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Georges Laugee, Woman with Sheaf of Wheat, Oil on canvas, 21¾" x 17½". Valparaiso University Art Collections, gift of Janette Wesemann Estate, 1978. Georges Laugee was a French portrait and genre painter of the second half of the nineteenth century.

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Lent and Limits

It is not the end
Of the world, only the end
Of the world without end.

The Lenten stretch of the Christian story reminds Christians that men are responsible for their deeds, else they would not need so great a salvation as the cross. And Lent further reminds Christians that the powers of this world for good or for evil are limited, else the powers for evil would have overcome the cross, or the powers for good would have been sufficient to save mankind without it.

A Lenten contemplation of the cross therefore offers Christian comfort against the modern indignity of being held irresponsible for one's deeds and Christian courage not to think that all is possible in a limitless world. Those who have been bought with a price live in the real world counting costs.

Accordingly, Christians are not surprised that a price must be paid when finite resources have been used up as if there were no tomorrow. Such, for example, is the world's situation regarding oil, and the day has come when large parts of the world's economy must be reconstituted on the basis of very costly oil and probably no less costly alternative sources of energy. Christians will be engaged in the problems aroused by reaching these limits if for no other reasons than these limits, like the cross, teach the wholesome finitude of this world and the dignity of human responsibility.

Leading us into an investigation of the limits of cheap oil is our February alumni columnist, Richard Nehring, who was graduated from the University in 1965 with a major in history. He then studied philosophy and economics at Oxford University on a Rhodes Scholarship from 1965 to 1967, and took his graduate studies in political science at Stanford University on a Danforth Fellowship from 1967 to 1971.

Presently Mr. Nehring is a social scientist in the energy program at the Rand Corporation where he specializes in fossil fuel supplies studies. He is the author of Giant Oil Fields and World Oil Resources (1978) and The Cost of Oil (1980). He and his wife, Brooke, are members of the University Lutheran Church at UCLA, and they tend a small orchard and large organic garden around their home in Pacific Palisades, California.

The Cresset welcomes alumnus Nehring to In Luce Tua.

The Editor

IN LUCE TUA

Nature's Brakes
On Gas and Oil:
Taking Depletion Seriously

Richard Nehring

The late historian David Potter characterized Americans as a people of plenty. He argued that the experience of a large country, blessed with rich soil resources and a favorable climate, seemingly endless forests, bountiful minerals, and generous supplies of energy, was the decisive element in shaping the American national character. Given this history, it is not surprising that most Americans, including most of our business and political leaders, have seemed incapable of understanding the fundamental reason for the present energy situation, namely, most of the energy problems that we face are the initial signs of the pending depletion of the world's conventional oil and gas resources.

Most energy policy proposals made during the past six years have ignored this basic fact. The idea that energy resources are finite has been regarded as unpatriotic, heretical, and defeatist. The common assumption has been that our energy problems are the fault of bad institutions. The task of policy is to change those institutions, returning us to the untroubled Eden that existed before we ever heard of oil embargoes, gasoline shortages, and outrageous energy bills. For conservatives, this has meant eliminating restrictive government policies that have shackled the productive efforts of American industry. For liberals, this has meant eliminating the monopoly powers of the energy industries. For conservatives and liberals alike, this has meant countering OPEC power.

Institutional reform, particularly with respect to the many counter-productive aspects of past government policy, is clearly part of the agenda of energy policy. But appropriate institutional reform depends on an accurate diagnosis of the energy situation. No diagnosis can be correct that does not take seriously the depletion of conventional oil and gas resources.

By the end of 1978, approximately 1.1 trillion barrels of petroleum liquids and 3700 trillion cubic feet of natural gas had been discovered and made recoverable worldwide. Approximately 424 billion barrels and 1030 trillion cubic feet of these amounts have been produced, leaving proved and probable reserves of 676 billion barrels and 2670 trillion cubic feet. Superficially, these
numbers would suggest that depletion is not a serious immediate problem. After more than a century of petroleum consumption, nearly two-thirds of the conventional petroleum resources of the world still remain to be produced. There is still more to be discovered. We can increase the recovery of oil from fields that have already been discovered. We can also produce oil and gas from the vast deposits of nonconventional sources of petroleum, such as the oil sands of Alberta and Venezuela, the oil shales of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming, and the Devonian shales of the Appalachian region of the United States.

This seeming abundance does not however justify taking the problems of depletion lightly. Because of (1) what we now know about the extent and distribution of world petroleum resources, (2) current rates of world petroleum consumption, (3) the decades that will be required to adjust to depletion, and (4) the cost of substitutes for conventional petroleum supplies, depletion deserves to be the starting point of all appropriate personal, corporate, and governmental action on energy.

The reasons for taking depletion seriously begin with what we know about the extent and distribution of world petroleum resources. The key facts can be summarized in just three points. The first and most important of these is that petroleum resources are highly concentrated in a small number of sedimentary provinces.

The presence of hydrocarbons in sedimentary areas is a common phenomenon. There are approximately 600 sedimentary provinces in the world. Exploratory drilling has occurred in more than 400, resulting in discoveries in nearly 240. Indications of hydrocarbons have been encountered in most of the rest. The near ubiquity of hydrocarbons in sedimentary areas should not blind us to the much more important fact that significant accumulations of petroleum are statistically rare.

A meaningful measure of significance is current world consumption of petroleum. In 1978, total world consumption of petroleum was approximately 32 billion barrels of liquid and liquid-equivalent petroleum resources (roughly 23 billion barrels of petroleum liquids and 54 trillion cubic feet of natural gas converted to liquid equivalents at the standard thermal conversion rate of 6000 cubic feet to the barrel). After more than a century of petroleum exploration covering nearly all of the prospective areas of the world, we have discovered only ten provinces containing more oil and gas than we currently consume in one year. Those ten provinces contain 72 percent of all the petroleum liquids and 61 percent of all the natural gas discovered to date. Only two of them contain more oil and gas than we currently consume in two years—the Arabian-Iranian (Middle East) province with oil and gas resources equivalent to twenty years of current world consumption and the West Siberian province with oil and gas resources equivalent to five years of current world consumption.

Besides these ten super-provinces, there are only twenty more major provinces with petroleum resources equivalent to three to twelve months of current world petroleum consumption (8 to 32 billion barrels). Together the thirty largest provinces contain 89 percent of the known recoverable petroleum liquids and 83 percent of the known recoverable natural gas resources of the world. The other 210 provinces with producible fields thus contain only 11 percent of the petroleum liquids and 17 percent of the natural gas, over half of which are in around 35 provinces with 2 to 8 billion barrels each. Thus nearly all of the world’s conventional petroleum resources are concentrated in only 15 percent of the explored sedimentary provinces.

**More Than Belt-Tightening is Needed**

United States production is also concentrated in a few major provinces. In only nine of the nearly sixty productive sedimentary provinces in the United States have we found more oil and gas than we currently consume in just one year—an estimated 6.7 billion barrels and 19.5 trillion cubic feet in 1979. These nine provinces contain 129 of the 174 billion barrels of petroleum liquids (74%) and 624 of the 754 trillion cubic feet (83%) discovered in the United States to date. In over seventy-five years of exploration in the most significant of these—the Mississippi Delta (south Louisiana), we have found only five years worth of current U.S. consumption. Whether in the U.S. or worldwide, this concentration in a few highly productive areas is overwhelmingly a consequence of basic geologic differences, not of differences in exploration effort.

The second key point about conventional world petroleum resources is that they are highly concentrated in a small number of large fields. Since petroleum exploration began, approximately 30,000 fields have been discovered. But more than 90 percent of these fields are insignificant as far as world petroleum resources are concerned. The 52 super-giant fields discovered to date—those with 5 billion barrels or 30 trillion cubic feet or more—contain 52 percent and 41 percent, respectively, of the world’s known recoverable conventional oil and gas resources. The approximately 400 known giant fields (including the super-giants)—those with 500 million barrels or 3 trillion cubic feet or more—contain approximately 850 billion barrels of petroleum liquids and 2600 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, 77 percent and 70 percent, respectively, of the world’s conventional oil and gas resources. The approximately 1400 known large fields—those with 50 to 500 million barrels or the equivalent in gas—contain at least another 175 billion barrels of oil and 750 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. Thus, only 6 percent of the known fields contain...
At current rates of consumption, the world has 50 to 70 remaining years of conventional oil supplies. By the 1990s we must have considerably reduced oil consumption to avoid major economic dislocations.

over 93 percent of the world’s known conventional oil resources and over 90 percent of the known conventional natural gas resources.

Significant petroleum fields and significant petroleum provinces are closely associated. The ten super-provinces contain 44 of the 52 super-giant fields. In almost all of the thirty major provinces, the oil and gas resources are concentrated in a small number of giant and super-giant fields. The concentration in a few major fields is particularly marked in the major oil-exporting countries. More than 90 percent of the oil resources of Saudi Arabia are found in just eleven fields. This level is reached with just five fields in Abu Dhabi, seventeen in Iran, six in Iraq, two in Kuwait, fourteen in Libya, and twenty-two in Venezuela.

A Unique Episode in History is Over

The third key point is that modern petroleum exploration is an efficient process. If major fields do exist in a province, most are likely to be discovered by the time 25 to 200 exploratory wells have been drilled in the province. The high efficiency of modern exploration is the result of advances in geologic knowledge and exploratory technology over the past fifty years that now enable the petroleum industry to locate most potential major petroleum traps with relative ease.

These three points considered together provide a powerful means for predicting the ultimate conventional petroleum resources of the world. Because only major and super-provinces make any appreciable difference to the total, the few—probably no more than a dozen—provinces that are unexplored or only lightly explored that have the potential to become major provinces mean that we will not see additions to the world’s petroleum supply from new discoveries in the 1980s and the 1990s like those of the 1950s and 1960s. Because modern petroleum exploration is efficient, the probability of future giant field discoveries in most of the known major provinces is slim.

Considering the prospects for future discoveries and additional recovery in the known producing provinces and the prospects of unexplored or lightly explored provinces, I estimate that ultimate conventional production of world petroleum liquids will be between 1.6 and 2.0 trillion barrels. Ultimate conventional production of natural gas will be between 5000 and 6500 trillion cubic feet. At current rates of consumption, this means 50 to 70 years of conventional oil supplies and 65 to 90 years of conventional natural gas supplies.

Given this potential, depletion obviously does not mean that we will have run out of oil or natural gas by next year or even in this century. What it does mean is that we can have at best only modest growth in world oil and gas consumption during the 1980s, and that by the 1990s we have to be making major efforts to reduce consumption of world oil and gas if we are to avoid major economic dislocations.

From this vantage point, the third quarter of the twentieth century appears to be a unique episode in world history. It was both the peak period of petroleum discoveries and the culmination of more than a century of rapid growth in world oil consumption. From the early 1860s to the 1970s, world oil consumption grew at an average rate of more than 7 percent per year. This exponential growth rate has several unusual properties. At this rate of growth, consumption doubles every decade, consumption during the most recent decade equaling all previous consumption.

When consumption of a finite resource begins at very low levels and increases at this rate, it can continue smoothly through several doubling periods. The economic expansion, based on the rapid growth in consumption of inexpensive oil and natural gas that occurred in both the United States and worldwide during the 1950s and 1960s, was such an episode. However, once consumption reaches large absolute levels, nature’s brakes begin to be applied. By 1975, world oil consumption would have reached such a point. The Arab-Israeli war 1973 and the accompanying embargo and major price increases advanced the necessary shocks that the
system had to undergo by several months. If the growth in world oil consumption continued at historic rates for just another decade from the early 1970s to the early 1980s, the remaining recoverable conventional oil resources would be good for 25 to 35 more years of consumption at the rate attained by 1983.

As events turned out, consumption may have been restrained early enough for the transition to occur from conventional supplies of oil and gas to other sources of energy without the world undergoing an economic and political disaster. Time is of crucial importance for such a transition. Developing new sources of energy supply to significant levels of production will take several decades. Currently most major new energy projects—nuclear power plants, coal gasification facilities, production from oil sands—individually take a decade from initiation to completion. Training the necessary manpower, producing the capital goods, and refining the technologies used for many plants will take even longer. Altering the way we use energy will also take decades. Existing factories, houses, and automobiles will be replaced only gradually. In many cases, improvements in the efficiency of energy-using goods will occur slowly as well.

**Conservation Costs Less than Catastrophe**

The depletion of conventional supplies of oil and gas resources confronts the world with a major challenge. Past consumption increased as rapidly as it did because most conventional deposits of oil and gas were inexpensive to find and produce. The most important fact about future energy supplies is that they are expensive, even in those cases where they are relatively plentiful. Most of the world's conventional oil was found and produced at a cost of $0.50 to $1.00 per barrel. Most of the world's nonconventional sources of oil are producible at a cost of $10 to $50 per barrel. If we attempt to continue present habits of energy use, replacing inexpensive oil and gas completely with expensive oil and gas—or expensive nuclear or expensive solar power, the economy will not be able to provide the required investment.

