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# Theological Observer

## TRUE AND FALSE ECUMENISM

From the beginning of the ecumenical movement there have been two aspects of this movement in the World Council of Churches—"Faith and Order" and "Life and Work." It is very important for us to recall this point if we try to understand the double strategy of the modern ecumenical movement. We all know, on the one hand, the papers approved in Lima, Peru, in 1982: *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*. The goal of these papers was to establish full church fellowship between all Christian churches and denominations in the world. On the other hand, we see the ecumenical dialogue of 1988 and 1989 in Europe concerning justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. In 1990 this dialogue will be held on worldwide level. The goal is a worldwide council of all Christian denominations; the Roman Catholic Church is also invited to speak with authority to these important questions of the human race. The Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms is gone; universalistic and worldly ideas of salvation of all men prevail.

We must also take a look at the Lutheran World Federation. There can be no doubt that the LWF, since the Dar-es-Salaam convocation of 1977 with the proclamation of "unity in reconciled diversity," is wide open to the World Council of Churches. We remember the Nairobi session of 1975 with its conciliaristic communion. The declaration made in 1984 at the LWF convention in Budapest that all member churches of the LWF are in pulpit and altar fellowship makes complete sense against the background of the ecumenical orientation of the LWF. One cannot push to have communion with churches of another confession if one does not have church fellowship with the church bodies of one's own confession. Dar-es-Salaam in 1977 also proclaimed the program "In Christ—A New Community," and the LWF has shown in many activities since that time that it is willing to walk in the steps of the Life and Work Commission of the World Council of Churches.

Also confessional Lutheran churches confess the one holy Christian church in the Nicene and Apostolic Creeds. If this confession is to be more than simply liturgical tradition, then we have to have a clear theological understanding of what is the meaning of the statement, "I believe one holy Christian and apostolic church." Although the one holy Christian church is an article of faith, it has clear marks, as Melancthon states in the Apology (VII, 20): "We are not dreaming about some Platonic republic, as has been slanderously alleged, but we teach that this church actually exists made up of true believers and righteous men scattered throughout the world. And we add its marks, the pure teaching of the gospel and the sacraments."

Also Martin Luther throughout his lifetime confessed and taught the one holy apostolic and catholic Christian church in the midst of this sinful world. On this point there is no difference between him and Melancthon. We find in Luther's writings the biblical ecumenical teaching, and we can learn much from him.

It is our responsibility to instill this biblical ecumenical thinking in the heads and the hearts of students and pastors. It does not help only to react against false ecumenical teachings, only to say "no" to false ecumenical ideas and activities. If we proclaim the Gospel, we also proclaim the only holy Christian church throughout the world and we are part of this church, as we confess in the Third Article of the Creed as explained in the Large Catechism (51-52): "Of this community I also am a part and member, a participant and co-partner in all the blessings it possesses. I was brought to it by the Holy Spirit and incorporated into it through the fact that I have heard and still hear God's Word, which is the first step in entering it."

The Association of Confessional Lutheran Seminaries exists to share information about the training systems of the different member seminaries, to coordinate where possible seminary programs, and to help each other in every way possible. In fact, all the seminaries of the ACLS have to deal in their training programs with the modern ecumenical movement. We are surrounded by denominations which are part of this movement. What should we do? I have four points to suggest:

1. We have to present the ecumenical thinking of the World Council of Churches and the LWF to our students, but we cannot do so without critical interpretation. We must also inform our students about the history of the ecumenical movement and show them that it did not start from a Lutheran foundation.
2. We have to give our students a solid ecumenical self-confidence on the basis of our confessions and we have to assure them that our confessions are important and extremely relevant to our time.
3. We have to avoid all false fears of having contact with representatives of ecumenical organizations. It is not false church fellowship to have discussion with them. We cannot go along with the unit concept of the Wisconsin Synod. Every expression of Christianity is not an expression of common faith or church fellowship; church fellowship is based upon the marks of the church. From my own experience I would say that guest-status in ecumenical committees and study-groups may be acceptable if a confessional professor is invited and his ecclesiastical administration agrees.

4. The Association of Confessional Lutheran Seminaries could be the basis of an ecumenical dialogue between the member churches of the International Lutheran Conference, if this conference in the future is willing to do more for theological unity than in the past. We should be ready for this task, if we are asked to undertake it by the officials of the I.L.C.

Manfred Roensch  
Oberursel, B.R.D.

