

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY



Volume 61:Numbers 1-2

January-April 1997

Table of Contents

The Porvoo Common Statement

Prepared by the Fourth Plenary Meeting
held at Järvenpää, Finland, 9-13 October 1992 3

The Porvoo Declaration in Confessional Perspective

The Departments of Systematic Theology:
Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne,
Indiana, and Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis,
Missouri 35

The Holy Spirit in the Augsburg Confession: A Reformed Perspective

Richard A. Muller 53

A Lutheran Professor Trained at Westminster Looks for Similarities and Dissimilarities

Richard E. Muller 79

***Cum Patre et Filio Adoratur*: The Holy Spirit Understood Christologically**

David P. Scaer 93

Saint Polycarp of Smyrna: Johannine or Pauline Figure?	
D. Richard Stuckwisch	113
Books Received	126
Book Reviews	127
<i>Emanuel Hirsch und Paul Tillich: Theologie und Politik in einer Zeit der Krise.</i> By A. James Reimer	Lowell C. Green
<i>The Descent of God: Divine Suffering in History and Theology.</i> By Joseph M. Hallman	Jeffery A. Oschwald
<i>Adolf Schlatter: A Biography of Germany's Premier Biblical Theologian.</i> By Werner Neuer	William C. Weinrich
<i>Martin Luther in Two Centuries: The Sixteenth and the Twentieth.</i> By Helmar Junghans	Paul J. Grime
<i>A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada.</i> By Mark A. Noll	Robert E. Smith
<i>True Faith in the True God: An Introduction to Luther's Life and Thought.</i> By Hans Schwarz	Martin Noland
<i>Baptized into God's Family: The Doctrine of Infant Baptism for Today.</i> By A. Andrew Das	James W. Kalthoff
<i>Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary.</i> By Peter Stuhlmacher	Jonathan F. Grothe
<i>Genesis 1-11: From Eden to Babel.</i> By Donald Gowan	Dean O. Wenthe
<i>I Believe but I Have Questions.</i> By Jane L. Fryar	James E. Butler
<i>Christian Moral Judgment.</i> By J. Philip Wogaman	Terrence Reynolds
<i>Giving Goliath His Due: New Archaeological Light on the Philistines.</i> By Neal Bierling	Thomas H. Trapp
<i>Windows on the World of Jesus: Time Travel to Ancient Judea.</i> By Bruce Malina	Charles A. Gieschen
<i>Islam: An Introduction for Christians.</i> Edited by Paul Martinson; Leader's Guide by Irene Getz	Henry Rowold
<i>Canon and Theology: Overtures to an Old Testament Theology.</i> By Rolf Rendtorff	Henry Rowold
Indices to Volume 60 (1996)	
Index of Authors and Editors	153
Index of Titles	154
Index of Book Reviews	156

Cum Patre et Filio Adoratur. The Spirit Understood Christologically

David P. Scaer

Scriptures, Tradition, and the Confessions

The Lutheran Confessions are not autonomous, self-contained documents. Rather their authority is derived from and reflects the authority of the Scriptures, which they interpret. They point behind themselves by inviting us to submit to the Scriptures as the final judge in all church teaching. The confessions share in the brilliance of the Scriptures. As the moon does not reflect the sun's full splendor, so the confessions do not pretend to speak on every issue. They are not of the same substance as the Scriptures. While a derived authority is subordinate, still the confessions are fixed in the theological heavens. Recognizing the Scriptures as ultimate authority does not leave us with mere biblicism. Scriptures are interpreted within the tradition in which they arose and of which they remain a part. Ignore this tradition and "confessionalism" can be as much a form of "fundamentalism" as "biblicism." Confessions are canonized tradition, and both determine the climate in which the biblical documents are to be read. Interpreting the Scriptures apart from tradition (confessions) fails to see the life of Jesus, the apostles, and the Church as a continuum in which the Holy Spirit is guide.

Belief in the Church affirms that what God began in Jesus, through his conception by the Spirit, he continues in the Church by the gift of the same Spirit to the apostles. In the Creed what the Church confesses about Christ anticipates what she confesses about herself. Ecclesiology embraces christology. This point is essential to Paul's imagery of the Church as the body of Christ.

The pericope of Peter's confession (Matthew 16:16-19) involves several revelations about Jesus and the Church. First, his confession that Jesus is the Christ came from the Father (16-17), through the preaching of Jesus (even if he was then unaware of it). Second, Peter knew this truth through a further revelation

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from Jesus (17). Third, Peter learned from Jesus that he would be part of the Church that would successfully storm Satan's citadel.¹

The humility of Jesus and of the Church are only temporary husks covering hidden mysteries.² If Jesus was tempted to disarm himself of his humility to exercise his glory (Matthew 4:3), so the Church is tempted to despise her humility to impress the world. Unbelief among her members consists in accepting the world's assessment that she is weak and of no value. She repudiates her history and despises her tradition as ignoble. This unbelief contradicts her own self-confession that she is elect and holy. Distrust of tradition discloses an intellectual arrogance and more importantly a less than full understanding of the Church as the Spirit's work.

