

Concordia Theological Quarterly



Volume 80:3-4

July/October 2016

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Forty Years after Seminex: Reflections on Social and Theological Factors Leading to the Walkout Lawrence R. Rast Jr. | 195 |
| <i>Satis est</i>: AC VII as the Hermeneutical Key to the Augsburg Confession Albert B. Collver | 217 |
| Slaves to God, Slaves to One Another: Testing an Idea Biblically John G. Nordling | 231 |
| Waiting and Waiters: Isaiah 30:18 in Light of the Motif of Human Waiting in Isaiah 8 and 25 Ryan M. Tietz | 251 |
| Michael as Christ in the Lutheran Exegetical Tradition: An Analysis Christian A. Preus | 257 |
| Justification: Set Up Where It Ought Not to Be David P. Scaer | 269 |
| Culture and the Vocation of the Theologian Roland Ziegler | 287 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| American Lutherans and the Problem of Pre-World War II Germany | |
| John P. Hellwege, Jr..... | 309 |
| Research Notes | 333 |
| The <i>Gospel of Jesus' Wife</i> : An Obituary for a Forgery | |
| Apology of the Augsburg Confession Comparison Chart | |
| Theological Observer | 341 |
| Lutherans and the Lure of Eastern Orthodoxy | |
| Showing the Mercy of Christ as a Deaconess | |
| David's Son | |
| Book Reviews | 365 |
| Books Received | 379 |
| Indices for Volume 80 | 381 |

Theological Observer

Lutherans and the Lure of Eastern Orthodoxy

The narrative has become all too familiar: a young man discovers the treasures of the Lutheran Church. He comes to delight in her doctrine and her practice, to exult in the power, the beauty, the antiquity, the genuine catholicity of her liturgy, to rejoice in the objective certainty of salvation that comes through the Sacraments, bolstered by the knowledge that the men who minister to him in the stead of Christ have in fact been divinely appointed to the task. His passion for that which is best in the Lutheran Church drives him to seminary, where his appreciation is only deepened. And yet, the more he learns, the more doubts arise. Is the Lutheran liturgy as ancient and catholic as it could be? Is it not possible that Luther and his colleagues carried their reforming program too far? Could it not be that the legitimacy and objective certainty of the Office of the Holy Ministry depends upon more than just the Word of God and the call issued by means of a fallible, sinful congregation?

These doubts, however, are set aside for the time being. Our young man has been trained for the Office of the Holy Ministry and receives a call to serve Christ's sheep in a particular congregation. He brings to his flock an eagerness to put the best of the Lutheran heritage into practice, but finds steadfast resistance from those under his charge, from some of his fellow pastors, and seemingly from the Synod at large. It seems that however lovely the ideal of Lutheranism may be, that ideal never finds concrete expression in a real community of believers. His doubts from before return with redoubled force.

In his desperation, he casts his eyes upon the Eastern Orthodox Church (hereafter "the Orthodox" or "the Orthodox Church"). Here surely is the genuine Church of the Apostles. Here is a community that continues to embrace her heritage in its fullness. Here are the faithful who still worship according to the ancient forms. Here there are no "worship wars." Here the holy and ecumenical synods are upheld in their entirety. In a way, the Orthodox seem more Lutheran than the Lutherans.

Of course, the Orthodox have their problems. For one thing, they deny the doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith alone. But do they really? Are they not just laying a slightly different emphasis than Lutherans are wont to do? In fact, does not the more ancient Greek East

approach the question of salvation from an entirely different perspective than the more recent and corrupt Latin West?

The Orthodox administer the Lord's Supper to infants, who are incapable of examining themselves, which St. Paul lays down as a requirement for a worthy communion (1 Cor. 11:28–29). But has the Lutheran Church really understood St. Paul aright? Is not faith the only criterion for a worthy communion, and do not baptized infants possess such faith? And does not John 6 make bodily reception of the Sacrament a requirement for salvation? How can the Lutheran Church deny salvation to infants by withholding from them the body and blood of the Savior in whom they trust?

The Orthodox pray to the saints, particularly to Mary. But is that really so bad? After all, their prayers do not necessarily constitute worship. They are simply asking fellow Christians to pray for them, and surely the fellowship that exists within the communion of saints cannot be broken by death. And ought we not to honor the very Mother of God? By singing her praises, are we not really extolling him whom she bore?

As the teaching of the Orthodox Church comes to seem reconcilable with Lutheranism, the thought begins to develop: can I not leave the Lutheran Church and, without apostatizing from the true Church, join myself to the ancient and apostolic Orthodox Church? I will not have to sacrifice anything that I love about Lutheranism, but I will gain so much. There I will not have to rely on such a shaky foundation as the written Word of God, which, after all, is open to interpretation. Rather than being required to demonstrate to my people the benefits of the historic, liturgical worship of their church, I can simply require them to accept what the Church has practiced for centuries. Rather than rely on the Words of Institution, I can trust that through the apostolic succession I have received power from on high to consecrate the bread and wine and call down the Holy Spirit to change the earthly elements into Jesus' body and blood. Rather than wait for my children to reach the age when they are capable of learning doctrinal formulae, even from infancy I can give them the medicine of immortality.

Eventually, rather than viewing Orthodoxy as reconcilable with Lutheranism, our young man begins to view Orthodoxy as upholding the truth over against Lutheran error. Finally, after a few years in a Lutheran parish, he announces his intention to be received into the Orthodox Church. The devastation wrought upon the affected congregation can take years to heal, and the man's departure can have a pronounced demoral-

izing effect upon his brother pastors, but his personal journey is complete. He is finally home in the arms of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

The number of pastors in the Missouri Synod who have gone this route is not very high. Nevertheless, cases of our pastors leaving for the Orthodox Church have occurred. This raises the question of what more we could have done and taught to help these pastors remain faithful to their ordination vows.

I write this from the perspective of a Lutheran pastor who is willing to stake his eternal salvation on that which is publicly confessed in the Book of Concord. I also write with great affection for the Orthodox Church. I myself was raised Greek Orthodox by a mother who continues to be a faithful member of that church. I have heard many edifying sermons preached from Orthodox pulpits that I am convinced are capable of saving their hearers. Such preaching, however, is not what draws Lutheran pastors to Orthodoxy. I fear that those who knowingly forsake the clarity of the Lutheran confession for Orthodoxy cannot do so without denying the truth. I write this as an appeal to hold fast the confession that we have received on the basis of Scripture alone, and as an encouragement that, whatever the problems with our fellowship, one need not forsake the Lutheran Church in order to be in the one Church of Christ.