### MYTH, MORALITY, AND THE WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION

As did so many others, I too thought that professional wrestling was the height of silliness. It was, in my opinion, nothing more than a “sport” of interest to old ladies who did not know the level of (ir)reality it portrayed. But one Saturday evening, when I had nothing better to do and upon the urging of a friend of mine, I tuned in to the World Wrestling Federation (WWF)—which, we are now assured, is “What the World Is Watching”—and I have been an avid fan ever since.

What is the attraction of it all? It is not that I believe that it is real—though it is amazing how well choreographed this stuff must be, so that no one gets hurt. It is not simply that the athleticism is unbelievable (especially evident when you see it live)—on my first night of viewing Billy Jack Haynes lifted his 250-pound opponent to arm’s length over his head (which is an amazing sight, even if the opponent is assisting). Rather, it is that professional wrestling in general, and the doings of the WWF in particular, have a meaning which is profound. This was brought home to me a few months after my first viewing (in late 1986)—indeed, the incident I am about to describe is what hooked me for good—when “The Macho Man” Randy Savage was beat up by “The Honky Tonk Man” with the latter using a guitar. The script was as follows (non-fans will have to put up with some incredible names for the next few paragraphs, but please bear with me): “The Macho Man,” managed by “The Lovely” Elizabeth, and “The Honky Tonk Man,” managed by “The Mouth of the South,” Jimmy Hart, were fighting it out for the Intercontinental Belt of the WWF.<sup>1</sup> During the course of the match, two of “Honky’s” friends—a.k.a. “The Hart Foundation” and also managed by Jimmy Hart, viz., Bret “The Hit Man” Hart and Jim “The Anvil” Neidhart—came to ringside and proceeded to lurk menacingly. Suddenly, as Jimmy Hart distracted the referee, the Hart Foundation leaped into the ring and

came to the assistance of "The Honky Tonk Man." Both contestants ("Honky" and "Macho") were pretty groggy by this time in the fight, so it did not take long for Bret Hart and Neidhart together to subdue Savage, at which time "The Honky Tonk Man" seized his guitar from ringside and proceeded to threaten Savage. ("The Lovely") Elizabeth looked on tearfully and helplessly from ringside.<sup>2</sup> What could she possible do? She did the only thing she could do; she entered the ring and pleaded on her knees, kneeling in front of Randy Savage, to prevent "The Honky Tonk Man" from crushing the guitar over her poor fighter's head.<sup>3</sup> Would "Honky" relent? Ha!—he would have none of it! Thrusting her ruthlessly aside, he hurled her to the canvas and taunted her. Distraught, she fled from the ring in tears. And then "The Honky Tonk Man" proceeded to pound his guitar with full force over the head of Randy Savage, so that the great "Macho Man" lay unconscious on the mat.<sup>4</sup> But wait—all was not lost! A great roar began to go up from the crowd. What did the sweeping cameras show? Nothing other than Hulk Hogan—the World Wrestling Federation Champion himself—led by Elizabeth charging from the dressing room area to help her fallen man. And help him he certainly did! He slid under the ropes into the ring and fought off all three "evil" men to rise strongly to his feet. Then, after leveling one of the Hart Foundation, he helped Randy Savage to his feet, and the two of them beat up "The Honky Tonk Man" and the other Hart Foundation member. Finally, together "The Hulkster" and "The Macho Man" hurled all three of the villains from the ring. Oh, the delirium! And then the moment came. In the center of the ring, Savage and Hogan faced one another alone, and the two men, never real friends before, clasped one another's hand, to the deafening roar of the crowd.

Now, I know what you are thinking. This is really too much. It is like a comic book come to life. To which I reply: of course, it is. Indeed, that is exactly the point. What is professional wrestling, especially WWF professional wrestling? It is, essentially, an enactment of basic myth. Consider the match which I have just described. Is this not the confrontation between Good and Evil? Does not Hulk Hogan fulfill the role of a Messiah figure? Does not Good triumph over Evil in the end? The answer to each question is, "Yes," which makes professional wrestling more than fantasy or fantasizing. It makes it more than, as I like to style it in "cocktail party conversation," "soap opera for men." It makes it, one might say, a morality play. Or, put another way, it makes it a religious experience—and that on the deepest, most basic level—as Good fights Evil, until a satisfactory resolution is obtained.<sup>5</sup>

