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# The American Lutheran



## "Sin Is a Reproach to Any People"

Proverbs 14,34

Our country may well apply to itself the warning contained in these seven words of sacred truth: "*Sin is a reproach to any people.*" Must we not list as crushing liabilities our searing sins, the increased iniquities during the past? First among these is our growing lawlessness. The worst war in history has left us our worst crime wave, with robbery, burglary, manslaughter, murder, assault, larceny, more frequent than ever before. J. Edgar Hoover, Chief of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, reports that the total of American criminals "is ten times greater . . . than the number of students in our colleges and universities." If Scripture is correct—we testify that it is—and only "*righteousness exalteth a nation,*" how can we continue to expect divine guidance if, with all our preëminence, we have become the most crime-ridden of civilized nations; if newspapers, motion pictures, magazines, miscalled "comic," and sometimes even crime broadcasts, help swell the ranks of old and young offenders? The time is here for real repentance and return to God in the only way men can draw near to the Almighty, through humble repentance and faith in the sin-atoning, sin-removing Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

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# The Communion As The Main Service

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*Note: This is the second chapter of Friedrich Lochner's "Der Hauptgottesdienst" in translation. Comments by the translator are in brackets.*

There is an abundance and a delightful diversity in the forms and orders for the public worship of the Church of the true faith, forms and orders in which the life of faith and of the communion finds free expression. She has a *Communion Service*, in which the rite of the Lord's Supper follows upon the preaching of the Word, so that seal and earnest is added to the Word. She has a *Preaching Service*, that features mainly the explanation and application of the Scriptures or in which, on special occasions, a sermon is preached. She has a *Catechism Service*, to establish and further the knowledge of the chief parts of the Christian teaching (catechetical sermon and examination in the Catechism). And she has a *Prayer and Praise Service* in her Matins and Vespers, the daily brief morning and evening services, in which God's Word is not only read but also explained most briefly, in accordance with Luther's well-founded requirement. Nevertheless, prayer and praise is the prominent element in these last named services.

## Luther on Weekday Services

[In a footnote, Lochner brings a quotation from Luther's "Ordering of Divine Worship in the Congregation" of 1523. When reading or quoting this writing, we must remember that Luther is here speaking of the Minor Services on weekdays and not of the Communion, the Main Service. In the Philadelphia Edition of Luther's Works, Paul Zeller Strodtach says in the introduction to this writing: "It is not at all strange that the place of prominence in this writing is occupied by a consideration of *daily* devotional periods in the church. The Mass as such receives nothing more than passing attention . . . The one emphatic statement is that daily Masses are to remain discontinued; but provision must always be made to meet the desire of such as would receive Holy Communion, even if this be on a weekday! . . . The simple morning service, outlined by Luther, was quite typical of the Evangelical Movement. It consisted of a lesson, and prayer (intercession). A similar daily evening or afternoon devotion was planned for early introduction, or at least when the proper person

or persons to conduct it would be at hand.]"

## The Quotation from Luther

"Now in order to do away with these misuses, it is necessary to know, first of all, that the Christian congregation never should assemble unless God's Word is preached and prayer is made, no matter how brief a time this may be. See Psalm 101: When the king and the people assemble for God's grace, they are to proclaim God's Name and praise. And Paul in I Corinthians 14 says, that in the congregation there is to be prophesying, teaching and admonishing. Therefore where God's Word is not preached, it is better that one neither sing nor read, nor even come together.

"This was the custom among the Christians at the time of the Apostles, and should also be the custom now. We should assemble daily in the early morning, say at four or five o'clock, and have God's Word read, either by scholar or priest, or whoever it may be, in the same manner as the Lesson is still read at Matins; this should be done by one or two, or by one after the other, or by one choir after the other, as may seem most suitable.

"Thereupon the preacher, or whoever has been appointed, shall come forward and expound a part of the same lesson, so that all the others understand it, learn, and are admonished. The first of these, Paul, in I Corinthians 14, calls speaking with tongues. The other, he calls expounding or prophesying, or speaking with the sense or understanding. And if this does not occur, the congregation is not benefited by the lesson, as has been the case until now in cloisters and other religious foundations, where they have only wasted their breath against the walls."

