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invaluable. True doctrine is what you believe about Jesus: his life and death and their meaning to you.

Articles of faith such as repentance, prayer and the Person and work of the Holy Spirit were clearly expressed by Dr. Rod Rosenblatt, Dr. Andrew Steinman, and Dr. Richard Schuta. We believe faith in Jesus Christ is a gift from God, given by the power of the Holy Spirit; thus all the glory belongs to God alone—it is not something we merit. Justification is the doctrine on which the church stands or falls and sanctification not rightly understood can turn into law. Dr. Daniel Preus, Dr. Steve Hein and Dr. Carl Fickenscher clearly explained from Scripture how God works to save.

We were introduced to a new generation of defenders of the faith including Rev. Brain Wolfmueller, Rev. Steven Parks, and Chris Rosebrough who addressed important topics like baptism, God and suffering, and “Christ-less” Christianity. We studied books of the Bible with Dr. John Seleska and Tim Seleska including the Psalms. Each week we prepared for our Sunday school lesson with Deaconess Pam Nielson. What important insights and knowledge we were able to glean. History was another topic often discussed with Dr. Paul Maier and Dr. Martin Noland. The topics included the events surrounding the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Reformation, Roman Catholicism, and the early Christian historian Eusebius.

The errors of Pietism and the Church Growth Movement were exposed by Aaron Wolf, Dr. Larry Rast, Rev. Rod Zwonitzer, Craig Parton, and Chris Rosebrough. We learned what the true marks of a church involve: the means of grace and salvation, the proclamation of the gospel and administration of the sacraments. We may never have known of such great theologians as Dr. Norman Nagel, Dr. Louis Brighton, and Dr. Ron Feuerhahn who were eager to share their insightful instruction on eternal life, the presence of God, the Lord’s Supper, and papal authority and Roman Catholic doctrine.

Luther’s explanation in the Heidelberg Disputation of the theology of the cross was clearly conveyed by Dr. Paul Grime, Dr. Steven Hein, and Dr. R. Scott Clark. “That person deserves to be called a theologian who comprehends what is visible of God through suffering and the cross.”

Culturally relevant topics were discussed by Dr. Mike Horton and Dr. Laurence White. They involved American Evangelicalism, Christianity and pop culture, and the secularization of the church. We were taught that there is no such thing as Lutheran substance expressed via “Evangelical style.” “It is not style or substance; its style forms substance.” In the church, what we believe establishes what we do and who we are. And let us not forget the thought provoking and educational articles published in the *Issue Etc. Journal* including: “Locus and Focus,” “Purpose Driven or Forgiveness Given,” and “Mere Monotheism.”

Such a wide range of topics were discussed on each and every show with guests including Ed Meese, John Shelby Spong, Dr. Alveda King, Bishop N.T. Wright, Dr. Albert Mohler, and Robert Schuller. This speaks to Jeff Schawrz’s dedication and abilities as the *Issues, Etc.* producer to compile

a guest list with the likes of these. I would be remiss in not recognizing the invaluable contribution of Pastor Todd Wilken. Not only were his questions insightful and probing, but the fact that he, too, was able to address all of the topics mentioned from a scriptural and cultural perspective was nothing short of astounding.

Thanks to *Issues, Etc.* I do not want to be “emergent,” “purpose-driven,” or to “become a better me.” I want Jesus, only Jesus, nothing but Jesus who lived a perfect life and died for me. This list is by no means exhaustive, yet I hope it conveys the blessing received from *Issues, Etc.* There is much appreciation especially from the laity who received an education worthy of a degree. While this “voice in the wilderness” has been silenced for now, “God works all things together for good for those who are called according to his purpose” and I can’t wait to see how.

[*Issues, Etc.* began broadcasting again June thirtieth after a “spring break.” You can listen live at piratechristianradio.com/ or download programs at issuesetc.org/]

THINGS THAT MAKE YOU GO “HMMMM”

“The Mandated Element of Wine” was presented to the Lutheran Church of Canada East District Pastors’ Conference on 13 November 2007 by the Rev. Dr. Thomas M. Winger. It was received with nearly unanimous consent. The footnotes from the original paper have been moved into the text parenthetically.

