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CONTENTS

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Editor's Letter

We're delighted to start publishing *Journal of Lutheran Mission* again. This endeavor, directed and overseen by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's Office of International Mission (OIM) theological faculty, will provide articles on the state and practice of mission in the 21st century. The journal will also now have a process for theological, peer review, also directed by the OIM faculty. This journal will continue as a beacon of light pointing to Christ and Him crucified for the sins of the world.

The Lutheran Reformation's principle of *sola scriptura* (Scripture alone) has manifold applications, including for Lutheran missions. The two essays in this journal stress the way the missional importance of the reading, study, and teaching of the Bible.

The first essay was presented at a theological symposium in the Dominican Republic in May 2023, which focused on pastoral formation. In the essay that was later published in *Concordia Theological Quarterly* (88, nos. 2–3), Benjamin Mayes focuses on "Pastoral Formation in Lutheran Orthodoxy and the Method of Theological Study Proposed by Johann Gerhard." The great emphasis within pastoral formation at that time on the personal reading and study of the Bible, including the requisite taking of detailed notes, is striking to the modern observer, accustomed to a system of seminaries to prepare men for the pastoral office. Overall, while the understanding and practice of pastoral formation from this period might look somewhat different than we are familiar with today, it was certainly no less rigorous and demanding and contributed to the development of a more formalized process for training men for the Office of the Ministry.

The second essay is a translation by Matthew Harrison of a 1969 essay by Paul Peters. It demonstrates how critically important Luther's Bible translation was for world missions. This is just one of many evidences Peters gives to show how, contrary to popular misconception, Luther had a strong sense of global mission. The Reformation in general and Luther's writings and preaching in particular were all truly missionary endeavors. Not only did Luther speak specifically about missions in his writings, he also promoted actual mission work, especially among the Jews and Turks.

Holy Scripture will always be at the heart of the Lutheran Church and Lutheran missions. May these essays encourage, enrich, and strengthen you in your own reading, study, and teaching of the Bible.

Finally, the journal is also open to submissions. Please submit your articles to one of the managing editors for consideration.

For the Editors,
The Rev. Dr. Michael Paul

Pastoral Formation in Lutheran Orthodoxy and the Method of Theological Study Proposed by Johann Gerhard

Looking at pastoral formation in the 17th century will help inform theological education today, particularly in the direction of pastors as self-learners firmly rooted in dogmatic exegesis.

By Benjamin T.G. Mayes

Pastoral formation is a pastoral duty.[1] Saint Paul said to Pastor Timothy and to all who share his vocation, "The things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (**2 Tim. 2:2**).[2] Yet pastoral formation begins in the family and congregation. Saint Paul also said to Timothy, "I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also" (**2 Tim. 1:5**). Pastoral formation is intense. It requires study and prayer. It is not simply a matter of making converts and then sending them out immediately to make more converts. Paul again says, "*Be diligent* to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (**2 Tim. 2:15**, emphasis added). The Lord Jesus prepared His apostles full time for three years. Thus we, who are teachers far inferior to the Lord Jesus and disciples far inferior to the Twelve, may need just as much time for pastoral formation and just as much intensity, or more.

As we consider how best to prepare pastors in our times, we should look to our own history for resources. Lutherans recognize the special blessings of the Reformation: In the sixteenth century, God led Martin Luther and his colleagues to preach and teach the Law and Gospel clearly from Holy Scripture. This same biblical doctrine was then established in the churches, schools, art, music, hymns, and theology of Lutheran Orthodoxy, from the time of the 1580 *Book of Concord* through the following century. If we want to see examples of the acme of Lutheran pastoral formation, this is where we should look.

Among Orthodox Lutherans, the arch-theologian was Johann Gerhard.[3] Gerhard (1582–1637) lived about a century after Luther. After a distinguished education at the University of Jena and elsewhere, he was called in 1606 to be a pastor and superintendent of 26 parishes in Heldburg, and a lecturer at a high school. He was just 23 years old. Just by considering his first call, it is obvious that his contemporaries thought highly of the gifts God had given him. On January 7, 1615, Gerhard was called to the office of pastor and superintendent general (something like a bishop) of Coburg.[4] This was a promotion. Previously he had been a "specific superintendent." Now his supervision included more churches, subdistricts, and specific superintendents. He soon set to work writing a church order for his diocese, the "Church Order of Johann Casimir," which was finished by 1616.[5] Then, that same year, he was called to be a professor of theology at the University of Jena, where he served for the next 21 years, until his death in 1637. Gerhard's writings built up the church and Christian believers and defended the church against attacks.[6] He also wrote about pastoral formation.

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[1] This article appeared first in *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 88, nos. 2–3 (April/July 2024): 99–121. Minor stylistic changes have been made for its present publication.

[2] Unless otherwise noted, Bible quotations are from the New King James Version.

[3] This is the judgment of Gerhard's contemporary Matthias Hoë von Hoënegg (1580–1645). Erdmann Rudolph Fischer, *The Life of John Gerhard*, trans. Richard J. Dinda and Elmer M. Hohle (Malone, TX: Repristination Press, 2000), 295.

[4] Fischer, *The Life of John Gerhard*, p. 72, sec. 5.2.

[5] Fischer, *The Life of John Gerhard*, p. 73, sec. 5.3; Martin Honecker, *Cura religionis Magistratus Christiani: Studien zum Kirchenrecht im Luthertum des 17. Jahrhunderts, insbesondere bei Johann Gerhard*, Ius ecclesiasticum 7 (Munich: Claudius, 1968), 43; and Johann Anselm Steiger, "Kirchenordnung, Visitation und Alltag: Johann Gerhard (1582–1637) als Visitator und kirchenordnender Theologe," *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 55, no. 3 (2003): 229.

[6] For a biography of Gerhard, see Steven R. J. Parks, "Johann Gerhard (1582–1637)," in *Lives and Writings of the Great Fathers of the Lutheran Church*, ed. Timothy Schmeling (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2016), 163–178.

While the formation of Christians begins in congregations and homes by means of the Sacraments, preaching, teaching, prayer, and devotion, here I will examine *formal* pastoral preparation at the time of Johann Gerhard. This consisted of three parts: (I) university curriculum, (II) personal study, and (III) ongoing assessment and "quality control."

I. Pastoral Formation at German Lutheran Universities of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

Theological Faculties

Universities with their theological faculties were the Lutheran centers of pastoral formation in Germany in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In 1600, there were 11 Lutheran universities in the Holy Roman Empire (including Germany), with about 2,500 students total.[7] The theological professors often had more to do than just teaching future pastors. Sometimes theology professors would also serve in the arts faculty, teaching Greek and Hebrew, or classical Latin and Greek texts.[8] Professors often had to fulfill non-university tasks, too, such as representing the university or the prince at meetings, being judges or jurors for church courts, and the like. Such activities were a nuisance to the professors, who complained that such extracurricular duties were preventing them from giving due diligence to their studies and lectures.[9]

The theology faculties were small. At Wittenberg in 1580, there were four regular professors of theology. All four of the professors had the duty of lecturing on the Bible, and one of them from time to time was supposed to lecture on Christian doctrine. The four professors could decide among themselves who would teach what, and they could even change from one area to another.[10] The statutes for the University of Rostock in the sixteenth century stipulated that each theology professor should take turns lecturing on every subject. While this was never fully implemented, the professors did commonly lecture in several different areas: books of the New Testament, books of the Old Testament, doctrine (theological commonplaces), and topics from the arts faculty, such as ancient languages or classical texts.[11]

Lectures

The official curriculum of the universities could vary somewhat from place to place but always focused on the Bible. Philipp Melanchthon wrote the statutes for the University of Wittenberg in 1545, and these influenced all other Lutheran universities in Germany.[12] These statues stipulated that lectures would be offered on the Bible, the creeds, and Augustine's *On the Spirit and the Letter.* Courses were to be offered on Greek and Hebrew, and the faculty was responsible for the moral and mental development of the students. At later times, lectures on Melanchthon's *Commonplaces*, the Small Catechism, or the Augsburg Confession were added. The focus on the Bible is striking. Thus, the stereotype of the Lutheran Orthodox theologians as "the dogmaticians"[13] needs to be challenged, since Lutheran universities did not make dogmatics dominant in their curricula until the latter half of the seventeenth century.[14] Before that, apparently, the doctrinal exposition of the Bible was more common. At Wittenberg in 1580, there were several professors of exegetical theology, but only one for dogmatics. Yet exegesis, too, was dogmatic. Lutheran exegetes were keenly aware of how the Bible supports Lutheran doctrine, and they often dealt with and refuted the wrongful exegesis of their theological opponents (such as Roman Catholics, Reformed, and, later, Socinians).[15] While the lectures usually focused on doctrinal books of the Bible (especially the prophets and the Pauline epistles), university

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7 Thomas Kaufmann, "The Clergy and the Theological Culture of the Age: The Education of Lutheran Pastors in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *The Protestant Clergy of Early Modern Europe*, ed. C. Scott Dixon and Luise Schorn-Schütte (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 121.

8 Thomas Kaufmann, *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung: Die Rostocker Theologieprofessoren und ihr Beitrag zur theologischen Bildung und kirchlichen Gestaltung im Herzogtum Mecklenburg zwischen 1550 und 1675*, Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte 66 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 1997), 399.

9 Kaufmann, *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung*, 392–393n623.

10 Marcel Nieden, *Die Erfindung des Theologen: Wittenberger Anweisungen zum Theologiestudium im Zeitalter von Reformation und Konfessionalisierung*, Spätmittelalter und Reformation, neue Reihe 28 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 116–117.

11 Kaufmann, *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung*, 391–392, 402.

12 Kaufmann, "The Clergy and the Theological Culture of the Age," 123; and Walter Friedensburg, ed., *Urkundenbuch der Universität Wittenberg*, vol. 1 (Magdeburg: Selbstverlag der Historischen Kommission, 1926), 261–265.

13 E.g., Jacob A. O. Preus, "The New Testament Canon in the Lutheran Dogmaticians," *The Springfielder* 25, no. 1 (1961): 8–33.

14 Kaufmann, "The Clergy and the Theological Culture of the Age," 123–124; and Kaufmann, *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung*, 391–392, 403–404.

15 Nieden, *Die Erfindung des Theologen*, 245.

sermon series were used to preach through the Gospels and the historical books of the Bible.[16]

From circa 1575 to circa 1625, regulations for Wittenberg's theological faculty repeatedly emphasized that lectures must not go into too much detail; they must instead cover material that the students would need to know as future pastors, showing them good examples of how to exposit the words of the Bible and to defend the church's doctrine. Nevertheless, during this period the lectures tended to become long, detailed, slow dictations.[17]

Lectures at Rostock were never supposed to be held at the same time as another class. The blocks of time set forth for the lectures were up to two hours in length. Theoretically, a student could attend every regular lecture offered. According to the statutes, time blocks were reserved for particular professors to lecture every day of the week,[18] surely excluding Sunday. Professors did not have to lecture on the same topic every day; some chose to lecture on two different topics at a time on alternating days.[19]

At the University of Jena, there were different kinds of classes: public lectures, *collegia* (which were extracurricular lectures or disputations), and sermon exercises. The professors themselves chose what they were going to teach. In order to keep professors accountable and make sure they were teaching subjects that the students needed to learn, printed lists of lectures were regularly published, which could be examined by the prince and his bureaucracy.[20]

A survey of printed class lists can give us a good picture of the Jena theological curriculum at the time of Johann Gerhard. Normally, Jena had three regular theology professors. In 1613, before Gerhard began teaching there, Ambrosius Reuden (1543–1615) offered one lecture series at a time. First, he announced lectures on the Decalogue, which would be followed by doctrinal commonplaces on the Gospel, repentance, providence, and predestination. Albert Grawer (1575–1617) offered two lecture classes: on Malachi and on Augsburg Confession II–IV. Johann Major (1564–1654) offered one lecture series: on Acts. At this time there was no mention of disputations or sermon exercises.[21]

In the winter semester of 1616, Johann Major was still lecturing on Acts. Johann Gerhard, a new professor, gave one lecture series at a time: first on the canonical and apocryphal books of the Bible; then on apparent contradictions in the New Testament; then on his method of theological study. He announced that later he would lecture on the doctrine of God. At that time, there were only two theology professors.[22]

Nevertheless, during this period the lectures tended to become long, detailed, slow dictations.