[To this quotation Lochner adds the comment: "In order that the Word of God be explained, and that 'most briefly,' in the Matins and Vespers, Veit Dietrich's Summaries came into being. Compare Dietrich's and Vierling's introductions in the 'Altenburger' New Testament, American Edition. In the latter's introduction, the Order for Matins and Vespers of that day are to be found.]

## The Communion the Chief Service

On the basis of Acts 2:42 and I Corinthians 11, and following the example

of the Ancient Church, the Lutheran Church regards the Communion as the most glorious and important of all public services and has therefore embellished this service most elaborately and meaningfully from the liturgical standpoint. Consequently she distinguishes between Main Service and Minor Service. A service is regarded as the Chief Service not because of the significance of the Sunday or Feast Day, nor because of the season of the year, nor because of its liturgical richness. A service is the Main Service because, as the Scriptural relation of Word and Sacrament determines, the proclamation of the Word of the Gospel is followed immediately by the rite of the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood, so that this rite, as the seal upon the Word, is the goal and the keystone of the service. All other services in which the rite of the Sacrament is not intended from the beginning, become Minor Services, no matter how richly they may have been embellished liturgically in former days. In the era of the Reformation, and long after, the Morning Service that followed the Matin was regularly the Communion Service, that is the Main Service, at least in larger congregations. One reason for this was the fact that Word and Sacrament belong together. Another reason was that in the Ancient Church the Lord's Supper was received by the entire congregation at least every Sunday, as in the days of Augustin, four hundred years after Christ. A third reason was the supposition that there would be a desire for the Sacrament. Over against the Roman Private Mass, in which only the officiating priest receives the Sacrament, the Apology emphasizes in the Eighth Article: "With us the people use the holy Sacrament willingly without constraint every Sunday." Also in the Twelfth Article: "Every Sunday and every feast day Mass is celebrated in our churches, when the Sacrament is administered to those who desire it, yet so, that they are first examined and absolved." Therefore it came about that when the Lord's Supper could not be administered in such a service because communicants were lacking, the endeavor was nevertheless to retain the form of the Main Service in all else. In some places, however, a prescribed exhortation was read after the sermon, or an extemporaneous admonition delivered, in which, without

legalistic pressure, the lack of communicants was deplored and the people admonished and encouraged to commune often.

### St. Justin on the Ancient Service

Note 1. As is well known, the oldest description of the Communion Service in the post-Apostolic period is by Justin the Martyr, who died 166. "On the day called Sunday an assemblage is made of all who live in town or country into one place, and the memoirs of the Apostles or the Scriptures of the Prophets are read as long as there is opportunity. Then when the reader has ceased, the President speaks and makes admonition and exhortation to the imitation of these excellent things. Then we rise together, and send up prayers. And when we have ceased from prayer, bread is brought and wine and water, and the President sends up prayers similarly and thanksgivings, to the best of his power, and the people approve by saying Amen; and the distribution and participation of the consecrated things is made to each, and they are sent by the Deacons' hands to those not present. The well-to-do and they who are willing, give, each as he pleases, and the gathered gifts are then laid before the President, who aids the widows and orphans with them, and also cares for the sick or otherwise afflicted, for the prisoners, strangers, in short, all who are in distress."

### Later Development

At the beginning of the Fourth Century, the Main Service is divided into a Missa Catechumenorum (preaching service) and a Missa Fidelium (specifically the service of the faithful, the service of the Lord's Supper). After the sermon, the deacon addressed the non-Christians and catechumens, "Ite, missa est!" "Go, you are dismissed." Especially the Missa Fidelium which now began, shows greater amplification and solemnity of the Communion Liturgy than the extremely simple rite pictured by St. Justin. According to the eighth chapter of the Apostolic Constitutions, the Missa Fidelium began with silent prayer by those who remained. The general and detailed prayer of the Church was then spoken by the deacon, the congregation joining with the Kyrie Eleison in litany fashion. After a collect by the bishop, the deacons gathered the offering of bread and wine and prepared it for use in the Lord's Supper. Then the men exchanged the holy kiss with the men, and the women with the women. Clothed in a special festive vestment, the bishop appeared at the altar, surrounded by the ministers of the higher orders. He spoke the