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Now, if my analysis is correct, what I see is most disturbing to me, disturbing in the extreme. Is it disturbing because Evil triumphs in penultimate terms? No—that is truly so in life. Is it disturbing because the outcome is assured? No—for us who believe in Jesus Christ, the outcome of all life is assured, but that makes the struggle no less intense. No, what I see is disturbing, because of the morality I see, because of the morality which is portrayed in the morality play. That is to say, what I see is Good, but it is not a Good which is really pure. What I see is Good, but it is a Good which has been corrupted. What I see is Good, but it is a Good which looks much like Evil, except to a lesser degree.<sup>6</sup> Let me put it thus. Is Randy Savage “good” in World Wrestling Federation terms? Yes, he definitely is (though he used to be quite “bad”). Does Randy Savage fight “fair and square”? Quite often he does not. He pokes his opponent in the eye. He chokes him on the ropes (he was almost disqualified for this in the match I have just described). He does what he needs to win, even if he must bend the rules. And what about “The Hulk”? Surely he fights “clean,” for he is the idol of the kids. Alas, even he does not. In a recent match between Randy Savage and “The Million Dollar Man,” Ted Debiase, Hogan came to the aid of Savage once again (as Andre the Giant aided Debiase’s cause). And he did so by hitting Debiase with a chair! Were the little Hulksters surprised at this? I would think they were.<sup>7</sup> And that is precisely the point. For myth reflects what we believe. And what does this myth show? It shows what we, in America, believe: that Good is better than Evil, that it is to be preferred, but that Good must use any means, that Good can surely bend the rules, that Good can even break the rules, if needed for the Good. In addition, myth teaches those who hear, the generation which comes behind. Just what does this myth say? It tells our children this: “Obey the rules—as long as it seems you can. Play fair and square—as long as you can win. Morality is only relative. The ends justify the means. Follow Hogan and ‘The Macho Man.’ ”

Yes, this is a disturbing thing to me. For it is essentially concealed. It is concealed from the public eye. Parents watch the morality of cartoons. Censors check the morality of prime-time shows. But who checks our current “myth”? Who hears the messages it gives? I fear the answer is, “No one.” For no one gives professional wrestling the attention it deserves, dismissing it as fraud. I hope that I am wrong in my assessment. I hope that the reader will check for himself.

1. How this belt differs from the world title belt is known only to our Lord and commentator Vince McMahon, who is actually the organizational brains behind the WWF.

2. The WWF is not short on sexual stereotyping. Note also "Ravishing" Rick Rude, who, after a victory, kisses into unconsciousness a "lucky" female he picks from the crowd.
3. Elizabeth, it must be noted, is a real "knockout" (pun intended) and wears knockout gowns; so this was supposed to be a very poignant scene.
4. For months afterward we were subjected to replays of the "disgraceful and disgusting" act.
5. This is similar to the function of myth from a structuralist perspective, where myth provides a resolution of seemingly irreconcilable opposites. See, e.g., Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*, New York: Harper and Row, 1969.
6. This is not to be simplistic about life; gray areas abound. Here I to speak of theory not practice, of fundamental values, not their application.
7. In recent weeks this tendency has been continued. The "Fabulous" Rougeau Brothers, for instance, just defeated "The Killer Bees" in tag team action by using all sorts of illegal moves. Indeed, the transformation of "bad guys" into "good guys," so popular lately in the WWF, exacerbates this phenomenon. Recently, the same Bret Hart mentioned in the incident narrated above became "good." He has, however, retained his brutal and quite merciless ways, though now these are directed more properly against opponents who are "bad." The same can be said of Brutus "The Barber" Beefcake and Don "The Rock" Muraco, as well as of Randy Savage, now heavyweight champion of the WWF. Indeed, such switching, coupled with the corruption of "good" wrestlers into "bad" (cf. Andre the Giant and Ted Debiase), itself fosters moral relativism by blurring all sharp lines.

James W. Voelz

### THE DANVERS STATEMENT

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, no less than other church bodies, is not immune to the cultural, social, and religious advances of contemporary feminism. Many denominations and church bodies have already accommodated themselves to the principles of modern feminism, which frequently involves both the relativizing of biblical

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statement and the radical rejection of traditional church practice. By no means is this cultural accommodation characteristic only of "liberal" churches. Also evangelicals, who in principle uphold strong positions on biblical authority, have advocated the abolition of all differentiations of church functions between men and women. The clergy and laity of the Missouri Synod have also evinced signs of uncertainty and confusion on the issues raised by feminism. It is, therefore, important that responsible thinkers also in our church clarify and explain the biblical and confessional basis for our opposition to the admittance of women to the church's ministerium.

