

JOURNAL OF LUTHERAN Mission

March 2014 | Vol. 1 | No. 1

Table of Contents

MISSIO DEI BY SCOTT R. MURRAY	6
EVANGELICALISM: THE HEARTBEAT OF AMERICAN PROTESTANTISM AND THE AWKWARD COMPANION OF AMERICAN LUTHERANISM BY WALTER SUNDBERG	8
RESPONSE TO WALTER SUNDBERG BY LAWRENCE R. RAST, JR.	16
ECCLESIOLOGY, MISSION AND PARTNER RELATIONS: WHAT IT MEANS THAT LUTHERAN MISSION PLANTS LUTHERAN CHURCHES BY ALBERT B. COLLVER	20
THE FUTURE OF MISSION IN THE LCMS: COLLABORATION BY JACK PREUS	28
TEACHING THE FAITH ONCE DELIVERED BY CHARLES P. ARAND	32
CHALLENGES TO TEACHING THE FAITH AS A COMPONENT OF MISSION STRATEGY BY TERRY CRIPE	40
WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MISSOURI? BY RANDALL L. GOLTER	44
LCMS MISSION: A PARADIGM OF ITS OWN BY KLAUS DETLEV SCHULZ	46
RESPONSE TO DETLEV SCHULTZ'S "LCMS MISSION — A PARADIGM OF ITS OWN" BY WILLIAM W. SCHUMACHER.....	56
A THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT FOR MISSION IN THE 21ST CENTURY BY MATTHEW C. HARRISON	60
BOOK REVIEW: "YOU HAVE THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE:" TRANSFORMATIVE READINGS OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN FROM A LUTHERAN PERSPECTIVE	70
BOOK REVIEW: INTO ALL THE WORLD: THE STORY OF LUTHERAN FOREIGN MISSIONS	78

© 2014 The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
Reproduction of a single article or column for parish
use only does not require permission of *The Journal
of Lutheran Mission*. Such reproductions, however,
should credit *The Journal of Lutheran Mission* as the
source. Cover images are not reproducible without
permission. Also, photos and images credited to
sources outside the LCMS are not to be copied.

Editorial office:
1333 S. Kirkwood Road,
St. Louis, MO 63122-7294,
314-996-1202

Published by The Lutheran Church—
Missouri Synod.

Please direct queries to
journaloflutheranmission@lcms.org.

This journal may also be found at www.lcms.org/journaloflutheranmission.



TEACHING THE FAITH ONCE DELIVERED

by Charles P. Arand

How do Luther's Small and Large Catechisms assist us in carrying out a theology of missions when it comes to dealing with those outside the faith? In this article, the Rev. Dr. Charles P. Arand explains that they provide a framework for thinking about missions along with plenty of theological food-for-thought regarding our assumptions for witness.

WE TEND TO ASSOCIATE the catechisms with teaching the faith to our children.¹ That observation alone suggests that we may connect the catechism more with education than with missions. Perhaps, however, we shouldn't be so quick to do so. After all, in Baptism children are snatched out of the jaws of Satan and transferred to the kingdom of Christ. They go from being a captive of Satan to becoming a child of God. Luther's baptismal booklet makes that abundantly clear.² So does the way in which Luther translates Matthew 28 in the Small Catechism: "Go and make disciples of the all heiden" (pagans/heathen),³ namely, those who stand outside the people of God. And how does one do this? Baptizing and teaching. Thus catechesis certainly does have a mission dimension to it.

Catechesis becomes all the more important with the confession that the Church is gathered by the Word rather than being based on institutional structures and ritual piety.⁴ In other words, the Church endures as it hands down the treasures of the faith from one generation to the next generation. And one wants to hand down to our children, the next generation, nothing but the life-giving Gospel of Christ. The confessors of the Book of

Concord were keenly aware of that when they repeatedly said that they did not wish to bequeath their descendants any other teaching than that which was set forth in these confessional documents.⁵ This role for the catechisms alone does much to establish the importance of the catechism for gathering people into the Church and keeping them there.

But it need not stop there. We may also ask, what might the catechisms offer for a theology of missions when it comes to dealing with those outside the faith? Now, I am not going to suggest that the catechisms somehow provide a full-fledged manual on how to do missions. But I will argue that they do provide a framework for thinking about missions along with plenty of theological food-for-thought regarding our assumptions for witness.

The Church endures as it hands down the treasures of the faith from one generation to the next generation.

