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SHAPING CONFSSIONAL LUTHERANISM IN THE 21ST CENTURY: THE IMPACT OF THE LUTHERAN REFORMATION ON MISSION, WORSHIP, AND WORLDVIEW

by Makito Masaki

Catechetical instruction is key to teaching the content of the *status confessionis*, as well as how to implement our *actus confessionis*.

Foreword

ISERVE AS THE PRESIDENT of Kobe Lutheran Theological Seminary in Japan, an institution that does not yet belong to the ILC. I also serve as the pastor of Itami Evangelical Lutheran Church, a congregation that belongs to West Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church. We are very thankful for this invitation to be extended to a small seminary like ours. However, to tell the truth, I was a little uncomfortable with the invitation because there is a good Lutheran church body that runs a seminary in Tokyo and has been a member of the ILC since its beginning. I visited Rev. Shin Shimizu, the president of Japan Lutheran Church, Nihon Ruteru Kyodan, in Totsuka church and sat under his feet to ask for his advice. He kindly gave me his fatherly blessing. Therefore, I am also thankful to Japan Lutheran Church for allowing and supporting me to speak this morning.

Actually, I feel at home here. It may be not only because I am in the town of the Reformer's home ground, but also because I have many good friends in the ILC. I received my STM from Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne in 1992, and I was one of the first set of candidates for the D.Miss, now Ph.D., in mission studies there. I earned my Ph.D. at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. My wife and two children are still members of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in the suburbs of St. Louis. My father was colloquized to be an LCMS pastor, and was given an honourable doctorate from Ft. Wayne seminary.

My younger brother Naomichi Masaki teaches at the Ft. Wayne seminary.

Moreover, I am thankful to be with people who have the same heart for the Lutheran Confessions. Many of the faculty in my Kobe seminary history, both missionaries and Japanese, were educated either at St. Louis or Ft. Wayne. All the presidents of the seminary who are Japanese were educated at St. Louis for their theological doctorate degree. Our seminary is devoted to training next generation pastors to be confessional, constructive, and cooperative pastors: confessional, who subscribe unconditionally to and confess the Book of Concord, constructive, who know well their vocation as pastors, and cooperative, who are willing to work with people. I am honoured to be invited to play a role in this conference.

Worldview

So, what does worldview mean, and what is the confessional Lutheran worldview?

The literal meaning of "worldview" may be the integrated understanding of God, man, and nature and their relationships to one another. We have the law, the Ten Commandments, that shows God's order he set among his creatures and reveals the sinfulness of man. Lutherans confess with other Christians the Ecumenical Creeds that are confessions of God [the Father], the Creator, God the Son, the Redeemer, and God the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier and Comforter. In the creeds, we clearly confess that God

created everything; God began, leads, and will end the world. We also confess the eternal life.

If you ask teenagers in Japan if they know the term worldview, to our surprise, they would answer that they always use it. For them the word means the settings of time, space, characters, and scenario that the Anime, Manga, and video game authors construct as the necessary background of their masterpieces. For example, for the famous series “Attack on Titan,” the author Hajime Isayama created the worldview as something like the following. Humanity has been hiding from gigantic, cannibalistic monsters called Titans ever since the population was decimated 100 years earlier. No explanation is given as to where these Titans originate. The people live in a multi-walled, socially-stratified city while they train an elite Survey Corps of fighters to protect them if the need should arise again. One peaceful day, Titans suddenly attacked the wall and broke in. When ten-year-old Eren Jaeger sees his own mother eaten by a Titan, he vows revenge against the Titans and joins the Corps. When his training is complete, he joins humanity’s fight against the Titans without and—much to his surprise—from within. The story of solving problems starts, proceeds, and ends in the environment and relationships among the characters that are decided by the author.

Japanese Christians associate the word “worldview” as a word associated with Reformed, or more precisely, Dutch Reformed theologians, such as Abraham Kuyper, Herman Bavinck, Herman Dooyeweerd, D.H.Th. Vollenhoven, and others who worked in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Abraham Kuyper, a journalist, statesman, and Neo-Calvinist theologian, founder of a new church, the Gereformeerde Kerken, a newspaper, the Free University of Amsterdam, and the Anti-Revolutionary Party, served as the Prime Minister of the Netherlands between 1901 and 1905. He taught that since everything in the universe should be taken only as God’s creatures, we should subordinate human understanding of everything to God’s understanding. With this thoroughgoing theistic theology, so called presuppositionalism, Kuyper suggested that all areas of human activity, including politics, economy, research, education, and others, need to be signified by the word of God and obey the divine authority. He established the Free University of Amsterdam so that every

area of knowledge may be Christianized and the truly Christian culture in every area of human knowing and living may prosper. Kuyper used the term worldview to promote his understanding of God, man, and nature, and their past, present, and future status.

