

## 1 Corinthians 11:17-34: St. Paul's High Pastoral Care!

Greetings to you in the Name of Jesus! I offer this essay as a starting position. A beginning. A jumping off point. And there is no better place to begin than Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. The topic assigned to me is enormous. Can't do it all in forty-five minutes. For a more in depth job take a look at the bibliography. But today let's at least get the ball rolling. My prayer is that this little essay will be beneficial to you and the Lord's church in which He has graciously put all of us.

Loads of problems in the church at Corinth! Factions, playing favorites with the pastors, jealousy, immorality, arrogance, etc.! And then there was trouble at the divine service! Rampant individualism! The Lord's Supper had been transformed into the church's supper or the individual's supper! The Lord's Supper had degenerated into a scene like that outside of Arrowhead stadium in October-gorging, guzzling, and carousing! And the church at Corinth was divided all the more. After all, the poor members couldn't keep up with the rich members and so were disregarded, diminished and despised. In addition, some went to communion believing that all they received from the pastor's hand and into their mouths was bread. Like the bread you eat at the dinner table in your homes! And if that's all for which you came, you might as well just stay at home!<sup>1</sup>

How is the pastor to deal with this? Call for a voters' meeting? Take a vote on how to proceed? Consult canon law? Quote a by-law? No. He will speak the Word of the Lord. He will not give these folks permission to have a holy communion any way that they want.

Now you can just imagine what some might say at this point. *"The pastor is lording himself over us! Who does he think he is?"* And in today's church there would be a voters' meeting. And the result of the vote would be: "Resign your call Pastor Paul! We'll do with the sacrament as we selfishly wish. We'll have a communion any way we desire! Now be a good boy. Do as we say. And here's a generous two weeks severance package! Next pastor please!"

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<sup>1</sup>Martin Chemnitz speaks of the situation in this way: "They were not coming to the Lord's Supper with any other spirit or in any greater reverence than in their private homes when they sat down to their ordinary meals. Likewise they were nourishing hatred in their hearts; they were despising the church, were shaming the poor, were not abstaining from idolatrous practices; they were even coming to the celebration of the Supper drunk – and yet, although this was so and they remained without true repentance and living faith, they still came to the table of the Lord. This Paul calls unworthy eating," *The Lord's Supper*, translated by J.A.O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 128. Dr. Luther writes: "the Corinthians at the bread with the misconception and misunderstanding that it was ordinary bread, and discerned no difference between this bread and other bread. This certainly is what is meant by 'unworthily eating the body of Christ,'" 1528 Confession Concerning Christ's Supper, LW 37:347.

But Pastor Paul provides the highest of pastoral care. He lets the Lord have His say. He pushes the Lord's words. And by doing so he squares up the Corinthians and all of us to the Lord Himself! *Coram Deo*-s us – brings us face-to-face with the Lord through *His Word*.

*“For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way after supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new testament in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.’”* (1 Co 11:23-25; cf. Mt 26:26-28; Mk 14:22-24; Lk 22:19-20) In Matthew's account Jesus promises that all this giving is *“for the forgiveness of sins,”* (Mt. 26:26-28)!

There you have it! Jesus says so. Jesus does so with His words. He says the bread is His body. He says the cup of wine is His blood. We recall also 1 Corinthians 10:16 where Paul rhetorically asks: *“Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation [koinonia] in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation [koinonia] in the body of Christ?”*

So what is the Sacrament of the Altar? We know what it is and what Jesus gives through His words – His mandate and institution words on the night He was betrayed! Watch out for those that don't start with the Lord's words or those that change His words. Such a move takes us right back to the first sin in the garden of Eden (Genesis 3: “Did God really say?”). to a judge (e.g. reason, feelings or a magisterial teaching office located in Rome) that commands obedience outside of Christ's words in the text of the Bible itself!<sup>2</sup> It is the true body and blood of our

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<sup>2</sup>Most scholars and theologians today do not start with the Lord's words to answer the question: What is the Sacrament of the Altar? John Reumann, an ELCA professor states: “Perhaps the most profound impact from biblical studies is the realization that we cannot today with surety ascertain what Jesus did, said, or intended, historically; rather, we must be content with biblical perimeters or limits and guiding directions. ... To many people the obvious starting point in considering the Lord's Supper lies in what Jesus said and did in a large guest chamber in Jerusalem at Passover ‘on the night in which he was betrayed.’ Yet one of the ironies resulting from all the intense modern study of the Gospels is that scholars are more and more certain that *we do not know exactly what Jesus said that night,*” in *The Supper of the Lord: The New Testament, Ecumenical Dialogues, and Faith and Order on Eucharist* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), xi-xii, 2. Another ELCA professor, Robert Jenson, agrees. Jenson contends that the Lord's Supper cannot be based solely on Jesus words (Mt 26; Mk 14; Lk 22) but also on “Jesus' meal-fellowship with his closest followers” before and after the resurrection, Braaten and Jenson, *Christian Dogmatics*, II:344. Berthold von Schenk (1895-1974), long time LCMS pastor of Our Savior, Bronx, NY, and founder of the St. James Society wrote the following: “I realized the need of a complete liturgy. It was not an easy task, for it

