.]

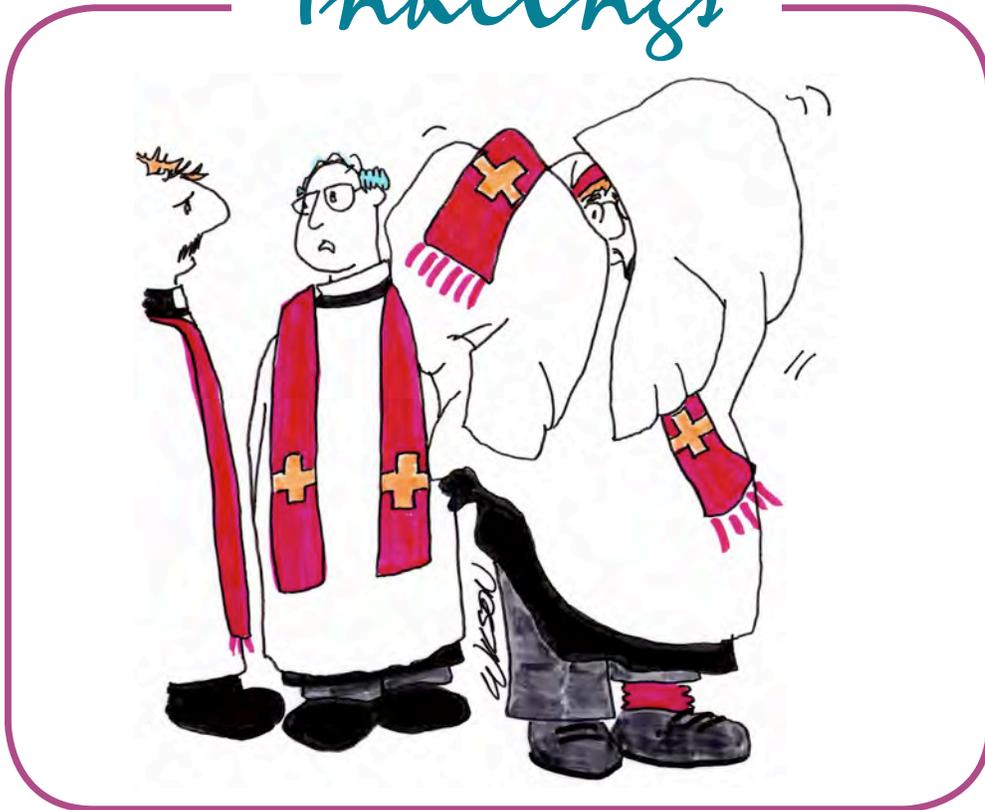
35. Samuel Solivan, *The Spirit, Pathos and Liberation: Toward an Hispanic Pentecostal Theology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 65, 147–49.

36. Bayer, *Living by Faith*, 66.

37. *Ibid.*

38. See Ap IV, 22–24; Kolb-Wengert, 124.

# Inklings



*Pastor Braun has a different relationship with clothing.*

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# Lutheran Deaconesses of Nicaragua

## “Every Appropriate Means”

DAVID SOMERS



THERE ARE MANY UNIQUE qualities of the nascent Lutheran Church in Nicaragua, organized as the Iglesia Luterana-Sínodo de Nicaragua (ILSN) on 11 January 2008, the result of mission work begun in 1997. Its rapid growth, the degree of local control and planning, the expansion of congregations (from none to twenty-three in eight years), missions and social work, the number of locally trained church workers, the quick establishment of a seminary, its youthfulness—all are remarkable on the scene of world Lutheranism, especially in the mission context. Of the many features of the ILSN, the one to be considered here is the story of its female diaconate, understood in the sense of the nineteenth-century movement often associated with Wilhelm Löhe.

The proportion of deaconesses to pastors sets the ILSN apart from all other Lutheran church bodies. As of 2009, 23 pastors had been ordained and commissioned and 41 deaconesses commissioned, all graduates of the program sponsored by the Lutheran Church–Canada (LCC). The 2009 graduating class included three Nicaraguan pastors and eight deaconesses.<sup>1</sup> From the outset, as the mission began training church workers through the LCC, the sponsoring agent of the mission, the number of female church workers trained was greater than that of males. Remarkably, the Nicaraguan upsurge is concurrent with a *decline* in Lutheran deaconess vocations elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

Historical and cultural influences in Nicaragua have allowed for the ready acceptance of a corps of trained female church workers. From the outset of the colonial period in Latin America, Roman Catholic female religious orders were concerned with social work and education. Various Protestant denominations proselytizing in Nicaragua since the mid-twentieth century followed suit and employed women in these areas.

This precedent was apparently not a factor considered by LCC mission designers when work began in Nicaragua in the late 1990s. The lack of provision for any community life, group center, corporate daily prayer, retreats, or specific continuing education—elements basic to the fabric of the diaconate since the nineteenth century—testifies to the fact that a diaconate in line with the deaconess movement in Lutheranism was not considered.

So, how did this predominantly female diaconate come about? The impetus was certainly not from a strong precedent in the LCC, since the LCC did not itself have a deaconess program. The establishment of a corps of deaconesses was not the deliberate plan of the LCC; rather, equipping Christians to serve the gospel was at the core of LCC design, whether female or male. Further indication of the absence of such intent was the lack of the development of a substantial, if any, diaconate in LCC missions begun in the same time period in Ukraine and Thailand. On the other hand, it seems the emerging LCC-related Lutheran Church in Cambodia does include an important female leader component, indicating the influence of the “any appropriate means” principle. There was no particular strategy or plan to produce a female majority among seminary participants as some insightful adaptation to the Nicaraguan context. The answer lies in the mission philosophy developed by Dr. Leonard Harms (LCC mission director from 1991 to 2006) and its adoption and implementation by the LCC through its Committee for Missions and Social Services. For the purposes of this article the following summary will present that philosophy.

Wherever Lutheran Church–Canada does mission work we have one goal: to proclaim the gospel by every appropriate means so that the hearer meets Jesus and not simply the missionary. When the Holy Spirit brings people to faith in Jesus, several things happen to which we as a church need to respond. The Holy Spirit brings the faithful together and they form congregations. The congregations want to worship Jesus and so ask the missionary how that can best be done. So, the missionary becomes a teacher of more than the gospel. He also teaches Christians how to respond to their new faith and hope in God. When congregations gather to worship, the members want to share all the good things God has given them.<sup>3</sup>

1. <http://www.lutheranchurch.ca/canluth/missions0409.pdf>.
2. See, for example: <http://www.diaconesses.fr/diac-intro.html> *Établissement des Diaconesses de Strasbourg* at [www.diaconesses.fr/diac-intro.html](http://www.diaconesses.fr/diac-intro.html); The Deaconess Community, <http://www.elca.org/deaconess/Background.html>; *Europe's biggest Protestant sisterhood tries to undo waning trend*, <http://www.eni.ch/highlights/news.shtml?2004/02>; [http://venezuelaview.blogspot.com/2007\\_03\\_01\\_archive.html](http://venezuelaview.blogspot.com/2007_03_01_archive.html) (accessed 19 January 2008).
3. Leonard Harms, “Accepting an Invitation,” *The Canadian Lutheran* 23, no. 1 (Jan./Feb. 2008): 10.

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Initially, all local church workers were grouped in one category called “evangelists.” Again, the guiding principle was this: “Wherever Lutheran Church–Canada does mission work, we have one goal—to proclaim the gospel by every appropriate means so that the hearer meets Jesus.” That position meant training those who were ready, willing, and able. In Nicaragua, most of those who responded to the needs at hand were women. That response, described in an LCC mission report, corresponded to the historical role of deaconesses as Christians serving the church in the social services:

Deaconesses serve the church as teachers of Christian Doctrine in the Nicaragua Children’s Christian Education project. This program reaches out to the children of many communities where the new churches are forming. They also assist the church to serve the social needs of the community. They are part of the total mission work force at work in all of Nicaragua and often help with the mission work in other Central American countries. They are an important component of our outreach into the non-believing population of the country.<sup>4</sup>

Another report reveals the development of aspects of the traditional diaconal role, noting the deaconesses’ leadership of devotions for women trainees in the church-related sewing school for community women, a work addressing physical and spiritual needs.

Though unplanned, the result of such a strong group of trained female church workers for the Lutheran Church in Nicaragua found amicable company in Lutheran history. Moreover, the development coincided chronologically with a renewal and revival of interest in the female diaconate in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod,<sup>5</sup> the Iglesia luterana de Venezuela<sup>6</sup> and the Iglesia luterana de Panama. Even though the creation of a specifically female corps of church workers was not intentional, once under way, the program moved quickly along well-entrenched channels in the Lutheran ethos conducive to its development and gained recognition as an important ministry of the church.

Another characteristic of the diaconal education in Nicaragua is its identity with pastoral training. Seminary classes for pastoral and diaconal candidates are held together at the same time, with the same professors, and for the same duration in the same church-granted certificate. The only difference is that the deaconesses have courses in pedagogical methodology while pastoral candidates have one in homiletics and liturgy.

Still, male-female discrepancies arose. Well-entrenched cultural patterns in the pastor-dominated LCC and male-dominant Nicaragua were assumed without appropriate reflection and with immediate impact. A perusal of LCC-published mission reports and articles reveals more coverage of pastoral activity than that of the diaconal, despite their relative numbers. Although not stated LCC mission policy, pastors, not deaconesses, were called to serve as LCC missionaries in Nicaragua and neighboring Honduras and Costa Rica. When the necessity of providing transportation for church workers became evident, pastors received motorcycles; deaconesses, however, continued biking, walking, or taking public transportation to cover comparable or greater distances. When stipends were determined for church workers, deaconesses received less than pastors. Those examples are not those of malicious, deliberate attempts to diminish the deaconesses’ role or persons. They do belie a lack of theological reflection and simple fairness in view of the church workers’ equal training and comparable workloads.

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*The deaconesses are highly regarded  
by members of the church.*

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Fortunately, as soon as the inequitable situations were noted—in some cases by the deaconesses themselves, and sometimes by outside observers—steps were taken to remedy the state of affairs to thwart further inequities and to establish principles of Christian justice and practice in the formative stages of the ILSN. Three cases in point are the equalization of LCC mission office worker salaries, the resolution of LCC’s Committee for Missions and Social Services to strive for equity among mission-related workers, and the appeal for support for deaconess expenses from the Concordia Mission Society, an LCC-listed service organization.

This restorative action has an impact beyond the immediate circumstances and individuals concerned. In these situations the ILSN and the LCC have a golden opportunity to be a beacon of gospel-oriented transformation. This too falls under the mandate of “every appropriate means . . .”

Despite many obstacles the future is bright. Often it is the deaconesses who first interface for the church with the general community. It is also often the deaconesses who have the most immediate opportunities to evangelize since catechetics is part of their tutorial curriculum. Moreover in the Latin American context where church involvement is largely a female activity, this group of church workers is important to communicating the gospel to women and their children.

The deaconesses are highly regarded by members of the church. Two of the six newly elected officers of the ILSN are deaconesses, meaning two of the three possible elected offices held by nonclergy are held by deaconesses. The community-at-

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4. Leonard Harms, “Mission—Proclamation and More,” *The Canadian Lutheran* 20, no. 3 (April/May 2005): 25.

5. [http://www.lifeoftheworld.com/lotw/article.php?m\\_vol=8&m\\_num=2&a\\_num=6](http://www.lifeoftheworld.com/lotw/article.php?m_vol=8&m_num=2&a_num=6). In 2002 Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, began a new program to train deaconesses in its Master of Arts program. It has also modified this program so as to certify Hispanic women for diaconal ministries in collaboration with the Hispanic Institute. See <http://www.etehit.org/English/Catalog/Specialized.asp>.

6. [http://venezuelaview.blogspot.com/2007\\_03\\_01\\_archive.html](http://venezuelaview.blogspot.com/2007_03_01_archive.html).

large, whose children so greatly benefit from the tutorial classes, also recognize the value of the deaconesses' service.

As the ILSN develops its organization as a church body, this remarkable group of women will define their participation and place in the church, both nationally and internationally. Without reflection or guidance, the deaconesses could succumb to the pressure of a male-dominated *machista* society, easily being allowed to slip into an unclear role. This danger is exacerbated by the systemic economic and social violence against women, as well as by the extreme poverty in Nicaragua, one of the poorest Latin American countries. A vague status may have contributed to the eventual decline of the diaconate in much of world Lutheranism, but its foundations in Lutheranism and in historic Christianity can provide strong support to define and edify this group of women through deliberate communal acts of prayer, retreat, meditation, and study that are encouraged, promoted, and provided by the church in Nicaragua.

### Resumen

El pastor Somers de la Iglesia Luterana—Canada comparte noticias del desarrollo sorprendente del ministerio de la diaconía en la Iglesia Luterana—Sínodo de Nicaragua donde a diferencia de otros países el número de diaconisas consagradas actualmente excede el número de pastores ordenados en el país. La participación histórica en Nicaragua de mujeres de órdenes religiosas católicas e iglesias protestantes en las áreas de servicio social y educación, así como la respuesta más

reciente y positiva de mujeres nicaragüenses al llamado de la misión luterana canadiense en el país centroamericano de «proclamar el evangelio por cada medio apropiado para que el oyente conozca a Jesús» son causas del auge del ministerio diaconal en la nación. Por medio de su servicio educativo como maestras de la fe y su rol en la obra social en pro de la comunidad, las diaconisas de hecho han apoyado las tareas de formación y evangelización de la nueva iglesia luterana en Nicaragua.

Aunque se hayan experimentado algunas desigualdades entre pastores y diaconisas en cuanto a la posibilidad de recibir llamados, acceso a recursos de trabajo (por ejemplo, transporte adecuado) y remuneración apropiada, tales situaciones que tienen que ver con la justicia ante el prójimo se han ido resolviendo concretamente para beneficio de toda la iglesia. La iglesia en Nicaragua honra a sus diaconisas y éstas han contribuido al liderazgo electo de la misma. Dado que en una sociedad machista la mujer latinoamericana generalmente es la presencia más constante y participativa en la vida de la iglesia, es importante reconocer que la influencia de la diaconisa en la evangelización de mujeres y niños seguirá siendo clave para el crecimiento de la iglesia luterana en la nación.