We may consider how the debate on women's ordination is handled. Pauline prohibitions are an appropriate starting point (the Protestant argument from *sola scriptura*). Unfortunately, though, the argument that this practice was unknown until recent times (the catholic argument) is ignored as of little value. The Protestant argument leaves us at the mercy of exegetical opinion on this or that passage.³ Symptomatic distancing of the Church from her own history is an obsession with modernity. We confess an apostolic (historic) Church, but we cry for an up-to-date one, as if the Church in the twenty-first century were not the Church

¹See W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1991), 2:632-634.

²Melanchthon connects the victory with the preaching and faith. One may see, for example, Tappert, 195. Ap IV, 260. The comparison between the humility of Christ and the Church is made in Ap VII-VII, 18. Tappert, 171, 18. All references to the Lutheran Confessions are taken from the Book of Concord, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959). The source is cited simply as Tappert. The abbreviations are: Augsburg Confession is AC; Apology is Ap; Small Catechism is SC; Large Catechism is LC; Treatise is Tr; Smalcald Articles is SA; Formula of Concord is SD.

³Avery Dulles discusses this problem in regard to the Catechism of the Catholic Church in "The Challenge of the Catechism," *First Things* 49 (January 1995): 51.

of the first century. One Church (*una ecclesia*) is not two. Like adolescents we disown our parents.

Apostolic Tradition and Creeds

The confessions stake out for themselves a place in the apostolic and post-apostolic tradition by commitment to the creeds whose earlier forms arguably predated the New Testament which preserved them.⁴ By citing ancient sources the Augsburg Confession and the Apology see themselves standing in the catholic tradition.⁵ By citing the earlier Lutheran Confessions the Formula of Concord adds them to this tradition. Claiming that the catholic creeds cannot demand our allegiance (the Protestant principle) fails to recognize that they share in biblical substance and expression and that they rose within the apostolic churches (the catholic principle). As much as liberal and neo-evangelical Protestants each find their nemesis in the other, both have an aversion to creeds. In contrast, for Lutherans they are distillations of the Church's faith and the means by which we share in her history.⁶ Martin Chemnitz, who contributed to the Formula and was instrumental in assembling the *Concordia*, provided from the ancient Church many testimonies to the Lutheran position in his *Catalogue of Testimonies*. In his *Examination of the Council of Trent* he demonstrated that the Lutheran faith continued the catholic tradition. Recent Evangelical, Anglican, and Lutheran transfers to the Roman and Orthodox communions can be

⁴See J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, third edition (London: Longman, 1972), 13. The *Romanum*, which forms the core of the Apostles' Creed, is arguably traceable to the two great apostles, Peter and Paul, and may have been in place before some New Testament documents were written. The division of the second article into the humiliation and glorification (Philippians 2:5-11) corresponds with Jesus' predictions of his death and resurrection (Matthew 16:21).

⁵Tappert, 47.

⁶Evangelicals can appreciate the creeds and confessions, but ultimately are critical of them and find them wanting. See Gerald Bray, "Scripture and Confession: Doctrine as Hermeneutic," in *A Pathway into the Holy Scripture*, 221-235, edited by Philip E. Satterwaite and David F. Wright (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1994).

explained by a desire to take the historical continuity of the Church more seriously.

The Spirit, the Scriptures, the Church: One Cloth

Lack of a detailed article on the Spirit's person in the confessions reflects the Lutheran understanding of the Church as his work. While biblical inspiration is important, Luther's explanation of the Third Article of the Creed says nothing about it. Had Luther been using the Nicene Creed, he might have said something. There belief in the Holy Spirit who "spoke through the prophets" is closely followed by belief "in one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church."⁷ Luther's concept of the holiness of the Church is derived from the Spirit's working through the Word, and thus inspiration is the premise for sanctification. Everything that Christ has done is "offered to us and bestowed on our hearts through the preaching of the gospel by the Holy Spirit."⁸ For Luther the Word is not exhausted by the Scriptures but certainly includes them. The Spirit does not work alongside of the Word (as Calvin says), but belongs essentially to the Word. It not only informs the intellect (*contra* Calvin) but converts the heart. Where there is no Word, there is no Spirit! Where there is no Church, there is no Spirit! "For where Christ is not preached, there is no Holy Spirit to create, call, and gather the Christian Church, and outside it no one can come to the Lord Christ."⁹ Universalism is impossible for Luther, who attaches the Spirit's work to the Church. "Until the last day the Holy Spirit remains with the holy community or Christian people."¹⁰ Through the Church the Holy Spirit "gathers us, using it to teach and preach the Word."¹¹ The Spirit is holy because he makes believers holy in bringing them to faith, but Luther can speak of the Church as the means through which her own holiness is increased.¹² This holiness is acquired

⁷This reference finds its roots in 2 Peter 1:21: "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men speak from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." Kelly, 341. It remains a standard passage.

⁸Tappert, 414. LC, Creed, 38.

⁹Tappert, 416. LC, Creed, 45.

¹⁰Tappert, 417. LC, Creed, 53.

¹¹Tappert, 417. LC, Creed, 53.

¹²Tappert, 415. LC, Creed, 36; Tappert, 418. LC, Creed, 57-59.