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meant a thorough understanding of the Apostolic and post-Apostolic Church. Luther, of course, was not a liturgiologist, nor a sacramentalist. The most stupid thing which Luther let himself in for was the Colloquy in Marburg with Ulrich Zwingli. How much time and thought has been wasted by insisting on absolute truth in dogmas! Luther fell into that trap in his controversy with Zwingli and split the Reformation. Zwingli had a much deeper understanding of the liturgy than we give him credit for, and his liturgy is far superior to that of Luther. The argument of *dies bededeutet und dies ist* ('this represents and this is') was sheer nonsense. In scientific language *bededeutet* and *ist* are the same thing. Luther was fighting windmills, and his position, '*Ihr habt einem anderen Geist . . .*' was a tragic statement. Those familiar with John Calvin will also realize that he was a much more profound theologian than Luther. What a pity it was when the liturgy was castrated. Luther's greatest blunder was his writing of the Mass. He was out of his element . . . All that was necessary was the restoration of the full liturgy – it was the first task I set myself out to do, to write a truly catholic liturgy. I found my sources in the post-Apostolic liturgical practices. I restored the Prayer of Consecration . . . It consists of: 1) praise to the Father, 2) the Words of Institution, 3) the Remembrance, 4), the *epiclesis* (literally 'the calling upon') or Invocation of the Holy Spirit . . . Luther showed his amazing ignorance by substituting the Our Father for the Great Prayer. His reason for substituting the Our Father for the Prayer of Consecration is unforgivable . . . We have only the recitation of the Words of Institution as the Consecration – really a bit of magic . . . it would be well for Protestant theologians to discover the truths, insights, and benefits inherent in Roman Catholic teaching and policy of the Counter Reformation period, as expressed in the statements of the Tridentine Council and also by such theologians as Odo Casel, Romano Guardini, Karl Adam, H. Küng, and others," in *Lively Stone: The Autobiography of Berthold von Schenk*, edited by C. George Fry and Joel R. Kurz, (Delhi: American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, 2006), 126ff. John R. Hannah praises von Schenk for his "recovery of confessional Eucharistic practice," (6). Von Schenk called the Roman Catholic Liturgical Movement of the last century to be, "the greatest movement in the history of our church," (*Lively Stone*, 123). Von Schenk's book, *The Presence: An Approach to the Holy Communion* (1945) reflects the influence of the Liturgical Movement in his thinking. Today's liturgical experts don't start with the Lord's mandate and institution words. Their point number one is postmodern's deconstruction of the words. Can't trust the words. The words don't do or give anything because they're not the Lord's words. Matthew 26, Mark 14 and Luke 22 are not received these days as from the Lord Himself. They're the community's words. The liturgical ticket these days is: ritual. That does the trick. Gets you in on the story. A participant. Thus, even the pope speaks of "re--presentation" and "recapitulation" going on in the liturgy. Get the ritual right and there's certainty. Get the ritual right. That's what makes a difference to me not the words! When one abandons the objective mandate and institution words of the Lord one moves into subjectivity. Objectivity via the Lord's words is not an option these days for the liturgical experts. It is a delusion. So there is the shift from the external objective reference to the internal reference point. Oswald Bayer points out that Freidrich Schleiermacher (1768-