With that service in mind the undersigned have joined with other evangelical theologians to form the "Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood." In January of 1987 nine evangelical leaders met in Dallas, Texas, to discuss their growing concern over the confusion about manhood and womanhood from a biblical perspective. The council, which has a board of five directors and twenty-six council members, is the direct result of this meeting. In December of 1987 the same group plus a few others met in Danvers, Massachusetts, and adopted a statement putting forth the rationale and purpose of the council. "The Danvers Statement" has now been made public, and we believe that it is important and helpful for our clergy and laity to be familiar with the statement and aware of the council. The address of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood is P.O. Box 1173, Wheaton, Illinois 60187. "The Danvers Statement" follows.

Waldemar Degner  
William C. Weinrich

The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood:  
The Danvers Statement

*Rationale*

We have been moved in our purpose by the following contemporary developments which we observe with deep concern:

1. the widespread uncertainty and confusion in our culture regarding the complementary differences between masculinity and femininity;
2. the tragic effects of this confusion in unraveling the fabric of marriage woven by God out of the beautiful and diverse strands of manhood and womanhood;



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3. the increasing promotion given to feminist egalitarianism with accompanying distortions or neglect of the glad harmony portrayed in Scripture between the loving, humble leadership of redeemed husbands and the intelligent, willing support of that leadership by redeemed wives;
  4. the widespread ambivalence regarding the values of motherhood, vocational homemaking, and the many ministries historically performed by women;
  5. the growing claims of legitimacy for sexual relationships which have biblically and historically been considered illicit or perverse, and the increase in pornographic portrayal of human sexuality;
  6. the upsurge of physical and emotional abuse in the family;
  7. the emergence of roles for men and women in church leadership that do not conform to biblical teaching but backfire in the crippling of biblically faithful witness;
  8. the increasing prevalence and acceptance of hermeneutical oddities devised to reinterpret apparently plain meanings of biblical texts;
  9. the consequent threat to biblical authority as the clarity of Scripture is jeopardized and the accessibility of its meaning to ordinary people is withdrawn into the restricted realm of technical ingenuity;
  10. and behind all this the apparent accommodation of some within the church to the spirit of the age at the expense of winsome, radical biblical authenticity which in the power of the Holy Spirit may reform rather than reflect our ailing culture.

### *Purposes*

Recognizing our own abiding sinfulness and fallibility, and acknowledging the genuine evangelical standing of many who do not agree with all of our convictions, nevertheless, moved by the preceding observations and by the hope that the noble biblical vision of sexual complementarity may yet win the mind and heart of Christ's church, we engage to pursue the following purposes:

1. To study and set forth the biblical view of the relationship between men and women, especially in the home and in the church.

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2. To promote the publication of scholarly and popular materials representing this view.
  3. To encourage the confidence of lay people to study and understand for themselves the teaching of Scripture, especially on the issue of relationships between men and women.
  4. To encourage the considered and sensitive application of this biblical view in the appropriate spheres of life.
  5. And thereby
    - to bring healing to persons and relationships injured by an inadequate grasp of God's will concerning manhood and womanhood,
    - to help both men and women realize their full ministry potential through a true understanding and practice of their God-given roles,
    - and to promote the spread of the gospel among all peoples by fostering a biblical wholeness in relationships that will attract a fractured world.

### *Affirmations*

Based on our understanding of Biblical teachings, we affirm the following:

1. Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood.
2. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order and should find an echo in every human heart.
3. Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall and was not a result of sin.
4. The fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women.
  - In the home, the husband's loving humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility.
  - In the church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility and inclines women to resist limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.

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5. The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, manifests the equally high value and dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women. Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in the covenant community.
  6. Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse.
    - In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to the husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands' leadership.
    - In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men.
  7. In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission—domestic, religious or civil—ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin.
  8. In both men and women a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set aside biblical criteria for particular ministries. Rather, biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment of God's will.
  9. With half the world's population outside the reach of indigenous evangelism; with countless other lost people in those societies that have heard the gospel; with the stresses and miseries of sickness, malnutrition, homelessness, illiteracy, ignorance, aging, addiction, crime, incarceration, neuroses, and loneliness, no man or woman who feels a passion from God to make His grace known in word and deed need ever live without a fulfilling ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world.
  10. We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large.

