

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY



Volume 65:1

January 2001

Table of Contents

Doctrine and Evangelism

Alvin L. Barry 3

Luther and World Missions: A Review

Pekka Huhtinen 15

The Augsburg Confession and its Missiological Significance

Karl Hartenstein 31

Account-ability

David K. Weber 47

Homiletical Studies 66

The Fifth Sunday after Epiphany, Series C
..... Carl C. Fickenscher II

The Second Sunday in Lent, Series C Ken Schurb

The Second Sunday of Easter, Series C
..... Raymond Hartwig

The Seventh Sunday of Easter, Series C
..... David Fleming

Theological Observer	77
<i>Dominus Iesus</i> and Why I Like It	David P. Scaer
Book Reviews	80
<i>What is Mission? Theological Exploration.</i> By J. Andrew Kirk.	Klaus Detlev Schulz
<i>Preaching Christ Today: The Gospel and Scientific Thinking.</i> By Thomas F. Torrance	Carl C. Fickenscher II
<i>Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World.</i> By Robert E. Webber.	John Paul Salay
<i>Out of the Saltshaker & into the World: Evangelism as a Way of Life.</i> By Rebecca Manley Pippert.	Tim Pauls
<i>Evangelism Made Slightly Less Difficult: How to Interest People Who Aren't Interested.</i> By Nick Pollard	Ken Schurb
<i>Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations.</i> By Walter C. Kaiser Jr.	Chad L. Bird
<i>Mission at the Dawn of the 21st Century: A Vision for the Church.</i> Edited by Paul Varo Martinson.	Douglas L. Rutt
<i>Beside Still Waters: Searching for Meaning in an Age of Doubt.</i> By Gregg Easterbrook.	Larry M. Vogel
<i>Handbook for William: A Carolingian Woman's Counsel for Her Son.</i> By Dhouda. Translated with an introduction by Carol Neel.	Karl F. Fabrizio
<i>Perspectives on War in the Bible.</i> By John A. Wood.	Chad L. Bird
Books Received	94

The Augsburg Confession and its Missiological Significance

Karl Hartenstein¹

Translated and edited by Klaus Detlev Schulz

“I will also speak of your decrees before kings, and shall not be put to shame.”² These words from Psalm 119³ are written on the title page of the *Augsburg Confession*. Four hundred years ago, in the chapter-room of the old bishop’s palace, a small group of Protestant princes and representatives of free cities read this work before the assembled diet in Augsburg. It was a decisive moment for all of Christianity. Christian Beyer, the chancellor of John the Steadfast, not only read the Augustana –

¹The following article is a translation of an essay by Karl Hartenstein, “Die Augsburger Konfession und ihre Bedeutung für die Mission,” *Evangelisches Missionmagazin (EMM)* [Stuttgart and Basel: Evangelischer Missionsverlag] (December 1930): 353-365. The *EMM* is now merged in the *Zeitschrift für Mission*. The Basel Mission Society, for whom Hartenstein served as mission director from 1926-1939, was a dominant and influential mission agency in the modern era of missions. Founded in 1815, it became a para-church mission organization for Pietism in Württemberg, the Anglicans in England, the Swiss Reformed and, before the Leipzig mission society ceased its ties with Basel in 1836, also for the Lutherans in Saxony [See: Wilhelm Oehler, *Geschichte der deutschen evangelischen Mission* (Baden-Baden: Wilhelm Fehrholz, 1949), 1: 163-179, 214-217]. Yet it was not unusual for such institutions to have, on occasion, incumbents as directors who were remarkably Lutheran in their approach. The essay by Karl Hartenstein, a Lutheran from Württemberg, is testimony to this. Together with pivotal figures such as Walter Freytag and Karl Barth, he dominated the European field of missions for many years. Hartenstein’s own particular contribution in the pre- and post- World War II period was the introduction of the concept of mission as the “*history of salvation*” – thereby feeding off the early findings of Oscar Cullmann, a noteworthy professor in Basel who later published his work, *Salvation in History*. This concept, when coupled with Barth’s affirmation of the “*Triune God (missio Dei)*” in missions and Freytag’s *eschatology*, contributed substantially towards making missiology a noteworthy theological discipline both at academic institutions and in missionary movements. [See: *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Mission*. Edited by Gerald H. Anderson (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1988), 282]. This essay captures basic missiological affirmations from a Lutheran perspective and demonstrates how a confessional document of the Lutheran Church can relate to contemporary contextual issues, which, by and large, have remained pertinent to this very day.