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1834), “understands the action of the divine service as ‘representative’ (not ‘efficacious’) activity,” in *Theology The Lutheran Way*, edited and translated by Jeffrey G. Silcock and Mark C. Mattes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 254, note #22. With Schleiermacher the Word of God is not an external word and it does not create faith. Instead, the universal *intra nos* “feeling of absolute dependence” is what creates the word. When the internal reference point of Schleiermacher no longer holds for the liturgical experts they find “certainty” when we act, take the plunge, do the ritual or whatever. The more you get in on the “act(s)” the better the liturgy. And so there’s Odo Casel (1886-1948) as well as Gregory Dix (1901-1952 / *The Shape of the Liturgy*) and their emphasis on the rituals through which the church has a worship experience! Pope John Paul II in his *Encyclical Letter: “Ecclesia De Eucharistia,”* calls it “the sacramental re-presentation of Christ’s sacrifice.” Tertullian uses this term in the way of “representation,” “manifestation,” or “public declaration.” Thomas Aquinas speaks of the Sacrament in this way: “*imago . . . repraesentativa passionis Christi*” (*Summa*, III, Q. 83, Art. 1). Odo Casel uses the term in the way of Greek pagan rituals, namely, that: “Worship is the means of making it [the saving, healing act of God] real once more, and thus of breaking through to the spring of salvation. The members of the cult present again in a ritual, symbolic fashion, that primeval act; in holy words and rites of priest and faithful the reality is there once more . . . The mysteries’ way is, therefore, the way of ritual action as sharing in the gods’ acts; its aim is union with godhead, share in his life. The mystery, therefore, embraces in the first place the broad concept of ritual ‘memorial’ – anamnesis / *commemoratio* – the ritual performance and making present of some act of the god’s, upon which rests the existence and life of a community . . . The sacred rite [the Mass] with its full divine content is what the disciples are to ‘act in memory’; they are to make real again the passion of their divine master. . . . Christ has given his mystery to the church’s care; she acts it out, and thereby fulfils his action, which has become hers. So Christ and the church become one in act and passion: the mystery is made a new and eternal covenant,” in *The Mystery of Christian Worship* (1962), 53-59. For Casel, in the tradition of Rome, the Mass is the real presence of an event or action of the past, namely, Good Friday. The exact opposite of all this is Dr. Luther who believes the Words of Institution are the words of Christ, the God-man Himself. “You do know and must know that our text, ‘This is my body,’ etc. comes not from men but from God himself, spoken by his own lips and set down in these very letters and words,” 1528 Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper, LW 37:304. “These words were spoken by the mouth of God,” *Idem*, 307. Therefore: “Everything depends . . . upon the words of this sacrament,” 1520 A Treatise on the New Testament, that is, the Holy Mass, LW 35:88; “We must turn our eyes and hearts simply to the institution of Christ and this alone, and set nothing before us but the very word of Christ by which he instituted the sacrament . . . For in that word, and in that word alone, reside the power, the nature, and the whole substance of the mass,” 1520 The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, LW 36:36; “Everything depends on these words. Every Christian should and must know them and hold them fast. He must never let anyone take them away from him by any other kind of teaching, even though it were an angel from heaven [Gal. 1:8]. They

Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine instituted by Christ Himself for us Christians to eat and drink (SC VI).<sup>3</sup> It is the Lord's Supper. It is not our supper like we eat at home – only bread, only wine! The Lord Jesus, by virtue of His Word, gives His body with the bread. By means of His Word He gives His blood with the wine. It is His body and blood born of the virgin Mary, that suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. It is His body and blood that rose from the grave on the third day and ascended to the Father's right hand! He doesn't have any other body or blood! *"This is my body which is for you ... This cup is the new testament in my blood."* "For the forgiveness of sins!" All sin!

Pastor Paul would have the Corinthians repent! To stop withholding their sin outside the Lord's forgiveness. To tear down all that would defense them from receiving this gift in the precise way the Lord gives it. To die to all their say so and control and to let Him be the giver of this good gift. To confess what He gives and then receive His body and blood with the bread and wine precisely as He says. So that the people under his care would receive what the Lord gives beneficially (*opus proprium* / Gospel - forgiveness) and not to their detriment (*opus alienum* / Law - wrath). Or to use language of the Small Catechism: we should fear and love God ... so that we receive the Lord's Supper in the way that Jesus gives it.

Gifts from the Lord can be rejected otherwise they wouldn't be gifts. When someone denies, diminishes, deflects or dilutes what the Lord says and gives, that person is at the refusal point of what He says and gives. And that's very serious! How serious? Perilously serious!

So Pastor Paul's care runs this way: "What do you expect to receive today in the Lord's Supper?" Many in Corinth answered: "Merely bread Reverend! Just a sip of wine! Nothing more. Nothing less. Just like we eat and drink at home!" "Do you believe Jesus gives you the forgiveness of sins in this gift?" "Of course not Reverend! Good grief! We don't need that! We'll handle it! We'll keep our sins Reverend.

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are words of life and of salvation, so that whoever believes in them has all his sins forgiven through that faith; he is a child of life and has overcome death and hell. Language cannot express how great and mighty these words are, for they are the sum and substance of the gospel," 1523 The Adoration of the Sacrament, LW 36:277. Oswald Bayer writes: "'Distribution' is something altogether different from mere 'representation,' for it is no symbolic expression but a gift; no statement but a promise. Everything depends on God's performative word for the enactment of the promise of the forgiveness of sins and the healing of our ingratitude toward the creator. Since this word precedes our faith, our response of faith and prayer can never lead us to understand the divine service as a 'self-realization of the church,' [Karl Rahner –Rome]. Even as the response of the church faith remains God's work," *Theology The Lutheran Way*, 88.