I. A Brief Overview of the Orthodox Church

The history and theology of the Orthodox Church will already be quite familiar to many readers of this essay, and I cannot do it justice in an article of this scope. Still, to tackle the problem of Lutheran temptations to Orthodoxy, some background is in order. I will here attempt a brief and grossly over-simplified sketch of the Orthodox Church in the hope that the claims I make further on may thereby be better understood.

Institutionally, if not doctrinally, the Orthodox can rightly claim to trace their church back to the apostles. Never has the Orthodox Church broken off from a more ancient tradition. The mutual split between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic communions, conventionally dated AD 1054, was more an instance of two equals going their separate ways than of one party splitting off from the other. Of course, institutional continuity does not necessarily entail continuity in doctrine. Still, the Orthodox pedigree should be taken seriously as far as it goes.

During the apostolic generation, to which the Orthodox Church can trace her institutional roots, Christianity pierced deeply into the heart of

the Roman Empire, both the Greek-speaking East and the Latin-speaking West. The Empire was an urban culture, and so Christianity began as an urban religion, particularly since the synagogues where the apostles first preached the Gospel as they entered a new region were all located in the cities. Though in the Scriptures there are no strict gradations within the clergy, the terms “elder/presbyter” and “overseer/bishop” being interchangeable, within the post-apostolic generation a model developed according to which the bishop would be the head of a given urban center, while the presbyters who led the congregations in the city and the surrounding country would be subject to his authority. As this hierarchical structure crystalized, rivalries developed between the bishops of the most prominent cities as they vied for preeminence. The chief rivalry was that between Rome in the Latin West and Constantinople in the Greek East. Though the Roman see could claim, based on tradition, to have been founded by the apostles, while Constantinople could not, realistically the rivalry was based upon the secular importance of those cities, though religious importance served a rhetorical function. Constantinople’s claim to be the “new Rome,” founded by the Christian emperor Constantine, was a direct challenge to the authority of “old Rome,” founded by pagans.

Tensions between the pope in Rome and the patriarch in Constantinople were exacerbated by the cultural rift that was growing between East and West. The language barrier between Latin and Greek speakers made communication and mutual understanding difficult, particularly in matters as delicate and precise as theological discourse. Furthermore, while the Latin Church struggled to survive in the midst of barbarian onslaughts and a decaying secular regime, the Greek Church played host to innumerable doctrinal controversies as heresies arose one after another. The theological stagnation that characterized the West, and that was largely responsible for allowing the pope to serve as the standard of orthodoxy in Eastern controversies, stood in stark contrast to the theological vitality of the East. The East produced Athanasius, Gregory Nazianzen, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, and countless other fathers of great theological brilliance; the West produced Augustine and a few others.

With the fall of the Western Roman secular regime and the rise of the papacy as a secular power, coupled with the Islamic invasions in the East, tensions between Roman pope and Constantinopolitan patriarch increased to the breaking point. In AD 1054, a papal legate to Constantinople placed a bull of excommunication upon the altar of the Hagia Sophia. The response of the excommunicated patriarch was to retaliate with an

excommunication of his own. The "Great Schism" thus initiated was never healed, and communication between the Greek East and the Latin West effectively ceased. The crusades, which included the shameful sack of Constantinople by Western armies, did nothing to help the situation.

To make matters worse, during the century before the Reformation an iron curtain descended upon Europe: Constantinople, and with it the remnants of the once glorious Byzantine Empire, fell to the Turks. By the time of the Lutheran Reformation, the Greek Church had taken on an almost mythical quality. The Greeks were assumed to be the pure, ancient church, free of the abuses that characterized the kingdom of Antichrist in the West. In fact, in a few instances, the Lutheran Confessions used the example of the Greek Church to prove their points against their Roman opponents. When the patriarch of Constantinople sent a representative to Wittenberg, the Reformers were eager to open communication. Philipp Melancthon prepared a Greek translation of the Augsburg Confession, which was sent off to Constantinople in the hope that the Greek Church might embrace the Lutheran faith. Unfortunately, it seems that the document never reached its destination, and the patriarch, who may have been sympathetic to the Reformation, was deposed due to financial irregularities in his administration.

Communication between the Lutherans and the Greek Church was successfully established in the next generation, when some of the men behind the Formula of Concord initiated a theological correspondence with Patriarch Jeremiah II of Constantinople. Two things became clear as a result of this correspondence. First, the Greek Church was not what the Lutherans had hoped it would be. It was fundamentally works-righteous, and was endlessly concerned with minutiae in externals. Second, argument on theological points was effectively impossible because of the authorities involved. The Lutherans insisted upon arguing from Scripture alone, with support from the Church Fathers as read in their original context, while the patriarch insisted upon the authority of the Fathers *as understood by the Church*. The Lutherans and the Greeks went their separate ways.

In the centuries following, both churches experienced their own upheavals. The Lutherans suffered greatly in the Thirty Years' War, and their church was devastated by Pietism and Rationalism. The Orthodox flourished with their center in Moscow until a new iron curtain descended in the form of the militantly atheistic Communist regime. Particularly in the United States, the embattled churches found themselves in similar circumstances. Both were immigrant churches, and both were underdogs

to the dominant mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic churches. In a way, both the Orthodox Church and the Lutheran Church have had to reconstitute themselves. In the case of the Missouri Synod, the Saxon immigrants eschewed the dominant rationalism of their day and instead attempted to return to the Lutheran Confessions as viewed through the lens of the seventeenth-century dogmaticians, always making the case that the Lutheranism of the Missouri Synod is authentic Lutheranism.