The Historical Setting of Luther's Catechisms

Before we look at its theological content, we need to consider briefly the historical settings of Luther's day and ours. After all, nearly five centuries

separate us. Our respective contexts are very different in many ways even as our tasks are the same.

The 16th-Century Context

When the visitations of the late 1520s were conducted in the environs around Wittenberg, they uncovered a dismal situation. Many people were largely Christian in name only as is evident from the prefaces of Luther's catechisms. Pagan influences and superstitions abounded. And this remained the case to some extent in the rural countryside around Wittenberg 50 years after the Reformation had

¹ See Robert Kolb's *Teaching God's Children God's Teaching* (Hutchinson: Crown Publishing, 1992; Saint Louis: Concordia Seminary Press, 2012).

² References in this paper will be to eds. Robert Kolb and Timothy Wengert's *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2000). See, for example, the introduction to his baptismal booklet on pgs. 371-375.

³ Kolb, Wengert, 359, footnote 78.

⁴ See Robert Kolb, "The Sheep and the Voice of the Shepherd. The Ecclesiology of the Lutheran Confessions," *Concordia Journal* 36, 4 (2010): 324-341.

⁵ Kolb, Wengert, "Conclusion to Part One of the Augsburg Confession," 58.

come, as uncovered by the Visitations of 1572 (e.g., the use of superstitious/homeopathic magic/zaubern).⁶

In addition, we must keep in mind that upward of 90 percent to 95 percent of the people in society were illiterate. Thus Luther wrote his catechisms for a culture of orality, to be heard more than to be read. His goal was to equip parents to teach their children — as the subtitle of each chief part indicates. However, perhaps in something of a reality check, Luther also addresses the catechisms to pastors⁷ in recognition that most parents were either unable or unwilling to carry out that task (hence the important role of catechetical sermons in the sixteenth century).⁸

The 21st-Century Context

We live today in a culture whose institutions and values have been shaped in large measure by Christian ideals.⁹ We also have high rates of literacy compared to the sixteenth century. In addition, Bibles are abundantly available in multiple copies and translations and can be found in many (if not most) homes. Average Christians have access to biblical and theological resources unlike any other period in human history. And in the United States, Christianity has shown a certain vitality of religion unmatched in Europe.¹⁰

Yet we see the influence of those Christian forces diminishing today. Biblical literacy and religious literacy continues to decline.¹¹ Fewer people have grown up within the Church and gone to Sunday school or Christian day schools. As a result, fewer even know the biblical origin of certain common cultural references (e.g., “doubting Thomas”). And yet, we are not dealing with a society (at

And yet, we are not dealing with a society (at least in America) that has never heard of Jesus. But their knowledge of Jesus is often distorted.

least in America) that has never heard of Jesus. But their knowledge of Jesus is often distorted. Their focus is far more on the person and personality of Jesus than the two natures in one person or the office and work of Jesus.¹²

The Big Picture of the Catechism

In spite of our historical distance from the sixteenth century, our goals today should remain the same as they were for Luther. He did not write the catechism as a kind of information dump, theological dictionary or course in systematic theology.¹³ To the contrary, Luther wrote the catechism in order to form Christians for, as he says, the catechism “contains everything what every Christian should know” (Luther’s Large Catechism, Shorter Preface, 2; Kolb-Wengert, 383). We might say that he saw it as a handbook of the Christian life. To make that point, Luther added the word *enchriridion* (handbook) to the title page of the catechism in the 1531 edition. We might even think of it as something of a “survival guide” for the Christian life.

As a handbook, Luther grounds students in the Christian life by rooting them in the heritage of the church. He utilizes the components that he had inherited, namely, the commandments, creed, Lord’s Prayer and the Sacraments. We have come to refer to them as the chief parts of

the Christian life. The Catechism of the Catholic Church refers to them as the “pillars of catechesis.”¹⁴ And then like prior catechisms, Luther inserts a few other elements that he deemed important for his day: prayers, Bible passages and the like.

Luther then uses these various elements to set forth the contours of the entire Christian life. The first three chief parts provide the Christian with a view of life in the

⁶ See Charles P. Arand, “‘And Use Satanic Arts’? Another Look at Luther’s Explanation of the Second Commandment,” *Concordia Journal* (July 1998): 219-224.

⁷ Kolb, Wengert, “Handbook, The Small Catechism [of Dr. Martin Luther] for Ordinary Pastors and Preachers,” 347.

⁸ See Mary Jane Haemig’s dissertation, “The Living Voice of the Catechism: German Lutheran Catechetical Preaching 1530-1580” (ThD diss., Harvard University, 1996).