Herman Dooyeweerd and D.H.Th. Vollenhoven are good examples of the successful fruits of education at the Free University of Amsterdam. Dooyeweerd categorizes the creaturely world into segments and acknowledges God the Creator as the only true unifying pole for the proper worldview. He says that when human beings, who have turned away from the Creator, want to grasp the world in unity, they cannot help but make one of the categorical elements work as the unifying pole to establish a worldview. Materialism makes material play the role of the unifying pole to explain the world. Humanism is the idea that makes human beings the unifying pole. They both may be characterized as idol worship.

The Dutch theologians’ arguments against the rationalistic and humanistic worldview of the day sought to present a biblical framework of thought, that is, creation, fall, and redemption as the foundation of a Christian worldview. It shows clear contrast with the worldview of dispensationalists, which tends to throw every problem that the world needs to face to Christ who comes back to us in the foreseeable near future. The Reformed theologians were determined to face the reality that is full of chronic and impending problems. An American theologian Rousas John Rushdoony brought the foundationalism a step further to Christian reconstructionist. He emphasized the command of God, the law of God’s reign. He applied Old Testament laws to the area of modern politics and economy in his book, *The Institutes of the Biblical Law* (1973). He also started a Christian home-schooling movement so that the children were protected from the secular world that brainwashes with the unbiblical, rationalistic, and humanistic value systems, or worldview. Rushdoony provided a vision of how the divinely reigned kingdom of God extends and develops in the world. He showed the duty of Christians to actively participate in reconstructing the world by applying and following the law of God.

Some Christians in Japan are very enthusiastic about the new theological direction known as the New Perspective on Paul. One of the representatives

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of the trend, Anglican Bishop N.T. Wright, takes a different approach from that of the Neo-Calvinists of the Netherlands. Instead of following their philosophical argumentations, Wright tries to articulate historically the Apostolic Gospel and the structure of its worldview as the original Christian worldview before it was polluted by ancient Greek philosophy and by modern rationalism and humanism.

American Evangelicals detected that the de-Christianization process is seriously damaging their young people. They were frustrated because they had overlooked the progress and the impact, and failed to cope with the problem that Christians think and act as though they are ignorant of what the Bible says about God, man, and nature. As a result, they follow rationalistic and humanistic worldviews. The Evangelicals started to develop Christian worldview classes at their universities to fight this trend.

One of their text books is Paul G. Hiebert's *Transforming Worldviews: an Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*. According to Hiebert, the word "worldview" has several roots. In his book, he explains the two of the most influential ones.¹

One is in Western philosophy, where the German word *Weltanschauung* was introduced by Immanuel Kant and used by writers such as Kierkegaard, Engels, and Dilthey as they reflected on Western culture.

In the nineteenth century, German historians turned from tracing the victories of those who came to rule the world successively to the study of ordinary people. This turn was made mainly by the influence of the Annales school, started by two Strasbourg historians, Lucien Paul Victor Febvre and Marc Léopold Benjamin Bloch. Bloch became known as the founder of an approach in historical research called Social History, which intends to give a holistic view of history by focusing on the then neglected area of the ordinary lives of common people. This view is influenced by Hegel and Marx. They researched topics such as festivals, etiquette, folk beliefs, and many more. These historians examined in detail the everyday lives of individuals, local events, and letters, to find value systems

commonly shared by the people. Soon they found that there are cultural patterns behind how people think and decide, and what people say and do. They examined problems such as how cultural patterns emerge and spread from one regions to other and why some die out soon and others last for millennia. The historians used the term *Weltanschauung*, the worldview, to refer to the deep, enduring cultural patterns of a people.

The other root that Hiebert introduces in his book is found in anthropology. Anthropologists studied peoples around the world and found deep but radically differing worldviews underlying their cultures. They found that worldviews profoundly shape the ways people see the world and live their lives, that worldviews sometimes spread from one group of people to another, and that worldviews are often inherited by the following generations.