The Orthodox, on the other hand, had a greater challenge. In the absence of a clear confessional standard on the order of the Book of Concord, there was an astonishing wealth of theological tradition from which to draw. What proved definitive for twentieth-century Orthodoxy was the reappropriation of the mystical theology of the Greek Fathers, particularly St. Gregory Palamas and St. Symeon the New Theologian, by Russian Orthodox refugees in Paris, among whom were such renowned figures as Vladimir Lossky, Georges Florovsky, Alexander Schmemmann, and John Meyendorff. This mystical theology intentionally replaced the increasingly scholastic tendencies that had characterized much of the Orthodox theology of the nineteenth century. Rather than works righteousness strictly speaking, this mystical theology emphasized the well-known, if not well-understood, concept of “theosis,” or “deification,” an organic process by which man becomes more and more like God. Through a combination of good actions, such as fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, with the reception of the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist, man comes to participate in the divine nature. The “hesychast tradition” (“hesychast” coming from the Greek *ἡσυχία*, meaning “calmness” or “quiet”), which combines ascetic practices with the meditative recitation of the “Jesus Prayer” (“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner”) in hopes of bringing about a mystical vision of the “uncreated light,” is seen as an important route toward deification. The idea that Jesus Christ died as the sinless substitute for the sinful human race, thus earning God’s favor toward sinners, is rejected as too merit-based. Surely the God who is love would not require payment at the hands of his creatures, no matter how sinful they are. It is thought the problem of the human race is not sin, and the consequent wrath of God, but the state of mortality, of actually being unsuited for God’s presence. In this view, what God accomplishes in the life of the faithful is not, at least primarily, the forgiveness of sins, but the transformation of our nature so that we become worthy of dwelling with him. This, and not the straightforward works-righteousness of Jeremiah II, is typically the theology that Lutherans now encounter when they begin delving into the Orthodox Church.

Something else that characterizes the Orthodox Church in North America is that it is a more recent immigrant community. Whereas the Missouri Synod sprung and grew from German immigration in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Orthodox Church is characterized more by immigration in the first half of the twentieth century. While most Missouri Synod congregations have been thoroughly Americanized and have largely lost their German identity, a Greek Church, for example, continues to be self-consciously Greek. A Greek festival, complete with loukoumades and baklava, is a regular and welcome fixture in any town fortunate enough to be home to a Greek Orthodox congregation.

As a result of these developments over the past century, a Lutheran exploring Orthodoxy is likely to encounter one of several churches. There is what I would call the "faithful Orthodoxy" of those laity who take their church seriously and appreciate the generally conservative social stance, the reverent worship, and the historical groundedness of their ancestral church. Adherents of this manifestation of Orthodoxy, both cradle Orthodox and refugees from liberalizing mainline Protestantism, have been influenced by their Protestant neighbors and would likely deny that their church teaches salvation by works. Then there is the "homeland Orthodoxy" of eastern Europe, where protestantizing influences are practically nonexistent and superstition holds powerful sway. There is also what I would call "classical Orthodoxy," the form espoused by Jeremiah II in the sixteenth century and whose development continued until the dawn of Communism. "Classical Orthodoxy" upholds the doctrine of the vicarious atonement, but cannot accept the formula of justification by grace alone through faith alone, insisting upon the place of works not just as a fruit of faith but as a means by which man becomes worthy of eternal life.

But the Orthodox Church that is most likely to hold the attention of any interested Lutheran observer is what I would term "academic Orthodoxy." By "academic" I do not mean in any way divorced from day-to-day experience. Academic Orthodoxy flourishes within the context of regular worship within an Orthodox parish, and indeed depends upon the beauty and mystery of the liturgy for much of its power and impact. Academic Orthodoxy is the Orthodox Church as reimagined by those thoughtful theologians of the twentieth century, with a narrative of smooth progression from the apostles through the Cappadocians to the hesychast tradition, with a disruption of a few centuries caused by the intrusion of Western scholastic tendencies. The focus of academic Orthodoxy is on peeling back the layers of scholasticism to reclaim authentic Orthodoxy, which is seen as centering on the teaching of *theosis*, with a supposed

radical gulf between Eastern and Western ways of thinking being brought forth as the cause for the vast difference between the Orthodox doctrine of *theosis* and the Lutheran doctrine of justification—and, I would emphasize, sanctification. Academic Orthodoxy is different in some fundamental ways from the classical Orthodoxy encountered by the Lutherans of the sixteenth century. It is a much more mysterious and attractive church, and, I would assert, a more dangerous one.

II. Lutheran Paths to Orthodoxy

If the Orthodox Church, particularly in its academic manifestation, is so doctrinally and culturally alien to the Lutheran Church, then why are some Lutheran pastors attracted to it? What could be powerful enough to draw a man away from the pure confession of justification by grace alone through faith alone for the sake of Christ alone into a community whose doctrine is so notoriously difficult to pin down? Though the answer cannot but be anecdotal, I will attempt at least to entertain the question.

The Liturgy

Looming over this entire discussion is the liturgy. To clarify, when I speak of “liturgy” in this context, I do not mean the divinely prescribed liturgy, namely, the preaching of the Word in its purity and the administration of the sacraments according to Christ’s institution (AC VII). The liturgy in that sense is completely non-negotiable, its form set for all time. I mean rather the body of man-made ceremonies that for centuries has adorned the divinely ordained worship. In this sense, the Lutheran Church is heir to a rich liturgical tradition. One would be hard-pressed to find aesthetic fault with the liturgical resources available to the Lutherans of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Even in the English language we possess an embarrassment of liturgical riches.

The problem is not with Lutheran liturgical resources, but with their appropriation. Those who appreciate the richness of our liturgical heritage are bound to be disappointed when they attempt to put it into practice. The common experience of the pastor who is passionately dedicated to the Lutheran liturgy is that many Missouri Synod congregations seem to be far more enamored of the songs of their mainline Protestant and Roman Catholic neighbors than the hymns of Luther and Gerhardt. The reverence that so characterized the Lutheran worship of four centuries ago seems at times to be all but missing from the modern American scene. And then we behold the Orthodox Church, where such a thing as a praise band has never been imagined. The Orthodox Church in any given American city

uses largely the same service as would have been used in Constantinople fifteen hundred years ago. Reverence, dignity, beauty—all are characteristics routinely found in Orthodox liturgical practice. The prospect of a church with an intact ancient liturgy that is not under constant assault from within its own ranks can be tempting indeed.