The challenge of depletion can be met only if the first priority of personal, corporate, and governmental efforts is a massive transformation of the many ways in which we use energy. This strategy, commonly known as "conservation," does not primarily mean belt-tightening during temporary shortages. It means an entire rethinking and revolutionizing of both our energy-using equipment and our habits of energy use. No other approach costs as little. No other approach avoids the immense and seemingly intractable environmental dilemmas associated with most new energy sources. Depletion does not automatically mean disaster. But it does mean change. The challenge for all of us is to make those changes intelligently, creatively, and justly.

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**Thomas Coates**

**October 1, 1910 – January 3, 1980**

**Good Show, Tommy!**

From March, 1941, to January, 1947, Thomas Coates was in fact, though never in title, managing editor of the *Cresset*. Coming onto the scene only four years after the founding of the magazine, he played a decisive role in defining its purpose, giving it a tone at once confessional and ecumenical, and assembling a stable of writers. For all that he gave to our magazine, we who later inherited it have reason to be grateful.

But the news of Tommy's death in Hong Kong on January 3 sets his life and ministry in a larger perspective. It was appropriate that he ended his days where he had spent his whole life, on one of the Church’s frontiers. Asia is a geographical frontier, still resistant to Christian entry. But so is the world of literature, the arts, and public affairs a frontier for the Church. And so, for that matter, were little, struggling Concordia College in Portland, where he served for a time as president, and the new, experimental, and therefore threatening Concordia Senior College where he headed the Department of Theology.

Tommy was well equipped for a frontier ministry. He enjoyed, but in any ultimate sense did not need, the company and approval of men. He moved from place to place, not in furtherance of any career plans but "On His Majesty's Service."

The words that come to my mind as I recall our years of working together are integrity and discipline and, most of all, faith. It was, finally, only his faith that enabled him to remain true to his calling and to his Lord in the last, sad years when only Grace Church in River Forest, Illinois, was willing to support him in his ministry.

Good show, Tommy. Give our regards to O.P. and Geisey and Graeby and the rest of the old *Cresset* crowd.

John Strietelmeier

for the *Cresset* Editors
Seven houses west of Fifth Avenue on Fifteenth Street in downtown Manhattan, in a basement store that seems to go on forever, two wizened shopkeepers ply their wares. They are Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Torch, and they own an art supply store noted for its selection of handmade papers which are lovingly and expertly handled by Mrs. Torch, a diminutive woman plain in dress but mighty in knowledge. For the Torches are not just store owners but shopkeepers of the old school, who know everything there is to know about the products they handle: who made them, how they are made, what their contents are—the whole process.

Mrs. Torch will spend literally hours with customers who come in the first time, and, if you mention you are a calligrapher (usually you won’t have to; she will ask for the specific uses to which you will put the paper), she will guide you through their selections. She will show you papers from Italy, France, England, Africa, and the United States, ranging in quality from 100 per cent linen down to ten per cent rag. She will carefully explain the difference between a wove and laid paper, if you don’t know, and will also tell how the quality varies from handmade to moldmade to millmade paper. She will also tell what sorts of sizing were used, if any, and in what papers. The place is a calligrapher’s dream come true; everyone who does calligraphy in the northeast corner of the United States eventually must go to Mrs. Torch simply for the education, even if you leave with only ten sheets of Michaelangelo at $1.20 per sheet.

As you wander through this store with its faint musty smell and see the tens of thousands of sheets of paper laid on simple wooden shelves built from floor to ceiling, you begin to sense a different period in craftsmanship on display; it is not the period of the arts and crafts revival under Morris but the result of that movement when there was a growth of small companies committed to excellence.

The apex of the Torch collection of papers is Whatman paper from England, a 100 per cent linen hand and moldmade paper of various types. You feel this stock and you realize that, under normal conditions, it will suffer no discoloration as it ages. It is the closest thing to a perfect paper you can buy, and when you feel it and smell it and hold it up to the light you can see why: it is even in texture with no thick or thin areas; the pulp is laid in a specific and very regular pattern, and it has an absolutely consistent tooth on the writing side. It is the result of the highest craftsmanship in papermaking in England. Whatman, however, went out of business during the great depression; Torch has the remaining supply of Whatman paper in the world.

Whatman paper suffered that defeat which has befallen so many small businesses. The Fabriano mills of Italy were the oldest in the Western hemisphere; many thought they would last forever. The Fabriano mills folded in 1978; the greatest of the Italian papermaking companies is no more. The combination of three forces—cost, rate of production, and competition from lower-priced inferior imitations—puts many companies out of business whose only crime is that they are not geared for mass production but strive for quality.

The world of excellent craftsmanship is based on small economic systems. In the future, operations like Whatman and Fabriano will rise again in new forms as cottage industries run as elaborate hobbies by those who make enough money from regular investments in mass markets. Only they will be able to withstand the economic uncertainty attendant upon small businesses studying for excellence in small quantities.

Craftsmen trust trained hands above slick minds; slow and meticulous and loving work is prized above mass or instant production. This gives birth to a political mentality which intuitively refuses partial answers to social problems because of its focus on the interrelatedness of individual small parts. Craftsmen as a group tend to be critical of and wary about political solutions to social problems; they are more likely to be involved in a small-scale politics, building the systems of relationships which help them survive in the marketplace and at home.

The campus pastor for the University Lutheran Ministry in New Haven, Connecticut, and chairperson for the Yale Religious Ministries, Jay C. Rochelle holds his M.Div. from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and his Th.M. in biblical literature from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. In addition to his special interest in the art and politics of calligraphy and other crafts, Pastor Rochelle cuts and prints linoleum and wood blocks, and bikes and bakes.

February, 1980
In the Material Inscape
Is the Interior Meaning of Crafting

It takes a while to grind the ink.
You have to make decisions about which stone to use for the grinding; if it is to be graded ink, it must be a Japanese stone. If you are aiming for one consistency, you use the Chinese stone.

Then decisions must be made about the gloss of the ink. If you want a high gloss, you use the Sumi ink. If you want a dull finish, you use a Chinese inkstick which contains no lacquer. The final decision is how much ink to prepare because if you underestimate the amount needed, it is very difficult to make exactly the same consistency a second time.

Now you are ready to grind the ink.

Drop by drop the water is poured out until you have enough for your purposes; then the ink is slowly ground with a circular motion which moves now clockwise, now counterclockwise. This stops sharp edges from developing on the inkstick, edges which could chip off and ruin the consistency of the ink. The pattern is rhythmic and needs a certain emptiness for its completion; a muddled mind will produce muddy ink. As the ink is slowly created under your fingertips and becomes a reflection pool in which your face is mirrored, the smell of the pine forest whence it originally came sweeps over you to create a deep sense of calm and serenity.

Next, a pen is necessary, and a reed is selected whose barrel is the right size for the work at hand. The knife is checked for sharpness. The first cut is made to clean and angle the end of the reed; then a hairline split is run up about half an inch from the end just angled. The reed is turned upside down to face the penmaker who then draws the knife in a slightly circular motion toward himself to create a gentle curve about an inch long to the tip of the shaft. The sides of the curve are then tapered, a bevel is cut on what is now the top of the emergent pen, and lastly a straight cut across the end makes the nib of the pen.

The tool is soaked in water a few minutes to fill the fibers so they will not suck the ink but allow it to flow onto the paper. The tool is simultaneously sensual and natural. Its sensuality is a necessary part of its naturalness. Natural tools simply have more feeling than do machine-made tools. A steel pen does not have the touch of a reed; a plain wood pencil has more tactile sensitivity than does a ball-point pen. And in this case, a natural item is used on a natural item which is its cousin.

As I lean rather close to the paper, since I am about to write small, I focus on the whiteness of the page. It is empty space about to be pierced by a mark which will change forever its character. As I begin to write, I focus on the minim—the smallest part of the individual letter—and I see it. I see it!

Perhaps the miracle of craftsmanship is precisely in this seeing, this beholding, this wonderment; in the making of one letter the whole of the craft is summed up. The history and the technique is in my hand, in my mind, the skill is in the discipline I’ve undergone, and the tools are simple extensions of myself which I know intimately because I have made them. All of this energy is poured out the end of the pen as the first strokes are made, and I see this: I see the history, the discipline, the tools, and what emerges from them with me as the vehicle is a free and personal and real letter which is not an abstraction or an idea in the mind. The potential has become the actual, and I see it!

Furthermore, I see into my own personality at the same time; I have captured eternity in a moment and seen it, not in Blake’s grain of sand, but in Rochelle’s capital A—which means I may also see it in the grain of sand. In the moment of eternity was the state of my soul made visible, sometimes for better and sometimes for worse. But that it was revealed at all! This is the interior meaning of crafting, of all crafting, be it weaving or pottery, or calligraphy. The medium doesn’t matter in the long run except as personal choice and economic possibility. But the interiority of the crafting matters and, with time, it is revealed to you. The reward of discipline is freedom; the reward of looking into the craft and learning it is seeing into the craft and learning about yourself.

If contemporary work-forms rob and drain people of their souls, then they have become the demonic counterpoint to the fulfillment found in crafting. To see what Gerard Manley Hopkins called the “inscape of things” is to enter an arena where work and leisure dualisms are overcome and where thought of profit is the outcome of, not the impulse to, labor. Craftsmen may not say much about this mysterious inside of their labors, but they know it and they know that it is profoundly political—even if we have troubles translating it into a political “program.”
In the Emergent Community, The Future Belongs to Soft Technology

In G. K. Chesterton's novel The Napoleon of Notting Hill, a time is foreseen when the government of England will be so routine and vapid that no one will want to be engaged in it. Such government will be made up of long lines of ascetic-looking men all dressed in drab and uninteresting clothing matching their drab and uninteresting work.

The hero, whom we first see as a young boy adulating the uniform of the deposed King of Nicaragua, grows up to become a friend of the Prime Minister—a man whose craziness is of such a kind that he makes ludicrous decisions which turn out to be interesting. One such decision is to recreate the neighborhoods of London as fiefdoms: Hammersmith, Chelsea, Kensington, Notting Hill, and the rest. Each fiefdom reinstitutes its heraldry and pageantry, and our hero becomes the King of Notting Hill. To everyone's surprise, he takes the job seriously! Chesterton's point is obvious: communities are made up of small units, each bearing a sense of place and pride and history. Large-scale government is nothing but management and can never be otherwise.

This small-scale political community has been enacted many times over, I think notably in the arts and crafts movement and in institutions of higher learning where arts and crafts were taught. Think for a moment of the guilds organized by William Morris and others in the Victorian arts and crafts revival; think again of the work and writings of Eric Gill or of the small press movement and the noble experiment of Black Mountain College. Today these small-scale political communities rise again, like the recurrent phoenixes from the ashes of burnt-out cultures. Many craftsmen today are convinced the current social structure is destined for oblivion and are already making contacts and networks which serve a political as well as economic purpose in their lives. Perhaps the next wave of revolution belongs to the soft technologies and the artisans, and Chesterton's old novel makes immediate sense.

The search of the Eighties will be for communities which enable one to pay the piper for the dying, oil-drained, monopolist capitalist structure while creating a subculture of meaningful social and interpersonal relationships. Craftsmen hope to balance the pressures of the first with the relaxed ambience of the second. Because of this search, William Morris will rise in importance once more. The sharp marketers of Pantheon Press re-issued the 1955 biography by E. P. Thompson in 1976 in anticipation of this rise in importance. Even Morris's romantic novels will re-appear: News from Nowhere and The Well at the World's End have both come out in paperback in the last three years.

Morris is important because he experienced in his time what we have experienced in our own; consequently the movement of Morris's life may provide some clues for the movement of the lives of craftsmen into the last two decades of this century. Morris moved from naive capitalism to romanticism to medievalism and finally and quite logically to socialism. His was guild socialism heavily influenced by the thought of Charles Kingsley and F. D. Maurice, the Christian socialists, and also by Karl Marx.

The crafting life is almost by its nature a socialist life. By this I certainly do not mean the top-heavy, so-called socialisms of governments like the Soviet Union or Sweden, but a system of relationships characterized by the direct exchange of finished goods in which mercantile considerations are minimized. Furthermore, it is a system in which the conditions of production and the act of production are in the same hands. It stems, in this instance, from a form of labor in which little dishonesty is possible because the craftsman is creatively responsible for the finished product. Ruskin said that the industrial revolution far from resulting in the division of labor, actually resulted in a schizophrenic division within people whereby mind and body, intellect and activity, work and leisure could no longer be united. In a crafting society the dualism is overcome because conception, planning, execution, and evaluation are all within the work of the craftsman.

My fantasy is that this has all happened before, that in fact the mass industrial civilization rose as high as it was able through exploiting the greed and avarice within people—and then something happened. People began to look at one another in a new way and to say, "What is this all for? Life is no fun anymore." So gradually they dismantled the system until economics and politics really were carried on as if people mattered, to use the late Fritz Schumacher's phrase. All the alternatives were played with; false choices were gradually weeded out; and in the end it was seen, as though in a vision, that "the only alternative, if mankind is to survive, is the non-materialistic counterculture. Some of its characteristics are a loss of ego-centric acquisitiveness, cooperation, an appropriate use of technology, decentralization in government and production, small local factories using local materials and full employment, non-violence, compassion, organic gardening, development of the arts and crafts, and a culture based on the realization of the spiritual nature of the universe."


