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+ Kenneth Frederick Korby +

May 5, 1924 - July 11, 2006

Readers of this article on Korby and Löhe will also find of interest the contributions in the Theological Observer section by Peter Bender (on Korby) and John Pless (on Löhe Studies).

The Editors

The Contribution of Kenneth Korby to a Renewed Reception of Wilhelm Löhe's Pastoral Theology¹

John T. Pless

In a letter dated August 4, 1853, Pastor Wilhelm Löhe wrote poignantly to the colonists in Michigan's Saginaw valley:

Dear friend. . . . Not only because of the death of my dear mother in her 84th year on July 6 do I write this letter on stationery bordered in black, but also because this letter, in another sense, is for me a kind of farewell letter or death notice. Recall if you will how things gradually developed in the Saginaw colonies and you will be aware how close these colonies were to my heart and hand. Today my hand, but not my heart, is taking leave of these colonies. . . . My stance toward you remains as it always has been. You are and continue to be my near relatives with respect to the doctrines of the Church; I am happy about your Synod, about your life, and I pray that nothing untoward may befall you because of your unjust, unholy and ugly attitude towards us, that you may be preserved and become a blessing to many. May the Lord and His holy peace be with you."²

Nearly twenty years later, the February 15, 1872, issue of the Missouri Synod's *Der Lutheraner* would provide an announcement of Löhe's death with minimal comment: "From *Lutherische Zeitung* we learned the shocking news that Pastor Löhe of Neuendettelsau, 'after a brief illness' died at five forty-five on the evening of January second."³

For much of the Missouri Synod's history, the significance of the pastor from Neuendettelsau has been only partially appreciated. At worst,

¹ This study was presented as "The Lively Use of Löhe: Kenneth Korby's Contribution to a Renewed Reception of His Pastoral Theology in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod" at the 2. Internationale Löhe-Tagung, Augustana-Hochschule, in Neuendettelsau, Germany, 23 July 2008.

² Cited in Gerhard Munding, "Wilhelm Löhe," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 70 (1997): 19.

³ Erich Heintzen, *Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod, 1841–1853* (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois-Urbana, 1964), Preface.

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Löhe was characterized as guilty of “Romanizing tendencies.”⁴ More generous assessments recognize his early assistance in providing human and financial resources that would be crucial for the development of what would become the Missouri Synod.⁵ Yet as we come to celebrate the bicentennial of Löhe’s birth, there is significant and positive appreciation of Löhe in the church body that he had a hand in establishing as a “father from afar.” Evidence of this is seen in that both seminaries of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) hosted conferences to commemorate the 200th anniversary of his birth. The February 2008 issue of *The Lutheran Witness*, the Synod’s official magazine, carried an article on Löhe.⁶ The Holy Trinity 2008 issue of *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology* was published as “the Loehe bicentennial issue,” featuring essays by North American and European scholars.⁷ *Concordia Pulpit Resources* noted Löhe’s contributions to preaching and included the translation of one of his sermons on the Lord’s Supper in a recent issue.⁸ Concordia Publishing House published David C. Ratke’s *Confession and Mission, Word and Sacrament: The Ecclesial Theology of Wilhelm Löhe* in 2001.⁹ In 2006, LCMS World Relief and Human Care commissioned a translation of *Löhe on Mercy: Six Chapters for Everyone, the Seventh for the Servants of Mercy* and has widely distributed this booklet throughout the congregations of the church body.¹⁰ John Stephenson, a professor of the Lutheran Church—Canada has translated Löhe’s 1849 *Aphorisms*,¹¹ which were published in 2008 by

⁴ For example, Franz Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. 3, trans. Walter W.F. Albrecht (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953): 447; and Diedrich Henry Steffens, *Doctor Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1917): 285.

⁵ For an analysis of Löhe’s influence in the early years of the Missouri Synod as well as the present, see John T. Pless, “Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod: Forgotten Paternity or Living Legacy?” *Currents in Theology and Mission* (April 2006): 122–137.

⁶ John T. Pless, “The Missionary Who Never Left Home,” *Lutheran Witness* 127 (February 2008): 11–13.

⁷ Included in this issue are articles by Dietrich Blaufuß, Craig Nessian, and Walter Conser, as well as translations of a sermon by Löhe on Trinity Sunday and his Preface to the *Agende für christliche Gemeiden des lutherischen Bekenntnißs*.

⁸ Wilhelm Loehe, “Historical Sermon: A Sermon on the Lord’s Supper,” trans. Jason D. Lane, *Concordia Pulpit Resources* 18 (August 24–November 23, 2008): 3–6.