"through the Christian Church."¹³ Sanctification is not acquired through the law but through the Word (the gospel).¹⁴ What Luther attributes to the Word in one breath, he attributes to the Church in another and to the Holy Spirit in still another. The second article looks at christology in the person of Jesus, and the Third Article looks at christology as what the Spirit does in the Church.¹⁵ The Word, the Church, and the Spirit offer and apply the work of Christ.¹⁶ Sanctification is nothing other than Christ in action through the Spirit in his Church.¹⁷ "Therefore to sanctify is nothing else than to bring us to the Lord Christ to receive this blessing, which we could not obtain by ourselves."¹⁸ Without Christ the Spirit cannot sanctify.¹⁹ Sanctification devoid of christology leaves a moralism, which Luther condemned in the papacy and now is characteristic of Arminianism and Wesleyanism.²⁰

The use of "Christian" for "catholic" in describing the Church was already in place by the fifteenth century.²¹ For Luther it reflected the importance of christology for his understanding of the Spirit and the Church. Christ is the only head of the Church.²² The word *catholica* was retained in the Latin versions of the creeds

¹³Tappert, 415. LC, Creed, 35-37.

¹⁴Tappert, 420. LC, Creed, 68: "Therefore the Ten Commandments do not by themselves make us Christian, for God's wrath and displeasure still remain on us because we cannot fulfill his demands."

¹⁵Alan Ludwig analyzes Luther's explanation of the Creed as follows ("Preaching and Teaching the Creed: The Structure of the Small Catechism's Explanations as Guides," *Logia* 3 [Reformation/October 1994]: 21): "Likewise, Christ is not mentioned in the explanation of the First Article, but is the subject of the Second and the object of faith in the Third. The explanation of the Third Article leads back to the person and work of Christ in the Second; the Father of Jesus Christ in the Second is then recognized as the Father of the Christian in the First."

¹⁶Tappert, 415. LC, Creed, 38.

¹⁷Credit for this phrase goes to Harold L. Senkbeil, *Sanctification: Christ in Action* (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1989).

¹⁸Tappert, 415-416. LC, Creed, 39.

¹⁹Tappert, 416. LC, Creed, 43-46.

²⁰Tappert, 416. LC, Creed 43.

²¹Tappert, 18, note 2.

²²Tappert, 417. LC, Creed, 51.

and Luther's *Formula Missae*. No denial that the Church was catholic or universal was implied when "christian" was used instead. Calling the Church "Christian" affirms Luther's understanding that Christian consciousness first experiences Christ within the historical reality of the Church before becoming aware of the Spirit as the creator of the faith. The Holy Spirit "first leads us into his holy community, placing us upon the bosom of the Church, where he preaches to us and brings us to Christ."²³ The Spirit reveals Christ, remaining himself unrevealed. Luther's assertion that "the Holy Spirit reveals and preaches the Word" is immediately preceded by his assertion the Church "is the mother that begets and bears every Christian through the Word of God."²⁴ Through the Church the Holy Spirit "speaks and does his work."²⁵ Luther calls "the Christian Church and the forgiveness of sins" the two means through which the Holy Spirit "begin[s] and daily increase[s] holiness on earth." The Holy Spirit, the Church, and forgiveness are for Luther inextricably interrelated. Apart from Christ "we see nothing but an angry and terrible Judge. But neither could we know anything of Christ, had it not been revealed by the Holy Spirit."²⁶ In the Apology the Church is called the Church of the prophets because of their testimony to Christ.²⁷ The Church may be called "prophetic" or "apostolic" because prophets and apostles both testified to Christ. Remove christology from the definition of the Church and the Holy Spirit is removed. Ideas of a *Weltgeist* or the Spirit preparing converts before and apart from the gospel is alien and inimical to Lutheran thinking.²⁸

The Holy Spirit, the Catechisms, and the Liturgy

Luther's Large and Small Catechisms are nothing else than explanations of the liturgy of the Church—*lex orandi lex credendi*. His catechisms are liturgical hermeneutics, interpreting the

²³Tappert, 415. LC, Creed, 37.

²⁴Tappert, 416. LC, Creed, 42.

²⁵Tappert, 419. LC, Creed, 65.

²⁶Tappert, 419. LC, Creed, 65.

²⁷Tappert, 227. Ap XX,2.

²⁸Calvin sees an operation of the Spirit in all creatures (*Institutes* III, 1, 2) and sees him as activating the Word by faith in the heart (III, 2, 33-34).

teachings (doctrines) of the Church first confessed in the liturgy and then explained by the pastor or the head of the household. The Creed, the Lord's Prayer, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper are things that that people hear, say, or do in the Church (the liturgy). The Large Catechism consists of sermons based on what the people experienced in the liturgy. The liturgy does not originate in individual piety (as Pietism and Schleiermacher argued), but the Word and Sacraments give birth to the Church.²⁹ Even the Ten Commandments are not isolated morals hanging on the walls of public schools, but form the basis of the confession for the absolution.³⁰ Unless the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and Holy Communion belong to the regular life of the Church (the liturgy), there is little purpose in asking Luther's question, "What does this mean?"