February, 1980
Once we were told that electricity from nuclear power plants would be "too cheap to meter."

Richard Hansis is Assistant Professor of Geography at Valparaiso University and holds his Ph.D. from Pennsylvania State University. His areas of specialization include economic geography and cultural geography, and his interest in conservation leads him to his present participation in the Bailly Alliance, a group which aims to prevent the construction of the Bailly I Nuclear Plant on the shores of Lake Michigan, thirteen miles from the Valparaiso campus.

Most Americans are now accustomed to moral appeals from their fellow citizens opposed to nuclear power plants. Sometimes acts of civil disobedience try to arouse their consciences to a moral choice against nuclear power. Most Americans are equally familiar with the seemingly pragmatic arguments which would justify building more nuclear power plants. Nuclear industry advertising and lobbying try to make the case for the plants on economic grounds and emotional appeals to our hope for national survival. Since these two positions often cross each other at right angles, a possible way out of the impasse may be to discuss the nuclear issue in terms amenable to analysis. Such a discussion does not exclude moral arguments, since any analysis of the nuclear issue is a basis for the evaluations of the dangers involved in producing—or not producing—electrical energy from nuclear reactors.

In the present "energy crisis," some voices cry out for American energy independence and urge more rapid construction of nuclear power plants. These same voices often accuse opponents of nuclear power of being irrational, emotional, anti-technology, anti-progress, and of advocating a return to feudalism, if not a return to the caves. By playing on the legitimate fears of people who depend on energy for their livelihoods, these voices speak in tones they ascribe to their adversaries. What needs to be done is to avoid the loud accusations of both sides and to take a longer look at the economic, social, and environmental impacts implied by the use of nuclear energy—and its alternatives.

A few facts concerning nuclear power plants may be helpful. The seventy-two commercial plants in the United States produce 12 per cent of our electrical energy, and electrical energy makes up approximately 12 per cent of the energy Americans now use. Thus, electrical energy generated by nuclear power is a rather small per cent of our total energy use. Smallness is no proof of insignificance, however. One argument of nuclear power advocates is that nuclear power saves on imported oil. If oil were used as a base load fuel—that is, as the fuel generating electricity during normal usage—then the argument that nuclear energy saves on imported oil would be valid. The argument is weakened, however, by the fact that oil is rarely used as a base load fuel, and most oil-fired generators are only used during peak demand times.

A second piece of useful knowledge concerns the end use of each form of energy. We should match each type of energy to the end to which it is put. For example, some forms of energy work best in a liquid or gaseous form; we propel our automobiles with gasoline, alcohol, or methane. Although electricity is suitable for certain motors and industrial processes, we should think of electricity as inappropriate for heating our homes and hot water tanks. The foolishness of such uses for electricity appears when we think of the energy transformations necessary to heat water by electricity. At the generator, water is heated to steam at temperatures of 600 to 1000° F, while other water cools the generator. This transformation results in much energy loss, and more energy is also lost in transmission. Seventy per cent of the energy of coal fuel—and even more of uranium—is lost before it reaches the hot water heater where cold water is electrically heated to 140° F. There are more appropriate ways to heat water, including gas and direct solar heating. Rational use of energy sources would include using the appropriate energy for each use.

Anti-Nuclear forces are accused of advocating a return to feudalism, if not a return to the caves.

Our energy planning must provide for safe and renewable energy which people can afford. While no energy source is completely environmentally benign, energy planning must provide for the maximum use of those energy sources which are most benign. Finally, energy planning must consider the socio-economic (employment patterns, population movements, etc.) impact of the energy provided. We call energy "renewable" if it comes from an almost infinitely available source. Nuclear fission is a nonrenewable source of energy; the supply of fissionable materials, so far as we now know, is limited. Even the use of the breeder re-
actor which generates more fuel
than it uses—but is more danger­
ous—does not provide us with re­
newable energy, although such re­
actors could provide energy for
some time into the future. Electric­
ity from breeder reactors, however,
does not meet the safety and afforda­
ble criteria set forth above. The
cost of the first large breeder reactor
is estimated at $5000 per installed
day of capacity.

Fusion power fueled by an iso­
tope of water has been viewed with
much hope. Water is almost limit­
less, but the problem of dispersing
the immense amounts of waste heat
during fusion makes unlimited use
of fusion less than encouraging. Fu­
sion also produces radioactive ma­
terials—those materials which con­
tain the fusion reaction—and con­
stitutes an environmental hazard of
considerable risk. Furthermore,
fusion power is still not demonstr­
ated technically, much less eco­
nomically.

Solar energy in its various forms
—direct solar energy for heating and
cooling, photovoltaic cells for elec­
tricity, wind for electricity, and
alcohol and methane from plants
and animals for heat and electric­
city—seems to meet the criteria es­
established above. Economic feas­
ibility in some cases is a real ques­
tion, but as we shall see, feasibility is
a very real question for nuclear
power too.

The solution to the problems of
nuclear power—building and oper­
ting safe reactors, minimizing health
hazards, disposing of radioactive
wastes, and decommissioning plants
after twenty to forty years of opera­
tion—is expensive, if possible. Nu­
clear power is not even a good Faus­
tian bargain. At a time when some
sectors of industry are worrying
about a capital shortage, the finan­
cial demands upon them for their
energy supplies are increasing pre­
cipitously. Moving capital to meet
energy costs makes it less available
for productive activities, and the
capital investments needed for nu­
clear power plants are enormous.

In 1953, Lewis Strauss, Chairman
of the Atomic Energy Commission,
maintained that electricity produced
from nuclear power plants would be
“too cheap to meter.” Today we
chuckle at such naiveté, but the opti­
mism which Strauss expressed en­
couraged the push for nuclear power
in the recent past. The time has
come to ask how the cost of nuclear
power compares to other forms of
energy, and more than dollar and
cents quotations are necessary to
answer the question.

Our children will have to pay for
decommissioning the nuclear reactors
we build in this generation.

Capital costs are the first costs
of nuclear energy. The successful Con­
necticut Yankee nuclear plant was,
in 1962, contracted at a price of $180
per kilowatt of capacity, i.e., the con­
struction of the plant would cost
$180 per kilowatt of electricity gen­
erated at maximum load. A coal
plant, contracted in 1962, would
have cost $150 per installed kilo­
watt of capacity. Prices for nuclear
plants were set by “turnkey” con­
tracts under which the builders of
the reactors took full responsibility
for designing and building the
plant, including any subsequent ac­tions necessary to meet regulatory
guidelines. For Westinghouse as
well as General Electric, turnkey
contracts were a financial disaster.

However, coal plants cost more to
operate than nuclear plants, and by
the early 70s, nuclear plants were
at least cost-competitive with coal
in the eyes of the utility companies.
For the consumer, a more relevant
figure is the price which he pays for
electricity. The public service com­
mision of each state sets rates for
consumers based on a certain max­i­mum percentage rate of return on
capital invested, i.e., the stock­
holder’s equity. The more equity a
utility has, the greater its profits.
This does not, of course, mean that
there is a higher rate of return on
capital invested, but that there is
a larger base on which to calculate
profits. Fuel costs are part of opera­
ting costs and thus are not figured
into the return on investments. All
other things being equal, then, the
higher the amount of capital in­
vested, the larger the amount the
consumer pays for electricity.

All other things are not equal in
the case of nuclear power versus
coal. Until recently, refined and en­
riched uranium cost $7 a pound, but
this price zoomed past $55 per
pound last year. Some financial
analysts expect uranium to go up to
$100 per pound soon, the price at
which fuel costs for coal and nuclear
plants will break even. Other
analysts even predict that refined
uranium will go to $200-$300 a
pound by 1985. Coal has increased
in price too—but not nearly as
rapidly as uranium.

In the past, nuclear plants cost
somewhat more to build but less to
operate than coal plants, but that
has changed in the last several
years. Rapidly accelerating con­
struction costs for nuclear plants—
approximately an 18 to 22 per cent
annual increase—have made them
substantially more expensive to
build than coal plants. These costs
are projected to accelerate more
rapidly than the costs of coal plants,
and the gap will widen. For nuclear
plants built since 1975, the cost
equaled and now exceeds the cost
of coal-fired plants. A recent Exxon
study shows that a 1000 megawatt
coal plant with desulfurization
equipment begun in 1976 would cost
$395 million less to build than a nu­
clear power plant of the same size.
It also shows that this coal plant
would cost 5.11 cents per kilowatt
hour to operate compared to 5.07
cents for a nuclear plant.

What the Exxon study does not
include are the huge government
subsidies to nuclear energy, a “hid­
den” cost to the consumer. These subsidies range from basic nuclear research to government regulation and insurance. Batelle Institute has estimated that the research and development costs for nuclear plants have been $18 billion to date. This amount, if it were not paid for by the taxpayer and were instead included in the electricity rate, would have raised the cost of nuclear-generated electricity by 2 cents per kilowatt hour. Add to this research and development subsidy such other subsidies as state and local evacuation plans, subsidies for uranium enrichment, and accelerated depreciation allowances and tax credits, and the cost of that electricity goes still higher. Finally, add on the subsidy to nuclear utilities which the Price-Anderson Act, passed in 1957, contributes to nuclear power. This legislation relieved the nuclear industry of serious liability costs. Limiting liability to $560 million for any one accident for which the government pays a substantial share, the Price-Anderson Act considerably eases the insurance costs to the utilities. Since property damage alone could reach $17 billion in a severe nuclear accident, this limited liability is a huge subsidy for nuclear power. All these subsidies decrease the cost of nuclear electricity but increase taxes.

Two other costs not included in electricity rates are those for nuclear waste disposal and decommissioning plants which have outlived their usefulness. Waste disposal research is being carried out by the Department of Energy. Wastes are presently being stored on site in pools of water in nuclear plants or are sent to “temporary” waste disposal sites. Safe permanent disposal, although theoretically feasible but not presently practicable, may be a reality by 1995—if all goes as planned and political resistance is overcome. The entire costs of permanent disposal sites are not included in present rates and will have to be paid for by nuclear electricity users when and if permanent storage sites are feasible.

Finally, the cost of decommissioning the nuclear plants awaits future generations. The true costs of carrying out this task are also not included in electrical rates presently charged by utility companies. Decommissioning cost estimates range from 3 per cent of construction costs—welding the doors shut and posting armed guards—to 100 per cent of construction costs—dismantling the irradiated structural materials and conveying them to the disposal sites. Nuclear plants have a relatively short life of twenty to forty years, so it is our children who will pay for decommissioning the plants we build.

When nuclear energy does not turn out to be the panacea its advocates would lead us to believe, the question goes up: “But what will we do for energy?” An answer easy to give in the abstract is solar energy, but we must also question the immediate practicality of that alternative.

**A problem of our energy future is: Who will be sufficiently employed to pay for our energy costs?**

Here the future is brighter, but not without some clouds. It will take time to implement the solar alternative, and part of the solar alternative must include responsible uses of present energies while the solar alternative is explored. Among these interim measures are conservation, co-generation, and rate restructuring. To encourage conservation, rates could be changed so that large electricity users would pay as much for each additional kilowat instead of less, which is the present situation. “Cheap” electricity for large users does not encourage conservation. Coupled to this rate restructuring might be a “lifeline” program which supplies electricity at low rates to consumers who use smaller amounts, possibly less than 500 kilowatts per month. Another complementary measure to these conservation measures is peak load pricing. By increasing prices for electricity at times of peak demand, consumers would be encouraged to use electricity for many uses at off-peak times. Since it is peak demand which is the crucial factor in determining the need for new generators, these rate changes might help even out demand and decrease the need for new electricity. Some of these measures have been implemented in a few places. While total energy demand has not decreased, it has not increased as fast as the original projections made by the utilities and the federal government. Decreased rates of growth in energy usage can be further supported by better insulated refrigerators and water heaters, heat pumps for heating and cooling, more efficient electric motors, etc.

Industrial co-generation of electricity can supply some of the demand for energy while solar alternatives are developed. A Dow Chemical Corporation study reports that co-generation could supply half of our industrial needs by 1985. Co-generation is the use of the waste heat from heat-producing processes for the generation of electricity. The steel industry, for example, is in a position to produce more electricity than at present by generating it from the heat released in the coking and smelting process.

Co-generation in the home is also possible. By using a motor running on natural gas or alcohol, heat and electricity could be produced for the home at a lower cost than is charged by many utilities. Other electrical demands can eventually be met by using photovoltaic cells. Although very costly at present, increasing use of them will bring down their price until they become competitive with other forms of energy. Breakthroughs in technology—principally in lowering the cost of silicon, the basic ingredient in the cells—have already begun at the Stanford Research Institute.

Any particular combination of alternatives to nuclear energy while the solar energy alternative is de-
Film

The Higher Meaning of John Wayne

Searching for The Searcher

James Combs

What does one say about John Wayne that has not already been said?

The eulogies abounded when he died last summer. "John Wayne was bigger than life," said President Carter. "John Wayne is America," said Elizabeth Taylor, the wife of a well-known Senator from Virginia, when she testified before Congress in behalf of a special medal struck for Wayne when it was known he was dying. Jack Valenti, President of the Motion Picture Association of America, opined, "the tallest tree in the movie forest has just been felled."

