Concordia Theological Quarterly

Volume 75:3–4 **July/October 2011**

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Observing Two Anniversaries

Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther was born on October 25, 1811, in Langenchursdorf, Saxony, Germany. It is appropriate that this issue honor C.F.W. Walther on this 200th anniversary of his birth because of his significant influence as the first and third president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (1847–1850 and 1864–1878) and also president and professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (1850–1887). Most of the articles below, which were first presented at the 2011 Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions in Fort Wayne, reflect his influence in many areas of biblical teaching, confessional subscription, and the life of the church in mission. These historical and theological studies are offered here so that Walther may be understood in his context and continue to be a blessed voice in our synod as we face the future.

This issue also recognizes one other anniversary. The venerated King James Version of the Bible, first printed in 1611, is now 400 years old. The article below on the King James Version was originally given as a paper at the 2011 Symposium on Exegetical Theology in honor of this anniversary. The importance of this translation for the English-speaking world is widely acknowledged. Although many may think that its day has passed, this article demonstrates the ongoing influence of the King James Version through other translations.

The Editors

CTQ 75 (2011): 275-287

Mission through Witness, Mercy, Life Together in Walther and the First Fathers of Missouri

Albert B. Collver

"Oh, how important it is, therefore, my brethren, that we make the salvation of souls above all things the chief object of our joint labor in the kingdom of Christ," said C.F.W. Walther in the opening sermon for the Synodical Conference in 1872.[1] The "salvation of souls," that is, "mission," is the chief objective of a synod. This sermon is far the only place that C.F.W. Walther expressed such thoughts. The presidents of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) who immediately followed Walther also seem to have the notion that "mission" is one of the primary reasons for the existence of the LCMS. Perhaps through ignorance rather than malicious intent, critics of the LCMS have stated that Walther and those who immediately followed him were not missional. In fact, the allegations do not stop with those involved in the early days of the LCMS, but extend back to Luther and the Reformation. In the late 19th century, Gustav Adolf Warneck alleged that the church which emerged out of the Reformation conducted no mission activity[2] and that the 16th-century reformers did not even have the idea of mission.[3] For many would-be missiologists, Luther and the reformers are of little help in developing a theory for mission. To make matters worse, the Lutheran Confessions seem to be of little help in this mission task, except for a few theologians.[4] If Luther, the other reformers, and the Lutheran Confessions are little to no help in formulating a missional theology, then other sources must be used, most notably non-Lutheran sources. Yet if Luther and the Confessions are not helpful in the

[1] C.F.W. Walther, "On Pure Doctrine for the Salvation of Souls: Opening Sermon for the Synodical Conference 1872," in *At Home in the House of My Fathers: Presidential Sermons, Essays, Letters, and Addresses from the Missouri Synod's Great Era of Unity and Growth*, ed. Matthew C. Harrison, various translators (Bridgeport, TX: Lutheran Legacy Press, 2009), 199.

[2] Gustav Adolf Warneck, *Outline of a History of Protestant Missions from the Reformation to the Present Time*, ed. George Robson (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1901), 8.

[3] Warneck, *Outline of a History of Protestant Missions*, 9.

[4] Klaus Detlev Schulz, "Christ's Ambassadors: A Confessional Perspective on the Missionary Office of the Church," *Logia* VII: 3 (1998): 13-18.

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field of missions, how did C.F.W. Walther arrive at the conclusion that the primary task of the synod was mission?

Since the 2010 convention, the LCMS has embarked on the task of restructuring itself "to accomplish God's mission most effectively."[5] It might be good for us to consider how Walther and his immediate successors viewed mission and compare that missiological theory to what was present in the 20th century. In the process of comparing Walther and the other German-born presidents of the LCMS, we may learn that Walther's definition of mission and use of missiological language is different from that of 20th-century missiologists. Finally, as a way forward, and freely admitting that Walther and his successors did not use this terminology, we would suggest that the early LCMS mission could be categorized or described in terms of witness, mercy, and life together.