Better Late Than Never

Our attachment to the confessions of the sixteenth century required that 1981 be commemorated as the three hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, arguably the most theologically developed confession from the early period of the Reformation (*circa* 1529-1537). Our preoccupation prevented us from seeing that it was also the fifteen hundredth anniversary of the Nicene Creed as it came down to us from the Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381). Its place in the Eucharist makes it the most *catholic* of documents.³¹ Nicea (A.D. 325) provided christological definitions and Constantinople fleshed out the Holy Spirit's relation to God: he is glorified with the Father and the Son.³² Lack of developed

²⁹Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, translated by H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 532: "The Christian Church takes shape through the coming together of regenerate individuals to form a system of mutual interation and cooperation."

³⁰In the *Book of Common Prayer* of the Anglican communion, the Ten Commandments are part of the preparation for the Holy Communion. This is presupposed in Luther's SC, "How Plain People Are to Be Taught to Confess," 20: "Reflect on your condition in the light of the Ten Commandments."

³¹Kelly, 396, 348-357.

³²Kelly, 342.

attention to the Spirit in earlier creeds was not due to an absence of awareness.³³ They spoke of forgiveness, presumably through Baptism, communion of the holy things (in the Eucharist), and the resurrection.³⁴ By the second century the Holy Spirit was confessed as the cause of the conception of Jesus by the Virgin.³⁵ Thus he appears first in connection with the person of Christ and later with what he does in the Church. The response of the salutation, "and with thy spirit," may point to his leading the Church in confessing Christ (1 Corinthians 12:2). he also had a place in the Eucharist.³⁶ The Apostolic Constitutions and other ancient liturgies use the Pauline phraseology, "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion [*koinonia*] of the Holy Spirit" (2 Corinthians 13:13), or similar forms of the anaphora (the preface to the liturgy of the communion), where it may have originated.³⁷ While Paul explicitly calls this sacrament "the Lord's Supper" (1 Corinthians 11:20), which is to say the meal provided by Jesus, it was never understood in exclusively christomonistic terms. Rather the holy things of the sacrament were given to the holy people, the Church, through the Holy Spirit's participation. The Formula of Concord affirms the presence of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament, but condemns the view that his presence displaces that of Jesus.³⁸ The sacramental life of the Church is, in fact, nothing else than the Spirit at work. From earliest times the Spirit was on all sides of the liturgical (sacramental) formula.

One could convincingly argue that, because of later and current aberrations in regard to the Spirit, the Creed of Constantinople needs expansion. Dispensationalism and charismatic movements have from time to time proclaimed the arrival of the age of the

³³Kelly, 348-357.

³⁴Kelly, 152-166.

³⁵Kelly, 146-47.

³⁶One may see John W. Fenton, "Where is the Spirit in the Mass?" *The Bride of Christ* 21 (January 1997): 3; and Timothy C. J. Quill, "And With Your Spirit: A Study of the Response to the Ancient Greeting *Dominus Vobiscum*," unpublished research paper, 1994.

³⁷R.C.D. Jasper and G. J. Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed*, third edition (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 90-104.

³⁸Tappert, 571, FC, SD, VII, 11.

Spirit. The Arians regarded him as a creature, and Schleiermacher, a child of the Enlightenment, depersonalized him by transforming him into the common "Spirit of the community."³⁹ All "Spirit-movements" find him apart from the Word or Christ. Charismatics may hold to a formal view of biblical inspiration, but for them the Spirit reaches his full potential in direct communication with believers apart from the Word. In divorcing him from Christ and the Church, charismatic and liberal agendas merge.

The *Filioque*

Considering the turmoil arising from the *filioque* (the phrase "and the Son" in the Third Article of the Nicene Creed), the western (Latin) communions may secretly wish that the Council of Toledo (A.D. 589) had never happened.⁴⁰ This is the impression given by the current pontiff, who wants to heal the breach with the east before the next millennium.⁴¹ The late John Meyendorff, a prominent spokesman for the Eastern Orthodox communions in America, held out an olive branch in conceding that "there was a sense in which both sides would agree to say that Spirit proceeds 'from the Son.'"⁴² Before the controversy reached full throttle the phrase was not unknown among the eastern fathers. The schism of A.D. 1054, on the other hand, was a separation waiting to become a divorce, and the *filioque* was a readily available excuse. Removing the *filioque* may only be cosmetic and is unlikely to bring about the peaceable kingdom where pope and patriarch lie down with Anglicans.⁴³ One proposed solution is

³⁹Kelly, 340; Schleiermacher, 569-574.

⁴⁰A more biblically, theologically, and historically detailed presentation of the *filioque* was made by Avery Dulles at the Eighteenth Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 19 January 1995 under the title, "The *Filioque*: What Is at Stake?" The paper was later published in *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 59 (January-April 1995): 31-47. See especially page 42.

⁴¹Paul Wilkes, "The Popemakers," *New York Times Magazine* (December 11, 1994): 65.

⁴²*Byzantine Theology* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1987), 91-94.