⁹ David C. Ratke, *Confession and Mission, Word and Sacrament* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001).

¹⁰ Wilhelm Löhe, *Löhe on Mercy: Six Chapters for Everyone, the Seventh for the Servants of Mercy*, trans. Holger Sonntag (St. Louis: LCMS Board for World Relief and Human Care, 2007).

¹¹ Wilhelm Löhe, *Aphorisms of the New Testament Offices and Their Relationship to the Congregation*, trans. John Stephenson (Bynum, TX: Repristination Press, 2008).

Repristination Press. *Lutheran Service Book*, the hymnal of the LCMS, contains one of Löhe's hymns, "Wide Open Stand the Gates" (LSB #639) and the accompanying *Agenda* and *Pastoral Care Companion* bear numerous signs of Löhe's influence. The new hymnal lists January 2, the date of Löhe's death, in commemoration of his vocation as a pastor.

A number of individuals could be cited as contributing to this renewed interest in Löhe and his influence in the LCMS within the last three decades, but none is more significant or substantial than Kenneth F. Korby (1924–2006). Korby graduated from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 1945, and, after pastorates in Minnesota and Oregon, he was called to the department of theology at Valparaiso University in 1958, where he served until 1980. While at Valparaiso, Korby earned a Masters in Sacred Theology from Yale, and, in 1976, he obtained a doctorate from Concordia Seminary in Exile for a thesis entitled "The Theology of Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Loehe with Special Attention to the Function of the Liturgy and the Laity."¹² In 1980, Korby became pastor of Chatham Fields Lutheran Church, an African-American parish on the south side of Chicago. Upon retiring in 1987 and moving to St. Paul, Minnesota, Korby served as vacancy pastor of Zion Lutheran Church until he completely retired from pastoral ministry and moved to Port Angeles, Washington, in 1997. Until he suffered a debilitating stroke in 2001, Korby was in demand as a speaker at pastoral conferences. In addition to his doctoral dissertation, Korby published three significant articles on Löhe.¹³ He became a purveyor of Löhe's pastoral theology, however, chiefly through intensive term classes taught at both LCMS seminaries in the 1980s and 1990s and through various conferences and study groups in which he participated.

Although Korby often spoke of writing a pastoral theology and was encouraged by students and colleagues to do so, he was so much occupied with teaching and preaching that he never found the time for such an undertaking. Korby intended for the move from Chicago to St. Paul to provide him with time to write. Within a few weeks of his arrival in St. Paul, however, he agreed to serve as vacancy pastor for a struggling,

¹² Kenneth F. Korby, *Theology of Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe with Special Attention to the Function of the Liturgy and the Laity* (Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Printshop, 1976).

¹³ Kenneth F. Korby, "Loehe's Seelsorge for His Fellow Lutherans in North America," in *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 45 (November, 1972): 227-246; "Theoretiker und Praktiker der Seelsorge," in *Wilhelm Löhe Anstöße für die Zeit*, ed. Friedrich Wilhelm Kantzenbach (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 1971): 137-147; and "Wilhelm Loehe and Liturgical Renewal," in *The Lutheran Historical Conference: Essays and Reports 1972* (St. Louis: Lutheran Historical Conference, 1974): 57-84.

central city congregation. As in Chicago, Korby found himself implementing what he had learned from Löhe in congregational life and tutoring young pastors to do the same rather than writing on Löhe. Ultimately it would be the example of Korby's own pastoral practice and his mentorship of seminarians and pastors that would open a way for a renewed appreciation for and usage of Löhe's legacy in the LCMS in a significant way.

This paper will seek to examine key themes from Löhe that emerge in Korby's published works and how these themes were creatively used by him in charting a way for contemporary pastoral care and church life within the LCMS. While Korby did not publish any additional works specifically on Löhe after the completion of his dissertation in 1976, themes from the dissertation would engage his writing and speaking for the remainder of his career. Like Löhe, the subject of his study and the object of his emulation, Korby found the congregation rather than the academy to be the most fruitful context for his life's work. To be sure, the years at Valparaiso witnessed a constant literary output of scholarly as well as popular sermonic and devotional pieces, but it was the later part of his career, spent in congregations, that pressed him to write and speak in a way that would give him a hearing among the clergy of the LCMS, and through him they would hear Löhe.