I. Missiology in the 20th Century

It is impossible to provide a complete overview of 20th-century missiology within the confines of this paper. Nevertheless, a brief review is necessary in order to contrast contemporary views with those of Walther and other LCMS presidents during the first 75 years of the Synod's existence. Missiology, as many understand it today, only became a separate and discrete discipline in the late 19th and 20th centuries. The father of modern "mission science" was Gustav Warneck (1834–1910), who taught in Halle, Germany.[6] As noted previously, Warnek did not believe the Reformation or Luther even possessed the idea of mission, let alone the desire or ability to carry it out. The belief that the parousia was near, a belief held by Luther and other Lutherans who lived in the 16th and 17th centuries, is another reason cited for the lack of interest in missions by Lutherans.[7] Robert Kolb has noted that Warneck's question to Luther was anachronistic in that Luther did not think in the same categories as the missiologists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[8] In fact, the word "mission" in Luther's day did not refer to what we understand as "missions" today. In the 16th century, the term "mission" was understood

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[5] BRTFSSG Taskforce. *THE FINAL REPORT of The Blue Ribbon Task Force on Synod Structure and Governance* (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, October 2009), 1.

[6] Klaus Detlev Schulz, *Mission from the Cross: The Lutheran Theology of Mission* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2009), 45.

[7] David J Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Mary Knoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 251.

[8] Robert Kolb, "Late Reformation Lutherans on Mission and Confession," *Lutheran Quarterly* 20: 1 (2006): 26–43, 26.

in terms of the Father sending his Son into the world. Toward the end of the 16th century, the Jesuits began to use the term "mission" in the sense that we are accustomed today.[9] In the field of modern missiology, the Jesuits from the Roman Catholic side, and the Pietists from the Protestant side, are seen as the proponents of the contemporary understanding of mission.[10] A common theme emerging in the history of missions is how the "official Church" resisted these movements. When reading the missiological literature, one almost gets the impression that missiologists have a secret *gnosis* (knowledge) that needs to be shared with the church at large if the church is going to continue to exist. This is perhaps in part connected to the tension between witness and confession.

The group that "saved" missions in the late 18th and early 19th centuries is seen as the laity.[11] This corresponds to the rise in Bible and mission societies, which was the *Zeitgeist* of the day. One mission society was connected to Wihlem Löhe and contributed to the founding of the LCMS. However, it should be noted that Löhe's mission society sent pastors rather than lay people to serve in overseas missions. We should also note that Walther and his immediate successors were contemporaries of and sometimes benefitted from these mission societies. Generally speaking, Walther and his immediate successors did not sing the praises of or give ringing endorsements for the mission societies.[12] As mission societies from various denominations worked in the same areas, many people began to wonder why Christians were not united in their approach to missions, and in a way that would consolidate resources to reach the heathen. The modern ecumenical movement emerged out of the mission society movement, from which is derived the notion that "doctrine divides but service unites."[13] Closely connected to this idea is the notion that witness and confession or doctrine are at odds with each other. Thus, the missiology movement developed in the milieu of Bible and mission societies and the ecumenical movement.

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[9] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 2.

[10] Shenk, Wilbert R. "New Wineskins for New Wine: Toward a Post-Christendom Ecclesiology," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 29: 2 (2005): 73–79, 74.

[11] Shenk, "New Wineskins for New Wine," 75.

[12] See the comment Francis Pieper makes about women, who murder their young through abortion but seek to save heathen children through their work in mission societies. Francis Pieper, "The Assassination of President McKinley and Public Misfortune: What Does God Desire to Teach Us through the Public Misfortune That Has Come Upon Our Country? 1901," in *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, ed. Harrison, 609–612.

[13] See Albert B. Collver, "Works of Mercy and Church Unity: Does Service Unify and Doctrine Divide?" *Concordia Journal* 36: 4 (2010): 342–353.