<sup>3</sup>"Concerning the Lord's Supper it is taught that the true body and blood of Christ are truly present under the form of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper and are distributed and received there," (AC X.1).

We'll deal with them." "Yes, you will," says the blessed apostle. "You won't be able to dodge or escape the Lord's *opus alienum* when you eat and drink what is given as if it were merely bread and wine! So let me spell it out for you: *whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord,*" (1 Co 11:27).

*"Guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord!"* This is very serious indeed! Martin Chemnitz remarks: "Paul is not speaking in a general way about guilt, but specifically about the way in which one draws guilt upon himself in the Supper, namely, by unworthily eating this bread which is the body of Christ. For they who eat unworthily inflict upon the body of Christ injury and shame no less than those who beat and killed him."<sup>4</sup> He then goes on to quote two ancient church fathers Theodoret [ca. 386/393-466, Bishop of Antioch] and Oecumenius to continue this point: "Just as Judas by betraying and the Jews by afflicting the body of Christ with their reproaches brought shame upon Christ Himself, so they also dishonor Him who receive His all-holy body with unclean hands and put it into a polluted mouth. [John] Chrysostom [ca. 345-407, Patriarch of Constantinople] says that it is just as great a crime as the crime of those who butchered the body of Christ and shed His blood."<sup>5</sup>

Jesus clearly says that the bread is His body and that the cup of wine is His blood. What He says He does and gives. You become guilty of sinning against the body and blood of Jesus and when you do not believe what He says and gives in His gracious, gospel way. Pastor Paul emphasizes the peril involved a second time: *"For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself,"* (1 Co 11:29). Chemnitz remarks: "Those who eat unworthily eat judgment to themselves in that they do not distinguish between the bread of the Lord's Supper and other, common bread, so that they fail to recognize His true presence and to attribute to Him due honor."<sup>6</sup>

Profaning Christ's most holy body and blood, incurring guilt and God's wrath (*opus alienum*) are not to take place in the church. Pastor Paul and the Corinthian congregation are to see to it that this does not happen. Consequently, based on the Lord's mandate and institution word (*Verba Domini*) the communicants are to distinguish or discern between the bread and wine that one eats and drinks at home from the bread and wine by which the Lord bestows His body and His blood to eat and drink according to His Word in the sacrament. In other words, they are to test whether Christ's body and blood given to them by the pastor's hand is being received as Christ's body and blood!

And so *"a man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup,"* (1 Co 11:28). Are you guilty? The testing point is the mandate and institution

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<sup>4</sup>*The Lord's Supper*, 131.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 131-132.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 133.

words of the Lord Jesus. He says he gives His body with the bread and His blood with the cup of wine. His words test you. His words are outside of you (*extra nos*). This cannot be ignored, diminished or denied. Any contradiction or rejection of what Jesus Himself says and gives as Pastor Paul has “*received from the Lord [and] passed on,*” (1 Co 11:23) is to be repented of. Eating unworthily and not discerning the Lord’s body are the same thing. If you can’t or won’t tell the difference between what you eat and drink at home and what the Lord Jesus gives you to eat and drink in the sacrament, you will not go unpunished.<sup>7</sup> “*That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep,*” (1 Co 11:30). Christ’s body and blood given with the bread and wine are life for those who receive it according to the Lord’s mandate and institution. His body and blood are death for those that do not!

So, again, Paul’s pastoral care is to lead the Corinthians to confess their sin and to repent (the heart of which is faith in what Jesus says and gives) so that they will not suffer God’s judgment: “*But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment,*” (1 Co 11:31). Paul says that in the Lord’s judgment He is treating the Corinthians as His children. He would teach the truth concerning the guilt of sinning against the body and blood of Jesus by unworthy eating and drinking at Corinth or any other altar. We, nor the Corinthians, are not to remain in that way – unfaith. We, together with the Corinthians, are to be instructed, confess, repent, and grow as the Lord’s children. Consequently, Pastor Paul’s high pastoral care, using the Word of the Lord would draw the Corinthians or any of us for that matter, from the irrevocable judgment when the opportunity for repentance is no more. The pastor’s call is for repentance: “*so that we will not be condemned with the world,*” (1 Co 11:32).

Christ’s body and blood are given to each communicant. His body and blood are then common in each communicant and they bestow and give the communion (*koinonia*). “*Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf,*” (1 Co 10:16-17). Werner Elect observes from this text: “Those who participate in eating the same bread are together the body of Christ. They do not produce this body. The body of Christ is there before they are and before what they do. They are rather drawn into it so they become its members. The fellowship-nature of the Sacrament is in this that Christ incorporates into Himself those who partake of it.”<sup>8</sup>

Again, the Corinthians did not distinguish a meal’s eating and drinking from the eating and drinking of the Lord’s most holy body and blood. And so they were also denying the Lord’s body and blood as they treated each other as if the Lord had not

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<sup>7</sup>See Martin Luther, 1528 Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper, LW 37:347.