Other people were not so kind: boor, reactionary, superpatriot, studio war hero, machoman, boozzer, anachronism. Perhaps the exploiting pop magazines that were issued just days after his death were most correct: "Last of the Westerners," "Symbol of American Heroism," "The Duke of Wide Open Spaces." It is curious how much more incisive were those who wanted to make a quick buck off of the Duke's death than those who loved him and those who hated him.

I feel that those who knew him personally or who were linked to the movie establishment felt too kindly about him, and those who didn't know him or were situated in anti-establishment circles tended to feel too harshly toward him. The slick airport bookstall mags understood him for us. He was the people's icon, a representative of the myths, ideals, and instincts we commonly feel. He exemplified the central myth we have created as a people, The West. As a Westerner he enacted the popular ideal of correct behavior—courageous, inner-directed, self-reliant, strong—and he responded directly, unreflectively, often violently, to situations. My God, how much we would love to do that!

It was Marion Michael Morrison (his real name) who died last summer, and it was that movie star who was extolled or condemned, because he and they confused the person and the persona, the man and the symbol. What we knew in the dark, John Wayne, lives on.

John Wayne was indeed an anachronism, although not for his political beliefs or lifestyle; one has only to live in a small Southern or Midwestern town for awhile (or for that matter on a university faculty) to see plenty of that. The anachronism was what he created, his masterpiece, the icon itself, John Wayne. He has told us how he made up "the John Wayne thing" in front of a mirror before starring in The Big Trail (1930). Wayne was perhaps the last representative of that type of popular creativity: developing a rather "flat" movie persona and sticking to it. The successes of his generation who did that always represented, were an icon of, some important

James Combs is Associate Professor of Political Science at Valparaiso University. His Dimensions of Political Drama (Goodyear Publishing Company) was published in January, and his (with Dan Nimmo) Subliminal Politics: Myths and Myth-makers in America (Prentice-Hall) is due out in April. He is currently researching a work on political fantasy, and he hopes soon to study temporality and politics, if he finds the time.
Wayne's career was never better expressed than in the role of Ethan Edwards in John Ford's *The Searchers*. Wayne plays a mysterious figure who returns to, but is outside of, a family in the West. Most of the family is killed in an Indian raid, but his niece is kidnapped. Relentlessly, obsessively, he searches for her, first to rescue her, but as she passes puberty, to kill her. Once found, she doesn't want to be rescued, and in what one current director calls "the single most harrowing moment in film," Wayne captures her, but rather than killing her, lifts her and takes her home. Wayne believed this his greatest role, and apparently the current crop of young Hollywood directors (Spielberg, Scorsese, Milius, Schrader, etc.) are obsessed by and continually use the basic plot of *The Searchers*: films such as *Taxi Driver*, *Hardcore*, *The Deer Hunter*, even *Star Wars* appear to have been influenced by it.

Why so? Some of it appears to stem from Wayne's mythological status, and from his ability (with directors like Ford and Hawks) to transcend the mere "horse opera" aspects of the movie Western and create iconic figures of memorable style and economy: Mr. Dunson of *Red River*, Tom Doniphon of *Liberty Valance*, Rooster Cogburn of *True Grit*. But it is in *The Searchers* that the quintessential frontier figure is taken to its full dramatic possibilities, and the terrible power of American freedom and violence captured in all of its tension and contradiction. And why, may we ask, does this enactment move us so much now?

Perhaps it is because of our current search, like Wayne's search for the little girl, for something dear that we lost. And perhaps it is because of our current fears that what we have created will reject us; that the winds of change endanger primal bonds of community; and that our "mission" has somehow changed along the way from something noble to something destructive and even pathological. George McGovern's "Come home, America" speech and Carter's "crisis of confidence" drama both indicate that something has been lost and "the search" is still on.

The West of mythology and characters such as Wayne gave us a popular formula for the enactment of moral dilemmas and social conflicts, and in their most magnificent treatments, the films of Wayne reflected much of what it means to be an American. Perhaps the Congressional medal inscribed "John Wayne, American" said more than its initiators knew. Perhaps, too, as we enjoy and study the best of Wayne in the future, we will discover, as the new directors discovered with *The Searchers*, that Wayne knew more than his detractors, or even he, knew. Mythological knowledge is a cultural "higher meaning" that transcends even the people who are the popular icons of the myth, and the iconography itself has a life that is truly larger than life. Marion Michael Morrison dies, but, for good or ill, the cultural artifact that he and we created, John Wayne, lives on. That's right, pilgrim.
The Rights of the Mentally Ill
And Community Responsibility

In every age one can find instances of helpful humane treatment of the troubled which was guided by available knowledge and enlightened by a religious or philosophical affirmation of the world.

In every age one can also find instances of fearful, self-protective treatment which was, not illuminated, but shadow-lighted by the dark beam of magic. Marcus Riedel

In order to be able to say what rights and responsibilities a person has because of a particular status he has, a role he plays, or a condition he is in, we have to know what that status, role, or condition is. To make a statement of the rights of the mentally ill requires that we know what mental illness is and how it affects a person’s civic, social, and human status. Definition of the responsibilities of mental health workers and of the community presupposes that we know what sort of training and experience are required to produce a competent mental health professional and what it means to be a human being and a member of a community.

You would think that we at least know what a citizen and a civil society are; but even about this there is a good deal of confusion. Some people, holding a very individualistic philosophy, think that civil society is just a collection of individuals each of whom should follow his own interest as he sees it. They see that we do have a common interest in defense against foreign enemies and in police protection of our own persons and property. They agree that one may help the needy out of a private sense of generosity. But according to such individualists, there is no public duty to people who are not competent to shift for themselves.

On the other hand, there are more community-minded people who think that we are parts of each other. What affects some of us reflects on us all, they think; for we are interdependent within a whole context which we can only partly control. Even the endowments which nurturing surroundings have granted us as individuals, we often get at the expense of others. Our greatest obligation, such people would say, is to maintain a humane community. That entails a care for those whom nature or their personal histories have provided with inadequate abilities to provide for themselves.

It is easy to see that these two opposed philosophies have different conceptions of what a human being and his value are. The different beliefs do not just exist in the abstract. They are held by real people and groups who operate in society. There are important questions, consequently, about the rights and permissions of divergent groups to act on their beliefs as well as of the duties which the political society may require of them.

Meanwhile, regarding mental illness, the confusion goes deeper still. The term “mental illness” is commonly made to cover almost everyone who is for some reason or other not fully competent to manage his own life in an adjustment which the people around him find satisfactory. Thus, people who suffer from mental retardation, people with disease-produced dysfunctions, people with hysterical responses to traumatic experiences, people who commit violent crimes, people who have simply made ineffective adjustments to very difficult life situations, and even people in whom normal aging has dimmed the faculties are all too often lumped together under the category of “mentally ill.”

In a few cases, the causes and characteristic patterns of deviant behavior are known. Paresis due to syphilis is diagnosable in much the same way as any other spirochete-caused disease. Down's syndrome is clearly diagnosable in much the same way as any other spirochete-caused disease. Down's syndrome is clearly diagnosable in much the same way as any other spirochete-caused disease. Down's syndrome is clearly diagnosable in much the same way as any other spirochete-caused disease. Down's syndrome is clearly diagnosable in much the same way as any other spirochete-caused disease. Down's syndrome is clearly diagnosable in much the same way as any other spirochete-caused disease. Down's syndrome is clearly diagnosable in much the same way as any other spirochete-caused disease. Down's syndrome is clearly diagnosable in much the same way as any other spirochete-caused disease. Down's syndrome is clearly diagnosable in much the same way as any other spirochete-caused disease. Down's syndrome is clearly diagnosable in much the same way as any other spirochete-caused disease.

Yet the fact is that several different groups of professionals and nonprofessionals have convinced the public that they have the expertise required to recognize mental illness, diagnose its type and cause, determine when a person should be institutionalized, to perform radical therapy, and to determine when the patient is cured or can be released.

Acceptance of such claims by the courts and the public exists side by side with newspaper exposes and legal complaints about the conduct of workers in state hos-

Marcus Riedel is Professor of Philosophy in Christ College, the interdisciplinary honors program in the humanities at Valparaiso University. He is presently concluding work on the Project on General Education Models, a venture sponsored by the Society for Values in Higher Education to revitalize liberal learning on American college campuses. From 1980 to 1982, Mr. Riedel will direct the Reutlingen, Germany, Center of the University's Overseas Study Program.

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hitals and about questionable commitments to institutions that might well lead to distrust and lack of confidence in the mental health system. It forgets the long history of mistreatment of people with deviant behavior that might well lead to fear of giving too much power to mental health professionals and institutions.

It is from this whole situation that concern for the legal rights of persons held to be mentally ill and for the responsibilities of the community arises. Hence, it is to that situation in part that our discussion must be addressed. In part also, however, the policy issues arise from the real condition that terms like "mental illness" are intended to label. It is a fact, after all, some people become internally incapable of coping with their lives, that some do develop deviant personalities and do exhibit behavior that is not just eccentric, but markedly deviant. They sometimes do harm to themselves and others in such ways as to lead us to believe they have not rationally chosen to do so. They do sometimes become uncontrollable by the ordinary social forces of habit and public opinion. The questions then arise what the responsibilities of the public and the professions are to such people, whether there is a social, human, or moral responsibility to them which goes beyond the prudent and legal, and conversely what rights, if any, they retain as citizens and as human beings against our intervention.

We cannot here deal with all the problems which arise in controversies about mental illness; but the original one remains with us. If we citizens do not know what mental illness is and how it should be treated, how can we get started on questions of rights and responsibilities? All we would be able to talk about is some very general responsibilities, like the true, but indefinite, duty to further the welfare of others when we can. Without some knowledge of mental illness, we cannot apply even these accepted moral values to particular cases. We will not, for example, know what will harm or help a mentally ill person.

I think the answer to our question is that we do know just enough about the nature of mental illness to be able to determine the main legal safeguards and the main human and public responses proper to the mentally ill. In order to say what it is that we know, I want very briefly to give a somewhat different version of the history of the treatment of mental illness than one usually hears. The popular version which one finds in textbooks of clinical psychology and psychopathology has it that in ancient times people believed in spirits and demons who were able to disrupt the natural order within them who controlled them and made them do things they would not ordinarily do. A person who had one was not only dangerous; he was evil and immoral. As the orthodox history has it, the ancients were barbaric and cruel in their treatment of the insane. They thought that the possessed maniac must be driven out of society where he would be harmless, or treated so cruelly that the demon would find his body too uncomfortable to inhabit. In modern times, so the story goes, we have overcome such primitive barbarity. Our recent history is one of steady progress in scientific knowledge and humanitarian sentiment.

This version of the history in effect gives a justification for diagnosis and treatments of the mentally ill which can be identified as scientific and rejects what it interprets as survivals of primitive ignorance. But I want to suggest that the available data support another more plausible interpretation and justify some different treatments of the mentally troubled. It is of course true that the ancients had not developed the scientific technology that we have now. But it is not at all the case that they were simply barbarous. Rather, in every age you can find instances of helpful humane treatment of the troubled which was guided by the available knowledge and enlightened by a religious or philosophical affirmation of the world. In every age you can also find instances of fearful, self-protective treatment which was not illuminated, but shadow-lighted, by the dark beam of magic.

**Jesus found mental illness to be a sign of sin, but his cure was not punishment.**

**He restored the afflicted to God and to the community. This didn't mean adapting to a law-ridden, self-protective society; rather, it meant a rebirth into freedom.**

I will not pretend to give a complete historical account of this. I will just point to a few important facts and then give an interpretation of the philosophic views they might reflect. These will be views people have of a world in which suffering, disease, and evil are stark realities. They imply beliefs about the values and ideals we have for ourselves and others, and about the kinds of practice which are consistent with our beliefs.

First, then, the ancients did believe in spirits; but in each culture that I know anything about at least, there have been a couple of different kinds of belief about them. Some people did think those possessed were wicked and should be punished. Other people thought of demons as entities much like persons but with magical powers. By "magic" I here mean a non-natural power to do physical and mental feats more or less instantaneously without going through a temporal process involving work. Believers in such magic were naturally enough ready also to believe in magicians who could with secret formulas cast out one demon with the help of another. Kings insecure on their thrones had such sorcerers around, but wizards hired their powers out to others, too, when the price was right and proper homage was paid them.

In those same times, however, there were other people who thought of the demon as the spirit of man or
the divine spark within him. Their experience led them to believe, as I believe our experience still teaches us, that neither purely mechanistic, physico-chemical, nor magical explanations are adequate for many events and for many aspects of human life, and that one must think of human beings as distinctly different from the rest of nature. The demon was for them that which makes us uniquely human and lifts us to our highest heights. Sometimes the demon was thought to be reason, in which we shared, but which went beyond our own capacities to include the motive power of the universe. Sometimes it was thought of in more religious terms as the spirit which men share with the gods or with God and through which our minds are illuminated and given hope and courage. In any case, for these people, if some were "possessed by demons," they were very human demons, and what you did about them was to treat the people who had them like distressed human beings.