In 1617, Johann Himmel (1581–1642) had joined the theology faculty, bringing the number up to three. In the winter semester, Johann Major continued his lecture series on Acts, now having reached chapter 16. Johann Himmel offered one public lecture series on polemical theology and announced the continuation of a private theological class. Gerhard was more active. He offered the end of a lecture series on the method of theological study and the theological *praecognita* (which probably included what we call *prolegomena*, dealing with the nature of theology, the doctrine of Scripture, and revelation).[23] After that was done, he announced that the next lecture series would be a "synoptic" explanation of theological commonplaces. He would also begin a Bible seminar and would continue the "rest of the exercises of disputations and sermons." Among the "philosophical" studies, no classes on metaphysics or logic were offered in 1617, since "a professor of metaphysics and logic is still being sought."[24]

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[16] Nieden, *Die Erfindung des Theologen*, 117; and Kaufmann, *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung*, 391–392.

[17] Nieden, *Die Erfindung des Theologen*, 115–117, 119–120; cf. Kaufmann, *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung*, 391.

[18] Kaufmann, *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung*, 392.

[19] Kaufmann, *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung*, 400.

[20] Ulrich Rasche, "Über Jenaer Vorlesungsverzeichnisse des 16. bis 19. Jahrhunderts," in *"Gelehrte" Wissenschaft. Das Vorlesungsprogramm der Universität Jena um 1800*, ed. Thomas Bach, Jonas Maatsch, and Ulrich Rasche (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2008), 17–18.

[21] Johann Tobias Major, *Prorector Academiae Ienensis Johannes Maior S. S. Theologiae Doctor, & Coeteri Professores L. S.: Socrates Ille Princeps Philosophorum Dicere Solebat: ... P. P. Die 5. Septemb. A. O. R. 1613.* (Jena: Weidnerus, 1613); on the printed lists of classes at Jena, see Rasche, "Über Jenaer Vorlesungsverzeichnisse des 16. bis 19. Jahrhunderts."

[22] *Rector Et Senatus Academiae Ienensis L. S.: Quae Catalogi Lectionum Publicarum, Quos Semestres Edere Solemus... P. P. Calend. Septemb. 1616* (Jena: Beithmannus, 1616).

[23] Cf. the contents of Johann Heinrich Alsted, *Praecognitorum Theologicorum Libri Duo: Naturam Theologiae explicantes, & rationem studii illius plenissime monstrantes* (Frankfurt am Main: Hummius, 1615).

[24] Johann Gerhard, *Rector Academiae Ienensis Johannes Gerhardus S.S. Theologiae Doctor, & Caeteri Professores L. S. D.: Aristoteles, Qui Teste Laërtio, Inter de Ambulandum Suiscum Discipulis Philosophari Solebat... P. P. Prid. Calend. Sept. A. O. R. 1617* (Jena: Steinmannus, 1617).

In the summer semester of 1618, Major again was lecturing on Acts. Himmel said he would lecture on Romans 9, followed by a "methodical synopsis of church history," followed by a succinct explanation of the minor prophets. He also had a private theological *collegium* (an extracurricular class of some kind). Gerhard was lecturing on theological commonplaces and leading disputations on the Gospels and polemical theology.[25]

From this sample of course offerings at Jena, we see a number of surprising things. First, if they did not have the right professor, they just did not offer the class. Second, professors usually offered just one lecture class per semester, but it was ongoing and thus probably always included new content. (These lectures were commonly turned into books later on.) Third, in addition to the main lecture, they often offered private classes, often in the form of disputations.

Collegia and Disputations

Many of the Jena class lists mention *collegia*. These were private classes, electives that did not have to be offered by the professors nor attended by students but that could be offered according to the interests of the professors and students and seem to have taken place frequently.[26] The classes consisted of lectures, disputations, or preaching exercises. The purpose of these private classes was to supplement the public lectures with preparatory studies or exercises.[27] They also supplemented the professors' salaries, since professors could charge extra fees for them.[28] These *collegia* seem to be the way that our modern classes developed. The topics, manner, and duration of the old public lectures were fixed by university statutes and could not easily be changed. Private *collegia*, on the other hand, both provided extra income and allowed professors and graduate students to offer whatever topics the local academic market desired.

After lectures, disputations were seen as the most important educational activity. Disputations were supposed to help strengthen students' ability to think and argue clearly, and to make clear the truth of the faith and show it as plausible by refuting contrary arguments.[29] In the seventeenth century, the popularity of disputations as an educational activity rose dramatically and characterized theological education in Lutheran Orthodoxy. This practice, which was originally supposed to train students to think critically and respond to the arguments of the opponents of Lutheran doctrine, was used increasingly by Lutheran professors in the seventeenth century for building consensus and for responding to new theological challenges in detail.[30]

Disputations were debates on theological topics. The purpose of academic disputations, as practiced by Lutherans such as Johann Gerhard, was truth and clarity, not just winning. A professor usually wrote theses and presided over the disputation as the "president." The "opponents" were usually students. In advance, they divvied up the theses and researched arguments against the theses in the books of the Lutherans' opponents. In the disputation, these "opponents" then brought arguments against the proposed theses. Their arguments were drawn from Scripture, church fathers, and philosophy. The "respondent" was often a senior-level student, in many cases a doctoral candidate, who had a difficult job. He had to defend the theses against the opponents. Often, if a respondent had troubles, the president (i.e., the professor) would step in to defend the thesis.[31]

Disputations were supposed to help strengthen students' ability to think and argue clearly, and to make clear the truth of the faith and show it as plausible by refuting contrary arguments.

The disputation could also be an assessment tool. Students of theology would often avoid taking the

[25] *Rector Et Senatus Academiae Ienensis L. S. D.: Scipio Maior, Qui Vicit Hannibalem...; P.P. Die 15. Martii A. O. R. 1618* (Jena: Typis Steinmannianis, 1618).
[26] Margreet J. A. M. Ahsmann, "Teaching in Collegia: The Organization of Disputationes at Universities in the Netherlands and in Germany During the 16th and 17th Centuries," in *Università in Europa: Le istituzioni universitarie dal Medio Evo ai nostri giorni strutture, organizzazione, funzionamento; Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi, Milazzo, 28 settembre–2 ottobre 1993*, ed. Andrea Romano (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 1995), 99–114.
[27] Rasche, "Über Jenaer Vorlesungsverzeichnisse des 16. bis 19. Jahrhunderts," 17–18, 22–23, 25, 28.
[28] Rasche, "Über Jenaer Vorlesungsverzeichnisse des 16. bis 19. Jahrhunderts," 28.
[29] Kaufmann, *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung*, 409.
[30] Nieden, *Die Erfindung des Theologen*, 123–127; and Kenneth G. Appold, *Orthodoxie als Konsensbildung* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).
[31] On the practice of disputations in the age of Lutheran Orthodoxy, see Appold, *Orthodoxie als Konsensbildung*; and Johann Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, in *On Interpreting Sacred Scripture and Method of Theological Study*, ed. Benjamin T. G. Mayes, trans. Joshua J. Hayes, Theological Commonplaces I–II (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2017), 191–198. On the practice of disputations in general, see Ahsmann, "Teaching in Collegia," 107–113. Luther's disputations will be translated and published in Luther's Works: American Edition, vols. 72–73.

degree of "bachelor of Bible" because of the high cost of the fees for this degree. Instead, they would hold a disputation, serve as the respondent and maybe even author the theses. The theses were printed with the student's name as the respondent and could serve as sufficient proof of his theological learning.[32]

Despite the popularity of the practice, disputations were occasionally criticized. Professors sometimes complained of the large amounts of time they had to devote to conducting disputations. This, combined with defenses of the practice, indicate that disputations sometimes were perceived as deficient.[33] Johann Gerhard's rules for disputations, too, sound as though he was aware of problems that could occur in disputations — for example, sophistic arguments, heated passions, and striving to win instead of seeking to set forth and know the truth.[34]

Assessment

From the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, it has been estimated that students stayed at the University of Wittenberg an average of 1.8 years.[35] A university degree was not required in order to become a pastor. In fact, in early modern Germany, pastors with university degrees were usually not wanted for rural pastorates. The differences in background and interests between the pastor and people were too great and could easily lead to conflicts. Pastors without a degree and especially of peasant background were the most suitable for such parishes, not least because they could be more easily controlled by patrons (rich lay leaders). Such pastors were known as "postil riders" (*Postillenreiter*), since they usually read the sermons of other pastors to the people instead of writing their own.[36] But in the cities and towns, and even in many rural places, having a well-educated pastor was regarded as important. While it was common for pastors to lack a university education at the beginning of the Reformation, the trend was toward increased educational requirements for pastoral candidates. Most Lutheran leaders saw increased formal pastoral formation as desirable, and as finances and teachers were increasingly available, standards rose.[37]

Theological study at a university was also quite different from modern North American practices, because university statutes (at least at Wittenberg) did not speak about or require grades or examinations, except when students wanted to graduate with a degree.[38] While programs of study and course offerings were well defined, there was a surprising amount of freedom. There were no set entrance requirements for the universities (aside from fluency in Latin), and there was no specific length of time that a student needed to stay at the university. Appointment to a parish as a pastor did not usually require a formal academic degree. Instead, the church's examinations were required, and these focused on the candidate's confession of faith, knowledge of the Bible and theology, and preaching. Thus, the length of study was tailored to students, who had differing abilities and education levels when arriving at the universities.[39] Qualification for the pastoral office depended wholly on the competency of the man, and the theological curriculum existed wholly to make the man competent to be a pastor. Thus, instead of a grade card or academic transcript, recommendation letters for candidates were commonly written, testifying to the candidate's moral character, ability to preach, and understanding of doctrine. These competencies were seen as requisite in order to be a pastor. That is, qualification for the pastoral office was based in part on the piety and character of the candidate. It was expected that candidates must first have experienced God's Word and cultivated it in prayer and reading, and that they had been put to the test in the real world. These kinds of competencies (academic and personal) were far more important than any academic *degree* for most parishes and pastors.[40] This appears to be a rigorous kind of competency-based education.[41]

[32] Kaufmann, *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung*, 413–414.
[33] Kaufmann, *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung*, 419.
[34] Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 192–198.
[35] Nieden, *Die Erfindung des Theologen*, 116n69.
[36] Sven Tode, "Bildung und Wissenskultur der Geistlichkeit im Danzig der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Bildung und Konfession: Theologenausbildung im Zeitalter der Konfessionalisierung*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis and Markus Wriedt (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 93–94; and Kaufmann, "The Clergy and the Theological Culture of the Age," 132–133.
[37] Kaufmann, "The Clergy and the Theological Culture of the Age," 128–130.
[38] Nieden, *Die Erfindung des Theologen*, 245.
[39] Kaufmann, "The Clergy and the Theological Culture of the Age," 125, 127–128, 132.
[40] Kaufmann, "The Clergy and the Theological Culture of the Age," 134–136.
[41] Cf. Rebecca Klein-Collins, "Sharpening Our Focus on Learning: The Rise of Competency-Based Approaches to Degree Completion" (Champaign, IL: National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment, 2013), *https://learningoutcomesassessment.org/documents/Klein%20Collins%20OP20.pdf*.