The next stage in the development of the missiology in the 20th century was the movement of "mission" from societies (what we would call para-church organizations today) to the church itself. In fact, "mission" was to become the defining principle of the church. This move occurred in 1932 when Karl Barth presented a paper in which he defined the church as a missional community.[14] Until this time, the church had been described in terms of how it could be located and what went on inside the church. Historically, the first definition of the church is found in Article VII of the Augsburg Confession, written in 1530. After the Augsburg Confession was presented to Emperor Charles V, various Protestant groups developed a confessional statement about the nature of the church, as did Rome in the Council of Trent.[15] Karl Barth's definition of the church as a "missional community" cast doubt on all previous confessions and definitions of the church, including the Augsburg Confession, at least among missiologists. Two years later, responding to Karl Barth's definition of a "missional community" and his emphasis on *actio Dei*, Karl Hartenstein[16] coined the term "missio Dei" ("the sending of God") to indicate that churches should be about God's mission rather than their own mission.[17]

Hartenstein incorporated Barth's Trinitarian theology into the theology of mission. *Missio Dei* is viewed as an attribute of God flowing from his Trinitarian nature: the Father sending His Son, and the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son. The concept of *missio Dei* has been called a "Copernican revolution" in mission theology, resulting in a shift from the church existing to do mission, to the church existing because of mission, and becoming a participant in God's mission. Bosch explains, "God's salvific work precedes both the church and mission. We should not subordinate mission to the church nor the church to mission; both should, rather, be taken up into the *missio Dei*, which now became the overarching concept. The *missio Dei* institutes the *missiones ecclesiae*."[18] In other words, the church is not the source of missions nor is it the goal of missions. The church and the planting of churches is not the goal of missions according to *missio Dei*. The term *missio Dei* became increasingly popular in the later

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[14] Derrick Lemons, "The Evolution of Missional Church Characteristics," *Journal of the American Society for Church Growth*, Winter (2009): 51-55, 51.

[15] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 248.

[16] Karl Hartenstein (1894-1952) was a Wurttemburg prelate and former director of the Basel Mission. He was a supporter of the confessing church movement and a proponent of ecumenism.

[17] Lemons, "The Evolution of Missional Church Characteristics," 51.

[18] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 370.

part of the 20th century.[19] Building on the concept of *missio Dei*, David Bosch and Darrell Guder coined "the term missional church. They hoped to forever marry the church's identity to mission."[20] The language and terminology of the missiology movement had its birth in the Reformed tradition, most notably with Karl Barth and the University of Basel in Switzerland.[21] The *missio Dei* movement arose out of Neo-orthodoxy, a compromising reaction to liberal theology. The Church Growth Movement also has a connection to *missio Dei*. The Church Growth Movement is a conservative reaction of evangelicalism that attempts to understand the rapid growth of the church, primarily in India, during the early- and mid-20th century.[22]

Since *missio Dei* is seen as an attribute of God, it affects how the church is understood and defined. *Missio Dei* also effects the roles of laity, clergy, and church structure. Article VII of the Augsburg Confession confesses that the holy, Christian church is "the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is purely preached and the holy sacraments are distributed according to the gospel."[23] Walther in *Church and Ministry* builds upon AC VII when he says, "The church in the proper sense of the term is the congregation of saints (Thesis 1)," and that the church can be recognized by "the marks of the pure preaching of God's Word and the administration of the sacraments according to Christ's institution (Thesis 5)."[24] For Walther and the Lutheran Confessions, the church is where believers are gathered around the Word and the Sacraments. In contrast, the theology of *missio Dei* and the missional church movement believe that missions must define the ecclesiology.[25]

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[19] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 2.

[20] Lemons, "The Evolution of Missional Church Characteristics," 51.

[21] David Bosch studied at the University of Basel under Oscar Cullman. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Bosch (accessed January 20, 2011).

[22] David J Bosch, "'Ecumenicals' and 'Evangelicals': a growing relationship?" *Ecumenical Review* 40, no. 3–4 (1988): 458–472, 459. Bosch mentions that, because of the Evangelicals' view of scriptures and a pessimistic view of man, mission and evangelism are seen in terms of bringing the lost into the church with the goal of expanding the church numerically.

[23] Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds. *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2000), 42.

[24] C.F.W. Walther, *Church and Ministry: Witness of the Evangelical Lutheran Church on the Question of the Church and the Ministry*. tr. J.T. Mueller. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 19.

[25] Richard H. Bliese, "The mission matrix: mapping out the complexities of a missional ecclesiology," *Word & World* 26: 3 (2006): 237–248, 239.