Thus, there were ancient Egyptian "hospices" and temples in which physician-priests augmented prayers and incantations with kindness, advice, recreation, and herbs. Greek Asclepiad temples of the eighth century B.C. were located in remote regions, away from family, trade, war, and stress. There sick were comforted, fed, bathed, massaged, and given nephpic drugs. Pythagoras in the sixth century B.C. urged paying attention to prevention rather than cure.

Jesus, confronting an outcast, dangerous lunatic who was said to be possessed of unclean spirits in Mark's Gospel, cured him not by the use of a magic formula, but by speaking to the demons in the man and then by leading the man out of the cemetery, where he was living with swine, into the open fields and sunshine and normal human intercourse.

Jesus found lunacy and other sicknesses to be a manifestation of sin; but the cure was not through judgment and punishment. Rather, it was through relieving the afflicted one of his guilt and restoring him to a right relationship with his life and the life of the community. The cure was a sign of the presence of God; but being right with God didn't just mean making an adaptive adjustment to a self-protective, law-ridden society. It meant a re-birth into freedom and ability to cope autonomously with the sometimes tough problems of life. Finally, even in what are referred to as the Dark Ages, medieval monasteries were frequently a refuge for fools and lunatics—a place where kind treatment was combined with relic-touching, holy water, and a mild sort of exorcism through prayer.

The point to my little history is that is is not belief in demons and spirits and inhumane treatment of the insane, on the one hand, nor belief in drugs, neurosurgery and kindly care, on the other, which separates the ancient and bad from the modern and good in the ways of caring for mental health. What separates the bad and good at the practical level is, to be sure, the way in which one approaches those whose spirits are troubled. But what motivates that approach is the way in which one conceives human-being-in-the-world and the way one conceives the relation between knowledge and the power to act. My history illustrates different conceptions of human life, different beliefs about the kind of knowledge which is available to us, different appraisals of the value of a human being and consequent differences in approach to therapy.

My claim is that two broadly different ideas of these things are as present in our own day as they were in ancient Egypt or Greece or at the dawn of the Christian era. The first I'll label for convenience the "Gnostic." In the gnostic myth nature and man are a theatre in which forces beyond our ken struggle for ascendency. The everyday social world and the world of nature are captives of Satanic powers that would enslave people. Our aim is to escape the evil and save ourselves from it. We can do it by isolating the evil and trying to overcome it by violence. Or we can go to the magicians who have a secret password that will get us through the enemy's lines and take us to salvation. It is not belief in demons, spirits, and the inhumane treatment of the insane on the one hand, nor belief in drugs, neurosurgery, and kindly care on the other hand which separates the ancient and bad from the modern and good in the ways of caring for mental health.

When you take a contemporary analog of this view as a citizen, your reaction to the mentally ill is just self-protective. You confine them and you don't let them back into society, and you probably paint all forms of deviant behavior with the same brush, calling them insane and evil. And you probably abdicate responsibility for determining the password, or the nature of mental illness and the effectiveness of therapeutic means, to the physician with the latest theory. If you take this view as a patient, you play the crazy game, thinking of yourself as bad but as not under your own control. You refuse responsibility for yourself and put yourself hopelessly, but submissively, into the hands of the magician. Mental health professionals who fall into this way of thinking, fall into the danger of becoming part of an entrenched guild whose authority derives from star-spangled robes and magic wands. They may then assume an authority they do not have and claim an arcane knowledge of a disease that doesn't exist or of a cure that does more harm than the disease.

A variation of the Gnostic conception appears in a way to be its antithesis. Again for convenience, I will label it the "Technical." I did not specifically illustrate it in my history, though it, too, appears in every age. It rejects all talk of other than mechanical or physical influences on personality or behavior. Nature and man, on this view, are intrinsically value-neutral. They are simply material organisms which adjust to each other...
in ordered, happy ways, or collide violently and produce pain. The aim of therapy is to alleviate pain and return the organism to the functions determined for it by the fixed laws of nature.

The danger when one takes this view, of course, is that he simply writes off all those people for whom no cure on the physical model is known. The further danger is that one takes them as less than human and therefore gives them no more care than will satisfy the most basic physical needs. The parallel with Gnosticism lies in the relation of the patient and the professional therapist. Once the physician convinces the patient or his proxy that he knows the ends to be achieved and the chemical or neurosurgical means by which to achieve them, the patient must simply submit to the manipulations of the expert, who is beyond criticism.

The second main view I do not have a handy label for, though I do think of it as a Christian one. It accepts humanity as part of nature but recognizes that the psychic and the social life which are essential parts of being human introduce complexities which are beyond those which need be considered in the relations of material bodies. It does not close out the possibility that there are forces at work in our lives which are, now or forever, beyond our ability to recognize. It does recognize that there are things radically wrong with our everyday human world, but it denies that human life or human kind are irrevocably bad. Possibilities of disease and other evils are always there, but so are possibilities that they can be overcome if, on the one hand, we keep faith with nature, with each other, with that which makes us to be most fully human, and with God; and if, on the other hand, we persistently refuse to defy our claim to favored status, our knowledge of pet theories, our luxuries, our power and position. It is the idolatry of just such things that leads to most of the serious problems in living which our society has.

The chief value, on this world-and-life-affirming view, is not simply a self-protective escape from evil. It is an affirmation of the importance of our own commitment to wrestling with the evils to see what can be done about them. Further, it is not just a feeling of benevolence to our fellowmen. It is our own active participation in an ongoing community response to the miseries we share.

That commitment carries other values in train. We won't look for magical solutions; but we will search for publicly communicable knowledge about the reasons and solutions of whatever can properly be called "mental" problems. We will strive for greater clarity in the concept of mental illness as opposed to non-sick forms of deviance or kinds of "psychological" difficulties which are not effects of physiological disease. One of the things that being human means is desiring to act on the basis of what is true. That motivates support of the search for knowledge. It should also motivate an interest in not harming anyone by claiming expertise where reliable knowledge has not been developed.

Now I think this account provides four principles, or premises, that we can apply to get to the question of the rights of the mentally ill and community responsibility. First of all, all the theories of the causes of mental illness from demon possession to neural dysfunction agree that mentally ill persons are to some degree, greater or less, incapable of coping with problems in living. Further, they agree that in some, but not all, cases, the mentally ill are to some degree non-responsible for, or have an impaired sense of responsibility for their actions. There is no reason, however, to think that either of these difficulties robs them of their basic status as human beings and persons. Hence, their status as human beings must be preserved.

**The first responsibility of the community is to be a community, persons tied together by the internal bond of humane values and norms. One cannot quite call it a legal duty, for it cannot be translated into laws. Perhaps one has to say it is an unrealizable ideal.**

To be a person and human means that one has a right to as much autonomy as one is capable of exercising in the choice of one's principles, one's personality, and what is done to one. A person may never morally be made a mere object for manipulation by another without his intelligent consent and without regard to the condition of his continuing consent.

To be human, furthermore, requires that one respect and have a care to help implement others' desires for themselves so far as that is morally possible and one's relation to them permits. Being human does not, however, entail either that you have perfect wisdom nor that you must always sacrifice your own legitimate interests to those of others.

My second premise is that we do not have adequate knowledge of even the behavioral syndromes of mental illnesses to be able to say for certain who is mentally ill and who is not even in the phenomenological sense of his being unable to cope with the realities of life and being non-responsible for his behavior. We certainly do not have much reliable scientific knowledge of the causes of such behavior nor of the whole effect of many of the forms of treatment that are used. My final premise is that we should affirm the world as it is and ourselves as parts of it and interdependent with others in it. Part of our job of living in the world is to struggle with evil actively and to open ourselves up to the consequences of doing so.

Some applications to mentally ill persons are almost immediate. First, they retain their right of autonomy until they use it destructively or until they so completely lose their ability to function that they cannot care for themselves. In the latter case, we owe them as humane a kind of care as our knowledge makes possible and our circumstances permit. Where a person suffering a mental disorder injures no one and retains a de-
gree of autonomy, it is within his freedom to choose to seek help or not. If he chooses to seek help, he has a right to participate in the assessment of his problems and choosing the treatment for them. He retains the right to terminate treatment at his own will. Certainly, he has the right not to be subjected to treatments which have consequences which he could not reasonably be thought, were he in his right mind, to choose.

If the person is dangerous to others, society has a right to protect itself from harm. The right of self-protection, however, does not entail the right of society to punish or mistreat the mentally ill person; nor does it entail the right to use him as a research subject against his will. This follows both from the dignity he retains and from our lack of knowledge of the causes of his ailment and the consequences of intervention. Expert opinion cannot impose confinement or treatment on him. Liberty is a moral and political or legal category, not a medical one. Hence, a person has a right not to be restrained without a public judgment of the justice of the restraint; that is, in emergencies, by a law officer acting within the limits of his office, and otherwise by a court with rights of appeal. Conversely, the public in estimating its safety does have the right to make a reasonable estimate of the need for confinement and the probable effects of terminating confinement.

Finally, while a patient can in no way surrender his right to decide not to be given psychiatric treatment, he cannot be said to have an absolute right to such treatment. This follows both from the lack of adequate knowledge of what a suitable treatment would be and from the fact that the treatment is a public act which also has costs and consequences. In that case, it is the public's responsibility to determine its own priorities.

Now, what follows from our premises about the rights and duties of mental health professionals? First, they are not magicians. They can neither form an autonomous organization of men and women with professedly arcane secrets nor can they be drafted as magicians in the court of the king, to do his dirty work, so to speak. They may serve as expert witnesses in a very limited sphere or as friends of the court, but they can neither be expected nor allowed to make unilateral decisions about confinement or treatment. A commitment to retain a respect for the patient as a human person, to do nothing to him without consent which is as intelligent as possible, and to claim no professional authority for a treatment which is not known to be beneficial: these I think are implicit in one's undertaking to use one's knowledge and skill for the welfare of another.

Professionals are obligated to a continual search which is capable of public communicability, open to public scrutiny, and communicable to students in a justifiable educative process for verifiable new knowledge. Most importantly, the judgment as to what constitutes beneficial as opposed to maleficent treatment is not a technical-scientific judgment. What constitutes psychological or mental and spiritual well-functioning and well-being depends on the deepest moral, philosophical, and religious considerations. Mental health professionals must be sensitively aware of this aspect of every clinical and experimental judgment that is made and must realize their responsibility to their clients and society—indeed, to mankind—in such judgments.

Conversely, such professionals must be protected from the demand for a perfection which does not exist. Every application even of verified knowledge requires judgment. Physicians as human beings are as subject to the effects of stress, pressure, and fatigue as anyone else. What can be required is that they accept, nay, seek, reliable controls on their decision processes and have their actions as open to qualified review as any others who perform public or economic services.

**Part of our job of living in the world is to struggle with evil actively and to open ourselves to the consequences. To increase the welfare of the needy is more than a matter of private charity. It is a public duty, for the need is due in part to social conditions.**

Finally, in dealing with guilt, anxiety, or any other condition which may involve the values and commitments of the patient, when professionals give advice or recommend courses of action for which their science does not provide justification, they must make clear acknowledgement of their own values, ideals, and religious or normative commitments; they must explain to the patient that at that point they have no more expertise or insight than any other disinterested individual who has the patient's welfare at heart.

To turn now to the responsibilities of the community, our premises would tell us that its first responsibility is to be a community, hence, a group which is tied together by the internal bond of common, humane values and norms. To be such a community requires continuous reflection on our values and actions and continuous recapturing of the meaning of human life. The premise that we should affirm the world entails that the community wrestle with its evils at the human level and try to do something about them, not escape by hiding from them and forgetting them nor by dismissing them to someone else's responsibility. One cannot quite call it a legal duty to be such a community, because there is no way of translating it fully into laws. Perhaps you have to say that it is an unrealizable ideal. Nevertheless, the ideal is the basis and goal of a fully civil and humane society.

More specifically, the community must, of course, determine its economic and political priorities and regulate the professions, but it would be a poor society indeed that spent all its resources on luxuries and died spiritually from a lack of heart and moral will. Not only that, but to help increase the welfare of those in need is not just a matter of private charity. It is a public duty, for the need itself is created at least in part by social conditions.
Valparaiso University Art Collections

Richard H. W. Brauer

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Art illuminates, enhances, expands the experience of living. But first the experience of art itself must be made accessible. For that, opportunities to encounter art must be provided. During 1979, over fifty works of art were added to the Valparaiso University Art Collections. Photographs of a few of these recent acquisitions are reproduced here and on the cover of this issue.


Left: Paul Caponigro, Stonehenge, 1970, black and white photograph, 14” x 11”. Valparaiso University Art Collections purchase, 1979. Paul Caponigro was born in 1932 at Boston, studied with Minor White, and now lives in Santa Fe. His work often presents mystic interpretations of nature.