The question for Lutherans who are tempted to Orthodoxy on the basis of her liturgy is this: for what purpose has the liturgy been handed down to us? For the Lutheran Church, the liturgy is a servant. The man-made ceremonies that adorn the word and the holy sacraments exist for the purpose of extolling the truly divine liturgy—that is, the Word purely proclaimed and the sacraments rightly administered—presenting it in a consistent, intelligible, and reverent manner to those who are gathered to receive the Lord's gifts. Like a ring whose setting encloses a precious gem, the rites and ceremonies enclose that which Christ has committed to his Church. What is of real value in the ring is the gem, and what is of real value in the liturgy is the doctrine of Christ. The liturgy, when practiced as intended, sets forth the benefits of Christ. If we are inclined to introduce a liturgical custom but cannot explain to our people and to our colleagues how it serves the doctrine of Christ, it may be that the liturgy has usurped the place of Christ and his teaching. We then risk adoring the setting, while in the meantime casting away the precious stone that the setting was originally intended to enclose and protect.

It is my conviction that this is exactly what happens when one leaves the Lutheran Church for the Orthodox Church on the basis of her liturgy. One may have left behind a community with liturgical disarray and entered a community where the liturgy is pristine and unchallenged, but in the course of this transition one has embraced all of the baggage that comes attached to the Orthodox liturgy. One has embraced a liturgy that directs a great deal of prayer and praise to the creature rather than the Creator. One has entered a fellowship that, despite her liturgy with its constant reminders of the need for divine forgiveness, teaches that man enters into eternal life, not through faith alone, but through a multitude of ascetic practices and good works. For the sake of the beautiful setting that is the Orthodox liturgy, one has discarded the precious gem that is the Lutheran confession of faith. The Lutheran who is tempted to Orthodoxy for the sake of her liturgy must ask himself whether the beautiful liturgical customs and lack of opposition to the Church's historic form of worship are worth the abandonment of Lutheran teaching, drawn from Holy Scripture. It is sobering to consider whether the answer to that question

reveals that we have made an idol of the very liturgy that was intended to bring to us the precious teaching of Christ.

If the liturgy that we have inherited from our fathers is precious to us, then we ought to have the courage and the willingness to learn to defend that heritage. We ought not to attempt to impose it without explanation. We ought to recognize that, yes, the man-made pattern of the divine liturgy *is* an adiaphoron, but that of course does not mean that it does not matter. All it means is that in the absence of an explicit divine command to retain the liturgy of our fathers, we are given the difficult but rewarding task of having to be able to show *how* our liturgy benefits the Church, and how irreverent forms of worship harm her. Better to fight for the liturgy and fail than to give up the fight and join an alien confession. If we do not achieve the level of beauty and reverence for which our heart longs, we may rest assured that the liturgy of heaven, which we will enter in due time, far surpasses in every respect any man-made liturgical service, even the best of the Lutheran tradition, and, yes, even the beauty and splendor of the Byzantine liturgy at its height. The emissaries of Prince Vladimir, who, when they beheld the liturgy of the Hagia Sophia, could say, "We knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth," are surely convinced now that they had underestimated the glories of the life to come.

Infant Communion

Another feature of the Orthodox Church that has drawn Lutherans is her practice of infant Communion. This practice naturally appeals to the Lutheran spirit. After all, we can be certain that a child who has been baptized into Christ has faith in him. How can we deny to that child, of whom Jesus says, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them" (Matt. 19:14), the very body and blood of the Christ into whom that child has been baptized? Does not the Orthodox practice better affirm the purely gracious nature of God's free gifts?

Lutherans, however, are bound solely to the word of God, and that word of God teaches, "Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself" (1 Cor. 11:28–29). When Jacob Andreae and Martin Crucius were confronted with the Orthodox practice of infant Communion, they responded with the word of God:

Since the children are not able to examine themselves and, thus, cannot discern the Lord's body, we think that the ceremony of the baptism is sufficient for their salvation, and also the hidden faith with

which the Lord has bestowed them. For through this faith they spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, even if they do not, in the communion of the supper, physically eat It. That spiritual eating, which Christ speaks of in Saint John's Gospel, is always necessary; but the other, the mystical one [the Lord's Supper], is not always necessary.¹

Andreae and Crucius saw the eating of Jesus' flesh and the drinking of Jesus' blood, spoken of in John 6 as necessary for eternal life, as taking place spiritually by the faith given to infants in their baptism. Thus the denial of the bodily eating and drinking until such time as St. Paul's required self-examination can take place does not constitute exclusion from the kingdom of God. This denial was taken very seriously by the Lutherans responsible for the Formula of Concord.

There is little of value that I can add to the ongoing discussion of infant Communion, but one point that I have not seen made elsewhere is that when our Lord instituted his holy Supper, he did so with food and drink that a newborn would not have been able to consume. In order to accommodate infants, the Orthodox have had to change the manner in which the Supper is administered: they use leavened bread, which is soaked in the wine and administered by spoon, similar to baby food. Infants and adults alike are spoon-fed the Lord's Supper, and chewing is unnecessary. Of course, that does not invalidate their suppers any more than using prefabricated wafers or individual cups invalidates ours, but it is worth considering that no infants, had they been present at the first Supper, would have been physically able to commune.

Such a cursory overview of the Lutheran argument against infant Communion will, I am sure, be hopelessly unconvincing to those who are tempted by the Orthodox practice. I would only urge that we bind ourselves to the word of God. If a teaching or practice seems to be a natural outgrowth of our theological system, as may well be the case with infant Communion, but nevertheless contradicts a clear testimony of Holy Scripture, we must be prepared to humble ourselves before the word of God and adjust our conclusions accordingly. If we enter the Orthodox Church so that our infant children may be admitted to the altar, then we

¹ *Augsburg and Constantinople: The Correspondence between the Tübingen Theologians and Patriarch Jeremiah II of Constantinople on the Augsburg Confession*, tr. George Mastrantonis (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1982), 143.

are rejecting the biblical teaching of the Lutheran faith and, I would argue, endangering the souls of our children.²