<sup>8</sup>*Eucharist and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries*, translated by Norman E. Nagel (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966), 28.

given them His body to eat and His blood to drink. To show contempt to a fellow communicant who has been given Christ's body and blood to eat and drink is to disparage His body and blood! The Lord Jesus "bodies" and "bloods" the communicants with His very body and blood. Consequently, we that commune are called Christ's body. And so the Corinthians were to wait for one another. To care for and love each other.

This is precisely what Pastor Paul is doing in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. He is giving high pastoral care in the proper distinction between the law and the gospel! And so the church after him does the same in the practice of closed communion.<sup>9</sup> We want those that commune to do so beneficially and not to their detriment. It is a fearful thing to deny Christ's body and blood in the sacrament! It is not good that someone should sin against the body and blood of Jesus by eating and drinking unworthily. How do you know if this is happening? Only from a person's confession and conduct! The church is then given to deal with people according to the Lord's mandate and institution words and the preaching of repentance. In faithfulness to Christ and out of love for people the church wants the body and blood of Christ to be received in the way He gives. And so, closed communion!

This was always the practice in the church and continued by the Reformation. To practice open communion was unfaithful to the Lord's words and the care drawn from them. Werner Elert states: "To the early church a man was orthodox or heterodox according to his confession. He was one or the other according to that confession with which he was 'in fellowship.' The fellowship in which he stood, the church to which he belonged, was shown by where he received the Sacrament ... By his partaking of the Sacrament in a church a Christian declares that the confession of that church is his confession. Since a man cannot at the same time hold two differing confessions, he cannot communicate in two churches of differing confessions. If anyone does this nevertheless, he denies his own confession or has none at all."<sup>10</sup>

Since participation in the Sacrament of the Altar is a confession of faith (the proclamation of Christ's death), it gives witness to the unity of faith of the communicants gathered around the altar. The Lord's Supper does not create unity out of disunity! Therefore, for communicants of a contrary confession to take the Lord's Supper together testifies that the differences between them do not matter when in fact (out of faithfulness to the Gospel and the words of Jesus) they do!

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<sup>9</sup>Dr. Norman Nagel has demonstrated that the term "close communion" comes from Baptist sources. See "Closed Communion: In the Way of the Gospel; In the Way of the Law," *Concordia Journal* 17:1 (January 1991): 20-29.

<sup>10</sup>*Eucharist and Church Fellowship*, 182.

Again, the point is so that Christ's body and blood are received beneficially.<sup>11</sup> This is the reason for all the questions in the sixth part of the Small Catechism! What is the Sacrament of the Altar? Where is this written? What is the benefit of this eating and drinking? How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things? Who receives this Sacrament worthily? The Large Catechism puts it this way: "For we do not intend to admit to the sacrament and administer it to those who do not know what they seek or why they come," (LC V.2). So, the pastoral concern questions like, "what do you expect to receive today in the Lord's Supper? And why?" After all, the Lord's Supper is the Lord's. It is not something that we do (LC V. 7) but what the Lord Himself gives through His words. The Augsburg Confession references John Chrysostom who "says that the priest stands daily at the altar, inviting some to Communion and keeping others away," (AC XXIV.36 German). When Dr. Luther revised the communion liturgy he wrote:

Here one should follow the same usage as with baptism, namely, that the bishop be informed of those who want to commune. They should request in person to receive the Lord's Supper so that he may be able to know both their names and manner of life. And let him not admit the applicants unless they can give a reason for their faith and can answer questions about what the Lord's Supper is, what its benefits are, and what they expect to derive from it. In other words, they should be able to repeat the Words of Institution from memory and to explain that they are coming because they are troubled by the consciousness of their sin, the fear of death, or some other evil, such as temptation of the flesh, the world, or the devil, and now hunger and thirst to receive the word and sign of grace and salvation from the Lord himself through the ministry of bishops, so that they may be consoled and comforted.<sup>12</sup>

Note the pastoral care! Properly distinguishing between the law and gospel! "But I think it enough for the applicants for communion to be examined or explored once a year. Indeed, a man [like Melancthon] may be so understanding that he needs to be questioned only once in his lifetime or not at all. For, by this practice, we want to guard lest the worthy and unworthy alike rush to the Lord's Supper."<sup>13</sup> And "those ... who are not able to answer in the manner described above should be completely excluded and banished from the communion of the Supper, since they are without

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<sup>11</sup>Dr. Luther refers to the Words of Institution as "the sum and substance of the whole gospel," 1523 *The Adoration of the Sacrament*, LW 36:277. Compare also: "You should hold fast to the word that says, 'Take and eat, this is my body.' This word is the whole gospel. You will observe and understand that it says nothing about a sacrifice or a good work but about a present and a gift, which Christ offers and gives to us, and which we should receive and with faith appropriate and hold fast ... for this sacrament is the gospel," *Idem*, 288-289.