Visual Arts Editor of the Cresset and Design Consultant to Stained Glass, Richard H. W. Brauer is Associate Professor of Art at Valparaiso University and Director of the University Art Galleries and Collections.
**Concordia's Not-So-Contemporary Look at the Formula Of Concord**

**Review Essay**

David G. Truemper

A Contemporary Look At The Formula of Concord


The four hundredth anniversary of the promulgation of the Formula of Concord of 1577 has sparked a good deal of interest in the document, reflected in several conferences and in a number of publications. Many of these publications have borne the Concordia imprint, and as is to be expected from a denominational publishing house whose editorial process includes doctrinal censorship, they tend mainly to reflect that theological stance currently in vogue in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The present volume is no exception. Most of the authors are members of the faculty of the Missouri Synod's Fort Wayne seminary; two are members of the faculty at other synodical schools. Two "outsiders" are Henry P. Hamann of Luther Theological Seminary, Adelaide, South Australia, and Bjarne Teigen, President Emeritus of Bethany College, Mankato, Minnesota. With a few notable exceptions, the theological posture of the authors is a reflection of the present vogue in the Missouri Synod.

A Contemporary Look at the Formula of Concord begins with an extended essay on the historical background of the Formula and a very brief statement on the contemporary relevance of the Formula. These are followed by essays discussing each of the Formula's twelve articles, including a thirteenth on the "Rule and Norm of Doctrine" with which the Formula begins.

The title, however, is misleading, since the book generally fails to address the Formula from the vantage point of the contemporary situation of the church. In almost every essay, the authors strive to restate the argument of the formulators of the Formula of Concord, but they usually fail to show how the Formula's teaching on controverted issues is to be helpful for the work and witness and worship of the contemporary church. The essays are only rarely "contemporary" in any other sense than that they happen to have been written by theologians who are alive and working in the twentieth century. In fact, the "look" of most of the authors is not at all a contemporary look, but a look from the vantage point of the seventeenth century's so-called "orthodox" theologians.

Generally, the essays in this volume give evidence of an essentially ahistorical view both of the confessional writings and of the situation of the contemporary church. Definitions and formulations from the various articles of the Formula are cited and asserted as if they could be made to apply directly to the present time, as if they were not already historically-conditioned in their original setting, and as if there were not four centuries of history between the original setting and that of the present-day church. It seems strange, then, that the editors should have sought to produce a volume of essays that could claim to be a contemporary look at the Formula of Concord, for they have given us a volume of essays that are for the most part neither contemporary in their "look" nor historical in their method and awareness. These interpretative essays simply judge and expound the Formula according to the standard of contemporary LC-MS ideology, as we shall see in the article-by-article analysis which follows.

The editors state their aims in a significant foreword. While encouraging gratitude for the Formula's endurance through four centuries, and while observing that such gratitude "should not contribute to divisiveness or to separation from the rest of Christendom, the editors' vision of a gratefully united church is at best chauvinistic: "The Formula intended to unite, and it could well become the basis for unity with all Christians, since it is simply an exposition of Biblical truths" (p. 10).

The lesson to be learned from the history of the preparation and promulgation of the Formula "proves..."
The Church’s doctrine is reduced to a museum piece—carefully dusted off and lovingly displayed—but nowhere shown to engage the contemporary world. What good is mere correctness if it does not address the human situation?

that faithful reliance on the Scriptures ultimately brings the blessing of religious concord” (p. 10). Therefore it should follow that “a faithful study of the Holy Scriptures will lead to harmony and understanding, though not necessarily to external unity of all church organizations” (p. 10). That would be conceivable only if one were to distinguish between concord or harmony on the one hand, and unity on the other—a distinction severely criticized in this volume by Kurt Marquart in his essay on Article X of the Formula. In any case, editors Preus and Rosin insist that the Formula “is seriously being considered as useful for a genuine ecumenical endeavor” (p. 9), while at the same time presenting it in such a way as to underscore the particular emphasis of some in the Missouri Synod:

The Formula is evidence that the principle of sola scriptura, which leads to an understanding and acceptance of sola fide as well as sola gratia was the binding factor which held Protestantism together. Scriptural authority—“Here I stand”—was the essential principle (p. 9).

It is surely a distortion of confession-al theology to assert that trust in the Scriptures is what produces saving faith. Yet that is apparently the opinion of a substantial group of Missouri’s theologians. In addition to their twisting of the sola scriptura maxim, the editors also suggest that the scriptures do not need sensitive and sophisticated interpretation. Proper recognition of the Bible’s authority means loyalty to the Bible “as it speaks to the reader” and without “the interpretation of the 20th-century mind” (p. 10). Further, they say that only on the basis of such a view of biblical authority is any measure of concord—or unity—to be achieved; and they insist that that is the position of the Formula of Concord!

But perhaps we are expecting too much. There are some indications of the rather tendentious views of that volume which have been handed to generations of seminarians, views which saw the story as the progressive victory of the good guys (the Gnesio-Lutherans, led by Flacius and Gallus) over the bad guys (the Philippists, led by Melanchthon), Kolb tells a much more complicated and carefully-nuanced story of a move toward concord led by people who were neither Gnesio-Lutherans nor Philippists, yet were joined by moderate members of both those groups.

As Kolb relates the story, the movement toward concord was not simply a theological one, but one which had (and needed) the active support of political leaders and which required careful political negotiations at almost every step of the way. Further, one sees that neither of the two warring factions held a monolithic party line on each debated point. Rather, each faction’s members ranged over a continuum of opinion, so that moderate members of both groups were able to support the concord moves of Andreae and the Swabians, and by 1577 all but the extremes of the two parties were able to sign their names to the finished document.

Similarly, Kolb shows that the Formula was not simply a victory for the Gnesio-Lutheran position over the “pussy-footing” and Crypto-Calvinism of the Melanchthonian views. To be sure, the Formula

affirmed the views of the main body of Gnesio-Lutherans regarding issues involving free will, good works, the Lord’s Supper, and adiaphora, while condemning extreme Flacianists and a Gnesio-Lutheran like Musculus on the one hand and rejecting Philippist positions across the board on the other. Some Philippist concerns were met, but by and large the condemnations of the Formula are directed against Philippist positions, not against those of most members of the Gnesio-Lutheran movement, even if its statements were tailored to take account of the positive viewpoints of the Philippist party (pp. 86-87).
Teachers of the Church should be expected to function more responsibly than does this apology for Confessionalism. One will not halt the erosion of Christian faith by trying to extricate Christian theologians from the web of history and culture.

This more complicated and more careful assessment marks a considerable advance over the “good guys vs. bad guys” view that has dominated much Missouri Synod teaching on the Formula at least since the publication of the Triglotta in 1922.

In his footnotes Kolb offers a lesson in the historian’s art. Nine of twenty-three pages of footnotes are Kolb’s, providing clues to his sources, pointing to further reading in areas touched on, and including a wealth of manuscript materials and contemporary publications.

Kolb has, of course, developed this thesis over a period of several years and in several earlier publications; this essay is clearly dependent on his earlier work, yet it manages to tell the story within a relatively brief compass, so that it can be a valuable resource for students in colleges and seminaries. The essay deserves to be reprinted in pamphlet form so that it would be readily available for such use.

Contemporary?

Wilbert H. Rosin, formerly president of Concordia College, Milwaukee, and now dean of the faculty at the Fort Wayne seminary, spends six pages in “Looking at the Formula Today.” His essay is a brief for the idea of a confessional church “that draws its statements of belief together in a formal document and seriously subscribes to them” (p. 88). In a sketch of some post-Enlightenment trends whose effect he sees to be the erosion of the Bible as an infallible guide, Rosin argues that proper use of the confessional writings will “halt the present-day erosion of Biblical doctrines” (p. 92). Such proper use calls for “relying on the Reformation principle of sola Scriptura, the Bible as the only source and norm of faith and life” (p. 92).

In calling the Bible “source and norm of faith and life” Rosin is not writing carefully, and may be merely sloganizing. Does he really mean that the Bible is the only source of faith and life? What has happened to Jesus’ claim to be “the Life”? And what about the sacraments as signs of God’s gracious will, and thus as the gospel by which the Spirit creates faith? Perhaps a closer look at the Augsburg Confession (Article V) or at the Smalcald Articles (Part Three, Article IV) would help the author to a more responsible statement. In fact, Rosin’s slogan is flatly contradictory to the very document his book is urging us to take seriously. The Formula of Concord does not call the Bible the source but rather “the only true norm according to which all teachers and teachings are to be judged and evaluated” (SD Rule and Norm, 3). Though the change from “only rule and norm” to “only source and norm” has become common in LC-MS circles at least since the publication of A Brief Statement in 1956, it has had disastrous consequences for understanding what the confessions teach about the Word of God.

Rosin implies that the whole theological enterprise is somehow above history, detached from the historical process. He criticizes “many” twentieth-century theologians for their “non-traditional” statements (a curious standard for one who is arguing for sola Scriptura and against the authority of such other factors as tradition!). After naming Bultman, Barth, the Niehrs, Tillich, Teilhard, Rahner, and Metz as culprits, Rosin observes:

These and others believed that Christian doctrine is largely achieved through interaction with the cultural milieu and develops through time. The effect has been to cut away at the very foundations of the faith. The polarity between this type of humanistic theology and revealed [sic] theology is evident today (p. 92).

Rosin thus confuses doctrine and theology and implies that the doctrine/theology of the Church is revealed, dropped full-blown from heaven. In his view the Scriptures would have to be read as a book of doctrines or as a kind of textbook of theology, and not (as the Book of Concord insists) as God’s word of law and gospel addressed to sinners.

Rosin can claim that he is only euniciating the synod’s traditional position. And that’s probably correct; one could find advocates of Rosin’s ahistorical view of Scripture and of doctrine in much of Missouri’s history. But that view has been accompanied also by the more responsible view of the confessional writers, who recognized that the ecumenical creeds were created at particular times and to refute particular heresies, that they were “achieved through interaction with the cultural milieu and develop [ed] through time.” If we recall, for example, how the debates over christology raged in the fourth century and how the non-biblical word homoousios was used to describe the deity of Christ, we can see that the intellectual and cultural climate indeed interacted with the formulation of Christian doctrine! And that has been true throughout the history of the church.

Teachers of the Church should be expected to function more responsibly than does Rosin in this apology for confessionalism. One will not halt the erosion of Christian faith by trying to extricate the work of Christian theologians from the web of history and culture.

Rule and Norm

Harry Huth contributes the essay “Rule and Norm of Doctrine in the Formula of Concord,” in which he combines a careful attention to the details of the text of the Formula with a rather vigorous insistence upon reading the Formula in the light of subsequent theological distinctions from the age of Baroque neoscholasticism. He argues that the
The gospel does not need the independent and a priori authority of an "inerrant scripture." It is surely a distortion of confessional theology to assert that trust in the scriptures is what produces a saving faith.

Formula regards the Scriptures as the Word of God and therefore as the authoritative norm for doctrine and that the Formula itself is likewise a norm according to which doctrine is to be judged. In the process, Huth marshals some impressive data as he seeks to answer the question, "What does the term 'Word of God' mean in the contexts of the Formula that deal with the rule and norm of doctrine?" After a meticulous survey of the entire Formula of Concord, Huth concludes that the phrase "Word of God" means "gospel" on more than eighty occasions, that is means "Bible" more than fifty times, that it refers to the sacramental words of institution on at least twelve occasions, that it means the law on eight occasions, and that, in addition, it occasionally refers either to Christ or to the Catechisms, to sermons, or to revelations to the Old Testament patriarchs.

There is surely no need to challenge those data. It is true that by 1577 "Scripture" and "Word of God" were more or less interchangeable terms also outside the Lutheran camp. Therefore it is highly significant that the authors of the Formula so successfully preserved the decisive Lutheran insight that the Scriptures lay claim to being the Word of God precisely because they bear witness to Christ by proclaiming the gospel. According to Huth's statistics, the equation of Word of God and Scripture outweighs the equation of Word of God and Scripture by a ratio of approximately 8 to 5! That is surely indicative of the center of gravity in the Reformation insight, namely, that the Scriptures are authoritative for the sake of Christ and the gospel.

Huth's essay contains another noteworthy feature. On the basis of a quotation from John Gerhard, Huth suggests that the Formula is to be understood according to the seventeenth century dogmatic distinction between the causative and the normative authority of Scripture. And he regularly inserts such favorite words of the later dogmaticians as "inerrant" and "infallible" as if they were also a major part of the Formula's arsenal of adjectives regarding the Bible. But they are not. Huth can cite only the Preface to the Book of Concord for the use of the word "infallible," and in both instances there it is used not to modify "Bible," but "Word of God" and "truth of the Word of God," respectively. Now, it is no crime to use subsequent distinctions and terminology to describe a document's sense; but it is less than helpful to imply that those subsequent distinctions and terms bear the same connotations for a 1577 document as they bear in the writings of theologians two (or ten) generations later. It seems to this reviewer that Huth's procedure, like Rosin's, detaches theology from the human, historical situation and teaches the church to treat the Scriptures as a source of timeless truth instead of as the original and apostolic witness to the gospel, which stands or falls with the crucified and risen Jesus and does not need independent and a priori authority as "inerrant Scripture."