Authority

The Lutherans draw toward the Orthodox approach to liturgy and the practice of infant Communion is understandable, but once the investigation of Orthodoxy progresses further, an informed Lutheran is bound to come upon some teachings that are difficult to accept. In particular, the denial of justification by grace alone through faith alone, together with the practice of offering prayers to the departed saints, runs contrary to Holy Scripture. In discussion with academic Orthodoxy, however (or classical Orthodoxy, for that matter), referring to the authority of Scripture is useless. This statement by Timothy Ware is typical:

The Bible . . . must not be regarded as something set up *over* the Church, but as something that lives and is understood *within* the Church (that is why one should not separate Scripture and Tradition). It is from the Church that the Bible ultimately derives its authority, for it was the Church which originally decided which books form a part of Holy Scripture; and it is the Church alone which can interpret Holy Scripture with authority.³

This view of Holy Scripture makes fruitful argument with the Orthodox practically impossible. For example, academic Orthodoxy tends to view with suspicion the Western doctrine of original sin. Should a Lutheran attempt to affirm the doctrine of original sin by citing Psalm 51:5, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me," an Orthodox apologist would likely respond by denying the right to cite Scripture as if the meaning of a given passage can be objectively determined and therefore used to demonstrate the truth or falsehood of a theological assertion. Though a Lutheran would claim to be relying upon Scripture alone, the Orthodox tend to insist that when Protestants do this, they are cloaking their own human traditions (in our case, a tradition of Lutheran interpretation) with a veneer of objectivity. The Orthodox, on the other hand, are honest about not relying upon Scripture alone.

² For a far more thoughtful and convincing discussion of the Lutheran position on infant Communion, see John T. Pless, "Theses on Infant/Toddler Communion," available at www.logia.org/logia-online/617.

³ Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1980), 207.

One is no better off referring to the writings of the Church Fathers. There is a substantial body of references from the Fathers that support Lutheran theology over against Orthodoxy (and, of course, much that does the opposite), but should such passages be brought forth in an argument, a Lutheran is likely to be accused of “cherry picking” the Fathers. When the Orthodox say that they regard the Fathers as a source of authority, what they finally mean is that they take the “consensus of the Fathers” as authoritative. How is that “consensus of the Fathers” determined? By the current theologians of the Orthodox Church. If both Holy Scripture and the Fathers are to be understood only as interpreted by the teachers of the Orthodox Church, then the only effective authority is actually the Church herself, and there is no such thing as genuine argument with the Orthodox.

That is why, I suspect, many Orthodox do not attempt to argue Lutherans into their church. They will cut off all argument by referring to their own authority, then invite the inquirer to experience Orthodoxy for himself by attending the Divine Liturgy and finally undergoing chrismation. One cannot understand Orthodoxy, it is claimed, without first having entered into and experienced Orthodoxy. The best course is to take the plunge and submit to the authority of the Church. Only then will one begin to understand what the Church teaches.

To a Lutheran who is being tempted in this way, I would urge that he look again to the Scriptures. “To the Law and to the testimony!” (Isaiah 8:20). Turn to our God who in his word speaks clearly to those who have ears to hear.

The Denial of Justification by Faith Alone: Mere Culture Clash?

One of the most striking ways in which modern academic Orthodoxy differs from classical Orthodoxy is in its approach to justification by faith alone. Classical Orthodoxy was content simply to deny it. When one reads Jeremiah II’s response to the Lutherans, one gets the impression that the Orthodox of that era simply affirmed what Scripture said without making any attempt to reconcile seeming contradictions. Thus the same theologian can say in the same passage that sinners are freely forgiven for Christ’s sake through faith in him, and that faith alone is not enough, but to justify it must be accompanied by prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and various works. The Lutherans, on the other hand, largely through the discipline of rightly distinguishing Law from Gospel, were able to speak clearly on just how it is that faith justifies apart from the works of the Law.

With modern academic Orthodoxy, however (exemplified by Vladimir Lossky, Georges Florovsky, Alexander Schmemmann, and John Meyen-

dorff), the situation is quite different. No longer are works put forth as a means of placating God. Instead, the entire system of salvation as taught by the Lutherans on the basis of Holy Scripture is rejected. Several reasons are given for this. One is the historical claim that the question of how one is justified before God simply never came up in the Greek East. After all, Pelagius was a Western heretic. Another is the cultural claim that the Eastern mind functions differently than the Western, and so we think differently about how salvation takes place.

As to whether the question of how one is justified before God ever came up in the Orthodox Church (aside from the astonishing nature of the suggestion that no one in the East ever struggled with a bad conscience in all those centuries), a simple answer is to point to the undeniable fact that the Lutherans brought the question up in the sixteenth century! When the Lutherans forced the Orthodox to reckon with the question, the Orthodox came down on the side opposite the Lutherans. Whereas the Lutherans claimed that one is justified by faith alone, apart from the works of the Law, the Orthodox claimed that one is justified by faith *and* by the works of the Law. It is as simple as that.

Far more dangerous is the assertion that the Eastern way of thinking invalidates the entire Lutheran system of salvation. The Lutheran system is denounced by prominent theologians as hopelessly Western, bound up with ideas of Roman law that are foreign to the genuine Christian spirit. Lutherans think in terms of *quid pro quo*: God needed payment for sin, and since man could not render such payment, God sent his Son to pay for man. The idea that God would account one righteous for the sake of another is a lifeless legal fiction. The East, on the other hand, thinks much more vibrantly. The East does not regard God as a cosmic bookkeeper who requires payment from man. God is rather the *Philanthropos* who cares not for payment but only for relationship. The Son came not to render payment for man but to bind man mystically to himself. The great moment in salvation history was not the death of Jesus but his incarnation, in which man was already saved through union with God in the person of Christ. The death of Christ was significant not as a payment for sin but as a way to unite Christ to the dead, and his resurrection was the resurrection of all men in him.

Thus the Orthodox beat the Lutherans at their own game. The Lutherans are still bound to a Romanist way of thinking, regarding Jesus as a sacrifice to pay for sin. They went part of the way back to the East by denying that man must render works to God in order to earn merit, but they are still working within a merit system: Christ, not man, earns merit

before God. The Orthodox, on the other hand, are entirely free of the Roman system. For them there is no merit, either on man's part or Christ's. God delights not in man's merit, but in his own mercy. There is no divine wrath to be assuaged, only death to be overcome. Tragically, many remain bound in death by continuing to focus on the things of this corruptible world, but those who cooperate with God by directing their gaze upward and undergoing the process of *theosis* will finally enter into the joy of their Master. Finally, eternal damnation is not the wrath of God burning in punishment against human sin, but the love of God as experienced by those who have not become habituated to it through *theosis*.