I. Korby's Interest in Löhe

A number of factors converged to attract Korby to the study of Löhe. His maternal grandfather was a Neuendettelsau *Sendlinge* who served in northeastern Nebraska. The congregation of his birth and childhood, Zion Lutheran Church in Wellington, Colorado, had its roots in the Iowa Synod before joining the Missouri Synod. As a seminarian and a young pastor, Korby was associated with *Una Sancta*¹⁴ and drawn by its emphasis on a churchly ethos marked by every Sunday celebration of the Lord's Supper and the restoration of private confession. His friend, Walter Bouman, produced a Heidelberg doctoral dissertation on nineteenth-century Lutheran ecclesiology that would invite a reconsideration of Löhe.¹⁵ A portion of a sabbatical year in 1968–1969 was spent in Neuendettelsau,

¹⁴ *Una Sancta* provided English-speaking readers with a glimpse into Löhe's pastoral theology. See Johann Conrad Wilhelm Löhe, "The Sacrament of Repentance" trans. Delvin E. Ressel, *Una Sancta* 10 (St. Matthias, Apostle and Martyr, 1951), 1-9 and 10 (Sts. Philip and James, Apostles and Martyrs, 1951), 10-23.

¹⁵ Walter H. Bouman, *The Unity of the Church in 19th Century Confessional Lutheranism* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Heidelberg, 1962).

where Korby immersed himself in archival research and benefited from close contact with Martin Wittenberg.¹⁶

Korby's work on Löhe is not only marked by a careful reading of the original sources but also engaged with key scholars of the period involved in Löhe research: Hans Kressel, Friedrich Kantzenbach, Georg Merz, and Martin Wittenberg (all from Germany); Siegfried Hebart (Australia); and James Schaaf (United States). Korby's own interest in Löhe was not simply to provide another historical study of his life or systematic investigation of his theology. Korby focused on the usefulness of Löhe for Lutheran pastoral theology in the late twentieth century.¹⁷

Critical of approaches to pastoral theology that exchanged the churchly setting for that of the clinic and the language of the Christian faith for the vocabulary of the personality sciences, Korby saw in Löhe a pastoral theologian who could not envision spiritual care apart from the context of the living congregation where the language of Holy Scripture, the Catechism, and liturgy were used for diagnosis and cure of troubled and tormented souls. Korby discovered in Löhe one who thought theologically about pastoral care and sought to practice it as a theological discipline in contrast to the growing trend of the middle and late twentieth century that reduced the care of souls to counseling and relied deeply on psychological theory rather than traditional theological categories.¹⁸ Korby anticipated the rising tide of voices such as William Willimon, Thomas Oden, E. Brooks Holifield, Paul Pruyser, and more recently Andrew Purves,¹⁹ who would make similar polemical assessments of pastoral theologies dominated by social ideologies or psychological views.

¹⁶ Martin Wittenberg's "Wilhelm Löhe and Confession: A Contribution to the History of *Seelsorge* and the Office of the Ministry within Modern Lutheranism" was subsequently translated by Gerald S. Krispen and published in the festschrift for Norman E. Nagel, *And Every Tongue Confess: Essays in Honor of Norman Nagel on the Occasion of His Sixty-fifth Birthday*, ed. Gerald S. Krispin and Jon D. Vieker (Dearborn, Michigan: The Nagel Festschrift Committee, 1990), 113-150. This essay proved an important source for many of Korby's students who sought to catechize congregations toward the recovery of the practice.

¹⁷ Korby's work was also reflected in a chapter on Löhe written by Herbert Mayer, one the readers of his dissertation, in Mayer's book, *Pastoral Care: Its Roots and Renewal* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1979), 195-212.

¹⁸ See Kenneth Korby, "Pastoral Theology in Ecclesiological Perspective," *The Cresset* (April 1970): 17-19.

¹⁹ See, for example, William Willimon, *Worship as Pastoral Care* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979); Thomas Oden, *Pastoral Theology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982); E. Brooks Holifield, *A History of Pastoral Care in America* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1983); Paul

Korby was of the opinion "that whoever wills to enter the thought of Wilhelm Löhe on the matter of the cure of souls must enter via his understanding of the church."²⁰ Noting that Löhe did not develop his views on the church systematically in the way of a classical dogmatics text, Korby echoed the observation of Walter Bouman that "[Löhe's] whole life and thought, his correspondence, his parish duties, his world-wide concerns revolved around the nature of the Church so that a biography of him can at the same time be an ecclesiology."²¹

II. Korby's Analysis of Löhe's Ecclesiology

The real weight of Korby's contribution is treatment of elements in Löhe's ecclesiology that are drawn together in a focus on pastoral care. Korby finds in Löhe a theologian who is both a theoretician and practitioner of pastoral care.²² Three strands of Löhe's ecclesiological thinking relative to pastoral care emerge in Korby's work.²³