Con una base sólida en la tradición luterana cuyas raíces se remontan al movimiento diaconal de Wilhelm Löhe en el siglo diecinueve, el futuro de la obra de la diaconisa es promisorio aún en contextos donde la mujer es a menudo relegada a un segundo plano y el objeto de violencia económica y social. A la vez Somers llama a todos los que participan en la formación diaconal a no cesar de reflexionar acerca de las bases teológicas e históricas, así como las implicaciones prácticas, de tan importante labor. Sin tal reflexión constante y aplicable a la vida, se corre el peligro de que la idea de la diaconisa se vuelva un concepto ambiguo, una cuestión pasajera. **LOGIA**

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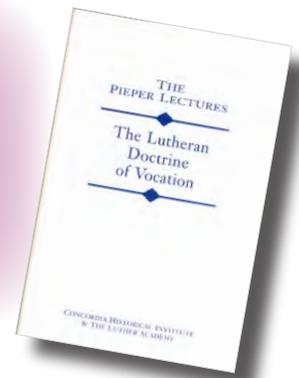
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# Grace and Bondage

## The Paradox of Christian Nurture

STEVEN HEIN



WHILE NOT A LUTHERAN, IT WAS David Hicks who eloquently described a fundamental paradox inherent in a classical, Christian education, particularly when viewed from a Lutheran perspective. He described a pedagogical tension in an education that would seek simultaneously to equip young minds for “the world’s fight and the soul’s salvation.”<sup>1</sup> This description closely parallels the paradoxical character of the Christian’s life as described in one of Luther’s early, but most profound, essays: his *Treatise on Christian Liberty*, better known as *The Freedom of the Christian* (1520). He put it this way: “A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all” (AE 31: 344).

Now, more than ever, parents and servants of the word need to understand these paradoxes in order to nurture our children with an education that is distinctly classical and Lutheran. This is the education that they vitally need. In this interest, I would add another way of describing Luther’s paradox that shapes the Christian’s identity. The Christian life is characterized by living in *The Freedom of Grace and the Bondage of the Neighbor*.

On the one hand, a distinctively Lutheran education needs to nurture understanding and attitudes that are shaped by the faith into which we are baptized. That faith centrally proclaims a life of secured freedom, a freedom to be the children of God enjoying life with our Creator for the sake of the grace of Christ. When it comes to securing and maintaining God’s favor, when it comes to grappling with the gap between the people we are and the people we ought to be, when it comes to securing our own welfare, there is nothing for us to do, nothing to accomplish, nothing to perfect. We must teach that getting saved is a matter of flat-out doing nothing.

The real offense of the gospel as it addresses the soul’s salvation is that it calls us to a ridiculously passive life, not unlike that of a beggar. Beggars lack the basic things that are needed to live. Moreover, should they be given what they need for life, they have nothing to offer in return. They just stand there—hat in hand—ready to receive again and again whatever they can get. Luther’s last words, found scribbled on a scrap of paper in his pocket after he died, were “We are all beggars, and that’s the truth.”

So here is our task: to raise up young beggars who make it a habit simply to go—spiritual hat in hand to the throne of grace—and receive all the donated dignity and sustenance for life they can get from the bleeding charity of a crucified Christ. They are to learn how to have and maintain a spiritual appetite simply to receive from the bloody hands of Jesus all that they are and all that they need for life today and every day. As beggars, they are to do this with the clear conviction that they do not, nor will they ever have, anything to offer their Lord in return. This is how it ought to be. When God has his way with us, we passively grow in an awareness and appreciation of our poverty and his graciousness. We may experience our spiritual poverty by the inner workings of the law and the external events that bring *tentatio*, but we grasp the graciousness of God by faith alone. We are to teach our children to enjoy a freedom from being obligated ever to do anything for God.

As Luther so eloquently put it in his Heidelberg theses (1518): “The Law says ‘do this,’ and it is never done. Grace says ‘believe in this,’ and everything is done already” (AE 31: 41 [thesis 26]). What Luther learned from the Apostle Paul is that we can live life under the law or we can live it under the gospel. Under the law, when all is said and done, there is always more to do. But under the gospel, when all is believed about the promises of Christ, all is already done, and there is nothing left to do. And with nothing, you get everything. You are free. This is the grace by which we are saved, and it brings an outrageous freedom—an outrageous freedom that has God whispering to us what Gerhard Forde has called the hilarity of the gospel: “What are you going to do now that you don’t have to do anything?”<sup>2</sup>

By the standards of the world and good old-fashioned religion—even that which often seeks to pass itself off as Christian—this is an understanding of grace that is both outrageous and hilarious. We get everything we need in our baptismal inheritance, even adoption into the royal family of his Son, yet we remain beggars. We become kings with the Lord Christ in his Kingdom who also made his appearance to the shout of

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1. David V. Hicks, *Norms and Nobility: A Treatise on Education* (New York: University Press of America, 1999), 2.
  2. Gerhard Forde, *Justification by Faith: A Matter of Death and Life* (Ramsey, NJ: Sigler Press, 1990), 33.

hosannas as a royal beggar.<sup>3</sup> That makes us royal beggars! Our God is a God who demands perfect righteousness, yet it is this God who gives us just what he demands in the righteousness of Christ, given in the sacred things to us, again and again. And here is another paradox about that righteousness: We are now perfectly sufficient in the righteousness of Christ, yet we are always in need of more; we are royal beggars for life.

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*Only those who die to sin may live in Christ.*

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The freedom of the gospel is God's wisdom, but it is usually seen as foolishness—religious foolishness from the human perspective. With man's sense of justice, everybody gets what they deserve. With God's justice, everybody gets what they do not deserve. The righteous Christ receives the wrath of God and punishment for sin, and we wretched sinners receive mercy. From the human standpoint, it sounds like a con job to keep us uncaring and lazy. Worldly wisdom operates with the assumption that the more important the issues connected with human existence, the more we need to get busy. The more God commands us—and he certainly does command us in his law (they are not the Ten Suggestions!)—the busier we think we need to be. Man's religion always advances the notion that there is divine help for those who help themselves.

Thus, the apex of spiritual commitment is manifested in what we do. But, against such a sensible perspective, we must teach our children to understand and appreciate the divine foolishness of the gospel which operates with different logic. The gospel teaches, ironically, what is contrary to what well-meaning Christian parents often teach, especially around Christmas time: "Tis better to give than to receive." The logic of the gospel, however, is just the reverse: "Tis better to receive than to give." When it comes to the soul's salvation, let me repeat, when it comes to the soul's salvation we must teach that all commitments to generous giving produce just what Aristotle promised:

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3. Our royal beggarly identity flows, in part, from our union and inheritance with Christ, whose royal reign was hidden under a beggarly appearance. Luther refers to Jesus as the royal beggar as he expounds on Matthew's connection with the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 concerning his triumphal, yet humble, entry into Jerusalem. "He rides there so beggarly, but hearken to what is said and preached about this poor king. His wretchedness and poverty are manifest, for He comes riding on an ass like a beggar having neither saddle nor spurs. But that He will take from us sin, strangle death, endow us with eternal holiness, eternal bliss, and eternal life, this cannot be seen. Wherefore thou must hear and believe" (WA 37: 201–2, as cited in David Steinmetz, *Luther in Context* [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1995], 28).

they produce a growth in worldly virtues. But when such things are trusted in, they also produce a ticket to hell. Conversely, the passive reception of the saving gifts of Christ produces just what the Apostle Paul promised: a perfect righteousness and a ticket to heaven.

Our challenge today, more than ever before, is to provide the experiences, vantage points, and the theological logic by which our children can see (first of all) and then appreciate the freedom that the grace of Christ imparts. In this regard, Christian pedagogy for our children has often made a critical mistake, and one that, unfortunately, has been passed on for generations. We think that life in Christ can best be nurtured and appreciated by our small children by engaging their hands in handicrafts and their minds in watered-down Bible stories. We then mix this formula with sweet thoughts about a milquetoast love of Jesus for bunnies, butterflies, and little children. We have witnessed how this regimen of soft religious pabulum produces mischievous boredom in our strong-willed boys by age eight and utter rebellion by many of both sexes by age thirteen. In the eyes of these children, the youth culture of today may not be seen as very wholesome, but it certainly is not so boring!

We need to recover the distinctively Lutheran understanding on how hearts and minds are prepared for the gospel. We must renew our faith in what Professor Ronald Feuerhahn has called "the power of negative thinking"<sup>4</sup>—the power of negative thinking that is harnessed by frequent sojourns in the way of full-strength law. Spiritual beggars are made, not found, and renewed in their passion to beg by a continual experience of their own spiritual poverty. Only those who die to sin may live in Christ. This is as true for the baptized two- and three-year-old as it is for their parents.

The theological logic that anchors the freedom of the gospel entails three very important adversaries that must be overcome—sin, death, and the devil. Without a real awareness and appreciation of these three enemies, the foolishness of the gospel will be simply foolishness, and progressively uninteresting foolishness at that. We must continually expose our children to these evils in their own life and world in order to nurture and maintain a beggar's mindset for life. Sin has rendered our little children dead in their trespasses, prone to make idols out of most anything or anyone, and curved in upon themselves with inordinate self-love. As with all of us—to use the botanical metaphor—they have become bad vines, in a bad vineyard, producing nothing but sour grapes.<sup>5</sup> We are and remain in this life—apart from Christ—wretched sinners.

One of the biggest challenges for the Christian nurture of our young people is to make these realities clear, important, concrete, and related to the fabric of how life must be lived in a fallen world. The freedom to live as beggars of God's favor in Christ Jesus, and the peace and security that it brings make

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4. The Rev. Dr. Ronald Feuerhahn has been a faithful and stimulating professor of Systematic Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, for many years.

5. An allusion to the metaphor in Isaiah 5:1–4.

little sense apart from an awareness and appreciation of the magnitude of the problem of evil. For this the law needs to have more than its instruction; it needs to have its impact. The power of negative thinking needs to have an impact in the lives of our children early and often, not just for discipline, but also for appropriate character formation. The problem of sin needs not simply to be instructed, it needs to be experienced. The power of negative thinking is the conviction in the hearts of our children by the work of the Spirit that they can die to sin—or they can just die.

This conviction is what creates a passionate life of begging for God's outrageous grace, trusting to exercise the freedom of the gospel to receive the riches of God's grace with nary a concern over the issue of what they might give in return. For them as for each of us, they can live by grace or they won't live at all. But thanks be to God, they will live by grace. The awareness of the riches of God's grace may be no greater than the awareness of the magnitude of one's sin. Our children can only grasp the wonder of the way of the gospel as it is balanced by the impact of the law. They will make progress maturing in the image of Christ bit-by-bit, as Luther put it, by always starting over again—dying to sin in the way of the law and rising up unto new life in the freedom of the gospel (AE 25: 478). This is true for our little ones, as it is for our teenagers, as it is for each of us.

Now at this point you may have been thinking: "But . . . but . . . but you are leaving things out, important things!" Yes, that is true. There is another side of the life of the Christian. The freedom of grace we have covered. But now, we must turn our attention to the other side of the paradox, the bondage of the neighbor. We must prepare our children for what Hicks calls "the world's fight." Christians are simultaneously free and bound.

Strangely, the notions of freedom and slavery are not always opposites from a biblical perspective. In the civil sphere, our forefathers closely linked the idea of freedom with the idea of liberty, that is, self-government, autonomous self-rule. Our *Declaration of Independence* declared that we would be a free people, determined to govern ourselves and independent from the British crown. However, when the Scriptures address what Luther called "things above us"—spiritual matters—they know nothing of human autonomy. We are either ruled at all points by the powers and principalities of evil or we are ruled by God.<sup>6</sup>

6. This means that in Christ we are bound to his righteousness, which produces the fruit of faith; and apart from Christ, we are bound to sin. Luther used the unflattering illustration of a mule that is ridden by its master in this regard. In spiritual matters we are as a mule, either ridden by the devil or ridden by Christ. Oberman's discussion of "man as a mule" is a delightful explanation of Luther's analogy here. He writes: "For Luther, man is *not* the mule that, stupefied by ignorance, cannot decide between two haystacks—education could help that mule. No, the condition of man does not depend on the breadth of his education but on his existential condition as a 'mule' ridden either by God or the Devil, but with no choice in the matter, no freedom of decision, no opportunity for self-determination" (Heiko Oberman, *Luther: Man between God and the Devil* [New York: Image Books, Doubleday, 1990], 219).

The Scriptures do not tie the notion of freedom to autonomy; rather they tie the idea of freedom to purpose—God's purpose.

The Christian's life is free and yet it is a life of slavery. Yes, Jesus taught that "if the Son has set you free, you will be free indeed" (Jn 8:36). He also instructed his disciples that as they rightly acknowledged him as Lord that meant that they are slaves, *douloi*; and a slave is not above his master (Jn 13:13–16). In the same vein, the Apostle Paul explained that in our baptism we have been set free from the slavery of sin and are alive to God in Christ Jesus. We have also thereby become slaves to God and righteousness (Rom 6:7, 17–19, 22), and as slaves are bound to their master, so we are bound to Christ. We are a new creation fashioned after his human nature, and created for works that God has planned from eternity that we should be about.<sup>7</sup>

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### *The Scriptures do not tie the notion of freedom to autonomy.*

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The sense of bondage here involves a necessary connection between our being and our doing. When it comes to spiritual things, we do as we are. Good fruit comes from a good tree as bad fruit comes from a bad tree. Grapes come from grapevines because that is how God has made them. Jesus taught that he is the vine and we are the branches, and that abiding in him we can produce some pretty good vintage. What we do flows from what we are. It is God who has so connected our being and doing. There is freedom here, for this is how God has designed us to be, but there is not autonomy. This again is Aristotle on his head. Aristotle taught that we are perfected in our being by a progressive perfecting of what we do. *Doing* is an investment in *becoming*—for good or ill. For this reason, Luther saw Aristotle's *Nichomachian Ethics* as of the devil, for it runs counter to the whole sense of the creating and saving work of God.

Luther observed in his Heidelberg theses that "the love of God does not find, but creates that which is pleasing to it" (AE 31: 41 [thesis 28]). God never comes to us as a beggar—hat in hand—hoping to get from us what he desires. (God really would like you to become a Christian. How about it? What do you say?) Whatever God wants, he makes all by himself. He needs no help from us. The general interpretive rubric for the Bible is this: whatever God commands, God creates. Whatever God demands, God gives. He commanded the creation of human beings in Genesis 1 and through the power of his word, it was so. He demands of us a perfect righteousness in his law, and he gives us just that in the righteousness of Christ through the gospel. In it he exhorts faith, and that is what he creates by

7. See Romans 5:17; Ephesians 2:10, 4:13–15.

8. Romans 1:16, 10:17; 1 Corinthians 12:3.

the power of the Spirit through the word of Christ.<sup>8</sup> His redemptive will is that we become a new creation in Christ, and that is just what he fashions by the power of the saving word in the waters of baptism. We are as he has made and remade us; and we do as we are in accord with his will and work.