²*The Book of Concord. The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Edited by Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 31. In further references, this edition will be abbreviated as *Book of Concord*.

³Psalm 119: 46.

as this Confession became known – before the emperor and empire, but confessed it “with a distinctness of voice and utterance which well accorded with the clearness and firmness of the belief it expressed.”⁴ A small group of confessors stood with him, surrounded by the assembled estates of the Holy Roman Empire. Five princes and two free city representatives dared to confess the scriptural message of the Reformation. They were prepared to sacrifice their lives for Christ, as Wolfgang, the prince of Anhalt, observed in those days: “For pleasure, I often go for a ride with others. Why then should I not, when there is a need, also saddle my horse in honor and obedience to my Lord and redeemer Jesus Christ and, sacrificing my body and life, rush towards the eternal wreath in the heavenly life?”⁵ Here the spirit of the first witnesses bursts forth. With the courage of the apostles and martyrs, they boldly confessed. They were determined to obey God rather than men. Luther wrote from the Coburg to Augsburg: “I will not and cannot fear such wretched enemies of God. Their defiance is my pride, their rage my cheer. Let the devil tremble, but we will not be afraid. The dear word, the wedding ring, is ours. We will ask for nothing else.”⁶ These are not mere words, but testimonies of people for whom Christ had become more important than anything else in the world. Accordingly, they had to confess the unique, precious, eternally true word before kings and beggars and before the world in which they lived. The *Augustana* became a priceless gift to millions of Protestant Christians. It thus befits us to reflect seriously upon the words that our fathers, with whom we belong to the one church of Christ, have left us in this Confession. We ask ourselves, what this Confession may tell us as a mission society, which desires to be nothing but a church of God *in actu confessionis* – a church confessing His word in the world. What does this Protestant Confession have to say to mission?

Confession and mission – declaration of faith and proclamation – are inseparable in two ways. Scripture tells us, what confessing Christ means: To follow Christ, to devote ourselves and sacrifice our service to Him.

⁴Leopold von Ranke, *Deutsche Geschichte im Zeitalter der Reformation* (Leipzig: Dunker und Humblot, 1873). The quote is taken from its translation: Leopold von Ranke, *History of the Reformation in Germany* translated by Sarah Austin (London: George Routledge & Sons; New York: E.P. Dutton, 1905), 605.

⁵Hans Preuß, *Luthertum um 1530 in Wort und Bild* (Berlin: Fische Kunstverlag, n. d.) 34.

⁶Preuß, *Luthertum um 1530*, 55.

Ultimately, though, everyone's discipleship and all services are tested by one thing. Do we proclaim Him before the world? Do we go forth and praise Him through word and deed as the Savior of the world? The confessors of Christ have at all times been His messengers, witnesses, and missionaries. We can only confess Christ in giving testimony to the kings and beggars of this world and not be ashamed of Him. Mission is testimony. Mission is confession.

Mission and confession also belong together in another sense. We use the word "confession" also in its other, derived meaning. We thereby mean those words, in which the content of the testimony has found its expression. We also mean clearly formulated, precisely defined documents that regulate our discipleship—our personal testimony. Already early on, the church of the confessors laid down confessions to establish clarity in its own practice, to protect itself from a corruption and dilution of the message and to show the succession of forthcoming generations the right paths and roads. So also the *Augsburg Confession* wishes to be nothing but an explanation of that which we can only confess through the deeds in our life. For those who want to confess Christ through word and life, it is a description of proper discipleship and a beacon for every individual's decisions.

Mission, too, has gratefully used such confessions. To be sure, our mission of Basel is transconfessional. It has never bound itself to a certain Lutheran or Reformed Confession. But it has, for its own instruction and education, always gratefully used the *Augustana* "as an outstretched arm towards Christ,"⁷ and as a clear guide for messengers and confessors, so that they may, in their preaching of the word and in their life of obedience, give a "clear confession." The national churches as well expect from us a clear confession, succinct words to ward off paganism and all syncretism, to voice in all clarity the truth and conviction of its new world, the church of God, to the old world from which it comes. Therefore, in the history of Basel's mission, the *Augustana* has offered great services in our seminaries and in instruction in all of its fields⁸ And

⁷Leonhard Fendt, *Der Wille der Reformation im Augsburger Bekenntnis* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1929), 12.

⁸The significance of the confession for mission is once again acute in the controversy between the German Protestant Missionary League (*Deutscher Evang. Missionsbund*) and the East Asia Mission. This League is a confessional fellowship. Its confession to Christ unites all German speaking missions with one another. It binds every missionary to the word of God, protects him from all missionary individualism, and

so it is, that the mission demands a clear confession, especially because, on a higher level, mission aspires to be confession, testimony, witness, and discipleship.

Thus far we can say: to have a confession is to be a missionary, a confessor to the world, like our fathers. This is the first point. To have a confession also means to do mission correctly, to testify clearly and truly about Christ and His work in one's commission, in agreement with the confession of the fathers of the church. This is the second point. Our question therefore is this: How can the *Augustana* assist us to testify and confess Christ and His word correctly to the world? We shall have it illuminate four aspects for us.

I.

The *Augustana* begins its first article by witnessing to the living and true God.⁹ It does not speak of a god in general. (For example, it immediately contrasts itself expressly with Islam). It speaks of the one, true God of whom humanity is ignorant, unless He reveals Himself to it through His Son. It is the Father of Jesus Christ, who becomes known here, not just any god, not any general concept of god. It is the God of Scripture, who reveals Himself, not the so-called gods found in thousands of religious documents over all the world. It is the God, who through His Son, entered the world of sin and death and revealed Himself as the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit. By confessing the Triune God at the outset, the *Augustana* has avoided every syncretism. It thereby rejects any claims that the Indians¹⁰ or the Muslims, when they speak of god, imply the God of the Bible. There is no other God than He who is the Lord of the world revealed in Christ. Such is the grand entrance presented in this confession.

underscores his position as a witness. Thus it was inevitable that the East Asia Mission was rejected for the sake of the confession, clarity, and truthfulness in affairs. One may see *Kirchenblatt für die reformierte Schweiz* 13 (1930).

⁹*Book of Concord*, 37.

¹⁰Luther refers to the Indians in two well-known references which came to Hartenstein's attention in an article "Von der Reformation zur Mission" by Dean Langenfaß, Munich, in the festschrift for Gerhard von Zezschwitz (1825-1886). They read as follows: "The kingdom of God cannot be restricted but, just as I have been baptized here, so also another Christian in India is baptized. For they have the same Gospel... Therefore it will not be confined. Whoever teaches different, deceives the people." "Christianity is also there where Rome is not to be found: 'Numquid Christiani qui etiam nunc sub Turca, Persarum, Indorum, Scytharum regibus, Romae sunt subjecti'."

But what about the condition of humanity as we find it in this world in light of this God? The answer is given in the second article – which for mission is of the greatest significance. It uses the following words: “Since the fall of Adam all human beings who are propagated according to nature are born with sin, that is, without fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence.”¹¹ This article is the clearest and the simplest formulation of the word “paganism,” among which we conduct our ministries.

According to this article, paganism is essentially paired with original sin. It results from humanity’s final rejection of God. “Paganism and original sin are joined indissoluble just as Christianity is with regeneration.”¹² The Confession’s point is this: All those are rejected who “argue that human beings can be justified before God by their own powers of reason.”¹³ This is exactly the belief of paganism. Paganism, the world of religions, is nothing other than the grandiose attempt of humanity to connect (*re-ligio*) with God despite its fall. On its own, with the powers of its innate nature, reason, soul, and will, paganism attempts to be justified and to become one with God. Paganism is the sinister attempt of a human being trying to save himself through his own religion. This is further qualified in the *Augustana* by means of three expressions. It describes all heathens as those who are “without fear of God.” All religions seek to find the way of the human soul to God on their own. Through spiritual practice and meditation, through passionate exercise and sacrifice, through pilgrimages and services in the temple, the heathen prepares himself to enter the world of God.¹⁴ The heathen always stands before God as a fighter, yes, and as a robber. He does not fear the one who is the holy God and who does not offer any sinner an opportunity to penetrate His holiness and grasp His mystery, except through His own extended grace. The heathen, too, comes from God. He is God’s handiwork. Therefore, he cannot be without God. And yet he desires to be without *the* God, who conceals Himself as the holy one before sinners, who lets them perish, who see Him, who is a terror to those who fall into

¹¹*Book of Concord*, 37, 39.

¹²This quotation has been taken from an article by Ernst Strasser, a German *Probst* of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Hannover, who wrote an article “Das Wesen des Heidentums,” *Neue kirchliche Zeitschrift* (N.K.Z.) 2 (1929).

¹³*Book of Concord*, 39.

¹⁴Romain Rolland, *Jung Indien. Aufsätze aus den Jahren 1919 bis 1922* (Erlenbach-Zürich; München: Rotapfelverlag, 1924). Therein the section on “Das Leben des Rama Krishna,” 48-51.

His hands. This ultimate fear of the holy and righteous God eludes paganism because of its thousand attempts to secure access into the world of God. We hear, furthermore, that the heathen is a human being "without trust in God." The common trait of all religions is an unwillingness to put blind trust in the invisible God. Therefore, they draw God into the visible world, erecting their own complete world with images and gods, to which they cling their hearts. It is the distinguishable mark of idolatry that one only believes in the visible, and visibility, in particular.¹⁵ One elevates the human being to a god, creates a world of mediators, priests and heroes, anthropomorphic gods, to which one's heart clings. This dual act, the humanizing of God and the *apotheosis* of man, is paganism. Pagans are not willing to trust in the invisible God and, hence, believe themselves to be righteous before God on the basis of their own innate abilities. There, where one worships images and believes in anthropomorphic gods, pagans place themselves in the center of attention. God is robbed of His honor and it is given to human beings. The spirit of the immanent world and the idolization of creation replace the position of the humble trust in the holy God. That is paganism.

Finally, the *Augustana* describes the human being as one who is "with concupiscence." All religions seek life, salvation, power, and happiness. They are totally egocentric. God must serve man, which actually explains the meaning of all their thousands of sacrifices and offerings that the primitives bring to their gods.¹⁶ Man seeks to win over God for himself through a host of religious works. This is the concupiscence of the unbroken, heathen heart.

Furthermore, the religions wish to see God—to celebrate Him. Therefore, this is always also the zenith of all heathen feasts, when the image of a god is taken from the shrine, and paraded through the mass of people. They want to see, longing to catch a glimpse of the invisible. As

¹⁵Søren Kierkegaard, *Einübung im Christentum* (Diederichs'sche Ausgabe), 130: "The distinguishable mark is paganism." [English translation: *Training in Christianity and Edifying discourse which accompanied it* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960)].

¹⁶The expression "primitive" was a widely used term during Hartenstein's time. One may consult, for example, Walter Freitag, "Zur Psychologie der Bekehrung bei Primitiven," in *Reden und Aufsätze*. Edited by Jan Hermelink and Hans Jochen Margull (Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1961), I: 170-193. Certainly, such a term often carried cultural or racial biases. One may see here Adam Kuper, *The Invention of Primitive Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988). Here, however, it is used as a deliberate judgmental term based on comparative studies between Christianity with other religions.

a result, paganism resorts to speculation and the worst sensuous cults in pursuit of pleasure and contemplation clouded "with concupiscence." Where standing in front of the holy God does not break this concupiscence, the neighbor and the body and life of the neighbor will not be regarded as sacred. Let us consider how paganism has denigrated women. Women are treated merely as inferior creatures, who are the possession and commodity of their husbands, who live without any right and dignity.¹⁷ No religion on earth gives the woman the dignity and redemption that Christ gives her. Polygamy among men and women is the goal of paganism. Zenana¹⁸ and harem are those places where the woman must endure the curse of life. Fornication and promiscuity emanate from all the heathen religions, which have been tainted "with concupiscence."

Thus the *Augustana* illustrates, in unsurpassable simplicity and depth, the corruption and remoteness from God that transforms the essence of paganism. It interprets these frightening descriptions in the context of original sin. Paganism's self-righteousness and self-seeking attempts towards salvation are totally condemned with the harsh words of Article 20: *sine Deo sicut gentes*, "without God as are the heathen."¹⁹ "The human being without God and His redemption is a distortion of that what defines human existence, the perpetual danger of lapsing into the demonic state."²⁰ It is most important that mission continually explores to identify and understand paganism so that the message of salvation is rightly brought to it.

II.

1. We are given a second insight from Articles 3 and 4 of the *Augsburg Confession*: "Only the mediator and his redemption must be preached." From where do the fathers of the confession draw this conviction? Does it not originate from the fact that they, suffering under their own deepest terror of the "*pavidae conscientiae*"²¹ and shocked by the sinfulness of their own hearts, heard the desperate cry for salvation uttered by the entire world, by all who are human? The *Augustana* sees in all clarity the

¹⁷Strasser, "Das Wesen des Heidentums," 98-99.

¹⁸A custom in India, where women of the high caste system were kept secluded in a part of the house.

¹⁹*Augsburg Confession* (henceforth quoted as AC) 20: 24; *Book of Concord*, 47.

²⁰Fendt, *Der Wille der Reformation im Augsburgischen Bekenntnis*, 84.

²¹AC 12: 4 and 20: 15, *Book of Concord*, 45, 55.

heathen world in one place and the world of salvation of the kingdom of Christ in another. Consequently, there follows in the third article the confession of the one mediator between God and humanity who has reconciled us with the Father, "a sacrifice not only for original sin but also for all other sins," who alone can shield and protect "against the devil and sin."²²

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. This is what the *Augustana* proclaims to the world. Only once, and therefore once and for all, God has revealed Himself in the Son. He has done everything for us, gives forgiveness and eternal life. In Him, the Father has begun His eternal kingdom, which He will bring to completion. The cross stands as the site of grace for the world. Resurrection was achieved to be the gate for the dying of all nations. He who ascended to heaven is the Lord over all the world to whom all authority has been given. We have a king. This confession of the third article announces mission. Mission is not intended to replace the heathen religion with a new one. Rather, God Himself must penetrate the world of the heathen. He Himself is present in Christ and wants to come through the proclamation of his messengers. From above He snatches the sinner out of the world of sin and death. He builds a new world, a new creation through the Holy Spirit. Mission is God's doing. "The case is yours, Lord Jesus Christ." He alone can unite and create anew in this world. God has brought the miraculous self-sacrifice in His Son and forgiven the world the sin that He had to bear. Mission seeks nothing but to make room, prepare the way, open the doors for the coming of God in Christ. It does not proclaim a new religion but a new world. It anticipates this miracle, wherever it humbly does its service. Jesus alone can instill the fear of God, the blind and blessed trust in God. He alone can remove the concupiscence in the human being through the Spirit from above.

2. For this reason the *Augustana* continues: How does the heathen become a man of God? How will the sinner be made righteous? Article 4 gives the answer. It does not speak of the death of the human being, it does not appeal to his good will or his innate reason. It knows that the sinner cannot extract himself from paganism. No, this miracle occurs "without distinction, out of grace, on account of Christ's sake through faith which God reckons as righteousness."²³ What do these words mean?

²²*Book of Concord*, 38.

²³*Book of Concord*, 39-40.

God in Christ begins totally anew with the world. He does not depend on our strength, but on Himself and His own doing. He remains the king who alone knows grace. Through the sending of His Son He has made Him for us "as wisdom and righteousness, as sanctification and redemption." Any selfjustification has passed. All that matters is the receiving, humble faith in Christ, who accepts us and allows what these words imply to become a reality: for us. This alone is how God saves the human being, by doing everything for us, by fulfilling all things, and expecting us to accept His offer.

This article on justification is also crucial for mission. The issue dealt with by the missionary is that faith may arise. But faith is something completely new, a miracle that God alone can bestow on the heathen, when He opens the heathen's eyes and ears for the word. Faith is that miracle by which human beings learn to look away from themselves, not to trust themselves, and to cling entirely to what God has done. God seeks to justify the heathen through Jesus Christ. As a result, mission always expects a total break of the heathen with his old world – a complete turn towards God – by the heathen humbling himself in the dust with all his religion and his wisdom before the One, who is his Lord. Mission knows what to demand and what to condemn. It is either-or: either believe in Jesus Christ or in oneself and one's own religion. This is what it always has to proclaim. It must be prepared to carry the cross of rejection, but also to experience the joy of victory, which Jesus gives those who believe. Christ and His justifying grace is the content of the mission's proclamation. It knows of none other.

III.

Let us, however, continue with our questions: How should missionary service be conducted? To this the *Augustana* answers with two important statements from the words on preaching and the church, which are inseparably connected in Articles 5, 7, and 8.

1. "If the heathens must praise God, then he must have become their God first; if they must believe then they should hear his word first, and so preachers must be sent to them, those who proclaim them the word of God (Luther)."²⁴ Article 5 of the *Augustana* refers us to this inner connection when it tells us, in all seriousness: "To obtain such faith God instituted the office of preaching, giving the gospel and the sacraments.

²⁴See Langenfaß, "Von der Reformation zur Mission."