Finally, since the Formula's section on "Rule and Norm" makes some remarkable statements about authority in and for the church, it would have been helpful for A Contemporary Look at the Formula of Concord if Huth had addressed the genuinely contemporary crisis of authority in the church by means of a broader discussion of the Formula's view of authority. Instead of speaking only about the Scriptures, the Formula envisions a kind of multi-level set of authorities: (1) the "prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments," (2) the "three general Creeds," (3) the Augsburg Confession as a summary of the "truth of [God's] Word" which was "brought to light . . . through the faithful ministry of . . . Luther," (4) the Apology, the Smalald Articles (and the Treatise), and the two Catechisms of Luther. These documents are then called "a witness to the truth." Scripture, the creeds, the Augsburg Confession, and then the other confessional writings, all share in authorizing what people need for their eternal salvation—and that is, as the Augsburg Confession makes clear, not a theory about the Bible but the gospel of Jesus crucified and risen. Read in its historical context, the Formula may be seen to be interested in that truth, and not in theories about biblical inerrancy which were developed in subsequent times.

I

Richard Klann's essay on "Original Sin" (Article I) is an exposition of the understanding of original sin in the writings of Luther and of the Book of Concord generally; only in the last third of the essay does the author rehearse the background and content of Article I of the Formula. He rightly recognizes that the confessional view does not address the question of the origin or source of sin, but rather its effects. The summary is then simple: "No one but God can rescue fallen man" (p. 121), and there is no clearer way to accentuate our need for the good news about Jesus Christ. Still, one must observe that the essay in no way takes up any of the distinctively contemporary problems to which the Formula's teaching on original sin might conceivably be addressed. As a result, the doctrine is reduced to the status of a museum piece, carefully dusted and lovingly displayed—but not shown to engage our contemporary situation.

II

Eugene F. Klug surveys Article II of the Formula on "Free Will,
needs of the believing Christian heart” (p. 161). Imagine! It is possible to expose the limitations of the tradition!

IV

David P. Scaer had the assignment of expounding Article IV for contemporaries: “Good Works.” One cannot criticize the accuracy of his presentation. He has caught the nuances of the controversy, sensed what was at issue, and presented the Formula’s settlement of this “tempest in a teapot” clearly and accurately. Most refreshingly, he takes issue with the authors of the Formula. They had written,

After all, these controversies are not, as some may think, mere misunderstandings or contentions about words, with one party talking past the other, so that the strife reflects a mere semantic problem of little or no consequence. On the contrary, these controversies deal with weighty and important matters, and they are of such a nature that the opinions of the erring party cannot be tolerated in the church of God, much less be excused and defended (SD. Introduction. 9).

Yet Scaer can blithely counter, “Some controversies are more imaginary than real. The controversy over good works and their necessity was this kind of controversy” (p. 169). Many will be heartened to discover that it is in fact possible to criticize the received tradition, so long as one does so in relatively “insignificant” areas like the role of good works in relation to justification (which just happens to be the central issue addressed by the Reformation). More substantively, Scaer gives us a piece of implicit, but extremely relevant, counsel: “The controversy among the warring Lutherans might have been averted if each party had tried to determine with more care and precision what was really involved in the other’s position” (p. 170). Members of the Missouri Synod will understand the consequences of failure to take that advice.

V

Re-enter Henry Hamann for an essay on Article V: “Law and Gospel.” Re-enter the bursts of fresh air. “At the present time,” he writes — never mind for the moment how the sentence continues; here is a theologian who knows that there is a present time! He knows also what theology is all about: “We see here how the central Reformation concerns, the merit of Christ and the comfort of anxious consciences, again show their influence” (p. 172). Most encouragingly, Hamann argues that distinguishing law and gospel does not mean dividing the biblical statements into two piles labeled respectively “law” and “gospel.” Rather, he asserts, “It is what is being actually, practically, existentially done with them that determines the difference” (p. 182). What a forward leap that is over the silly arguing of those who keep wondering whether to put statements such as “Nimrod was a mighty hunter” into the law-pile or the gospel-pile!

Even more significantly, Hamann risks the normally forbidden Sachkritik: in two cases, he observes, “one may wonder whether the article on Law and Gospel has found the best theological statement” (p. 183). In one of these he says, “in describing a function of the Gospel the Formula uses terminology usually reserved for the Law” (p. 185). One can only rejoice that Hamann, a New Testament scholar by training, can risk the charge that a confessional writing has used misleading and inaccurate language. Hamann’s concern is for essentials: “any confusion of Law and Gospel means a loss of the Gospel” (p. 186, emphasis his).

Confusion here would easily darken the merits and benefits of Christ, once more make the Gospel a teaching of the Law . . . and thus rob Christians of the true comfort which they have in the Gospel against the terrors of the Law (FC SD V, 27) (p. 186).

If Hamann is the exemplar, perhaps Lutheran seminaries should assign courses in the Confessions to New Testament scholars.

VI

Eugene Klug argues the case for “The Third Use of the Law” in Ar-
Distinguishing law and gospel does not mean dividing the bible into two piles respectively labeled "law" and gospel. Contemporary Lutherans can clean up their language by no longer using the label "law" for the Torah.

ticle VI. He sees the article as an attack on antinomianism of the sort that taught man's freedom from the law also in the matter of "godly, righteous living." According to Klug, Article VI is fully in accord not only with Luther but also with the earlier confessional writings, most notably articles VI and XX of the Augsburg Confession. The "contemporary" flavor is given in a section which attacks the views of Elert, Althaus, and Ebeling as contrary to that of the Formula.

It seems that nothing in Lutheran theology generates more heat and less light than debates about the so-called third use of the law. This is so (in this reviewer's judgment) because the issue has not yet been clearly stated—not even by the Formula of Concord. Compromise document that it is, the Formula holds in tension on the one hand the assertion that there is no human encounter with the law of God that does not accuse and expose sin, and on the other hand the assertion that there are no good works which are not in accord with the Ten Commandments, so that the commandments give instruction to Christians about the performance of good works. Both the Formula and expositor Klug seem to have missed two crucial points.

First, the theological label "law" is unfortunately used to refer not only to that which demands performance and simultaneously exposes non-performance, but also to the Torah, the instruction on how God's people were to live before him, in which instruction the pious Israelite could indeed "delight," as the Psalms repeatedly sing. It would seem that contemporary Lutherans could help the Formula toward clarity by cleaning up their terminology and no longer using the label "law" for the Torah of the Old Testament and the paraenesis (i.e., exhortation to holy living, as in Ephesians 4-6 or Romans 12-15) of the New Testament. For a righteousness of the law is an attempt to get to God by works; Torah/paraenesis is the "way" to live before God as his people. Clarity is not served by using the term "law" (or the so-called third use of the law) for the latter.

Secondly, neither Klug nor the formulators of Article VI seem to have remembered what was already clear in the catechisms of Luther, namely, that the Ten Commandments are fulfilled not by works, but by faith. It is curious, then, that Klug should make so much out of the distinction and relation between faith and works, yet write as if what the decalog demands is simply mere performance. Perhaps the work of Klug's bogey-men (Elert, Althaus, and Ebeling) has helped to expose the Formula's inadequacy on this point. And the fourth article of the Apology should already have helped us, as it addressed the question of how to urge Christians to good works without losing the promise.

VII

Article VII, "The Holy Supper," is expounded by Lowell C. Green, now on the faculty of Concord College, River Forest. What is most refreshing about Green's work is its awareness of the "new knowledge and corrected information regarding the Lord's Supper in the Confessional Age" which scholars (Green among them) have brought to light since the 1950s. Green's work (like that of Kolb) is distinctive in its awareness, appreciation, and use of this wealth of material, some of which is listed by Green in a special bibliography at the end of his essay.

Significantly, Green shows that Article VII mediates, not between Gnesio-Lutherans and Philippists, but between the sacramentology of Luther and that of Melanchthon. Contrary to the traditional view, Green holds that Melanchthon was not guilty of a "Crypto-Calvinist" view of the sacrament. In an intriguing table (p. 211) Green sketches the respective positions of Luther and Melanchthon, along with the compromises of the Formula. And he wryly observes that Melanchthon's view has subsequently been thought to be Luther's, and Luther's has in fact been forgotten by many theologians and teachers.

There follows a straightforward exposition of the crucial elements of the Formula's sacramental theology, focused in the three characteristic affirmations of Lutherans: (1) the sacramental union, i.e., that Christ's body and blood are really present together with the blessed bread and wine; (2) the manducatio orali, or oral eating, i.e., that communicants receive Christ's body and blood by their eating and drinking of the blessed bread and cup; and (3) the manducatio indignorum, or eating by the unworthy, i.e., that also unbelieving, unworthy communicants receive Christ's body and blood, albeit to their judgment. On that basis Green ventures some contemporary liturgical criticism, opposing in particular the idea of a "fourfold action" in the eucharistic liturgy.

Against the idea of an offering of the elements and a eucharistic prayer, he observes, "The offering and the eucharistic prayer turn acts of God into human actions; this is a confounding of Law and Gospel" (p. 224). Further, he argues that to refer to the consecrated elements as "bread" and "wine" reflects an indifference to the sacramental union of bread with body, wine with blood. Green's criticisms are sometimes voiced also by other American Lutherans unhappy with certain features of liturgical renewal in our day. But the criticisms are really unfounded; the Formula does not hesitate to break both of those rules in sections 79-87 of Article VII. And
the Apology clearly states about the sacrament, “There is also a sacrifice, since one action can have several purposes” (Ap XXIV, 74).

VIII

Bjarne W. Teigen, President Emeritus of Bethany College, Mankato, Minnesota, writes the exposition of Article VIII, “The Person of Christ.” His work is a competent, straightforward, and reasonably useful tour through the Formula’s christology, regularly showing its connections with the preceding article on the Lord’s Supper. Though there is some tendency to read later dogmatic terms back into the Formula, this does not skew the presentation or render it historically inaccurate. To Teigen’s credit, he stresses also that a proper christology is no mere museum piece but is necessary for the sake of our salvation. What this reviewer misses, however, is a sensitivity to the tension running through the christology of the Formula and of Luther before it. While the traditional two-natures christology which was developed in the early Church is affirmed and sometimes simply assumed as a matter-of-course, there are seeds in Luther’s theology (and some of these are quoted by the formulators of Article VIII) of another christology, one which so unites God and man in Christ that “apart from this man there is no God.” Quoting from Luther’s Great Confession, the Formula continues:

if you can say, “Here is God,” then you must also say, “Christ the man is present, too,” and if you could show me one place where God is and not the man, then the person is already divided and I could at once say truthfully, “Here is God who is not man and has never become man.” But no God like that for me. . . . No, comrade, wherever you put God down for me, you must also put the humanity down for me (sec. 82-84).

Once one realizes that Luther is speaking of “God” and not just of “deity” or “god-ness,” one sees that Lutheran christology has within it the seeds of a development beyond the definitions of the fourth and fifth centuries. Sadly, these seeds have been left unplanted. Perhaps the ferment in contemporary christology will give some Lutheran theologians occasion to plant them so that we may see how they grow.

IX

C. George Fry contributes an essay on “Christ’s Descent into Hell,” as touched on in Article IX. Fry’s essay is distinguished by the lack of even a single footnote, by its evident failure to have taken any of the primary sources into account, and by its failure to have reckoned with a 1974 dissertation on the subject (referred to by Robert Kolb in note 52). As a result Fry can offer only a misleading rehash of outdated and just plain erroneous judgments about the situation addressed by Article IX. To compound the problem, he refers repeatedly to “the Lutherans” as being in “agreement” on this or that facet of the understanding of Christ’s descensus, yet not once does he suggest who those “Lutherans” were, and not once does he cite any of their writings. He asserts that sixteenth-century Lutherans held views which were in fact developed only in the seventeenth century under the pressure of polemical necessity. He completely misrepresents Luther’s descensus-theology. He gives no evidence of any real understanding of the controversy in Hamburg involving John Aepinus. And his summary of the Formula’s teaching on the descensus is a marvel of invention.

To straighten out this mixture of confusion and error, it must be observed that Luther nowhere taught the triumphal descensus of the Baroque dogmaticians, but instead taught a view of the descensus fully in accord with his theology of the cross: Christ is Lord over death and hell because he has undergone their torments. And Luther explicitly denies that the descensus was a real movement from one place to another: “if you want to speak exactly, he never went there; he remained on the cross, in the grave, or in heaven” (WA XXXVI, 161). Further, Luther taught that the descensus was Christ’s experience of death in body and soul, thus a descensus “to the dead,” to the “grave of the soul”: “in body and in soul he is placed beyond the limits of this life, and the soul goes to its place as if to its grave” (WA XXX/1, 517). Luther approved the traditional images of the harrowing of hell, not because they portray what actually happened, but because they offer comfort to sinners: Christ went all the way to the grave and the place of the dead, so that when we must go that way we shall not experience any ordeal or visit any place that is not under Christ’s Lordship.

Most of what Fry asserts as the Lutheran “consensus” about the descensus was developed in the polemical situation of the seventeenth century and has little to do with Luther, or the Formula of Concord, or any sixteenth-century Lutheranism’s published views—except, in some ways, the views of Melanchthon. It is surely ironic that some LC-MS theologians have argued for an understanding (and a corresponding translation) of the descensus article which developed long after Luther’s death, and that they have so argued as if thereby to be preserving a genuinely Lutheran view. What they have defended is a mixture of the medieval view (against which Luther reacted) and that of Melanchthon; in the process, the view Luther actually held has been condemned as “Reformed” and “un-Lutheran.”