One can conclude that if God has regenerated us to be slaves of the Lord Jesus, we must above all serve and be obedient to him. Indeed, this is how much of the theology in the church through the ages has seen it. The Christian has been called to a life, bound by a higher calling, to perform special spiritual works for our Lord Jesus out of obedience to him. The more pious you are, the more time you devote in your life to doing them. Such an idea flourished in medieval monasticism. You go to the monastery to perform super spiritual works for your merit and for Christ's benefit. Today we see the remnants of such thinking even in our Lutheran congregations. We dream up special works to serve Jesus in our congregations and then we implore our members to come and do them on a regular basis. Congregations that can fill up a monthly calendar with such events are called "alive." And those who busy themselves doing them are called "active members." We call this congregational monasticism and it is a misunderstanding about Christian piety and works.<sup>9</sup>

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### *We call this congregational monasticism.*

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To engage the world's fight is to leave the confines of monastery and church building and enlist your talents and energies in the temporal orders of life—to be of some earthly good. In the thinking of Luther, it is to make things in this life a little bit better. The Christian life proclaims a bondage to our neighbor and his welfare. I have made this point elsewhere, but it is also fitting here. We cannot serve our Lord Jesus directly for two rather unflattering reasons. The first is that we do not have anything that he needs. The second—equally unflattering—is that whatever we have that is worth anything, he gave us. Faith generates love, and God would have us channel our fear, love, and trust in him (things that are just part and parcel with being a new creation in Christ) by distributing as stewards the blessings that God has entrusted to us. He binds our deeds to our neighbor and gives us some significant things to do in this life. At the same time, he schools us in the gentle art of loving—something that we shall be doing for an eternity. Then he makes this ar-

range: serving the neighbor in faith is reckoned as service rendered to him, even when that service is rendered to those one might consider the least of his brothers.<sup>10</sup>

The bondage of the neighbor is to be understood in a twofold sense: in the way of the gospel, and in the way of the law. As a new creation in Christ, this bondage is composed of the compelling demands of gratitude and love. In the way of the gospel, we serve the neighbor out of delightful gratitude for all that our Lord has done and given to us.<sup>11</sup> This is a bound freedom from all concerns about our own welfare as these are put to rest in the secured gifts and promises of Christ. Moreover, we serve our neighbor out of love because that is just what the new creation has been created to do. We are God's piece of work and we do as we are. These realities undergird the usually taught "because-you-want-to" side of things. This is the delightful bondage of love. The neighbor becomes a beloved and it is love's compulsion to serve and bestow gifts for her welfare. Little Suzie falls down and skins her knees. Her loving mother picks her up, comforts her, and tends to her wounds. Now should we be so silly as to ask the mother why she did this or if she thought she had to, she would surely think we were crazy. Works of love have a bondage about them—even a compulsion—as one is captivated by the needs of a beloved, but legal considerations of duty and calculation have no place. Such is the bondage of the neighbor as the Christian is seen in light of the realities of the new creation in Christ brought forth from the waters of baptism.

There is another side to the bondage of the neighbor, however, because there is another side to the Christian. Apart from Christ, the Christian remains a fleshly sinner, sold as a slave to sin in which nothing good dwells and nothing good comes forth.<sup>12</sup> The bondage of the neighbor occasions for the Christian a context to carry on the subduing and disciplining of the flesh. Moreover, it is a significant hill on the battlefield where spiritual warfare is to be engaged against the world, the flesh, and the devil. To our children we are to say, "You don't *want* to? . . . Well, you *have* to." This is the bondage of the neighbor in the way of the law.

We need to be very clear on this. There is no liberty in the bondage of the neighbor. There is no liberty in our doing, or in the nurture of our children's doing. We can be constrained by the love of Christ and captivated by the needs of the neighbor, we can be constrained by the law and serve our neighbor for

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9. For a more complete discussion of the false piety exhibited in monasticism and contemporary congregational forms of the same thing, see my essay, "The Outer Limits of a Lutheran Piety," *LOGIA* 3, no. 1 (Epiphany, 1994): 4–10.

10. See Jesus' teaching about the works of the sheep on Judgment Day in Matthew 25:31–40.

11. We serve out of a sense of loyalty to Christ, who is Lord, and has made us servant/slaves—not out of a sense of legal compulsion but by grace. The life of service flows from an ethos under grace, not law.

12. See the Apostle Paul's description in Romans 7:14–20. Luther expressed this *you do as you are* understanding between faith and unbelief in the following way: "So it is with the works of man. As the man is, whether believer or unbeliever, so also is his work—good, if it was done in faith, wicked if it was done in unbelief. But the converse is not true, that the work makes the man either a believer or an unbeliever" (AE 31: 361).

our own good, or, as is often the case, we can be constrained by both.<sup>13</sup> It is a win-win situation each way. In the paradoxical nurture of our children that addresses the bondage of the neighbor, we are to use discipline with all its rewards and penalties to teach what “the fat relentless ego”<sup>14</sup> in all of our children needs to understand: life will go better for them if they follow the rules than if they break them. We call such service that flows from discipline, “civil righteousness.” It is not intrinsically the stuff of godliness; it is the stuff of practical wisdom. So we teach our children: “Do yourself a favor, and follow the rules!”

A good tree bears what the Lord considers good fruit, and a bad tree bears what is considered bad fruit. But the Lord can use either or both to feed our neighbor quite sufficiently. Warming the heart of our children by the gospel produces the bondage of love; and warming the butt of our children produces the disciple of the law . . . or other such applications that get the message across. Both law and gospel are needed to nurture the bondage of the neighbor.

Nurturing children to live in the freedom of grace and the bondage of the neighbor corresponds to a dual citizenship that God has called all of his children to occupy as the Church Militant. Under the lordship of Christ, we are simultaneously citizens of the Kingdom of God and worldly earthly communities. We live a secure life as beggars of the grace that makes us free, and we live significant lives with works that bind us to our neighbors. These are great and wondrous truths about the fundamental identity of all of us, including our children—yes, even the smallest of these. These children are simply on loan to us from their heavenly Father and, through adoption, their Brother-in-Gospel.

Let’s put away the glitter, the finger painting, and the silly things that we do in the name of Christian education and teach this paradoxical identity of life in the cross of Christ. Let us rightly divide the word of truth, teaching and applying God’s law and his gospel that our children might adopt a lifelong habit of dying to live, dying to sin, and rising unto newness of life. Serving Christ in the neighbor’s need as lords of all, beholden to none, and servants of all and subject to all. Let us nurture our children with the goal and confident hope that in that day when you gather your earthly family together in the fullness of salvation, by the grace of God, they will be there. **LOGIA**

13. Forde expressed this duality of motivation as rather typical of ordinary saints, and even more so. “To be realistic, this side of the *eschaton* we shall no doubt have to say that in our actual deeds there is something of a mixture of the *have to* and the *want to*, maybe even a good deal more of the former than the latter. But we must not lose sight of the hope, the vision, inspired by the absolutely unconditional promise. For in the end, that alone will survive—true sanctification” (Forde, *Justification*, 57).
14. A delightful term for the central enemy of moral life coined by Iris Murdoch. See her *Sovereignty of Good* (London: Rutledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), 52, 66.



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Dr. Das is the holder of the Niebuhr Distinguished Chair at Elmhurst College, Elmhurst, Illinois, and is the author of the books *Solving the Romans Debate*; *Paul and the Jews*; *Paul, the Law, and the Covenant*; and *Baptized into God’s Family*.

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**The Reverend Doctor David Scaer  
The Reverend Professor Charles Cortright**

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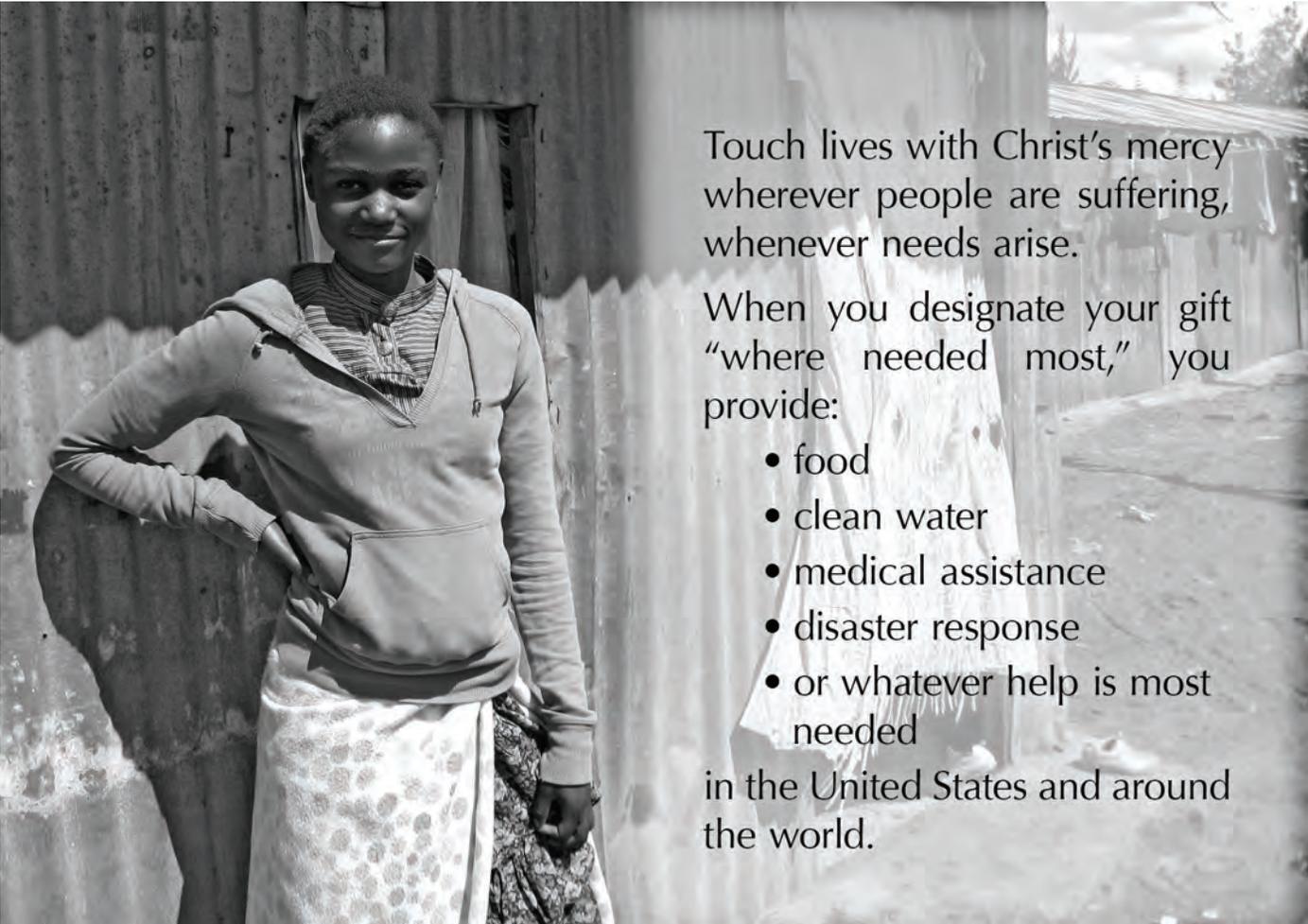
Friday Afternoon, April 9

3:00-3:30 Registration  
3:30-5:00 Lecture I  
5:30-6:00 Choral Vesper  
7:00-8:00 Social Hour  
8:00-10:00 Banquet

Saturday Morning, April 10

8:30-9:00 Coffee  
9:00-10:00 Lecture 2  
10:00-10:15 Break  
10:15-11:15 Lecture 3  
11:15-11:35 Reactor 1  
11:35-11:55 Reactor 2  
11:55-1:00 Discussion

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# REVIEWS

*“It is not many books that make men learned . . . but it is a good book frequently read.”*

Martin Luther

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## Review Essay

### *Singing the Faith: Living the Lutheran Musical Heritage.*

By Richard C. Resch (Executive Producer) and Daniel Zager (Writer). Fort Wayne, IN: The Good Shepherd Institute of Pastoral Theology and Sacred Music, Concordia Theological Seminary, 2008. DVD.

“We are heirs of an astonishingly rich tradition . . . the living heritage and something new.” So said what is by now considered a classic statement on the theology of worship, the introduction of *Lutheran Worship* (CPH, 1982). Into such “an astonishingly rich tradition” the viewers of this 80-minute DVD will be drawn. Directed by Kantor Richard Resch of Concordia Theological Seminary and written by Dr. Daniel Zager of the Eastman School of Music, this DVD has made a remarkable milestone of evangelical music and sacred song in a very accessible form. The Good Shepherd Institute of Pastoral Theology and Sacred Music of Concordia Theological Seminary is to be commended for producing this weighty resource for the life of the church. Every pastor must watch this DVD and study it carefully with Scripture, the *Lutheran Service Book* (or any other Lutheran hymnal), and the catechisms. The pastors who are already at home in this great legacy will rejoice in finding this treasure useful for their ongoing teaching and pastoral care, while those who are not will be drawn into its vitality so that they may want to learn much more. This reviewer is deeply and rejoicingly convinced that *Singing the Faith* is serviceable to our Lord and his people for the saving gospel’s sake.

*Singing the Faith* is a study of the history of Lutheran congregational singing presented in four twenty-minute chronological segments: 1) Luther; 2) the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; 3) the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; and 4) the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Eight scholars, cantors, hymn writers, and musicians are teaching in this DVD: Christopher Boyd Brown of Boston University School of Theology; Kevin J. Hildebrand of Concordia Theological Seminary; Martin Jean of Yale University Institute of Sacred Music; Robin Leaver of Westminster Choir College; Richard C. Resch of Concordia Theological Seminary; Carl F. Schalk of Concordia University Chicago; Stephen P. Starke of St. John Lutheran Church, Bay City, Michigan; and Daniel Zager of Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester. The performance of the sacred music includes Mar-

tin Jean, Craig Cramer of University of Notre Dame, and the Bach Vespers Choir of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church of New York with Cantor Rick Erickson. The DVD is filmed at eleven different locations in Indiana, Missouri, Michigan, New York, and Massachusetts. It comes with a 32-page teacher’s guide and reproducible classroom handouts in PDF format.

As *Singing the Faith* walks the viewers through centuries since the Reformation, it helps them to acknowledge the origin and development of Lutheran sacred song tradition, and thereby assists them to locate themselves in the contemporary situation. Dr. Luther reflected on his time when he wrote a brief tract *Concerning the Order of Public Worship* in 1523. He recognized that both the office of the Holy Ministry (*Predigtamt*) and the divine service (*Gottesdienst*) originated with Christ, but both had been perverted and corrupted by his time. The task of his time, as Luther understood it, was to restore them according to Christ’s mandate and institution and not to abolish them altogether because of their abuse (WA 12:35.2–18; AE 53:11). In the nineteenth century of the confessional revival in Germany, Theodor Kliefoth made a similar assessment in his *Die ursprüngliche Gottesdienstordnung in den deutschen Kirchen lutherischen Bekenntnisses, ihre Destruction und Reformation* (The Origin of the Divine Service Order in the German Churches of the Lutheran Confessions, Its Destruction and Reformation) of 1847. While Luther’s timeline was: 1) the origin in Christ, 2) the destruction, and 3) the Reformation, Kliefoth expanded it by adding two more: 4) the destruction again in the eighteenth century, and 5) the restoration in the nineteenth. *Singing the Faith* goes a step further by adding a post-nineteenth century period. In the contemporary environment of ecumenism, diversity, and globalization, *Singing the Faith* invites the viewers to rediscover the distinctively Lutheran heritage of hymns and sacred songs that give Christ and his comforting gospel.