II. Pastoral Formation according to Johann Gerhard's *Method of Theological Study*

Now that we have considered pastoral formation from the standpoint of curriculum at Orthodox Lutheran universities, it is also important to consider what else pastoral formation included. Namely, it included prayer, intense private study of Scripture and theological texts, and careful note-taking. This leads us to consider how Gerhard directed students to carry out the private side of pastoral formation.

Methods of Theological Study

Since the officially stipulated courses of study were very flexible, many professors wrote methods of theological study in the form of advice to theology students, to lead students to prepare themselves well for the pastoral office.[42] Perhaps this indicates an implicit admission that the official curricula were not sufficient to form the students into competent pastors. Thus, the written methods of theological study were geared toward a student's personal, private study much more than toward an official curriculum at a university.[43]

Gerhard's Method of Theological Study (1617)

Johann Gerhard published directions for theological study for his students at Jena.[44] In his *Method of Theological Study* of 1617, he incorporated Luther's general advice of prayer, meditation, and spiritual trial (*oratio, meditatio, tentatio*) into a work of three parts.[45] The *Method* arose from Gerhard's lectures as a new professor of theology at the University of Jena. In these lectures he led his students through a plan for a five-year course of study focused primarily on the study of Holy Scripture, though not neglecting other areas of theology. Here Gerhard sets forth a methodical approach to studying Scripture and dogmatic theology in which one is supposed to write down quotations and observations in large blank books organized by topic. The *Method* gives readers not just a list of *what* to study but also practical guidelines on *how*, guidelines that will benefit students and theologians even today. It is a rigorous method of study that centers on biblical exegesis in conversation with the Reformation and the Early Church, with a view to how this material can be used for pastoral life in sermons, teaching, and debate. To speak anachronistically, it integrates exegetical, systematic, historical, and practical theology.

The written methods of theological study were geared toward a student's personal, private study much more than toward an official curriculum at a university.

Prerequisites of Theological Study

In the first part, Gerhard deals with the prerequisites of theological study, such as a right intention, piety, and daily prayer. Here he shows the connection between the academic study of theology and Christian faith.[46] For Gerhard, "study" does not imply that only mental faculties are to be involved. The Latin word *studium* means more than the English word "studying." It also means "zeal, exertion, endeavor."[47] At the beginning of the *Method* Gerhard discusses prayer and a godly, Christian life as part of theological formation, and at the end he discusses *tentatio* ("testing"), which to him means two things: experiencing the truth of this theology personally and suffering the testing of the devil. Thus, "study" refers to the formation of the whole person of the Christian, not just the mind.

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[42] Kaufmann, "The Clergy and the Theological Culture of the Age," 125; for a list of such works, see Johann Georg Walch, *Bibliotheca theologica selecta litterariis adnotationibus instructa*, vol. 1 (Jena: sumtu viduae Croeckeriane, 1757), 4–11.

[43] Kaufmann, "The Clergy and the Theological Culture of the Age," 126.

[44] According to Robert Preus, Gerhard had the study programs of Andreas Hyperius (1511–1564) and David Chytraeus (1531–1600) in mind as he was setting forth his *Method.* While he was not wholly original in setting forth the *Method*, he was indeed influential on those who read him. Robert D. Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, vol. 1 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), 140; and Johann Anselm Steiger, "The Development of the Reformation Legacy: Hermeneutics and Interpretation of the Sacred Scripture in the Age of Orthodoxy," in *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation*, ed. Magne Sæbø, vol. 2, *From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 723.

[45] Johann Gerhard, *Methodus Studii Theologici: Publicis Praelectionibus in Academia Jenensi Anno 1617. Exposita* (Jena: Tobiae Steinmanni, 1620); and Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*.

[46] See Nieden, *Die Erfindung des Theologen*.

[47] Charlton Thomas Lewis and Charles Short, eds., *A Latin Dictionary Founded on Andrews' Edition of Freund's Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962), s.v. "studium" I.

Pre-Theological Studies

In the second part, he deals with the pre-theological studies (what we might call pre-seminary education), including Hebrew and Greek.[48] It was assumed that students already knew Latin, since Gerhard's book was written in Latin. Here we also see how Gerhard regarded philosophy.[49] Gerhard saw many parts of philosophy as useful for the study of theology, though he also firmly maintained that God's revelation in Holy Scripture must always remain the master and that philosophy should not be allowed to undermine that revelation. Gerhard favored retaining the study of philosophy for theologians not simply because of its use by opponents, such as Calvinists.[50] Rather, for Gerhard, "philosophy" includes a number of different fields of knowledge. As a whole, philosophy sharpens one's mind. The "real" parts of philosophy, such as astronomy, geography, physiology, and classical psychology, are useful — even necessary — to explain many biblical terms. The "instrumental" parts, such as logic and rhetoric, help a theologian to be clear in teaching.[51] Aristotelian metaphysics, on the other hand, is useless for theology. In general, Gerhard cautions against misusing philosophy, but his praise of it is due not just to its use by his opponents. He saw philosophy as being in service to God's revelation, not reigning over it. This allowed him to view it as useful.[52]

Personal Bible Study

In the third part, Gerhard deals with the course of theological study itself, which was projected to last five years, though Gerhard recognized that not all students would be able to progress through the entire course of studies.[53] With regard to the study of Scripture, Gerhard advised a twofold approach: cursory reading and accurate reading.[54] With the cursory reading, one would read the Bible in the vernacular, two chapters of "doctrinal books" in the morning and two chapters of "historical books" in the evening. While reading, the student should write the theme of each chapter, such as "creation" for Genesis 1, at the top of the page in his Bible.[55] Following this plan, the heavy thinking would be done in the morning, and the lighter reading in the evening. The schedule allows around 30 days to be missed, while still reading the entire Bible in one year.

With the accurate, or painstaking, reading, the student would read the Bible in the Greek and Hebrew, beginning with the New Testament Epistles and following a trusted commentary on the original text alongside the Greek and Hebrew. By this manner of study, he might work through only a few verses per day. Gerhard says that for each chapter of the Bible, one should take notes on the following things: (1) the summary and scope of the chapter; (2) its general outline; (3) significant emphases of words or phrases (such as the definitions of unusual words or phrases); (4) the differing interpretations of ancient or recent teachers of the church (that is, a comparison of the most important translations of the Bible); (5) the resolutions of apparent contradictions; (6) significant doctrines and observations that are not obvious at first sight; and (7) solid sayings of the fathers.

By spending hours each day on this diligent reading of Scripture, and by copying and taking notes in their notebooks, pastoral candidates prepared for themselves a source of knowledge that would serve them throughout their ministries.

Reading Doctrinal Books

Gerhard next suggests studying and taking notes on doctrinal books. According to Gerhard, the student should first read a book of doctrine for beginners, such as Chemnitz's *Enchiridion*. After the principal "definitions and scriptural testimonies connected with them" have been memorized, he is ready to move on to a precise treatment of theological commonplaces. But this doctrine for beginners is important, since it gives the student the theological vocabulary and categories that will allow him to gather and organize theological knowledge in the future. Gerhard says, "For that can

[48] Donald Meyer, "John Gerhard on Philosophy in Theology," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 27 (September 1956): 721–724.
[49] See Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 1:122–126; and Meyer, "John Gerhard on Philosophy in Theology," 721–724.
[50] Cf. Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 1:126.
[51] Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 162–179.
[52] Cf. Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, 1:122, 130–131.
[53] Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 180; Steiger, "The Development of the Reformation Legacy," 705; and Walch, *Bibliotheca theologica selecta*, 1:5–6.
[54] For the following, see Gerhard, On Interpreting Sacred Scripture and Method of Theological Study, 180–187; and Martin H. Jung, "'Est omnino sapientia donum Dei': spirituelle Aspekte des Theologiestudiums bei Melanchthon, Gerhard und Francke," in Dona Melanchthoniana, 2nd ed., ed. Johanna Loehr (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2005), 180–181.
[55] For an example of chapter summaries for the whole Bible, see Benjamin T. G. Mayes, "Mayes Bible Chapter Summaries," *Lutheran Orthodoxy* (blog), June 10, 2019, *https://lutheranorthodoxy.blogspot.com/2019/06/mayes-bible-chapter-summaries.html*.

be one's greatest aid in the examinations, extemporaneous discourses, disputations, and sermons, and all throughout one's life — lest one wander into unknown forests, so to speak, but rather he should know how to store everything away in its proper spot like a busy bee."[56]

When the student is ready to study theology (theological commonplaces) more deliberately, Gerhard recommends that he prepare a large blank book with sections of blank pages reserved for each article of faith and all its parts. Gerhard recommends following certain writers in order to organize one's theology notebook: Matthias Hafenreffer (1561–1619), Balthasar Mentzer (1565–1627), or Gerhard's colleague Johann Himmel. This listing of the parts of each doctrine helps the student to think clearly and to gather notes methodically for the rest of his life.[57]

At the end of his *Method*, Gerhard recommends that the fifth-year student begin to read church history, Luther's works, and the Early Church fathers. Gerhard's section on Luther's writings is quite short, only two pages in our English translation. He encourages students to begin not with the early Luther, to whom so much twentieth- and twenty-first-century attention has been directed, but with Luther's German writings from the time of the Augsburg Confession (1530) until his death. Only after reading Luther's mature works should they go back to read the earlier writings. The same method can be seen regarding his Latin writings: Students should start with the Genesis lectures (1535–1545) and only afterwards read the other Latin writings of Luther.[58] The section on how to read the medieval Scholastics is eight pages in English. Here Gerhard mostly just exposes their errors, while also suggesting that the Scholastics can be useful polemically, since many arguments against contemporary Roman Catholic doctrines can be found in them. Students are encouraged to read only Lombard's *Sentences*, Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*, and the commentaries of Bonaventure and Biel on the *Sentences*.[59]

Gerhard's recommendations on reading the Early Church fathers are comparatively long, comprising 19 pages in the English translation. Gerhard goes into detail to make clear what the fathers are not: norms of truth in the church. But alongside this negative approach to the fathers, Gerhard also offers a very positive approach. Constructively for Protestant theology, Gerhard recognizes that without the writings of the fathers, many exegetical insights would be lost. Thus, one cannot simply replace the fathers with an appeal to *sola Scriptura*. The fathers are irreplaceable. Without the fathers, the church's knowledge of Scripture would be decreased. The fathers also play an important role in polemics for Gerhard. They were, after all, the common patrimony of the divided confessions, and an appeal to their writings was important and effective among discussion partners who wanted to be the successors of those revered fathers. Whatever criticism Gerhard had toward the fathers, he criticized as one who stood within that very Christian tradition. He criticized not *all* that the fathers wrote but only *some*; he criticized not from the *outside* but from the *inside*; he criticized not on the basis of subjective whim or the spirit of the age but on the basis of Holy Scripture. His theology continued to be formed intensely by the fathers, since the tradition of the ancient church was not just his history but also a part of his own present.[60]

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Disputations

Gerhard valued disputations greatly: "The exercises of the school disputations have great advantage and advance students' studies in no small way. … They

[56] Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 188.

[57] For a different proposal on organizing analog commonplace books, see Benjamin T. G. Mayes, "How to Organize Analog Commonplace Books for Theology or Anything Else," *Lutheran Orthodoxy* (blog), May 14, 2023, *http://lutheranorthodoxy.blogspot.com/2023/05/how-to-organize-analog-commonplace.html*. For a digital implementation, see Joshua Hayes, "How to Organize Digital Commonplace Notes for Theology or Anything Else," *Lutheran Orthodoxy* (blog), May 15, 2023, *http://lutheranorthodoxy.blogspot.com/2023/05/how-to-organize-digital-commonplace.html*.

[58] Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 211–212.

[59] Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 230–238.