Through these, as through means, He gives the Holy Spirit who produces faith, where and when He wills, in those who hear the gospel."²⁵ The proclamation of the word occurs not *privatim*, on the basis of one's own gifts or decision, but depends on the office of the church, which has been instituted by God. This is how Christianity has always understood it. The proclamation of the mighty message, which occurs between heaven and earth, is about creation and redemption and completion of the world and can only be carried out by those who have been especially assigned to such a task, who have totally committed themselves to God, and who are prepared to proclaim on behalf of the church of God. If the word of God is rightly preached, then – the *Augustana* tells us – it becomes the means, the vehicle, through which faith is created in its hearers. But the fact that this faith comes about rests in the authority of God alone, lies in His hands, where and when He gives his Spirit. The proclamation and its success are not in our hands. We do not have control over the word's ability to touch the heart. It is not in our might to have God Himself come. Thus, particularly in view of the preaching of the word, the full majesty of God is upheld, as well as the office and the word, its task of proclaiming and preaching. However, the place and time where and when the word is heard, are reserved for his majesty. To be gracious – we said above – is the manner in which God condescends Himself to the sinner. To be gracious – we say here – is the manner in which God creates faith where and when He wills. This is the nature of how mission must be done. The missionary is, therefore, merely the obedient messenger, the steward and witness, to call out what has been done by God. Herein lies the seriousness of mission. For the messenger is charged to proclaim the Lord and His word faithfully and in loyal servitude, not to pursue his own skills. He is *subordinate* to Him, who has given him the office. He is accountable to Him who is his Lord. But this also reveals the blessed side of the office. For what is more magnificent than to proclaim the message of salvation to the world?

Such a mission, however, merely carries out the commission of the church. Mission and the church belong together, as the *Augustana* tells us. It is not the single pious missionary who goes and wants to awaken individuals through his doing. The mission must safeguard herself against all individualism. The messenger is a member of the church, held accountable to it, and closely associated with it. He has the commission to summon new members into the church of God, the large and invisible

²⁵*Book of Concord*, 40.

church. But mission and the Holy Spirit, too, belong together. It has not been placed into the hands of human beings that, when they preach to the heathen, these might come to faith. The “where and when it pleases God” remains standing particularly for the missionary. This humbles him, drives him daily to God, and brings him in closer relationship with the one, who alone remains the subject, the Lord and King of mission, the Holy Spirit.

2. Let us consider a second issue. Articles 7 and 8 of the *Augustana* confess, immediately after the office of preaching, that God has entrusted His word to the church. His intention is to call heathens into His church: “It is the one holy Church, which remains at all times, the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is purely preached and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel.”²⁶ Church! Wherever this word resonates, there the deepest curse of the world is uncovered and overcome the horrid solitude of human beings, the isolation and disintegration, the lack of fellowship in the world. The word of God is the word of love from which arises love for one another. Only there – where a human being recognizes his sin and is recipient of grace – there alone true fellowship emerges. The church is not a club, an association of converted people. It is the people of God transcending space and time, the great host of the blessed in heaven and on earth who are in fellowship with Christ. It is quite significant that the *Augustana* does not refer to the church as mere human beings. The church is no ordinary human business, but church is there where God has His word proclaimed and where there are people gathered to listen. Here holy people are born, not without sin, but people on whom God has placed His hand and taken into His service. Certainly, there remain “in this life many hypocrites and public sinners among the righteous.”²⁷ The pure church does not exist on earth. It is reserved for eternity. This insight is the strongest barricade against all types of sectarianism, against any disintegration of the church. God alone can and will separate. This, too, is the best barricade against any false security of the church and humbles her daily, because it will always remain a church of sinners and its pious members will always be in need of daily repentance.

This also has crucial implications for missions. The *Augustana* delineates three aspects. Firstly: When mission is defined by the office of

²⁶ Article 7: 1, *Book of Concord*, 42.

²⁷ Article 8: 1, *Book of Concord*, 42.

proclamation and the church, then external pressures and mission politics have no effect. "The word must do it." The Reformation has taught us this anew. In the history of mission there have been numerous attempts to build bridges to the heathen. Those who have crossed them were in fact no Christians. Where God is at work, there we humans should not facilitate, persuade, or use force. Any connection between politics and mission, as the history of missions in China reveals, must be dismissed.²⁸ The *Augustana* unmistakably states "For secular authority deals with matters altogether different from the gospel," and "this is why one should not mix or confuse the two authorities."