First, there is the unity of the church. Drawing on Ephesians and the creed that "I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church," Korby sees Löhe as providing a corrective to the conceptuality of the church as "visible and invisible" inherited from Lutheran Orthodoxy and widely used in the nineteenth century.²⁴ Löhe did not abandon this distinction as can be seen in his *Agende* of 1844 and his *Three Books About the Church*. In the foreword to the agenda, Löhe writes that the church is the "marvelous creation of her one and only Lord and Master, which has demonstrated and will demonstrate herself independent of everything except Word and Sacrament. In her totality the church is and remains invisible and appears visibly, sometimes here, sometimes there, as her banners wave in the

Pruyser, *The Minister as Diagnostician* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976); and Andrew Purves, *Pastoral Theology in the Classical Tradition* (Louisville: John Knox/Westminster, 2001). For a helpful introduction to the churchly character of Löhe's pastoral theology, see Armin Wenz, "Ministry and Pastoral Theology of Löhe and Vilmar" *Logia* 16 (Holy Trinity 2007): 15-23.

²⁰ Korby, *Theology as Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe*, 307.

²¹ Korby, *Theology as Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe*, 148.

²² See Korby, "Theoretiker und Praktiker der Seelsorge," 137-147.

²³ Korby concentrates on Löhe's *Drei Bücher von der Kirche* (1844) and *Der Evangelische Geistliche* (1852-1858) in his analysis but demonstrates a wide comprehension of other works by Löhe, especially those that attend to liturgy, catechesis, and pastoral care.

²⁴ See Heinrich Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. Charles A. Hay and Henry E. Jacobs (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961), 582-599 and Holsten Fagerberg, *Bekennnis, Kirche, und Amt in der deutschen konfessionellen Theologie des Jahrhunderts* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells Boktryckeri, 1952), 127-131.

breeze, sometimes here, sometimes there, and her marks appear in Word and Sacrament, sometimes here, sometimes there."²⁵

To avoid positing two churches, one visible and the other invisible, Löhe seeks to speak of the church as simultaneously visible and invisible. This Löhe does by using the analogy of the human being who is both body and soul, one not existing without the other in this life, and by making a distinction between those who are "called," as those embraced in the visible church, and those who are "chosen," as members of the invisible church.²⁶ Korby acknowledges that Löhe's treatment of the visible/invisible distinction is not without difficulties from the multiple perspectives of missiology, systematics, and pastoral care.²⁷ He identifies what he sees as problematic:

To be caught in the tug of war initiated by the use of the words 'visible' and 'invisible' is to be threatened always to flee into the invisible, thereby turning every day churchly life over to machinations, devices, techniques, and powers of all sorts. Or, to choose to concentrate on that reality that corresponds to 'visible' is to shift the understanding of the Word of God and faith so that the inner life of the church is drained off into the quagmires of experientialism and into the legalisms of righteousness by works or rituals. And yet, to hold to both terms 'visible' and 'invisible' is very nearly to be caught defenseless against the 'two church solution' that has so often threatened the church's unity and the Gospel.²⁸

Yet, positively, Korby argues Löhe is able to escape turning the doctrine of the church into an abstraction by avoiding a shift from oral/auditory images to visual ones in his ecclesiology. The inner life of the church which is hidden is given outward expression in preaching, baptizing, absolving, and distributing the Lord's Supper.

The inner and outer life of the church is joined together in an unbroken unity. Korby cites Löhe from *Three Books About the Church*: "The visible church is the 'tabernacle of God among men, and outside of it there is no salvation. A man separates himself from God the Father if he separates himself from the church, his mother. . . . As a man stands in relation to the church, so he stands in relation to God."²⁹

²⁵ Cited in Korby, *Theology of Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe*, 178.

²⁶ See Wilhelm Loehe, *Three Books about the Church* trans. James SchAAF (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 87-89.

²⁷ Korby, *Theology of Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe*, 180-181.

²⁸ Korby, *Theology as Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe*, 182-183.

²⁹ Korby, *Theology as Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe*, 180.