This, of course, may be a simplification, but I believe it to be a fair representation of the way this topic is often dealt with among the Orthodox. At first the Orthodox view of salvation asks permission to exist alongside the Lutheran view because it is only a matter of cultural, not doctrinal, differences. Then the Eastern cultural view takes for itself the status of being "right" as opposed to the "wrong" and lifeless Western view. Thus some Lutherans have been brought through a gradual process of accepting the Orthodox view and finally rejecting the Lutheran view.

We must guard against any attempt to dismiss the Lutheran soteriology as merely "Western." It is not Western, but scriptural. It is based on the acknowledgement that God is indeed just, and that the justice of God is not just a legalistic Western construct, but a fundamental teaching of Scripture. Perhaps the clearest testimony to God's justice with reference to salvation is Romans 3:25–26, in which St. Paul writes that God put forth Christ "as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." According to St. Paul, for thousands of years God had patiently refrained from punishing the sins of the penitent. King David comes to mind, who by all rights should have been killed and damned for eternity for his crime with Bathsheba. When he repented, however, God "passed over" his sin. This makes God complicit in David's sin, but God is righteous and just, punishing all sin. The death of Jesus showed that God still punishes sin. In fact, he did punish David's sin in the fullness of his just, divine wrath, punishing it in Christ by putting him to death on the cross. The death of Jesus allows God to be both fully just and fully merciful, one who punishes sin and one who justifies the ungodly. Of course, if a Lutheran were to argue this way with the Orthodox, he would be denied the right to interpret St. Paul himself, but if we look honestly at St. Paul

here, we can see that the Lutheran system of salvation is not just a product of the Western imagination, but fully informed by the teaching of the apostles.

If one is tempted to relinquish the Lutheran soteriology as too sterile or inadequately grounded in reality, one might consider that when the Lutherans speak of justification by faith alone, they are not denying the vivifying power of faith, the blessedness of good works, or the transformative activity of God. Faith in so far as it justifies is indeed alone, but the faith that justifies is a divine work that brings about an actual new creation, the actual birth of the new man, and the actual fruit of good works. God indeed “makes us righteous” through faith. By believing in his Son, we are righteous with the imputed righteousness of Christ, which alone is the cause of our salvation, and righteous with our own righteousness, which God works in us and which is the fruit, not the cause, of our salvation. The exclusion of the fruits of faith from justification is not the denial of their existence, but the ordering of things in their proper place.

Classical Orthodoxy denied justification by faith alone but upheld the vicarious atonement. Modern academic Orthodoxy denies both. It makes sin the wages of death rather than death the wages of sin. It softens and even denies the wrath of God. It offers a form of salvation that is satisfyingly cooperative and refreshingly guilt-free. A Lutheran who is drawn to Orthodoxy ought to consider this seriously and soberly, before he has reached the point of conceding all authority to the Orthodox and thus relinquishing his basis for affirming a scriptural view of salvation.

III. Conclusion

The Orthodox Church has preserved Christian faith during very difficult times, such as the Islamic invasions and the more recent persecution under Soviet communism. I do not intend to disparage the Orthodox Church as a whole. There are many faithful Christians within her, and there is much to admire in her teaching and practice. I only intended to point out that no Lutheran can leave our fellowship and enter into her fellowship without first abandoning that which is most important: justification before God by grace alone through faith alone for the sake of Christ alone.

Each one should read the Orthodox authors for himself; compare them with the authorities they cite; consult the liturgies and prayer books of the

Orthodox Church and consider whether one can in good conscience make those hymns and prayers his own.

The splendor of Christ's Bride is hidden in this life, only to be revealed in the day of his appearing. God keep us steadfast in his word. Amen.

Christopher J. Neuendorf
Pastor, Holy Cross Lutheran Church
Davenport, Iowa

Showing the Mercy of Christ as a Deaconess

[This speech was given by Deaconess Sara Smith on the campus of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, at the Graduating Deaconess Banquet on May 19, 2016. It is a vivid witness concerning what the deaconess program at CTSFW and the office of deaconess is all about. The Editors]

Let me share with you a little about my call as the Director of Human Care to St. Paul Lutheran Church in Cincinnati. We are in an urban setting, and I'm called to mercy care in the congregation and in the surrounding community, known as Madisonville. I serve the members of my church and our neighbors. As we receive the mercy of Christ, we share that mercy with each other and with our community. Our mercy care goes out in the name of Christ, caring for our neighbors in body and soul. This is *diakonia*.

Diakonia is serving others in mercy. The one true Deacon is Christ. Our *diakonia* can only be a sharing in His service. It's Christ's sacrificial love that lives in us and serves others in mercy. We are instruments through which God gives mercy.

In our congregation, I'm present for those in need; present for the members of St. Paul who experience loneliness, illness, brokenness—especially the women. I show love to those that no one else seems to have time for.

The community of Madisonville is in the city of Cincinnati. It's urban. It's diverse. In the past few years we've seen progress, revitalization and growth in Madisonville. There's also sin and brokenness. I see drug addiction, abuse, prostitution and murder; families torn apart; people living in unlivable conditions; sin—the ugly, deadly condition we all face.

Our neighbors are sinners and we love them. We care for people regardless of their struggles, regardless of their actions. They need Christ. It's the gospel of Christ that changes people. We recognize their true worth—a very high price has been paid for them. God the Father gave His Son for them. Christ died for them. Our community should know we care and that it's the mercy of Christ that we share. I can't tell people that God loves them, that I love them, if I don't also care about what they need.

These dear neighbors come to the door of the church. They are usually looking for help with a physical, bodily need. They may be facing hunger, eviction, or some other hardship. Assisting with these basic needs provides opportunities for me to share the Gospel of Christ with our suffering neighbors. God is giving us the opportunity to show mercy to our neighbors. While meeting basic needs, I point to the true comfort found only in Christ.