Secondly: In view of the church, the mission should also pay attention to the natural orders and structures found in the heathen countries. They direct our attention to the fact that, though the creation of God has been destroyed, it has not been relinquished. Thus the *Augustana* admonishes us to "*conservare tamquam ordinationes Dei.*"²⁹ The cultural traits and structures from which the missionary comes are also corrupted and cannot be merely transferred. On the other hand, the primeval orders of the heathens, such as marriage and family, kinship and tribe, economic and judicial orders, still carry signs of God's creation. We should, therefore, be concerned that the Spirit of God also enters the forms of the tribes to which we go and renews and purifies them. To be sure, here we have to be aware of the danger of accommodation wherever one goes. But we should not ignore the natural orders, just as it was done also at the time when the first missionaries came to our country. This will protect us from a false sense of superiority, from seclusion, and it will open our eyes for the Spirit who builds the church and does not despise the natural orders.³⁰

²⁸Looking at the most recent developments in China, Hartenstein must be thinking of the violent movement, the "I Ho Ch'üan, which Europeans termed the Boxer Movement. On June 24, 1900, an imperial decree in Peking ordered the killing of all foreigners. Months of carnage ensued during which Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries were affected the most severely among the foreign population. Unfortunately, missionaries were the target of retribution because they had become the spearhead of Western penetration, often openly flaunted the privileges assured to them by treaties, and frequently disregarded Chinese feelings with regard to propriety and order. See Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Mission* (New York: Penguin Books, 1964), 286-288.

²⁹"...keep as a true order of God," AC 16: 5; *Book of Concord*, 50.

³⁰The mission period between the World Wars had two significant missionaries whose mission approach aligns itself to the above discussion on creation and "primordial structures" or "primeval links." 1) Bruno Gutmann (1876-1966), a Leipzig

Thirdly: The expression, “the assembly of believers,” if correctly understood, protects the church from the false perception to expect a number of churches to live without sin. The young and the old Christianity remains a church of sinners under the cross. We clearly see the problem in the young churches. In the second and third generation they content themselves with a false sense of security ignorant of the fact that they, too, have to withdraw from paganism, as their fathers and mothers once did. It serves no purpose to reproof and critique, much less to encourage excommunications and divisions. Instead, it would be more appropriate for mission to share this problem with the young churches, to place itself also under this outgrowth of sin and then attempt to proclaim in solidarity with them the word of repentance for believers and of the Holy Spirit, who cleanses and sanctifies the church. The primary service of mission is proclamation to the heathen, but then there is the other: to the church. Neither should be neglected. Thereby the *Augustana*, if correctly understood, delineates for us important lines and paths for our mission practice.

IV.

We must allow ourselves to be told one last word by the *Augustana* with regard to the question: What ultimately do we have with the goal of our mission? We have always accused our mission – by America in particular today – of being too little focused on doing, of placing no emphasis on action, that it, because of its doctrine of justification, is rendered incapable for joyous action. Mission, we are told, allows the world and its people to remain complacent so that no new energies are set free for social and

missionary to the Chagga people in the Kilimanjaro area (now Tanzania), is noted for his ethnographic studies and his attempts at incorporating tribal “primeval links” into the community of Christ because the tribal order of creation had not, in his view, been affected by sin and should not be destroyed by modern civilization. See Ernst Jäschke, *Bruno Gutmann: His Life, His Thoughts, and his Work* (Erlangen: Verlag der Ev. Luth. Mission, 1985). 2) Christian Keysser (1877-1961), a German Lutheran missionary sent by Neuendettelsau Mission to Papua New Guinea where he, too, engaged in ethnographic and linguistic research, which offered guidance to culturally appropriate proclamation of the gospel as well as to the practice of tribal conversions instead of the individual. See Christian Keysser, *A People Reborn*, translated by Alfred Allin and John Kuder (William Carey Library, 1980). Unfortunately, in the denazification process, both missionaries were strongly criticized for their sense for national and cultural identity but their approaches continue to be advocated. [Leonardo Neitzel, “Mission Outreach and Households in the City of Fortaleza,” Northeast Brazil (Doctor of Missiology dissertation, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, 2000)].

moral reform in the conditions of this world. The *Augustana* teaches us differently when we read Articles 6 and 20: "Concerning the New Obedience" and "Concerning Faith and Good Works."³¹ Certainly, the *Augustana* takes the original sin seriously and understands that its curse passed over all of creation. Therefore the roots of our doing must lie deep, very deep. From faith alone, which receives the grace of God, will new obedience be born. But it must come forth. "Faith must bring forth good fruits." Yes, surely it is so: only the power of forgiveness truly sets free, free for the service of love. Only those who truly entrust themselves in grace are actually people of obedience. To be sure, we are not promoting here a specific action plan, no program, no new economic order; one thing though comes into being, and that is far superior: new obedience to the will of God, the fulfillment of His commandments. The *Augustana* majestically portrays the new obedience, how Christ drives the old man to obedience though he resists and complains. It shows how all the conditions in this world must be permeated with love, though love is so often suppressed and replaced instead by hardships and suffering.³² Christ leads us. He will establish His kingdom. Therefore, He does not let His people become complacent. In praise and thanks to Him, in obedience to Him and through the power of the Holy Spirit they must do good works. "Such lofty and genuine works cannot be done without the help of Christ, as he himself says: 'Apart from me you can do nothing.'"³³ The *Augustana* testifies that one must do good works and it demonstrates how they can be done in the power of the word through which the Holy Spirit teaches. The *Augustana* places all Christians, as forgiven human beings, into marriage and family, vocation and nation. There love is performed, obedience is achieved, and fruits of the Spirit are brought forth. Obedience is greater than programs and it accomplishes the divine will far better than new orders for social transformation. There is nothing else the Lord expects from His people. He Himself plans to create a new heaven and a new earth.