Second, the apostolic character of the church means that the church is not a static institution but a living organism. The church is both called and calling. By the apostolic word, that is the living voice of preaching that is in conformity to the apostolic Scriptures, the church is called to life in Christ Jesus. Korby expresses the connection between the apostolic Word and mission:

As the mission is the church of God in motion, so the energy of that motion is the Word of God, the apostolic Word. That Word alone is the energy; that Word alone is the uniting center. It is not the constitutional order of the church, not a lord, not a bishop that is the uniting power in the center of the church, but this apostolic Word, the Scripture. Apostolic is the principle [sic] name for the church, for these clear Scriptures are not only the uniting word, but that clear Word that is always at the center and the church is never without 'its glorious center.' Löhe equates the apostolic Word and the Scriptures. However, at the same time he continues to keep alive the quality of the Word as spoken, as oral.³⁰

This is the calling to faith as faith comes from hearing the gospel. The church that is apostolic is constituted in and by this faith-creating Word. At the same time, the church that is apostolic is a calling church, as this church confesses Christ before the world and through the preaching of Christ gathers people from every tribe and tongue into the holy community whose head is Christ.

Acts 2:42 is taken by Korby to be crucial in Löhe's thinking on the nature of the life of the apostolic congregation expressed in worship: "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." Korby sees Löhe's use of this pericope as another example of avoidance of abstractions as he concretely describes the character of the liturgical congregation as praying, preaching, and celebrating the Lord's Supper.³¹

Gathered by the apostolic Word, the church is fed by the body and blood of the Lord in the Lord's Supper. While the appearance of four items noted in Acts 2:42 might appear in varying degrees in different gatherings of the congregation for worship, all four come to culmination and union in the service of Holy Communion. "One element may appropriately be stressed over the others in any given gathering. But the great high point,

³⁰ Korby, *Theology of Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Loehe*, 177.

³¹ Korby, *Theology as Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Loehe*, 170; also see Korby, "Wilhelm Loehe and Liturgical Renewal," 71, where Korby traces how Löhe develops the use of Acts 2:42 in his *Laienagende* of 1852.

the fountain of all other life and worship, is the union of the four elements. That union is the celebration of Holy Communion."³²

Korby maintains that Löhe's "sacramental realism" shaped his understanding of the church as a living organism. The church is known from the altar. It is from the altar that mission is generated and to the altar that mission returns. The movement of mission is from and to the altar as the church lives as "an organism of rescuing love." Although Korby himself was influential in shaping the training of deaconesses at Valparaiso University, he does not provide an extensive treatment of Löhe's understanding of the female diaconate in his published writings. He sees the diaconate as the embodied expression of the mercy of Christ rescuing those in need from bodily suffering and spiritual distress. In his treatment of the apostolic character of the church in Löhe, Korby was more interested in demonstrating how the church lives as a royal and holy priesthood under the oversight and care of the pastor.

Contrary to interpretations of Löhe that would see in him a hierarchal clericalism that demeaned the life of the laity, *disenfranchising* them from the life of the church, Korby finds in Löhe a unity between the pastoral office and the universal priesthood. Both are from the Lord. The office is established by Christ for the sake of the apostolic word so that it might be heard, believed, and confessed in the places where the priestly people called by the Lord live and work.³³ Korby sees Löhe as one who revitalizes a Lutheran doctrine of vocation that enlivens the laity to live out their callings in the world, especially in the Christian home where the word of Christ is to dwell richly. Thus the laity are not only the objects of spiritual care, they are engaged in this work in union with the pastor. Korby observes that Löhe's "*Haus-Schul-und Kirchenbuch* proved to be a coherent statement expressing the union of the home, the school, and the church in mutual care of souls, and included valuable guidance for laymen to engage directly in that caring work."³⁴

Korby would show himself to be more than a theoretical interpreter of Löhe, but one who modeled his own pastoral and pedagogical work after him. As a pastor and as a teacher, he produced devotional guides for the Christian family that envisioned the family as the locale for the life of the

³² Korby, *Theology of Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe*, 170.

³³ See Kenneth Korby, "The Pastoral Office and the Priesthood of Believers" in *Lord Jesus Christ, Will You Not Stay: Essays in Honor of Ronald Feuerhahn on the Occasion of His Sixty-fifth Birthday*, ed. J. Bart Day et al. (Houston: The Feuerhahn Festschrift Committee, 2002), 333-371.

³⁴ Korby, *Theology as Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe*, 173.

royal priesthood in hearing the Word of God, exercising the mutual exchange of the forgiveness of sins and engaging in ordered daily prayer. While they were not published and marketed, these guides were often photocopied and modified by Korby's students and are still in use in many congregations.