The use of grape juice in the Lord’s Supper at a congregation of our district has recently caused scandal, and threatens our fellowship in the place where it is most intimately expressed. The pastors’ conference is surely the appropriate place to discuss, inform, strengthen one another in our common practice. For our historic common practice is the exclusive use of natural bread and natural wine, as the following anecdote from Luther’s *Table Talk* illustrates:

When somebody inquired whether, when a sick person wished to have the sacrament but could not tolerate wine on account of nausea, something else should be given in place of the wine, the doctor [Martin Luther] replied, “This question has often been put to me and I have always given this answer: One should not use anything else than wine. If a person cannot tolerate wine, omit it [the sacrament] altogether in order that no innovation may be made or introduced.” (Winter of 1542–1543, AE 54:438)

This story explodes our modern myopia that presumes we are the first to have such pastoral concerns. But it begs the basic question of precisely why this is our common practice. What is the biblical and historical basis for our church’s

insistence on the exclusive use of natural wine? The following is an exposition of the historical, scriptural, and confessional data and logic that support it.

The Lord instituted his Supper during the last celebration of the Passover with his disciples. Though higher critics have disputed this setting, it is the clear teaching of the Synoptic Gospels (Joachim Jeremias has decisively proven that the Synoptics are to be trusted on this point. See *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, pp. 15–88.) The Passover meal is the historical context in which to investigate the Sacrament's institution. Unfortunately for our investigation, the Old Testament knows nothing of a cup of wine in the Passover. Exodus 12 speaks only of unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and a lamb or goat. For an explanation of the cups, we need to turn to rabbinic sources.

The Mishna, compiled in the second century A.D. on the basis of long-standing oral tradition, teaches: "Even the poorest in Israel must not eat unless he sits down to table, and they must not give them less than four cups of wine to drink, even if it is from the [Paupers'] Dish" (Moed, Pesahim, 10:1). Throughout the discussion the content of the cups is consistently called "wine" (יַיִן; *yayin*). It is sometimes referred to as "mixed," that is, diluted with water. The third cup, known as the "cup of blessing," is thought to be the cup our Lord blessed. It is called the "cup of blessing" because of the action of the *pater familias* at that point: "After they have mixed for him the third cup he says the Benediction over his meal" (10:7).

Tosefta Moed, a later commentary on the Mishna, elaborates that the cups must contain "a volume of a quarter-log, whether this is straight or mixed, whether this is new or old. R. Judah says, 'But this is one condition that it has the taste and appearance of wine'" (10:1). Lacking a scientific framework, this is the closest they can come to saying that, though it may be old or new wine, good or bad, mixed or straight, it must be real wine, and this fact must be obvious to all participants. (A log is usually defined as about 300 ml. Thus a quarter log is about 75 ml.) Jeremias, 67–68, addresses the question of whether each participant at the Passover had his own cup, or whether one cup was shared around the table. Later rabbinic literature (the Talmud) could be interpreted as describing the former [individual cups], in which case each person drank seventy-five milliliters per cup. But Jeremias argues that earlier Jewish practice was to share one common cup, in which case 75 ml would barely suffice for a sip each. More likely the cup was filled up and shared. In any case, the New Testament account is unequivocal that at the institution of the Lord's Supper Jesus gave one common cup to be shared by all (Mt 26:27; Mk 14:23; Lk 22:17, 20; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:25–27).

The Tosefta goes on to explain the meaning of wine as an element of the Passover:

For the wine is what causes the blessing of the day to be said. . . . A. It is a religious duty for a man to bring joy to his children and dependents on the festival. B. And how does he give them joy? C. With wine, since it says, . . . *wine to gladden the heart of man* (Ps. 104:15). (10:3–4)

The emphasis on joy demonstrates that the key feature of wine is its alcoholic content, its ability to inebriate, which is further emphasized by the requirement of taking no less than four cups of wine. What of the weak, who could not handle this? Rabbi Judah says, "[One gives to] women what is suitable for them, and to children what is suitable to them" (Tosefta Moed 10:4). He offers no further explanation of what this means, but since he has previously referred to the possibility of diluting the wine with water, this would seem to be what he has in mind.