So what does an "ecclesiology driven by a theology of missions"[26] look like? In order to understand the advantages of a missional ecclesiology, the problems with historic ecclesiology need to be described. David Bosch describes the problem with Article VII of the Augsburg Confession as he sees it:

> The church was defined in terms of what happens inside its four walls, not in terms of its calling in the world. The verbs used in the Augustana are all in the passive voice: the church is a place where the gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly. It is a place where something is done, not a living organism doing something . . . The church of pure doctrine was, however, a church without mission, and its theology more scholastic than apostolic.[27]

According to Bosch, the church of the Augustana is a church without mission. The church has to be doing and sending, rather than receiving Christ's gifts. Other authors argue that a post-Christendom, missional ecclesiology must replace the static model of historic ecclesiology in order to engage the culture of the day.[28] A missional ecclesiology also is a post-denominational ecclesiology, since a denominational ecclesiology focuses on what churches *do*, whereas a missional ecclesiology focuses on what a church *is*.[29]

According to the chief missiological thinkers of the 20th century, the church of the Reformation inherited from the reformers and from their creeds the notion that the church

> is "a place where certain things happen" (i.e. the right preaching of the gospel, the right administration of the sacraments, the exercise of church discipline). In this century, Hunsberger said, we have reclaimed the biblical notion that the church is "a body of people sent on a mission."[30]

This missional ecclesiology envisions the church as a "sent community" rather than a "vendor of services," with the services being the word and

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[26] Bliese, "The Mission Matrix," 245.

[27] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 249.

[28] Shenk, "New Wineskins for New Wine," 73–79.

[29] Craig Van Gelder, "Rethinking denominations and denominationalism in light of a missional ecclesiology," *Word & World* 25: 1 (2005): 23–33, 31.

[30] George R. Hunsberger, "Birthing missional faithfulness: accents in a North American movement." *International Review of Mission* 92, no. 365 (2003): 145–152, 146.

sacraments. This view represents a "fundamental alteration in the way the church exists."[31]

Indeed, the fundamental alteration in the way the church exists includes changes in the role of the pastor, the liturgy, and in the structure of the church. Instead of being the place where Christ bestows his gifts of forgiveness to his people through the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments, worship becomes a celebration and a sending event.[32] Missional worship always is a sending. The pastor is to become a missionary to the congregation, sending them into their community.[33] Just as *missio Dei* is viewed as an attribute of God, making him into a sending God, so too, is it to become an attribute of the church.[34] Leadership in a missional church needs to be more than preaching and teaching; it needs to be interactive and apostolic.[35] Finally, ordination is seen as undermining the priesthood of all believers by minimizing the gifts of leadership found in the non-ordained.[36] In summary, a missional ecclesiology, as expounded by the chief missional theologians of the 20th century, promotes fundamental changes in how the church has been historically conceived. First, missional ecclesiology shifts the focus away from creeds and confessions. Second, it demphasizes the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments. Third, it alters the concept of worship from receiving Christ's gifts to a celebration and sending service. Fourth, in planting churches, it deemphasizes the need for professionally trained clergy, and presses the laity into service as the ones sent out into the world. This view of church and mission is very different than that of C.F.W. Walther and the other presidents of the Missouri Synod's first seventy-five years.

II. Mission in the House of Missouri's Fathers

For C.F.W. Walther and those who immediately followed him, mission was about the salvation of souls, which occured by connecting people to the gospel and the sacraments located in a Lutheran congregation. For Walther, to borrow from the motto from the Bleckmar Mission, Lutheran

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[31] Hunsberger, "Birthing Missional Faithfulness," 150.

[32] Darrell L. Guder, "Missional Structures: The Particular Community," in *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, ed. Darrell L. Guder, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 221–247.

[33] Guder, "Missional Structures," 241.

[34] Guder, "Missional Structures," 222.

[35] Alan J. Roxburgh, "Missional Leadership: Equipping God's People for Mission." ed. by Darrell L. Guder, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 183–220.