[60] Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 212–230; and Benjamin T. G. Mayes, "*Lumina, Non Numina*: Patristic Authority According to Lutheran Arch-Theologian Johann Gerhard," in *Church and School in Early Modern Protestantism: Studies in Honor of Richard A. Muller on the Maturation of a Theological Tradition*, ed. Jordan Ballor, David Sytsma, and Jason Zuidema (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 457–470.

cause one to search for truth and its confirmation."[61] They help to free the mind from doubts. They train future pastors to be able to "convict those who contradict" (**TITUS 1:9; CF. 2 TIM. 3:16**). They help a student to be able to "give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you" (**1 PETER 3:15**). "Moreover, these kinds of disputations were initiated and consecrated by Christ who, after turning twelve years old, 'sat in the midst of the teachers, hearing and questioning them' (**LUKE 2:[46]**), and they have been repeated by continual use in the church among the piously learned."[62]

Yet most of Gerhard's teaching about disputations consists of rules that aim at keeping the disputations on track: "Sophistic argumentation unbecoming of theological order should be banished." "There should be no outbursts, taunts, or curses." "Beware of pointless logomachies and word fights." "Keep from interrupting one another." "The disputation should be about questions that are good to know, necessary to understand, and contained in the Holy Scriptures."[63] Such rules and warnings seem to be directed against the kinds of debates that many of us know: undisciplined free-for-alls filled with personal attacks and often strewn with irrelevant arguments. Gerhard was aware of the abuses of the practice but still defended the usefulness of disputations, so long as they were conducted appropriately.

Preaching

Gerhard's advice on preaching in the *Method* has attracted attention in English.[64] His advice on applying Scripture to hearers in terms of teaching, reproof, training, correction, and consolation based on 2 Timothy 3:16 and Romans 15:4 is surely worthy of our attention. But beyond that, it is significant that for Gerhard, instruction in preaching does not begin until the fourth year of theological study. "Since those who rush into preaching before they have a firm grasp of heavenly doctrine and tried judgment usually run afoul, we have wanted to defer practicing church homilies until the fourth year of studies. Nevertheless we will not prescribe anything for those who, aided by a uniquely excellent talent or compelled by family needs, aspire to reach this goal and practice of theological study more quickly."[65]

Gerhard's concern makes sense to professors such as myself who hear student field workers preach from time to time. Not every student is ready in his first year to take homiletics. He really needs to achieve the competency of thorough biblical knowledge and clear theological thinking before he tries to preach. That is, he needs to have something to preach before he can preach it. Gerhard saw this and treated the learning of preaching in a way that recognizes varying competencies among students.

III. Pastoral Formation according to Johann Gerhard's Church Order

So, with the theological curriculum of the University of Jena and Gerhard's *Method of Theological Study*, a full and complete way of pastoral formation has been set forth. But what has not yet been discussed is assessment. How can the church be sure that this or that man is qualified to begin the pastoral ministry? For this, Gerhard's church order shows us how seriously Orthodox Lutherans took theological examinations within the call process.

Gerhard's Church Order

On June 5, 1606, Gerhard was called to be pastor and superintendent of Heldburg by Duke Johann Casimir of Coburg.[66] Four years later, in December 1610, he had made his report of an inspection of the churches and schools of Heldburg and had come to conclusions about how they needed to be improved.[67] Having successfully carried out this task, he was given the duty of conducting a general inspection of all of Johann Casimir's lands in Thuringia and Franconia in 1613.[68] By 1615, Gerhard had become general superintendent (the functional equivalent of a bishop) in Coburg and had written a church ordinance (or a "church order"), the "Church Ordinance of Johann

[61] Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 191.
[62] Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 192.
[63] Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 193.
[64] Benjamin T. G. Mayes, "The Useful Applications of Scripture in Lutheran Orthodoxy: An Aid to Contemporary Preaching and Exegesis," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 83, no. 1–2 (January/April 2019): 111–135; Adam C. Koontz, "Speak as the Oracles of God: Reinhold Pieper's Classical Lutheran Homiletic," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 85, no. 1 (January 2021): 23–36. Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 201–210.
[65] Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 201.
[66] Georg Berbig, *D. Johann Gerhards Visitationswerk in Thüringen und Franken* (Gotha: Th. Herm. Wechsung, 1896), 5.
[67] His report of the visitation is printed in Berbig, *D. Johann Gerhards Visitationswerk in Thüringen und Franken*, 32–36.
[68] Berbig, *D. Johann Gerhards Visitationswerk in Thüringen und Franken*, 5–6.

Casimir," which was later published in 1626.[69] This church ordinance included chapters on many of the same topics that appeared in Gerhard's commonplace *On the Ecclesiastical Ministry*, such as the call, examination, ordination, investiture, and pastoral duties.

A church ordinance in early Lutheranism was both more and less than what we have in the *Handbook* of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). It was more in that it usually included a detailed statement of faith to which all the ministers had to adhere. This was the "body of doctrine." In Gerhard's church ordinance, instead of a body of doctrine, he explains that God's Word is the only rule of doctrine and preaching, he explains which are the symbolical books of our church, and he explains how the writings of the church Fathers are to be regarded. Gerhard's church ordinance then offers chapters on the call, examination, ordination, investiture (i.e., installation), preaching, catechization, ceremonies, Confession and Absolution, Holy Communion, Baptism, marriage, visiting the sick, funerals, pastoral ethics, pastoral remuneration, duties of the laity, church and school visitation, the office of church superintendents, excommunication, church discipline, alms, lay leaders, hospitals, sacristans, and marriage cases. Finally, in Latin, there are school regulations. Gerhard was not original in this. He basically took two existing church ordinances and edited them for the situation in Coburg. Of these two church ordinances, the one he quotes most often, both in his own church ordinance and in his *Theological Commonplaces*, is the 1580 church ordinance of Elector August of Saxony.[70]

In Lutheran Germany, churches were governed by a board of control called a "consistory," which consisted of theologians and lawyers appointed by the Christian ruler to deal with oversight of the churches in the realm. The cases it decided dealt with marriage; disputes over church property; supervision of the lives, doctrine, and conduct of pastors; protecting pastors from injustice; and the exercise of the major ban (excommunication).[71] This placement of church matters under consistories was widely adopted in all Evangelical territories in Germany.[72] The leading clergyman of the consistory was called a "superintendent." The model of church government by superintendent and consistory resembles the model of a bishop with his cathedral chapter. It is what the Lutherans were used to coming out of the Middle Ages.

Pastoral Formation Verified by the Call Process and Visitation

The call process in Gerhard's district, Coburg, was handled mainly by the consistory and the superintendent. Candidates were not permitted to request a particular parish, much less to give bribes to obtain it. (The fact that this prohibition had to be mentioned means that it must have been regarded as a danger and may have happened.) The call process itself ran something like this. Those who have the right of patronage in a vacant parish should nominate suitable persons to the consistory. This has to happen so that the consistory can examine the candidate in person before he gives a trial sermon before the patron (and perhaps also before the congregation). If the candidates are found qualified — pure in doctrine and upright in life, as testified by references — then they are presented to the congregation.[73]

Theology students normally are not allowed to take over pastorates right away. First, they must serve as schoolteachers or as assistant pastors. This is so that they can learn the rituals of the church (*ritus ecclesiae*). With testimonies from their superintendents and pastors, students could later be called to sole pastorates or as senior pastors. Yet before such calls, they would need to be examined again. This examination consisted of a trial sermon and an inspection of their progress in learning and reading. The consistory carries out this examination and keeps records in a book of men waiting for a call. Particularly gifted men, equipped for preaching and well acquainted with the

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[69] Honecker, *Cura religionis Magistratus Christiani*, 43; and Johann Gerhard and Johann Casimir of Sachsen-Coburg, *Ordnung Wie Es in Deß Durchleuchtigen Hochgebornen Fürsten Und Herrn Herrn Johann Casimir... Fürstenthumb Und Landen... in Den Kirchen, Mit Lehr, Ceremonien, Visitationen Und Was Solchen Mehr Anhängig, Dann Im Fürstlichen Consistorio, Mit Denen Verbotenen Gradibus in Ehesachen Und Sonsten, Auch Im Fürstlichen Gymnasio, so Wol Land: Und Particular Schulen, Gehalten Werden Solle* (Coburg: Forckel, 1626).

[70] Steiger, "Kirchenordnung, Visitation und Alltag: Johann Gerhard (1582–1637) als Visitator und kirchenordnender Theologe," 229.

[71] See August, Elector of Saxony, "Des durchlauchtigsten, hochgebornen fürsten und herrn, herrn Augusti, herzogen u. s. w. Vorordenung und befehl, was sich alle und jede in seiner churfürstlichen g. erblanden und incorporirten stiften underthanen auf die negst gehaltenen zwo visitationes anno 1574 und 1575, und dann anno 1577 bis auf ferneren befehlich und vorbesserung vorhalten sollen," in *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Emil Sehling, vol. 1.1 (Leipzig: Reisland, 1902), 200.

[72] Otto Friedrich, "Kirchenverfassung B. Evangelische Kirche," in *Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon: Kirchlich-theologisches Handwörterbuch*, ed. Heinz Brunotte and Otto Weber, vol. 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956), 814.

[73] Gerhard and Casimir, *Ordnung*, 128–131.

rituals of the church, may skip the diaconate period. The decision on this lies with the consistory. Not only is this examination required before the first call, but it is required also at subsequent calls to other parishes.[74]

There was a specified list of points that the consistory had to examine: Is the candidate's doctrine pure? Is he diligent in studying Scripture and reading other books? What kind of voice does he have? What is his health status? Does he lead a morally upright life? How old is he? And has he subscribed the Book of Concord?[75]

The trial sermon was also necessary. Here the consistory would pick a text, and the man being examined would have to give a short sermon on it. The consistory was supposed to pay attention not just to his oratory but also to his pronunciation and gestures. If the examination was a failure but the candidate was young and there was hope that he would improve, he was to be sent back to the academy for further study. (This indicates, again, that the length of formal seminary formation was variable, based on the competency of the individual man.)

Then there is a trial sermon before the congregation. The superintendent presents the candidate to the congregation; the candidate preaches; and afterward the superintendent asks the parishioners if they will have him.[76] The common people as a whole did not have a choice between several candidates, as in an American election. One candidate was put before the congregation, and after listening to him, they could accept him or refuse him.

The congregation has the right to refuse a proposed new pastor, but they have to give reasons. If the reasons are trivial, from misunderstanding or ignorance, their refusal can be overruled by the consistory. In this case, the congregation would be instructed by the superintendent before the new pastor begins. Why would the congregation's wishes not be followed in this case? Because, according to Gerhard's church order, it is not edifying to let a congregation continue in error, ignorance, or obstinacy.[77]

After the candidate has been cleared by the consistory and accepted by the laity, he still has to receive confirmation by the prince in Coburg. So the candidate travels to Coburg and there preaches yet another trial sermon. After being given approval by the prince, ordination and installation follows.[78]

Gerhard's church ordinance states also that repeated examination was required for preachers who had been serving for fewer than eight years, even though they had already been ordained. This would have to take place if their progress in study was not already known by the consistory.[79]

In Gerhard's church order, it was also expected that periodic inspections (or visitations) would take place, conducted by the representatives of the superintendent and consistory, and at these inspections, one of the things investigated was the extent to which pastors had continued to study the Bible and theology. Besides this, the representatives investigated both the pastors' sermons and their diligence in carrying out pastoral duties. Among other questions, ministers of the church were asked about their loyalty to the Book of Concord, whether they had been reading the Bible through twice each year and whether they had also been reading the symbolical books and Luther's works. They were asked which of the ancient and modern Bible commentators they had been using and whether they knew Greek and Hebrew. At each visitation, a book of the Bible and one or two articles of doctrine were assigned to the pastor, and he would be examined on them at the next visitation.[80] This ensured that a lazy pastor would continue studying and, most importantly, would study the things that would be most helpful to his people in defending and edifying their faith.

At each visitation, a book of the Bible and one or two articles of doctrine were assigned to the pastor, and he would be examined on them at the next visitation.