The growing attention to the concept of worldview led to deeper investigations of culture and the use of the words such as "ethos," "zeitgeist," "cosmology," "cosmos within," "world metaphor," "world order," "world hypotheses," "outlook on life," "collective unconscious," "spirituality" and so on.

What are the functions of worldviews, then?² Firstly, they answer our ultimate questions such as: Where are we (what is the nature of the world)? Who are we (what does it mean to be human)? What is wrong (how do we account for evil and the brokenness of life)? What is the remedy (what is the path from brokenness and insecurity to a life that is whole and secure)?

Secondly, worldviews give us emotional security. People in uncertainty turn to the deepest cultural beliefs to recognize and renew order in life and nature.

Thirdly, worldviews validate our deepest cultural norms with which we evaluate our experiences and choose courses of action.

Fourthly, worldviews help to integrate the culture. Compartmentalized perceptions and experiences are unified to give a sense that we live in a world that makes sense.

Fifthly, worldviews monitor the cultural change and help us to select or reject new ideas and to reinterpret

Luther ... wanted people to live out their life as confessors of faith in their daily situation, that is, people learn to live by *actus confessionis* who apply the *status confessionis* in their everyday life.

¹ Paul G. Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 13.

² Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews*, 28.

those we adopt to fit our worldview.

Sixthly and finally, worldviews provide psychological reassurance that the world is truly as we see it and a sense of peace and being at home. Worldview crisis hits people when there is a gap between their worldview and their experience of reality.

Underlying a culture, worldview provides people a coherent way of looking at the world. Clifford Geertz pointed out that worldviews are both models of reality and models for action. The models of reality describe and explain the nature of things, and define how we understand the world, while the models for action provide us with the mental blueprints that guide our behaviour and define how we take action.³

Lutheran Worldview

What is the worldview that the Lutheran Reformation brought about? If we take the worldview as meaning both the models of reality and the models of action, Japanese Luther scholar, Yoshikazu Tokuzen's contribution cannot be overlooked to articulate the worldview that Luther presented and lived.⁴

Tokuzen sees Luther as a man of concentration and expansion, that is, Luther summarized his faith and theology to the minimum confession, and his life and work was the lively application of what he confessed. We need to recognize the two aspects of the confession of faith, *Bekennniss*, and distinguish them while not separating them. The two aspects are *status confessionis* and *actus confessionis*. The Church and individuals live out their confession in variety of concrete situations in the tension between the *status confessionis* and *actus confessionis*.

We need to discuss how Luther reformed the meaning of *confessio* before going into the two aspects of them according to Tokuzen. The Greek word *homologeîn*, originally meaning to testify at a court, is used in the New Testament to mean comprehensively to praise God, to confess sins, to confess the faith. Augustine used the word confession comprehensively as the New Testament does. Through the Middle Ages, the word confession lost its comprehensive meaning and became a small part in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Confession was disregarded and formalized to be a mere element

in a process. Luther wanted to clarify the meaning of repentance in the light of the forgiveness of sin in his “95 Theses.” When Luther was studying the Psalms he was learning from Augustine and Jerome. When he came to the sixty-sixth chapter in his First Lecture on Psalms, he quoted Jerome, “The confession of sins is the praise to God,” and commented that to confess our sins before God is to acknowledge God as God, God as righteous and to give glory to God.⁵ Luther regained the meaning of confession from a static, formalized one to dynamic wholehearted one.

By the time Luther lectured on the Letter to the Romans, Luther's acknowledgement of God, who works all in all, and man, who is a sinner, led him to justify God who condemned man for his sin, and justify man by this God through faith in the Saviour he sent. In a lecture on the Letter to the Hebrews, he says “all that we do is *confessio* . . . , they praise you, confess you, adore you and bless you and all that they do is actually your work in them.”⁶ So, for Luther, confession is what man does with his whole personhood and whole life, and that we confess is solely the work of God in us.

What is *status confessionis* according to Luther? Luther summarized the confession of God as the confession of Christ alone, and further concentrated confession to the confession of Christ in His redemptive work alone. Christ's work of redemption and faith in Christ is the *status confessionis*, the basic confession of what Christians believe.