X

Kurt Marquart expounds Article X, under the title “Confession and Ceremonies.” With characteristic bite, Marquart sets the issue clearly and observes accurately that this article has implications not only for church customs and ceremonies but also for ecclesiology itself. Marquart sees FC X as a commentary on AC VII in two crucial points: (1) unity in the church is not a two-stage affair according to which there is first a kind of invisible unity of faith and then secondly a visible and outward or organizational harmony or agreement, and (2) such unity exists
Luther so united God and man in Christ that “apart from this man there is no God.” Lutheran christology could well be developed beyond the definitions of the fourth and fifth centuries. Doctrine does not fall full-blown from heaven.

when there is agreement “in the doctrine and all its articles,” in the entire “God-given Gospel-doctrine” in all its “full-orbed splendor and integrity” (p. 269).

One must be cheered that a Missouri Synod theologian can publicly criticize a piece of the tradition, in this case the distinction between the visible and the invisible church. And in the wake of the recent “Formula for Concord” essays and meetings throughout the synod, it is refreshing to see a Missourian in good standing with the present regime call into question that regime’s oft-used distinction between “unity” and “concord.” It is especially helpful to see that done so evidently on the basis of the gospel. But it is all the more distressing, then, to see Marquart push the “truth of the gospel” in the direction of a quantified (and maximum) idea of “the doctrine and all its articles.” His argument, briefly, is this: proper church unity, including agreement in such externals as organization and ceremony, is possible only when there is “prior agreement in doctrine” (the appeal is to SD X 16), and such agreement in doctrine must be thorough, including every “larger or smaller area or aspect of the one Christian truth” (p. 269). In support of this view, Marquart surveys the use of the word “article” in the earlier confessional writings, in particular the preface to the Augsburg Confession and the section on the Creed in the Loci Communes. If he is right, then Missouri’s insistence upon full, or at least very substantial, doctrinal agreement as a precondition for church fellowship would be shown to have the support of the Book of Concord.

But is that in fact the case? Does FC X require such a conclusion? I think not, though the grounds are rather a little complex. Consider the following:

(1) In AC VII, the ground for unity is “that the Gospel be preached eintraechtiglich,” i.e., harmoniously, agreeably, with unanimity; the Latin reads, “to consent concerning the doctrine of the Gospel.” Here, “de doctrina evangelii” means the activity of teaching or preaching the Gospel, since it is paired with de administratione sacramentorum (concerning the administering of the sacraments), and since it is parallel to the German gepredigt (preached). Thus the primary referent for doctrina is the actually preached gospel, not theoretical formulations of “doctrine(s).”

(2) The equation of “doctrine” and “gospel” is common in FC X, being found in sections 2, 5, 10, 14. The natural reading of “doctrine” in section 31 would be the same, i.e., the preached gospel.

(3) That the primary and natural meaning of “doctrine” is the preached gospel is supported also by the usage of the term in Andreae’s Six Sermons, a preliminary stage in the development of the Formula, and in Melancthon’s Loci Communes, a theological textbook in which almost all the reformation preachers and theologians had been trained.

(4) Marquart’s appeal to SD V 1, 23, 24 as support for his view of the meaning of “article” is in fact an appeal to the Latin translation; the German original speaks of “zwo Lehren,” “zwo Predigten,” “beide Lehr” (two teachings, two sermons, both doctrines).

(5) When the Augsburg Confession speaks of “articles” it is not, as Professor Marquart suggests, speaking of doctrinal formulations, but of the parts of the confession. The Preface concludes, “This is our confession and that of our associates, and it is specifically stated, article by article, in what follows.” The confessors can hardly have meant to confess every “larger or smaller area or aspect of the one Christian truth,” since there is nothing in the Augsburg Confession on the papacy, on indulgences, on transubstantiation, or on purgatory—in spite of the importance of those topics at the time! Nor does the Formula of Concord address these topics (with the exception of transubstantiation) in any substantial way. It seems unfair, then, to suppose that FC SD X, 31 suddenly establishes as a criterion for church unity prior and total agreement on all points or parts of Christian doctrine, especially on parts which came to be controverted only in subsequent centuries—such as the ordination of women, or the use of historical-critical methods of biblical study (to cite but two areas presently hotly contested among Lutherans).

The point of the confessional writings, also in the case of AC VII and FC S, is not to establish a list of articles (such as those in AC I-XXI) on which agreement is to be required, but to call for a stance, a determination that whatever matters be touched on, they be touched on in a way that keeps clear the gospel about forgiveness “by grace, for Christ’s sake, through faith” (AC IV). Our confession must be evangelical—whatever points it comes to address. The gospel is the only substantive criterion, after all! Marquart comes close to that when he speaks of the “whole organism of Christian doctrine,” but he persists in nuancing that notion in a quantified way when he calls for understanding “Gospel-doctrine as consisting of individual ‘articles’” (p. 269).

(6) SD X 31 is made to stand on its head when it is used to state maximalist conditions for church unity; the argument actually moves in such a way as to assume evangelical agreement. Churches
will not condemn each other because of a difference in ceremonies, "so long as they are one with each other in the doctrine and all its articles (i.e., the preached gospel) as well as in the right use of the holy sacraments" (my translation). The article addresses churches which are "one with each other" in their preaching of the gospel and use of the sacraments; such churches will not condemn one another over externals like ceremonies, institutional forms, or theological formulations. Like the Augsburg Confession, the Formula operates with a gospel-and-sacraments-in-action criterion, not a more-or-fewer doctrines criterion for church unity.

(7) Who are the "churches" meant in SD X 31? If they are the various territorial churches in the Lutheran camp, then this statement assumes their full fellowship—whether Gnesio-Lutheran, Philippist, or Swabian. If they are the Lutherans on the one hand and the Romans on the other hand (as is clearly the case in AC VII), then this statement would, along with AC VII, assume the unity of Lutheran and Roman communions and would enjoin them to refrain from mutual condemnation. In either case, commonly preached gospel-and-sacraments constitutes a prima facie case for the unity of the church. The Lutherans were ready, after all, to submit to the Roman bishops if only they would tolerate the Lutheran preaching of the Gospel; thus the Lutherans were clearly ready to tolerate the Roman preaching of the Gospel! Woe, then, to those who refuse to recognize unity because of the presence or absence of ceremonies and theological formulations.

(8) If modern Missourians nevertheless insist on prior and complete theological agreement, they put themselves into a genuine bind. If there must be agreement in all the larger and smaller areas or aspects of doctrine, then there can be agreement in none. Suppose that X and Y share a common theology of justification, but differ on the descensus; then X and Y would not, according to current LC-MS logic, be in fellowship. They would not have a consensus about doctrine “and all its articles.” And they would have to dispute each other’s claim to be the church at all. No, preached gospel and done sacraments constitute a prima facie case for church unity, a unity which may not be broken or denied by divergences in matters external.

Marquart’s plea for the “organic, holistic understanding of Gospel-doctrine” (p. 269) is well-taken; it is unfortunate that what he gives with the one hand he takes away with the other by lapsing into a quantified understanding of the ground for unity.

XI

Editor Robert Preus, President of the Fort Wayne seminary, writes on Article XI, “Predestination and Election.” Preus presents the evangelical teaching on this topic with clarity and directness, reflecting in the process his own broad acquaintance with the Baroque theologians, as well as his readiness to criticize them when polemical concerns forced them into awkward or less than adequate formulations (see note 4, p. 313). One would only hope that the essay had gone beyond mere exposition and had mined the resources of this article of the Formula for the contemporary life of the church.

XII

C. George Fry returns as the author of “Other Factions and Sects,” discussing Article XII. Fry sketches briefly some facets of the “radical Reformation” and then summarizes the Formula’s various condemnations. Those condemnations are, for the most part, gratuitous; they were included to show that the authors of the Formula “have no part or share in their [the “sectarians”] errors” (SD XII, 8). Fry asserts that these condemnations are significant in that they anticipate “the struggles to be fought against modern rationalism and neopaganism in the subsequent centuries” (p. 290). But he does not succeed in showing what that significance is or how the Formula can be a resource in dealing with whatever modern movements he refers to under the labels “rationalism” and “neopaganism.”

A bibliography is appended, which includes many kinds of works, some of which are only tangentially related to the Formula of Concord. Strangely absent are some important items, such as Gritsch and Jenson’s Lutheranism and the special number of the Sixteenth Century Journal which includes the essays from a 1977 conference of LCUSA theologians on the Formula of Concord. Readers interested in additional resources should consult the bibliography prepared by Robert Kolb which appears in Confession and Congregation, the volume of essays from a conference for parish leaders on the Formula of Concord held at Valparaiso University, 19-22 October 1977, published as Occasional Paper III of The Cresset.

There is little to praise in this volume. Apart from the essays by Kolb and Hamann there is little that is original or fresh, and what is not is often misleading. Since the book sells for only $9.95, while most books of comparable size are in the $15.00 price range, one can only assume that the publication of this volume has been subsidized to some degree. 'Tis a pity that those funds could not have been used to support scholarship that was in fact "contemporary" and which would better show the evangelical resources provided by the Formula for the life and work of the church in our time and place. But then, if this is after all a book for the having and not for the reading, most of this review essay has been exercise in futility, proceeding as it has to treat the volume as a serious piece of theological writing for the contemporary church.
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February, 1980
On Turning Sixty

John Strietelmeier

Lent, 1934. The boy sits with his family in the pew where his grandparents sat when St. Peter's Church was new. Through the barely open windows the first breezes of a southern Indiana Spring distract the boy's attention from the liturgy of the midweek evening service. Inside the half-dark church, the penitential words and music of "O Lamb of God Most Holy." Outside, but carried on the breeze into the church, another world, the world of which the boy has been reading in National Geographic Magazine. The boy is caught in a tug-of-war between love for this world which, for all its probable wickedness, is too lovely not to be loved, and a faith which tells him that he must not love the world or the things of the world.

The boy's world is a secure world. He is related to at least half of the members of this large congregation. His parochial school teacher taught his father. He has never known any other pastor than Pastor Brauer, now in the fullest vigor of a long ministry at St. Peter's. The mayor of the town is an old friend of the family. The county sheriff is one of the boy's innumerable second cousins. Two of the four elders who sit in the front pew for the ostensible purpose of keeping the sovereign congregation's collective eye on the pastor's orthodoxy bear the boy's surname; another is his maternal grandmother's cousin. One knows one's slot in such a setting. Another tug-of-war between a need to be deeply rooted and the call which it is death to refuse: "Come, follow Me."

The boy's future seems secure and predictable. In a few weeks, that day of wrath, the dreadful day, Examination Sunday, yielding its peaceful reward the following Sunday in confirmation and an Oxford-grey suit with long pants. Then high school. Then college. Then law school. Then (thirty years down the line) the judgeship of the Ninth Judicial Circuit of Indiana and a brick colonial house on North Washington Street. Perhaps even an eldership in the congregation. Somewhere along the line marriage, if a candidate can be found in the congregation who is not within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity. Mother has already compiled a short list of possible candidates. The frontrunner in the boy's book is not on Mother's list—and not, it would appear, in the congregation. (Teacher Koch is aware of the special relationship between the boy and the girl to whom he has never worked up the courage to speak. He arranges for them to get each other's papers to grade.) Those are lovely homes up on Washington Street. Still another tug-of-war between the need to succeed and the stern command: "Deny yourself."

Lent, 1980. The sixty-year-old man sits with his grandson in the handsome new Immanuel Church. Spring comes late to northern Indiana. The warmth of the church after the chill outside makes the man drowsy.

The tug-of-war never ends. There is much to be said for being fully and merely human. Then one could at least accept the defeat that awaits all things human with dignity and with grace. In fact, his own mortality might well be the least of his concerns. For one does not live six decades without coming to suspect that he may not, after all, be the center of the universe. There are people and things whose survival is much more important than the survival of one's life-worn self.

Susan Ertz once observed that "millions long for immortality who do not know what to do with themselves on a rainy Sunday afternoon." Here in this church, the man would be most content to say, "Thank you, Sir, but don't put Yourself out any more for me"—and be on his way. Dylan Thomas was very young when he advised us all not to go gentle into that good night. A sixty-year-old pagan might be more inclined to accept Swinburne's counsel to "thank with brief thanksgiving / Whatever gods may be / That no life lives forever; / That dead men rise up never; / That even the weirdest river / Winds somewhere safe to sea."

Alas, the man is not a pagan. The very mention of the word "river" arouses memories of hearing about "a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." All of the experiences of his life have conspired to teach him that security is an illusion, that life is unpredictable and undirectable. But beyond experience and often contradicting experience is the Word. No one of the dreams of his boyhood worked out quite as he had expected; most did not work out at all. But only because a boy's eye can not see, nor his ear hear the things that God has prepared for those who love him.

What does it all add up to? Hard to say. Anyway, young Andy wants to sing. Come on, boy, I'll teach you some good words:

Thou on my head in early youth did smile,
And though rebellious and perverse meanwhile,
Thou hast not left me, oft as I left Thee.
On to the close, O Lord, abide with me.

The Cresset