Often those coming to my office have a lot of brokenness in their lives. They need a compassionate listener as much as they need the physical help for which they are asking. Sometimes we can't meet the physical need. Mercy care at St. Paul is funded by donations. As the Director of Human Care, I disperse these funds at my discretion. A reason for denying financial assistance could be because there is not enough money for every need. Often a request is denied because it may do harm—situations in which giving financial assistance would seem to enable destructive behavior, or maybe even just encourage irresponsibility.

It's difficult to deny a neighbor's request for financial assistance. It's much easier to take someone's hand and say "We'll help you with this." When I must deny someone's request, he or she is treated with dignity. Whether or not they receive what they are asking for, they will receive what they truly need—the mercy of Christ, maybe in physical/practical assistance and maybe not—but always through His Word.

I see Christ in those I serve. In his words from Matthew 25, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me" (Matt 25:40). To serve the hurting and suffering is to serve Christ. I see Christ in them. And I see myself in them. We are the same: sinners in need of a Savior. Christ is found in the suffering.

We proclaim Christ to our neighbors. Where we see the hurting, suffering and broken we proclaim Christ. They see and hear the mercy of Christ in what we say and do.

St. Paul frequently receives requests from transients, people passing through Cincinnati and requesting money for gas, food, or car repair. It's difficult to verify these requests and I suspect that in a lot of these cases the story is not entirely true. They are almost always wanting cash. I never give cash. These requests usually end with me putting gas in their car to get them on their way. I meet them at the gas station on the corner. A couple times a month, I stand at a gas pump praying with someone. It's important in these cases that the recipient of our assistance understands this is from our church and from the mercy we receive in Christ. When I suspect that they have knocked on the door of the church to get some quick cash, I want to be sure they know what they are receiving from us—the love and mercy of Christ.

Most of the time, I serve a few homeless people. I see individuals living in abandoned buildings, living on the street or living in a car. There is an immediate, sometimes a desperate need that can't always be immediately met. Mercy care of the homeless begins by meeting them where they are, sometimes with the honor and privilege of walking with them, moving through stages—often very slowly. It takes time to build a relationship of trust. Frequently there are other issues that need address—mental illness, addiction, criminal activity.

There was James, homeless and living in his car, the only place he felt safe. James has social anxiety and paranoid-schizophrenia. He came to St. Paul for prayer. It took over a year before he was ready for me to assist him in finding housing. During that time he came to the church weekly, met with me and with the pastor. I frequently put gas in his car and fed him. I was building a relationship of trust with him. Eventually, he trusted me enough to allow me to assist him in getting the proper treatment for his mental illness. I still take him to the clinic every month to receive an injection. He is now a member of our church, has an apartment and is doing well, although, of course, some struggles still remain. But he knows where to take his burdens. He knows where to receive the mercy of Christ.

Sometimes, maybe permanent housing is not possible. But no matter what else I do, I bring the gospel of Christ to those I serve. They are receiving Christ's mercy through my church. Lives are transformed through hearing God's Word and receiving Christ's mercy.

Darrell was forty-two years old and had been living on the street for over fifteen years. He grew up in our church. His mom is still a very active member, and has long been my sister in Christ and friend. Before I became the Director of Human Care, I didn't know she had this son. Darrell was

homeless and addicted to crack (and also suffering with mental illness) living on the streets in downtown Cincinnati. At first, I didn't know what to do, how to serve him—or even where to find him. Eventually, I was going downtown once a month and walking around trying to find him—usually I did. The first time I found him, I still didn't know what to do. So I talked to him—a difficult conversation in which he didn't make much sense. And I prayed with him. I did this every month. Sometimes he was out of it. Sometimes he was happy to see me. Sometimes he wasn't. I tried—unsuccessfully—to get him connected with services that would help.

Then, after a couple years, the court system sent him to the state psychiatric hospital where he still is. I still visit once a month. He told me how much my visits on the street helped him. All I ever did was talk for a few minutes and pray with him. The presence of someone who loves him in Christ—just being present, bringing Christ, was what I could do for him. Now he's clean and sober. We read the Bible and devotions and have better conversations (although still a little out-there sometimes).

God works in His own time. With our presence we bring the comfort and assurance of hope to those who wait. "Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!" (Ps 27:14).

Occasionally a crisis affects the entire community. Last summer, seven people were shot late one night in Madisonville. One of the two who died was the shooter. The other one was Barry, a friend of mine. He was a frequent visitor to the church office and attended church occasionally. I didn't know his family when he was alive, but now I know his mother and sister well. I've cried with them and prayed with them. Through this suffering, I have the opportunity to show them the love of Christ.

One morning a little over a year ago, I heard on the radio during my drive into my office—an early morning fire at an apartment complex in Madisonville. This complex is low-income housing. The forty-three people who were displaced from their home did not have resources to recover. St. Paul serves her neighbors. What are we called to do at a time like this? We pray for our neighbors . . . and we take action. We are present during crisis.

I was there for our neighbors when it was time to reenter the building to retrieve whatever soot-covered belongings they could. I went into the building and helped pack and carry things down the stairs. I could be found hanging out in the parking lot at the times when the building would be open. People began to refer to my car as my "office." They could sit in

my car with me to talk. I heard about the terror of waking to the burning building, about the loss—and about a lot of other things. In times of tragedy, past suffering comes back. While serving in practical ways, addressing physical and emotional needs, we point to the true source of comfort and recovery, to Christ, His forgiveness and eternal love.

I'll tell you about my friend Lora. I received a call from the social worker at a community agency wanting me to come offer spiritual counseling to a woman. I recognized Lora right away when I walked in the room. I'd seen her recently walking down the street with a man who befriends prostitutes. Now she had been beaten and was in a panic. In these situations, people usually open up and tell you everything—and she did. I soon became someone that she would run to when things became too difficult, but so far she hasn't taken the steps to get out of the lifestyle—to leave behind the drugs, the abusive boyfriend, and the ugly things she does for the drugs and the boyfriend. It can be discouraging. But she knows I'm there for her. And she knows why I'm there.

I see the sin and its results and the brokenness. I also see the love of Christ and the hope that is in him. *Diakonia* brings love to the unlovable and hope to the hopeless.