For example, in the Smalcald Articles of 1537, Luther starts out the first part summarizing the Ecumenical Creeds and then he further summarizes down to Christ's office and work, which is our redemption. This is the theology of the cross. The first and chief article of the second part is the foundation of the rest of the articles. Luther confesses that only the redemptive work of Christ justifies us. Quoting from Romans 4:24–25, John 1:29, Isaiah 53:6, and Romans 3:23–25, Luther says, “This is necessary to believe. This cannot be otherwise acquired or grasped by any work, law, or merit. Therefore it is clear and certain that this faith alone justifies us.” He then quotes from Romans 3:28 and 26. He goes on to say, “Nothing of this article can be yielded or surrendered, even though heaven and earth and everything else falls.” Following quotes from Acts 4:12 and Isaiah 53:5, he says, “Upon this

³ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays by Clifford Geertz* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 169, quoted in Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews*, 28.

⁴ Yoshikazu Tokuzen, *To Confess the faith: In the Case of Luther and Bonhoeffer* (Only in Japanese).

⁵ WA 3:378.

⁶ WA 57:137

article everything that we teach and practice depends, in opposition to the pope, the devil, and the whole world. Therefore, we must be certain and not doubt this doctrine. Otherwise, all is lost, and the pope, the devil, and all adversaries win the victory and the right over us.”⁷ This is the article of justification. This is the worldview of Luther and his Reformation in a nutshell. “Justification is the article by which the church stands and falls.” *justificatio est articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*.

What then is *actus confessionis* according to Luther? Tokuzen says that the Reformation is the formation and confirmation of the *status confessionis* in the form of *actus confessionis*. What Luther wrote, talked, preached, argued, and how he lived is basically his expression of *actus confessionis*. When we see concrete actions arise out of the necessity of the concrete situations, the worldview as a model of reality serves as the worldview as a model of action, that is, *status confessionis* gives birth to the *actus confessionis*.

Luther’s lectures on the Psalms and New Testament letters helped Luther to discover the Gospel. Out of his *status confessionis* emerged his “95 Theses” as an *actus confessionis*, asking a series of questions concerning the practice of the church that do not fit the *status confessionis*.

Responding to Erasmus, who in the “*libero arbitrio*” accused and reproached Luther of being too stubborn by holding on to his own assertio, Luther said that if a person gives up sticking to his assertio he is no longer a Christian because assertio means to stick on, to affirm, to confess, to apologize, and to hold it not to be broken. Since they are bestowed by the Holy Spirit from heaven the spirit glorifies God and confesses Christ until their death. To die for the confession and assertion of faith is what *assertio* of faith means.

Confessing the faith means that the confessor does not compromise and sacrifice *status confessionis*. When Luther had to cope with Carlstadt, Muenster, the Peasants’ War, and conflict over the Lord’s Supper with Zwingli, Luther showed the same determination and stubbornness to his *status confessionis*. He could not see the difference of *status confessionis* as a minor conflict. He could not compromise nor sacrifice any article of faith in order to be united with people just because they share the same purpose.

Luther already started to preach and write on the

Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer in 1516. The Small Catechism and the Large Catechism are also his *actus confessionis*. In the Small Catechism, he instructs the heads of the family to answer the questions that their household ask in a very simple but powerful way. Parents are to teach their children by confessing their faith so that the children may grow up as confessors of faith who share with their parents the same worldview of both *status confessionis* and *actus confessionis*.

Tokuzen describes the confessional documents that Luther and other confessors wrote as practical applications of what they confessed. They confessed their faith in the form of clear testimony to prepare for discussions with the opponents in a friendly manner and “in this way dissensions may be put away without offensive conflict and they may be brought back to agreement and concord.”⁸ Luther went on to confess in the third part of “Concerning the Lord’s Supper, Confession (1528),” and he confessed with Justus Jonas and Melancthon “The Articles of Schwabach (1529).” His argument against Zwingli was summarized in “The Marburg Articles (1529).” All of these led Melancthon to confess “The Augsburg Confession (1530).” Specific historical situation led Luther to write “The Smalcald Articles (1537).” They are all *actus confessionis* in the concrete situation that the Reformers faced out of the same *status confessionis*.