### THE SAINTS OF THE MOST HIGH

The phrase *qaddīshe-ʿelyōnīn* is a construct chain which occurs four times in the course of Daniel 7 (vv. 18, 22, 25, 27). This chapter brings the Aramaic half of Daniel (2:4-7:28) to a close and contains, of course, the awe-inspiring vision of the Son of Man. The translation in the Authorized Version is "the saints of the Most High." A more neutral

rendition, to be sure, would speak of “holy ones” (using the Germanic side of the English language) rather than “saints” (derived from the Latin *sanctus*) since English usage restricts the word “saints” to human beings. Nevertheless, the Authorized Version is, in fact, accurate in this instance; the *qaddīshīn* of Daniel 7 (the absolute form occurring in verses 21 and 22) is specifically holy people—in other words, we Christians. Critical scholars, to be sure, routinely deny Daniel the possibility of prophecy concerning Christ and His church. What is more, however, some critics reject the identification of the *qaddīshīn* with humans of any sort, whether Maccabean Jews or any others. Thus, Martin Noth,<sup>1</sup> John Collins,<sup>2</sup> and others visualize these “holy ones” as celestial beings rather than earthly.

In a recent article on Daniel 7:18 John Goldingay (of St. John’s College in Nottingham) reaches conclusions which tend in this direction, suggesting “beings who are celestial in some way,” whether angels or, at least, “glorified Israelites.”<sup>3</sup> Actually, Goldingay is not so concerned with the scope of the *qaddīshīn* in Daniel 7 as he is with the significance of *‘elyōnīn* in the construct chain *qaddīshe-‘elyōnīn*. Goldingay takes the usage of the genitive here as “epexegetical or adjectival” and so arrives at this translation of the phrase: “holy ones on high.”<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, the grammatical terminology here is somewhat imprecise. In Gesenius-Kautzsch-Cowley the term *genitivus epexegeticus* subsumes a troupe of different uses,<sup>5</sup> while Williams uses the term “epexegetical” as an alternate to his genitive of “specification” (which is nothing like the instance in question).<sup>6</sup> There is no genitive specifically called “adjectival” in either Gesenius-Kautzsch-Cowley or Williams. The latter’s “attributive” genitive applies “where English would employ an adjective,”<sup>7</sup> and similar language appears in Gesenius-Kautzsch-Cowley.<sup>8</sup> The attributive genitive is a murky idea, distended with baseless exuberance in the modern grammars and breeding much exegetical mischief. This category of attribution seems the basis of Goldingay’s translation, but none of the examples in the grammars bears any resemblance to the *qaddīshe-‘elyōnīn* of Daniel 7:18. Goldingay’s reference to section 128q in Gesenius-Kautzsch-Cowley is a mystery (presumably a misprint), since this paragraph speaks of genitives used to express purpose and “the material, with which something is laden or filled.”<sup>9</sup>

Goldingay cites both Calvin and Lacocque as allies in his grammatical enterprise (although not in the ensuing interpretation of Daniel 7).<sup>10</sup> Calvin, indeed, says of *‘elyōnīn*: “Some refer it to the one God, but I think this is a profane way of speaking.”<sup>11</sup> Lacocque at least recognizes the divinity which hedges the word, but as a result consistency drives him to a deification of creatures which assaults the monotheism so central to Old Testament theology.<sup>12</sup> At any rate,

Goldingay reaches this conclusion with respect to Daniel 7: "the 'holy ones' of whom it speaks are not beings on earth but ones 'on high.'" <sup>13</sup> The case, however, lacks cogency.

In the first place, as Goldingay mentions, *'elyōn* is a Hebraism;<sup>14</sup> it is a loan-word found in Biblical Aramaic only here in Daniel 7.<sup>15</sup> And the Hebrew noun *'elyōn* is used exclusively as a title of the One True God, "Highest" or "Most High."<sup>16</sup> Appearing with special frequency in the Psalms, *'elyōn* sometimes occurs in the company of other divine names. One interesting conjunction is the *'elōhīm 'elyōn* of Psalm 57:3 (MT; 57:2 EV) and Psalm 78:56, "God Most High." The most basic semantic principle of biblical interpretation requires us to abide by the common meaning of a word unless the context or analogy of faith prevent. Since no such problem arises here, we are bound to the ordinary sense.