Part I is devoted to Dr. Luther and his contributions. Robin Leaver lets the first Lutheran martyrdom in 1523 serve as the point of departure. Having written the text of the narrative ballad of this incident in “*Ein neues Lied wir heben an*,” Luther with his colleagues started to write hymn texts and tunes. Daniel Zager points out that already in 1524 the first Lutheran hymn collection appeared: *Etlich Cristlich lider Lobgesang und Psalm* (Some Christian songs, canticles, and psalms), sometimes referred to as the *Achtliederbuch* (literally, the Eight-songbook). The very first hymn in this collection is Luther’s “Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice” (LSB 556). The second is “Salvation unto Us Has Come” (LSB 555) by Paul Speratus. Out of eight

hymns, Luther contributed four and Speratus three. Christopher Brown comments that Erasmus did not complain only about Luther's influence at the university in Latin but also his effect on common people through hymns in German. Brown then introduces the words of a pastor in the sixteenth century (it must be Tileman Heshusius) that the one hymn, "Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice" is responsible for carrying the gospel to more people, even to those who did not know Luther's name, than all other writings of Luther combined.

Two important quotes are included in this section of Part I in the teacher's guide as well as in the handout. One is on Luther's high regard for music:

After all, the gift of language combined with the gift of song was only given to man to let him know that he should praise God *with both word and music (verbo et Musica)*, namely, *by proclaiming [the Word of God] through music and by providing sweet melodies with words (et mixis verbis suavi melodiae)*. *Preface to Georg Rhau's Symphoniae Incundae*, 1538. WA 50:372.2–5; AE 53:323–24 (emphases added).

The second is more fundamental; that which reveals Luther's theology of worship:

For God has cheered our hearts and minds (*unser herz und mut fröhlich gemacht*) through his dear Son, whom he gave for us to redeem us from sin, death, and the devil. He who believes this earnestly cannot be quiet about it. But he must *gladly (fröhlich)* and *willingly (mit lust)* sing and speak about it so that others also may come and hear it. *Preface to the Babst Hymnal*, 1545. WA 35:477.6–9; AE 53:333 (emphases added).

Philip Nicolai understood the church's song in the same way as Luther, as indicated in the first stanza of his "O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright" (LSB 395): "My king and my bridegroom is in possession of my heart" (*Mein König und mein Bräutigam, hast mir mein Herz besessen*). Here *Lutheran Service Book* follows *Lutheran Book of Worship*: "Our Lord and master, *You have won our hearts to serve you only!*" (emphases added). The praise and acclamation of our Lord is born in the hearts that have received his saving gifts. For both Luther and Nicolai the rhythm is from him to us, and then from us back to him and to each other. His giving, our receiving, his gifts finding their fruition in our giving and living out—in this dynamic flow of the gospel the initiative is always with our Lord all the way through, not only in his answering for our sin on Calvary but also in his bestowing forgiveness through his ongoing service in the church. Our song does not stand independent of his gifts, but ever flows from them. The content of our praise centers precisely in what our Lord has done for us on the Good Friday. As the teachers in *Singing the Faith* pointed out in unison, Lutheran hymns and sacred music do what the preachers speak from the pulpit: the proclamation of the gospel. Part I of *Singing the Faith* captures this evangelical vitality of the Lutheran congregational singing tradition in a superb manner by tracing its origin in the gospel

that has found Luther and his colleagues at the Reformation.

Part II highlights the contributions of Martin Schalling (1532–1608), Philipp Nicolai (1556–1608), and Paul Gerhardt (1607–76). The viewers are invited to appreciate both music and text of Schalling's "Lord, You I Love with All My Heart" (LSB 708), Nicolai's so-called "queen of chorales," "O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright" (LSB 395), and Gerhardt's "Entrust Your Days and Burdens" (LSB 754) and "A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth" (LSB 438). These pastors lived under very difficult and uncertain circumstances of doctrinal persecutions, devastating plagues and epidemics, the Thirty Years' War (1618–48), and even family deaths, as in the case of Gerhardt, who lost four of his five children and also his wife. In the midst of suffering and pain, sadness and distress, as these men buried multiple members of their church day after day, they gave the church perhaps some of the finest hymn texts to sing at all times.

Daniel Zager reminds us that the third stanza of Schalling's "Lord, You I Love with All My Heart" was later incorporated by Bach into his St. John's Passion as the very last element. While stanzas one and two extol the Lord's bounteous gifts, which make the faithful unshakable even in the midst of the deepest sorrow and pain of the heart, the last stanza provides us a way of thinking about our own death and our own resurrection. Nicolai's chorales, both "queen" and "king," exemplify "what it means to sing the faith—not to sing about the faith, but actually to sing the faith" (teacher's guide, 14). Concerning Gerhardt's hymns Richard Resch comments that all his 139 hymns are strong because they give Christ. He characterizes Gerhardt's hymns with the theology of the cross by saying: "they teach us how to sing with tears."

This reviewer thinks it worth spending much more time than just twenty minutes on this section, as the other three sections. Each hymn should be explored in terms of the richness of its content, even phrase by phrase, by tracing the texts to their biblical sources and in some cases to Luther's Small Catechism. Pastors may want to check the hymn texts in original language to understand their proper content with precision by using such resources as W. G. Polack, *The Handbook to the Lutheran Hymnal* (CPH, 1942, 1958) and Fred L. Precht, *Lutheran Worship Hymnal Companion* (CPH, 1992), so that they may unpack for the benefit of their congregations what may be hidden in the English rendition. Reflections on these great hymn texts and melodies could occupy pastors, musicians, and the members of the Body of Christ for weeks of Sunday morning Bible classes. How can we not use ample time in appreciating the richness of a text such as the following Gerhardt hymn?:

A Lamb goes uncomplaining forth,  
The guilt of sinners bearing  
And, laden with the sins of earth,  
None else the burden sharing;  
Goes patient on, grows weak and faint,  
To slaughter led without complaint,  
That spotless life to offer,  
He bears the stripes, the wounds, the lies,  
The mockery, and yet replies, "All this I gladly suffer."

A bonus in Part II is a brief lecture by Martin Jean on the role of organ in congregational hymn singing. Jean explains that it was during the seventeenth century that organ as accompaniment grew in the church's usage in order to assist the congregational singing in pitch and tempo. The teacher's guide strengthens this understanding of the role of the musicians with helpful comments on Johan Crüger (1598–1662) and Johann Georg Ebeling (1637–76), two of the important composers who served with Paul Gerhardt at Berlin's Nikolaikirche. In this way, Part II of *Singing the Faith* succeeds in elaborating on the core Lutheran singing tradition from the post-Reformation era.

Part III brings the viewers up to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It draws our attention first to the enormous legacy of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750). Then after commenting on the decline of Lutheran heritage during the second half of the eighteenth century, it introduces the confessional revival of the nineteenth century by highlighting Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1809–47) and Friedrich Layriz (1808–59).

Robin Leaver helps the viewers understand that Bach's cantatas were not to be treated as isolated items but rather a part of the whole in the liturgy. In those days the chief divine service was long. It took anywhere between three to four hours, or more. A sermon was preached normally about an hour in length. By placing the cantatas after the reading of the gospel and before the creed and sermon, Bach intended them to be musical expositions of the gospel of the day. Bach wrote his cantatas based on German Lutheran chorales from the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries, the age of Lutheran orthodoxy. During 1724–1725, exactly two hundred years after the first Lutheran hymn collection of 1524, Bach wrote an extensive series of cantatas for the entire church year.

Bach as a theological musician also enriched the liturgical life of the church by providing organ preludes. Here again, Bach helped the congregation to focus on the gospel of the day by associating a familiar hymn melody with a hymn text. In the DVD, Craig Cramer demonstrates. Understanding the liturgical role of the organ prelude, the viewers may be prompted to arrive at the church before the musicians start playing it before the divine service. *Singing the Faith* gives Bach's Cantata BWV80: *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott* ("A Mighty Fortress Is Our God") as an example.

After Bach, the Enlightenment theology brought about the decline of the Lutheran church and her music and hymnic heritage. In fact, it may be recognized as surprising that despite the effect of rationalism and pietism Bach was still able to stay within the rich Lutheran tradition of singing the faith. As always, confessional revival results in liturgical renewal. *Singing the Faith* underscores the work of Felix Mendelssohn in reviving not only Luther's heritage but also Bach's legacy in his choral music and symphony. It also expounds on the enormous influence of Friedrich Layriz in Bavaria in his work of compiling and editing Lutheran chorales. Carl Schalk explains how Layriz restored the vitality of the sixteenth century chorales not only by recovering the original unedited text but also the original melody. Toward the conclusion of this section, *Singing the Faith* introduces still another important man of the confessional re-

vival, Wilhelm Löhe (1808–72), with his hymn, "Wide Open Stand the Gates" (LSB 639). The viewers of Part III will again be left with Christ and his gifts through the eighteenth and nineteenth century Lutheran hymn writers and musicians.

Part IV discusses Lutheran hymns of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. As *Lutheran Service Book* notes our time as "the most prolific period of English-language hymn writing in the history of Christendom" (preface, ix), *Singing the Faith* with its teacher's guide and handout lists no fewer than twenty four contemporary hymn writers, composers, and church musicians of British and American origins. Among them, four men are distinguished by the DVD: Martin Franzmann (1907–76), Jaroslav J. Vajda (b. 1919), Stephen P. Starke (b. 1955), and Kevin Hildebrand (b. 1973). In this reviewer's opinion, we should include the director of *Singing the Faith*, Kantor Richard Resch, as one of the major players in the living Lutheran heritage.

The viewers are invited to sing along with Franzmann's "Thy Strong Word" (LSB 578), Vajda's "Up through Endless Ranks of Angels" (LSB 491), and Starke's "Tree of Life" (LSB 561), "In the Shattered Bliss of Eden" (LSB 572), and "O Gracious Lord, with Love Draws Near" (LSB 599). Starke tells how his hymns have emerged out of his diligent biblical studies in sermon preparation and how, at times, familiar liturgical texts, such as the Proper Preface, prompted him to write hymns. Kevin Hildebrand answers the question of why contemporary Lutherans have a need to add more hymns when the received repertoire of the rich Lutheran tradition is already bountiful. His answer is simple and evangelical: "We can't help." This comment demonstrates that the Lutheran heritage of singing the faith is not something of the past but of the ongoing, living vitality. As Richard Resch summarizes, the subject of Lutheran hymns is how our Lord rescued us in his Son, and this subject never changes through the centuries. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another, with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God" (Col 3:16). Just as Luther, Gerhardt, and Bach, so also have contemporary Lutherans been struck by the same Gospel. The Lord has "cheered our hearts" too. Therefore, we cannot be silent about who our Savior is, what he has done, and how he continues to serve us with his gifts. The vitality of the Lutheran singing tradition will go on because our Savior's ministry never ceases. The DVD ends with a beautiful contemporary setting of Luther's "In Peace and Joy I Now Depart" (LSB 938), composed by Kevin Hildebrand.

*Singing the Faith* is a very well-crafted DVD, of high quality. It is a masterpiece. It is brilliantly made. Are there still areas for improvement? Naturally the producer could have added more. The teacher's guide provides supplemental material that will complement the teaching and music contained on the DVD. For the sake of usability with flexibility, the design to have four short segments of twenty-minutes is well thought-through. Therefore, without any negative judgment on this DVD, this reviewer will here offer a few humble suggestions to consider for those who will use *Singing the Faith* to enrich their teaching.

First, in the Luther section of Part I, the point of departure was the first Lutheran martyrdom of 1523 and the appearance

of the first Lutheran hymn collection of the subsequent year. Luther's enormous contribution toward congregational singing was marvelously explored in this segment. But it can be made even clearer when the story of the Reformation in general is also told, and more particularly, how the gospel became clearer in Luther over the course of his life. Luther was increasingly moving toward clearer confession of Christ between 1520 to 1525. While the Medieval Roman Catholic doctrine and practice remained his opponent throughout his career, during this time another major challenge entered the scene from the side of the sacramentarians and the Anabaptists. In these years Luther was moving from his confession centered in the outward signs (Augustinian neo-Platonic sign theory) to internal faith ("everything depends on faith") to the Word ("everything depends on the Word") and finally to the wholeness of all that the Lord gives according to his mandate and institution of the means of grace and the office that serves them ("Let the sacrament remain whole"). Hymns and sacred music are not themselves a point of departure; rather it is always a result of the Lord's prior giving of his gifts. Doctrine in the sense of the delivery of forgiveness through the means of grace comes first. As soon as our *sacrificium* stands independently from his *sacramentum*, our Lord is diminished in the church's song. Acknowledging the background in Luther's theological development only helps to properly locate the important years of 1523 and 1524 mentioned in *Singing the Faith*.

The second is a problem of translation. It is natural for us to use the hymn texts in English to make certain points in our teaching and learning. But quite often, despite the best efforts and labors of the translators, the original texts of the hymns have different emphases, accents, or even contents. Since we pay close attention to words and phrases in studying the hymns, if we use only their translated versions there may be a chance that we get more from the translators' confession rather than from the hymn writers'. In this regard, a general rule when reading the translated documents may apply: "never trust the translator." It is worth checking the original language before teaching the gospel through hymn texts, even those hymns that are sung in *Singing the Faith*. It will help us to move toward fuller appreciation of the hymns. It may also make us aware of the struggles that the translators may have encountered in dealing with two languages.

The third is in the important subject of the confessional revival that was dealt with in Part III. While the contributions of Mendelssohn and Layritz were mentioned there together with a hymn of Löhe, *Singing the Faith* spends a relatively small amount of time in discussing this topic. It shows how we are still not fully aware of the importance of the confessional revival. We recall the words of Hermann Sasse: "Why do we know practically nothing about the greatest liturgical scholars of our church in the nineteenth century, about Löhe and Kliefoth?" Since then the work of Löhe has been rediscovered, but not that of Kliefoth, whom Sasse recognized as the most important Lutheran episcopal figure in Germany, and of whom John Kleinig speaks as one of the greatest churchmen of the nineteenth century. As the two hundredth anniversary of his birth is coming

next year, it may be worth investigating his contributions not only in the areas of doctrine, exegesis, church history, preaching, and church governance, but also, for our purposes, in the area of liturgy, hymns, and church music.