What can we learn from the church order of Johann Gerhard? The call process included a lot of preaching. People wanted to make sure that every pastoral candidate could preach well before he became a pastor. There were also many checks and controls on the purity of doctrine, as well as a clear program of continuing education and recertification. Pastors did

[74] Gerhard and Casimir, *Ordnung*, 131–132.
[75] Gerhard and Casimir, *Ordnung*, 132–139.
[76] Gerhard and Casimir, *Ordnung*, 139.
[77] Gerhard and Casimir, *Ordnung*, 128–131.
[78] Gerhard and Casimir, *Ordnung*, 139.
[79] Gerhard and Casimir, *Ordnung*, 140.
[80] Gerhard and Casimir, *Ordnung*, 237–239.

not have to take classes, but each pastor had to demonstrate progress in his theological study. There were no requirements for any particular academic degree.

Thus we have seen that formal pastoral formation included curriculum, a method for personal study, and a manner of assessment. Working together, early modern Lutheran churches did the best they could in producing able ministers of the New Testament, who would be "complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (**2 TIM. 3:17**).

IV. Conclusions and Applications

Our study of pastoral formation according to Johann Gerhard has brought forth results that may surprise some people. Some of the approaches to pastoral formation may be of great value to us today. But first, what does the Lutheran seventeenth-century pastoral formation lack?

Perhaps the liturgical life and practice of worship was not covered at the universities in a consistent way. According to Gerhard's church order, this aspect of formation was, nevertheless, required of new pastors. Candidates lacking familiarity with the church's liturgical rites would need to serve as assistant pastors or schoolteachers at first, until they had learned these rites. The music of Lutheran worship was taught by requiring students to participate in worship and liturgical choirs.[81]

Mainly, practical-pastoral theology seems to have been limited to preaching advice and exercises. How would candidates learn to teach the catechism, do evangelism, or provide individual pastoral care? Such subjects were not taught at Jena, apparently, yet candidates for the ministry were supposed to have competency in some of these areas. Perhaps it was hoped that students would learn these skills under the tutelage of senior pastors out in the parishes. It is also possible that aspects of individual pastoral care and counseling were taught in exegesis.[82]

While there might be a plethora of valuable pastoral skills that a pastor should have, the old Lutheran pastoral formation instead aimed at making a young man competent in the Bible, doctrine, and self-directed learning. Apparently, everything else could be learned somewhere else. The pastors were taught to be self-learners.

By and large, the ideal of a mainly biblical curriculum was followed in the lectures and disputations at Jena and other Lutheran universities. Yet side by side was the study of dogmatics, including the Book of Concord, and exegesis was conducted in such a way as to show that our dogma is biblical. One might say that nearly all the curriculum was dogmatic exegesis. In my humble opinion, this is desirable for our day and age. Our exegetes need to be at home in our dogmatics and able to show our future pastors how and why every point of our doctrine is not just "what we as Lutherans believe" but exactly what God gave to us through the apostles and prophets. Conversely, our teachers of systematic theology need to see themselves as biblical theologians, to refrain from speculation, and to bind themselves to what Scripture actually says. As for church history, much of this could be put in a book and assigned as directed reading. In my experience, the best pastoral formation in historical theology classes happens when students are confronted with *theological* texts from the past and then led to discuss the *doctrine* and use of *Scripture*.

According to Gerhard and the early Lutherans, pastors and theology students must develop a daily discipline of reading and methodical note-taking.[83] This, too, is desirable for pastoral formation today. Nowadays, there are more distractions than ever. Just as daily instrument practice is necessary for a professional musician, so also daily practice in focused reading, note-taking, and writing is necessary for a pastor. Could our curricula make more use of directed readings and less use of classes? Such directed readings could be assessed by means of a student's portfolio, in which he demonstrates that he has taken good, methodical notes on his readings, which he can then use throughout his ministry.

Gerhard's method of pastoral formation looks to me like competency-based pastoral formation. No particular degree was required to become a pastor; no particular classes had to be taken. What was required was a thorough knowledge of the Bible and theology,

[81] Paul Graff, *Geschichte der Auflösung der alten gottesdienstlichen Formen in der Evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1937), 1:18–23.

[82] E.g., Friedrich Balduin, *Commentarius In Omnes Epistolas Beati Apostoli Pauli* (Frankfurt am Main: Mevius, 1654); and Friedrich Balduin, *Apostolic Agenda: The Epistles of the Holy Apostle Paul to Titus and Philemon*, trans. Eric G. Phillips and James L. Langebartels (Fort Wayne, IN: Emmanuel Press, 2020).

[83] Nieden noticed this with regard to sixteenth-century Lutheran theological study methods in general. Marcel Nieden, "Rationes studii theologici: Über den bildungsgeschichtlichen Quellenwert der Anweisungen zum Theologiestudium," in *Bildung und Konfession: Theologenausbildung im Zeitalter der Konfessionalisierung*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis and Markus Wriedt (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 222–225.

an excellent ability to preach and teach, and piety. Formal assessment seems to have been mostly lacking. There was some assessment of students in early Lutheranism, though not as much as in a typical North American educational institution. Students were evaluated only if they wanted to be tested for a degree, or as part of their rigorous theological interview as part of the call process. A benefit of this method is that it might allow students the time they need to immerse themselves in reading and thinking during their years of study. A disadvantage is that a student might study for years and then, at the end, fail to pass his exams either for a degree or for pastoral competency. Our current system of classes with assessment every quarter (or semester) avoids such situations.

There was also a kind of accreditation. The seventeenth-century Lutheran universities were funded by the state, and therefore representatives of the state came to the universities from time to time to conduct inspections. Sometimes inspectors found that university statutes were not being followed. There always has to be accountability and quality control in some way or the other, and early modern Lutherans knew this, too. But for the pastors, an *accredited* degree was not necessary. A man's actual theological knowledge, confession of faith, and ability to preach well were more important than where he studied or for how long.

It is also interesting to me that the theology faculties were all small: three or four regular professors, plus some adjuncts. There is no need for us in the LCMS to be ashamed of the size of our seminaries. Historically considered, our seminary faculties are large.

Some aspects of seventeenth-century German Lutheran pastoral formation may seem appealing to busy twenty-first-century pastors and professors, but different is not necessarily better. For example, being able to lecture in detail straight through a book of the Bible (as Luther did, lecturing on Genesis from 1535 to 1545), or on a theological topic, or on a part of the Book of Concord, could lead to more good books. And if the same thing has to be said to students year after year in classes, why is this not instead turned into an article or book and simply assigned as reading? On the other hand, perhaps a continuous lecture over the course of years would be boring and not useful in giving a consistent pastoral formation to all students.

So, rather than advocating wholesale adoption of the early Lutheran pastoral formation process, the ideas I find most compelling for our consideration at the present day are the following. First, we should consider rigorous competency-based pastoral formation, with varying *durations* of seminary study tailored to the individual student's abilities and prior knowledge and experience. Second, we should consider more directed reading of the Bible (cursory and accurate/painstaking). Students should be able to present an extensive portfolio of their well-arranged notes, which will serve them in their ministries. Third, seminar-format classes should sometimes use the disputation model. Somehow or the other, recovering the practice of disputation could be of great benefit. Fourth, as Gerhard says, "He who prays diligently has completed half of his studies."[84] If this is true, then maybe prayer should be made a part of the *curriculum*. For example, perhaps the course load could be reduced and students could be taught to meditate on Scripture and then be expected to do it every day, recording their insights in their well-organized exegetical and theological notes.

In a world where computer software (like ChatGPT or Bing) can generate halfway decent prose on any subject, including Lutheran theology, some of our prior practices need to change. If a chatbot can spit out bland but correct prose on theological topics, then hastily graded writing assignments are a worthless learning activity. Instead, the most valuable activities will be those in which students are guided to create something useful for their future preaching and ministering, and in which the students become deeper thinkers and more thoroughly biblical and faithful. Finally, after significant learning, guiding their development as preachers and teachers will be most important.

Faithfulness in committing our faith "to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (**2 TIM. 2:2**) is of the utmost importance. It is the duty of the whole church, but especially of the ministry, and most especially of church leaders and called theology professors. Learning from our Lutheran history on pastoral formation can give us some tips and new approaches, which, while old, may be extremely timely here and now.

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[84] Gerhard, *Method of Theological Study*, 143.

Luther's Global Sense of Mission

This article, published in German in 1969, corrects a common misunderstanding that Martin Luther lacked a sense of global mission. On the contrary, he held a bold view of mission: That the object of mission is the world.

By Paul Peters[1]
Translated by Matthew C. Harrison

Editor's Comments on "Luther's Global Sense of Mission," translated by Dr. Matthew Harrison.

The following article, published in German in 1969, has already informed missiological thinking in the United States, having previously formed the basis of Eugene Bunkowski's *Concordia Theological Quarterly* article, "Was Luther a Missionary?" (CTQ 49:2&3, 1985). While Paul Peters' article provides a defense of Martin Luther's sense of mission, there remains one area that can easily be misread.

Early in the article, Peters references Luther's distinction between public preaching and private preaching in his commentary on Psalm 82. Those who aver that Luther had no sense of global mission take his words about the apostolic mandate to infer that the reformer believed that this mandate applied only the apostles sent by Jesus. Peters' careful reading of Luther clarifies this distinction between these two kinds of preaching.

As one reads this article, it becomes clear that Luther understood "private preaching" as the responsibility of Christians to proclaim the gospel within the station of life into which God has placed them, even if that be as captives of the "Turks." What Luther is not imagining is the situation in which a given individual operates publicly outside the divine call and represents himself as called by the church. Both the first-century apostles and legitimate missionaries today have been rightly called (*rite vocatus*), the apostles immediately by Jesus Christ and those that follow mediately by the Church.

With these opening comments, the editors invite you to study this important article. Note as well Luther's foci in his Genesis lectures, as he teaches that the place and the object of mission is "the World," while the means by which the mission mandate is carried out is the Word. Thus, along with legitimate call or placement, it is the means of grace — Word and Sacraments — that are crucial to a proper global sense of mission.
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IT IS REMARKABLE that works that have been written on the history of mission have neglected a deeper treatment of Luther's understanding of mission. Luther is denied not only the act of mission, but even the idea of mission. The basis for this is twofold. First, the view is attributed to Luther that the universal mission mandate — that the Gospel be proclaimed to all creatures — applied only to the apostles. Second, the German state churches were dependent on governments that were not yet engaged in colonial politics. Thus without any protection from the authorities, no missionary work had been undertaken at that time. Roman Catholic predominance prevailed until the Spanish Armada was defeated. It is argued that it was only after 1588 that the way was clear for Protestant missions.[2] Neither of these is true.