⁹ See Alvin J. Schmidt, *How Christianity Changed the World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004)

¹⁰ See Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University, 1989).

¹¹ See Stephen R. Prothero, *Religious Illiteracy: What Every American Needs to Know and Doesn’t* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2008).

¹² See Stephen Prothero, *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003); Richard Fox, *Jesus in America: Personal Savior Cultural Hero, National Obsession* (San Francisco: Harper, 2004); and Stephen J. Nichols, *Jesus Made in America: A Cultural History from the Puritans to the Passion of the Christ* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2008).

¹³ First, there are many topics that Luther does not cover in the catechisms. There is no treatment, for example, of the attributes of God or of the three-fold office of Christ or of His humiliation and exaltation. He suggests that these can be dealt with in later sermons (Second Article).

¹⁴ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 2000).

world. It provides Christians with something of a story: God's grand story. The next three chief parts (Baptism, confession/absolution, Lord's Supper, baptismal booklet, brief form of confession and the marriage booklet) orient us to live our life within the Church. Finally, the last section (daily prayers and table of responsibilities) orients us to the everyday life of a Christian within creation.

So, what kind of Christian does he hope to form? Luther aims to orient one's entire life around faith. This is a vitally important point. Even though neither the Small Catechism nor the Large Catechism utilizes the language of justification, the emphasis of the entire Reformation comes through loud and clear in the way that each of the chief parts centers on the theme of faith. We might characterize its overarching theme as the "art of living by faith." It's an art in that it is not learned all at once nor is it something that one can apply to specific situations in a purely mechanistic manner.

Consider how the theme of faith shapes the Christian worldview in the first section of the catechism. The First Commandment and the "Close of the Commandments" enclose the other nine commandments with the words, "we should fear, love and trust in God." The First Commandment¹⁵ is then woven through each individual commandment. Each article of the Creed opens with the words, "I believe." They conclude with the words, "This is most certainly true." Although Luther does not provide a definition of faith in the Small Catechism, one learns the "pro me" of faith by learning the grammar of faith. So notice how Luther teaches one to talk "faith talk." I believe that God made me, provides me, gives me, protects me, redeems me, purchases me that I may be His own, calls me, enlightens me, etc. Each petition of the Lord's Prayer is a prayer for faith over and against Satan's attacks and assaults upon our faith. This is especially apparent in nearly every petition of the Large Catechism. But even in the Small Catechism, note how

we repeatedly acknowledge that this petition is indeed carried out by God "without our prayer" but we pray that it may occur within our own lives as well.

From this view of life in the world offered in the first three chief parts, we move into the life of the Church that we might describe as the "nourishment of faith." Here faith is born and strengthened by means of the Word that is carried to us in the sacraments from Baptism to

confession to the Lord's Supper. Perhaps the best example of the theme of faith here is found in the fourth question of the Lord's Supper regarding those who are worthy and well-prepared, namely, "those who believe the words, given for you and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins."

The final section of the catechism deals with daily prayers and vocation. We might characterize this as the "exercise of faith." In light of justification, Luther helps the Christian to embrace life on earth as service to God. The rhythms of daily life provide the context and

For Luther the struggle for faith does not begin prior to faith; it commences once the Spirit has ignited the "spark of faith" within us. The moment we pray, we turn our backs on Satan, which is tantamount to a declaration of war. And so the life of the Christian is a life of struggle and a constant battle against those forces that would undermine and snuff out our faith.

opportunity for our daily prayers. You have to get up in the morning? "Pray." You have to eat? "Pray." You got to bed at night? "Pray." And note how the theme of faith emerges again. For example, what advice does Luther give in the evening prayer? "Lay your head down on your pillow and go to sleep." In other words, don't lay there tossing, turning and worrying about tomorrow. You just prayed, "into your hands I commend myself, my body and soul and all things."

So pulling all of this together, we might characterize the various sections of the catechism as dealing with aspects of a life of faith, namely: the "need for faith" (the Ten Commandments) since as creatures we cannot live without faith; the "gift of faith" (Creed) as it recounts all of the gifts of God from creation to the resurrection thus engendering and strengthening faith; the "battle cry of faith"¹⁶ as prayer puts us on the front lines of the war with Satan; the "nourishment of faith" (sacraments within the

¹⁵ Where the Small Catechism weaves "fear and love" through the Ten Commandments, the Large Catechism focuses more on "fear and trust."