To address the brokenness of sin in the city, the church must be in the city. We must be visible in the midst of the community, must be present in and be a part of the community. The presence of Christ can be found within the walls of our church right there in the midst of the brokenness. Christ comes to the broken through his church and into the community. God has not abandoned us, he dwells with us. We do not abandon our neighbors. We dwell in the city. The inner-city is a mission field that we must support.

Physical care must flow from the church and all its members. It's good and right to reach out with bodily care and assistance, while always pointing to the solution to sin. Our assistance is connected to Christ. Our mercy care always points to Christ. Our neighbors learn that St. Paul Lutheran Church is a loving, caring place proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ, inviting them in for care of body and soul.

Sara Smith
Deaconess, St. Paul Lutheran Church
Cincinnati, Ohio

David's Son

[*This homily was delivered during the Fall Faculty Forum at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, on September 1, 2016. —The Editors.*]

It is the Glory of God to conceal things, but the glory of kings to search things out. (Prov 25:2)

Do not put yourself forward to the King's presence or stand in the place of the great, for it is better to be told, "Come up here," than to be put lower in the presence of the noble. (Prov 25:6-7)

And so it is, Solomon sounds an awful lot like Jesus. Makes sense. They're both kings. Both sons of David. One received wisdom as a gift, the other was himself the very Wisdom from on high. And it may just be that in the wisdom of Solomon, the One greater than Solomon was already speaking to our vanity.

And so it is, we live in a world of knowledge and folly, of upgrades and degradation, technology and triviality. Our stunning advances are matched only by our slide into the abyss. Pardon the polytheism, but those whom the gods wish to destroy, they first make mad.

Our GPS system can take us anywhere we want to go, without a map or even a care in the world, but we're no longer able to navigate our way to the proper bathroom. The gold and bronze medal winners in the Olympic women's five thousand meter race were both men. I have a friend who teaches political science at Eastern Michigan University, and his students are demanding to be addressed according to their new gender neutral pronouns: "zir" and "hir" and all the rest. One particular student demands to be addressed in the plural: a good sign that demons exist, and that our problems are legion.

So it is, in every sphere of our LGBTQ life, we celebrate orientation, only to find ourselves more disoriented than ever.

And here we are, once more, at Fall Faculty Forum, our own annual orientation. New faculty members have joined us. We get to know one another again, along with new rules and regulations by which we live our life together. And, if I hear rightly, we're even getting new computers, along with updated classrooms. But tomorrow, there's a more important orientation. A new batch of students will join us here at CTS. More tax collectors and fishermen, centurions and tentmakers, lawyers and scribes. Some a bit like the Pharisees, others more Epicurean. And yet they are

coming to this campus because they know, perhaps better than we, that the world has gone mad. And we hope to send them out again, armed with a word of wisdom, to equip them with a compass that points true north, a word of truth, a slice of reality in a mad hatter's world.

So, what do we have to offer them? Even if all our classrooms are updated, and even if our computers are top notch, we'll still be behind the times. What with our devotion to the Scriptures, a God called Father, and a chapel that demands that every wedding have one boy and one girl, we are located on the very fringe of our culture's map. Tucked away between Clinton Street and the St. Joe River, we might just hope that no one ever finds us, that we might happily live in the past, quietly taking the Benedict Option of monastic retreat from the world. But we shouldn't kid ourselves. Our students will have to face a new and dangerous world, and there'll be no hiding. And in a world of lawyers, lawsuits, and loans, we'll all be made to care.

But we should not despair. Never despair. For it was through Wisdom that the heavens were established, the skies made firm, and the fountains of the deep were established. And Wisdom still rejoices in his inhabited world and delights in the children of men. And every Lord's Day, Wisdom still beckons, "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed" (Prov 9:5). And the Lord has put us here precisely for such a time as this. Other cars may have passed us, but we can learn from the skid marks and potholes, crashes and collisions that litter the road ahead. And we're sure to pick up refugees, stragglers, and the walking wounded along the way.

While others build their towers, we'll shore up the foundations. While others look for life on Mars, we'll dig deeper wells. Rather than drink the Kool-Aid, we'll quench our thirst with the living water. That's, after all, why we insist that our students learn ancient Greek (a quaint old language where the pronouns are stable, and we learn of the one who says "ἐγώ εἰμι"). As we reach back to Hebrew also, we tap into the ancient wisdom, enabling our students to ground themselves in the Aleph that they might make it to Omega.

And so our students come in search of hidden treasures, to see beyond the cultural veil to that which is true and lasting. For it is the glory of God to conceal things, but the glory of kings to search things out. And so also, it is the glory of the King's men.

But, then, it's not enough to live in the past. Like every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven, we must be like the master of a house who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.

And the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And that is, in the best sense, to know your place in the world. Adam strove to be like God, and Eve like Adam. And so it has always been. Those claiming to be wise are made fools, exchanging the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles, exchanging the truth of God for a lie, worshipping the creature rather than the Creator, and are given up to dishonorable passions.

Now, here at CTS, we love our gift theology. But it doesn't take a Lutheran to figure out that it's a gift to come down where we ought to be. And when we are in the place just right, we will be in the valley of love and delight. And, as our liturgists would appreciate, "to bow and bend will be our delight." Or as Solomon said, "Do not put yourself forward to the king's presence or stand in the place of the great, for it is better to be told, 'Come up here,' than to be put lower in the presence of the noble" (Prov 25:6-7).

And that is a truth the One Greater than Solomon lived out: Leaving the seat of honor to wash the feet of others. Leaving his throne to wear a thorny crown. Humbling himself even unto death. Yes, this one, crucified by the hands of lawless men, God raised up, so that at his name every knee would bow, and every tongue might confess that he is Lord.

While progress promises without delivering, it's the wisdom of the ages to play the part of the lowly, as did our Lord. And so we make our case to the world—not in arrogance, but in solidarity, not on our high horse, but as those who have been knocked off our perch, as if by a lightning bolt from heaven.

We have no rush to take our neighbor to court, to indict him. "What your eyes have seen do not bring hastily to court, for what will you do in the end, when your neighbor puts you to shame?" (Prov 25:7-8)—which is to say, we're all in this together. There is a judge whom we all must stand before. And there is one King, who made himself low, in whom alone we'll find a verdict we can live with. 'Tis a gift to be free.

Peter J. Scaer