⁴³John C. Bauerschmidt, an Episcopalian clergyman, goes against the common opinion of his Church in opposing its elimination. His arguments are generally taken from the earliest Anglican divines. "'Filioque' and the

having the Spirit "proceed through the Son." Known by both eastern and western fathers such phraseology might be taken in an Arian sense, making the Son an instrumental or incidental cause.⁴⁴ The eastern argument, based on the absence of the *filioque* from John 15:26, is gaining converts. It may be argued, furthermore, that any honor thereby attributed to the Son is already in place without the *filioque*.⁴⁵ Like the Father, the Son is creator — as the one through whom all things are made (*per quem omnia facta sunt*). Concessions, however, may be motivated by the rush to an ecumenical paradise. In addition, the argument based on the absence of the precise phrase may demonstrate a biblicism that adherents for its exclusion might later find embarrassing. Does anyone really dispute Karl Barth's argument that this matter can hardly be resolved by one passage or that the absence of the phrase requires absence of the idea? We should put to rest any idea that by the *filioque* the west claimed two parallel or converging sources (*dua principia*) within God for the procession of the Spirit, one from the Father and the other from the Son. The Father was *principaliter*.⁴⁶ There is no idea of a "Nestorian" Spirit who derives his deity and personhood from two unrelated or separate sources.

Fundamental in Barth's argument in favor of the *filioque* is the traditional distinction of *opera ad extra* (how God reveals himself), and the *opera ad intra* (what he is in himself). God's revelation reflects his essence.⁴⁷ What he does is determined by what he is. Unless this were so, we would be faced with sheer agnosticism.⁴⁸

Episcopal Church," *Anglican Theological Review*, 73 (Winter 1991): 1-25.

⁴⁴Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, translated by G. T. Thompson (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1936), I, 1:551. All subsequent references to Barth will be to this volume and part.

⁴⁵Even without this addition that the Spirit proceeded from the Son, the Third Article of the Constantinopolitan Creed does not have an insufficient christology or pneumatology. The Spirit was confessed as Lord, that is, *kyrios* (*dominus*), the *Adonai* of Israel, the principle of spiritual life (*vivificantem*). Kelly (342) points out that the Creed only endorses the doxology: Glory to be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

⁴⁶Barth, 557.

⁴⁷Barth, 548.

⁴⁸In the same way works reveal faith, though I am not sure that the correlation has been set forth in this way.

Barth convincingly argues that the Son's sending the Spirit presupposes that the Spirit also belongs to the Son. The Son cannot give what he does not eternally and essentially have. Without the *filioque* the sending of the Spirit "stands merely [as] temporal truth without eternal ground,"⁴⁹ an argument offered in the sixteenth century by Lutheran Tuebingen theologians in their correspondence with the patriarch of Constantinople.⁵⁰ The Son's sending the Spirit is *not* identical with the *filioque* but presupposes and reveals it. The Lutheran dogmatician Johann Andreas Quenstedt (1617-1688) said it earlier: "The temporal sending of the Holy Spirit presupposes that the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Son as he does from the Father. Sending the Spirit is a declaration and manifestation of the process."⁵¹ Passages speaking of the Spirit of the Son belong to the debate. They cannot be interpreted away by referring to the Spirit's relationship within time to the Son, for example, Pentecost.⁵² In breathing the Spirit on his disciples, Jesus expressed his essence as the Father's Son (John 20:22). Proceeding and "being breathed" refer to the same trinitarian process and the Son is *spirator Spiritus*.⁵³ Jesus in sending the Spirit, who proceeds from the Father, was giving the Church what belonged to him eternally and essentially and not accidentally or temporally. Just as the Holy Spirit is not incidentally but essentially the Spirit of the Son (*filioque*), so the Father is the Father of the Son and the Son is the Son of the Father not only in revelation but essentially.

Inevitably a discussion on the relationship of the *opera ad extra* to the *opera ad intra* will be found to be obscure, having little to do with practical church life. With impatience over what appears to be so much theological wrangling, the norm of Church life has shifted from Scripture to pragmatism — from divine revelation to

⁴⁹Barth, 550.

⁵⁰George Mastrantonis, *Augsburg and Constantinople* (Brookline, Massachusetts: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1982), 118.

⁵¹Quensedt, *Theologia didactio-polemica sive systema theologicum*, cited in Barth, 550: "Missio haec temporalis (Spiritus sancati) praesupponit aeternum illum Spiritus sancti (aeque a Filio atque Patre) processum estque eius declaratio et manifestatio."

⁵²Barth, 549.

⁵³Barth, 554.

"what works." Instead of talking about God, we talk about people. Here the *pro nobis* principle has gone awry and the tail wags the dog. Even if proponents of feministic theology have never heard of the *ad extra/ad intra* distinction, it is fundamental to their demand that God be spoken of as both "he" and "she." If women image God in the same way men do (*ad extra*), then God is as much "she" as "he" (*ad intra*). This is offered as an illustration to show that the Son's sending of the Spirit in time (*ad extra*) must be related to the *filioque*, his eternal relationship to the Son (*ad intra*).

We make no attempt to tread into the mystery of the Holy Trinity, but only to confess it. St. Augustine pleaded ignorance in distinguishing the begetting from the proceeding.⁵⁴ Francis Pieper was content with *quid sit nasci, quid processus, me nescire sum professus*.⁵⁵ Thomas Aquinas, without unraveling the mystery, made the distinction that procession involves both Father and Son, and the begetting only the Father.⁵⁶

⁵⁴Augustine, *Contra Maximinum Haereticum Arianorum* Episcopum II, 14, 1, cited in Barth 543: "Distinguere inter illam generationem et hanc processionem nescio."

⁵⁵"I confess that I do not know how the generation and procession takes place." Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 1:418.