¹⁶ See "The Lord's Prayer in Luther's Catechisms: The Battle Cry of Faith," *Concordia Journal* 21(January 1995): 42-65.

church), and the “exercise of faith” (our prayer lives and vocations within the world).

A Few Catechetical Assumptions/Guidance for a Theology of Missions

In this section, I’m going to highlight a few catechetical insights that might provide us with some working assumptions for thinking about mission and witness in the twenty-first century.

The Theological Structure of the Catechism

Let’s begin with the structure of the first three chief parts. There has been a fair amount of debate about the ordering of the catechism over the years, namely, whether or not to begin with the Ten Commandments or the Creed.¹⁷ Below are two things we can discern.

First, the catechism gives us a Law/Gospel structure for the Christian life. Obviously, one of the most distinctive features of Luther’s catechisms lies in the way in which Luther began the catechism with the Ten Commandments. He is the first within the Christian tradition to do this intentionally and deliberately. The traditional ordering since Augustine was Creed, Prayer and Lord’s Prayer, which was meant to correlate with Paul’s “faith, hope and love.” Luther adjusted the ordering for the sake of writing a manual that could be used in helping people prepare for confession/absolution in 1520. Thus the commandments diagnoses our condition, the Creed provides the “medicine” and the Lord’s Prayer describes how to take that medicine. By the late 1520s, the pattern remains the same, but Ten Commandments take on a bit more of a pedagogical emphasis as Luther writes the catechism for the instruction of the young.

Second, the distinction between the Law and Gospel pattern of the catechism must in turn be considered within a larger creedal framework or, better yet, within the larger creedal narrative of the catechism. Consider the following:

Luther for the most part interprets the Ten Commandments in light of the theology of the First Article of the Creed. After all, the Law presupposes the goodness of God’s gifts and provides the instructions for the proper use of those gifts according to God’s purposes. In addition, the Ten Commandments deal largely with the

First Article gifts of God. Thus it is not without accident that where the Small Catechism concludes with the words, “for which it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey,” the Large Catechism attaches the words, “as he has enjoined in the Ten Commandments”(LC II, 19; Kolb-Wengert, 433). Thus we have God’s gifts (First Article) and the proper use of them (Ten Commandments). Misusing these gifts through idolatry results in their terrifying accusations as they come crashing down upon us. This brings us to the doorstep of the Second Article.¹⁸

The Second Article provides the center or fulcrum of the catechism, or at least its first three chief parts, holding it together in unity. It picks up where the First Article leaves off, but presupposes that something has gone awry between those two articles for now we find ourselves captive to Satan and thus “lost and condemned.” (The First Article of the Large Catechism fills in some of the blanks by noting that we don’t like to acknowledge these gifts as coming from God and so “swagger about and boast and brag” as if have these gifts of ourselves).¹⁹ And so, the Second Article opens the way for our rescue and deliverance to Christ’s kingdom along with life under the lordship of Christ. And so how does Christ bring us under his rule having defeated “sin, death and the devil”? By sending the Holy Spirit, (Augsburg Confession, Article 3, 405; Kolb-Wengert, 38-39) who in turn brings us under the rule of Christ. This then becomes the focus of the Third Article of the Creed.

Luther then expounds the Lord’s Prayer in light of the Third Article. The connection is not hard to see. To borrow from the Apostle Paul in Gal. 4:6, the Holy Spirit goes into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” And so we move from the Third Article to the Lord’s Prayer. In addition, for Luther the struggle for faith does not begin prior to faith; it commences once the Spirit has ignited the “spark of faith” within us (Formula of Concord, Article 2, 54; Kolb-Wengert, 554). The moment we pray, we turn our backs on Satan, which is tantamount to a declaration of war.²⁰ And so the life of the Christian is a life of struggle and a constant battle against those forces that would undermine and snuff out our faith.

¹⁸ And so Luther notes, “Therefore, if we believe it, this article should humble and terrify all of us.” Preceding that, he notes that this is because we misuse the gifts of God and fail to “thank him or acknowledge him as Lord or Creator” (Kolb, Wengert, 433).

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ C.S. Lewis’ *The Screwtape Letters* (New York: Macmillan, 1943) picks this theme up as well.

¹⁷ See chapter four of Charles Arand, *That I May Be His Own: An Overview of Luther’s Catechisms* (Saint Louis: Concordia Academic Press, 2000) for a more complete discussion, which is summarized here. See also Albrecht Peter’s five-volume commentary on Luther’s catechisms (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House).