The first assertion is based on Luther's interpretation of Psalm 82:4, where he states, "The Apostles were the first to go and preach in foreign homes because they had a mandate [*Befehl*] and were ordained, called, and sent [*verordnet, berufen und gesandt*] to preach in all places, as Christ said: 'Go into all the world, and preach to all creatures' (**MARK 16:15**). But afterwards no one had such a universal [*gemeinen*] apostolic mandate."[3]

Whoever makes the effort to read this statement in its context will immediately note that Luther distinguishes between "public preaching" and "private

[1] Paul Peters, "Luthers Weltweiter Missionssinn," Lutherischer Rundblick, XVII (1969): 162–175. Bracketed numbers [163] etc., refer to the page of the original article.
[2] See Bengt Sundkler, *The World of Mission*, trans. Eric J. Sharpe (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965), 96f.
[3] Martin Luther, *Luthers Sämmtliche Schriften*, ed. Johann Georg Walch, 23 vols. (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1880-1910), V.721. Hereafter, St. L.

preaching" [*öffentlichen Predigten* and *Winkelpredigten*]. He wants to draw the attention of the clandestine preachers to the sanctity of the call, so that each one, insofar as he is a called a preacher, has clearly defined official duties [*Amtstätigkeit*]. This was not so in the case of the apostles. They had the general call to go to "all lands," enter "foreign homes," and preach to all people. However, this does not apply to those who are called to a specific congregation [*Gemeinde*] which God has given and entrusted to them. As a demonstration of this, Luther points to 1 Peter 5:3 and Titus. With respect to 1 Peter 5:3, he bases his argument on the etymological meaning of κλήρων ("lot" [*Teile*]), whereby the apostle indicates that to each pastor [*Gemeindevorsteher*] a particular portion of Christians has been entrusted to his care [163], and thus also a defined area. Thus the apostle left Titus behind in Crete to see to the tasks which still needed attention there (**TITUS 1:5**). Here neither the apostle nor Luther demonstrated a lack of mission sense. They would simply state that wherever there is an issue of congregational work [*Gemeindearbeit*], the public call must not be outside of consideration, as had happened in the case of the clandestine preachers, the Anabaptists. Every called preacher of a congregation [*Gemeindeprediger*], whether he worked in non-Christian [*Heiden*] or Christian lands, had a clearly defined area of activity. Therefore Luther does not give the right to a preacher [*Prediger*], however pious and upright, "to preach among papists or people of a heretical parish or to teach secretly… without the pastors' [*Pfarrherrn*] knowledge and consent. For he does not have the mandate to do so."[4] But this for Luther changes nothing of the universal validity of the great mission mandate of Jesus. Indeed, Luther only made one distinction between the call of the apostles and their successors. The call of the apostles was immediate. The call of their successors is mediated. To be sure, both are divine vocations with respect to their content and authority [*Gewalt*]. Thus both the apostles and their successors have the one vocation to preach Christ, or, as Luther in his exposition of Psalm 45:15 expressed: "The apostles teach Christ, just as the prophets, the teachers, the bishops, the pastors, the ministers, who baptize, who administer the Sacrament. … So do I if I am a teacher of the Gospel, just as Paul and Peter do."[5] When Luther says Christ is preached by such an unbroken line of preachers [*Predigern*], his global understanding of mission is coming to the fore. And this all the more so, as Luther tells us repeatedly in his expositions of Old and New Testament books, because God gives to this Christ, "the Gentiles for an inheritance ... and the end of the world for His possession" (**PSALM 2:8**).

But before I present individual statements of Luther, I should make clear that ***the Reformation as such was a powerful missionary undertaking.***[6] Unfortunately, this is overlooked by those who write historical works on specific issues of world mission, as well as by those who write generally about the topic.

Luther had rediscovered the heart of the Gospel, justification by faith, and in doing so, he laid a new foundation for every impulse for mission and for every missionary endeavor. The spread of the Gospel prior to the Counter-Reformation bears witness to the mission power of the Reformation. In a short time, the Reformation spread from the North Sea to the Mediterranean, from the Balkans to Britain. But this force not only worked broadly, it also went deep.

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This very depth is rightly regarded as an additional dimension [of the Reformation]. Before the Reformation, the spread of the Gospel was only superficially successful. Many misuses had forced their way into the Divine Service. Christendom was beset by pagan religious components, particularly in countries recently conquered by the mission. Consequently, mission churches were regarded in essence as "baptized paganism." Christendom formed itself completely differently through "the holy Gospel," [164] which, as Luther could say, "broke out again."

The sermons of Luther and the Reformation preachers [*Prädikanten*] planted the Gospel deep in the hearts of believers. This was his effort "to bring the preaching office [*Predigtamt*]… once again into its rightful place [*Stand*]" and "to bring the Divine

[4] St. L. V.721f.
[5] St. L. V.465.
[6] A.G. Dickens, Professor of History at King's College, University of London presupposes this in his historical work, *Martin Luther and the Reformation*, and does not allow the missionary history of old Lutheranism to be unduly separated from the life history of Luther. See, for instance, 75.

Service [*Gottesdienst*] again into full sway [*in rechten Schwang*]." Religious instruction in church and school produced an "integration of the Gospel," the likes of which had not previously happened. As a consequence, very strong, deeply grounded congregations were brought to life. Wherever this third dimension brought reinvigoration of existing congregational life, it was the prerequisite for an ever-expanding evangelization and mission, which did full justice to Luther's global missionary sense.

We turn now to statements of Luther which bear witness to his sense of mission.

Luther's *Lectures on Genesis* demonstrate just how strong Luther's sense of mission was. Thus he finds in Enoch a man "who walked before God… as a public matter, namely that he pursued God's cause before the world, treated God's Word, taught the correct worship of God."[7] Here we encounter two expressions, "world," and "Word," which in Luther's explication play a significant role and which are key to his global sense of mission. The latter ("Word") is the means for proclamation of the joyous message, while the former (world) provides the place and object of this message. That is why Luther describes Noah going throughout "the entire world" and "having everywhere taught and exhorted true worship of God [*Gottesdienst*]."[8] No less does he describe Abraham "publicly" preaching[9] and building "a public chapel or altar" to preach "above all to his family, but also to the Canaanites who are nearby and gathered at this place," to be instructed "regarding the correct religion."[10] Completely in accord with his sense for mission, Luther adds that Abraham "did this not in secret, out of fear of pagan threat or power, but in a public place, whereby he with his [people] and his example might also bring others to the knowledge of God and the right faith."[11] God had even "driven Abraham by hunger to Egypt so that he would be useful and enlighten some [Egyptians] with the knowledge of God. … Thus God deals wondrously on earth. He sends apostles and preachers to the people before they see it coming or even think of it. Even those who are sent don't even know themselves how they come."[12] Luther also depicts Joseph saying to his brother: "You have now acknowledged God and also me. Therefore go and do this work which you have heard. What I have spoken [privately] in your ear, you must now preach on the rooftops (**MATT. 10:27**). Therefore proclaim it to my father and to his entire household and neighbors. As Christ commanded his disciples (**MARK 16:15**): 'Go into all the world, and preach the gospel etc.,' so Joseph also sends his brothers and says: 'Go tell what you have heard.'" Then he adds [165] the warning, "If we have confessed His Son Jesus Christ…, then it shall immediately follow: Go now. Do not be quiet so that you only are saved, rather [go], that other homes [*Haufe*] also may be preserved with you."[13]

Here Luther speaks not only of the evangelization and the mission of the Word. He understands that the history of the people of God, in general, is mission history. So far as the people of God are bound together with the history of the Canaanites and the Egyptians, Israel's history is global mission history. Luther even uses the great mission mandate in Mark's Gospel to demonstrate this. In light of this global mission, we can heartily assert with P.T. Forsyth, an English theologian who belongs to the Free Church, that "the entire course of history is a comprehensive mission movement."[14] Thus Luther also emphasized the promise to Abraham that in him all generations on earth would be blessed (**GEN. 12:3**): "But now follows the real promise, which one should write with golden letters and boast about and praise in all lands. For it brings and offers eternal treasures… But so this promise shall be poured out and spread among all peoples or generations on earth, as the words clearly state, so will we know of no other than of the Son of God, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who has distributed this blessing among all peoples."[15]

It is particularly the Psalms which Luther again and again uses to emphasize the global expansion of the rule of Christ and of His preaching of the Gospel. To this end, Luther speaks often of a "new kingdom," and of a "new teaching" after Moses,[16] as though Moses and the prophets had not prophesied this at all. They prophesied it, but they only prophesied. They were not yet sent out to all peoples. All Israel had to live under

[7] St. L. I.500.
[8] St. L. I.501.
[9] St. L. I.782.
[10] St. L. I.837.
[11] St. L. I.839.
[12] St. L. III.234.
[13] St. L. II.1711.
[14] P.T. Forsyth, *The Creative Theology of P.T. Forsyth, Selections from His Works*, ed. Samuel J. Mikolaski (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969), 76.
[15] St. L. I.747.
[16] St. L. V.161.

the law for a time, which "was added" (**GAL. 3:19**), and to wait for the promised kingdom. Jesus, not Moses, preached that "the kingdom is at hand" (**MARK 1:15**).

Luther's sense of mission caused him to describe this kingdom. Where he does so, the global view of his sense of mission is expressed. According to his interpretation of Psalm 8, Christ's kingdom "is established and kept in all lands, and even in heaven… only through Word and faith, without sword and armor."[17] This kingdom is "not a temporal, passing, earthly kingdom…, which man governs with laws and rights. It is a spiritual, heavenly, and eternal kingdom, that must be governed beyond all laws, rights, and external ways."[18] As such, it reveals the great mission truth "that unbelievers [*Heiden*] should become God's people without Moses' law, yes, without and beyond all law."[19] And not only this, Christ's sending also "makes it clear that because the Gentiles [*Heiden*] shall become His people, accordingly, Moses' law shall cease. [166] For Moses' law is not given to the Gentiles, and they should go to the Lord Himself and not to Moses, and become the Lord's people, not Moses' people, that He dwell with them together with the Jews."[20]

Here we sense very strongly how Luther's sense of mission is borne from his deep understanding of this "right form of doctrine," as he once called it. "This knowledge of salvation …" according to Psalm 19:4, "will be spoken by the heavens, by the day and the night … in the language of all peoples and in all lands … This was fulfilled when the apostles proclaimed the great deeds of God in many different languages, and it will yet be fulfilled in the entire world, because the Gospel, which through the apostles was spread abroad in many different languages, still resounds in the same languages until the end of the world."[21]

Although Luther, with the Psalmist, foresees so clearly the spread of the Gospel through all the world, still he does not overlook that "the cross immediately follows" the preaching of the Word. For "the devil opposes the Word with the wise, powerful, holy, and hypocrites, and everything which is high and mighty in the world."[22] In addition comes "the ingratitude of the people, the contempt and despising of the Word. In short, there is nothing but misfortune before the eyes."[23] But no matter how difficult it is for us "to freely praise mercy openly without fear … For it is boldness beyond all boldness, virtue beyond all virtue, bravery beyond all bravery when a person understands that he is to publicly speak of the Name of the Lord and thank Him."[24] There are "all sorts of reasons which close the lips. Sometimes it's fear of danger. Sometimes the hope of gain. Often even the advice of friends prevents it. This all makes it completely clear why the Psalmist (**PSALM 51:17**) says, 'Lord open my lips and grant me courage to clearly proclaim, teach, and lead others in the ways which I have learned that you alone be praised and glorified for all eternity. For you have justified the godless freely by grace.'"[25] So Luther encourages us to continue in the work of the mission as one who has "also often experienced something of how great it is that one dare to speak of what one has experienced."

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But furthermore, it belongs to Luther's sense of mission that he says the Holy Spirit foresees that public preaching "bears witness to great weakness." And so the Holy Spirit "consoles the church and says: 'I will grant your preaching about me good fortune and prosperity, that the best part of the world shall accept it. Although the whole world fights against the Gospel … yet some of the nobility, kings, princes, and great men of the world shall bind themselves together with you and accept the Word.' For God will have His tithe out of the great multitude of kingdoms and people. … God always converts some people through this doctrine of faith against all [worldly] thought and opinions. Thus the church is increased and there are always some who remain steadfast and shed their blood for this doctrine."[26]

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[17] St. L. V.192.
[18] St. L. V.1144.
[19] St. L. V.1154.
[20] St. L. XIV.1821.
[21] St. L. IV.7133.
[22] St. L. V.362.
[23] St. L. V.369.
[24] St. L. V.595.
[25] St. L. V.596.
[26] St. L. V.458f.