Joachim Jeremias points out that "In everyday life water was drunk. The daily breakfast consisted of 'bread with salt, and a tankard of water', and even at the main meal bread and water were the chief ingredients" (Jeremias, 51). Jesus' words to the woman at the well (Jn 4) confirm that water was the basic staple of life. Wine thus served a different function. Aside from the Last Supper, only twice is it reported that Jesus drank wine: in Matthew 11:19 (in which Jesus' festive meals with tax collectors and sinners are reported), and in John 2 (in which Jesus provides copious amounts of high quality wine for the wedding at Cana). Jeremias assumes rightly that Jesus would have drunk wine at the festive meals to which he was invited, but otherwise would have drunk water in the customary fashion. But the Last Supper was different. Here, as we have seen, it was the duty of every participant to drink wine: four cups, according to the Mishna. There can be no doubt that Jesus and his disciples observed this rule in their final observance of the Passover. The content of the cup Jesus blessed and distributed was wine.

It may also be possible that the use of wine carried medicinal connotations, as it was normally applied together with oil to effect cleansing and healing (Lk 10:34). Certainly the gift of wine was prophesied (for example, Jer 31:12; Hos 2:22; Joel 2:19, 24; 3:18; Amos 9:13) as a feature of the Messianic age to which the Passover pointed, whose fulfillment began with Christ's gift at Cana and continues in the Lord's Supper.

What kind of wine Christ used cannot be determined with precision. Jeremias makes the assumption that it must have been red wine because he holds to a symbolic view of the Lord's Supper. If it represents blood, it must have been red wine, he concludes (Jeremias, 53). We Lutherans have no sympathy for this view. In fact, as Jeremias demonstrates from the Talmud, white, red, and "black" wine were readily available. Some later rabbinic sources lay down the rule that only red wine may be used at the Passover, but it is uncertain whether this held for the early first century. Thus, there can be no requirement that a particular color of wine be used for the Lord's Supper. (Indeed, prior to modern times, Lutheran practice was almost universally to use white wine: first, because that was what was normally available in Germany; second, because it functioned confessionally against a symbolic view of the sacrament.)

We have established that Jesus most certainly used wine in instituting the Lord's Supper. What should we make of the fact that he speaks of the cup containing "the fruit of the vine"? Some have asserted that Jesus thereby permits us to use

grape juice, but this conclusion is illegitimate. First, Jesus does not use the normal word for “fruit,” καρπός, which might be used of something like grapes. (The common Greek words for the grape or a bunch of grapes are σταφυλή, and βότρυς.) Instead he uses the noun γένημα, from the verb γίνομαι, which might better be translated “product.” Thus, we should translate “product of the vine,” which more naturally refers to something like wine that is “produced.” Second, Jesus did not invent this phrase, but quotes a standard, rabbinic technical term used in blessing the wine in the Passover cup. Thus, any Jew would recognize “product of the vine” as a liturgical phrase referring to wine. Third, it is a basic linguistic and logical error to conclude that, because Jesus referred to the contents of the cup as “product of the vine,” he was permitting us to use any “product of the vine.” By this logic we would be as justified in using pumpkin juice as grape juice, for it, too, is “product of the vine.” By this logic, when our Lord on the cross said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son” (Jn 19:26), he was permitting each and every “woman” to take John as her son. No, he was referring to one particular woman, Mary. So also at the Last Supper Jesus did not say, “You may take anything that is ‘product of the vine’ and use it in the repetition of this meal.” No, he took a cup of wine, referred to it by an established technical term as “product of the vine,” and mandated that we do what he did.

The Formula of Concord is therefore on solid historical and theological ground when it concludes:

For since Christ gave this command at table and during supper, there can be no doubt that he was speaking of true, natural bread and natural wine as well as of oral eating and drinking, (*von rechtem, natürlichen Brot und von natürlichen Wein* [FC SD 7:48]).

The second edition of the Apology [as printed in Kolb-Wengert, p. 226], rejects the false teaching of the Encratites, who “abstained from wine even during the Lord’s Supper” [Ap xv:21]. One must ask even today whether objections to wine stem from a false spirituality that rejects the goodness of God’s created gifts. Such words, which are binding on Lutheran pastors, exclude all substitutions. Neither grape juice, nor so-called de-alcoholized wine satisfy these criteria. For though the latter was surely wine once, with the alcohol removed it is wine no longer. (Use of de-alcoholized wine is akin to ordaining a transsexual [a “woman” who used to be a man,] and believing that Christ’s mandate has been satisfied.) Some have argued that de-alcoholized wine is chemically identical to natural wine, albeit with a lower amount of alcohol, usually 0.5 percent. (See, for example, “Is ‘Non-Alcoholic Wine’ Really Wine?” *Concordia Journal* [Jan. 1991]: 4–6, which cautiously approves the use of this product, though it provides no scriptural, confessional, or historical data to support this opinion. This is, however, a contradiction in terms, for the essential meaning of the word “wine” [יַיִן in Hebrew; οἶνος in Greek] is fermentation and the presence of alcohol. [In Greek there is a different word for unfermented

grape juice or “must” out of which wine is made: τρῶξι (see BDAG/3e (2000), p. 701).] That fermentation is the key component of meaning is clear from the fact that fermented beverages made from fruits other than grapes can still be called wine, such as peach or dandelion wine, though they are not included in Christ’s mandate to use what he used, and so may not be used in the Lord’s Supper. Neither is grape juice or de-alcoholized grape wine included in his mandate, since they are not natural wine.) If we do what the Lord did, if we use what he used, the Formula of Concord concludes, we will have no doubt. The substitution of different elements introduces considerable doubt that we have the gifts the Lord intends to give us. And faith is the very opposite of doubt. Faith clings only to that which is sure and certain.

Ultimately, then, we are left with a theological and hermeneutical question that takes us beyond these questions of history. The Lord’s Supper is called the “Lord’s” because he instituted it and gave it to us for our good. He instructed us to carry it out in his church according to his mandate. His mandate is that we do it as he did it, that men who represent him in the Holy Office of the Ministry should take bread and wine, consecrating them with the words he gave us, and giving them to repentant and believing Christians to eat and drink for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. Because it is the Lord’s Supper, not man’s supper, we may not change it to conform to our desires, weaknesses, or unfaith (1 Cor 11:20). For it is indeed unfaith to believe that our Lord would give us something that would harm us. We confess with Luther in the Large Catechism:

We must never regard the sacrament as a harmful thing from which we should flee, but as a pure, wholesome, soothing medicine which aids and quickens us in both soul and body. For where the soul is healed, the body has benefited also. Why, then, do we act as if the sacrament were a poison which would kill us if we ate of it? (LC v: 68).

If such fears lead us to alter what Christ has given, we risk losing entirely his benefits:

For we must believe and be sure of this, . . . that the Sacrament does not belong to us but to Christ, . . . Therefore we cannot make anything else out of it but must act according to His command and hold it. However, if we alter or “improve” on it, then it becomes a nothing and Christ is no longer present, nor is His order (Luther, *Concerning the Private Mass and the Ordination of Priests* [1533], WA 38:240.24; AE 38:200).

On the other hand, where faith clings to the word of Christ and the sacrament is kept as one undivided whole as he mandated it, it is filled with rich blessings:

See, then, what a beautiful, great, marvelous thing this is, how everything meshes together in one sacramental reality. The words are the first thing, for without the words

the cup and the bread would be nothing. Further, without bread and cup, the body and blood of Christ would not be there. Without the body and blood of Christ, the new testament would not be there. Without the new testament, forgiveness of sins would not be there. Without forgiveness of sins, life and salvation would not be there. Thus the words first connect the bread and cup to the sacrament; bread and cup embrace the body and blood of Christ; body and blood of Christ embrace the new testament; the new testament embraces the forgiveness of sins; forgiveness of sins embraces eternal life and salvation. See, all this the words of the Supper offer and give us, and we embrace it by faith. Ought not the devil, then, hate such a Supper and rouse fanatics against it?" (Luther, *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper* [1528], AE 37:338).

DISAPPEARING THROUGH ANTHROPOMORPHISM

With what sight and vision do we view our present reality? This question has gnawed at my personal theological and sociological underpinnings for many years. In 2 Timothy 4:1, Paul testifies to Timothy "ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ." Popular translations include "in the presence (and in view) of God and of Christ" and "in the sight of God and Christ Jesus." But from which direction should this viewing or sight take place? From an exegetical standpoint, the focus of the passage appears to center on God, specifically Christ Jesus, the judge, and his kingdom. But what happens when our translations or explanations center on Paul's view? When the emphasis is rather placed on Paul's sight, his vision, or his view, God and Christ Jesus no longer remain at the center. As such, the very nature and work of God disappears through an anthropocentric view of Scripture and revelation, ultimately affecting the doctrine and practice of our faith.

Though almost eighteen years after its first printing, *Disappearing Through the Skylight* (New York, Penguin Books, 1989) remains a popular text for many colleges and universities, especially in the liberal arts arena. While not a theological text, the suggestions for how one should view our present reality is staggering to us who cling to a Judeo-Christian worldview. Author O. B. Hardison, Jr. theorizes that "today, nature has slipped, perhaps finally, beyond our field of vision." Nature is reality. So in simple summary, reality can no longer be truly viewed or ascertained

because the changes have been fundamental, the concepts — and even the vocabularies and images in which the concepts tend to be framed — no longer seem to objectify a real world. It is as though progress were making the real world invisible.

What do we learn from Hardison? Truth, nature, reality: it is all relative. It can longer be defined as absolute.

Now apply, if you will, these very suppositions to our doctrine and practice as orthodox Lutherans. It would be easy to diverge here into another paper addressing the humanistic tendencies during Luther's time, found even specifically in the suppositions of Erasmus. But our focus here revolves around our present reality, this current earthly realm. If similar questions have gnawed at you as well, I would encourage a reading of *Postmodern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture* by Gene Edward Veith, Jr. (Wheaton, IL, Crossway Books, 1994). Contained therein is a much greater treatment of the postmodern thought upon Christianity. And I would challenge, or earnestly testify (as Paul did to young Timothy) that Christianity has been shaken to its very core by anthropocentrism at its very best. God's Word prophetically resonates loud and clear: "a form of godliness but having denied the power therein: and from these turn yourself away" (2 Tim 3:5).

What appears to be at work within the Christian church today, and especially within the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, is a tendency to view the work of the gospel and even the means of grace from a human perspective. Rather than standing in God's presence, as we confess actually occurs in the divine service, the tendency is to focus on our perception, our view, our understanding. Thus even the divine service has been cast aside in favor of worship elements that are vague or generalized, generally coined "seeker sensitive." And now we get to the heart of the issue at hand. Are we anthropocentric or theocentric in what believe and practice? And a further question that I will address is this: what has become of our christocentric view? This must not be neglected.

Anthropocentrism as defined by the *Free Dictionary*: an inclination to evaluate reality exclusively in terms of human values. Conversely, theocentrism is defined as the belief that God is the center of all truth in the universe. My first call out of seminary was to a young congregation that had been planted just a few years prior. There was much confusion about style, substance, and so on They had practiced, in some shape or form, various parts of the divine service. But they had also practiced, to the same degree, rituals that are foreign to Lutheran worship: laying on of hands for the sick, troubled, and even for the pastor before a sermon, anointing with oil, contemporary and charismatic music, etc. The congregation was located in an area where such practices were the norm, rather than the exception. And according to demographics, this was the group to target! And so their worship was designed around the needs or views of the local population. Even the Constitution and By-laws of this LCMS congregation were written so as to require contemporary worship and a relationship with Jesus as one's "personal" Lord and Savior. Shortly after my ordination and installation, one of the requirements by the district was that my wife and I attend "Mission Planter's Institute." It was felt that such training could better equip us to grow this congregation and to be missional in our attempts to "reach the lost." We were told