<sup>12</sup>1523 *Order of Mass and Communion*, LW 53:32.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 33.

the wedding garment [Mt 22:11-12].”<sup>14</sup> To the unrepentant would be given the *opus alienum!*

We Lutherans are about the proper distinction between the law and the gospel (which “is a particularly glorious light,” FC SD V.1) just as Pastor Paul was doing with the Corinthians. People need care. Sometimes the care they need is not what they expect. “You don’t come to receive Christ’s body and blood for the forgiveness of your sins? Really? Then you must refrain. After all, Jesus says that the bread is His body, the wine is His blood, and it comes with His promise of forgiveness. If you partake unworthily, you will be guilty of sinning against Christ’s body and blood. You will eat and drink judgment on yourself and quite possibly condemnation with the world at the end. The, “law brings wrath,” (Ro 4:15)! So the proper pastoral care is the call to confess sin and to repent so that there is worthy reception of Christ’s gifts in the sacrament. Such is love. Love wants what is good for the communicant – i.e. a worthy eating and drinking – “I believe what Jesus says and gives according to His words.” Such is the high pastoral care we can learn from the blessed apostle Paul.

### **Appendix: Some Random Remarks**

We have come a long way from Dr. Luther’s meeting with Ulrich Zwingli at Marburg in 1529. Zwingli denied Christ’s mandate and institution words. “Is” didn’t mean “is.” “Is” means “symbolizes.” So all you’re left with is bread and wine in a memorial meal. So the big deal is just our work, our doing, or our remembering.

Consequently, Dr. Luther would not commune or have church fellowship with Zwingli and his followers. Dr. Luther and the Lutherans gave the same refusal as they encountered the Reformed theologian John Calvin and his disciples. After all, “they all with one voice declare that the true, essential body and blood of Christ are absent in the Supper, as far away from the consecrated bread and wine as the highest heaven is from the earth. For according to their own words, ‘We say that the body and blood of Christ are so far from and distant from the signs [bread and wine] as the earth is from the very highest heaven,’” (FC SD, VII.2 quoting Article XXV of the *Consensus Tigurinus* of 1549). The fundamental presupposition with the Reformed that informs their position is that the finite (bread and wine) cannot contain the infinite (the body and blood of Jesus).<sup>15</sup> Consequently, it is up to us with

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Such a presupposition has a hard time holding the truth of Christ’s incarnation (John 1:14). In other words, if the finite cannot contain the infinite, then the incarnation too is impossible. However, just as all the fullness of the deity dwells in the body of Jesus (Co 1:19) so too the God-man Jesus is substantially present with His body and His blood in the bread and wine of His supper. Hermann Sasse observes: “The rejection, by Luther and the Lutheran Church, of Zwingli’s and Calvin’s teachings concerning the Sacrament can be understood only in the light of their consequences: these teachings must inevitably, although certainly against the

the Spirit's help for faith to ascend into heaven where the humanity of Jesus sits in order to eat and drink spiritually (but most certainly not orally)!

For Dr. Luther the confession of the Lord's Supper according to the Lord's own words cannot be compromised. It is a matter of life (gospel) or death (law) as we have observed from our flyby of 1 Corinthians 11. The very gospel itself was at stake. After all, the Lord's Supper is a means by which the gospel is delivered to sinners. And when the gospel is at stake, people are at stake! Consequently, for the sake of loving people: closed communion.

But for the likes of Zwingli, Calvin and their theological descendants that deny the Lord's clear and simple words of His last will and testament ("this is my body; this cup is the new testament in my blood; given and shed for you for the forgiveness of yours sins) nothing of any consequence is at stake – certainly not life nor death! And so open communion! And unionism! John Stephenson points out that in their writing entitled the *History of the Sacramental Controversy*, Martin Chemnitz, Timothy Kirchner, and Nicolas Selnecker quote a manuscript from Philip of Hesse that urged the Protestants [the Lutherans] to take Zwingli and his followers into their fellowship and brotherhood as the Augsburg Confession was being drafted in 1530. The Landgrave was of the opinion that the doctrine of the sacraments