Secondly, the close cognate *'illay*, which occurs ten times in the Aramaic section of Daniel, likewise serves exclusively as a divine title.<sup>17</sup> In chapters 3 and 5 it is conjoined with *'elāhā* (3:26, 32; 5:18, 21), while in chapter 4 it stands alone (vv. 14, 21, 22, 29, 31). Here in chapter 7 *'illay* occurs in verse 25 in such close proximity to *'elyōnīn* as to make a distinction between the terms quite unnatural. Without any contrary indication the original readers would have no reason to understand the sequence of thought any differently than the translators of King James: "he shall speak...words against the Most High and shall wear out the saints of the Most High."

Thirdly, the context allows neither a reference to angels nor a restriction of the *qaddīshīn* to saints in glory. An angelic reference is excluded by the conjunction of *qaddīshīn* with *'am* in verse 27, "the people of the saints." Attempts to apply the word *'am* to angels in either the Aramaic<sup>18</sup> or the Hebrew<sup>19</sup> of the Old Testament are quite specious. Nor is a restriction of *qaddīshīn* to saints in glory any more feasible than talk of angels. For the four beasts of Daniel's vision are clearly earthly empires (vv. 2-7, 17, 23) and so too the final horn of the fourth beast is a human (although ecclesiastical) institution (vv. 8, 20, 24). Yet these earthly powers are able to attack and, indeed, oppress the "holy ones." Already in verse 7 does this terrible truth surface; the fourth beast "devoured and crushed and trampled down the residue with its feet," as verse 19 reiterates. (Although its use in verse 12, as also in 2:18, prevents us from describing *she'ar* as a technical term here, verses 7 and 19 do contain its only biblical instances in the emphatic state as *she'ārā*?; and certainly "the residue" includes the faithful remnant of such consequence in Old Testament theology.) More obvious are the horrors of the horn, who "made war with the saints" and, indeed, "prevailed over them" (v. 21) in the vision. The entity thereby symbolized was to "wear out the

saints of the Most High” as they were to “be given into his hand” for a predetermined period. With frightening clarity, then, do we see in the prophetic vision the tribulations of the *ecclesia militans*, the church still struggling with the world.

Fourthly, in connection with this ecclesial vision, Daniel describes the destiny of the church in general and not some unspecified collection of saints. The broad strokes of verse 23 are indicative: the fourth beast was to “devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it.” The most explicit statement, however, occurs in verse 14, where the “saints” are described as the people of the Son of Man in every place and time: “And there was given to Him dominion and glory and kingship that all the peoples, the nations, and the languages should serve Him.” The word *qaddīshīn*, to be sure, occurs twice without modification in Daniel 7—to make a more personal application of principles to the individual saints, but without setting any bounds to the sweep of the panorama (vv. 21, 22b).<sup>20</sup> Yet, in any case, the emphasis of the vision is clearly the ultimate triumph of the church as such. In verse 22b the inheritance of the individual saints is purely a corollary of the final justification of the *una sancta catholica*: “the Ancient of Days came and the judgment was given in favour of the saints of the Most High, and so the time arrived that saints took possession of the kingdom.” The conceptual framework, then, of Daniel 7 requires the grammatical “determination” of the first word in *qaddīshē-elyōnīn* (so as to translate “the saints” as in the previous sentence). In Aramaic, however, the first noun of a construct chain cannot be determinate unless the last noun be determinate.<sup>21</sup> With his “epexegetical” interpretation, therefore, Goldingay must take *qaddīshē* as indeterminate (“holy ones on high,” not “the holy ones on high”).<sup>22</sup> Such an idea becomes especially artificial in verse 27 when a third noun is added to the construct chain, *‘am-qaddīshē-elyōnīn*. The natural understanding is determinate: “the people which consists in the saints...” Since, however, *‘elyōnīn* occurs neither in the emphatic state nor with a pronominal suffix, any words preceding it in a construct chain can be determinate only if *‘elyōnīn* be a proper noun, that is, the divine title, “the Most High.”<sup>23</sup>