Shaping Confessional Lutheranism in the Twenty-first Century

How may we be able to produce confessional Lutherans in the twenty-first century? One of the ways that Luther used was educational reform. The purpose of education was twofold for Luther, one was to evangelize, that is, to grow people into confessors of faith, and the other was to grow mature citizens. Luther believed that people need to know and to confess that we are justified for the sake of Christ alone and by faith alone. This is *status confessionis*. He then wanted people to live out their life as confessors of faith in their daily situation, that is, people learn to live by *actus confessionis* who apply the *status confessionis* in their everyday life. This is why he designed education to train good citizens.

Luther used the threefold method to educate people. He formed Christian schools. He replaced schools in monasteries and cathedrals with Christian schools run by the nobilities. He made use of the church for education.

⁷ Quotations from the Book of Concord from, Paul T. McCain et al., ed., *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005). SA II, 1, The Chief Article.

⁸ AC Preface 9.

He also made the family a unit for education.

He wrote “The Explanation of the Ten Commandments, Creed, Lord’s Prayer (1520)” and “*Betbuechelein* (A Small Booklet on Prayer, 1522)” based on his catechetical preaching. He lamented that many people are not able to answer even a simple question of what salvation is after listening to sermons for three or four years. There are books that teach about salvation but they are not written in the heart of the people. Luther worked hard to prepare the material for preachers and for the head of the house. He himself preached four times a year a series of ten catechism sermons in two weeks using Matins on Sunday mornings and two o’clock meetings on weekday afternoons. In 1529, he wrote two Catechisms, the Large in April and the Small in May. He created posters of teachings, so that people may be able to see on the wall of their dining rooms and the head of the family read aloud everyday at the morning and evening prayer. He added the preface and the *Haustafel* to print with the Small Catechism. From the third edition, the Small Catechism was also known as the *Enchiridion*.

He used these to impact the society by suggesting that the pastors “would read each morning, noon, and evening only a page or two in the catechism, the prayer book, the New Testament, or something else in the Bible. They should pray the Lord’s Prayer for themselves and their parishioners.”⁹ He also makes clear that “it is the duty

of every father of a family to question and examine his children and servants at least once a week and see what they know or are learning from the catechism and if they do not know the catechism, he should keep them learning it faithfully.”¹⁰

Luther starts his catechism with the Ten Commandments. This is what we need to respect and honour as the highest treasure because we know what God desires us to be and to do. It is not that we are to live as Jews who received the Ten Commandments through Moses. We read it as the universal commandments that apply to everyone. Luther takes students to the

next section, the Creed. The Creed shows what we are to expect and to receive from God. Here is the clear order and distinction of Law and Gospel. In the answer part of the Second Article, Luther summarizes the redemption and the life of the redeemed as follows.

He (Christ) has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil. He did this not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, so that I may be His own, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.¹¹

This is a concise and clear summary of how a Christian grasp *status confessionis* and live it out as *actus confessionis*.

In “The German Mass (1526),” Luther shows his sense of need for a good and simple catechism. He also wrote a prayer in a special way that the words of the Lord’s Prayer are to be prayed with deeper understanding and appreciation. The catechism was a prayer book that guides the learners to prayer in the everyday life.

Luther teaches about the three parts above, “everything that we have in the Scriptures is included in short, plain, and simple terms.” He continues and says, “when three

parts are understood, a person must also know what to say about our Sacraments, which Christ Himself instituted: Baptism and the holy body and blood of Christ.”¹²

Then Luther makes a suggestion how to teach and make people good confessors of faith.

We would have all together five whole parts of Christian doctrine. These should be taught constantly and be required leaning for children. You should recite them word for word. For you must not rely on the idea that the young people will learn and retain these things from the sermon alone. When these parts have been well learned, you may

We pray with hope in Christ alone. As we pray, our hope is made conviction and encouragement. As we pray our *status confessionis* becomes more deeply understood, and our *actus confessionis* more actively incarnated in us.

⁹ LC Preface, 3.

¹⁰ LC Short preface, 4.

¹¹ SC Creed, The Second Article.

¹² LC III, 15–20.

supplement and strengthen them by also setting before them some psalms or hymns, which have been composed on these parts of the catechism. Lead the young into the Scriptures this way and make progress in them daily.¹³

He goes on to explain the method of teaching the Catechism so that the Catechism enters the mind and becomes fixed in the memory.