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will of those who represent them, eventuate in undermining belief in the Incarnation and particularly belief in the presence of Christ [in the supper]. A spiritualism which will have nothing to do with Christ's humanity, and concerns itself, instead, solely with His divine nature, will soon lose even this. The separation of the divine and human natures of the Lord in such a way that one is thought of apart from the other, will easily result in a rejection of the doctrine of the two natures as an absurdity and in a complete abandonment of belief in the Incarnation. To what extent this opinion has been confirmed by the doctrinal development in Reformed Protestantism we shall refrain from judging. But within Lutheranism, at least, it is true that every defection from belief in the Real Presence of the whole Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar has resulted in an abandonment of belief in the Incarnation of the eternal Son of God," *Here We Stand: Nature and Character of the Lutheran Faith*, translated by Theodore G. Tappert (Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1966), 155-156. The Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord (SD VII.113-127) gives a list of sixteen specific errors of the Reformed ("Sacramentarians") that are rejected because they misinterpret the words of Jesus by allegorizing and spiritualizing them. Since they do this they turn the Lord's Supper into something other than the objective GIFT of Christ's true body and true blood for the forgiveness of sins. Consequently, the Solid Declaration quotes Dr. Luther's 1544 "Brief Confession Concerning the Holy Sacrament": "I regard them all as being part of the same cake (that is, as sacramentarians and fanatics), as they are. For they do not want to believe the Lord's bread in the Supper is his true, natural body which the godless person or Judas receives orally just as well as St. Peter and all the saints. Whoever (I say) does not want to believe that should not trouble me ... and should not expect to have fellowship with me. That is final," (FC SD VII, 33).

including the Lord's Supper should not divide the Lutherans and the Zwinglians. Why not? Because the Zwinglian rejection of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament did not deny an article of faith (like the gospel)! Luther denounced this attempt by Philip as *Scheineinigkeit* ("false unity").<sup>16</sup>

And yet Landgrave Philip's wishes for open communion and unionism have been realized! The *Scheineinigkeit* has been institutionalized from the Prussian Union of 1817 all the way through such twentieth century agreements between Lutherans and Reformed at Arnoldshain (1957), Leuenberg (1973), and the August 1997 decision by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to enter into full intercommunion with the Reformed Church in America, the United Church of Christ, and the Presbyterian Church USA. All three of these church bodies deny the Lord's mandate and institution words of Jesus regarding the Lord's Supper. Or to put it quite simply, the entire teaching / doctrine of the Small Catechism, not just its confession of the Lord's Supper has been abandoned in such *Scheineinigkeit*.

Such *Scheineinigkeit* takes place when the mandate and institution words of Jesus and the pastoral care implications that flow from them are diminished, denied or rejected. The love of men grows cold when we put the body and blood of Jesus into unworthy mouths and then spin it as Eucharistic hospitality. The love of men grows cold when we no longer fear and love God.

After all, the God-man Jesus who says: "This is my body and this cup is the new testament in my blood" is the same one true God who promises that He alone is our God in the First Commandment! Receive it worthily and it will be for your benefit – forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation (*opus proprium*) – blessing of God! Receive it unworthily and it will be like glass in your belly (*opus alienum*) – wrath of God! We are to fear and love God so that we take the greatest care to give out and receive the Lord's body and blood for all the wondrous, forgiving, vitalizing good that they are just as Jesus Himself says.

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<sup>16</sup>John Stephenson, *The Lord's Supper*, Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics XII (St. Louis: The Luther Academy, 2003), 7-8. Regarding the Zwinglians Dr. Luther wrote: "If we are to practice Christian unity with them and extend Christian love to them, we must also love and be satisfied with, or at least tolerate, their doctrine and behavior. Let anyone do that if he wishes. Not I. For Christian unity consists in the Spirit, when we are of one faith, one mind, one heart, Ephesians 4 [:3ff.]. This, however, we will gladly do: in civil matters we are glad to be one with them, i.e., to maintain outward, temporal peace. But in spiritual matters, as long as we have breath, we intend to shun, condemn, and censure them, as idolaters, corrupters of God's Word, blasphemers, and liars; and meanwhile, to endure from them, as from enemies, their persecution and schism as far and as long as God endures them; and to pray for them, and admonish the to stop. But to acquiesce in, keep silence over, or approve their blaspheming, this we shall not and cannot do," 1527 That These Words of Christ 'This Is My Body,' Ect., Still Stand Firm Against The Fanatics, LW 37:27.

But I'm afraid just the opposite is happening in the church precisely because we no longer FEAR God's wrath. That's been done away in much of the church. The Small Catechism language, "we should FEAR and love God .. [and] we should FEAR His wrath and not do anything against them" because God "threatens to punish all who breaks these commandments" [the Ten Commandments – and I would suggest this even applies to Christ's mandate and institution words recorded in 1 Corinthians 11] is not even on most people's theological radar screens (including most seminary professors and pastors). Guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord? Eating and drinking judgment? Weak, sick, and dying? God threatens to punish those that sin? Condemned with the world? Not even considered any more! After all, we twenty-first century Christians know better!