[167] But the most important thing for Luther is this: that God will always create a place where the Word can be taught. Luther's sense of mission recognizes no limit for this. For the Lord of the Church will "have the kingdom not merely among the Jewish people, but upon the entire earth, throughout the whole world." Christ "will have His baptismal font, His pulpit, from which He teaches, His apostles and teachers in cities and towns, though it be only one or two that are there who believe. So the Name of Christ remains. So, too, the altar upon which the Sacrament is administered. And they will not only be spread far and wide, but endure, so that Christ and His name be found in every corner throughout the world."[27] Therefore Luther declares that "also among the Turks there are people who have faith in Christ and Baptism." Also, "there have always been under the papacy some believers. And they are still there. We do not know whom God preserves through the Word and the Sacraments, no matter how unhappy the devil and the pope are about it."[28] Or "cannot Christ be there because the Turk or the Scythian has temporal rule?" Luther warns us, "Don't draw too narrowly the inheritance of Christ. … For who among us could otherwise know which are Christians in truth? There are also among us very many wicked people, and few who are good. The power [*auctoritas*] of the divine Word is greater than we can grasp. How much greater is it than our imagination and our preconceptions which deal with the appearance of external matters?"[29]

Luther's warning "not to draw the inheritance of Christ too narrowly," brings us to the realization that "with God there is no respect of persons," as Luther emphasizes in his explication of the Book of Jonah. Therefore "we should judge no one, nor doubt any man."[30] Jonah was mistaken that Nineveh meant nothing to God and that there was no chance it would obtain grace. But the grace of God became manifest precisely in Nineveh. Contrary to Jonah's expectation, the people of Nineveh were the first to accept the Word of God. Jonah had to learn from God not to "limit place, goal, time, measure, person, or merit to God's grace."[31]

Luther's sense of mission also comes into play where he insists that the number of preachers of the Gospel may not be limited. Their number should much rather increase. In view of the many vacancies in the Saxon church and in all of Germany, in view of the small number of students in the schools and the crucial decrease in the number of students even in Wittenberg, Luther wrote the sermon, "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School."[32] He points out how necessary it is to form more pastors and teachers and, for this reason, to promote schools for boys and universities. We have every reason to take heed to these words of Luther. Our churches suffer under the lack of pastors and teachers and, above all, missionaries, while there are plenty of opportunities to plant [*ins Leben zu rufen*] mission congregations at home and abroad.

[168] On the basis of Psalm 68:12, which Luther translated: "The Lord gives the Word with a great host of evangelists," he says to us: "Here God says that He will give real evangelists. … That has happened in all the world through the apostles and their successors. For He has given many, sent to all lands, as is appropriate in the time of grace."[33] Here Luther speaks not only of apostles, but also of their successors. But in the next verse, which references "kings of this army," he understands only the apostles, "who have converted all the world, each in his own place having brought his army to Christ. These same kings are united … have preached the same thing, namely the faith as the gospel gives. … Thereby they have also produced so much fruit and converted the world, that after them no one has done so much."[34]

How could Luther say that the apostles "converted the whole world"? Does he intend to say that the apostles converted the entire world as we know it today? There have been theologians who believed this. They even assumed that already in the time of the apostles the Gospel was transplanted to our Western continent. This, however, is not Luther's meaning. We learn from his explication of Mark 16:14–20 that "the apostles did not reach the whole world. For there is no apostle who came to us."[35] And since America was discovered precisely in his time, he is in no doubt that "many

[27] St. L. V.468.
[28] St. L. VI.279.
[29] St. L. VI.279.
[30] St. L. XIV.855.
[31] St. L. XIV.856.
[32] St. L. X.417. "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School, 1530, AE 46:207–258; also WA 30 II,517–588 and St. L. X.416–459.
[33] St. L. V.667.
[34] St. L. V.668.
[35] St. L. XI.950.

islands have been found in our time where there are unbelievers, and no one has preached to them."[36] His answer is found in his explication of this psalm, that, according to David's words, in the future, the grace of God would be preached everywhere… that His kingdom will be extended under all the heavens…, that Christ would rule and govern in all lands, where they believe in Him, and that the holy Christian Church would be spread over the entire world."[37] Here Luther spoke of the future, without limiting the preaching of the grace of God to the time of the apostles. Rather, the "word of the Gospel [would] be preached by the apostles" and run its course "in the entire world, and … forever."[38]

In an Ascension sermon, Luther tells us how he would have this understood: "Their preaching has gone out into all lands, although it has not yet reached the whole world. This going forth has begun and commenced, although it is not yet complete and fulfilled. But it will be preached farther and more broadly until the last day. When this preaching has been proclaimed and heard in all the world, then the message shall be complete and everywhere established. Then the last day will come."[39] Luther illustrates this with an image. The continuous progression of the message is "like a stone thrown into the water. It makes waves, circles, and ripples, and the waves press further and further. One drives the other until they come to shore." Or Luther compares the message with "the message of the emperor, which is sent to Nürnberg or to the Turk, though it has not yet arrived. Thus it is with the preaching of the apostles."[40] "And so it has now come to us who live at the end the world. For we are right near the sea."[41]

Luther often contrasts this spreading of the Gospel with the proclamation of the Law in the Old Testament. While the Old Testament Law and the preaching of the prophets did not extend to the whole world and had not been preached to all creatures, but only to the Jews in their synagogues, the Gospel will not be so limited. It will be free to go out to the entire world. If it is preached to all creatures, there will be no little corner which it hasn't reached before the Last Day. So Luther, in his explication of Psalm 2, has God address His king with the words: "Before You come as king on earth, one person alone praises and thanks You in the small, narrow corners of the Jewish land and at Jerusalem. But after Your advent another will ring out, sing praise, and give thanks. Not in a narrow corner, in the Jewish land only, but in all lands of the entire world, as vast as the heaven is."[42]

Thus according to Luther, mission work is finally Christ's work, and therefore God's. For the apostles have "not produced their own preaching of themselves but received it through the obvious sending and mandate of the Holy Spirit, and preached it to the world."[43] God has "established such a regiment that He Himself leads and drives it, that it goes as it should go. … For what a person is to do through another or through a command is never done right. But what the Lord Himself does, that goes and stands; that means it's done. There one must say: It is God's work. Previously, He sent Moses and others and ordered and commanded much that should be done. Yet nothing was done. Therefore I will finally come Myself and do it Myself."[44]

"When this preaching has been proclaimed and heard in all the world, then the message shall be complete and everywhere established. Then the last day will come."

We all need such words of encouragement whenever we ask ourselves whether the Christian church in our "modern" world still has a future. A repeated treatment of Luther's explanation of the Third Article and the Second Petition is very appropriate, in order to become familiar with his trust in God's own work as that which is essential in his sense of mission. According to Luther's explanation of the Third Article, the Holy Spirit "calls and gathers the whole Christian Church on earth and preserves it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith." Where Luther, in his explanation, refers to the church, it is always "all Christianity on

[36] St. L. XI.954.
[37] St. L. V.1335.
[38] St. L. V.969.
[39] St. L. XI.951.
[40] St. L. XI.995.
[41] St. L. XI.955.
[42] St. L. V.192.
[43] St. L. V.971f.
[44] St. L. V.969f.

earth." According to his Large Catechism, the church is "a particular community [*Gemeine*] in the world, which is the mother that begets and bears every Christian through the Word of God, which He reveals and drives [*treibet*], enlightens, and inflames hearts, that they lay hold of it, receive it, hold on to it, and remain with it."[45] For Luther, the church is "on earth," "in the world." [170] It is not limited to one land or people. It is God Himself who, through the gift of the Holy Spirit, advances His work among all peoples and calls and gathers all believers. Here Luther points to the global mission work of the Holy Spirit, or of the Triune God. He emphasizes this particularly through his explanation of the Third Article in both catechisms. Nothing testifies so clearly to Luther's global sense of mission than his explanation of this article.

The same can be said of his explanation of the Second Petition in the Large Catechism. There Luther prays not only that we, who have received the Word of God, "remain and daily receive it, but that it win an opportunity and following and proceed powerfully through the world so that many come to the kingdom of grace, become partakers of redemption, brought by the Holy Spirit so that we may all live in one kingdom beginning now and forever remain."[46]

This prayer not only testifies to Luther's sense of mission in general, but — very pointedly — to his understanding of the ***obligation to mission***. The Lord Himself has taught us this prayer. Here the question is raised which we today must answer: Does our sense of mission continue to urge us to pray the Second Petition and "pray the Lord of the harvest that He send workers" (**MATT. 9:38**)?

Furthermore, we have to consider Luther's answer to the question of how the kingdom of Christ comes to us. His answer is twofold: "On the one hand, here in time through the Word and faith, and on the other, through revelation."[47] This answer brings him to add — and this again expresses his sense of mission — "Now we pray both that it come to those who are not in the kingdom, and to ourselves, upon whom it has come, through daily reception and, in the future, to eternal life."[48] The words "that it come to those who are not yet in the kingdom," must always be added to Luther's explication of the Second Petition in his Small Catechism, so that it says clearly, "We pray in this petition that it come to us also" and "to those who are not yet in the kingdom." Then Luther proceeds to pray in the Large Catechism, "Dear Father, we pray, first of all, give us Your Word, that the Gospel be preached rightly throughout the world. Second, that it also be received through faith, and that it live and work in us."[49] And where Luther says the kingdom of God comes to us — "eternally through revelation," until "the devil's kingdom… is finally destroyed, sin, death, and hell consumed, that we live eternally in complete righteousness and blessedness"[50] — he states what he already had said in his explanation of the Third Article in the Large Catechism: "But the Holy Spirit advances [*treibt]* His work without ceasing until [170] the Last Day. To this end, He ordained [*verordnet*] a community [*Gemeine*] through which He speaks and does everything."[51] Thus Luther never presented the mission activity of the Holy Spirit, which He advances through His church and which lasts until the last day, in any other way.

The citations from Luther thus far have sufficiently demonstrated what a broad understanding the reformer had for the spread of the Gospel into all the world. It now remains to demonstrate that he put his understanding of mission into practice and that his contribution to world mission is not insignificant.

II

Luther himself spoke of his mission activity [*Missionstätigkeit*] when he was reminded that he, though only a preacher in Wittenberg, still taught in all the world with his writings, and thus went beyond the boundary which his call to a congregation [*Gemeindeberuf*] placed on him. He responded that as a "Doctor of the Holy Scriptures… by papal and imperial mandate… according to his sworn office he had the duty to interpret the Scriptures before the whole world and to teach everyone."[52] Here it becomes clear how Luther and his contemporaries viewed his writings as a means of global mission activity. He views the task of writing as "a divine office and work" [*göttlich Amt und Werk*],

[45] LC, Creed III, 42.
[46] LC, Lord's Prayer, Second Petition, 52.
[47] LC Second Petition, 53.
[48] LC Second Petition, 53.
[49] LC Second Petition, 54.
[50] LC Second Petition, 54.
[51] LC Third Article, 61.
[52] St. L. V.723.

though "many… do not see how necessary and useful it is to the world." That is why Luther finds it appropriate to praise his work as a writer. For where the scribe [abandons his calling], or where, as Luther says, "the theologians turn away [i.e. give up the vocation], then God's Word turns away and we remain vain heathen."[53] In short, Luther's writing is to be understood as global mission work.

This should be obvious to anyone who considers the far-reaching impact Luther's Bible translation achieved. His literary activity culminated in his work as a hermeneutician. Thanks to his translation of the Bible, what the apostle Paul had longed for was suddenly fulfilled, "that the word of the Lord may run, and be glorified" (**2 THESS. 3:1**), that it "spread out swiftly and be manifest in its glory." This was realized not only in Germany and in the diaspora, but wherever translations of the Bible were produced in all European countries and languages based on Luther's translation.[54]

The influence of Luther's many and various other writings Luther should also be made clear. There are at least 350 published works (not to mention his 3000 letters directed to people in all the world [*in aller Welt gerichteten Briefen*]). Above all others, his Large and Small Catechisms are the most significant mission writings. By these, he first introduced basic religious instruction into church and school, "an instruction by which one" — according to his own words — "teaches and instructs the pagans [*Heiden*], despised by us who want to be Christians, regarding what they believe, do, leave undone, and should know in Christianity."[55] Then we must mention his *Church Postils* and *House Postils*, which were read by emergency preachers [*Notpredigern*] [171] to many churchgoers and were avidly read as devotional literature in countless Christian homes. With these two postils, Luther reestablished the preaching office [*Predigtamt*] and brought both public worship and home devotion to their proper places and forms [*und den öffentlichen wie den Hausgottesdienst in sein Recht gebracht*]. The missionary influence this had on the church in the following centuries both at home and abroad cannot be overlooked. We'll just mention Johannes von Walter [1876–1940], who in his "History of Christendom", points out that Luther's "sermons as devotional literature still touch the hearts of countless Protestants today."[56]

Thirdly, we should mention Luther's many pamphlets, which served to teach and edify and which represented a new form of missionary influence. They were carried by many colporteurs and missionaries[57] to families in town and country and read by young and old. They were also taken abroad by missionaries and translated into the language of each respective country.