[36] Roxburgh, "Missional Leadership," 195.

missions lead to Lutheran congregations and Lutheran congregations do Lutheran mission. While the term *missio Dei* had not been formulated, nor missional theology conceived, Walther probably would not have been surprised by their development. Church union efforts and some mission societies promoted similar concepts in his day. Walther did not promote mission at the expense of confession, as he saw mission (witness) as integrally connected to the confession of the church. Walther also taught that part of the life of the church involved taking care of those in need, that is, showing mercy or compassion to people. He also believed that the church had a fellowship or life together in promoting the goal of the salvation of souls. It would be irresponsible historical revisionism to suggest that Walther, and the four LCMS presidents who followed him, spoke of or described the church using the terminology "witness, mercy, life together." That being said, I would suggest that Walther and his successors spoke about the church can be described in terms of witness, mercy, life together. I would also suggest that such a description is helpful for the church today, both in countering errant views of mission and in describing the LCMS national and international mission work today.[37]

The current emphasis for the LCMS is witness, mercy, and life together.[38] In brief summary, witness (*martyria*) in Scriptures refers to the testimony that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, who has come to save his people. Witness (*martyria*) is the proclamation of the gospel and the bestowal of Christ's forgiving gifts. Another aspect of witness (*martyria*) is confession. The Gospel of John uses the word *martyria* in both ways—to describe the testimony or witness given and as a synonym for *homologein*, to confess. Witness and confession, mission and confession, mission and doctrine go hand in hand. Mercy (*diakonia*) is compassion and service for those inside and outside the church in their physical needs. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus had compassion on people in need (Mark 6:34). Before Jesus was crucified, he prayed that the church would be one (John 17:11, 21, 23). He desired for his church to be in fellowship to have a life together (*koinonia*) with his Father. Jesus' ministry on earth involved *martyria* (witness), *diakonia* (mercy), *koinonia* (life together). In a similar way, the church's work is patterned after this threefold emphasis and can also be found in Walther and the early years of the LCMS.

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[37] The LCMS convention held in Houston, Texas, in July 2010, voted to restructure the work of the church into two categories: national mission and international mission.

[38] For a brief introduction to the threefold emphasis of witness, mercy, and life together, see Albert B. Collver, "Witness, Mercy, Life Together." *The Lutheran Witness*. Saint Louis, MO, January 2011. Available at http://bit.ly/ibD6Lq (accessed January 18, 2011).

While quotations from people can be arranged in ways to support positions and ideas never intended by the original authors, at the dedication of Walther's Mausoleum in 1892, Francis Pieper provided a summary of C.F.W. Walther's teachings. Pieper writes:

> Finally, Walther did not neglect to show the congregations their Christian duties. He taught: The entire congregation is to be concerned for and is therefore answerable to Christ to see that God's Word holds sway pure and clear and richly in its midst. The entire Christian congregation is thus the spiritual society [*Verein*] established by God, that is, to place the light of divine truth upon the lampstand. Walther taught: The entire congregation has the duty to see to it that in its midst, Christian discipline is exercised, in order to guard against offense and so that the fallen brother be returned to the way of life. The Christian congregation is therefore the society established by God, in which the members are duty-bound to aid each other toward the acquisition of the final goal, the acquisition of salvation. Walther taught: The entire Christian congregation is duty-bound to take on also the physical need of its brothers, knowing that in these suffering brothers, Christ suffers, and that in them, Christ is served. Walther taught: The entire Christian congregation is given the concern for the spreading of the Church through the preaching of the Gospel. The establishment, maintenance, and upkeep of Christian institutions are duties inseparably bound together with the Christian estate. The entire Christian congregation is therefore the mission society established by Christ.[39]

As Pieper explains Walther's teaching, the theme of witness, mercy, and life together emerges. First, the church is a society created by God, where the word of God is preached. The witness, that is, the proclamation of the Gospel, creates the church, a life together, for the people of God. The divine truth is placed on the lampstand for all to see; this is mission. The diligence to the truth of God's word is the flipside of witness, that is, it is confession. Confession and mission, confession and witness, belong together. Without the truth, without pure doctrine, there can be no mission. As part of the church's life together, mercy is shown to those in physical need. As part of the church's life together, Christian institutions such as seminaries, schools, publishing houses, et. al., are established and maintained. Finally, the Christian congregation is established as a "mission society" to do the work of witness, mercy, and life together.

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[39] Francis Pieper, "Address at the Dedication of the Walther Mausoleum 1892," in *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, ed. Harrison, 603.