Fifthly, the second clause of verse 27, immediately succeeding *‘am-qaddīshē-elyōnīn*, clarifies the significance of the final word in the construct chain. A literal translation is the following: “His kingship is a kingship of eternity, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.” Critical scholars, to be sure, such as James Montgomery, refer the pronominal suffixes of 27b to *‘am* (“the people”) rather than to *‘elyōnīn*.<sup>24</sup> This idea, however, runs contrary

to the theme not just of Daniel 7, but also of the Book of Daniel as a whole and, indeed, of the apocalyptic literature in general. Yes, as 27a asserts, the church participates indirectly in the royal authority of her Lord, concurring with His judgments (cf. Rev. 2:26-27). The recurring theme of Daniel, however, is the exclusive sovereignty of the True God exercised on behalf of His church (e.g., 2:21, 44; 4:3, 17, 25, 26, 32, 34-35; 5:21; 6:26; 8:25; 9:27; 11:45; 12:1). And this quintessential message of apocalyptic prophecy lies at the heart of Daniel 7 (vv. 9-14, 22, 26). Verse 27a clearly returns to the eternal kingship of verse 14, where people from all nations serve the Son of Man. Likewise, in 27b the saints are those drawn from all the dominions of this world to serve and obey the Most High. In Biblical Aramaic, in fact, the root *plh* ("serve") deals uniquely with reverence paid a deity.<sup>25</sup> Ezra applies the noun *pālḥān* (Ezra 7:19) and the participial form of the verb (Ezra 7:24) to the temple of God in Jerusalem. All the remaining specimens appear in Daniel 3, 6, and 7 (in the two verses already cited, 14 and 27). The occurrences in chapters 3 (vv. 12, 14, 17, 18, 28) and 6 (vv. 17, 21) underscore heavily the exclusive right of the One True God to divine adoration. In 3:28, for example, even Nebuchadnezzar has to make this confession: "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath...delivered His servants that trusted in Him and...yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god except their own God."

Sixthly, a subsidiary point is the understanding of *qaddīshē-‘elyōnīn* in subsequent Judaism. The most pertinent datum is the rendition of the phrase in the Cairo Genizah text of the Damascus Document (20:8). There the Hebrew analogue is *qēdhōshē-‘elyōn*, using the usual singular form of the divine title discussed above. Such evidence is not, of course, determinative; it can do no more than confirm the testimony of the original text. Goldingay's appeal, on the other hand, to post-biblical usage away from a lucid archetype is sadly insubstantial, as well as contravening the *sola scriptura* rule of all valid theology.<sup>26</sup>

There remains, then, no shadow of doubt; the *‘elyōnīn* of Daniel 7 is a divine title, "the Most High." Yet on the credit side of the ledger Goldingay does expose the nullity of the usual modern explanations of the plural form of *‘elyōnīn*. Bauer and Leander call it attraction of the genitive (though actually singular) to the plural of a preceding construct.<sup>27</sup> (G. Behrmann, A.A. Bevan, F. Hitzig, and K. Marti followed this route in commentaries of note on the Book of Daniel.) Goldingay discounts this idea from the lack of any instance in Biblical Aramaic. Nor is there any real parallel in Hebrew which

would lend weight to such an explanation. (Goldingay himself does not perceive the true significance of the second plural in the *bēnē-’elīm* of Psalms 29:1 and 89:7 MT [6 EV].)<sup>28</sup>

Another construction put upon *’elyōnīn* by critical scholars is the “plural of majesty.” Montgomery is representative of this school, assuming the same usage in the Aramaic *’elōhīn* (e.g., Daniel 3:12; Montgomery wants “God” where the Authorized Version has “gods”) and presupposing in Hebrew parallel uses of *’elōhīm* and *q<sup>e</sup>dhōshīm*.<sup>29</sup> With the support of Bauer and Leander, however, Goldingay rightly questions “whether Biblical Aramaic uses the plural of majesty of *’lh*.”<sup>30</sup> Indeed, an impartial study of Biblical Aramaic actually requires a more forceful conclusion: the “plural of majesty” is purely imaginary. Again, Goldingay recognizes *q<sup>e</sup>dhōshīm* as “a genuine plural” in Proverbs 9:10 and 30:3 and in Hosea 12:11 (MT, 11:12 EV), but unfortunately he fails to see the same “genuine” plurality in the *q<sup>e</sup>dhōshīm* of Joshua 24:19. Even more disappointing is his accession to the general modern attenuation of *’elōhīm*, which Goldingay calls a “well-known convention.”<sup>31</sup> This last point, however, is of such comprehensive significance as to require separate discussion. Suffice it to say that, in terms of Biblical Aramaic, there is certainly no grammatical justification to treat *’elyōnīn* as a “plural of majesty.”