Kliefoth (1810–95) left us major works on the liturgy in *Theorie des Kultus in der evangelischen Kirche* (1844), *Die ursprüngliche Gottesdienstordnung in den deutschen Kirchen lutherischen Bekenntnisses, ihre Destruction und Reformation* (1847), *Acht Bücher von der Kirche* (1854), and *Liturgische Abhandlungen* (1858–61). **The last-mentioned work is an eight-volume series**, each of which contained four to five hundred pages! He also edited a prayer book, a hymnal, a daily lectionary, and church order. Kliefoth published more than seventy hymns. On top of them all, as a culmination of his liturgical and hymnological labors, he published four folio size volumes of *Cantionale* (1868–80) together with Kantor Otto Kade, in which rich liturgical resources such as the order of communion service of all Sundays of the church year, daily services, prayers, and liturgical music and hymns for organists and choirs are contained. The *Cantionale* restored the liturgical treasures of the Reformation and gave them new life. Over against the poverty of the liturgical materials he inherited, Kliefoth enriched the Lutheran way with the liturgy by consulting forty-nine evangelical sources from the years between 1524–58. Where he found only Latin texts, he carefully translated them and only rarely did Kade compose new melodies for them. The text settings were carefully compared with the word usage of his time and adjusted. The *Cantionale* were published as a model and teaching seminars were held. Little by little, the *Cantionale* were introduced into the congregational learning process of the liturgy. Kliefoth rebuilt the choirs and gave them an important teaching task in the divine service. Children also played an important role in the liturgy. According to the *Cantionale*, the school children were supposed to learn by heart 172 hymns—more than one third of the hymns! (*Cantionale* I, 1:22). The confessional and liturgical vitality of the nineteenth century is embodied not only in Löhe and Kliefoth but also in Theodosius Harnack (1816/17–89) and other churchmen. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is an heir of the confessional revival. It will be helpful to unpack further the important contributions of this era. The liturgical air that they breathed and the common root they shared are still alive in the Lord's congregations of our time.

The fourth is about Part IV. This section focuses on contemporary Lutheran hymns in English. Such a concentration of language of origin is helpful because *Singing the Faith* aims at an American audience. But if the DVD is about the history of Lutheran congregational singing, it may be helpful to mention contemporary hymn writers and composers in other languages as well, such as from the Scandinavian traditions. The same thing may apply to Part III. The knowledge of the affect of the liturgical renewal in the nineteenth century in other countries may broaden our understanding of the living musical heritage of the Lutherans in the whole world.

"We are heirs of an astonishingly rich tradition . . . the living heritage and something new." This reviewer is profoundly grateful for the gift of *Singing the Faith*. This DVD is not merely

educational in a sense of giving some hard data on important facts, events, persons, and contributions of the past. It is also devotional; it “cheers our hearts,” because it teaches us not only about what it means to sing the faith, but it actually proclaims Christ to us. It invites the viewers to confess their Savior. It draws them to want to spend more time to discover this evangelical heritage more.

This reviewer prays that *Singing the Faith* may reach as many people as possible. Pastors will find it very valuable in their ongoing ministry. People would love to discover the rich treasure of the gospel in the Reformation singing heritage that is already theirs. This DVD can be used in Bible studies, catechism classes, meetings with congregational leaders, retreat, and circuit convocations. It is suitable in the classrooms of Lutheran schools, colleges, and seminaries. It can be broadcast through TV and internet. *Singing the Faith* can also be an enormous missionary tool. It should be translated into many languages and brought into many countries. As the fact that a cameraman who shot this DVD was converted over the course of its production process and was baptized in a Lutheran congregation indicates, *Singing the Faith* proclaims Christ our Savior. We can only rejoice with “the astonishingly rich tradition” of the gospel to which *Singing the Faith* points. Having received it we cannot be silent but must pass it on to the next generation!

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**Introducción a la vida y teología de Martín Lutero.** By Alberto L. García and Rubén D. Domínguez. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2008.

🔗 This monograph on the life and theology of Luther, written by two Lutheran scholars who for years have been fruitful in God’s vineyard as pastors, professors, and authors in Latin America, the United States, and at various colleges and seminaries of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, constitutes a welcome addition to the pool of literature on Luther available in Spanish and is also a contribution to Luther studies in any language.

García and Domínguez successfully achieved their goal of writing an accessible introduction that brings the thought of Luther to bear on the pastoral work of the Lutheran church among Hispanics in this country and also in Latin America (23). In the final section of the book (173–199), for instance, Dr. García develops the idea first formulated by an Italian scholar (and also elaborated in García’s doctoral thesis (81)) that the theology of the cross is a hermeneutical key for the reading and study of Luther (173). After drawing out the countercultural, christological, sacramental and eschatological implications of Luther’s theology of the cross, García notes how Luther’s approach helped him bring the comfort of the gospel to Latinos suffering marginalization and Hispanic women undergoing

domestic violence (193). Also insightful and practical is the discussion of the Reformer’s praise of Mary, in his 1521 commentary on the Magnificat, as a tool for evangelizing Hispanics, who often have a high regard for the Virgin (118–119).

The authors also deserve commendation as historians. By dedicating this work to the famous Argentine Methodist church historian, Justo L. González, himself a disciple of the renowned Luther scholar, Roland H. Bainton, García and Domínguez signaled that they, too, intended to produce high-quality scholarship in González’s marvelous genre of the “history of Christian thought,” and they do not disappoint.

Thus, this “introduction” to Luther’s thought is by no means a watered-down portrayal of his theology bereft of nuances or sidestepping challenging problems of interpretation. On the contrary, so as to overcome the difficulty of understanding the late medieval, Renaissance and Reformation Europe that Luther lived in, Dr. García wrote the first of the three sections of the book, with chapters on the historical, intellectual, and personal context of the Wittenberg professor (23–59). Then, in order to cope with the challenge of keeping the reader abreast of the latest developments in Luther research, the authors weave into the entire book, including the longest, second section on the work of Luther as a reformer and as a confessor of the Christian faith (61–169), discussions of new trends in Luther studies. To give one example, García and Domínguez emulate Heiko Oberman, the expert on late medieval theology who wrote a biography of Luther in 1992, by paying close attention to Luther’s teachers in order to trace the roots of his intellectual development in nominalism, Augustinianism, humanism, and mysticism. But they also make use of relatively recent research on Luther’s debt to his confessor, Johann von Staupitz, citing a 1991 study in German comparing Staupitz’s 1516 sermons to Luther’s *Commentary on Romans*, written that same year (46–47). Moreover, they suggest that a much less well known teacher of Luther’s at the Augustinian cloister of Erfurt, Johannes Greffenstein, had a greater impact on him by encouraging him to pursue the intensive study of Scripture (67).

Also to the credit of these two scholars, they do not simply focus on the secondary literature, but also acquaint their readers with Luther’s own writings. Every chapter in the second section of the book, for example, includes a description and analysis of the pivotal treatises the Reformer wrote during a certain phase of his career. García and Domínguez orient us by pointing out the writings they consider most significant for the theological development of Luther, and sometimes they stress less famous works at the expense of more celebrated ones. For instance, they consider the forty theses Luther penned for the 1518 Heidelberg Disputation more significant for defining the eventual shape of Reformation theology than the *Ninety-Five Theses* (88). They also praise the richness of Luther’s theology in his tract *Against Latomus*, written while Luther hid at the Wartburg Castle in 1521–1522, as a clearer presentation of the ideas he would expound a few years later in his noted *On the Bondage of the Will* against Erasmus (128). The authors also bring out the significance, for Luther’s Christology, of his obscure 1540 *Disputation about the Divinity and the Humanity of*

*Christ* (179), and on the next page they have a stunning long quote from a 1525 Luther sermon on Philippians 2.

By delving into Luther's works a little more than most biographies or surveys of this German's thought, García and Domínguez motivate their readers, be they persons already steeped in the study of Luther or newcomers to the field, to make greater use of their sets of Luther's works or to purchase such resources for their bookshelves or computers. This monograph contains a useful list of Luther's publications year by year, taken from Mark U. Edwards' study of the later years of the Reformer's career (17, 23), and also helpful references to editions of Luther's works in Spanish and English that have appeared after the ten-volume Spanish edition of Luther's works published in Buenos Aires was completed in 1985. It is always salutary to revisit or visit not only the Lutheran Confessions, but also the rest of the Lutheran corpus, since the theology we hear from Lutheran pulpits sometimes focuses only on some aspects of Luther's thought and not others.

Because of its ambitious goals, this work also has some defects. In the area of content, some statements misrepresent the medieval church. In the first chapter, for example, "Luther in the context of his world," we read that when Luther was born in 1483 people were "beginning" to doubt the unilateral authority of the church (27). Such a statement suggests that the medieval church enjoyed constant prestige and power throughout the Middle Ages, whereas in fact, especially during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the papacy reeled from one crisis to another, being subject to the French crown while the popes resided in Avignon (mentioned later, 107), going through a forty-year period when there were two, even three, rival popes, suffering a temporary curtailment of its power to the conciliar movement (mentioned later, 38), and then weathering scandal because of the immoralities of several Renaissance popes. In the area of interpretation, I found García and Domínguez's chronology of Luther's discovery of the gospel (74) and their analysis of the differences between Augustine and Luther less persuasive than the classical interpretations of these issues by the Finnish historian Uuras Saarnivara (cited by García and Domínguez, 80). Finally, the text abounds in careless errors. There are "anglicisms" in the Spanish, such as the use of the noun *monasticismo* for "monasticism," when the correct word is *monacato* or *monaquismo* (73). Some dates are inaccurate, such as the ones of 1300 to 1495 for Gregory of Rimini, when in reality he died in 1358 (40). Some Spanish words lack a letter or an accent, and German names also are repeatedly misspelled, such as the university towns of Ingolstadt and Heidelberg, rendered as Inglostadt and Heilderberg (87–88). Such minor flaws, however, hardly detract from the many strengths of this monograph.

Abstracto en castellano de la recensión de *Introducción a la vida y teología de Martín Lutero*, escrita por Alberto L. García y Rubén D. Domínguez (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008)

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### Resumen

Esta monografía acerca de la vida y teología de Lutero, escrita por dos eruditos luteranos con mucha experiencia pastoral y docente, es un gran aporte por varias razones. En primer lugar, enriquece la literatura acerca del reformador disponible en castellano y muestra cómo ciertos enfoques teológicos de Lutero pueden facilitar el ministerio entre los latinos de los Estados Unidos y en América Latina. Además, los autores resultan ser dignos discípulos del conocido historiador de la iglesia, Justo L. González, pues no simplifican aspectos complicados ni esquivan puntos polémicos en la interpretación del pensamiento de Lutero, sino que los examinan con tino, tomando en cuenta las pesquisas más recientes que han esclarecido estos temas. Por último, esta obra es valiosa porque nos motiva a leer nosotros mismos las obras de Lutero. García y Domínguez enfocan los tratados claves que Lutero publicó en cada etapa de su carrera reformadora, y en la introducción ellos suministran información útil sobre las ediciones más recientes de las obras de Lutero, principalmente en español y en inglés. No concuerdo con todos los criterios de García y Domínguez, y hay también errores ortográficos, pero tales fallas de ningún modo desvirtúan los grandes méritos de este libro.

*Salmos: Una Ventana al Antiguo Testamento y al Mesías.* By Rudolfo H. Blank. St. Louis: Editorial Concordia (Concordia Publishing House), 2008. 695 pages, hardbound, \$24.99.

✦ Dr. Blank, a veteran church worker among Spanish speaking people, provides not only a better understanding of how the Psalms provide a window for increased appreciation of the Old Testament as a whole and of Messianic theology, but also of how these ancient documents and doctrines can enrich evangelism and ecclesiastical ministry today. Although this scholarly tome is not a commentary on the whole book of the Psalms (it investigates and interprets only thirty-six Psalms), nevertheless exegetical, historical, and practical insights abound that can be used in meaningful study and interpretation of the remaining Psalms. Blank intends his pastoral and theological study to be useful for "líderes de congregaciones y grupos de estudios bíblicos a lo largo del mundo de habla hispana, y también para los estudiantes en seminarios, institutos bíblicos, y programas de extensión" (13f.).

After a short Introduction and explication of the "División del salterio," Dr. Blank organizes his study into fifteen thematic chapters. I regret that Dr. Blank, with his evangelical spirit and insights, does not include a study of the "imprecatory Psalms," which remain so difficult for me to understand historically and theologically. Eleven sections study two different Psalms and four sections deal with three or four different Psalms. For example, chapter one studies Psalms 1, 19 and 119 as Torah Psalms; chapter four analyzes Psalms 110 and 22 as Messianic Psalms; and chapter twelve examines Psalms 121, 126, 127, and 128 as Psalms of Ascent ("Los salmos graduales"). The individual studies range in length from the shortest of one page (ironically Psalm 119 because of its similarity to Ps. 19) to the longest treatment of 32 pages (Psalm 23). Blank identifies a category as "salmos mesiánicos" but admits that he came to the conclusion that all the Psalms can be categorized as "mesiánicos y escatológicos" (18). Frequently, Dr. Blank offers an insightful excursus on an-

cillary issues, for example, in chapter three on the relationship of Psalm 24 and the New Testament and, in chapter nine, comments on ancient Israel's traditions about "holy war" together with a review of Gerhard von Rad's scholarly opinions. There are also liturgical notes after study of Psalm 32 and suggestions for hymns after Psalm 19. There is a bibliographical index of mostly English studies that includes twenty-five works in Spanish. Although there is no index citing the places of scholarly references in the text, Blank engages in dialogue with a wide range of scholars from Augustine to Martin Luther to contemporary scholars like Dahood. Extremely stimulating and helpful is his index of the Psalms studied noting their references or allusions to other books of the OT and NT. The book uses La Santa Biblia, Nueva Versión Internacional but frequently explicates Hebrew vocabulary underlying the translation.

A short review cannot give a comprehensive evaluation of Blank's detailed work. Therefore I will merely lift up some high points touching three Psalms (1, 23, and 46) of special interest to me.