Walther specifically talks about the connection between mission and confession. In his *On Pure Doctrine for the Salvation of Souls*, which was preached at the opening of the Synodial Conference in 1872, Walther said:

> As you know, my brethren, it is a common saying in our time that the continual urging of the doctrine is a most pernicious tendency, only hindering, yea, destroying the kingdom of God. People say, "Instead of disputing so much about the doctrine, you ought rather to think of taking care of the souls and of leading them to Christ." But all who speak this way certainly do not know what they say and what they do. As it would be folly to chide the tiller of the ground for his diligence to obtain good seed, and to demand that he should be eager only to obtain good fruit, so it would be folly to chide those that take heed unto the doctrine above all things, and to demand of them that they should rather endeavor only to save souls. For as the tiller of the ground must be eager to obtain good seed above all things, if he wishes to reap good fruit, so must the Church care for sound doctrine above all things, if she wishes to save souls.[40]

Even in Walther's day, people were pitting pure doctrine against the mission cause. Yet Walther rejects this false distinction and rightly points out that confession and pure doctrine ensure that the seed being planted is good seed. Without confession and pure doctrine, the witness or mission effort will plant bad seed that will either not sprout or will produce a sickly plant. Walther clearly ties the salvation of souls to the proclamation of pure doctrine.

In a similar way, in his 1900 address, "We Are God's Fellow Workers," the LCMS President Friedrich Pfotenhauer said,

> That a preacher or missionary who claims the Gospel is not enough to build the Church, and therefore one must employ all manner of "new methods," is an unfaithful servant, and despite all his business, will receive an evil reward. Let us not even attempt to convert men with methods of our own choosing, but always remember that we are God's servants and that we, according to His will, are to use no other means than His Word and Sacraments.[41]

Pfotenhauer's point is that pastors and missionaries as servants of God are bound to use the methods that the Lord himself has instituted and man-

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[40] C.F.W. Walther, "On Pure Doctrine for the Salvation of Souls: Opening Sermon for the Synodical Conference 1872," in *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, ed. Harrison, 198.

[41] Friedrich Pfotenhauer, "We Are God's Fellow Workers 1900," in *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, ed. Harrison, 723.

dated, namely, the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. The use of methods or techniques not prescribed by the Lord for the purpose of mission makes the pastor or missionary an unfaithful servant. Doctrine and mission go together. Once again, we see that the challenges and temptations facing the pastor and missionary are not new; that is why St. Paul instructed Timothy to "guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called 'knowledge'" (1 Timothy 6:20).

Pieper provides good insight on how to handle the charge that pure doctrine gets in the way of mission. He did this in an opinion on a situation Missouri Synod missionaries encountered in India in 1926. The missionaries there found that the church's teaching against polygamy hindered their mission work. So a request was sent back to St. Louis asking if polygamy could be permitted among converted people in India. Pieper wrote back,

> On the contrary, we remind ourselves that our Savior is certainly more concerned with the spread of His Church than we are. Now if the insistence on monogamy were really a hindrance for mission, Christ would not have so strictly bound the church of the New Testament to monogamy, as is the case in Matthew 19.[42]

Pieper's response is appropriate for handling nearly any circumstance where faithfulness to pure doctrine is alleged to hurt mission. Christ our Savior is more concerned with the growth of his church than are we; he would not give us a teaching that is harmful to his church. Once again, we see the emphasis of witness and confession working hand-in-hand.

Pfotenhauer also provides a glimpse into how active the Missouri Synod was in the missionary endeavor, which may serve as a sort of commentary on the various mission societies of his day. In his "The Lord's Sending of the Seventy," delivered in 1898, Pfotenhauer wrote:

> It is a fact that presently no district in our Synod, nor another church body, can point to such evident results in the area of inner mission as our Minnesota and Dakota District. Our messengers have moved over great territories, entire states, as though they had wings. In hundreds of places, where the feet of those we've sent [*Sendlinge*] have touched the ground, Christian congregations now bloom. Often as a result of such a mission trip, an entire garland of preaching stations arises. Also at such places, where at first only a few souls listened, but nevertheless were diligently and regularly visited by our missionaries, the

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[42] Franicis Pieper, "A Gutachen on Polygamy 1926," in *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, ed. Harrison, 666.