No, there is no reason to think that *’elyōnīn* is anything but the “common garden variety” of plural in whatever language—an independent numerical plural. Thus far can we travel in Goldingay’s company. Yet beyond this point we find the road which he proposes blocked with all the obstacles described above; *’elyōnīn* remains a title of the One True God. We can only conclude, therefore, that within the single divine essence is a distinction of persons—“the Most High Ones,” to translate literally. Two of these persons receive individual attention in the vision of Daniel 7. The First Person is called the Ancient of Days (vv. 9, 13, 22) because the others have from eternity received being from Him (whether “begotten” or “proceeding”). The Second Person presents Himself to the First as the *bar-’enāsh*, the Son of Man (v. 13), a title connecting the *ben-’ādhām* of Psalm 8 with the *huios tou anthrōpou* of the gospels. For the Messiah was God become man to assume the sin of men and impute to us His holiness. Only in this way could we sinners become “the saints of the Most High.”<sup>32</sup>

1. Martin Noth, “Die Heiligen des Höchsten,” in *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (Munich: Kaiser, 1957), pp. 274-290, which appeared in English as follows: “The Holy Ones of



- the Most High," in *The Laws of the Pentateuch and Other Studies* (trans. D.R. Ap-Thomas; Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 215-228.
2. John J. Collins, "The Son of Man and the Saints of the Most High in the Book of Daniel," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 93 (1974), pp. 50-66.
  3. John Goldingay, "'Holy Ones on High' in Daniel 7:18," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 107 (1988), p. 495.
  4. Goldingay, p. 496.
  5. E. Kautzsch and A.E. Cowley, eds., *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, second edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), pp. 416-419.
  6. Ronald J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax: An Outline*, second edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 11.
  7. Williams, p. 11.
  8. Gesenius-Kautzsch-Cowley, p. 417.
  9. *Ibid.*
  10. Goldingay, p. 496, note 9.
  11. John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Daniel*, ed. and tr. Thomas Myers, reprint (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), II, p. 50.
  12. A. Lacocque, *Le Livre de Daniel* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux, 1976), p. 114.
  13. Goldingay, p. 497.
  14. Goldingay, p. 495.
  15. Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), p. 1106.
  16. Brown-Driver-Briggs, p. 751.
  17. Brown-Driver-Briggs, p. 1106; cf. Montgomery (see note 24 below), pp. 215-216 (re Daniel 3:26).
  18. Brown-Driver-Briggs, p. 1107.
  19. Brown-Driver-Briggs, pp. 766-767.
  20. Although the Authorized Version, like the English versions generally, has "the saints," in both cases the state is absolute rather than emphatic in the original text (simply "saints").

Leupold elucidates best the rationale of this usage: "21...in the Aramaic the word appears without the article, and so the thought expressed really emphasizes merely the quality of these persons; and the idea is that whatever comes under the category of 'saints' as such is repugnant to this great horn...22...the word 'saints' in the last clause is again without the article...a similar usage is found in 8:24 and in Ps. 16:3. The idea then takes this form: Whatever goes under the name of saints is destined to receive the kingdom." Herbert C. Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969), pp. 320-321.

21. Franz Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1968), p. 25.
22. Goldingay, pp. 496-497.
23. Alger F. Johns, *A Short Grammar of Biblical Aramaic*, revised edition (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1972), p. 10.
24. James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* ("International Critical Commentary"; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1927), pp. 315-316.
25. Brown-Driver-Briggs, p. 1108.
26. Goldingay, p. 495.
27. H. Bauer and P. Leander, *Grammatik des Biblisch-Aramäischen* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1927), 53o.
28. Goldingay, p. 495.
29. Montgomery, pp. 307-308; cf. pp. 153 (*re* 2:11), 205 (*re* 3:12), 214-216 (*re* 3:25), 258-259 (*re* 5:11). No protests arise from the modern conservatives, e.g., Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary* ("Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries"; Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1978), p. 145. Similarly Leupold (p. 318) invents a "plural of potency," referring readers to Joshua 24:19 and Proverbs 9:10.
30. Goldingay, p. 496.
31. *Ibid.*
32. The 'elyōnīn, then, in qaddīshe-elyōnīn is no mere possessive genitive, but rather a subjective genitive. The saints are those whom the Triune God has sanctified, setting them apart to be His own.