“I Am a Creature!” First Commandment — First Article Assumptions

Now let’s consider a couple implications that arise for us out of Luther’s interpretation of the first commandment in light of the First Article of the Creed. First, what question is Luther asking here? Note that he is not asking whether or not there is a God. He assumes that there is one. Nor is he asking the question, “What is a god?” He assumes that people see that a god is that to which you look for all good things (LC I, 2). Nor is he asking the question, “Should you have a god?” He assumes that you already have one. Why? Because as creatures, we must look somewhere for life. No, the question is solely, “Which god is yours?”²¹ That will determine whether one has true faith or false faith (LC I, 2-3).

Think for a moment about Luther’s starting point. He works with an anthropology that assumes that we are creatures. Consider how he opens his explanation to the First Article in the Large Catechism. He asks, “What does it mean to confess that God is the creator?” He answers remarkably (and perhaps surprisingly),²² that it means I am a creature, “I am God’s creature” (LC II, 13; Kolb-Wengert, 432). Now, by definition, creatures do not have life of themselves. They are not self-sufficient and self-sustaining. They must seek life from outside of themselves. Luther makes this abundantly clear in his explanation to the First Article of the Creed. As human creatures, we need to look somewhere for what Kolb frequently refers to as “identity, security and meaning.”

By beginning with the assumption that we are creatures, Luther works with a recognition that everyone is already a part of God’s story by virtue of being His creatures and living in His creation! God is the creator; we are His creatures. That is who we are and what we are. It defines our core identity. In fact, we are His creatures

Luther aims to orient one’s entire life around faith.

²¹ As an aside, I always thought that Luther’s starting point made more theological sense than those two questions that arose out of James Kennedy’s *Evangelism Explosion* several decades ago. Do you remember those? “If you were to die tonight, do you know without a doubt that you would go to heaven?” And second: “If God were to ask you why should I let you into my heaven, what would you say?” Now, those questions presuppose that (1) that someone believes in heaven and (2) that they want to go there. Now, I’ve been told that those are still fairly reasonable assumptions, especially if one lives in certain regions of the Bible Belt.

²² In that Luther does not proceed to a discussion of God’s nature or attributes.

before we are His children.²³ We are human creatures who have now been adopted as children of God in Christ. And because people are creatures they cannot live without a god. The only question left is, “Where do you look for such things?”

By interpreting the commandments in light of the First Article, Luther shows that the Law’s accusations do not come out of the clear blue. The Law is already at work within the world.²⁴ In other words, as we encounter the Ten Commandments and experience them as “the crushing force of God’s design for human life when they are not taken seriously” (Kolb), or we experience them as the “weight of life” (to borrow a phrase used by Barry Lopez in a different context). And because I am “God’s creature,” I am accountable to the Creator.

So what might we take away from this? We begin by listening to people’s stories, their hopes and their problems. We listen to hear on what they may be centering their lives and where they look for security and meaning. And we listen to the ways in which the Law is bearing down upon them, the ways in which God’s design for life has come crashing down upon them due to their idolatry. At that point, we can lead them to see that these idols cannot bear the weight of their faith; they will not hold up when the going gets tough. They will not rescue the person out of their predicament.

“Jesus Has Become My Lord!” Second Article Assumptions

Interestingly, Luther never uses the “;” word, namely, the language of justification, in order to express the Gospel. Perhaps it is because as he is addressing peasants who would have little conception of how courtrooms work or be familiar with legal language or its metaphors. Instead Luther uses the feudal language of lordship, something that the average person would understand well as they lived with it every day. And with it, Luther utilizes the language of victory of the powers that enslaved us, (sin, death and the devil) into which he incorporates the vicarious satisfaction (with Christ’s holy precious blood and innocent suffering and death).

²³ In conversation with James Nestingen, he pointed out that the Gospel restores us to our creatureliness. “To be glad and content to be a creature [versus wanting to be more than a creature]—that is redemption.”

²⁴ See Gustav Wingren, *Creation and Law*, trans. Ross Mackenzie (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1961)..

The catechisms thus give us a narrative that portrays how God created us and how we lived in paradise. But then the devil led us into captivity. We no longer had a lord or king. Instead we lived only under tyrants and jailers.²⁵ The Small Catechism then picks up the story with the scene of a battlefield. On one side of the battlefield, lined up from horizon to horizon are Satan and his minions. We are captives behind enemy lines. Then Christ appears on the battlefield (like David battling Goliath). By virtue of His vicarious suffering and death and by virtue of His resurrection, Christ defeats Satan (Luther's "marvelous duel" image), frees us from that captivity and carries us to His kingdom where we live in everlasting "righteousness, innocence and blessedness."