What embarrassing doctrine has to be removed for the kingdom of God to be established visibly for the ecumaniacs? It is the law that reveals God's wrath against sin and sinners! Do away with that and you're on the road to social and religious utopia! Sixteenth century divisions can be overcome quite easily here when one is unconcerned with the wrath of God (that was essential to all the reformers with regard to the topic of salvation *coram Deo*). Steven Paulson states: "It is an enduring legacy of the liberal-Protestant approach to the gospel to root out all references to God's wrath and to define God's essence as love without qualification. For such liberal theologians any reference to God's wrath would represent a foreign element in theology."<sup>17</sup> That is witnessed in the North American Lutheran-Reformed ecumenical agenda over the past fifty years. The summary of the 1981-1983 dialogues, that led to a so-called consensus resulting in the ELCA having full communion with various Reformed confessions and even the latest with the Methodists (August 2009) runs like this: "Humankind seems bent upon bringing the end of the world upon itself and all creatures of God by nuclear holocaust. Our churches are already enlisted in a common mission: participation in God's preservation of the world, God's struggle for justice and peace, and evangelization. Each of our churches independently has addressed issues common to our local communities, our nation, and the world, such as: nuclear armament, peace, justice for the poor of our country and the world, prison reform, sex, marriage, and the family, economic justice, the yokes of race and class, ecology, and the advocacy of all persons denied their right to achieve their potential."<sup>18</sup> What is most important here? What is job number one for the church in her proclamation according to this document? It is in humanity saving itself from itself by unleashing humanity's potential – being all that humanity can possibly be!

Hans-Lutz Poetsch and Gerhard Rost recognized this loss in their evaluations of the Leuenberg Concord. Poetsch observed that the Dr. J.A.O. Preus II "called attention to the dangerous lack of distinction between the Law and the Gospel." Rost noted the

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<sup>17</sup>"The Wrath of God," in *Dialog* 33 (Fall 1994): 245-246.

<sup>18</sup>*An Invitation to Action: The Lutheran-Reformed Dialogue Series III 1981-1983*, edited by James E. Andrews and Joseph A. Burgess (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 2.

problems of the document articulated by Dr. Peter Brunner [who ironically pushed for the Concord's adoption]: "A soft-pedaling of the holy Trinity and of Christ's nature as true son of God; **a suppression of God's wrath**, with the attendant danger of covering up the mystery of God's love; a suppression of the apocalyptic return of Christ and in connection with that a reinterpretation of the Kingdom of God into a development of peace and justice within this world,"<sup>19</sup>

Friedrich Schleiermacher of Berlin was instrumental in removing God's wrath from theological thinking and pastoral care. In an 1830 sermon that he preached marking the three-hundredth anniversary of the signing of the Augsburg Confession, he had the audacity to proclaim: "There are in our Augsburg Confession certain imperfections, and because of them I did not really want us to accept and endorse it [the Augsburg Confession] anew word for word, so to speak, as our own confession. **Among these imperfections is the fact that one finds in it still far too much talk about the wrath of God.**"<sup>20</sup> He goes on to preach: "**we have no cause or directive for setting up this idea of the wrath of God as something grounded in Christianity, as something essential to faith, or even as a proper doctrine.**"<sup>21</sup> The wrath of God was appropriate for Paul's day but not for Schleiermacher's and ours according to those working out Eucharistic sharing. In this matrix the mission of the church and her preaching office is to make people feel good about themselves, produce positive thinking, encourage self-esteem, and invent all kinds of ways to help sinners avoid shame and guilt at all costs! And all this has resulted in much *Scheineinigkeit* nationally and locally in the church.

Schleiermacher's attempt to rid the church of God's wrath (*opus alienum*) is not the loss of God's wrath! Instead, one loses the gospel itself. After all, it is in the preaching and application of the gospel that God's wrath is ended for sinners! The promise of Jesus in the Supper is just that! "*Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins.*" The proclamation of forgiveness (gospel / *opus proprium*) means that in complete opposition to the law the sinner has been redeemed, purchased and won from all sins, death, and the power of the devil [God's wrath]!

Consequently, we are served well by the pastoral care of St. Paul who passes on to us what he received from the Lord. And that is this: "*The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.'* In the same way after supper he took the cup, saying, '*This cup is the new testament in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.*'" All this so that we would be led to confess our sin, receive the sacrament worthily, bestow it to those who are worthy, and therefore love one another. It is the Lord's Supper.

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<sup>19</sup> *The Springfielder* 36:3 (December 1972): 186, 191 (emphasis added).

<sup>20</sup>Friedrich Schleiermacher, "The Wrath of God," in *Servant of the Word: Selected Sermons of Friedrich Schleiermacher*, translated by Dawn De Vries (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 153 (emphasis added).

<sup>21</sup>Ibid. (emphasis added).

In the name of Jesus.

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