A clear path has been mapped out for mission. Nothing is more dangerous for mission than to expect it to relieve this world from its thousands of problems, to restructure the social and moral needs, to solve the problems of industries, land possessions, and racial tensions. Scripture offers no social programs. Mission is unable "to transform the world into

³¹*Book of Concord*, 40, 52.

³²AC 16: 3-7; *Book of Concord*, 48-51.

³³AC 20: 38-39; *Book of Concord*, 56.

a kingdom of righteousness."³⁴ But this is what it can and must do: to recognize all the plights and show compassion and in its discipleship of Christ, be obedient, bring forth good fruits, let love be lived within the orders of this world, and while it lives under the selfish powers on earth, let God's word set what is right and what He demands from us. Mission must endure all setbacks and problems, wait for this eon to pass, and the Lord to bring in the new world.

2. And this is the final word: the *Augustana* is filled with the deep resonance of hope. The 3rd Article states that the Lord of the world will come again. He comes as the judge, repeats the 17th Article. He will raise the dead and give eternal life or damnation. The *Augustana* explicitly rejects the doctrine, "that before the resurrection of the dead saints the righteous people alone will possess a secular kingdom."³⁵ What does this mean? Christ brings a new world, we do not. It serves no purpose that we as pious people believe in progress, in transformation through our strength and action, in the creative powers of our programs and orders, as if we are able to bring something about in this world. Christ introduces the new world. He ushers in the last things through judgment and fulfillment, and then He will establish His kingdom, a new heaven and new earth.

This is the final word and the truth it conveys remains for missionary work. How will a handful of messengers among millions of people groups do their service, without the daily certainty that He, in whom they trust, is the Lord of the world, who comes to establish His kingdom? This is a message of victorious joy. With it we are prepared to serve and suffer. But it also humbles at the same time for it makes our work temporary, incomplete, and unfinished. Our churches abroad are only makeshift, built for a time, destined for their demolition when He comes. World change is reserved for the Lord alone. This message finally casts us into

³⁴Hartenstein's criticism is leveled in part against Daniel Johnson Fleming, a professor of missions at Union Theological Seminary, New York, who was an ardent supporter of Christianizing the social order and world transformation through mission. One may consult Fleming's book, *Marks of a World Christian* (New York: Association Press, 1920), 152: "We ought to be able to go to the man most indifferent to the Church and say: 'Here is the big thing-why are you not in it? We are working for the disenfranchisement and ennoblement of every single human life, the perfecting of human society in all its myriad activities and relationships, the transformation of the kingdoms of this earth until they have become the kingdom of our God and his Christ, the Christianization of all life everywhere.'"

³⁵Article 17: 5; *Book of Concord*, 50.

restlessness and fear of the heart, so that we do not adopt a false sense of security and idleness. Like a flash of lightning in the night, the *Augustana* casts the word of the coming Lord into the church and daily reminds it and its mission of their toil and labor: "My keeper, has the night already passed?"

The *Augustana* is no ancient document. It is the confession of men who, believing in Christ, have put their lives at risk. It thus does not behoove us merely to celebrate or understand the *Augustana*, but actually to believe and confess with it the one to whom it points: Jesus Christ. We want to learn from it in order to do mission correctly and according to the Great Commission, as Luther has told us so beautifully in his ascension sermon of 1523: "One must proclaim the Gospel publicly in the best way possible so that it is called out to all creatures, and there remains no corner on earth which it will not reach till the final day."³⁶

³⁶*D. Martin Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, 98 volumes (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger Edition, 1883 and following), 12: 556, 20-22. See Langenfaß, "Von der Reformation zur Mission," towards the end of his presentation. As a summary see Gerber, "Konfession und Mission" *Lutherisches Missionsjahrbuch* (1930).