Luther confessed the faith and kept confessing in words and deeds. His way of impacting people to have a Reformation worldview and live accordingly starts and continues with catechetical education, and never ends. Luther says:

For myself I say this. I am also a doctor and preacher, yes, as learned and experienced as all the people who have such assumptions and contentment. Yet I act as a child who is being taught the catechism every morning, and whenever I have time, I read and say, word for word, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Psalms and such. I must still read and study them daily. Yet I cannot master the catechism as I wish. But I must remain a child and pupil of the catechism, and am glad to remain so.¹⁴

He says this because he knows the benefit of always learning the catechism, that is,

[F]or even if they know and understand the catechism perfectly, which, however, is impossible in this life, there are still many benefits and fruits to be gained, if it is daily read and practiced in thought and speech. For example, the Holy Spirit is present in such reading, repetition, and meditation, He bestows ever new and more light and devoutness. In this way the catechism is daily loved and appreciated better, as Christ promised in Matthew 18:20 'For where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I among them.'¹⁵

If we seek the way to shape Confessional Lutheranism in the twenty-first century, we need not to look for anywhere else but stay in the daily education of the catechism while others may look for more fancy way or short-cut

way of reaching the goal. Catechetical education is the most certain way of making both the teachers and the learners understand what we confess, and of training them to apply *status confessionis* into practice in the everyday life.

It may be good to teach people how to pray as Luther emphasized in the German mass cited above. Prayer links the divine service and the daily life, receiving gifts from God at the divine service and sharing it with our neighbours in the daily life.

The Lords' Prayer in the Large Catechism serves as the best instruction on prayer. We are commanded to pray daily to fight against our enemy, our flesh, the world, and the devil. Luther teaches that we pray because God tells us to do so, and also we pray because he promises us to hear our prayer. Luther is not satisfied by just letting readers know the importance and urgency of prayer. He interprets our suffering as beneficial for us to turn us to God in prayer. And, he suggests in a strong tone to make a daily habit of prayer. He says,

Everyone should form the daily habit from his youth of praying for all his needs ... This I say because I would like to see these things brought home again to the people so that they might learn to pray truly and not go about coldly and indifferently. They become daily more unfit for prayer because of indifference. That is just what the devil desires, what damage and harm it does him when prayer is done properly.¹⁶

In the first petition, we are reminded of our identity as baptized in his name, redeemed, and made to be his children. Since we call God our Father, it is our duty always to act and behave as godly children, that he may not receive shame, but honour and praise from us.

In the second petition, we pray for the kingdom to come. This petition is not teaching us to wait for his earthly rule and political kingdom to be realized. Many misuse the term *Missio Dei* to see God's work of reconciling the world to himself as making society humanly better or creating a Christ-centred society where people value the Christian worldview as the best one among existing worldviews. Christians are to obey God in helping him as his servants to accomplish the kingdom of God on earth. God sent Christ to bring us to himself and to govern us as a King of righteousness, life, and salvation

¹³ LC, Short preface, 24.

¹⁴ LC, preface, 8.

¹⁵ LC, preface, 9.

¹⁶ LC III, 28.

against sin, death and an evil conscience. We pray that the word of God and a Christian life may abide and daily grow in us, and may gain approval and acceptance among other people.

In the third petition, we pray for his will to be done. We receive God as our own, and all his riches but in this petition we pray that we must firmly keep God's honour and our salvation, our identity, and our inheritance.

In the fourth petition, we come to the prayer for our vocational life, that God provides for us all to eat and drink. We also ask him to protect our family so that we may be able to eat and drink in peace.

In the fifth petition, we pray for the forgiveness of our sins.

In the sixth petition, we pray for the protection from the temptation from our flesh, world, and the devil.

In the seventh petition, we pray that the evil one may not conquer us, and for God to give us a peaceful, faithful end.

We pray with hope in Christ alone. As we pray, our hope is made conviction and encouragement. As we pray our *status confessionis* becomes more deeply understood, and our *actus confessionis* more actively incarnated in us.

If the faith is the truth, and the love is the commandments, prayer is out of hope given and hope being strengthened and activated.

God is shaping us in this century to confess our hope in him. Prayer is always a time of repentance and a time of faith and praise. We confess when we pray. We remain in the joy that our Lord gives in the Word and the Sacraments, and we rejoice in Christ and confess Christ alone is our Lord and Saviour.

Rev. Dr. Makito Masaki president of Kobe Lutheran Theological Seminary