> Lord blessed this faithful yearlong ministry of His servant. The number of believers has gradually increased so that they now have begun to become an independent parish.[43]

Pfotenhauer joyfully proclaims that no other church body can match the results of the mission efforts in the Minnesota and Dakota District. The mission strategy is remarkably simple: preach the Gospel and start congregations. Lutheran mission indeed leads to Lutheran congregations. Pfotenhauer also notes how such reports of mission brings joy to the congregation and encourages us in our life together.[44]

The fathers of the LCMS also were concerned with the church's life together. In a day when great distances separated pastors and congregations and when communication was not as good as today, it was very easy for a pastor to become so immersed in his congregational work that he lost sight of the larger church around him. Writing "On Christian Stewardship," Pieper addressed this very concern. He writes,

> You have the duty as a Christian to keep your own eyes open. Perhaps you do not even keep a church paper, such as the *Lutheran Witness* or *Der Lutheraner*, which will keep you in constant touch with the events and the needs of the kingdom of God. It is not only a small, but a very great shortcoming, and truly a disgrace, if there are congregation members who do not read a church paper.[45]

Part of Christian stewardship, part of our life together, is staying abreast of the events within our Synod so that we know who and what to pray for as well as where our support is most needed. Who would have thought that reading the *Reporter* or the *Lutheran Witness* was part of our life together in the church? There are many other areas where Walther and the other fathers of the Missouri Synod wrote about our life together as it pertained to Lutheran day schools, seminaries, and synodical gatherings.

III. Conclusion

Pfotenhauer echoes Walther in stating the central purpose of the LCMS:

> We exist and have founded a synod in order, as much as possible, to bring men to salvation, and thereby to check the misery in Christendom and the number of the lost in the poor blind heathen world. If we

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[43] Friedrich Pfotenhauer,"The Lord's Sending of the Seventy: An Encouragement to Mission! 1898," in *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, ed. Harrison, 718.

[44] Pfotenhauer, "The Lord's Sending of the Seventy," 719.

[45] Francis Pieper, "On Christian Stewardship: The Gifts of the Christians," in *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, ed. Harrison, 656.

> do not do this, if we fail to seek the honor of Christ and the salvation of souls, Luther fears, as he says, "then may the dear God convene a synod, namely a 'council of angels' in order to carry out his judgment."[46]

For Walther and the LCMS presidents who came after him, the purpose of the Synod was to bring men to salvation. All the work that the LCMS did was directed to this task and goal. Pure doctrine and confession assisted the witness of the church by ensuring good seed was sown. Congregations were started to hold the pure truth of God on a lampstand for their communities to see and come to hear the gospel and receive the sacraments. Works of mercy were shown to people in physical need. Hospitals and orphanages were built not only to take care of the needy, but also to provide a place where the gospel could be taught. Institutions, schools, and other agencies of the Synod were established and maintained to promote our life together in the body of Christ. Educational institutions such as Lutheran day schools and seminaries were part of the church's life together to ensure that the witness of the gospel would continue for their children and grandchildren. Hopefully, this brief survey into Walther and the first fathers of Missouri encourages the exploration of other examples where the Missouri Synod carried out witness, mercy, and life together. Now that the Synod in convention this past July has decided to categorize all the work that the Synod does as mission, it is more important than ever to recall how the Synod in the past had a holistic view of mission that included the emphasis of witness, mercy, and life together.

Words from Walther's "Duties of an Evangelical Lutheran Synod 1879" provide an apt conclusion:

> A synod is to be a living member of the body of Christ, and together with every other living member of that most sacred body in the whole world, it must do whatever it possibly can to spread Christ's kingdom and, wherever possible, to win for Christ and to lead into His sheepfold all those whom Christ has bought with His precious blood, and ultimately to lead them into the salvation of everlasting life.[47]

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[46] Friedrich Pfotenhauer, "Doctrine and Mission: The Purpose of Synod Meetings 1892," in *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, ed. Harrison, 698.

[47] C.F.W. Walther, "Duties of an Evangelical Lutheran Synod 1879," in *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, ed. Harrison, 328.