What might this suggest for the ways in which we articulate the Gospel in various contexts? As we listen to people, we identify those images or metaphors that allow us to bring the Gospel to bear upon their lives.²⁶

Life in the Church: Third Article — Lord's Prayer Assumptions

A couple of important insights for missions emerge in Luther's treatment of the Third Article of the Creed.

First, it provides an orientation to the focus of the Spirit's work and how He carries it out within individual Christians. The catechism makes the point that the Holy Spirit's work is to direct us to Christ or bring us to Christ. In other words, the entire focus of the Spirit's work is Christ. He sanctifies us by bringing us to the Lord Christ to receive His benefits (LC III, 39; Kolb-Wengert, 436). This establishes a very close link between the Second and Third Articles, virtually treating them as aspects of one event (i.e. being brought under the lordship of Christ). And then over and against the semi-Pelagianism of Gabriel Biel's nominalism, it makes the point that

we cannot come to faith by our own efforts. As such, this article helps us to address concerns raised by both Pentecostal theology and Evangelical decision theology respectively.

In the second half of his explanation, Luther moves toward the Church as the context and setting of the Spirit's work. Note how the article starts out with the individual Christian confessing, "The Holy Spirit calls me by the Gospel." Luther then connects that Spirit's work in the individual with the Spirit's work in the Church. And so the article continues, "even as" (*gleichwie*) the Spirit does so for the entire Church. The "*gleichwie*" here parallels its usage in the Second Article where it states

that we will live under Christ and in His kingdom "even as" (*gleichwie*) he is risen from the dead." One might suggest then that second statement depends upon the first. So the Spirit calls me by the Gospel "even as" the Spirit calls and gathers the entire Christian church on earth. Or as Luther puts it, the Church is the "mother that begets and bears every Christian" (LC III, 42; Kolb-Wengert, 436).

We do not promise that the life of the Christian within the Church is a life of ease or prosperity on this side of the second coming. It is a life under the cross. For Lutherans, the life

of struggle does not precede faith; instead it commences with birth of faith. In confessing that Jesus has become our Lord, we declare war on Satan. He now devotes all his energies toward undermining and destroying our faith. For Luther, prayer becomes our weapon in the "spiritual warfare" in which we now find ourselves embroiled. So for what do we pray?

Consider the Third Petition of the Lord's Prayer. We have to remember that, originally, the introduction and its explanation were not part of the Small Catechism. So the Third Petition summarizes the first two petitions, which deal with God's name and faith, respectively. In the First Petition, we ask that God's name be proclaimed and honored. This takes place through the Word. Name and Word belong together. In the Second Petition, we pray

When it comes to missions, we must take into account the entire life of the person coming to faith. We cannot be content with the moment of conversion (not that we have been), that is to say, with the igniting of the "spark of faith." Satan will do his best to extinguish that faith. And so we prepare and equip people with what they need for a lifetime of struggle.

²⁵ Luther provides a nice account of that narrative in the Large Catechism (Kolb, Wengert, 434).

²⁶ Here we might consult J. A. O. Preus' book, *Just Words: Understanding the Fullness of the Gospel* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000) and Robert Kolb's *Speaking the Gospel Today: A Theology for Evangelism* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1995).

that God’s name and Word create and strengthen faith that we may believe and live a life worthy of God’s name. Now the Third Petition prays that both of those petitions may be answered over and against all those that would resist the Word and undermine faith, that they instead support us in faith.

So what might we take away from this? Well, when it comes to missions, we must take into account the entire life of the person coming to faith. We cannot be content with the moment of conversion (not that we have been), that is to say, with the igniting of the “spark of faith” (FC II, 54). Satan will do his best to extinguish that faith. And so we prepare and equip people with what they need for a lifetime of struggle.²⁷ All of this occurs within the context of the Church (thus leading into the final section of the catechism ... but that is for another day).

Conclusion

The catechism doesn’t do everything. It was not intended as a comprehensive systematic theology for all times. It was, however, intended as a handbook for Christians, even what we might call a survival manual for the Christian life. As such, it gives us basics. But those basics provide us with starting points for thinking through the questions that we encounter in our own day. This is, in part, what gives us its timeless value.

The Rev. Dr. Charles P. Arand is the Waldemar A. and June Schuette Chair in Systematic Theology at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri.

²⁷ See Article Two of the Formula of Concord regarding the ups and downs of how we experience faith (Kolb, Wengert, 555, 557).