⁵⁶Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, IV, 137. The argument of Aquinas should not be dismissed out of hand. If the Son is begotten of the Father and the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone, identified as the monopatrism position by Avery Dulles, it then becomes difficult to say in what way "being begotten" differs from "proceeding." We can and perhaps should leave it at the level of mystery, as Augustine, Quenstedt, and Pieper do. There is the rare occurrence of the Spirit identified as the Son in the *Shepherd of Hermas*. Of course, the biblical terminology never comes close to suggesting or allowing this in any sense. While theologians do not use "begetting" of the Father's relationship to the Spirit, they do use "proceeding" to explain in general terms that both Son and Spirit have their origin in the Father. Dulles does just this when he writes ("The Filioque: What Is At Stake?" 42): "... the procession of the Son and the Spirit [does not] subordinate them to the Father." Here procession is used for "coming" and simply means that both Son and Spirit have their origin in the Father. There is no suggestion that the Son proceeds in the same sense that the Spirit does. We have neither two "Sons" nor two "Spirits." The *filioque* serves the very useful purpose of removing any confusion since the Spirit is of both the Father and the Son, and so the Spirit is distinct from the Son.

The *Filioque* and the Consequence of Universalism

Absence of the *filioque* has been seen as a cause of universalism. Barth claimed, perhaps rightfully so, that without it our relationship to God would be "more or less expressly naturalistic, unethical [in] character," that is, of a creature to a Creator.⁵⁷ In the end his views on Christ as the only revelation (gospel) and election brought him to universalism.⁵⁸ The Roman Church, which also has the *filioque*, allows for salvation apart from the Church, but this can hardly be equated with the classical universalism.⁵⁹ Even though the eastern church speaks of the sanctification of nature, without the *filioque* it explicitly denies universalism.⁶⁰ How one stands on the *filioque* should have an affect on how one stands on universalism. Yet, this is not supported by practice. This does not mean, however, that the *filioque* lacks significance in other questions, for example, inspiration and feminism. After all, the Spirit proceeds from the Son and not the "Daughter."

God: The Most Fundamental Issue

Meyendorff, who is not unsympathetic to the idea of the *filioque* as an attempt to establish Nicene orthodoxy firmly, sees the debate at another level.⁶¹ Is God known first in unity or in his

⁵⁷Barth, 550.

⁵⁸R. B. Kuiper, *For Whom did Christ Die? A Study of the Divine Design of the Atonement* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans 1959), 44-61. The chapter is entitled "Barthian Universalism."

⁵⁹One may see the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* ([Liguori, Missouri: Liguori Publications, 1994], 222-224): "Those 'who believe in Christ and have been properly baptized are put in a certain, although imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church.'" Special relationships are allowed for the Jews, who still have sonship, and for Moslems, who "adore the one, merciful God." The Roman church also sees itself as "the place where humanity must rediscover its unity and salvation." Reviewers of this catechism have taken it to allow salvation outside of Christ. This may be implied, but to this reviewer is not explicit.

⁶⁰Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 134-136; 163.

⁶¹Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 92.

persons?⁶² For the west the tendency is to know God first as unity (*unitas in trinitate*). Barth feared that the eastern position of *trinitas in unitate* was potentially tritheistic.⁶³ The western position has actually led to unitarianism. The *unitas* has not been followed in every case by *in trinitate*. Consider prayers offered to "God" without reference to the divine persons. Luther's gracious God in Christ seems to favor the eastern view of first confronting Jesus (the Son) through whom alone we find God as Father: *trinitas in unitate*.

A Case for the *Filioque*: Christ, Spirit, Scripture

Louis Igou Hodges has described inspiration as "part of the very essence of Christianity as well as the *sine non qua* of evangelical theology."⁶⁴ Lutherans can say this of other doctrines, but critical studies since the Enlightenment have put inspiration on center stage and made it a rallying point for conservative Christians. The Evangelical Theological Society and the Institute for Biblical Research require belief in it.⁶⁵ Its defense has created its own catholicity (ecumenicity).

The Greek word for inspiration, θεόπνευστος, means "God breathed" or "breathed by God." Used of the Old Testament (2 Timothy 3:16) and subsequently of the New, it is composed of words referring to the Father (θεός) and the Spirit (πνεῦμα) or what the Spirit does. "All Scripture is breathed [through the Spirit] by the Father." It is derived from the Father (God) through the Spirit and is divine. Hence they are *holy* Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:15). In a sense θεόπνευστος (inspired) could be used as a trinitarian word for the Spirit's relationship to the Father. He is

⁶²Meyendorff, *Bysantine Theology*, 94. "The question was whether tri-personality or consubstantiality was the first and basic content of Christian religious experience."

⁶³Barth, 552.

⁶⁴"Evangelical Definitions of Inspiration: Critiques and a Suggested Definition," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 37 (March 1994): 99.