Finally, we must not fail to mention Luther's 37 hymns, by which he invited churchgoers — indeed, taught them in a completely new way — to participate in worship, one that was unthinkable prior to the Reformation. We find a mission hymn based on Psalm 67, about eternal salvation and songs of thanksgiving echoing among all nations and peoples. Likewise, in Luther's hymn "*Es wolle Gott uns gnädig sein*" ["May God Bestow on Us His Grace"], the nations and all the world sing:

> *So danken Gott und loben dich*
> *Die Heiden überalle,*
> *Und alle Welt, die freue sich*
> *Und sing mit großem Schalle,*
> *Daß du auf Erden Richter bist*
> *Und läßt die Sünd nicht walten;*
> *Dein Wort die Hut und Weide ist,*
> *Die alles Volk erhalten,*
> *In rechter Bahn zu wallen.*[58]

> *Thine over all shall be the praise*
> *And thanks of every nation;*
> *And all the world with joy shall raise,*
> *The voice of exaltation.*
> *For Thou shalt judge the earth, O Lord,*
> *Nor suffer sin to flourish;*
> *Thy people's pasture is Thy Word*
> *Their souls to feed and nourish.*
> *Now let our hearts say, "Amen!"* (*LSB* 823:2)

The final verse in Luther's hymn "Christians One and All Rejoice" [*Nun freut euch, lieben Christen gemein*], reminds us of the words of the great mission

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[53] St. L. X.453.

[54] [Consider, for instance, that Luther's Bible translation had tremendous influence also on the King James Bible. MH]

[55] St. L. X.230.

[56] Johannes von Walter, *Die Geschichte des Christentums*, 2nd ed., 2 vol. (Gütersloh: 1932–1939) 2:221.

[57] Here we follow A.G. Dickens, op. cit., 75, who in this connection and elsewhere repeatedly and quite understandably speaks of "missionaries."

[58] Gareis in his history of evangelical mission to the gentiles [*Geschichte der evangelischen Heidenmission*] asserts that Luther is only referring to "pagans" in the "pagan Christian church" in the hymns. But Luther mentions "all people" in this verse. See Werner Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism*, trans. Walter A. Hansen (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), 386–89.

mandate of Christ in Matthew 28:19: "And teach them to retain everything that I have commanded you" [*Und lehret sie halten alles, was ich euch befohlen habe*]. The last verse of the hymn clearly states, "What I have done and taught, that shall you do and teach, thereby the kingdom of God will be increased to His praise and glory"[59] [*Was ich getan hab und gelehrt, das sollst du tun und lehren, damit das Reich Gottes werd gemehrt zu Lob und seinen Ehren*]. "You" means every Christian. Luther's Reformation placed congregational song alongside the choir and thus broke the dominance of a one-sided liturgy in a language foreign to the people, with the result that a rich hymnic flood flowed in house, school, and church. An unconquerable spiritual font had been opened, and it poured fourth unceasingly into the hearts and lives of the people.

But Luther's mission activity was not exhausted in his writing. His sermons and lectures also had a significant missionary influence, reverberating among numerous preachers who sat below his pulpit and at his feet. No fewer than 16,000 students of theology matriculated at the University of Wittenberg alone between 1520 and 1560. This institution, like no other, formed missionaries for home and abroad. The Wittenberg matriculation log demonstrates that a third of the students came from foreign countries. Thus at least [173] 5,000 missionaries spread Luther's doctrine abroad, as they had learned it from his sermons and lectures and from those of his successors. What Luther said in one sermon proved true: "And so it goes with the sermon, too." Then follows the passage already cited comparing [preaching] with a stone, cast into the water, and causing many circular ripples round it. Or, to say with Elert, the evangelical sermon was not "bound to place" [*ortsgebunden*]. It was in Luther's sense of mission always a sermon borne from place to place, as Isaiah already demonstrated when he compared the Word of the Gospel to a flood (**ISAIAH 35:6**). On the basis of this passage, Luther says, "The prophet by this image shows that the Word will be preached more richly and spread ever further and further. And from the church, which is in one place, the Word will create many others."[60]

This confidence of Luther in "the unending dynamic of the Gospel" and in the corresponding "movement of the church" ***turned his attention to the non-Christian peoples with whom he came into contact.*** We must not immediately think of people overseas but, rather, of the Jews in Germany and the Turks in the Balkans. With the former, Luther was naturally personally concerned. The fact that at the beginning of his public activity he thought about the conversion of the Jews testifies to an energetic sense of mission. His confidence in the Gospel as the power unto salvation [**ROM. 1:16**] awakened in him the faith "that many Jews would be converted, if they heard our preaching and the interpretation of the Old Testament."[61] He even gives advice on how one could bring a Jewish person to Christ, [in such a way that he] would not be poisoned or hardened [against Christ]."[62] And in one document, dedicated "to the discerning Jesel, Jew at Rossheim, my good friend," he shares this about a "little book" that he intends to write "if God gives him space and time." He hopes that he might "win some from their paternal line of the holy patriarchs and prophets and bring them to their promised Messiah." He concludes the document with the assurance that he "wanted to do what is best for the Jews … for the sake of the crucified Jew, whom no one shall take from me."[63] Luther was still looking for the conversion of the Jews when this letter was written in 1537, though he had already long before experienced how very much misunderstood his love was, and that his "favor" was used for obduracy. It was Luther who said, "We love the Jews."[64] All of this is sufficient evidence of Luther's desire to bring about the conversion of the Jews, and of the measures he took to achieve that end.

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Luther's attention turned ever and again to the warlike Turks, who threatened the continued existence of Germany. First he turned against them in his

[59] The English translation used in *LSB* 556:10 does not completely reflect the mission emphasis of Luther's original. "What I on earth have done and taught / Guide all your life and teaching; / So shall the kingdom's work be wrought / And honored in your preaching."
[60] St. L. VI.427.
[61] St. L. XII.1574.
[62] St. L. XIX.1014.
[63] St. L. XX.1826.
[64] St. L. XXII.1584.

polemical writings, "On the War against the Turks,"[65] his "Sermon to Soldiers fighting the Turks,"[66] and his "Admonition to Prayer against the Turks."[67] But it should be noted that he does not preach the crusade. The sword does not serve the kingdom of Christ but the temporal kingdom of the left, to which one has to prove complete fidelity as one must observe the regulations of an inn [*Herbergsordnung*]. Despite the polemical nature of these writings, they never fail to think of mission activity among the Muslims, even as the latter threaten the kingdom. First, he addressed the men and women who were about to be captured by the Turks. In captivity, they should diligently and faithfully serve their lords, in order "to adorn and beautify the Gospel and the Name of Christ… and perhaps convert many."[68] By so emphasizing the conversion of many Turks, he had already begun to put into practice his sense of mission. But he emphasized not only potential prisoners of war. ***All*** who find themselves in the midst of an unbelieving people [*heidnischen Volkes*], that is, within a "true mission region," not only have the right and the authority [*Recht und die Gewalt*] to teach the Word of God, but are obliged to do so, at the risk of their salvation and the grace of God. This duty belongs to all believers. In doing so, the Christian should "bear much fruit through the Word among all unbelievers [*Heiden*], convert many and save them…, and create space for the Gospel and the kingdom of Christ everywhere."[69]

The emphasis Luther placed on the mission to unbelievers [*Heidenmission*] among the Turks was a seed which began to sprout soon after his death. Elert points us to Primus Truber (1506–1586) and Baron Ungnad von Sonegg (1493–1564), who from Württemberg conceived of a mission not only among the southern Slavs but also among the Turks. The resulting translation of the Slovenian New Testament into Glagolitic[70] by Stefan, consul from Ingnentia, led in 1559 to an opinion of a collegium of clergy and secular experts, which states, "By this translation it is hoped that the orthodox Christian religion and the true wholesome Gospel be promoted throughout Turkey to sanctify the hearts and minds of the Turks and, with time, our Lord Jesus Christ be spread abroad in Turkey."[71] But this did not remain only an opinion.

In 1561 Baron Hans von Ungnad [1493–1564] directed "a plea to the German princes for help to bring the pure doctrine of the divine Word also to Turkey."[72] Elector August of Saxony [1526–1586], Duke Christoph of Württemberg [1515–1568], and others answered this call and made significant contributions to the printer Ambrosius Frölich in Vienna and also to the preacher Gregor Vlahovic [1523–1581].[73] Duke Ludwig of Württemberg [1554–1593] in 1583 sent the Master Valentin Von Cless [1561–1634] from Knittlingen to Morocco, to learn Arabic and the Muslim religion so that "by this our saving religion may be propagated among these barbaric people."[74] With justification, Elert says, "Even if no significant results were achieved, it should not be contested that Lutheranism of the sixteenth century made a determined attempt to turn Luther's mission concepts into action."[75]

The Scandinavian princes also followed the good example of Luther. Gustav Vasa (1496–1560), who had Laurentius Andreae [1470–1552] translate the New Testament, took up the mission to the Laps. His first missionary [*Sendbote*; sent 1526] was the brother [Prior] Benedictus [175] Petri from the cloister Vadstena. And other missionaries followed him, working tirelessly to "establish parishes." These "missions to unbelievers," as Elert remarks, "were not Reformation. They were mission, properly so called."[76]

Even if these first Lutheran missions brought no great results, they nevertheless provided a good example for later Lutheran missions. It was in the previous [nineteenth] century, according to Elert, that "the final breakthrough of the mission thought of Luther came about in the portion of Christianity which is named for him." All the more do we today as members of faithful Lutheran churches — as successors of the

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[65] [*Vom Krieg wider die Türken*, 1528, WA 30.2, 107–148. MH]
[66] [*Heerpredigt wider den Türken*, 1530, WA 30.2, 160–197. MH]
[67] [*Vermahnung zum Geget wider den Türken*, 1541, WA 51.585–625. MH]
[68] St. L. XX.2191.
[69] See Elert, 389, cited according to WA 23.645.30.
[70] [Oldest known Slavic alphabet created in the Ninth century by St. Cyril. MH]
[71] Elert, 394.
[72] Elert, 394.
[73] [Preacher in Möttling beginning in 1559. MH]
[74] Elert, 348.
[75] Elert, 354.
[76] Elert, 347. The author, Prof. Dr. Paul Peters, notes that it was not worth going into the article in volume 3 of Karl Holl's collected works. He did not have access to the other newer publications (Hermann Dörries, "*Luther und die Heidenpredigt*," in *Mission und Theology*, Franz Wiehe, 1953, 61-77; Walther Ruf, 20-41, with extensive references). Readers wishing to pursue the subject further are hereby advised.

nineteenth century — make Luther's global sense of mission our own.

Where our Lutheran fathers failed in this mission — and they failed often — we don't need to judge them. Rather, we ask ourselves to what extent we have lacked such mission sense in the past and present. Where this has been the case, we shall confess, repent, and bear the fruit of repentance. Let the understanding and will for global mission grow. And so far as the Lord of the church gives us strength, let us put this sense and will into action — both at home and abroad.

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