Apostolic Blessing of II Corinthians 13:13, and the congregation responded "And with thy spirit." Then antiphonally, "Upward the heart!" "We have lifted it up to the Lord." "Let us give thanks unto the Lord." "It is meet and right." "It is truly meet and right to praise Thee high above all, the true living God," etc. This rather lengthy yet sublime prayer of thanksgiving closes with the Sanctus sung by the entire congregation, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is God, the Lord of the angels, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory." Then follows the Consecration; another general prayer with special intercessions, spoken by the bishop; the Peace; and the distribution. The last, with the close, is described: And after all have responded "Amen" (to the Peace), the deacon says, "Let us take heed!" and the bishop speaks to the people: "Holy things unto the holy!" and they respond, "One is Holy, One is the Lord, One Jesus Christ to the glory of God the Father, blessed for ever. Amen. Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth and good will toward men; Hosanna to the Son of David, blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord; God the Lord appeared also unto us, Hosanna in the highest!" Then shall the bishop communicate himself, after this the elders and the deacons and the sub-deacons and the lectors and the singers and the ascetics; and among the women the deaconesses, and the virgins and widows; then the children, and then all the people, in this order, with awe and caution, and without noise. The bishop shall give the sacrifice saying, "The Body of Christ," and the communicated shall respond, "Amen"; the deacon shall hold the Cup and, offering it, shall say, "The Blood of Christ, the Cup of Life," and the communicated shall say, "Amen." The Thirty-Third Psalm shall be chanted while all others are communicated, and when all men and all women have received, the deacons shall carry what remains into adjoining chambers. And the deacon shall say after the singers have finished, "Having partaken of the precious Body and the precious Blood of Christ, let us give thanks unto Him who has counted us worthy to partake of His holy mysteries, and let us pray," etc. The Thanksgiving, spoken by the bishop, brings the service to a close.

### The Communion Without the Holy Communion

Note 2. Although the Brandenburg-Nuernberger Kirchenordnung of 1533 attempted to fashion a Sunday service without Communion after the order for the Minor Services, the custom became more and more general to retain the

form of the Main Service up to the sermon. Upon the sermon followed the Litany or the Te Deum, or both in turn as "congregational prayer" and "congregational thanksgiving." Or there was merely a hymn of praise by the congregation, in connection with and introduced by a "Christian motette" of the choir, both, as it were, the *Deo gratias* for the Word of God that had been heard. But the Braunschweig-Lueneburgische Kirchenordnung prescribes: "After the sermon shall be sung the Preface; Sanctus; German Pater Noster; Christ, Thou Lamb of God; a German collect for Sundays; and the final blessing."

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## Highlights of ALPB Board Meeting

The May meeting of the Board of Directors, presided over by President John A. Kavash, was opened with prayer by Pastor August Brustat.

Mr. Walter Allen, Chairman of the Membership Committee, rendered an aggressive report on the activities of this Committee. He indicated that personal appeal letters were going forward to prospective members whose names have been supplied by Pastors throughout Synod. He emphasized that no mimeographed or stereotyped letters were being used and that his committee is inaugurating a long range program.

Executive Secretary, Rev. Theodore Wittrock, observed that the tracts published by the Bureau are being widely acclaimed. We herewith reproduce a quote from a letter received from a Southern churchman of another denomination—"Truly, I believe you people put out the most attractive tract I have ever seen. People just 'gobble' up their contents. They are appealing to the eye, which is an added incentive to make a person want to read them." Pastor Wittrock also presented his planned itinerary in connection with attending Synodical Conventions during the summer months for the purpose of promoting the work of the Bureau.

The Sunday School Week and the Reformation Week Committee reported progress in their respective fields of promotion.

Mr. J. F. E. Nickelsburg, Business Manager of THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN MAGAZINE, announced that the printers of the magazine would increase the cost of production by 10% on September 1st. The Board authorized the signing of a new contract at the increased figure with the confident expectation that the ever widening interest in the work of the Bureau and intensified support on the part of its members would insure the necessary increased revenue to meet this rising cost of production.

It was resolved that the Secretary extend the best wishes of the Board and Godspeed to Pastor August F. Bobzin, former President of the Bureau, on his trip to Europe in the interest of the Board for European Missions.

The meeting was adjourned with The Lord's Prayer in unison.

Theodore C. Moelher