⁶⁵Hardly in need of improvement is a 1994 statement issued by Evangelical and Catholics affirming "the divinely inspired Scriptures, which are the infallible Word of God." One may see "Evangelical and Catholics Together," *First Things* 43 (May 1994): 15-22.

breathed (*spiratio*) by God. He is the Breath or Spirit of God (רוח ה' פרוח; τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ). Biblical inspiration reflects (*opus ad extra*) and is derived from the Father's eternal breathing (*spiratio*) of the Spirit (*opus ad intra*). The Spirit's being breathed (*spiratio*) by the Father is no different than his eternal proceeding (*processio*) from the Father. The Spirit is θεόπνευστος, breathed by God the Father in an eternal sense, namely, always going forth from the Father. The Scriptures (θεόπνευστος) are inspired by God in a temporal sense, namely, the Father working through his Spirit. *Spiratio*, "being breathed," is foundational for *inspiratio*, inspiration. He who by the Father is "inspired" himself inspires. In the Spirit's inspiring, we see that he is himself inspired, which is to say, that he is Holy Spirit. Consider the parallel in regard to the second person. According to Luther, he who is born (*geborn*) of his mother in time is born (*geborn*) of his Father in eternity.⁶⁶ Just as the temporal birth reflects the eternal birth, so the temporal inspiration reflects an eternal one.

Hodges provides nine definitions.⁶⁷ None includes christology, a factor essential in Lutheran doctrinal definition. Two characteristics of the classical Lutheran understanding of Scriptures should be pointed out: (1.) the christological factor is satisfied in seeing Christ as Scripture's content; (2.) a necessary continuity exists between the Spirit's inspiration of the Scriptures and his converting through the Word to which he is essentially joined, *contra* some Calvinists.⁶⁸ The Spirit does not have to be

⁶⁶Tappert 345, Sc, Creed 4.

⁶⁷Hodges (104-110): (1.) An activity of the Spirit on the readers and not the writers (Barth); (2.) Conveying the very words; (3.) Supernatural influence on the writer's hearts; (4.) Human words functioning as divine words; (5.) A supernatural influence assuring the accuracy of revelation of the Spirit's work on the heart; (6.) An influence governing their written and spoken words; (7.) A superintendence of the words; (8.) A divine guiding of the authors; and (9.) The Spirit's working "concurrently and confluent" with the writers (Hodges' own definition).

⁶⁸Robert D. Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970): "Second, the written and spoken Word derives its power from its content, Christ" (373); "Third, the written and spoken Word of God derives its power from the Holy Spirit, who is united with the Word and operative through it" (374); These theologians could speak of "the perpetual union of the Spirit with the Word of God" (374);

added to the Word. He is already there. Lutherans, however, did not correlate the christological content of the Bible with its inspiration.⁶⁹ Viewing the Scriptures within the trinitarian and christological perspectives may provide the correlation.

First, let us consider the trinitarian perspective. If the Spirit who proceeds from the Son (*filioque*) is the same Spirit who inspires the Scriptures (θεόπνευστος), then the Son belongs *ipso facto* to the definition of inspiration. If we cannot describe the mechanics of the process, we must still insist that the Son belongs to it. Ascribing inspiration to the Spirit and asserting that the Son—that is, Christ—constitutes the biblical content cannot mean that each divine person has a particular task not given to the other: *opera ad extra indivisa sunt*. Neither can the christological content of Bible be looked upon as an alien or familiar insertion into the inspired Word, as if the Spirit had any other choice but to testify to the Son. The Spirit's freedom or sovereignty is circumscribed by his being the Spirit of the Son who reveals himself in the gospel.⁷⁰ He who inspires is the Spirit of the Son (1 Peter 1:11) and thus inspiration flows out of the trinitarian mystery. Prophets witnessed to Christ because the inspiring Spirit within them was the Spirit of Christ. Thus the greater trinitarian mystery, through the christological mysteries of incarnation and atonement, shapes, forms, penetrates, and gives substance to the mystery of inspiration. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7) and the Spirit of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:19). Fundamental to classical Lutheran christology is that the Spirit is given through the human nature, that is, Jesus who is God and man.

Many Calvinists held that the Spirit only entered the Word sporadically and that his call was not always serious (376).

⁶⁹Preus writes (374): "The Lutheran theologians refused to debate about how Christ is present in the word of Scripture and how Scripture brings Christ to us."

⁷⁰Tappert, 31. AC 5, 2: "For through the Word and the sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given, and the Holy Spirit produces faith, where and when it pleases God [*ubi et quando visum est Deo*], in those who hear the Gospel." One may compare John 3:8.

Second, correlating Christ and the Spirit in defining inspiration is required by the *opera ad extra/opera ad intra* distinction. What God does corresponds to what he is, as both Quenstedt and Barth insist. The Spirit who inspires the Scriptures is not only the Spirit of God (Father), but the Spirit of the Son (*filioque*). The Spirit of the Father who inspires the Scripture (θεόπνευστος) must also be the Spirit of the Son because the Father is Father only in regard to the Son. He is the Spirit of Christ both in a temporal and an eternal sense. In turn the Son is eternally *spirator Spiritus*. Jesus' words are not his but the Father's (John 14:24), and so the Spirit's words are not his but the Son's. In inspiration the trinitarian mystery manifested in the cross is revealed.