Professor Blank begins by stating that Psalm 1 sets the orientation and tone of the marvelous collection of "canciones sagradas" that have served as a hymnal and fountain of devotion for God's people for more than three millennia (25). He categorizes the Psalm one as of "Los salmos Tora" because it shows the way for God's people in "el camino de la Tora, la palabra de Dios, revelada a Moisés y los profetas" (25). He thinks that the Psalm began as a coronation hymn but, as time and circumstances changed, it became a celebration of the royal nature of all God's people and finally gained a Messianic interpretation. Blank's interpretation of 1:1 not only examines important Hebrew words (for example, *ashrei* and *barak*) but also draws on the *Didache* and *Letter of Barnabas* to illustrate the early church's understanding of the way of life or light and of the other way of death or "oscuridad" (29). When examining the meaning of "el árbol plantado a la orilla de un río," Blank draws insights for understanding and application from Exodus, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea and Zachariah, as well as historical references to Assyrian, Babylonian and Egyptian rulers (35 f.). Blank concludes his study of Psalm 1 with the observation that it is interesting that this introductory or summary Psalm, as in none of the 150 Psalms, is there mention of "circuncisión ni los alimentos prohibidos ni la obligación de observar el séptimo día como día de reposo" (43).

Missionary Blank immediately whets the reader's spiritual appetite when he begins his exposition of Psalm 23 by noting relevantly how the "imágenes bucólicas de verdes pastos y tranquilas aguas" contrast so radically with "las escenas de terror y destrucción con que nos bombadean en los medio de comunicación . . ." (569). Blank invokes both history and literature in our exegetical task by placing the Psalm in a literary genre stretching from Homer's *Odyssey* to the *Chronicles of Narnia*. He stimulates attempts at contemporary application by noting that the confession "The LORD is my shepherd" also proclaims that "ni Baal, ni Osiris, ni Mot . . . ni ningún otro, es quien me pastorea" (570). His statement motivates us to ask what false gods we disclaim in our confession. Does professing today that

"The Lord is my shepherd" mean acknowledging that false gods like wealth, fame or power do not protect me, provide for me, or rule my life? He finds it no accident that Psalms 22, 23 and 24 form a "tríptico" in which Psalm 23 responds to "la angustia" of Psalm 22 and then provides the foundation for the enthronement of the Lord over all nations in Psalm 24 (576). His interpretation of the psalm reminds us that our journey (peregrinación) in faith weds existential trust with eschatological confidence (569).

Blank begins his analysis of Psalm 46 with a stimulating reference to Sennacherib's threat of the destruction of Jerusalem as recorded in Isaiah 37. To people faced with seemingly invincible military power, Isaiah prophesied that the enemy, "No entrará en esta ciudad" (261). In the face of hostile evil, God promises, "Por mi causa, y por consideración a David mi siervo, defenderé esta ciudad y la salvaré" (Is 33-35) (261). Although Blank examines various historical possibilities for the events and era to which the psalm may refer, he also effectively shows how Luther used it in reference to the contemporary dangers he faced. Blank also notes that the images are "escatológicas y apocalípticas" reflecting also threats of primordial chaos (264).

Regardless of historical reference, it is easy to understand the force of the words "amparo y fortaleza," and therefore more interesting is Blank's examination of four hypotheses behind the statement in verse four about "the river whose streams make glad the city of God" (266). The four options explored are that the phrase is symbolic in general, a symbolic reference to "el río del paraíso," which flows not around earthly Jerusalem "sino (around) la Sión escatológica, la nueva Jerusalén," reference to a real sanctuary other than Jerusalem (for example, ancient Dan), or hyperbolic reference to "el río Cedrón de Jerusalén" since that small river or stream (riachuelo) was as important for the people there as is the Amazon or Orinoco river today in the lives of some people (265-267). I wonder if the Gihon Spring also merits consideration since it provided reason for joy in Jerusalem. Blank completes his examination of the four theories by noting that accepting one of the theories does not require exclusion of the others. As he frequently does, Blank ends the examination by connecting the psalm with the saving work of Jesus (270).

As I finished reading this book, I left with the awesome awareness that I had surveyed hymns that had provided spiritual meaning and inspiration for King David, our Lord Jesus, St. Augustine, Martin Luther, and millions of God's people in many lands in many different circumstances and times. Dr. Blank's knowledgeable and faithful insights enhanced my ability better to view the Psalms as a window for God's covenant with his people and for messianic peace. All who read this commentary will thank Dr. Blank and better use the Psalms to praise God for his covenant of grace and truth manifested in Jesus the Messiah.

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### Resumen

El Dr. Blank provee un enorme caudal de información para entender la teología mesiánica del Antiguo Testamento, y nos ayuda a

ver cómo los documentos y las doctrinas antiguas pueden enriquecer hoy los ministerios evangelísticos y eclesiásticos.

Aunque no se analizan sino 36 salmos, los pensamientos que expresan los aspectos exegeticos, históricos, y prácticos de dichos salmos pueden ser usados para estudiar e interpretar los salmos restantes.

El libro es útil para “líderes de congregaciones y grupos de estudios bíblicos a lo largo del mundo de habla hispana, y también para los estudiantes en seminarios, institutos bíblicos, y programas de extensión”, p. 13s.

Como es difícil hacer una evaluación completa de esta detallada obra, resaltaré algunos puntos de los salmos 1, 23, y 46.

El Salmo 1 es la base para la orientación y el tono de la maravillosa colección de canciones sagradas que sirvieron como himnos y como fuente de devoción para el pueblo de Dios por más de tres mil años, p. 25.

Blank piensa que el salmo comienza como un himno de coronación, pero cuando el tiempo y las circunstancias cambiaron, se convirtió en una celebración de la naturaleza real del pueblo de Dios, y finalmente recibió una interpretación mesiánica. Blank no sólo examina en 1:1 la importancia de algunos términos hebreos (e.g. *ashrei* y *barak*), sino que también cita a la Didagé y la Carta de Barnabás para ilustrar el entendimiento de la iglesia primitiva acerca del camino de la vida o de la luz y el otro camino de la muerte o de la oscuridad, p. 29.

Inmediatamente Blank hace que el lector incremente su apetito espiritual cuando comienza con la exposición del Salmo 23 resaltando cómo las “imágenes bucólicas de verdes pastos y tranquilas aguas” contrastan tan radicalmente con “las escenas de terror y destrucción con que nos bombardean en los medios de comunicación”, p. 569. Estimula la aplicación contemporánea observando que la confesión “El SEÑOR es mi pastor” también proclama que “ni Baal, ni Osiris, ni Mot . . . ni ningún otro, es quien me pastorea”, p. 570. Esta afirmación nos motiva a preguntarnos a qué dioses falsos renunciamos en nuestra confesión. Cuando hoy profeso que “el SEÑOR es mi pastor”, ¿reconozco que los falsos dioses como la riqueza, la fama o el poder no me protegen, no me proveen, ni gobiernan mi vida? Blank piensa que no fue un accidente que los Salmos 22, 23, y 24 forman un tríptico en el cual el Salmo 23 responde a la angustia del Salmo 22 y luego provee el fundamento para la entronización del Señor sobre todas las naciones en el Salmo 24, p. 576.

Blank comienza su análisis del Salmo 46 con una referencia estimulante a la amenaza de Senaquerib de destruir Jerusalén (Isaías 36). Aunque Blank examina varias posibilidades históricas a los que el salmo pueda hacer referencia, también muestra efectivamente cómo Lutero lo usó en referencia a los peligros contemporáneos que él enfrentó. Blank también observa que las imágenes son escatológicas y apocalípticas y reflejan también las amenazas del caos primordial, p. 264. Son muy interesantes las cuatro hipótesis con respecto a la frase: “hay un río cuyas corrientes alegran la ciudad de Dios”, p. 266. Las cuatro opciones que se exploran son que la frase es simbólica en general, una referencia simbólica al río del paraíso, que no fluye en la Jerusalén terrenal, sino en la Sión escatológica, la nueva Jerusalén. Puede referirse también a un santuario real que no sea Jerusalén (la antigua Dan), o puede ser una referencia hiperbólica al río Cedrón de Jerusalén, ya que ese pequeño riachuelo era tan importante para esa gente como el Amazonas o el Orinoco lo son hoy para la vida de algunas persona, pp. 265–267. Como lo hace con frecuencia, Blank termina su análisis conectando el salmo con la obra salvadora de Jesús, p. 270.

Cuando terminé de leer este libro, me di cuenta que examiné himnos que proveyeron inspiración y significado espiritual al rey David, nuestro Señor Jesús, San Agustín, Martín Lutero y millones de hijos de Dios en muchos países y en muy diferentes circunstancias y épocas. El conocimiento del Dr. Blank y su confiable perspicacia mejoraron mi habilidad para ver los salmos como una ventana donde se ve el pacto de Dios con su pueblo para traer la paz mesiánica. Todos los que lean este comentario le agradecerán al Dr. Blank, y usarán mejor los salmos para alabar a Dios por su pacto de gracia y verdad manifestada en Jesús el mesías.

*The Virgin of Guadalupe: Theological Reflections of an Anglo-Lutheran Liturgist.* By Maxwell E. Johnson. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002. 190 pages.

Among the Mexican population the Virgin of Guadalupe stands out as the icon of their culture. Throughout the San Joaquin Valley in central California one can see the influence of the Virgin of Guadalupe among the Mexican population through the statues of the Virgin on the lawns, the prayer candles with the image of the Virgin that are sold in the local stores, and the images of the Virgin that appear on the gravestones of many Mexican gravesites.

Many Roman Catholic authors have written extensively on the subject of the Virgin of Guadalupe. *The Virgin of Guadalupe: Theological Reflections of an Anglo-Lutheran Liturgist* is the first book written by a Protestant author about the Virgin of Guadalupe, the patron saint of Mexico.

Dr. Maxwell Johnson serves as an ordained minister in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and as professor of liturgical studies at the University of Notre Dame. He is author of *Images of Baptism* (2001) and coauthor of *The Apostolic Tradition: A Commentary* (2002). Dr. Johnson is also a frequent contributor to scholarly journals.

In addition to the foreword, the introduction, and the conclusion, the book contains five chapters: 1) “The Apparition Narrative and Image”; 2) “Origins and Development of the Guadalupan Narratives and Image”; 3) “Modern Roman Catholic Theological Interpretations of the Virgin of Guadalupe”; 4) “Celebrations of the Virgin of Guadalupe”; and 5) “The Virgin of Guadalupe in Ecumenical Perspective.” At the end of each chapter Johnson includes an extensive list of references.

Virgilio Elizondo, a prominent Roman Catholic scholar on the Virgin of Guadalupe who also serves as a professor at the University of Notre Dame, wrote the foreword to Johnson’s book. In this section, Elizondo observes that Guadalupe has been seen as a major source of division between Protestant and Catholic Christians. He then goes on to state that Johnson demonstrates that the very opposite is true: the Virgin of Guadalupe can serve as a bridge to ecumenical endeavors. Elizondo then expresses his hope that the Virgin of Guadalupe can be a point of unity between Catholics and Protestants.

The first chapter focuses on the apparition of the Virgin by utilizing the earliest extant accounts that date from the year 1648. This chapter provides valuable background for understanding the circumstances of the apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe that allegedly took place in 1531.

In the second chapter, Johnson analyzes the arguments of several historians that contest the veracity of the apparition account. He draws heavily on the historical study by Stafford Poole, *Our Lady of Guadalupe: The Origins and Sources of a Mexican National Symbol, 1531–1797*, which concludes that the apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe does not rest on sound historical evidence. This chapter also contains the counterarguments of various scholars who disagree with Poole’s position. In this chapter Johnson gives a balanced treatment of the historicity of the apparition account.

Chapter three discusses the theological significance of the Virgin of Guadalupe from the perspective of Roman Catholic theologians with extensive quotes from Virgilio Elizondo. In this chapter Elizondo typifies the Virgin of Guadalupe as a great evangelizer not only of the Indian masses but of the established church as well. The Virgin calls the established church to leave its own ethnocentrism and accept the Indians as equals. Johnson then quotes Pope John Paul II as saying that the Virgin of Guadalupe is an impressive example of a perfectly inculturated evangelization.

A list of different celebrations for the Virgin of Guadalupe are presented in the fourth chapter of the book. Maxwell discusses in depth the origins and significance of the 12 December Roman Catholic feast day for Guadalupe. He then gives examples of different ELCA and Episcopal congregations that observe this festival. His observations of these Protestant congregations does provoke thought. It would be interesting, however, to include these specific congregations' theological rationales for including such a celebration in a Protestant context.

In the final chapter, Dr. Johnson quotes Article IV of the Augsburg Confession on justification and then states that he sees no contradiction in being an Evangelical Christian and a "Guadalupano." Johnson goes on to state that Luther's commentary on the Magnificat should be applicable to the Virgin of Guadalupe. With regard to church practice, Johnson proposes a synthesis of popular Guadalupanism and Protestant theological convictions as he sees the Virgin of Guadalupe functioning as a concrete manifestation of cultural incarnation of the gospel message.

In the conclusion, Johnson affirms that no amount of historical study will objectively discern whether or not the Virgin Mary appeared to Juan Diego on the hill of Mount Tepeyac in 1531. At the same time he insists that the Virgin of Guadalupe lives through the lives of millions of people who venerate her either as a saint or a cultural symbol of liberation and ethnic identity. He makes a valid point here. Most of the Mexicans who pray to the Virgin of Guadalupe know little or nothing about the historicity of the apparition. In Guadalupe they see a manifestation or symbol of the Virgin Mary who will help them in their everyday need. Accordingly, they will continue to invoke her regardless of the position that the historians take regarding her apparition.

Johnson's book lacks a sound theological basis from the Lutheran theological position concerning the invocation of the saints. Article XXI of the Augsburg Confession teaches that "it cannot be demonstrated from Scripture that a person shall call upon the saints or seek help from them." Nonetheless, *The Virgin of Guadalupe: Theological Reflections of an Anglo-Lutheran Liturgist*, gives an excellent overview of the Virgin of Guadalupe and the religious and cultural role that she plays in the lives of millions of Mexicans. The book is very well written and organized. Furthermore the notes at the end of each chapter, as well as the references listed under "For Further Reading" on page 185, provide additional valuable references on this subject.

One may not agree with Johnson's point of view. Even so this book provides valuable insights on the Virgin of Guadalupe

that will help to understand the culture and religious views of the Mexican Roman Catholic population. I recommend this work as a valuable resource for those who desire to do outreach in this cultural setting.

*Daniel E. Conrad*  
Pastor, Zion Lutheran Church  
Terra Bella, California

### Resumen

La Virgen de Guadalupe reina como el icono cultural y religioso más importante de la cultura mexicana. En el Valle de San Joaquín, California, se ve su imagen en todas partes.

El libro *The Virgin of Guadalupe: Theological Reflections of an Anglo-Lutheran Liturgist* es el primer libro acerca de Guadalupe que ha sido escrito por un protestante. Maxwell Johnson, el autor del libro, es pastor de la Iglesia Luterana en América (ELCA) y se desempeña como profesor de liturgia en La Universidad de Notre Dame.

Su libro abarca muchos temas en cada uno de sus capítulos: La aparición de la Virgen, los debates entre los historiadores acerca de la veracidad de la aparición, las interpretaciones modernas de la Virgen de Guadalupe, las celebraciones de la Virgen de Guadalupe, y la Virgen de Guadalupe en perspectiva ecuménica.

En su libro el Dr. Johnson declara que él no está seguro en cuanto a la historicidad de la aparición. A la vez nos recuerda que la Virgen de Guadalupe vive en los corazones de muchos mexicanos que la veneran como una santa o un símbolo cultural. Mas el profesor no ve ninguna contradicción entre la creencia acerca de la justificación por la fe en Cristo y esta u otra creencia en la importancia de la Virgen de Guadalupe.

El libro tiene sus fallas teológicas puesto que no trata la postura teológica luterana acerca de la invocación de los santos en la cual se nos enseña a no pedir la intercesión de los santos ante Dios. Sólo por medio de Cristo tenemos acceso al Padre. Sin embargo, el libro tiene muchas referencias bibliográficas y trata el tema de la Virgen de Guadalupe y su ineludible importancia con profundidad. Por medio de este libro se pueden comprender con más detalle las perspectivas religiosas y culturales de la población mexicana en torno a la Virgen. Recomiendo este libro como un recurso valioso para todo aquel que quiera hacer la obra de evangelización entre la población mexicana, especialmente en los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica.

*Primera Carta a Timoteo.* By Roberto E. Bustamante. St. Louis: Editorial Concordia, 2006, 638 pages. *Segunda Carta a Timoteo.* By Roberto E. Bustamante. St. Louis: Editorial Concordia, 2007, 524 pages. *Carta de Pablo a Tito.* By Roberto E. Bustamante. St. Louis: Editorial Concordia, 2008, 414 pages.

☞ What John MacKay commented more than seventy years ago has rung true even up to the dawn of the new millennium as one considers authentic, original Latin American theological reflection from a Lutheran perspective: "... the Southern Continent has too long been nurtured on the translation of second-rate religious books produced in North America and Great Britain. ... Let the writing of original books in Spanish and Portuguese by those capable of producing them be encouraged to the utmost limit" (*The Other Spanish Christ*, 269). The "designer languages" for doctoral candidates in theology have been English, French and German. In the twenty-first century, that is changing as resources and theological reflection in

Spanish are going from strength to strength, no small thanks to publishers like Concordia Publishing House (Editorial Concordia), who have made the offering of materials originally written in Spanish a priority.

There is no doubt but that the bright, young Argentinean exegete, Roberto Bustamante, has distinguished himself as one of the many important theologians emerging from the global South with the production of three solidly researched, in-depth and extensive commentaries on St. Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus. The commentaries are written with three audiences in mind: the general reader, the pastor in need of resources for leading Bible studies and crafting sermons, and students of theology. A unique system of markings on the edge of the pages make it handy for the reader to differentiate between general material regarding Paul and his protégés Timothy and Titus, specific commentary (verse by verse) on the text, sections providing devotional and homiletical application, and the pages that contain grammatical and other technical information for the serious exegete.

Bustamante begins his commentary by recognizing that he approaches the text with a certain bias, that it is impossible for an interpreter to be absolutely objective—something that he no doubt learned well from his teacher, Dr. James Voelz, of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. His method, he states, is shaped by his subscription to the Lutheran Confessions. But he also describes his triple approach to the text as literature, pointing out that every text can be viewed as a “window” through which one can see beyond; as a “mirror,” in which one can see something of oneself; and also as a stained glass, in which one can see many details to be appreciated and interpreted. In the text as a whole is Christ, the “canon inside the canon,” the lens through whom any text should be considered.

The commentaries are replete with useful diagrams and charts that help the reader understand not just the words of Paul but also his underlying thought structure, which is very important for understanding the apostle. Sometimes a more “artistic” depiction is included, such as a visual depiction of Paul's back-and-forth thought development in Titus as a pinball bouncing from one side to the other (*Carta de Pablo a Tito*, 57). On the same page, a simple line arching upwards to the right into a circle and continuing, like an airplane doing a loop-d-loop, is utilized to illustrate Paul's use of climax in the text. The grammatical structure of the original Greek and analysis is meticulous, with detailed discussion of the textual variants. Various appendices, which are articles in their own right, are included in each volume. They cover topics from “Ecclesiastical Offices in the Pastoral Epistles,” to “Personalities in the Pastoral Epistles,” to “The Concept of History in the Pastoral Epistles.”

Thus, Bustamante's approach is, on the one hand, literary, in which he sees all the epistles as having two narratives. He calls the “secondary narrative” the story of God's work already accomplished in Christ Jesus. The “principal narrative” is the

actual situation confronted by Paul, in which he “functions like the director of a theatrical work whose actors have not read the script, thus he must take upon himself the work of telling them what to do” (*Primera Carta a Timoteo*, 45). On the other hand, the meticulous attention to the minute historical, grammatical and textual details that Bustamante provides supply technical information to satisfy the most demanding Biblical scholar.

One notes only three criticisms of these excellent commentaries. First, they are not available in English. That may soon be resolved, although it should also serve as an incentive for the serious Biblical scholar to learn Spanish. Second, this reader expected more application from the Latin American perspective specifically. Bustamante begins his commentaries confessing his biases, but nowhere does he speak to the fact that he is writing from the perspective of a Latin American with unique experiences and perceptions that might pick up on facets of the epistles that resonate to his native culture and history. Indeed, there is little reference to the particularities of the Latino context, even in the practical sections. Finally, the lack of an index—even an index of biblical references—is a serious drawback to works of such magnitude. The quality of Bustamante's erudition in these three volumes perhaps merits the creation of a separate index. Having said all that, Bustamante's work is a very fine contribution. I highly recommend it.

*Douglas L. Rutt  
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Fort Wayne, Indiana*

### Resumen

Los comentarios a las cartas pastorales de Pablo que ha escrito el exegeta argentino Roberto Bustamante demuestran la calidad de la obra teológica que se ha ido desarrollando con más ahínco en el lado sur del globo. El intérprete identifica la óptica que trae consigo a la lectura de las cartas, a saber, su identidad confesional luterana la cual lo lleva a ver a Cristo como el mensaje central de las Escrituras. Aunque la narrativa principal de las cartas es la situación actual que enfrenta Pablo, la obra de Dios que ha sido llevada a su plenitud en Cristo sigue siendo la narrativa más amplia o secundaria de las mismas. La óptica cristocéntrica, sin embargo, no echa a un lado el rigor que el autor aplica al estudio minucioso de los textos bíblicos, comentando acerca de los mismos verso por verso, tomando en cuenta sus variantes y aspectos técnicos de índole gramatical, y proveyendo aplicación al lector de tipo devocional y homilética. En su contribución Bustamante demuestra que además de su valor literario y riqueza de detalles, los textos nos invitan a ser partícipes de su argumento y narrativa. Los comentarios están repletos de diagramas, tablas y otras ayudas de tipo visual que ayudan al lector a entender la estructura del pensamiento paulino en las cartas y la relación entre conceptos importantes. La obra también incluye apéndices que tratan de distintos tópicos como los oficios eclesiásticos y el concepto de la historia en las cartas pastorales. La obra en general se beneficiaría de más reflexión desde la óptica latinoamericana, debería estar disponibles en inglés y necesita ser acompañada de un índice de textos bíblicos. A pesar de estas pocas observaciones críticas, la obra no deja de ser erudita y a la vez necesaria en la biblioteca de todo estudiante de teología, sea pastor, seminarista o laico.

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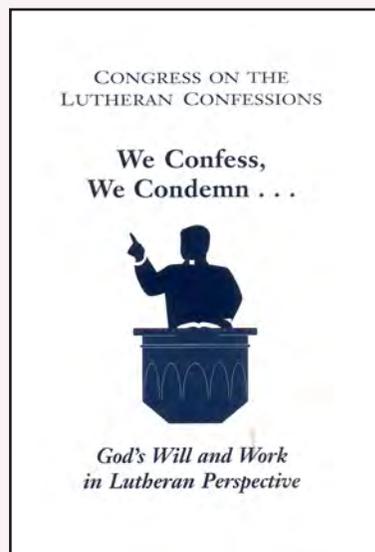
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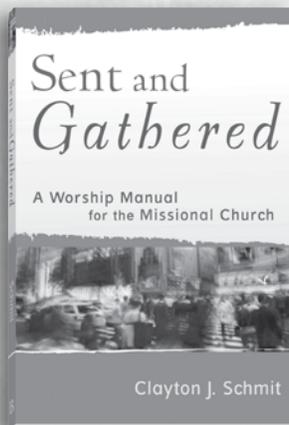


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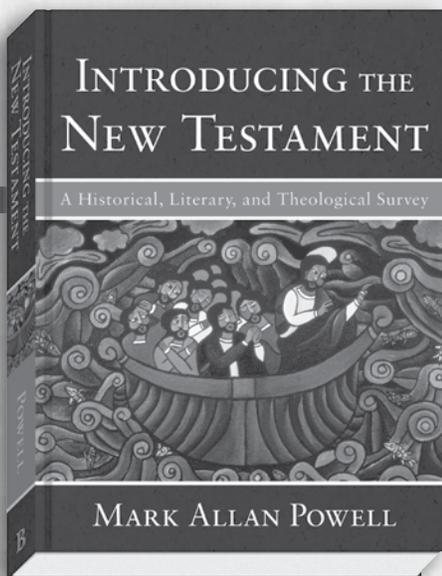
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# LOGIA Forum

## SHORT STUDIES AND COMMENTARY

### REFLECTIONS ON THE HISPANIC/ LATINO FAMILY TODAY

We tend to generalize when speaking of Latin American or United States Hispanic/Latino societies as traditionally family-oriented. When we imagine the Hispanic/Latino family, we see a father, mother and good number of children. From the outside looking in, we perceive a relatively peaceful and happy home where *fiestas* take place with extended family members. Overall, we may see a stable setting that has not changed much over the years.

However, as in many other urbanized societies where a mass of humanity lives in sprawling and busy cities, many Latin Americans and U.S. Latinos are not immune to the challenges of raising a family. When we begin to look under the surface of what appears to be solid family values, we are forced to move beyond romantic stereotypes about naturally family-oriented Latinos. If we allow ourselves to see the Hispanic/Latino family only in a traditional way—that is, a strong social unit that exhibits a high sense of duty and sacrifice to care for and enrich family life—we may fall into the trap of not seeing and hearing the harsher reality of a weakened home life with definite signs of deterioration and brokenness. Commitment to family is still generally valued in Hispanic/Latino society, but the relationships or family ties are suffering from human sinfulness and without the gospel message of healing, hope and renewal in Christ.

Beneath the appearances and listening with our hearts, we notice reversed priorities in family relationships among Latinos. For example, *la familia* (the family) has often come before *la pareja* (husband-wife relationship). It is not uncommon for mothers to give a higher value to and fight harder to get along with their children than to do the same in relationship to their husbands. In this context, the solution is not to pit family against marriage. Yet the message needs to be

communicated to Latino families that God has given the highest priority to the husband-wife relationship so that through such bond the family might be blessed.

Living together outside of marriage has become common in various sectors of Hispanic/Latino society. Latino couples need to hear the message loud and clear: When a man and a woman live together with marital privileges but without pledging themselves in lifelong faithfulness to God and to each other (for the sake of having a family), they are living outside of God's design for a "one flesh" relationship. Stepping outside of God's design has consequences. Although *vivir juntos* (living together) just seems *más fácil* (easier) because it allows a couple to have a family without the "burdens" of marriage, the practice of cohabitating undermines the desirability of having a stable foundation that can strengthen the family's well-being in the long run.

Some historic trends in Latin American and U.S. Hispanic family life, such as men having children outside of wedlock in order to "protect and exalt the male 'macho' image," often compel mothers to raise children alone (*madres solteras* or single mothers). Where then are the men and fathers for the family? They are often absent and visibly distant. In this context, family care and counseling among Latinos must always deal with proper and salutary views of manhood and what it means to be a good husband and father.

Many suffer the effects of a broken family life. Families have to struggle with issues of poverty (physical, emotional and spiritual), personal insecurity, abandonment and loneliness, domestic violence, the lack of confidence or personal value, the dearth of opportunities to achieve worthy goals in life, the failure to grasp the notion of a hopeful future, evident lack of conviction toward the value that God has placed on marriage and the family, and many other ills and challenges that are self evident today.

The recognition of God's design for the family generally continues to be upheld among Latinos and Latinas. For the majority of people, deep down inside, family is still more important than anything else in life. It is even more important than recreation, status or career.

As Christians we have gained a biblical perspective on the family. Christians rejoice that it is a form of existence that has roots from the beginning, has God's blessing, and gives us

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responsibilities beyond ourselves. We are dealing with something that we have not created, something that transcends us, originates in God and drives us to be for and serve another. Through marriage first (and then also family life), Christians express to the world their belonging to one another under God's design as well as their belonging to Christ as his bridesmaid. In Christ, the congregation becomes the Holy Spirit's place where families are gathered, enlightened and sustained through Word and sacrament.

Congregations that want to work among people of Latin American descent in the U.S. must not assume romantic visions of the Latino family, but be ready to engage families as needed in the process of restoring harmony, exercising forgiveness, building relationships, deepening intimacy and improving communication. Besides the practice of accompaniment ("being there") in times of crisis, transitional and preventative events that promote pre-marital orientation, marriage enrichment, parenting classes and family celebrations are important. Moreover, whole-family ministry opportunities, in contrast to the usual division of Sunday School and Bible studies into age groups, are critical to strengthen families. Such strategies are not an end in itself, but a response of faith in service to the neighbor and in gratitude to God for the gift of the family in church and world.

Mark Kempff

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### Resumen

El profesor Kempff señala que el ministro luterano no debe asumir una visión romántica de la familia hispana. Aunque el compromiso con la familia todavía representa un valor importante en la sociedad latina, esta generalización no nos debe cegar a los problemas que atentan contra la unidad familiar. Estos tienen en común una inversión de prioridades que ponen en segundo plano al matrimonio. Notamos, por ejemplo, la prioridad que la pareja hispana a menudo le da a los hijos por encima de la relación de pareja o matrimonio en sí, la prioridad que se le da más y más al «vivir juntos» por encima del compromiso que el matrimonio implica, o la prioridad que el «macho» le da a su poder de conquista sobre la mujer fuera de casa por encima de su deber como marido responsable «en su propia casa» y dentro del contexto de la unión matrimonial. Kempff argumenta que, ante visiones en las que la familia se presenta más que nada como proyecto humano, la iglesia debe rescatar la dimensión transcendental del matrimonio y la familia como creación y don de Dios. Así pues, la familia nos precede, trasciende e impulsa a vivir en relación al prójimo según el diseño divino. El ministro luterano deberá abrir espacio para promover y fortalecer la vida en pareja y la unidad familiar en su propuesta de proclamación del evangelio, misión y pastoral, para que así nuestra gente hispana pueda reflejar más y más en sus vidas el amor entre Cristo y su iglesia.

## THE VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE: A LUTHERAN APPROPRIATION

In the gospel ministry that Lutherans undertake in Latin America and North America among Latino/as, the figure of Our Lady of Guadalupe stands out as a resource for solidarity and outreach. As a Midwestern Lutheran who grew up in Minnesota, I had naively assumed that while Guadalupe was significant, she was ultimately tangential to Mexican and Mexican American cultures. However, after having lived on the United States-Mexico border in a Mexican cultural context, studied Mexican culture and history, and read influential cultural interpreters of Mexican identity such as Octavio Paz, I now recognize the figure of Guadalupe as an essential component to the culture and identity of the Mexican and the Mexican-American.

My ministry in the United States, Rio Grande Valley, and in Laredo, Texas (and my ongoing academic study in U.S. Latino/a Theology) has made me aware of an ongoing tension I have had regarding Guadalupe. To reject her fully as pagan mythology, as many evangelicals do, risks alienating the people to whom we seek to bring the good news of Christ. Yet, to fully accept her status risks a potentially confusing, even contradictory, blending of religious and theological claims, which in turn might lead to a clouding of the clarity of the Gospel. How, then, might we appropriate this sign, symbol and metaphor as Lutheran missiologists, pastors, and laity?

My personal response has been tentative and fluid, highly dependent on context. And my appropriation will likely change as I continue to dialogue with others and learn from them. Regarding the apparition itself, I believe most Lutherans, including myself, will remain skeptical. Edwin Sylvest expresses well my own attitude regarding the historicity of this event: "I do not challenge the historicity of the events of 9–12 December 1531 . . . [T]he historian, on strictly historical grounds, cannot affirm or deny the nature of what was evidently a miraculously transforming experience for Juan Diego, his uncle, and an entire people" (*Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe: Mother of God, Mother of the Americas*. Dallas: Bridwell Library, Perkins School of Theology, 1992, p. 42). What is crucial here is that something did "happen" that became a life-changing experience not only for Juan Diego, but for a whole culture, and remains so to this very day. The potent image of Our Lady of Guadalupe lives culturally in the day-to-day existence of all Mexicans. As Mexican American writer Richard Rodríguez has said, she is the flag that flies in every Mexican's heart.

As a theologian who has been steeped in sociology, anthropology, ethics, literature, and hermeneutics, I have never been much concerned about the scientific validity of the apparition of Guadalupe herself. Yet, I am interested as a moral theologian in the deep mythological and semiotic icons and metaphors that may be cultural bridges to the cross and the biblical narratives. Mythology lives on in all cultures, includ-

ing our own secularized North American society, because myths are not always false; on the contrary, myths are always true. St. Paul's use of the unknown God in Acts, Don Richardson's use of "the peace child" in his missionary work, C.S. Lewis's appropriation of myth in his literary work, and the numerous other examples of contextualized mission have all influenced my acceptance of myth and symbol in a culture as a potentially compelling vehicle for communication of the gospel. Those of us in ministry constantly scout for bridges between the natural religion of our hearers and revealed gospel. While a given cultural myth may not be historically verifiable, or true in a literal sense, it nevertheless often serves truth, beauty, and the good in every culture. And so, as Lutheran laity and clergy, we ask, "What ethical, aesthetic, and truth claim functions does Guadalupe serve?"

Speaking personally about my own appropriation, I have learned to welcome, and even be enriched, by the apparition of Guadalupe. Her narrative speaks a profound and affirming welcome for the *mestizo*, the poor, the alienated, the lonely, the struggling, the dying, and all who reside in the Americas. Despite the feminist critique of Guadalupe (that she reinforces negative stereotypes of women, thereby disempowering them), I believe that she affirms the role of women in general, and mothers in particular, who often struggle alone against a variety of destructive forces to their identity and self-respect. Indeed, Guadalupe even continues to draw me into a deeper appreciation and solidarity with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and with the Mexican people. Our Lady of Guadalupe has served as a bridge for me, bringing together worlds I have spent a lifetime attempting to reconcile.

Various images of Guadalupe hang in my office. The icons on the wall provoke regular conversation and dialogue among colleagues, students, parishioners, and staff that I serve. As a result, some know my office as a safe place. Others enter and inquire, "What does this mean?" opening up the possibility of mutual cultural and theological enrichment, even offering the opportunity for gospel ministry. In short, my experience has confirmed that Guadalupe permits me as a pastor and theologian to participate in the Mexican-American community as an adopted member or guest rather than a stranger. Pastorally, Our Lady of Guadalupe or *la morenita* (little brown Virgin) functions as a proclaimer of a type of gospel (as opposed to law in a Lutheran vernacular) in that her brown face and message of love to Juan Diego in the midst of the oppression of the Spanish conquistadors embodies to an extent the truth that God's mercy in Christ is also for the native and the *mestizo*. Ecumenically, Guadalupe offers a way to establish meaningful dialogue, especially with my Roman Catholic brothers and sisters. Ethically, like Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary, Guadalupe inspires me in my own efforts to serve as comforter, helper, servant and hope of the afflicted.

Carl C. Trovall  
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Austin, Texas

### Resumen

El profesor Trovall propone una interpretación luterana de la Virgen de Guadalupe que, por un lado, no rechace la importancia cultural del símbolo para el mexicano, y por otro lado, no oscurezca la centralidad de Cristo y la claridad del evangelio. La pregunta crucial no es si la aparición ocurrió o no (o sea, la historicidad del evento), sino cuál es la función que el símbolo de Guadalupe representa para el mexicano y si este simbolismo puede o no servir como puente para la proclamación del evangelio al mexicano. Aunque la respuesta a esta pregunta dependerá del contexto de la misión, el profesor Trovall argumenta que desde el punto de vista ético-moral es posible usar el símbolo de Guadalupe o *La Morenita* y su solidaridad con el pobre Juan Diego para defender la dignidad del mestizo y el indio oprimido. Más allá de la apropiación ética del símbolo, Trovall sugiere, en línea con el pensamiento de otros teólogos hispanos, que el símbolo de la Guadalupe podría servir como un «tipo» de evangelio, un medio que ayudaría a proclamar al oyente la misericordia de Dios en Cristo Jesús. Dado el contexto histórico de la Conquista de México y la opresión y desmoralización que ésta trajo a los mexicanos, la cara morena de la Virgen y su mensaje de amor a Juan Diego puede representar o encarnar hasta cierto punto la verdad de que la gracia de Dios en Cristo también es para el nativo y el mestizo.

## IMMIGRANTS AMONG US: WHAT ARE CONFESSIONAL LUTHERANS TO DO?

The modifiers *illegal* and *undocumented* have been equally criticized when used in reference to immigrants who initially entered or currently reside in the United States without the benefit of a valid visa or permit. Both terms minimize the complexity of the immigration issue. Those who use the term *illegal* tend to appeal primarily to unquestioned obedience to the civil law regardless of its potential pitfalls, and often fail to be sensitive to the plight of immigrants or, as it were, to put a human face on the issue. Those who use the term *undocumented* tend to appeal to obedience to the higher moral law when dealing with the suffering immigrant, thereby putting a human face on the issue, but do not always give full weight to the current demands of the civil law. In the end, both terms actually look at the immigrant solely within the framework of a legality-illegality polarity that lends itself to a reductionism that allows little or no place to other factors in the debate such as poverty, labor demand, family, and human rights—not to mention, theological considerations.

A number of common myths plague conceptions about illegal or undocumented immigrants, especially of Latin American background. One is that they are potential terrorists and therefore pose a national security threat. However, the great majority of immigrants are everyday normal people who are not terrorists or go around committing criminal acts. Another myth is that immigrants take jobs away from American citizens. Like most first generation immigrants, recent arrivals actually do jobs very few North

Americans would take for which otherwise there would be an unmet labor demand. Therefore, recent immigrants contribute to the economic growth of the nation in agricultural, construction, and service industries. A third myth is that immigrants do not pay taxes and overburden public services. While the overburdening of resources could be an issue in some local contexts, the broader picture is that illegal immigrants end up paying social security taxes through the use of faked IDs or, more generally, through purchasing goods. Despite the fact that taxes are being paid, however, most immigrants will not use public resources for fear of being caught by “la migra” or immigration enforcement officers. A final myth is that immigrants are a danger to the preservation of American values and do not want to learn English. The reality, however, is that the great majority of immigrants adapt creatively to new cultural realities and norms. More than 90 percent speak English at some level and, moreover, they generally tend to promote and model traditional American values such as a strong work ethic and a desire for the unity of the family.

While issues about placing immigrants somewhere alongside legality-illegality or myth-reality spectrums could be debated further on statistical grounds or in terms of particular local contexts and politics, confessional Lutherans must ultimately look to their own theological and pastoral resources for responses to the immigration issue. First among these resources is the distinction between the two kingdoms or realms. The distinction teaches that God works both through the temporal realm or government by means of the law (in its first use) to restraint injustice and promote peace and good among people, and through the spiritual realm to bring sinners into a right relationship before God through faith in Christ by means of the proclamation of the law (in its second use) and the gospel. The Lutheran distinction is useful in the immigration debate for various reasons.

At the most basic level, the distinction reminds us not to confuse the two realms or kingdoms. Confusion happens when we make the church’s unity depend on or be determined by a particular stance on immigration law. We can then acknowledge that, among Christians, there can be a spectrum of opinions and even heated debate regarding what is (and what is not) just, good, reasonable, and peace building about current immigration law. Such disagreements, however, should not infringe upon our unity in Christ, which the gospel alone brings about and nurtures.

Confusion also happens when we let the government or civil law interfere with the church’s work of proclaiming the gospel to all people and doing the works of mercy that flow from the gospel. We can then learn that, among Christians and especially those who have been called as pastors or consecrated as deaconesses, there can be no compromise on the church’s fundamental call, responsibility, and privilege to proclaim the gospel and do the works of mercy on behalf of all people regardless of their legal status or one’s position for or against particular aspects of current immigration law.

Another resource is the doctrine of vocation, which deals with the concrete way(s) in which the law of God is actually fulfilled on earth through the divine institutions of marriage, government, and church. When married to the doctrine of the two kingdoms, this teaching allows Christians to argue for the particular neighbor(s) they have been called to serve, advocate for, and even protect according to their God-given vocations. Vocation allows Christians not to fight for the civil or moral law *in abstracto*, but rather to fight for the moral and civil law *in concreto* by having the well being of some actual neighbor in mind. Through the teaching of vocation, Christians learn that their concrete neighbor(s) will determine to some extent how much weight they give to various factors (for example, poverty, border security, labor demand, law enforcement, just wages, and family unity) in the immigration debate. They also learn to live in this world with a solid commitment to the gospel and the neighbor, but also a variable measure of flexibility and ambiguity when dealing with complex and debated issues such as immigration where it is not yet evident or clear that the civil law always or even mostly promotes what is good, just, and reasonable.

*Leopold Sanchez  
St. Louis, Missouri*

### Resumen

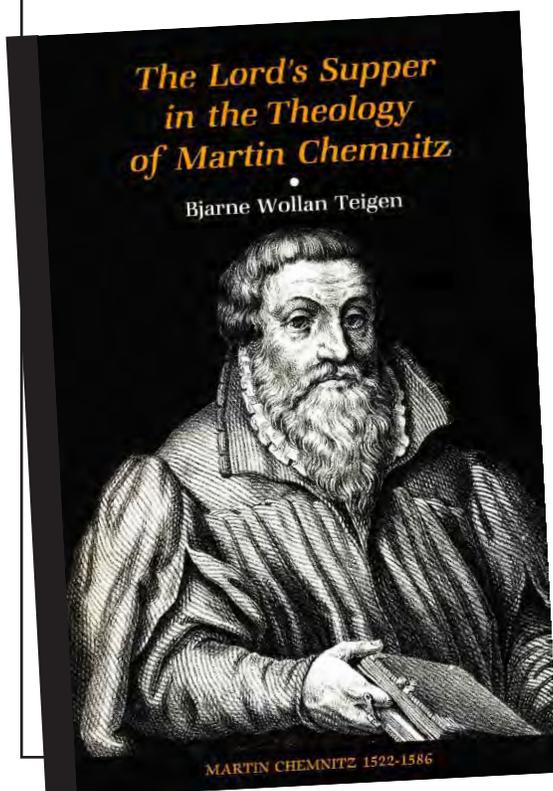
El profesor Sánchez afirma que, en el debate acerca de la ley de inmigración en EEUU, el lenguaje de «ilegalidad» toma en serio la letra de la ley civil pero no le da suficiente consideración a aspectos morales que obligan al inmigrante a emigrar como lo son la pobreza y el deseo de reunirse con familiares. El uso del adjetivo «indocumentado(a)» toma en serio la cara humana del problema migratorio pero no siempre da suficiente peso a las demandas actuales de la ley civil. Mitos comunes acerca de inmigrantes, de tipo cuestionable, sólo añaden oscuridad a un problema de por sí complejo. Entre estos mitos tenemos que los inmigrantes son un peligro a la seguridad nacional, le quitan el empleo a ciudadanos norteamericanos, no pagan impuestos y se aprovechan de los recursos de otros, o se rehúsan a aprender el inglés y vivir de acuerdo a valores de la cultura anfitriona. Sin embargo, la gran mayoría de los inmigrantes no son anarquistas, contribuyen a la economía del país haciendo trabajos que nadie quiere y pagando impuestos, y además aprenden inglés y se adaptan creativamente a la cultura anfitriona. Más allá de estos argumentos, Sánchez argumenta que el luterano debe anclarse en la doctrina de «los dos reinos» la cual enseña que Dios promueve tanto la paz y la justicia entre los seres humanos mediante la ley civil (reino temporal) como la reconciliación de los seres humanos.

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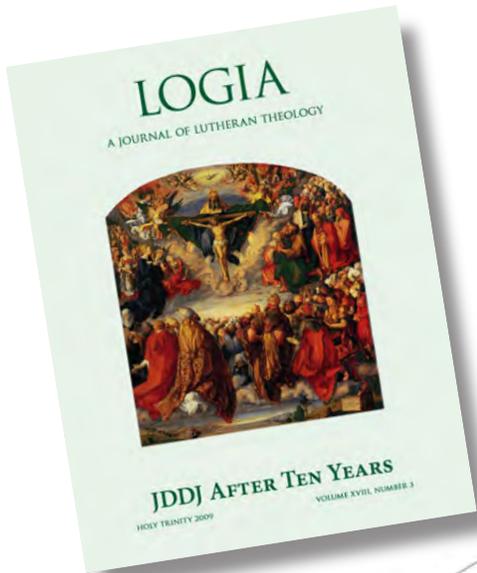
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