Third, the Lutheran Church is a confessional communion. As a heir of the confessional reawakening of the nineteenth century, Löhe embraced the Lutheran Confessions as the clear exposition of the Holy Scriptures. This led him to reject the Prussian Union and all that it entailed. Korby describes Löhe's confessionalism as a "sacramental confessionalism" in that he understood all of Lutheran doctrine drawn together in the Sacrament of the Altar. This sacramental confessionalism had both ecclesiological and pastoral consequences. Ecclesiastically it meant that for Löhe there could be no inter-communion with those of another confession. Pastorally it meant that the Confessions are embraced to keep the Lutheran Church centered in the purity of evangelical proclamation and administration of the Lord's Supper. For Löhe, the Confessions prevented involvement in inter-confessional mission societies and the embrace of what Korby identifies as "methodistic" methods of evangelization and pastoral care.

III. Lutheran Pastoral Care in Korby's Writings

As noted, Korby approached Löhe as a practicing pastor and teacher of pastors. In this capacity, Korby draws deeply from Löhe in six aspects as he seeks to articulate a Lutheran pastoral theology.

First, the care of souls properly belongs to the church. Korby writes:

The shape of Loehe's pastoral theology can be designated as a tri-polar field. The basic pole is the Word of God; the other two poles are the congregation and the pastor. As the Spirit leads the congregation, giving them pastors and teachers as gifts, the same spirit gives the *means* for the church's life and work. The wisdom and power of the pastoral office lie in the *use* of that Word. The object of pastoral care is the creation of new creatures. In *Seelsorge*, therefore, God's Word, not human skills, is the essence of persuasion, for the aim of the Spirit is to make a new and holy people, not merely to modify behavior with human persuasion. Care of souls is the cure of souls.³⁵

Second, Korby insists on the primacy of private confession and absolution in pastoral care. Like Löhe, Korby sought to restore confession

³⁵ Kenneth Korby, "Loehe's *Seelsorge* for his Fellow Lutherans in America," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 45 (November 1972), 235.

and absolution to usage in congregational life. He cites Löhe: "Private confession is the mother of all care of souls and for it there is no substitute."³⁶ An evangelical reclaiming of confession and absolution is anchored in the chief article, justification by faith alone. Absolution is the enactment of the justifying word of the gospel. For Löhe the *Beichtvater* (father confessor) is not a judge over the penitent but a servant or ambassador who is sent with the verdict of the judge: forgiveness to those broken by their sin. Löhe's theological and pastoral work on confession and absolution shaped Korby's practice and the way in which he taught congregations to treasure confession for the sake of the absolution as well as the manner in which he tutored pastors to care for the souls of the penitent. Included in the *Pastoral Care Companion*, an accompanying volume to the *Lutheran Service Book*, is a "Preparation for Confession"³⁷ taken in large part from a piece that Korby had prepared to assist penitents in spiritual self-examination prior to confession. Löhe's influence can be seen here.

Third, tied to the restoration of confession and absolution is the necessity of discipline within the church. The word of blessing in the absolution directed toward sinners who repent has its antithesis in the word of curse in the binding key spoken to hardened sinners who will not repent. Korby writes:

Löhe saw private confession and absolution as only a half measure if there is not joined with it the power to refuse absolution or to deny the Lord's Supper. To use only one key means the loss of both. Löhe judged easy or cheap care of souls to be worthless. 'There is no such thing as care of souls without training or discipline.' If there is no practice of excommunication, absolution loses some of its significance.³⁸

Korby points out that for Löhe, discipline in the church is work of rescue. It may be compared to the physician setting a broken bone, painful but necessary for the healing of the patient. Korby's attempt to reclaim the terminology of church discipline as a congregational activity of rescuing love is deeply indebted to Löhe. Korby writes:

³⁶ Korby, *Theology as Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe*, 160. Korby developed a contemporary approach to the practice of private confession and absolution based on Löhe's work in an unpublished paper presented on 19 April 1966 to a pastoral conference of the LCMS English District in Toledo, Ohio. A copy of this paper is in the author's possession.

³⁷ *LSB Pastoral Care Companion* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2007), 657-663.

³⁸ Korby, *Theology of Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe*, 189.

For his chief text Loehe uses St. Matthew 18. He begins his exposition of this text by describing the Lord Jesus as the One greatly offended by all mankind. He Himself comes to us the offenders, to be the pastor, the care-taker of our souls. In the same way, says Loehe, God gives us to each other to be care-takers of each other. God's divine call to do this work is issued in the offense of the brother. But God intends not only that we pardon the offender but that the offender be rescued. And entirely in accord with his churchly understanding of teaching and life, Loehe goes on to stress the congregational activity. Discipline is an affair of the congregation. The entire congregation should unite itself for the rescue of the single soul. The fellowship of the congregation gives witness against the unrepentant sin of the sinner, drawing the judgment of all into the field against the obstinacy of the person; and each one is to stand for all the others and together they are to stand for each one. That is the love expressed in Matthew 18. Can anyone imagine such love, such care, he asks? It is exactly the opposite of the spirit of Cain who says, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' Loehe notes that these words about the congregation and such care are spoken by Jesus before congregations were established, while Jesus saw them only as those future creations he would make by His words. Thus Jesus reveals 'a total organism of rescuing love' which helps restore the brother with gentleness because it is spiritual.³⁹

Fourth, sermon, sacrament, and catechization form a necessary triad in the care of souls. In *Three Books About the Church*, Löhe characterized his own time as "a time of one-sidedness and experimentation."⁴⁰ Writing in a time of liturgical experimentation and exploration of new paradigms for mission and ministry, Korby noted the parallels between Löhe's time and the late twentieth century in regard to what he believed was detrimental to the genuine care of souls. The care of souls requires church. That means

³⁹ Korby, "Wilhelm Loehe and Liturgical Renewal," 76-77. Here also see Korby, "What Happened to the Other Key" *The Cresset* (April 1974), 3-5. Without referencing Löhe, Korby observes that "The indifference to the practice of church discipline has grown from a spirit of disobedience, from a misunderstanding of the judgment of God, and from a cowardly spirit of fear. But even deeper than that in the pathology of indifference is the spirit of unbelief about the word of God" (4). Korby then goes on to speak in Löhe-like language of how church discipline is the rescuing work of the whole congregation seeking to break the lethal enchantment of the sinner with his sin. The theme of this short article is expanded in an unpublished paper entitled "The Key to the Renewal of the Church is the Office of the Keys: Discipline within the Body of Christ" presented on 30 September 1975 to a meeting of the Central Regional Pastoral Conference of the Northern Illinois District (LCMS). In this paper, Löhe is explicitly used in Korby's description of the nature and function of discipline in the congregation. This paper is in the author's possession.

⁴⁰ Korby, *Theology of Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe*, 188.

the care of souls is dependent on a context formed by preaching, the Lord's Supper, and catechetical instruction.

Luther's Small Catechism tutors the Christian in repentance, faith and holy living. For Korby, as for Löhe, the Catechism is not merely a condensed dogmatics text; it is a handbook for Christian praying and living. Korby follows Löhe in urging that the Catechism be learned by heart and utilized for faith and life. Echoing Löhe, Korby maintains that the Bible, a Lutheran hymnal, and the Catechism are the three books for church and home that form the core texts for catechetical instruction.⁴¹

Fifth, Korby echoes Löhe's necessity of making a distinction between the "ordinary" and "extraordinary" forms of pastoral care.⁴² The ordinary means for the care of souls are sermon, liturgy, and catechesis. The extraordinary means would be those pastoral activities that attend to specific needs and crises in the lives of believers. Here again we see that the church is fundamental to pastoral care. Korby writes,

So radical was this contextual setting to be understood that Löhe argued: if one does not anchor the extraordinary means in this general setting of the ordinary, he will make the grave error of turning the extraordinary into the ordinary. That is, the private care, the care of the individual, will become the ordinary means of the pastor's work and preaching, catechesis, and liturgy will become occasional, peripheral, and insignificant. The private care of the individual is extraordinary, by Löhe's description. But if it is to be fruitful and blessed work, it must be done with those on whom the ordinary means of the care of souls have done their work.⁴³

Korby observes that Löhe spotted a tendency to replace the ordinary with extraordinary:

Such an inversion is what he (Löhe) called 'methodism' in pastoral care. Löhe called this a one-sidedness, growing out of the conviction that the Word of God would work effectively only if it were used in a certain way. But the attempt to achieve something special, something spectacular in this way was like cutting with the handle of a knife. The feverish creation of new measures for pastoral care will, in the long run, produce just that, 'new measures.' It does not take too long before the effects once produced

⁴¹ Peter Bender, a student of Korby's, founded the Concordia Catechetical Academy which produced *Lutheran Catechesis* and other catechetical aids modeled after Korby's work in this area. The Academy has sponsored a three-day Concordia Catechetical Symposium each June on various aspects of catechesis.

⁴² Korby, *Theology as Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe*, 245; also see Kenneth Korby, "Loehe's Seelsorge for his Fellow Lutherans in America," 227-246.

⁴³ Korby, *Theology as Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe*, 246.

by the 'new measures' begin to wear off, for in becoming the ordinary means for the care of souls, the extraordinary means do not have the staying power that the ordinary means contain within themselves.⁴⁴

The Introduction to the *Lutheran Service Book Agenda* echoes Korby's reading of Löhe:

It is helpful to distinguish between the ordinary and extraordinary means of pastoral care. The ordinary means include preaching, catechization, confession/absolution, prayer, and the liturgy itself. Extraordinary means of pastoral care are just that—they are out of the ordinary. Counseling, intervention, and referral are examples of the extraordinary. While recognizing the place of the extraordinary forms of pastoral care, the agenda attends to the ordinary.⁴⁵

Six, Korby develops from Löhe a definition of the liturgical congregation as the praying congregation. Löhe sees liturgy as a "holy drama"⁴⁶ that is the agent of dialogical interchange between God and the congregation. Korby comments that "Löhe described the worship as God moving with his Word and deed (the Sacrament); the congregation receives through Word and deed (the Sacrament) and gives through Word and deed (fellowship). This meeting of God the Lord and his congregation in celebrating earnestness, is the highest life."⁴⁷ That Löhe sought to study the ancient liturgies of the church both from the east and west, evaluating their content by the Lutheran Confessions and retaining what is useful in them, was indeed part of Löhe's contribution to liturgical renewal. Korby argues that Löhe was more than a liturgical archaeologist; he was one who desired to teach the liturgical life. Liturgy was to be taught to the people so that they might be moved to understanding and especially to prayer. Löhe's preface to the 1844 *Agenda* and his *Seed Grains of Prayer* are among the materials that Korby sees as serving this goal. Korby would produce a "narrative service" entitled "The Liturgy in Slow Motion" based on the Common Service found in *The Lutheran Hymnal* of 1941 that would be photocopied and widely distributed as a way of teaching the liturgy. Something of a template for Korby's education piece was Löhe's outline of the chief parts of the liturgy in the Preface to the 1844 *Agenda*.

⁴⁴ Korby, *Theology as Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe*, 247.

⁴⁵ *Lutheran Service Book Agenda* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2006), ix; also see John T. Pless, "Lutheran Service Book Agenda and Lutheran Service Book – Pastoral Care Companion" in *The History and Practice of Lutheran Service Book* ed. Daniel Zager (Fort Wayne: Good Shepherd Institute, 2007), 149-156.

⁴⁶ Korby, *Theology of Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe*, 273.

⁴⁷ Korby, *Theology as Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe*, 276.

Korby writes that for Löhe "the liturgical life of the congregation moves in concentric circles around the Word and the Sacrament."⁴⁸ This means the worship life of the congregation extends into the daily lives of Christians in their homes and work places. In this way, all of time and work is hallowed by the Word of God and prayer. In an unpublished essay on "Prayer Books and Liturgical Work of Wilhelm Löhe," Korby observes that for Löhe "the true liturgical congregation is the church with the desire to offer petition, to give praise and thanksgiving on behalf of all mankind. That, not the majesty, simplicity, or antiquity of its forms make it a liturgical congregation."⁴⁹ Thus the pastor teaches the congregation to pray liturgically. Korby comments:

The pastor teaches his congregation rightly to be a liturgical congregation when he teaches and practices such common prayer with them. This perception of the genuinely liturgical congregation conforms to Löhe's understanding of the Christian life as hallowing all things by the Word of God and prayer. When he wrote the *Haus-Schul-und Kirchenbuch*, he expounded this teaching of the apostles by instructing the readers: the Word of God reveals the will of the eternal King and the prayer of the congregation is nothing else than the expression of her own hallowed will meeting with the will of her Lord and King. With prayer she turns herself and all creatures, together with their total use, to his will.⁵⁰

IV. Conclusion

In Kenneth Korby, Wilhelm Löhe found a faithful disciple and an able interpreter. He was a careful scholar who opened many within The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and beyond to the pastoral legacy of Löhe. More than this, Korby came to embody key themes of Löhe in his own work as a pastor and teacher. His churchly scholarship and his pious example continue to commend the pastor of Neuendettelsau as one from whom we still have much to learn.

⁴⁸ Korby, *Theology as Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe*, 274.

⁴⁹ Kenneth Korby, "Prayer Books and Liturgical Works of Wilhelm Loehe" (unpublished essay in possession of the author). The publication of this essay is planned for a future issue of *Logia*. Surprisingly, Korby does not mention Löhe in his essay "Prayer: Pre-Reformation to the Present," in *Christians at Prayer*, edited by John Gallen, S.J. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), 113-133.

⁵⁰ Korby, *Theology of Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe*, 275.