Third, the Spirit by whom Jesus is conceived (*incarnatus [conceptus] est de Spiritu Sancti*) is the same Spirit who speaks through the prophets (*locutus est per prophetas*). By the incarnation, atonement, and resurrection (christology), the Spirit of the Son comes in every case to us as the Spirit of Christ. This is essential to Luther's definition of the Creed's article on the Spirit. The Spirit is not only defined by the Son in eternity (*filioque*) but by the Son who takes on flesh (*incarnatus est de Spiritu sancti*). Christ's sending of the Spirit to the apostles completes the revelation of the trinitarian mystery (Luke 24:29; John 20:22; Acts 2:33). The Scriptures, inspired by the Spirit of Christ, are by the act of inspiration christological in content. Summing up our argument, the relationship of the Spirit to Christ in time also belongs to how inspiration is understood. This sending of the Spirit on the apostles is not incidental but reflects the more mysterious eternal breathing (*spiratio*), the proceeding (*procedens*) of the Spirit within God. The Spirit testifies to Christ not as a witness looking in from the outside, but as one whose being is defined both eternally by the Son (*filioque*)—*Spiritus Filii*—and as one whose work is determined in time by the cross—*Spiritus Christi*. He declares that which belongs to Jesus (John 16:13-15). The inspiration of the apostles originates in the cross, which shapes them as apostles, as well as what is inspired through them (John 19:30; Matthew 27:50). Paul can make the crucified Christ the substance of the message because the Father has sent upon him the Spirit of his Son. Inspiration finds its substance in incarnation and atonement. The Holy Spirit whom the Father sends in the name of Jesus will

“bring to remembrance all that [Jesus] said to [the apostles]” (John 14:26). The humiliation of Jesus (*homo factus est*) provides the content for what the Spirit says (*Spiritus Sanctus locutus est de prophetas*). Inspiration is not gnostic infusion but comes from the crucified Jesus who gives the Spirit to his apostles. Hence the inspired Word is the apostolic and inherently redemptive Word. Christ does not have to be added to the inspired Word, but belongs to its essence! Without this understanding, the Spirit who inspires would not be the Spirit of Christ.

There are consequences for hermeneutics (interpretation) and the Christian life in excluding the *filiouque* and the *incarnatus de Spiritu sancti*, that is, christology, from the definition of inspiration. Remove Christ from the equation of inspiration and the Bible soon becomes a book of laws (principles for living). If the absence of the *filiouque* can be said to lead to universalism (even if the evidence is unconvincing), how much more does its absence lead to a moralistic understanding of the Bible. Behind this issue is whether the Spirit is the Spirit of the Father (*trinitas in unitate*) or of God in general (*unitas in trinitate*). The latter view, which I suspect is the popular one, does not require that the Spirit testify to Christ but only to God in general. This lets the Bible be used for any number of non-christological purposes.

Luther could speak of the Spirit, the Word, and the Church all accomplishing the same thing, and in his theology the catholic principle of an historic Church and the Protestant principle of the Scriptures belong to the one operation of the Spirit. The giving of the Holy Spirit to apostles, the Church, the ministry, and the Scriptures all have their source in the one breathing of Jesus (John 20:22; one may compare 19:30).⁷¹ The Spirit who forgives is the Spirit who inspires. Since the Church, the ministry, and the Scriptures are apostolic, they are the work and the working of the same Holy Spirit.⁷² Jesus’ command to his apostles to preserve his teachings (Matthew 28:20—catholic principle) has the same point of reference as the words the Spirit speaks through them (Matthew 10:20—Protestant principle). Apart from Church,

⁷¹Tappert, 81-82. AC 28,7.

⁷²Tappert, 464. FC, Ep I, 1; AC 28,6.

ministry, and Scriptures we cannot look for the Spirit or define him. He who proceeds from the Father and the Son (*filioque*) and is given to the apostles “keeps [the whole Christian Church on earth] with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.”⁷³ In the Church the Spirit forgives believers in Christ. The Spirit’s witness in the apostolic Word (inspiration) converts by creating faith in Jesus (christology) and joins us to his Church where the trinitarian mystery (theology) is revealed and confessed.

The manner in which the Trinity actually comes to us reverses the expected order of Father-Son-Spirit. The Spirit points us to Christ who brings the Father. “No one can say that Jesus is the Lord except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:3). “And no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (Matthew 11:27). The biblical order is Spirit-Son-Father. The trinitarian revelation is found in the invitation of Jesus (the gospel) to come to him (Matthew 11:28).⁷⁴ Still the Father reveals all this through the preaching of Jesus (Matthew 16:17). Through this and this alone the Spirit establishes the Church. Luther’s explanations of the Third Article in both Catechisms define the Spirit’s work solely in applying Christ and his benefits to the Church.⁷⁵ The Spirit’s life in the Church (sacraments) is derived from the life (history) of Jesus. No outline details these mysteries and no diagram can portray them. By faith we live within mysterious concentric circles, always in motion. Moving from one mystery we anticipate others and return to where we have been many times before. Always at the edge of comprehension, we are fully comprehended by them but never fully comprehend them.

Theology, the mystery we call God, is too often seen as an historical dinosaur to the pragmatic American mindset. Such an approach deprives us of tasting mysteries now that will completely envelop us later. In bringing people to faith in Christ as God’s Son through Baptism, the Spirit “together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified” and the

⁷³Tappert, 345. SC, Creed, 6.

⁷⁴Tappert, 526-527. These citations are among others used in FC, SD, II, 25-27.

⁷⁵Ludwig, “Preaching and Teaching the Creed,” 18-22.

trinitarian mystery is revealed, moving us to confess: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son and who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified."