Volume 33

Die Lutherische Kirche
Geschichte und Gestalten

Lutheranism between Cultural Imprint and Reformation Heritage

Lutheranism has spread throughout the world in various ways. As a result, it has taken root in very different cultural contexts. But can there be one »Lutheran identity«? Or are there not rather »Lutheran identities« – depending on the respective imprint? And what connects them with one another? What is it like to live in a communion that enables numerous expressions of »Lutheran identity«, and where are the challenges of this togetherness?
As it strives for communion as a vibrant church community, the Lutheran World Federation is faced with these very questions. Reason enough to look for identity markers, for pillars of a common Lutheran identity which have relevance in history and the present within differing cultural contexts, and form a link between theology and history.

With contributions from Anne Burghardt, Klaus Fitschen, Nicole Grochowina, Claudia Jahnel, Susanne Lachenicht, Kenneth Mtata, Hilke Rebenstorf, Chad Rimmer, Gottfried Rösch, Oliver Schuegraf, Jerzy Sojka, Willhelm Wachholz, Jennifer Wasmuth and Christian Volkmar Witt.

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Lutheran Identity
Fitschen / Grochowina / Schuegraf (eds.)

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Die Lutherische Kirche – Geschichte und Gestalten – Volume 33

Edited by the Historische Kommission des Deutschen Nationalkomitees des Lutherischen Weltbundes

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Content

Lutheran Identity / Identities?

Perspectives from the Worldwide Communio

Foreword

Anne Burghardt

Nowadays, identity is a controversial expression. The more one tries to define a certain identity, the less watertight it becomes. However, this in itself is not hopeless, but revealing. It is not the purpose of identity to set boundaries or to create a distance, as some critics would claim. It is true that there are movements which, for ideological reasons, would define the "question of identity" primarily in terms of demarcation from others. In the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), on the other hand, we have focused on the question of how to understand the plurality or coexistence of various identities within a communion as an enriching gift.

The study process on what "Lutheran identity" is, or what it means "to be Lutheran", began in 2017 with the Twelfth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation in Windhoek, Namibia. What does it mean "to be Lutheran" within the great diversity of cultures and national contexts that make up our global communion of 149 member churches?

Throughout its history, the LWF has engaged in study processes to deepen our common understanding of the theological identity of member churches through which we recognise and support each other. These study processes have focused on various theological questions from the field of hermeneutics to ecclesiology, on public witness, worship, and common service to our fellow humans.

As Lutherans we are united in our common confession that we are saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Justified by faith alone, we are freed to serve. Or, as Luther writes, good works flow freely from faith. Liberated by grace, we are called to love and serve our neighbours. We believe that these basic Lutheran values of freedom, love and service to others can increasingly serve as a counter-witness to the increasing narratives of discrimination, exclusion, and injustice in society.

However, being Lutheran is not a static identity. The complexity of the definition of "identity" leaves room for dynamics, one might say confessional dynamics. In 1530, the Augsburg Confession was written as an ecumenical testimony. As a document, the Augsburg Confession sought to define the

still young reform movement, and thus made an ecumenical proposition to the church of its time. This confessional event defines Lutheran identity in all times and places.

Why do we speak of Lutheran identities in the plural? For the LWF, "to be Lutheran" means confessing the gospel in a way that on the one hand poses questions to conventional culture on the basis of the gospel, while on the other hand confessing the gospel within the respective context. Confessing means translating the gospel into a context with the aid of language and rituals, with word and sacrament. Confessing means being involved in these dynamics that show what the gospel has to say to people in every place. Naturally, such confessional dynamics come in many variations, thus displaying different identities.

Many questions, problems and possibilities related to the definition of identities are discussed in this book which you have before you. For the LWF, the study process on Lutheran identity (or identities) uncovers new forms of expression and finds creative ways to live grounded in our baptism, so that it is and will be a response to the challenges of our time. If we listen to the experiences of others, we can take a step back and recognise that diversity does not lead to confusion or hopelessness, but rather to a rich harmony of voices, to a great tapestry of humanity.

Introduction

What is Lutheran identity? Ever since the Reformation, this question has been raised – and it has always been a very complicated issue involving theology, self-understanding, the practice of piety, the relationship to the world and governmental power as well as to other denominations. But it is at the same time a matter of people's own direct relationship to God. In addition, it comes to be recognised in various different contexts: in Reformation times this first occurred in the Electorate of Saxony, and thus under Martin Luther's own ruler Frederick the Wise, and later under Elector John Frederick of Saxony. But in Hesse and other territories of the Holy Roman Empire of German Nation as well as in various (imperial) cities, the new doctrine was also able to become established and thus made the question of identity relevant. After the defeat in the Schmalkaldic War (1546/7), other players emerged, for example the city of Magdeburg with its claim to recognise and preserve Lutheran identity[1] – this question became fully present after Martin Luther's death in 1546. This marked, at the latest, the start of Protestant policy of remembrance,[2] which had to be active in two directions: reassurance internally, and clear demarcation outwardly, so that the events of the Reformation should not degenerate into a historical episode as they were passed down to the second and third generation.

During the critical transition after the death of Luther, the crucial figure of identification, those problems[3] came to the fore which had already been virulent in the debate on the formulation of a confession (1530). It was hardly possible to clarify what exactly constituted the "family of the Augsburg religion" (= "Augsburger Religionsverwandte"), even if its members called

1. Cf. Thomas Kaufmann: Das Ende der Reformation. Magdeburgs "Herrgotts Kanzlei" (1548-1551/2), Tübingen 2003; Anja Moritz: Interim und Apokalypse. Die religiösen Vereinheitlichungsversuche Karls V. im Spiegel der magdeburgischen Publizistik, 1548-1551/52, Tübingen 2009.
2. On policy of remembrance, cf. Thomas Fuchs: Protestantische Heiligen-memoria im 16. Jahrhundert, in: Historische Zeitschrift 267 (1998), 587-614. Cf. also for the wider context Astrid Erll: Kollektives Gedächtnis und Erinnerungskulturen. Eine Einführung, Stuttgart / Weimar 2005.
3. On the – in some cases polemical – opinions concerning Luther's death and their significance for the culture of remembrance beyond the 16th century, cf. Nicole Grochowina: Kaiser und Kaiserin? Bilder von Martin Luther und Katharina von Bora im 17. Jahrhundert, in: Carlotta Israel / Camilla Schneider (eds.): Bild, Geschlecht, Rezeption. Katharina von Bora und Martin Luther im Spiegel der Jahrhunderte, Leipzig 2021, 64-113, here: 76-81.

on the *Confessio Augustana* (CA); precisely because of these differences it was distributed in the versions "*variata*" and "*invariata*". There were discrepancies, not only in the *praxis pietatis*, but also concerning basic theological positions and the stance with respect to secular authorities. That is exactly why it was considered necessary to strive for a common – and definitely broad – confessional basis, in order to be clearly recognisable as a unified counterpart to the Catholic Church and the secular authorities.

However, the result of these uncertainties was not just the attempt to find a common confession, but also the increasing number of disputes that broke out repeatedly, especially from the 1540s onwards. Alongside all the theological discussions, it was the question of identity which always came up as an issue. Closely linked to the controversy surrounding the introduction of the "Interim" (1548) was the "Interim Controversy", which marked the "greatest crisis in German Protestantism"[4]. It concerned Lutheran doctrine in the shadow of the "Interim" and thus of the efforts to re-catholicise the Old Empire. The essential markers of identity in the emerging Lutheran Church were at stake: the doctrine of justification, the marriage of priests and the lay chalice. On the Lutheran side, meanwhile, there was a dispute about whether Catholic rites could be reintroduced without doing damage to Lutheran doctrine. Here there were different positions that wavered between realpolitik and the strict effort to assert one's own understanding of the supposedly pure doctrine. This meant that the question of identity was particularly strongly represented. Philipp Melanchthon and Matthias Flacius Illyricus were the protagonists in this dispute, which developed around the question of which matters were to be understood as adiaphora. In the end, hardly any common identity was to be found here; instead, it came to a split within Lutheranism, with two main groups which can be called "Gnesio-Lutherans" on the one hand and "Philippists" on the other.[5] Subsequent disputes – for example about the role of faith and the importance of "good works" – were also just as pronouncedly divisive as the "Interim Controversy". All in all, all the later disputes indicate that in the 16th century there was no general agreement on the character of Lutheran identity that was generally binding and thus also unifying.[6] From a theological and ecclesiastical point of view, it was more than necessary to come to an agreement here.

4. Bernhard Lohse: Dogma und Bekenntnis in der Reformation. Von Luther bis zum Konkordienbuch, in: id. / Wilhelm Neuser / Günter Gaßmann et. al.: Handbuch der Dogmen- und Theologiegeschichte. Vol. 2: Die Lehrentwicklung im Rahmen der Konfessionalität, 2nd revised and supplemented edition, Göttingen 1998, 1-167, here: 109.
5. Cf. ibid., 112.
6. On the majorist, antinomist, synergist and Osiandrian controversy cf. ibid., 113-129.

A key controversy, which also unfolded its power in the question of identity, is connected with the development of the Formula of Concord. The intention here was to overcome the divergences that had come to light and been sharply defined, and thus to come together again in unity. Only in this way could the nascent Lutheran Church survive amidst the political (and ecclesiastical) conflicts in which it found itself involved. The question of a common confession was also significant because it remained unclear who exactly subscribed to the *Confessio Augustana*. The reason why this question was important was that the "Peace of Augsburg" (1555) only gave legal recognition to the adherents of the "Augsburg Confession". Thus the question of confession became existential,[7] and was correspondingly fiercely negotiated. In the end (1577), a formula was reached that was subordinate to the CA and at the same time abandoned the more extreme positions on the side of the "Gnesio-Lutherans" and "Philippists".[8] Only in this way was it possible to reach a doctrinal agreement within a narrow political and theological framework that encompassed large parts of Lutheran theology. The essential point of reference here was Martin Luther. His views were widely consulted in order ultimately to resolve the disputes that had arisen.[9] He and his writings continued to be one of the elements – indeed, probably the essential one – when it came to establishing a Lutheran identity based on a common doctrinal orientation. However, this inevitably led to further disputes revolving around the appropriation of his doctrine and views. Against this background, the Formula of Concord is to be understood as an essential attempt to bring order into the question of identity. This is not just due to the fact that agreement was reached here, but it is also important since this was achieved in the third generation after the Reformation. In general, this generation played a decisive role in clarifying the question of identity in the medium term, because it could not claim original experience, but was called upon to appropriate the historical events anew – on the basis of solid source work – and to make them fruitful for its own time and the future. This involved profound and often difficult "work on identity", which was nonetheless decisive for the further course of the movement or indeed of the Church.[10] Having said that, the question of Lutheran identity had not been fully resolved. Depending on the context, there were further decisive turns; one example was the Pietist

7. Cf. ibid., 138.
8. Cf. ibid., 162.
9. Cf. Formula of Concord, in: Robert Kolb / Timothy J. Wengert (eds.): The Book of Concord. The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Minneapolis 2000, 486-660.
10. Cf. Michael Hochschild: Die Zukunft der geistlichen Bewegungen. Wie bleiben Bewegungen beweglich? Zürich 2016, 139-149. Here we also find the term "work on identity".

reform movement in the "Old Empire", which brought questions about the renewal of personal spiritual life, and thus of the innermost being, to the fore.

Another turning point, originating in the 17th century, was the confrontation with deistic and later rationalist attitudes, as the theology of the Enlightenment sought to find a solution in neology and thus in a specific connection between faith and reason.[11] This also had an impact on the question of identity, since now something emerged which was to become *opinio communis* in the 21st century at the latest: church membership was no longer a matter of course, and there was no longer adequate provision for the appropriate socialisation. In other words, it was becoming increasingly possible to find and accept several available offers for finding meaning in life and thus – in view of growing individualisation in society – to formulate and practise one's own personalised denominational identity. It may be assumed that this tendency was already in place in the early modern period and ultimately since the Reformation.[12] However, the further development of church, state and society encouraged this differentiation – at least in the European context. In the global context, the forcible expansion of European powers led to a different development which can also be observed in the development of the mission churches.[13] This emphasis on context indicates that the international perspective is indispensable in order to reach a proper understanding of Lutheran identity. Outside European contexts, the Lutheranism which the missionaries carried into other parts of the world underwent a transforma-

11. Cf. Gustav Adolf Benrath / Gottfried Horning / Wilhelm Dantine et al.: Handbuch der Dogmen- und Theologiegeschichte. Vol. 3: Die Lehrentwicklung im Rahmen der Ökumenizität, 2nd revised and supplemented edition, Göttingen 1998.

12. Cf. on the comprehensive approach of confessional ambiguity, which can already be dated to the early modern period: Andreas Pietsch / Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger (eds.): Konfessionelle Ambiguität. Uneindeutigkeit und Verstellung als religiöse Praxis in der Frühen Neuzeit, Heidelberg 2013. Cf. also Kaspar von Greyerz / Manfred Jakubowski-Tiessen / Thomas Kaufmann / Hartmut Lehmann (eds.): Interkonfessionalität, Transkonfessionalität, binnenkonfessionelle Pluralität. Neue Forschungen zur Konfessionalisierungsthese, Heidelberg 2003.

13. This addresses a large thematic field that has taken on a new direction with the "post-colonial turn". Cf. for example René Devisch / Francis Nyamnjoh (eds.): The Postcolonial Turn. Re-Imagining Anthropology and Africa, Leiden 2011; Ulrich von der Heyden / Jürgen Becher (eds.): Mission und Gewalt. Der Umgang christlicher Missionen mit Gewalt bei der Ausbreitung des Christentums in Afrika, Asien und Ozeanien in der Zeit von 1792 bis 1918/19, Berlin 2000; Andreas Nehring: Das "Ende der Missionsgeschichte" - Mission als kulturelles Paradigma zwischen klassischer Missionstheologie und postkolonialer Theoriebildung, in: Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift 27 (2010), 161-193; Judith Becker (ed.): European Missions in Contact Zones. Transformation through Interaction in a (Post-) Colonial World, Göttingen 2015

tion when it was to be brought together with the spiritual practices and the images of God which already existed there. These processes of transformation are of fundamental significance when taking a fresh look at the question of Lutheran identity in our time.

When the question of Lutheran identity arises, it makes sense to look at the roots in the Reformation period. At the same time, the question can never be answered if the global perspective is ignored, which takes serious consideration of regional contexts as well as the theology and the practice of piety developing there. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) also follows this path, for it has repeatedly gone into the question of Lutheran identity in order to encourage self-assurance and reflection on what unites and sustains this worldwide *communio* of Lutheran churches. Various studies bear witness to this.[14] At present, the question is being raised anew against the background of secularisation in Europe and the growing Lutheran churches in Africa, for example in Ethiopia and Tanzania. In addition, there are theological questions that arise from the respective, context-related *praxis pietatis* and concern, for example, the role of the gifts of the Spirit or of the Holy Spirit in general, and taking this background to put the question of the role of the contexts and traditions in which Lutheran identity unfolds.[15] This process includes a lively global exchange of views on traditions and perspectives, addressing common tasks such as the formation of faith and its practice.[16]

This book, which results from a conference of the Historical Commission of the German National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation, is part of this dialogue process investigating contemporary Lutheran identity. This interdisciplinary meeting took place in February 2022 in digital space and suited the current dialogue process of the LWF as it looked into the different markers of Lutheran identity.

It became clear in the lectures and discussions that the issue of present-day Lutheran identity cannot be solved without recourse to the foundations that lie in the past. Just as contexts shape the respective confessional identity, so too the precepts of the Annales school apply when looking at confession and identity, namely that everything that has evolved has a previous history[17] – and therefore this very history must always be considered when looking at the present. Therefore this study is divided into three parts. Firstly, the question

14. Cf. the contribution by Chad Rimmer in this book.
15. See in particular Chad Rimmer / Cheryl M. Peterson (eds.): We Believe in the Holy Spirit. Global Perspectives on Lutheran Identities, Leipzig 2021.
16. See the webinars in the LWF's "Being Lutheran" series.
17. Cf. Matthias Middell / Steffen Sammler (eds.): Alles Gewordene hat Geschichte. Die Schule der Annales in ihren Texten 1929-1992, Leipzig 1994.

of identity is raised and examined from different perspectives, starting with the sociologist Hilke Rebenstorf. She shows that the development of identity is ultimately an active process; the interactions that play a role are fundamentally not free of expectations but aim to shape identity as consciously as possible. In this connection she also refers to the role of the context, taking the processes of social modernisation as an example. It becomes clear that any form of identity also needs concise identity management.

The historian Susanne Lachenicht locates the question of identity in the early modern context. She is concerned with the dispute on denominational affiliation, which can be understood as an essential marker of identity – as long as it is defined. In the early modern period, however, the phenomenon of "confessional ambiguity" was widespread. Using three examples from regional contexts (Cologne, Berlin, New York) and from the entire field of the early modern period, she shows that and how such newer perspectives not only help to deconstruct the paradigm of denominalisation. It also becomes clear that processes of identity formation in the early modern period must be understood to take place on a number of different levels. This applies especially to the dynamic processes of argumentation about concepts of God, theological convictions, spiritual practices and thus ultimately also about Lutheran identity.

Thus the importance of context is made abundantly clear. This is precisely the perspective which the theologian Claudia Jahnel expands upon by looking at contextual theologies on their way to a collective theological practice. Here the identities are first of all assertions of identity. They are clearly created, negotiated and sometimes also rejected. "Contextual theology" takes this seriously and thus ensures that topoi of Lutheran theology (doctrine of justification, priesthood of all believers, etc.) are reflected with respect to their context. On a global level, this is also accompanied by the critical reflection of hegemonic power, since this is colonial. Ultimately, such an approach denies that theology is a supposedly timeless matter of course. Theology makes itself an object of research in its temporal conditionality.

This basic recognition opens one's eyes to take a closer look at claims of Lutheran identity, which is the topic of the second section of this book. It focuses specifically on Lutheran identity and how it has been shaped in the past and present. The theologian Jennifer Wasmuth discusses the claim that Lutheranism is a form of "Spirit-forgetfulness". All too often, the Holy Spirit takes second place over against the scriptural principle which sees the Bible as a corrective in spiritual life. Wasmuth goes beyond Rudolf Otto and his widely received work "The Idea of the Holy" (1917) and takes Christian Henning and Christian Danz into consideration with their more recent approaches to understanding the Holy Spirit in Lutheran diction; she concludes that the Spirit does indeed have a firm place within Lutheran theology. This is

not a concession to the renaissance of the Holy Spirit in the 21st century, but is derived appropriately from Lutheran pneumatology. Thus the Holy Spirit is to be taken into account when considering the question of identity, even if there are reservations in the practice of piety.

One theological token that is mostly understood as an essential marker of Lutheran identity is the "priesthood of all believers". In his address to the "Christian Nobility of the German Nation", Luther uses this expression pointedly in order to emphasise the authorities' obligation to work vehemently for the renewal of the church. In this context, the individual relationship to God and – correspondingly – the individual responsibility for the world are made clear. However – as shown by the historian Nicole Grochowina in her article – this extensive theological concept also has limitations which lead at least to the suspicion that the "priesthood of all believers" may well have been understood too optimistically as a marker of Lutheran identity. It is recognisable that the basic conception was already subject to adjustments of content, but also at the times when it was adopted in particular cases, for example by the Peasants' Revolt or the Anabaptist movement.

The theologian Klaus Fitschen introduces the context of the diaspora in order to ask about identity formation in the 19th century. For Lutheranism, the threat of becoming a minority, of remaining a minority or even of being completely annihilated as a church has certainly existed since the 16th century. These experiences came into play in the 19th century when Lutheranism was taken seriously in various minority situations and supported by diaspora organisations. In order to create and preserve identity, it is important to see that just this is largely the normal case, so that here one particular facet of the question of Lutheran identity is revealed. So here further processes of preserving identity were necessary, and they should be placed into comparison, especially in a global context.

The theologian Christian Witt concludes this second part of the book with reflections from the perspective of historical theology. They were made during a panel discussion, which explains the length and character of this article. Witt emphasises that there is no timeless and thus continuously recognisable Lutheran identity. Rather, one should speak of various constructions of Lutheran identity that can be assigned to specific time frames and whose effects can thus be assessed. The normative foundations of Lutheranism should also be placed in this scenario in order to recognise that their appropriation is also a dynamic process and by no means ahistorical, so that it is reasonable to speak of identity construction.

The third section demonstrates by examples from particular backgrounds how important the different contexts are. They can hardly be overestimated when it comes to the shaping of specific constructions of, or claims to,

Lutheran identity. On the level of theology or devotional practice, these are sometimes almost completely disconnected from expressions of identity in other contexts, and this forms a challenge to the worldwide communio of Lutheran churches. The theologian Chad Rimmer starts off this global overview by tracing the dynamics that unfolded in the LWF as it began to address the question of Lutheran identity. Rimmer names the normative dimension of this identity, but also points to the extensive process of transformation that begins when such norms are appropriated. Finally, he refers to the recent survey sent to all churches within the LWF concerning their respective expressions of Lutheran identity. This raises new questions that focus on the formation of regional and congregational identities and also on much needed ways to deal with diversity in forms of expression and in the handling of ethical issues and spiritual gifts.

Four reports serve as examples to deepen these questions and add further observations. The first article mostly concerns the African continent. The Zimbabwean theologian Kenneth Mtata shows that African theologians were already influential for the Reformation. He then uses examples from the history of the Lutheran World Federation to demonstrate African contributions to Lutheran identity. He throws light on the way intercultural, political, missionary and pneumatological issues have been handled and emphasises the need for a holistic perspective.

The theologian Wilhelm Wachholz points to the challenges facing Lutheranism in Brazil and thus in a multi-religious society. To be precise, it is confronted by the challenge of not "swallowing" the surrounding culture, says Wachholz, while at the same time making sure that it is not itself "swallowed" by it.

The theologian Gottfried Rösch names another challenge in his contribution on Germans from Russia in Bavaria. The question of who exactly falls into this category is just as virulent as the question of language, the preservation of their existing identity and the formation of a new identity in a completely new context. In so-called "third spaces", it is possible to combine what they find in their new surroundings with what they have brought with them, so that these spaces gain a special significance for the formation of identity.

And finally, the theologian Jerzy Sojka points to a particular challenge for Lutheranism in Poland, which – like the whole of Polish society – had to come to terms with the freedom it had won after 1989 and the transformations that went with it. Heritage, history and new possibilities were all present here, so that the process of creating identity and adapting to the rapidly transformed context wavered between them.

All these chapters emphasise the importance of context in place and time and of the different processes of appropriation and settlement of norms, which should hardly be underestimated. In all attempts to create binding

frameworks, the different findings offer good reason to speak of constructions, assertions and ultimately also of formations of identity which are limited in time and place. Thus, the LWF has set itself an ambitious but highly important task in the goal of holding on to a communio of churches in the face of such differences and scope for action, despite the fact that this communio has a strong potential to separate rapidly, especially on ethical issues, due to prevailing conditions in the respective region and the resulting differences. Nevertheless, these potentials for conflict are counterbalanced by the fundamental goodwill of the churches of the LWF and their willingness not only to remain in this communio, but also to grow together more strongly than ever. This basis is indispensable and at the same time useful for considering and negotiating current questions of Lutheran identity and thus arriving at binding statements that allow us to take our place in the contemporary age as churches and as a world communion.

The editors would like to thank all those who have contributed to this book. First and foremost, these are the authors who were prepared to re-address and accentuate the question of Lutheran identity at the conference in February 2022 and in this publication.

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Selbitz / Leipzig / Hanover in January 2023

Sr. Nicole Grochowina / Klaus Fitschen / Oliver Schuegraf

Identity?

What is Identity?

Answers from a social sciences perspective

Hilke Rebenstorf

The discourse around and about identity (identities) is more topical than it has been for a long time. Although the term "identity" is not necessarily mentioned in some of the current debates, it is often implicit. It is to be found in books on mindfulness and authenticity, which advise people to "be themselves", express themselves, take care of themselves. Identity plays a role in the debate about the feeling of *Heimat* ("belonging") that came up again a few years ago; *Heimat* is understood as a place where one is in good hands, a place to identify with and which has shaped one's identity.

While in these cases identity has a positive connotation as a factor that is recognised as important for people as well as for entire societies, in other respects it has fallen into disrepute. The Cultural Studies which emerged in England as an emancipation movement in the 1950s led to the Cultural Turn in the social sciences.[1] In its wake, there has been an increase in identity politics that go hand in hand with the demand for an environment free from discrimination. The best known protagonists are certainly the ethnic and religious minorities, queer people, women, "defenders" of the West. What some consider indispensable for an equal, democratic society is held by others to threaten and divide society, because in their view identity politics seem to heighten the boundaries between the familiar and the foreign, rather than lowering them. The example of identity politics, for which endless types can be found, makes it immediately clear that many of the thus formulated identities overlap; they are not singular, and indeed cannot be singular. What was already vividly formulated 40 years ago still applies:

1. Cf. Helga Schultz: Die kulturalistische Wende. Eine kritische Bilanz, lifis-online 2009 (Leibniz Institute), available at: https://www.leibniz-institut.de/archiv/schultz_19_11_09.pdf (viewed on 1.11.2022).

> "Identities are highly complex, tension-laden, contradictory symbolic entities – and only those who claim to have a simple, unambiguous, clear identity have an identity problem."[2]

> "In conclusion, the concept of self is a chimera [...]. Or perhaps it is constructed by social experience and maintained by social role requirements [...], or by the use of shared systems of meaning [...], or by social reinforcements [...]. Or the self is the cognitive structure which gives meaning and organisation to one's experience. Or the self is the person's own construction, the core of one's responsibility and one's moral being [...]."[3]

Corresponding to this complexity of the phenomenon under discussion, the answer to the question of what identity is can only be somewhat complex, especially since the social sciences literature on the subject is hugely extensive. In order not to go beyond the given, necessarily limited, framework and yet to provide some basic answers which do justice to the complexity, this article is divided into the following steps: the first short section deals with the question whether identity should be spoken of in the singular or in the plural (1.) This is followed by a chapter on identity development – in its stages (2.1), as a process (2.2) and through interaction (2.3); the chapter is based on basic findings of developmental psychology, socialisation research and symbolic interactionism. In the following chapter, the question of the single or multiple identities is taken up again, explaining their complexity. This makes it evident that identity is not only something entirely one's own, but is socially shaped and anchored (3.). This creates a two-fold challenge for the stability of identity (development). On the one hand, there is the "self" that one is – or believes to be – and that one wishes to represent; on the other hand, there is that which is anchored in society, that gives a person stability in their own identity, but which can be thrown out of balance when it comes to social changes (4.). Conclusions that follow from these observations are integrated into this last chapter.

2. Closing remarks by the Palestinian Israeli sociologist Sami Ma'ari at the Middle East Conference of the Evangelische Akademie Arnoldshain, quoted from Micha Brumlik: Arnoldshain oder: Versuch, den Nationalismus zu verflüssigen, in: Pflasterstrand 207 (1985), 20-24, here: 23.
3. Jane Loevinger / Elizabeth Knoll: Personality. Stages, Traits, and the Self, in: Annual Review 34 (1983), 195-222, here: 213.

1. Identity and / or identities

Identity is first of all the answer to the seemingly simple question: "Who am I?", a question that has only emerged in the modern age. Our answer to this question is called *personal* identity. But that is not the only question that arises with regard to identity. Although we live in the society of individuals[4], these are integrated into diverse networks of relationships which also have a formative effect on personality and behaviour, so that the question of identity must be supplemented by the question: "What is my relationship to others? What do others expect of me?" This is then the *social* identity. A further question follows almost immediately: "How do others see me?" If their image matches my own, I am lucky or simply good at identity management. However, there are often discrepancies, for example during puberty and young adulthood between the perceptions of parents and those of children, but they are particularly evident in prejudice discourses. What emerges in response to this question is *ascribed* identity. One central question remains that is gaining importance in times of increasing individualisation and geographical as well as social mobility: "Where do I belong?" or "What do I belong to, what do I identify myself with?" This usually concerns social groups of language, occupation, ethnicity, politics, or also sports disciplines, leisure activities, and so on. This represents a variant of *social* identity or of *group identity*.

All this makes it clear that identity has many facets which are dealt with in the social sciences and whose short presentation is only possible as a highly compact overview, in which the various aspects can be described, but not dealt with in depth. Let us start at the outset, the development of identity in the individual.

2. Identity development

2.1 Stages of identity development

After immigrating into the USA, Erik H. Erikson began to deal with questions of identity and identity development under the impression of the geographical and social mobility that was already clearly recognisable there,

4. Andreas Reckwitz: The Society of Singularities. On the Structural Transformation of Modernity, Cambridge 2020 (first published as: Die Gesellschaft der Singularitäten. Zum Strukturwandel der Moderne, Berlin 2017).

especially among immigrants.[5] His model of stages of development[6] has long been a standard in developmental psychology and socialisation theory. In permanent confrontation with one's surroundings and within one's respective "horizon of experience", crises of development take place, each of which produces specific characteristics of identity. For example, infancy is characterised by wanting or needing something that one cannot yet obtain for oneself: food, attention, warmth, etc. Basic trust or mistrust develops from the experience of "wanting and getting". So it goes on through early childhood, the years as a toddler and a school child; stage by stage, it is a case of the relationship between autonomy and shame and doubt, between taking the initiative and feelings of guilt (what came out of my initiative), as well as of the development of a "sense of purpose" or the experience of self-efficacy in the face of feelings of inferiority or failure.[7]

The decisive phase of identity development is in adolescence, which is characterised by a turn towards the inner self and the increasingly pressing answer to the question "Who am I?" During this time, the ego identity is stabilised, a knowledge of one's own self; one tries to be true to oneself, which ideally succeeds, but the process can end in identity diffusion.[8] This identity acquired during the phase of adolescence forms the basis for a person's further steps of development, which are then integrated into the identity acquired as an adolescent. These are: in early adulthood, entering into intimate relationships, then later starting a family or other ways of being creative. In old age, it is time to look back on life and decide how far the aspects of continuity, consistency and coherence, to which one had aspired, have been achieved, and to assess the personal sense of integrity.

2.2 Identity development as an active process

According to the range of their experiences, adolescents are confronted with new developmental tasks that nonetheless follow from and build on one another. The specific tasks and the way they are mastered depend essentially on

5. Siebo Siems: Eriksons amerikanische Erfahrung. Ich- und Gruppen-Identität als Schlüsselbegriffe neuer Integrationsformen, in: Psychologie und Gesellschaftskritik 36/37 (2013), 13-33.
6. Erik H. Erikson: Identity and the Life Cycle, New York / London 19942 (first published 1959). Cf. also Helmut Fend: Entwicklungspsychologie des Jugendalters, Opladen 2000, 404-407.
7. Erikson: Identity (see note 6), 57-93.
8. Ibid., 94-100.

the extent to which first children, and later adolescents and adults, set out to explore their environment. The degree of exploration and the attitude taken towards the (surrounding) world result in a specific form of identity development. Figure 1 shows the formal model of identity development as described by James Marcia on the basis of clinical studies.[9] The coordinate axes are determined by the extent of exploration, i.e. exploring the environment, trying out roles[10], "active search for new role models"[11] and commitment, i.e. the extent to which one feels committed to these new models or world views.[12]

Figure 1: Formal model of identity development[13]

Commitment	Extent of exploration	
	high	low
high („Decisiveness")	Identity Achievement decided	Identity Foreclosure fixed
low Diffusion	Identity Moratorium searching	Identity diffusion

The two identity types Erikson describes as bipolar can be seen in Figure 1 in the diagonal opposition of top left and bottom right: adolescents who show a high level of exploration of the environment and a high level of commitment to it develop a clear identity – Marcia calls them decided. In contrast, there are those with low exploration and low commitment (box on the bottom right of Fig. 1) with the result of identity diffusion: not really knowing who you are and what you stand for. Two dimensions, however, naturally allow other combinations. The combination of low exploration with high decisiveness means a fixed, inflexible identity, which is possibly hardly reflected and can lead towards extremism or fundamentalism in the political and religious context. The opposite combination – high exploration and involvement with one's surroundings, coupled with low commitment – stands for persistent searching, which Marcia calls identity moratorium – one goes on waiting or searches a little longer "in order to find oneself".

9. Cf. Fend: Entwicklungspsychologie (see note 6), 408f.
10. This is how Erikson would describe this exploration. Cf. Sabina Misoch: Identitäten im Internet. Selbstdarstellungen auf privaten Homepages, Cologne 2018 (first published by UTB in 2004), 40.
11. Fend: Entwicklungspsychologie (see note 6), 408.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.

2.3 Identity development through interaction

The psychological development models of Erikson and Marcia briefly outlined above as well as fundamental ontological and anthropological assumptions indicate that identity development can only occur in interaction with others. Like Erikson, George Herbert Mead distinguishes different phases of development, which in his concept, however, are not characterised by crises, but by different forms of play.[14] The first biographical form is childish play, in which the child imitates roles perceived in its environment. Playing alone, the child fills different roles that change and relate to each other, copying behaviour, idioms, or the relationship of the roles to each other by observing significant others, i.e. parents, preschool teachers, siblings and other people in the vicinity. These are borrowed social identities.

At an older age, childish play is replaced by organised game. This follows rules, and several people take part. Game involves different roles, each of which is linked to specific expectations. It is no longer simply a matter of reproducing in play what has been learned in direct contact at close quarters, but of generalising the expectations of (significant) others and integrating them into the generalised expectations of a specific role. In organised game, the confrontation with different roles is intensively encouraged by role taking.

By realising that there are a multitude of roles and also a multitude of social spheres and processes, the human being as an individual becomes aware that he or she does not belong completely to just *one* of these roles. At the same time, it becomes clear that individual identity is multiform because of the many roles in which the person finds himself. Or, as Erikson puts it:

> "The emerging ego identity, then, bridges the early childhood stages, when the body and the parent images were given their specific meanings, and the later stages, when a variety of social roles becomes available and increasingly coercive."[15]

14. Cf. on Mead: Hans Joas: George Herbert Mead (1863-1931), in: Dirk Kaesler (ed.): Klassiker der Soziologie 1. Von Auguste Comte bis Alfred Schütz, Munich 2006[5], 172-190, esp. 176-182; Misoch: Identität (see note 10), 35-50; Max Preglau: Symbolischer Interaktionismus: George Herbert Mead, in: Julius Morel / Eva Bauer / Tamás Meleghy / Heinz-Jürgen Niedenzu / Max Preglau / Helmut Staubmann: Soziologische Theorie. Abriss der Ansätze ihrer Hauptvertreter, Munich / Vienna 2015[9], 57-72.
15. Erikson: Identity (see note 6), 96.

3. Multi-layered identity (identities)

So what is the individual's answer to the supposedly simple question: "Who am I?" or "Who are you?" Some of the possible social roles that the ego assumes in modern differentiated society are to be found in professional and family life, among friends, in voluntary work or clubs, etc. Some of them may involve a high degree of identification or a correspondingly high level of commitment, and with others there may be less identification. The expectations associated with social roles and generally accepted usually concern behaviour: postmen and -women are supposed to deliver letters reliably, schoolchildren to be attentive, civil servants to be loyal to the state, and so on. These expectations are not only imposed on us from outside, but we ourselves are aware of them and strive to fulfil them. We basically meet each other in our respective roles. There is no interaction which is free of expectations – this means restriction of individual freedom, but living in social roles gives us security for our own behaviour, for the definition of social situations, so that we don't have to ask ourselves constantly, "What is actually going on here?" (Erving Goffman).

Apart from fulfilling these social roles, which are connected with certain positions in the various social spheres, we also belong to various groups, for example to our nation, to a language group, to a religion, a profession, or a political organisation. Such affiliations also create expectations regarding ourselves and, almost more so, the behaviour of others: Italians are hot-blooded lovers, Frenchmen and -women are filled with joie de vivre, Germans are hard working, professors are clever and absent-minded, and so on. Some of these affiliations are "inherited", such as language group, ethnicity, nation, and mostly religion, while others are nowadays more likely acquired, such as profession and political organisation.

In summary, this much can be said so far in response to the question "What is identity – from a social sciences perspective?":

- Social identity in roles and affiliations is based on socially shared everyday knowledge – these are the role expectations, the "knowledge" about social groups, etc.
- The multitude of role identities and group / affiliation identities are either hierarchically integrated, allowing Identity Achievement in Erikson's sense, or they exist side by side in a disorderly way with the effect of Identity Diffusion.
- The hierarchy of the different partial identities results from the individual meanings (salience) attributed to these partial identities. One consequence of this can be identity politics.

– Depending on the social situation, different partial identities can be "activated". Over a beer with friends in the evening, you will not fulfil the expectations associated with your professional role – but this role will nonetheless be noticeable: teachers like to explain how everything works, and pastors tend to sermonise even in private.
– Social identity as a group identity can be ascribed. This is the case, for example, with all types of prejudice: racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, homophobia, etc. If one is assigned to a group and attributed with the "usual characteristics" or confronted with the respective expectations, it is hardly possible to fight back successfully. This can lead to increased identification and even radicalisation.

This fifth aspect points strongly to a subject that is to be addressed in the last chapter of this article.

4. Challenges to identity (development)

Identity is fragile. It is true that the models of Erikson and Mead give the impression that an identity has been achieved once and for all after passing through the various stages of development. However, this idea fails to recognise that these, as well as other developmental models, are ideal types. The fragility of, or challenges to, identities originate in two different areas. One area is inherent in the individual, the other is that of social processes.

4.1 Identity management

"Inside everybody there is a retouched picture of themselves" – I don't know where this saying comes from, but I think it is immediately obvious what it means. In sociology, the Canadian-American sociologist Erving Goffman in particular has dealt with questions of identity management. However, before going into more detail, let us first look at a schematic representation of the problem (cf. Fig. 2).[16] Once again, there are two dimensions: one is the so-called modes of being of the self (column on the left) as real or ideal, the other dimension is represented by the so-called perspectives of viewing (middle and right columns): is it about inside (how one views oneself) or outside

16. Fend: Entwicklungspsychologie (see note 6), 415.

(how one presents oneself). It becomes clear that there is a fundamental difference between self-perception and external perception, which calls for a certain form of information control via the self-presentation.

Figure 2: Self-perceptions and perceptions of the self by others[17]

Modes of being of the self	Perspectives of viewing	
	INWARD *(hidden)*	OUTWARD *(open)*
REAL *(Reality)*	TRUE SELF This is what I am really like	PROJECTED SELF This is how I show myself to you
IDEAL *(possibility)* *(fantasies)*	IDEAL SELF This is what I would really like to be	SOCIAL DESIRED SELF This is how you should think of me

In the real "mode of being of the self", we have an internal image of ourselves that we would call "This is what I am really like", our true self. The external view, which is directed outwards, is how we show ourselves to others, the projected self. Apart from this real "mode of being", there is also the ideal one, which is seen as a possibility or simply exists in our fantasy. There the ideal self exists as an internal image contrasting with the true self, as a vision of how one would really like to be. One may wonder whether and how one actually projects this to the outside world; Goffman's studies suggest an answer.

Erving Goffman studied human interactions intensively. As an extraordinarily subtle observer, he analysed very precisely the unwritten rules that societies have created to avoid the risks of misunderstanding, exposure, failure of communication[18] and thus protect people's selves and personal identity. Goffman assumed that every person has something they want to hide. This can be a physical infirmity, a mental affliction, a dark secret from the past, a sexual orientation that does not conform to the prevailing morality, a profession that is considered offensive in certain circles, etc. He himself chose the apt formulation for this: The individual "is an entity about which a record can be built up—a copybook has been made ready for him to blot."[19] The ego must therefore be protected from discredit and damage. This can be done through:

17. The illustration is taken from Fend, Entwicklungspsychologie, 415. However, the title of the illustration is different in Fend.
18. Erving Goffman: Interaction Ritual. Essays on Face-to-Face Behaviour, New York 1967.
19. Erving Goffman: Stigma. Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1963, Chapter Biography.

- Techniques (information management). Goffman mentions a wide range of techniques that can be used. They range from avoiding contact, keeping mum, little white lies and deceitfulness, to downright lying, inventing stories, or "faking" a biography.[20] In Goffman's time, individuals were still able to manage information themselves to a large extent; in times of social media and the World Wide Web, this has become much more difficult. Other people pass on information outside, sometimes even "alternative facts", so that a completely new "threat situation" has been created.
- The unwritten rules of the system of interaction contain numerous instructions that prevent people from being exposed, e.g. overlooking a slip of the tongue, attributing a blush to the heat in the room, etc.[21] These rules did not apply universally even in Goffman's time, but seem to be disappearing more and more.
- *Alltagswissen* (a kind of tacit knowledge, knowledge about everyday life)[22] is the (unconscious) mastery of the system of interaction, the knowledge of the nature of social roles and social groups, of norms and everything else that holds society together and is shared by its members. If this *Alltagswissen* is damaged, e.g. if the reaction to a gesture, a word, the start of a conversation turns out differently in an interaction than expected, this leads to irritation. The reaction to this can be very different, depending on the relevance of the situation. One can ignore it with a shrug of the shoulders; in most cases one tries to explain away this unusual response – such patterns of explanation are *Alltagstheorien* (theories on everyday life). If the irritation was very strong, if it affected central aspects of one's own identity, e.g. an inappropriate criticism of professional expertise, the seemingly brusque rejection of an invitation, etc., or if a specific situation arises repeatedly, then it is not only *Alltagswissen* but also identity which can be damaged. Theories on everyday life then require broader support and are developed in dialogue with people who have had similar experiences, e.g. immigrants who are accustomed to different forms of politeness than those to be found in their newfound home.[23]

20. Ibid., Chapter Passing.
21. Cf. Goffman: Interaction Ritual (see note 18), 97-112.
22. This term, as well as that of Alltagstheorien / theories on everyday life, comes from Alfred Schütz: Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt, Frankfurt a.M. 1981[2]. Cf. in summary Max Preglau, Phänomenologische Soziologie: Alfred Schütz, in: Morel / Bauer / Meleghy / Niedenzu / Preglau / Staubmann: Theorie (see note 14), 73-98.
23. On the necessity of theories on everyday life and their construction, see Lutz Hoffmann: "Wir machen alles falsch" – Wie türkische Jugendliche sich in ihren Alltagstheorien mit ihrer Lage in der Bundesrepublik auseinandersetzen, Bielefeld 1981.

Alltagswissen, which is of central importance for the stabilisation of individual and collective identities, is especially subject to constant processes of change with social modernisation.

4.2 Social modernisation

Some of the social changes that require a permanent readjustment and stabilisation of personal and social identities have been widely discussed since the 1980s. These include individualisation, which comes from the detachment of individuals from the traditional large groups to which they were accustomed.[24] There is the change in the course of careers, which is connected with economic structural change from an industrial to a service society and continues with digitalisation, and is thus part of the ongoing process of individualisation. There is the clearly visible pluralisation of life patterns, among them changing family forms, increasing geographical mobility, etc. And, last but not least, the acceleration of technical and social change contributes to the apparent dissolution of the "familiar world". All these processes and their interactions challenge the tacit knowledge about everyday life. "Old truths" and values no longer apply. Identity politics seem to lead to particular irritations in this area. Why are women and migrants suddenly no longer satisfied with their menial jobs? They were always in this position, so why should that no longer be valid? How does this affect people in better jobs? Do they now have to defend them? And the generation "Fridays for Future" poses serious questions and allegations: did "the old people" do everything wrong?

In view of the challenges imposing upon social and personal identity, there can obviously be no conclusive answer to the question asked in the title of this article. There are so many varied roles and affiliations; there are too many different things that are important to the individual, thus "blanketing" the complexity of identity, as it were; and, above all, there is a great diversity in the results of the identity formation processes. From a sociological perspective, it is the question of the function of identity which attracts more interest. This article opened with the popular (scientific) debate about identities, and it can also close with it. "Successful" identity in accordance with Erikson, Marica and Mead stabilises individuals, enables them to interact with others and thus also contributes to social stability. On the other hand,

24. First brought to the attention of a broad public and subsequently widely discussed by Ulrich Beck: Risk Society. Towards a new Modernity, Sage 1992 (first published as: Risikogesellschaft. Auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne, Frankfurt a.M. 1986).

states of identity diffusion, foreclosure or even persistent moratorium can be socially explosive.

Thus, there is the challenge to society to what extent it is capable of adopting perspectives of others, as is a mature personality according to Mead, or at least of honouring this capability. It has to do so in order to extinguish the fuse before the bomb goes off.

Identity

Cultural and early modern concepts and perspectives

Susanne Lachenicht

In this short paper, I do not want to answer the question of what "Lutheran identity" is today, nor do I want to define what exactly "Lutheran identity" was in the early modern period. Instead, I would like to offer some reflections on the topic of "Lutheran identity between cultural context and Reformation heritage". These are based on two points of view which have emerged in the last few years in my own work on Huguenot identity, on diasporas in the early modern age, on tolerance and transconfessionality. To this end, I will start with a few remarks on the concept of "identity" from the perspective of cultural studies. Secondly, I will present research on the early modern period that questions the paradigm of confessionalisation and thus the clear definition of confession and confessional affiliation. In the third part I will go on to see what this might mean for "Lutheran identity" today.

1. "Identity" from the point of view of cultural studies

What actually is "identity"? Who benefits from "identity"? Does identity exist in reality, or is it rather a matter of constructions and social, political, economic and cultural practices, including those of religion, that give the people involved a stable, solid, reliable feeling of belonging and the possibility – or impossibility – of participation?[1]

1. On the constructivity of "identity" see, for example, Ernst von Glasersfeld: Die Konstrukte der Identität, oder: die Kunst, Unterschiede zu übergehen, in: idem: Wissen, Sprache, Wirklichkeit, Wiesbaden 1992, 113-121; Amartya Sen: Die Identitätsfalle.

Today, perhaps more than ever, "identity" is "contested ground".[2] The ascription of identity to oneself and to others seems to be creating more and more division in our society, and this generates echo chambers where there is no longer dialogue, negotiation or compromise. There is no discussion about how society can function and live together, but simply a struggle for dominance of interpretation, for participation, for exclusion, and in extreme cases also for the destruction of others.

Cultural and social sciences have shown that "identity" is anything but stable, reliable or clearly demarcated from others. The scientific etic approach[3] therefore speaks more and more of identifications, performative acts of self-determination and external determination; these can change depending on the context, on the situation; they are continually being renegotiated, but they have very concrete effects in and despite their *fuzzyness*. In the sense of poststructural structuralism, these identifications take place against the background of specific structures, which in turn undergo change on account of the acts of identification in individual situations.[4]

Identifications take place on the basis of interaction within groups, as well as at the imagined and material boundaries of these groups. However, actors are always part of different social groups. Depending on the context or the situation, one and the same actor can be in opposition to him- or herself, should self-identification and identification by others be actually mutually exclusive. Identifications are fluid and multiple, while identities are polyphonic, ambiguous, hybrid.[5]

Warum es keinen Krieg der Kulturen gibt, Munich 2007, 33-53; Bernhard Giesen (ed.): Einleitung, in: idem: Nationale und kulturelle Identität. Studien zur Entwicklung des kollektiven Bewusstseins in der Neuzeit, Frankfurt a.M. 1991, 9-18; Paul du Gay / Jessica Evans / Peter Redman (eds.): Identity. A Reader, London 2000.

2. Dirk Hoerder: On Transcultural States, Nations, and People, in: idem / Christiane Harzig / Adrian Shubert (eds.): The Historical Practice of Diversity. Transcultural Interactions from the Early Modern Period to the Postcolonial World, New York / Oxford 2003, 13-32, here: 14.
3. The term "etic" here refers to the scientific-analytical perspective. It is about terms that are used to name a phenomenon that is to be analysed. The emic perspective, on the other hand, would be concepts, terms found in sources or used by the actors themselves who are being studied. "Identity" would therefore be the emic term, "identification" the etic one.
4. Nancy L. Green: The Comparative Method and Poststructural Structuralism. New Perspectives for Migration Studies, in: Jan Lucassen / Leo Lucassen (eds.): Migration, Migration History, History. Old Paradigms and New Perspectives, Bern / Berlin / Brussels 2005, 57-72.
5. See for example Ian F. Haney-Lopez: Social Construction of Race. Some Observations on Illusion, Fabrication, and Choice, in: Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review 29/1 (1994), 1-62; Homi Bhabha: Hybridité, identité et culture contemporaine, in:

Participation or exclusion in all their forms, however, are the guarantee for access to resources, to status, to rights. Polyphonic identifications in groups lead to the construction and control of identities by so-called *gate keepers. Gate keepers* are economic, political, military, intellectual or spiritual "elites" who define who belongs to the group, who is excluded, and by what behaviour that is decided. The narratives generated in this process emphasise the homogeneity and stability of this group, even if the performative acts of identification and the associated processes of negotiation attest to the opposite, seen empirically. At the same time, the aim is to convince other majority or minority groups of the homogeneity and stability of identity, of hierarchies, superiority or inferiority. These narratives are stabilised by individual actors, the *gate keepers,* and thus connected through institutions such as families, churches, schools, universities and media within which individuals operate, but at the same time they are subject to permanent processes of change, i.e. the need to adapt to changing internal and external contexts. The constructed "identity" changes *mutatis mutandis* through acts of identification, through contacts, through permanent negotiation. "Identity" thus has to adapt again and again to the polyphonic discourses, including the practices of the actors who "form" this group or those who perceive this group as "other". If these dynamic processes of adaptation do not take place at the level of narratives and practices, there are signs of dissolution, i.e. dissociation from within and from without.[6]

2. On the unambiguity of confession and confessional affiliation in the early modern age

Is "identity" now an appropriate term to use when looking at Lutheranism in the 16th and 17th centuries, or when considering the extent to which Lutheranism today, in its globally diverse forms, was shaped by this period and endures today? In what follows, I will not approach this question by means of Lutheran theology or the practices of Lutheran churches, their pastors and elders, but rather through the lens of early modern believers.

Jean-Hubert Martin (ed.): Magiciens de la terre, Paris 1989, 24-27.

6. Hoerder: Transcultural States (see note 2), 14; Robin Cohen: Global Diasporas. An Introduction, Seattle 1997, 172; Susanne Lachenicht: Exil, Asyl und die Auserwählten. Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmungen und hugenottische Identität im Refuge, in: Achim Dettmers / Sabine Dressler (eds.): Fremde(s) aushalten. Migration und Aggression in Europa (Texte zur reformierten Theologie und Kirche 1), Solingen 2016, 53-66.

First, however, a brief look at the expression "identity". Within the German language, it developed in the course of the 18th century into a synonym for "complete agreement, sameness, essential unity". It thus concerns homogeneity, stability, exact agreement (derived from the late Latin "identitas", itself a derivative of "idem": the same).[7] Since the 1950s, the term "identity" has become omnipresent in politics, society and science, is often essentialising, comes as a battle cry for more participation of the most diverse groups, as a concept for analysis. "Identity" is thus not an early modern term.

Looking for an original expression of the early modern period that seems to be at least partially congruent with the term "confessional identity"[8], one might perhaps choose something like "confession", "pure doctrine" or "our religion". Deviations from "pure doctrine" were described as "error", "deviation", "aberration", "false doctrine" or "heresy". Associated with this were not only certain beliefs, a specific theology, a liturgy, an ecclesiology, but also social practices that applied, or at least were supposed to apply, to all areas of life: ethics, a moral code that was supposed to permeate all actions.[9]

For a long time, the period between 1540 and 1648 has been understood as a confessional age and as an age of confessionalisation, dominated, after the "tribulations" of the Reformation period, by the recovery of clear theological ideas, the dissemination and enforcement of old or new norms, confessional propaganda and the prevention of counter-propaganda, the internalisation of a new order through education and the disciplining of believers – an age of close interconnection between church and state, i.e. religion and politics. This served the formation of modern statehood and clear denominational confessions in equal measure.[10]

7. Duden – Online – Wörterbuch, available at: https://www.duden.de/suchen/dudenonline/Identit%C3%A4t (viewed on 15.11.2022).

8. On the term "confessional identity" today, cf. for example Silke Dangel: Konfessionelle Identität und ökumenische Prozesse. Analysen zum interkonfessionellen Diskurs im Christentum, Berlin 2014.

9. On the concept of confessional identity for the early modern period, see for example Frauke Volkland: Konfession und Selbstverständnis. Reformierte Rituale in der gemischtkonfessionellen Kleinstadt Bischofszell im 17. Jahrhundert, Göttingen 2006

10. See for example Ernst-Walter Zeeden: Grundlagen und Wege der Konfessionsbildung in Deutschland im Zeitalter der Glaubenskämpfe. in: idem (ed.): Gegenreformation, Darmstadt 1973, 85-134; Wolfgang Reinhard: Zwang zur Konfessionalisierung? Prolegomena zu einer Theorie des konfessionellen Zeitalters, in: Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung 10 (1983), 257-277; Heinz Schilling: Die Konfessionalisierung im Reich. Religiöser und gesellschaftlicher Wandel in Deutschland zwischen 1555 und 1620, in: Historische Zeitschrift 246 (1988), 1-45. Summarising the state of research: Stefan Ehrenpreis / Ute Lotz-Heumann: Reformation und konfessionelles Zeitalter, Darmstadt 2002.

This description of the early modern period has been predominant for a long time, but it took too little notice of many parallel, often contradictory processes, some of which are connected to what has been described above. "Confessionalisation", therefore, has quite rightly come under criticism in the last twenty years.[11] This is partly because it has obscured the view of the ongoing reformation processes within and beyond the confessions. Secondly, however, tolerance as an idea and toleration also as a state practice were at least as important for the formation of early modern society and state as attempts at standardisation and social disciplining. Without the settlement of non-orthodox emigrants or exiles, the expansion of statehood would hardly have been possible, not only in the colonies of early modern states, but also in Europe itself.[12] Examples include the settlement of Moriscos (Moors) in Italy in the early 17th century, Dutch Catholics in Protestant areas of the Holy Roman Empire, and Huguenots in Lutheran Brandenburg-Bayreuth. Thirdly, the paradigm of confessionalisation is subject to a teleological understanding of modernity that appears problematic today, not least in the context of postcolonial critique.[13]

If we now turn from the structural level and look at the everyday life and actions of subjects and believers in the early modern situation, as well as to those of local ecclesiastical and secular authorities, then we find confessional and social practices that often seem diametrically opposed to the confession-

11. Kasper von Greyerz / Manfred Jakubowski-Tiessen / Thomas Kaufmann / Hartmut Lehmann (eds.): Interkonfessionalität – Transkonfessionalität – binnenkonfessionelle Pluralität. Neue Forschungen zur Konfessionalisierungsthese, Gütersloh 2003; Andreas Pietsch / Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger (eds.): Konfessionelle Ambiguität. Uneindeutigkeit und Verstellung als religiöse Praxis in der Frühen Neuzeit, Gütersloh 2013.

12. See, among others, Susanne Lachenicht: Refugee "nations" and Empire-Building in the Early Modern Period, in: Journal of Early Modern Christianity 6/1 (2019), 99-109.

13. Teleological concepts of "modernity" assume that people, societies and states must almost inevitably develop in a specific direction, which is usually described as "progress" or "civilisation". Once all societies have reached this state, the "end of history" is nigh (Francis Fukuyama: The End of History? in: The National Interest 16 [1989], 3-18). This end of history could be marked by liberalism in the form of democracy and a market economy (as with Fukuyama), but also, as repeatedly emphasised in the paradigm of confessionalisation, in the context of early modern state formation. The latter went hand in hand with the establishment of a mono-confessional population, which was a prerequisite for the formation of the early modern state. These teleological models of history not only exclude differences or other turns of events, but present them as a deviation from a (universal) norm, i.e. they can falsify history by neglecting historical specificity. It was precisely postcolonial critique that repeatedly rejected universalist models describing the course of civilisation and history, not only because these negate history in its plurality and specificity, but because their eagerness to "civilise" was above all an important ideological component of colonialism and imperialism.

al and social norms. The priesthood of all believers, as it is now known not just in the Lutheran Church, declares that "every Christian is free to form his or her own judgment on the teachings of the church"[14], or, as it says for example in some of the tracts of the so-called Peasants' War period, free to interpret the gospel himself or herself, or to consider the way in which different churches and faith communities provide faith and meaning in life. This attitude appears to have been widespread practice in the early modern period, not only for Lutherans, but also for many other Protestant, Catholic, Jewish and Muslim believers. This is substantiated by significant studies on transconfessionality, interconfessionality and religious indifference or dissent that have emerged in the last twenty years.[15] Whether something was called deviant or heretical, and whether this deviance led to persecution, could turn out very differently according to the respective situation, as has been demonstrated by Carlo Ginzburg's *The Cheese and the Worms* regarding the Catholic region of Friuli, but also by works on Sephardic Jews who converted to Christianity.[16] Nicole Grochowina's work on *Indifference and Dissent in the County of East Frisia in the 16th and 17th Centuries* from 2003 also clearly showed how it was possible for individuals living in the midst of a wide range of different faiths to belong nominally to one church, but at the same time attend services of other faith communities, to get married or have their children baptised in other churches.[17] The background to such practices, which have also been described for many other multi-denominational territories – by Dagmar Freist, Jesse Spohnholz or in my own work, among others – was partly spiritual curiosity, indifference to "boundaries" or even criticism of the church to which one "actually" belonged. In some cases, it might be the prohibition of a marriage, the denomination of the chosen godfather or godmother, but also interdenominational marriages.[18]

14. See the website of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), available at: https://www.ekd.de/Priestertum-aller-Glaeubigen-11246.htm (viewed on 15.11.2022).
15. Von Greyerz / Jakubowski-Tiessen / Kaufmann / Lehmann: Interkonfessionalität (see Ann.11); Pietch / Stollberg-Rilinger: Ambiguity (see note 11).
16. Carlo Ginzburg: The Cheese and the Worms. The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller, Baltimore 2013; Natalia Muchnik: Du judaïsme au catholicisme: les aléas de la foi au XVIIe siècle, in: Revue historique 623/3 (2002), 571-609.
17. Nicole Grochowina: Indifferenz und Dissens in der Grafschaft Ostfriesland im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert, Frankfurt a.M. 2003.
18. Jesse Spohnholz: Exile Experiences and the Transformations of Religious Cultures in the Sixteenth Century. Wesel, London, Emden, and Frankenthal, in: Journal of Early Modern Christianity 6/1 (2019), 43-67; Marjorie Plummer / Victoria Christman (eds.): Topographies of Tolerance and Intolerance. Responses to Religious Pluralism in Reformation Europe, Leiden 2018; Susanne Lachenicht: Religious Orthodoxy and

I would like to name three examples from different times and places. The first example takes us to Cologne in the late 16th century. As Daniel Fogt has shown,[19] couples from the Netherlands or German-Dutch couples who had been forbidden to marry by the Reformed consistories for moral reasons often got married in clandestine Dutch Calvinist churches in Catholic Cologne. There are numerous references to these transgressions in the records of the Dutch Reformed Church of Cologne. These offences were thus on record but were not punished despite the discussion and confirmation of moral reprehensibility. Nor did the city of Cologne ban these couples from living in the city. Only a limited number of individuals were prosecuted on account of these unwelcome marriages and confessions. Most of them were able to pursue their occupations unmolested, leading a life between different faiths and congregations. In many cases, social disciplining in the sense of regulation of marriages by the churches did not take place – a phenomenon that has also been described for other early modern towns and cities such as Basel.[20]

We come to the second example, to Berlin in the late 17th century. When the Hohenzollerns, the rulers of Brandenburg, converted from Lutheranism to Calvinism in 1613, tension arose between them and their predominantly Lutheran subjects. Not merely for confessional reasons, but primarily for internal colonisation and the development of the land, Calvinists from Switzerland and the Netherlands, as well as Huguenots after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, came to settle in Brandenburg. The French Reformed consistories, but also those of the German Reformed and Lutheran churches in Berlin-Brandenburg, wanted at all costs to prevent their believers from acting across confessional boundaries, especially from inter-denominational marriages and the participation in the Lord's Supper in a different Protestant church, which indeed required permission from the consistory until 1720. The consistory books of the French Reformed Church in Berlin are full of prohibitions, reports of violations of these directives, and the minutes of con-

Trans-Confessional Practices in Colonial New York and South Carolina, in: Revue Française d'Études Américaines 141 (2014), 21-31; Dagmar Freist / Sabine Kyora / Melanie Unseld (eds.): Transkulturelle Mehrfachzugehörigkeiten als kulturhistorisches Phänomen. Räume – Materialitäten – Erinnerungen (Praktiken der Subjektivierung 13), Bielefeld 2019; Dagmar Freist: Glaube – Liebe – Zwietracht. Religiös-konfessionell gemischte Ehen in Deutschland in der Frühen Neuzeit (Bibliothek Altes Reich 14), Munich 2017.

19. Daniel Fogt: Migration and Transregional Marriage along the Dutch-German Borderlands, 1570-1601, in: Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte / Archive of Reformation History 112/1 (2021), 285-295.

20. Susanna Burghartz: Zeiten der Reinheit – Orte der Unzucht. Ehe und Sexualität in Basel während der frühen Neuzeit, Paderborn 1999.

tentious discussions – but in these cases there was never any punishment such as exclusion from Communion or excommunication. Instead, there were increasing numbers of entries on marriages between Lutheran and Reformed Christians, the baptism of children with mixed German-French or purely Lutheran parents, which was officially permitted from 1690, and the participation of French Reformed believers at the Lord's Supper in other churches, i.e. those of the Lutheran or German Reformed denominations.[21]

The third example comes from New York in the 1760s. Transconfessional practices had been common in the first decades of the 17th century. Many denominations and faith communities were short of pastors and churches. By the second half of the 17th and in the 18th century, however, the denominational landscape seemed to have become more stable. In many places, especially in cities like New York, there were congregations and church buildings for almost all Protestant confessions. Nevertheless, many people continued their transconfessional practices, for example one of the anciens of New York's *Église du Saint Esprit*, François Basset. He attended services not only in his own church but also in New York's Anglican, Presbyterian and Dutch Reformed churches, because he was interested in the sermons of other pastors and wanted to expand his own understanding of the Word of God.[22]

The "demand for clarity" in religious beliefs and the social practices associated with them has been invoked again and again by advocates of the theory of confessionalisation, but it is apparently not just undetectable in many areas of life, but was possibly not standard in previous times either. So, the question arises, when were boundaries drawn and when not? When did it become a problem if indifference or dissent occurred? When was "clarity" called for a definite commitment? And when was a lack of clarity punished?

Was the early modern period really primarily about "identity": sameness, homogeneity, unambiguity? Or has it always been about defining limits in the respective situation in order to enable participation and integration, or preventing it only in the most extreme cases? In the case of Carlo Ginzburg's miller Menocchio, the tolerance of church inquisitors is just as astonishing as the social and economic reintegration of the blasphemous miller after the first trial by the Inquisition.

21. Susanne Lachenicht: Hugenotten in Europa und Nordamerika. Migration und Integration in der Frühen Neuzeit, Frankfurt a.M. / New York 2010.

22. New York Historical Society: Livre de Mémoire pour Jaques Buvelot, entries of the summer of 1767 and of November and December 1767. See also Lachenicht: Hugenotten (see note 21), 304-318.

3. Conclusions

So, what does all this mean for a discussion about "Lutheran identity"? Can there be such a thing as a definite "Lutheran identity" at all, if the priesthood of all believers, that "every Christian is free to form his or her own judgement about the teachings of the church", is one of the foundations of Lutheranism? This indeed virtually excludes homogeneity and identity and encourages individual believers' searching as well as transconfessional behaviour for all kind of motives. It also promotes the repeated and constantly renewed reform movements in the Lutheran Church, such as the Pietisms in the 17th and 18th centuries. Is it not almost inevitable that the "priesthood of all believers" gives rise to this dynamic reform process?

Is "Lutheran identity" therefore a dynamic process? A permanent ongoing negotiation, for which the conference of the Historical Commission of the German National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation and this book are exemplary? Which is based on the "priesthood of all believers" that makes "identity" in the sense of homogeneity impossible? But what then is at the heart of the Lutheran communion?

When I read the text describing the topics and discussions of our conference, I wondered whether it could actually deal with "identity" in the narrower sense or – given the background of the common basis of the priesthood of all believers and its consequences – whether it would not turn out to be a dynamic discussion of the most diverse convictions, of conceptions of God, the relationship between God and humankind, Christian ethics and morals and the permanent critical self-reflection as individuals and a community. Could one speak about a stable identity, or should it not be rather a question of practices, of action whose foundation should continually be discussed and tested for sustainability? I am afraid I cannot answer these questions here. The answer must be given by each individual believer; and church communions must decide how far they consider a common confession to be essential.

Contextual Theology 3.0

From contextual theologies to transcultural, intersectional theologies and joint theological practice

Claudia Jahnel

1. Changes in contextual theologies

Contextual theologies only exist in the plural. The term stands for a wealth of different approaches, meanings and contexts and is therefore, as Angie Pears recently put it, an "evasive and fluid term".[1] Contextual theologies are provocative because they cause unambiguities and clear demarcations to tumble and challenge us to bear with ambivalences. For those who leave the well-trodden paths of a supposedly universal theology soon find themselves in a confusing web of sometimes contrasting interpretations. These sometimes appear heretical and schismatic – especially to "Western" observers – and their claims to identity sometimes appear highly essentialist (what is meant by "African theology"?) or they claim universality for their own particularities. In their diverse manifestations, however, contextual theologies also reveal "the messiness, ambiguity and beauty of humanity"[2] and are, above all, "everyone's own response of faith".[3]

The term contextual theology originates from the work of the Fund for Theological Education and has replaced concepts of accommodation or indigenisation.[4] Thus it was originally shaped by the question of how theological

1. Angie Pears: Doing Contextual Theology, London / New York 2010, 1.
2. Michelle Gonzales: Afro-Cuban Theology. Religion, Race, Culture and Identity, Florida 2006, 121.
3. Niels-Peter Moritzen: Mission VIII: Mission – praktisch theologisch, TRE 23 (1994), 68-72, here: 71.
4. Christine Lienemann-Perrin: Training for a Relevant Ministry. A Study of the Contri-

teaching and research could and should be anchored in the respective contexts. In the meantime, the understanding of contextual theology has multiplied and changed. Contemporary contextual theologies, I would argue, are increasingly transcultural and intersectional: they work on particular challenges in the context of global developments, postcolonial transformations and ongoing experiences of injustice, criticise Western monocultural perspectives and call for the epistemological decentralisation of Western systems of knowledge as well as recognition for diversity – "ecology"[5] – in knowledge and practices.

These shifts reflect fundamental global and local changes. Traditional structures disintegrate and cultural identities are called into question, globalisation processes continuously lead to social differentiations and hybridisations – wherever this happens, religious identities also become multiple identities, regional contexts are no longer homogeneous – supposing they ever were – and cultural particularities have long been coloured by hybrid, transcultural, glocalising interrelationships. The particular "Christianities" are also highly diverse culturally, "ethnically", nationally and in terms of social origin, gender, sexual orientation, age or physical and mental condition.

Taking individual examples, this article aims to illustrate this diversity of mostly recent contextual theologies – some, but not all, Lutheran – and to shed light on the questions they pose for thinking and theological activity in the so-called Global North. In order to clarify the shifts in perspective over the last two decades or so, it starts with an introduction to more fundamental ways of understanding and developments in contextual theologies. Looking into the future, I consciously conclude with a model of a contextual theology from the field of Lutheran churches and theology, quoting the message of an international LWF conference in Windhoek in 2015 entitled "Global Perspectives on the Reformation: Interactions between Theology, Politics and Economy". In my opinion, this underlines a forward-looking aspect, namely that contextual theologies are more than ever challenged to become joint practice in a globalised world.

bution of the Theological Education Fund, Madras / Genoa 1981, 174.

5. Boaventura de Sousa Santos: Das Weltsozialforum. Auf dem Weg zu einer gegenhegemonialen Globalisierung, in: Kritische Interventionen 9. Globaler Widerstand gegen den Kapitalismus. Auf dem Weg zu einer neuen Internationale? Hannover 2006, 153-182, here: 148ff.

2. Contextual theologies as an expression of particular identities and as a criticism of the universality of Western epistemology

In 2008, the Catholic theologian Herbert Vorgrimler wrote the following definition of contextual theology:

> "Contextual theology is a collective term that emerged in the 1970s, in which the most diverse theological interests and methods agree that theological reflection and the decision of faith ('finding one's identity') on which it is based certainly originate from a socio-cultural 'environment' (= context), that is to be precisely determined in each case and forms their habitat. As a programme, contextual theology means a rejection of the global validity of the 'Eurocentricity' of traditional theology (which at the same time demands that European theology become aware of its own context) and of the ideal image of an unhistorical faith. Contextual theology therefore means more than just 'adaptation' or 'inculturation' of an exported Christianity. The detailed knowledge of each context requires great interdisciplinary efforts. Both Protestant and Catholic contextual theologies have emerged in liberation theology, feminist theology (feminism) and Third World theologies."[6]

According to this definition, it is constitutive for "contextual theology" on the one hand to assume a certain particularity of the respective theology; on the other hand, there is criticism of Western theology's claim to universality. Both aspects go hand in hand, but they have different intentions. The first aspect underlines the fact that Christian churches worldwide necessarily develop different images of Christian identity due to contextual particularities, historical developments as well as their actors. That is why there are liberation theologies in Latin America, theologies of water or of the pig in the Pacific region, theology of han in Korea, or of the highest ancestor in East Africa.

The emergence of particular Christianities and contextual theologies generated great enthusiasm among Western theologians and church representatives in the 1980s, which is also reflected in the publication of basic works on contextual theology by theologians from the Global North.[7]

6. Herbert Vorgrimler: Neues Theologisches Wörterbuch, Freiburg i.Br. 2008 (new edition, 6th ed. of the complete work), also available at: https://www.herder.de/hk/schlagwoerter/kontextuelle-theologie/ (viewed on 4.11.2022).
7. Stephan B. Bevans: Models of Contextual Theology, Maryknoll 1992; Robert J. Schreiter: Constructing Local Theologies, Maryknoll 1985.

Behind this enthusiasm lurks the danger, repeatedly raised by theologians of the Global South[8], of a benevolent paternalistic attitude that enthusiastically welcomes contextual theologies as an expression of the emergence of "independent", "authentic" theologies, but does not recognise them as theology of equal value or even regards them as a deviation from "pure doctrine". [9]

This makes the second characteristic of contextual theology all the more significant: the criticism of the claim to universality by Western theology and Western forms of Christianity.

Paradigmatic for this criticism is the declaration of the theologians of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) in Dar es Salaam in 1976.

> "We reject as irrelevant a merely academic theology that is divorced from action. We are prepared for a radical break in epistemology, which makes commitment the first act of theology and engages in critical reflection on the praxis of the reality of the Third World."[10]

Theologians of the Global South thus become aware of their context, they search for links that can help them to form their own theological identity, and carry out an epistemological break.

3. Intercultural interconnections and epistemological polyphony

In the 1990s, there was a growing realisation that globalising and localising dynamics are interconnected and that cultures are not self-contained entities but the product of intercultural contacts and interdependencies and thus transcultural hybrid entities. This is why the term "intercultural theology"

8. Manas Buthelezi: Ansätze afrikanischer Theologie im Kontext von Kirchen in Südafrika, in: Ilse Tödt (ed.): Theologie im Konfliktfeld Südafrika. Dialog mit Manas Buthelezi, Stuttgart / Munich 1976, 33-132, here: 116, 118.
9. Cf. Vitor Westhelle: After Heresy. Colonial Practices and Post-Colonial Theologies, Eugene 2010.
10. K.C. Abraham: Taking the Poor Seriously. An Interpretive Report, in: Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians / Bernadette Mbuy-Beya (eds.): Spirituality of the Third World. A Cry for Life. Papers and Reflections from the Third General Assembly of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (January 1992), Nairobi / Maryknoll 2005, 207–210, here: 207.

(*interkulturelle Theologie)* has become established in the German-speaking world. Intercultural dynamics put questions to contextual theologies and cause them to change. Contextual theologies that claim to represent a culture "authentically" are unwilling to admit that traditional structures have long since dissolved and that "regional identities" do not simply exist, but are created and reinvented. This is by no means just a loss. Rather, there is a gain in the fact that only "in the process of questioning tradition [...] can a reflective approach to tradition and identity develop at all [and new] positionings with regard to identity become possible".[11]

At the same time, the insistence on recognition of the polyphony / diversity of knowledge systems is becoming stronger today. This tension between the dissolution of traditional "contexts" and the reinvention of particularisms on the one hand, and the demand for recognition of the polyphony of forms of thinking and resonances with the world on the other, forms a challenge also for (Lutheran) contextual theology.

4. Recent diversity of contextual theologies

4.1 Priesthood of all believers and theology of the cross as theological practice

In her lecture "*Die Glut kommt von unten*" (The embers are down below)[12] Patricia Cuyatti, the former Program Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean in the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), explores the question of the particularities of Lutheran identity in the context of Latin America and the Caribbean. The very formulation of her guiding concern makes it clear that the question is not to be discussed on a purely theological, dogmatic level, but involves life practice. Her aim is to show "how the Lutheran churches of Latin America and the Caribbean live their faith and how they express their identity in their context".[13]

11. Andreas Nehring: Partikularismus und Universalismus in der Ökumene und die Bedeutung interkultureller Begegnung, in: Claudia Jahnel / Hans Helmut Schneider (eds.): Dein Reich komme in aller Welt. Interkulturelle Perspektiven auf das Reich Gottes, Erlangen 2011, 83-116, here: 87.
12. Patricia Cuyatti: Die Glut kommt von unten. Die lutherischen Kirchen in Lateinamerika und der Karibik und ihre Begleitung durch den Lutherischen Weltbund, in: Claudia Jahnel / Hans Zeller (eds.): Luthers Unvollendete. Relevanz lutherischer Theologie aus europäischer und lateinamerikanischer Perspektive, Erlangen 2013, 53-68.
13. Ibid., 53.

According to Cuyatti, two "aspects of the Reformation" have "fundamentally changed the understanding of what it means to live the dynamic of grace":[14] the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and the theology of the cross. The first Reformation motif, the idea of the priesthood of all believers, shapes the structure of the Lutheran churches. As minority churches, in contrast to Catholicism, they are characterised by a flat hierarchy and by the participation of all believers in the *Missio Dei*, whereby the majority of members are women. In addition, the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers led to the education of the believers, which Luther had already emphasised and which is also a central feature of Lutheran churches in the region.

The other Reformation motif, that of the theology of the cross, is experienced reality in the context of Latin America, says Cuyatti, and is "far more than a topos of dogmatics [prescribed by the institution of the Church]":

> "In the Christologies developed by the Latin American churches, Jesus is close to the people, and the cross is the place where – in a reality often marked by violence – redemption and hope are experienced."[15]

It is characteristic of contextualisations of Lutheran theology at the regional level as well as of Lutheran dialogues at the global level that specific Lutheran topoi are at the centre and are reflected in a contextualising way. The specifically Latin American signature of contextualisation lies, on the one hand, in the concentration on specific Reformation core themes. While in Germany for example, the Lutheran and ecumenical discussion revolves around the Scriptural principle,[16] the doctrine of justification[17] or baptism[18], Latin American and Caribbean Lutheran theologies, according to Cuyatti, concen-

14. Ibid., 54.
15. Ibid., 54.
16. Christina Costanza / Martin Keßler / Andreas Ohlemacher (eds.): Claritas scripturae. Schrifthermeneutik aus evangelischer Perspektive, Leipzig 2020.
17. Cf. for example: Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, LWF Geneva, 1999, available at: https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/Joint%20Declaration%20on%20the%20Doctrine%20of%20Justification.pdf (viewed on 19.02.2022)
18. Cf. Voneinander lernen – miteinander glauben. "Ein Herr, ein Glaube, eine Taufe" (Eph. 4,5). Konvergenzdokument der Bayrischen Lutherisch-Baptistischen Arbeitsgruppe (BALUBAG), 2009, available at: https://www.befg.de/fileadmin/bgs/media/dokumente/Voneinander-lernen-miteinander-glauben-Konvergenzdokument-der-Bayerischen-Lutherisch-Baptistischen-Arbeitsgruppe-BALUBAG-2009.PDF (viewed on 4.11.2022).

trate on the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and the theology of the cross, because these topics have particular relevance for the challenges on the ground. Secondly, Latin American and Caribbean Lutheran theologies differ from the aforementioned and other doctrinal disputes, for example in Germany, in that they are shaped by the tradition of Latin American liberation theology, which makes life practice the yardstick for the relevance of theological teaching and proclamation. It is not theological or even denominational correctness that determines contextualisation, but the "deeply felt love for the neighbour, [which] has its origin and ground in God", breaks into a concrete context and changes it.[19] With its orientation towards liberation theology, the Latin American and Caribbean contextualising interpretation of Lutheran theology thus also contains an interdenominational or ecumenical dimension.

This orientation towards "praxis" and living reality increasingly characterises Lutheran and ecumenical dialogues at the world level. For example, the LWF's campaign for the Reformation anniversary, "Not for Sale", shows a clear commitment to human life and creation threatened by intersectional dynamics of violence.

4.2 Theology of relationality and diversity instead of Lutheran and colonial "soli"

The second example of contextual theology comes from a different geographical region and from the pen of a Methodist theologian who, however, deliberately referred to Lutheran theology at a conference in the run-up to the Reformation anniversary. The lecture "Relational Theology and Reforming the Pacific"[20] by the rector of the Pacific Theological College in Fiji (PTC), Upolu Vaai, presents a decolonial approach to the Reformation and to Western theology and churches in general. Vaai believes that Western culture has suppressed and changed Pacific culture since colonial times. Pacific culture is a culture of diversity and relationality, of relationship, concreteness, physicality and corporeality which is marked by holistic spirituality and cosmological affinity to nature. Where there is relationship, there is "life", in diversity and variety.

19. Cuyatti: Glut (see note 12), 53.

20. Upolu Vaai: Relational Theology and Reforming the Pacific, in: Claudia Jahnel (ed.): Reflecting Reformation and the Call for Renewal in a Globalized and Post-Colonial World, Erlangen 2017, 201-214.

In contrast, says Vaai, Western culture is characterised by a "one truth" and a "one size fits all" ideology. "Thanks" to decades of "political, economic, social and religious change", this logic of standardisation at the expense of diversity has also come to prevail in the Pacific region:

> "What this ideology means is that there is only one system that works (this is often the mentality in local governments when it comes to economic development), one framework that fits (this is often the mentality in local policy makers), one interpretation that is correct (this is often the case in theological colleges in the region), one idea of God that is true (this is often part of the emerging culture of fundamentalism and recently denominationalism in the Pacific churches which has led to, for example, the Samoan government to propose a review of the constitution to ban Islam from Samoa), one language that is suitable (this is often the case in education when it comes to quality or higher education), and one culture that survives (this is often the case with local developments where development models are often borrowed from a foreign itulagi)."[21]

The Protestant churches in the Pacific had, among other things, reinforced this influence of Western culture by emphasising the Reformation "soli": *sola scriptura*, for example, had marginalised other faith narratives and other religious and cultural traditions (stories). The *sola gratia* introduced a very dualistic image of sinful man into Pacific culture.

Vaai's juxtaposition of Western (colonial) binary thinking and Pacific relational thinking of diversity is a narrative that can currently be found frequently in academic discourse, but which goes far beyond it to shape debates across society and politics. Actors from various interest groups in conjunction "with environmental activism, indigenous self-assertion, non-Western epistemologies, academic research and visual practice"[22] criticise a binary logic that separates reason from nature, mind from matter, and that supports an anthropocentric notion of human domination of nature, while ignoring interdependence and diversity. This commitment combines Pacific relationality with Andean contextual theologies of "ecotheosophy"[23]

21. Ibid., 204f.
22. Tom Holert: Verkomplizierung der Möglichkeiten. Gegenwartskunst, Epistemologie, Wissenspolitik, in: Annika Haas / Maximilian Haas / Hanna Magauer / Dennis Pohl (eds.): How to Relate. Wissen, Künste, Praktiken. Knowledge, Arts, Practices (Wissen der Künste 1), Bielefeld 2021, 44-58, here: 56.
23. Josef Estermann: Apu Taytayku. Religion und Theologie im andinen Kontext Lateinamerikas (Theologie interkulturell 23), Ostfildern 2012, 193.

or "African cosmovision"[24]. Decolonial philosophers or sociologists plead accordingly for the recognition of epistemological diversity that embraces both humans and nature. For example, the Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos postulates an "epistemicide", i.e. the murdering of indigenous relational forms of knowledge by Western knowledge, or by Western knowledge cultures' claim to superiority.[25] The characteristics of this Western epistemology include, as the Lutheran theologian Daniel Jara from Ecuador summarises:

> "... the priority of the scientific knowledge over any other knowledge or way of knowing; a deterministic scientific rigor; [...] a claim for a supra-cultural and supra-contextual validity of their conclusions; the search for truth as the right and unique representation of reality; a clear distinction between 1) subject and object [...] and 2) knowledge and its subject." [26]

De Sousa Santos opposes this epistemicide and the hegemonic power of the one Western system of knowledge, with the decolonising plea: "Another knowledge is possible!"[27] Vaai's approach amounts to a theological variant of this demand. In a kind of re-reading of Lutheran theology, he confronts the "soli" and the "one-truth" ideology with the relational impulses of Luther's Theologia Crucis:

> "Luther was more interested in God's 'relational-event' rather than the 'rational event' of defining God as contemporary scholarship tends to emphasize. The emphasis is not so much (on) developing a 'theory of the other' [...] but about 'relating to the other'".[28]

While Cuyatti emphasises from the outset the links to classical Lutheran topoi – theologia crucis and the priesthood of all believers, Vaai is predominantly concerned with the division and distinction from Lutheran theology. For him, it is only decolonial reading which reveals relationality as a core

24. Joram Tarusarira: African Religion. Climate Change and Knowledge Systems, in: Ecumenical Review 69 (2017) 398-410, here: 407.
25. Boaventura de Sousa Santos: Epistemologies of the South. Justice against Epistemicide, New York 2014.
26. Daniel Jara: "Absent" Christian Ways of Knowing from the Global South, in: Zeitschrift für Interkulturelle Theologie/ZMiss 1 (2021), 150-169, here: 155f.
27. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (ed.): Another Knowledge is Possible. Beyond Northern Epistemologies, London 2008.
28. Vaai: Theology (see note 20), 213.

concern of Lutheran theology, enabling him to construct a bridge to Pacific relationality. In this way, Vaai's hermeneutics pursues this aim,

> "[to] deconstruct and reconstruct some aspects of Luther's theology in order to develop a relational theology that is faithful to the Reformation tradition and is able to inform and address the many issues the Pacific communities are facing daily". [29]

For Vaai, continuity with Lutheran doctrine is not the standard to which Lutheran or Protestant interpretation should be orientated. Rather, the guiding principle should be whether the Reformation can make a "valuable contribution towards strengthening the decolonization and rethinking of the Pacific that we want".[30]

What Cuyatti and Vaai have in common, however, is the clear distinction from an opposing position. In Cuyatti's case, the pattern is delineation from the Catholic Church with its hierarchical organisation as well as from global economic injustice and violent political regimes. Obviously, the fact that Protestant churches in Latin America are minority churches and thus hardly likely to be accused of supporting ruling regimes makes it less problematic to identify with the aforementioned aspects of Lutheran doctrine and practice. In the Pacific, on the other hand, the seamless connection to Lutheran theology is suspicious, because the history of the powerful Protestant mission and the continuing social and political influence of Protestant churches make it plausible that Protestant theology is in league with ecclesiastical and political powers.

The comparison between Cuyatti and Vaai underlines the interdependence of context and contextual theology. Both approaches do indeed question mechanisms and structures of power and oppression and reinterpret Lutheran theology in terms of liberation theology or relationalism. But they also differ from one another. The reason for this is not least the position of the churches in society – in some cases as marginal minority or diaspora churches, in others as a majority church with considerable influence.

29. Ibid., 202.
30. Ibid., 202.

4.3 The contextuality of every theology and the transgressiveness of contextuality

Central to Cuyatti's and Vaai's contextual theologies are global developments and transcultural interlacing. These are responsible for the conditions of social, economic, cultural or epistemological inequality and injustice to which the contextual theologies respond critically. Nevertheless, in both approaches, a regional understanding of the closer definition of "contextual" continues to predominate. More recently, however, there have been shifts and intersectional extensions in the understanding of "context". Context can therefore also be defined as a development that transcends individual geographical areas and poses a challenge beyond local situations and even globally.

The Norwegian theologian Sigurd Bergmann's essay "Theology in the Anthropocene – and beyond?" in the collection of essays entitled "Contextual Theologies" is paradigmatic for this.[31] According to Bergmann, who follows Paul Crutzen and other researchers, we have been living since the industrial revolution in the 18th century in the geological age of the Anthropocene, i.e. in a time in which human life has left irreversible traces on planet Earth and sedimentation in its geological layers. These include global warming, the extinction of animal and plant species, or the presence of concrete or aluminium in rock strata.

The consequence for theology which Bergmann calls for in the context of the Anthropocene is to make this context the subject, critically rethinking creation theology and anthropology and allowing freedom to reformulate them. What is needed is a "Contextual Theopolitics of the earth experienced as the Ecocene".[32]

Two developments are noteworthy here – and also in other essays in the same volume "Contextual Theology". First of all, a distinction is made between the contextuality of every theology on the one hand and the way in which specific contextual theologies discuss it on the other. In their introduction, the editors of the essay collection define the latter process in more detail as "doing situated theology".[33] In view of the debate about the particularity of regional theologies (in the plural) and the long claimed supposed

31. Sigurd Bergmann: Theology in the Anthropocene – and beyond? In: Idem. / Mika Vähäkangas (eds.): Contextual Theology. Skills and Practices of Liberating Faith, Abingdon / New York 2021, 160-180.

32. Ibid., 161.

33. Sigurd Bergmann / Mika Vähäkangas: Doing Situated Theology. Introductory Remarks about the History, Method, and Diversity of Contextual Theology, in: Bergmann / Vähäkangas: Theology (see note 31), 1-14.

universality of European theology (in the singular), the way in which the editors point out that obviously every theology is contextual is revolutionary and groundbreaking. It follows that no theology today can avoid being theology in the context of the Anthropocene or in the context of migration[34], even if it does not explicitly address this challenge and must not always do so. But the assertion that a theology is valid for all space and time is fundamentally no longer tenable.

The second noteworthy development is the shift in the conceptualisation of "context" away from a geographically regional understanding to one that crosses geographical borders. Contextual theologies thus reach a "new level", as the doyen of contextual theology, Stephen Bevans, together with Louis Luzbetak, judges in the blurb of "Contextual Theology":

> "While each essay is rooted in its own particular context – South Africa, Costa Rica, northern Finland, India, parts of Europe – each is also rooted in a World Christianity, postcolonial, and postmodern context as well. They demonstrate that contextual theologizing needs to be and is indeed an integral, guiding perspective of any theologizing today."[35]

The "new level" is thus characterised by the fact that globally interconnecting challenges come into view more strongly, are defined as context and are either more or less regionally anchored.

4.4 Intersectionality and body-relatedness of contextual theologies

Contextual theologies today take up the dynamics of intersectional discrimination increasingly and, related to this, focus more attention on the body. The concept of intersectionality goes back to Kimberlé Crenshaw. The metaphor of "intersection" – that is to say, "overlapping" – is meant to draw attention to intersections of discrimination, involving at the same time multiple discriminations based on gender, racialisation, class, religion, age, health, etc. This

34. Cf. Claudia Jahnel: Migration – Macht – Theologie. Prolegomena einer Theologie im Kontext von Migration und Postmigration, in: Georg Etzelmüller / Claudia Rammelt (eds.): Migrationskirchen. Internationalisierung und Pluralisierung, Leipzig 2021, 127-150.

35. Stephen B. Bevans / Louis J. Luzbetak: Blurb of the book: Bergmann / Vähäkangas: Theology (see note 31).

list shows that discrimination is often connected with the body. Different "categories of discrimination" often reinforce each other.

Contextual theologies that address gender-related discrimination mechanisms in addition to regional challenges can be described as almost classic. In "Daughters of Anowa", for example, Mercy Amba Oduyoye develops a contextual theology that sees itself as African *and* feminist.[36] Even earlier, from the end of the 1970s, Asian women theologians began to criticise their male colleagues: they drew up theologies of inculturation as well as contextual and liberation theologies, but did not question the patriarchal structures of their traditions that made women victims of violence. However, according to the Chinese theologian Kwok Pui Lan, women are usually the "poorest of the poor, the most voiceless among the oppressed, the most exploited among the exploited".[37] They are treated, according to Korean theologian Chung Hyung Kyung, like "no-bodies" whose double marginalisation goes unnoticed.[38]

Within "Black Theology", too, intersectional differentiations in regional contexts are increasingly being addressed. Michelle Gonzales, for example, shows in "Afro-Cuban Theology"[39] that in Cuba historical, cultural and political developments make racial discrimination, and the resulting "Black Theologies" there, clearly different from racial discrimination and "Black Theologies" in the USA. A universal "Blackness" in the sense of a common experience based on a skin colour read as "Black" is a construct that cannot be maintained since there is a distinction between Afro-American and Cuban-American. In addition to discrimination on the basis of skin colour, there are different categories of discrimination, such as that of the Spanish language or of Santeria religiosity.[40]

For Anthony Pinn, too, using the term "Black" to describe the contextual "Black Theology" is too schematic.[41] The differentiation advocated by this US theologian, however, focuses less on regional historical differences. Rather, he criticises the fact that the "black body" in Black Theology is constructed as an abstract symbol. The concrete and thus contextual "lived body", on the

36. Mercy Amba Oduyoye: Daughters of Anowa. African Women and Patriarchy, New York 1995.

37. Pui Lan Kwok: God Weeps with our Pain, in: EAJT 2 (1984), 228-232, here: 229.

38. Chung Hyung Kyung: Struggle to Be the Sun Again. Introducing Asian Women's Theology, Maryknoll 1990, 39.

39. Michelle Gonzales: Afro-Cuban Theology. Religion, Race, Culture, and Identity, Gainesville, Fl. 2006.

40. Ibid., 132.

41. Anthony B. Pinn: Embodiment and the New Shape of Black Theological Thought, New York 2010.

other hand, which makes specific and individual experiences, receives little attention in Black Theology.[42]

The approaches taken by recent contextual theologies as outlined above differ significantly from each other, especially with regard to their understanding of context. While the approaches of Cuyatti and Vaai still define context predominantly from a geographical point of view, Bergmann points out that contexts in a globalised and interconnected world cannot be limited geographically – even if climate change associated with the Anthropocene naturally affects different regions with different strength. In feminist and gender theologies, as well as in recent Black theologies, the understanding of context shifts in yet another way: by entwining global challenges as well as those of a regional context with intersectional categories of discrimination.

Besides the differences, there are also common tendencies. These include the interest in making other "stories" heard, criticism of the monopoly of Western knowledge culture and questioning of Western dominance in theological interpretation, a stronger inclusion of religious practice and non-academic theological resources in theological reflection, an approach that goes beyond the boundaries of denomination and disciplines, the entwining of contextual and intrasectional challenges and, finally, the search for ways to express epistemological polyphony without abandoning all that unifies and the theological continuity.

5. Contextual theologies as collaborative practice in diversity

Finally, I would like to present an example that integrates these new aspects of contextual theologies and develops in addition another groundbreaking perspective. It is the message of the LWF International Conference in Windhoek in 2015, entitled "Global Perspectives on the Reformation: Interactions between Theology, Politics and Economics".[43]

The title betrays a critical engagement with the Reformation tradition from a global perspective. "Global" in this case signifies by no means uni-

42. Cf. ibid., 3.

43. Anne Burghardt / Simone Sinn (eds.), Global Perspectives on the Reformation. Interactions between Theology, Politics and Economics, Windhoek, 2015, 153-155 (available at: https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/doc_61_windhoek_en_low.pdf; viewed on 19.02.22)

versal. Rather, "global" refers to the diversity of approaches, knowledge systems and approaches to Reformation theology as well as their intercultural connectedness. It is significant that the Lutheran "soli", and thus doctrinal contents, are not emphasised as the central characteristics and unifying bond of a Reformation theology. Rather, the common ground consists in common orientations, which are defined in more detail by four adjectives with "C": transformative theology in the sense of the Reformation is contextual, critical, creative, and concrete.

"Contextual" does not refer here to regional specificities, but to specific forms of knowledge and practice, which can be further defined as follows:

1. "Different ways of hearing God's word".
2. "Different ways of relating to God's presence."
3. "Different ways of reflecting on and addressing diverse needs around the globe."
4. "Different ways of engaging with other faith traditions."

Contextual diversity is thus not reduced to regional differences either. Rather, the message does not specify the factors which cause the contextually different ways of hearing God's Word, interpreting it and letting it shape one's own relationship to the world and to people of other faith convictions. Criticism is only aimed at the universalisation of one's own contextual positions:

> "Sensitivity to context reveals the need for critical reflection on one's own universalizing assumptions and on the context. Critical reflection discloses that some dynamics of power and privilege need to be overthrown, which invites creativity which in turn generates concrete actions."[44]

Thus the different "Cs" – contextual, critical, creative, concrete – correct each other. In this way the LWF statement takes the need for affiliation to context seriously as well as the fact that knowledge and theology are situational. At the same time, however, it broadens the perspective for a polyphony of transformative theologies and knowledge systems. This enables creative developments of Reformation theology and thus establishes the prerequisite for concrete, critical action.

The Namibia Message is forward-looking, but also draws attention to the critical-constructive potential of dialogue and encounter as a common

44. Ibid., 154.

form for the practice of contextual theologies. Dialogue and encounter build bridges between particular hybrid specificities of culture or epistemology and the translocal challenges that urgently require a common practice.

Lutheran Identity / Identities?

Miniaturising the Holy Spirit?

Lutheran identity in pneumatological perspective

Jennifer Wasmuth

1. Introduction

In theological treatises on Lutheran pneumatology, it is more or less a topos that they start with a reference to the widespread perception of a "Spirit-forgetfulness" in Lutheran theology and piety, and go on by emphasising that the Reformation sources strike a different note and should be rediscovered in the context of contemporary "obsession with the Spirit",[1] and that especially with regard to contemporary systematic theology, one cannot simply speak of a "neglect" of the Holy Spirit.[2]

These contrasting remarks, which can regularly be observed, seem to point to an ambivalence that is peculiar to Lutheran pneumatology. The following paper will therefore explore this ambivalence, first of all with the help of a study by the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg which does not purport to be dealing with Lutheran identity in a pneumatological perspective, but is rather looking to describe the principal features of Lutheran identity. In connection with this study, the question to be examined is this:

1. Cf. Cheryl M. Peterson: Rediscovering Pneumatology in the "Age of the Spirit". A North American Lutheran Contribution, in: Dialog 58 (2019), 102-108; Jennifer Wasmuth: "The Holy Spirit has Called Me through the Gospel". The Third Article of Luther's Small Catechism as a Basic Text of Lutheran Ecclesiology, in: Chad Rimmer / Cheryl M. Peterson (eds.): We Believe in the Holy Spirit. Global Perspectives on Lutheran Identities (LWF Documentation 63), Leipzig 2021, 101-114.
2. Cf. Hans-Peter Großhans: Vernachlässigter Geist? Zur Bedeutung der Pneumatologie in der neuesten evangelischen Dogmatik, in: Petra Bosse-Huber / Konstantinos Vliagkoftis / Wolfram Langpape (eds.): Wir glauben an den Heiligen Geist. XVII. Begegnung im bilateralen theologischen Dialog zwischen der EKD und dem Ökumenischen Patriarchat (Konstantinopel XVII) (Beihefte zur Ökumenischen Rundschau 130), Leipzig 2021, 93-118; Bernd Oberdorfer: Embodied Spirit. Outlines of Lutheran Pneumatology, in: Rimmer / Peterson: Holy Spirit (see note 1), 47-58.

how far is the Holy Spirit an object of discussion here, in a fundamental reflection on Lutheran identity?

Taking the result of the investigation of this study as a starting point, we take a look back at Rudolf Otto, a Lutheran theologian who deliberately did not attempt to refute the aforementioned thesis of "Spirit-forgetfulness", but who, on the contrary, did everything he could to turn the question mark into an exclamation mark. Accordingly, the pneumatological figures of reasoning still present in Luther must be eliminated if Luther's actual concern is to be taken into account.

The extent to which this approach of a decidedly Lutheran "anti-pneumatology" was not able to convince is shown by two selected approaches to contemporary Lutheran pneumatology: the approach of Christian Henning and Christian Danz. In contrast, however, these approaches not only demonstrate the lasting ambivalence of Lutheran thinking about the Holy Spirit. Rather, in their definition of the Spirit's activity, they raise questions that seem worthy of consideration for future processes of Lutheran identity formation and are therefore briefly outlined in conclusion.

2. "Lutheran Identity" – Study by the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg

In 2019, the study "Lutheran Identity" was published by the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg.[3] It undertakes the ambitious attempt to define Lutheran identity with respect to systematic theology and ecumenism in three sets of theses. Firstly, it describes fundamental theological convictions (thesis set 1),[4] then it locates Lutheranism in relation to the unity of the church (thesis set 2), and finally it outlines ecumenical challenges (thesis set 3).

If one follows this study, then the significance of the Holy Spirit in Lutheran understanding consists mainly in awakening faith in Christ by attachment to the biblical word of the gospel. Accordingly, at the very beginning of the study, the central event of salvation, the incarnation, is brought into connection with the work of the Holy Spirit: it is the Holy Spirit who creates belief

3. Theodor Dieter (ed.): Lutherische Identität / Lutheran Identity, Leipzig 2019 (available at: https://ecumenical-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/06219_Dieter_Lutheran_Identity_druck.pdf, viewed on 5.11.2022).
4. This series of theses is a continuation of a series of theses formulated in the 1970s and published by the Institute in 1977 under the same title "Lutheran Identity".

in this event. To quote the study: "In the humanity of the Word and in the corporality of the sacraments, God grants faith by the Holy Spirit".[5]

The study goes on to develop this idea ecclesiologically under the heading "The proclamation of the Word and the administration of the sacraments are the necessary means of salvation, means by which Christ through the Holy Spirit creates, preserves, and sends his church into the world."[6] The significance of the Holy Spirit for creation is also taken into consideration,[7] but it plays a lesser role than the reflections on the soteriological and ecclesiological significance.[8]

That the normativity of the biblical word[9] is the basis of Lutheran biblical piety[10] should not be misinterpreted as a fundamentalist understanding of the Bible, which, according to the study, consists precisely in not taking sufficient account of the importance of the Holy Spirit when interpreting the Bible. As emphasised with reference to Luther and his "triad: prayer (asking the Holy Spirit to grant true understanding of the text), meditation (attending to the whole of the text to allow it to say what it wants to say), and afflictions (the Bible confronting the reader, whose life may be in contradiction to the text). In Latin this is called *oratio, meditatio, tentatio*.)"[11], not every word of the Bible is in Lutheran understanding to be understood directly as the Word of God and to be applied directly to the present. Rather, it is the Holy Spirit "who makes the written text the living Word of God."[12]

5. Dieter: Identity (see note 3), 84 (section 5); citing the "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification", section 14 similarly states that justification "means that Christ himself is our righteousness, in which we share *through* the Holy Spirit in accord with the will of the Father" (ibid., 84f – italics by this author).
6. Ibid., 87-88, also 102 (section 63), where it says: "That human beings hear this call and believe it is the work of the Holy Spirit, who at the same time founds the church", and 104 (section 67).
7. Cf. ibid., 91-94. The section is dedicated to the understanding of "the world as the good creation of God who, by his Word and Spirit, brings about and preserves all that is and leads this same world for his glory".
8. This is also reflected, among other things, in the fact that the work of the Holy Spirit is brought into association with the progress of ecumenism: "If the results of the dialogues and ecumenical encounters are received and become binding in all domains of the church's life, one should regard this as the work of the Holy Spirit" (ibid., 114 [section 91]).
9. On this ibid., 97 (section 48).
10. Thus ibid., 125 (section 118).
11. Ibid., 125 (section 118).
12. Ibid., 125 (section 117).

The study also sees Lutheran understanding not only in opposition to a fundamentalist understanding of the Bible, but also to a spiritualist understanding, expressed particularly in the form of a *prosperity gospel.* In contrast, Lutheran faith cannot be reconciled with a triumphalist view of the church "which would overlook its low estate": rather, it calls to mind "a piety that recognizes God's power to be concealed behind weakness".[13]

Taken all together, these statements on the Holy Spirit quoted here from the study indicate on the one hand that the Holy Spirit is of central importance for Lutheran identity: without the Holy Spirit, neither a right understanding of Scripture, nor true faith in Christ, nor the church as a communion of saints is conceivable. On the other hand, it is evident that the aspects of soteriology and ecclesiology are in the foreground; theological statements on the Trinity are also contained, but only formulaically.[14] The extent to which the Holy Spirit is to be understood as a *person* in the Trinitarian sense is not explained. Also in terms of creation theology, the statements remain vague; the Holy Spirit is only described in its instrumental function ("through the Holy Spirit"), while spiritualistic tendencies are rejected.

Altogether, this raises the question: when it comes to Lutheran identity, does the Holy Spirit indeed have a central significance for the understanding of faith and church, but not for the understanding of God and creation? Does that mean that one cannot allege that there is a general Lutheran "Spirit-forgetfulness"[15], but maybe that there is a tendency towards "dwarfing"[16]? A kind of miniaturisation that does not perceive the Holy Spirit in all its possibilities?

That there are indications of such a tendency will be demonstrated in the following with the help of a "very valuable work".[17] In this paper, which claims to go with Luther beyond Luther, the significance of the Holy Spirit for a modern Lutheran theology is problematised, unlike in the study of the Strasbourg Institute. This is based on a strong foundation supported by Luther's writings.

13. Ibid., 83 (section 7).
14. Thus ibid., 137 (section 153), when it says: "Every worship service of a community assembled around altar and pulpit in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is celebrated in communion with the whole church, which is the body of Christ."
15. Cf. Christian Danz / Michael Murrmann-Kahl (eds.): Zwischen Geistvergessenheit und Geistversessenheit. Perspektiven der Pneumatologie im 21. Jahrhundert (Dogmatik in der Moderne 7), Tübingen 2014, 1-12.
16. Thus Jörg Lauster: Der heilige Geist. Eine Biographie, Munich 2021, 200-203, with a view to "scriptural fetishism" in Christianity.
17. Thus Ferdinand Kattenbusch: Rez. Otto, Die Anschauung vom Heiligen Geiste bei Luther, in: ThLZ 26 (1900), 708-712, who writes: "It captivated me from the first to the last page" (706).

3. Fundamental enquiries into a Lutheran theology of the Holy Spirit: Rudolf Otto (1869-1937)

Rudolf Otto, whose work "*Das Heilige*" (The Idea of the Holy), first published in 1917, was to make him famous as a scholar of religious studies up to the present day, received his licentiate in theology in 1898 with a dissertation of barely more than a hundred pages. The title of this dissertation is: „*Die Anschauung vom heiligen Geiste bei Luther. Eine historisch-dogmatische Untersuchung*" (Luther's View of the Holy Spirit. A historical dogmatic study.)

The paper is of interest because Otto specifically examines Lutheran core statements on pneumatology and asks about their theological plausibility. Otto's aim is not to address the dogmatic treatment of the Holy Spirit as a whole and to correct possible restrictions. Rather, he focuses on the question of the soteriological significance of the Holy Spirit – whether the role of the Holy Spirit is to be described here in the way traditionally done by Lutherans, i.e. whether it is true, to use Otto's words, that Luther's views on the "fundamental religious experience", which he

> "himself always associated with 'spiritus sanctus', really finds its proper and exact expression in this term according to its traditional meaning in the church; here he develops a particular and characteristic collection of ideas, which involves not only the spiritual potency itself, the origin of the Christians' new ways of thinking, but also especially the way in which this potency is intended to be effective."[18]

Otto, on the other hand, assumes that Luther himself was not aware that his "fundamental religious experience" had resulted in a new understanding of the Holy Spirit. Luther was therefore able to make ample use of traditional formulations[19] and in this way gave the impression that for him the Holy

18. Rudolf Otto: Die Anschauung vom heiligen Geiste bei Luther. Eine historisch-dogmatische Untersuchung, Göttingen 1898, 1.

19. This concerns first of all Luther's ideas about the *nature* of the Holy Spirit ('the spiritual potency itself'). Although Otto sees cautious attempts at a new formulation of the Trinitarian dogma that go beyond the orthodox doctrinal tradition ("Lombard-Augustine"), overall he notes in Luther "a willing, conservative adoption of the authoritative tradition without a particularly far-reaching interest in comprehending and working on the dogmatic material, or even in its further development" (ibid., 9). According to Otto, Luther's ideas with regard to the *work* of the Holy Spirit ('the way in which this potency is thought to be effective') are similarly traditional. Luther had amalgamated the two traditional conceptions of the Holy Spirit as *dominus deus* (the Holy Spirit as Lord over the spiritual means of baptism, the ministry of preaching, etc.) and *donum*

Spirit continued to have the meaning anchored in church tradition, but this cannot be upheld, as Otto seeks to make clear in the course of his dissertation.[20]

For even if Luther remained attached to traditional ideas, on closer examination these do not prove to be definitive or, as Otto would say, "original". Rather, it is often enough the case that Luther's

> "explanations concerning spiritual life and the divine effect and influence on it have pushed into the background or completely ignored dogmatic constructions. God himself and God alone, free of diremption by functions or persons, is then the subject of all causation and the object of all feeling."[21]

According to Otto, however, the function of the Holy Spirit, insofar as it plays a role at all, is reduced by Luther to a purely instrumental one: *per spiritum sanctum*. The Holy Spirit simply puts God's or Christ's will into practice. For Luther, the Holy Spirit is therefore to be regarded as subordinate to God, and it is, according to Otto, this "purely subordinating view of the Spirit and its relationship to God" that constitutes Luther's "immediate, underlying conception", "which is frequently pervasive, making a mockery of all dogmatic structuring".[22]

In his first step of argumentation, which aims at a summary of Luther's views on the Holy Spirit, Otto comes to the conclusion that a *depotentiation of* the Holy Spirit is characteristic for Luther, while in his second step he goes more deeply into this finding by examining Luther's definition of the relationship between the Holy Spirit, faith and the Word more closely. The backdrop to this is the question already raised in the course of the presentation of Luther's traditional ideas on the work of the Holy Spirit, whether in Luther the new life is to be located "in the context of empirical, clear psy-

divinum (the Holy Spirit as gift) and thus remained attached to a supranatural understanding. How the effect manifested itself empirically-psychologically, on the other hand, remained open. Luther indeed emphasised the religious effects more than previous tradition when he described the Holy Spirit as a "comforter" and "giver of freedom" (cf. ibid., 15), but he did not break away from a supranatural approach here either.

20. Otto states in this context: "All of his dogmatic explanations are more instructive than pleasing. Nowhere in them does it emerge clearly and tangibly that these traditional terms really grew organically and necessarily out of one's own religious experience. [...] They stand a priori as sacred, fixed forms" (ibid., 11).

21. Ibid., 17.

22. Ibid., 19; accordingly, Otto sums up: "And so 'Lutheran' doctrine of the Spirit can only speak of it as the eternal divine energy through which God works all in all, especially all that is 'spiritual'" (95).

chological causation" or "in the darkness and mystery of purely supranatural miraculous effects".[23]

However, in order to be able to determine the relationship between the Holy Spirit, faith and the Word more precisely, Otto proceeds to formulate two series of contrasting statements, which on the one hand describe the Holy Spirit, but on the other hand faith as the cause of new life in Christ and the Word as the cause of faith:

> "The new life must be worked by *the Spirit* from the very first, in all its parts, until it is consummated by the resurrection from the dead. That is Luther's thinking. Likewise Luther thinks that *faith* works the new life, caput et fons omnium virtutem, totius vitae. It is *the Spirit* which imparts faith, pouring it out and working wonderfully from above. This is Luther's thinking. Likewise, Luther thinks that faith comes from the preaching, through the *Word*, which gives and creates everything."[24]

Here it is not appropriate to reproduce Otto's analysis, which is the actual heart of his paper, and to test its validity. Rather, the focus here is solely on the result of the analysis, which comes down to the fact that for Luther faith is to be understood as the "sufficient ground of the new life" and the Word as the "sufficient ground of faith". The Holy Spirit, on the other hand, has only a metaphorical meaning, serving Luther solely as a "powerful form of speech, a stylish costume".[25] And this also applies in view of the question of why not all come to faith who hear the proclamation of the Word of God. For according to Otto, this question cannot be answered with the typical Lutheran concept of the "Spirit that blows where it wants to."[26] In this case, one must rather go back to the idea of predestination, which is indispensable to Luther's religious experience, to the "great general mystery" which says that when "God, according to his eternal counsel and with his power, determined the spiritual state of the individual personality, he opened or closed their ears."[27] As a result, the Holy Spirit is thus for Otto an entity that, unlike in the conventional Lutheran doctrine, is soteriologically

23. Ibid., 20.
24. Ibid., 25.
25. Ibid., 72.
26. Cf. Jn 3:8; also CA 5, in: Robert Kolb / Timothy J. Wengert (ed.): The Book of Concord. The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Minneapolis 2000, 40f.
27. Otto: Anschauung (see note 18), 91.

wihout significance,[28] and which would have to be completely reconceptualised theologically as "divine energy".[29]

4. Lutheran Pneumatology in the 21st Century: Selected New Approaches

In the course of the 20th/21st century, the fundamental questions formulated by Rudolf Otto for a Lutheran pneumatology have not caused people to abandon Lutheran pneumatology. On the contrary, there is a whole series of interesting pneumatological drafts from Lutheran pens. Two newer approaches in the German-speaking world will be dealt with in the following in all brevity.[30]

4.1 Christian Henning

First of all, we should mention Christian Henning's habilitation thesis, which was presented at the Faculty of Theology in Erlangen. Published in 2000, it is entitled „*Die evangelische Lehre vom Heiligen Geist und seiner Person. Studien zur Architektur protestantischer Pneumatologie im 20. Jahrhundert*" (The Protestant Doctrine of the Holy Spirit and its Person. Studies on the Architecture of Protestant Pneumatology in the 20th Century). The title, as well as the entire ductus of the thesis, conceal what this text actually has to offer:

28. Cf. ibid., 95: "*Gratia dei: Christus: ecclesia* (ministerium verbi): *verbum: fides: libertas Christiana* – these terms, in truth the pearls and mysteries of the evangelical rosary, form the causal chain of all spiritual experience and events. And the links of this chain are firmly and exactly joined to one another. They themselves constitute the actual independent and sufficient causal nexus, allow nothing to come between them, and exclude false divisions and compromises as well as indistinct 'throughs', 'ins' and 'withs'. Filling the space completely, they take the place of the 'spiritus sanctus', replacing it entirely in the empirical perspective, and cut it off in its traditional meaning as a supra-psychological cause of the nova vita or as an otherworldly coefficient of causes in this world" (italics in the original).
29. Otto only hints at this idea, but it is clear that this would mean abandoning the "Augustinian form of dogma", cf. ibid. 106.
30. In the international context, reference should be made to Martin Timóteo Dietz: De libertate et servitute spiritus. Pneumatologie in Luthers Freiheitstraktat (FSÖTh 146), Göttingen 2015, Pekka Kärkkäinen: Luthers trinitarische Theologie des Heiligen Geistes (VIEG 208), Mainz 2005, and Peterson: Pneumatology (see note 1).

an independent, unquestionably Lutheran approach to pneumatology in the sense of the study of the Strasbourg Institute mentioned in the introduction.

The thesis is divided into two main parts, whereby the first is considerably more extensive than the second. Here, Henning undertakes the task of throwing light on the "Protestant doctrine of the Holy Spirit and its person in German-language theology of the 20th century" on the basis of influential systematic conceptions. Henning is not interested in specifically Lutheran approaches; on the contrary, he is concerned with the overall development of Protestant theology in its manifold interdependencies and profiled elaborations of pneumatology. However, conceptions of Lutheran theologians also appear in this context.

Henning presents his own reflections in the second main part of his thesis, whereby one gains the impression that the first part was only intended to offer the prolegomena for what is systematically unfolded in the second, albeit considerably shorter, section. The result of the historical, genetic presentation is that Henning does not rate any of the approaches he describes as ultimately convincing, and this is because in none of them is the personhood of the Holy Spirit adequately addressed:

> "The Holy Spirit is defined in a multitude of different ways: as the force of evidence (Timm), as the revelation of the Lord (Barth), as the power of life, as the divine movement of life as a whole and its third momentum (Tillich), as a field of energy and strength, as the origin of all life and eternal gift (Pannenberg), as the power to overcome suffering and to make a new creation (Moltmann), as the power of reason (Dantine), as the power to overcome crises (Welker, Müller-Fahrenholz), as the designation of God's being (Barth, Tillich, Pannenberg, Moltmann)."[31]

But because in Henning's view the idea of personhood remains underdetermined, and in some cases does not occur at all, he himself undertakes to develop an approach with which the personhood of the Holy Spirit can be made plausible. This is done with the help of a concept of person which Henning reformulates on the basis of Trinitarian theological considerations and seeks to make pneumatologically fruitful. The guidelines are the idea of inner dialogue and the idea of identity.

It appears noticeable that Henning places himself in a frame of reference which goes beyond the theological approaches dealt with in the first main section and also includes significant philosophical approaches. To name just

31. Christian Henning: Die evangelische Lehre vom Heiligen Geist und seiner Person. Studien zur Architektur protestantischer Pneumatologie im 20. Jahrhundert, Gütersloh 2000, 296.

one example, Henning draws on the theories of the American philosopher George Herbert Mead and the French philosopher Paul Ricœur to define the concept of identity more precisely.[32] He also points out the fundamental necessity of defining the theological concept of person in such a way that "it remains analogous to the modern philosophical concept of person".[33] However, there is no comparable intensive reference to Luther, as was characteristic for Otto. Nevertheless, Henning's own approach may be understood as one with which genuine Lutheran concerns are taken up in pneumatology. This can be seen, for example, in dealing with the "distinguishing of the spirits"[34] or also with biblical tradition as the "verbal clothing" of the Holy Spirit.[35] However, this is particularly evident in what Henning describes as central to his approach, namely the assumption that

> "an encounter between God and a human takes place in inner dialogue. In this encounter, God constitutes the individual as a pardoned sinner and constitutes himself as the Holy Spirit, the counterpart to the individual. In the continuation of this dialogue, the Holy Spirit and the justified sinner build up their identity in mutual self-interpretation and reveal it to one another in dialogue." [36]

Henning goes on to develop this idea further, characteristically in terms of (biblical) hermeneutics, soteriology and ecclesiology.[37]

4.2 Christian Danz

Unlike Christian Henning, the theologian Christian Danz, who teaches in Vienna, explicitly places himself in the tradition of Reformation theology with his Pneumatology, published in 2019. Although he too would probably not call his draft a *Lutheran* pneumatology, the references to Luther and as well as to old Lutheran orthodoxy are striking. This is evident not only in the explicit references – Luther is quoted comparatively often – but also in the basic decision underlying the pneumatology, in its structure as well as in the unfolding of the individual structural elements.

32. Cf. ibid., 344-373.
33. Ibid., 17.
34. Cf. ibid., 385-388.
35. Cf. ibid., 399-403.
36. Ibid., 305.
37. Cf. ibid., 404-426.

After a thorough review of pneumatological conceptions, which differs from Henning's by refraining from describing them, but rather presents the history of problems associated with them, Danz decides in favour of a Christological soteriological version of pneumatology. Thus it is the sentence: "The Holy Spirit reminds us of Jesus Christ"[38] which forms the focal point of his pneumatology. The reasons for the Christological soteriological version of pneumatology are even more evident in Danz's work than in Henning's: they are to be found in the manifold, partly contradictory definitions of the Holy Spirit found in the pneumatological conceptions discussed and in the tendencies towards an ever greater delimitation of the work of the Holy Spirit which, in Danz's view, do not serve the purpose of clarification but ultimately lead to uncertainty as to what is to be understood dogmatically by the Holy Spirit. As a consequence, Danz therefore maintains that one should

> "keep away from universal pneumatological theories of integration and relate the Holy Spirit to the Christian religion. The doctrine of the Spirit is about a self-description of Christianity, and not about installing the Spirit of God as the universal principle of a total integration of reality."[39]

Danz unfolds his central guiding principle by analysing as the essential aspects of the "remembrance of Jesus Christ" a giver of the gift (the remembrance), this gift itself as well as its recipient, and determines these aspects as structural momenta of the tradition for which the Holy Spirit stands.[40] In the presentation of his own pneumatological conception, Danz uses a structure which corresponds to these structural momenta by explaining what is to be understood *firstly* by the Spirit as the giver of the gift, *secondly* by the gift of the Spirit, and *thirdly* by appropriation of the Spirit. In doing so, Danz himself refers to the traditions he is following here: the "classical themes of the doctrine of the Spirit – ecclesiology, media salutis and ordo salutis."[41]

In the treatment of the individual structural elements, references to the Lutheran tradition are also evident, for example in the context of the ecclesiological and sacramental reflections necessary for understanding the Spirit.[42]

38. Christian Danz: Gottes Geist. Eine Pneumatologie, Tübingen 2019, 171.
39. Ibid., 94.
40. Cf. ibid., 188: "With the Spirit of God, the Christian religion presents inwardly its dependence on the memory of Jesus Christ and in this way sees itself as a creative self-appropriation as religion in the process of transmission".
41. Ibid., 5.
42. Cf. ibid., 228-241 and 283-288.

However, the reformulations which Danz himself had prefigured also become concrete here,[43] for example, when the personhood of the Holy Spirit is affirmed, but not justified in terms of the Trinity, but in terms of Christology.[44]

5. Conclusion and outlook

The study of the pneumatological conceptions selected here, which may not have been purposely conceived as *Lutheran* approaches by their authors[45] but nonetheless show recognisably Lutheran traces, allows one to state generally that the Holy Spirit has a firm place in Lutheran theology. In other words, these approaches confirm the findings of the Strasbourg Institute's study mentioned above, namely that the Holy Spirit is an essential element of Lutheran identity. This is even proved by Otto's dissertation, whose detailed critique, based on an intensive examination of Luther's understanding of the Holy Spirit, indicates the importance of this topic for Lutheran theology. The approaches of Henning and Danz underline this importance for contemporary Lutheran theology. Although they position themselves in the pneumatological discourses of the 20th and 21st centuries, their approaches cannot be understood solely as a reaction to a current "boom" in pneumatological questions.[46] Rather, they confer upon pneumatology a fundamental theological status, making pneumatology indispensable for Lutheran dogmatic thinking. In this respect, these approaches at the beginning of the 21st century can be seen as counter-designs to Otto, whose approach a good hundred years earlier aimed at a depotentiation of the Holy Spirit and even the abandonment of pneumatology.

Remarkably, all the approaches discussed here – including that of the study by the Ecumenical Institute – converge in their soteriological, Christological focus of pneumatology. This focus therefore seems to be an essential trait of Lutheran pneumatology: to think of the Holy Spirit within the framework of

43. Cf. ibid., 205, where he formulates: "With the differentiation of the Spirit into giver, gift and appropriation, the elements taken to build the memory of Jesus Christ, the theme of old Lutheran dogmatics is taken up, but reformulated against the horizon of modern problems".

44. Cf. ibid., 206-226.

45. Cf. Henning: Lehre (see note 31), 344, who makes it clear here that he is concerned with questions of "Christian identity".

46. Cf. ibid., 9, also Danz: Gottes Geist (s. note 38), 7-39 (on the "rediscovery of the Spirit of God").

the order of grace, but not of the order of nature. However, this confirms the ambivalence noted at the beginning, and the question raised in the context of the study of the Ecumenical Institute reemerges: does this focus bring with it a reduced perception of the Holy Spirit? Is a kind of "miniaturising of the Holy Spirit" typical for Lutheran identity?

With Henning and Danz, one could reply on the one hand that precisely the delimitation of the definition of the Holy Spirit itself and of its work, taking it beyond the soteriological Christological significance, frequently leads to a seemingly arbitrary functionalisation of the Holy Spirit, ultimately making its significance unrecognisable. The miniaturisation or "dwarfing of the Holy Spirit" on the Lutheran side, on the other hand, determines the Holy Spirit once again[47] and frees it from being used in all kinds of ways as a variable to fill in gaps in explanation, without having any say of its own.

Taking another position, it could be argued that as a consequence of the soteriological Christological focus of pneumatology Lutheran theology can hardly make mention of the Holy Spirit in contexts which were naturally still realms of the work of the Holy Spirit, not only for Luther himself,[48] but which are also highly relevant in the life-world. In a situation where individual humans as well as whole societies face the challenges of an ecological crisis of unimagined proportions, or are confronted with a global pandemic – should Lutheran theology remain silent? Would that not indeed underestimate the Holy Spirit's possibilities? On the one hand, a soteriological Christological version of pneumatology makes sense, but on the other hand, it seems necessary to pursue these questions in the future – if Lutheran identity is not to be seen to leave current challenges theologically unanswered.

47. In this sense also Notger Slenczka: Das Wunder des Durchschnittlichen. Die systematisch-theologische Reflexion der lutherischen Pneumatologie angesichts charismatischer Bewegungen, in: Lutherische Kirche in der Welt 54 (2007), 57-77.

48. Thus Luther says: "Spiritus sancti duplici modo est in hominibus. Primo generali quadam actione, qua conservat eos et caeteras creaturas Dei. Deinde datur enim piis Spiritus sanctus a Christo" (WA 39 II; 239, 29-31). Cf. also Michael Plathow: Der Geist hilft unserer Schwachheit auf. Ein aktualisierender Bericht zu M. Luthers Rede vom heiligen Geist, in: KuD 40 (1994), 143-169, here: 163-165, who points out here that Luther understood the anointing of the sick according to Jam 5:14f as the healing work of the Holy Spirit.

Lutheran Identity through Common Priesthood?

Reflections on doctrine and life in the 16th century

Nicole Grochowina

Is the "priesthood of all believers" an indispensable part of Lutheran identity? In 2017, when the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) began to ask what constitutes Lutheran identity, or rather Lutheran identities, it could hardly avoid this question. After all, the "priesthood of all believers" goes "right to the heart of Reformation theology"[1], stemming as it does directly from the Lutheran doctrine of justification.

Nevertheless, the answers to a questionnaire on Lutheran identity which the LWF received from the Lutheran world in 2019 present a surprising picture: "common priesthood" does not appear here as a specific keyword. The importance of freedom is indeed stressed, particularly "evangelical freedom", but ultimately it seems that Lutheran identity – depending on the region and continent – is determined first and foremost by issues that are virulent in the respective contexts and concepts of faith and church. From the perspective of contextual theology, this result was to be expected.[2] On the other hand, from the perspective of those who prefer to see the "priesthood of all believers" as the driving force for the identity of worldwide Lutheranism this is quite surprising.[3]

1. Hans-Martin Barth: Einander Priester sein. Allgemeines Priestertum in ökumenischer Perspektive, Göttingen 1996, 30.
2. Cf. Sigurd Bergmann / Mika Vähäkangas (eds.): Contextual Theology. Skills and Practices of Liberating Faith, Abingdon 2021; Angie Pears: Doing Contextual Theology, London 2010.
3. That this is not a solitary finding is also indicated by taking a look at handbooks on Luther, in which the "priesthood of all believers" is not a separate entry. See for example Albrecht Beutel (ed.): Luther Handbuch, Tübingen 2010[2].

It fits into the picture that the question of how far the "priesthood of all believers" was sustainable and important for conveying identity has repeatedly been discussed by German language researchers. In other words, was it really the "priesthood of all believers" that set people in motion in the 16th century, enthusing them for the new doctrine and enabling it to last over time?[4] Or should there be differentiation here in favour of other influencing factors, so that in the end little remains of the "priesthood of all believers" as a marker of Lutheran identity in the past and present?

Indeed, the "priesthood of all believers" can be understood as an "ecclesiological concretion of the doctrine of justification". Nevertheless – and this will be shown in the following – this remained largely limited to doctrine and thus to (specialised) theological discourse. This was contrary to Luther's basic intention in his treatise "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation"[5], in which he wanted to win the authorities over to the new doctrine and to let them enforce it; precisely to this end, Luther developed the theological figure of the "priesthood of all believers".

More than that: when it came to concretion of this theological figure in real life practice in the early modern period, difficulties arose that continue to have an effect down to the present day. In addition, considerations and decisions regarding political regulations and interests raised their heads whenever the use of this theological figure presented a perceived or real threat to the social order. Preventive measures in such cases included theological readjustments, such as the extension of the doctrine of ordained ministry. At the same time, they also included very concrete actions against all those who supposedly went too far in adopting the common priesthood, such as the peasants (1524/25) or the Anabaptists (especially during the Anabaptist kingdom of Münster in 1534/35) in the contemporary opinion. However, it should be noted that theological readjustment and concrete political action were sometimes so interrelated that it is difficult to distinguish between the cause and the consequence.

To make this clear, the first part locates the theological figure of the "priesthood of all believers" in the Reformation context. Later two exemplary groups from Reformation events are named, the peasants and the Anabaptists, who attempted to adapt this figure in different ways. The way in

4. Cf. Thomas Kaufmann: Geschichte der Reformation. Berlin 2016, 301.

5. Cf. Martin Luther: To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Improvement of the Christian Estate, in: Timothy J. Wengert (ed.): The Roots of Reform (The Annotated Luther 1), Minneapolis 2015, 376-465 (German: An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung [1520], in: WA 6, 404-469).

which these attempts were treated then shows that the basic intention of the "priesthood of all believers" was successively pushed aside in favour of political considerations. This is an important contribution to the question of Lutheran identity insofar as this demonstrates that this figure – at least in the 16th century – was not able or allowed to have a broad impact; thus, one cannot speak here of an identity marker.

1. Doctrinal conception – and its limitation

The doctrine of justification had a remarkably "explosive power" because the "theological exclusivisation of man's relationship with God" ultimately "deprived the existing ecclesial system of its foundation". This is how the church historian Thomas Kaufmann summarised it, making it clear that the "dramatic theoretical reductionism of the doctrine of justification" with its recourse to the direct relationship between the individual human being and God – thanks to the grace of God – meant that much of what happened in the existing church appeared suspicious and in need of reform.[6] The explosive power and the broad impact of the doctrine of justification thus lay in the fact that the "unease"[7] cultivated towards the church at least since the late Middle Ages was now endowed with vocal expression, as was the growing desire of the laity to participate more in salvation and no longer leave this to the clergy alone. The desire for the emancipation of the laity thus coincided with a special crisis situation in the Church and found a congenial expression in the doctrine of justification, but even more so in the theological figure of the "priesthood of all believers", which then unfolded in different ways in everyday life.[8] The "priesthood of all believers" was therefore not a "chance product created at the desk of the theologian Martin Luther"[9]; it is rather the case that here those issues of church criticism came to a head that were already virulent at the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the modern era.

6. All quotations from Kaufmann: Reformation (see note 4), 301f.
7. Ibid., 302.
8. Cf. on this synopsis of theology and context Volker Leppin: Transformationen. Studien zu den Wandlungsprozessen in Theologie und Frömmigkeit zwischen Spätmittelalter und Reformation, Tübingen 2015, 58. Cf. also Barth: Priester sein (see note 1), 31-33. After the times of need, the figure of the "priesthood of all believers" was less prominent as a theological theme in Luther. Cf. ibid., 48f. Cf. also Klaus Peter Voß: Der Gedanke des allgemeinen Priester- und Prophetentums. Seine gemeindetheologische Aktualisierung in der Reformationzeit, Wuppertal / Zürich 1990, 32f.
9. Leppin: Transformationen (see note 8), 58.

1.1 The explosive power of the theological figure

The explosive power of the "priesthood of all believers" lies both in the broad range of this theological figure – encompassing both men and women – and in the fact that a special responsibility was now placed in the hands of the laity.[10] In concrete terms, this means that it depended on individual faith in each case. By faith, God's free work of grace was to be accepted. This faith was to be strengthened through preaching and the sacrament – and finally, the trust in God's saving action in Christ was to grow, to be constantly renewed and put into practice, in order to ensure certainty of faith.

Such a theological figure assumes that the "joyous exchange" between Christ and the individual human being, and thus God's work of grace towards human beings, does not affect the inner human being alone,[11] but also comes to be expressed in explicitly exercised responsibility for the world, as Martin Luther described it in his treatise "The Freedom of a Christian". This means that the responsibility of individuals is shown both in the concern for their own faith or their relationship to God as well as in the exercise of responsibility for their neighbours, individually and forcefully.[12] The explosive power of the "priesthood of all believers" actually lies in the concentration on the individual and in his or her empowerment. Empowerment in this context means that every believer may assume "that no greater dignity can be bestowed upon them than being chosen by God to live in his presence." This is precisely what the "priesthood of all believers" expresses, thus linking the dignity of the individual to the dignity of Christ as high priest. This enables believers to participate in the "all-surpassing glory of Christ"[13] and thus endows them with a power that cannot be inherent in any ordained office.[14]

The figure of the "priesthood of all believers" is grounded sacramentally in baptism. That, together with faith, is the decisive – sacramental – element of the "priesthood of all believers". This is why Martin Luther, in his treatise "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation", stated paradigmatically: "For

10. Cf. Kaufmann: Reformation (see note 4), 300.
11. On the "joyous exchange" cf. Martin Luther: Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen (1520), in: WA 7, 12-39, here: 25, (for an English translation of the Latin version see: The Freedom of a Christian, in: Wengert: Roots [see note 5], 474-538).
12. Cf. Harald Goertz: Allgemeines Priestertum und ordiniertes Amt bei Luther, Marburg 1997, 126.
13. Quoted in ibid., 94-96.
14. Cf. on Luther's criticism: Voß: Gedanke (see note 8), 37.

whoever has crawled out of the water of baptism can boast that he is already a consecrated priest, bishop, and pope."[15]

For Luther, baptism is closely linked to freedom, which results from God's justifying and therein inaccessible action and requires to be accepted in faith. In other words: "Baptism is the basis for the freedom of a Christian"[16], here the human becomes a "new creature".[17] And not only that, for it is also the basis for the priesthood of the individual. In other words, priesthood is "not an additional predicate" of Christians, but an "a priori inherent aspect".[18] Whoever is a Christian is automatically a priest.[19] And even more: henceforth there is an "incompatibility of baptism and priestly ordination"[20], in which not least the criticism of the ordination process in the Catholic Church becomes clear.

Seeing baptism as the foundation of the relationship with God and as the assurance of God's promise to the life of each individual[21] has consequences for one's entire existence as a Christian. As Martin Luther writes: "It follows from this that there is no true, basic difference between laymen and priests, princes and bishops, or (as they say) between spiritual and secular, except that of office and work, and not that of status."[22] This means that, according to Luther, there is one Christian estate – for everyone. Here is a priesthood free of hierarchy, which is to be equated with being a Christian and has the neighbour as its object. In contrast to the special, ordained office, this requires no justification, according to Luther, but is rather to be seen as "self-evident".[23] This approach is remarkable and points to a relatively rapid development in Luther's attitude, for he saw no reason in 1517 to make such a demand or to develop such a theological figure.[24]

But now he took up what had already begun to emerge when studying the question of baptism: the distinction between laity and clergy in the sense of a

15. Luther: Nobility (see note 5), 383.
16. Barth: Priester sein (see note 1), 34.
17. Martin Luther: The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, in: Paul W. Robinson (ed.): Church and Sacrament (The Annotated Luther 3), 13-129, here: 71 (De Captivitate Babylonica Ecclesiae. Praeludium Martini Lutheri [1520], in: WA 6, 497-573, here: 534).
18. Goertz: Allgemeines Priestertum (see note 12), 99.
19. Cf. also Voß: Gedanke (see note 8), 34.
20. Ibid., 40.
21. Cf. Goertz: Allgemeines Priestertum (see note 12), 105-110.
22. Luther: Nobility (See note 5), 383.
23. Barth: Priest sein (see note 1), 34.
24. Cf. Leif Grane: Die ekklesiologische Bedeutung der Rechtfertigungslehre – aus Luthers Sicht, in: Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche. Beiheft 10: Rechtfertigungslehre (1998), 1-14, here: 1.

difference of estate was henceforth obsolete. This is the real explosive power of the "priesthood of all believers", for with this statement Luther also rejected a "basic feature of canon law"[25] which had hitherto been valid.

If all belong to one estate, it means that the church gains its form through the common action of all believers, thus without any hierarchy. In this way, when individuals are called to perform a service, they need not adopt a majestic attitude, since the service is only for a limited period and is directed towards the neighbour.[26] The church thus becomes "a brotherhood with Christ, with all the angels, with the saints, and with all Christians on earth".[27] In his writing on the "Freedom of a Christian", Luther therefore calls on all believers "to be a Christian [meaning 'Christ' – ed.] to my neighbour, just as Christ has been to me."[28]

Nevertheless, for him the "priesthood of all believers" could not forgo the ordered ministry.[29] For Luther, the proper calling by the congregation was important,[30] otherwise it was not possible for someone to take office. The entire priesthood, that was thus gathered together, was to remain sovereign of the process.[31] It was also important that no one exercised an office (such as the office of preacher) on his own authority and by personal appropriation. This would ultimately deprive everyone else of the opportunity to be called.[32] And finally, there should be no doubt that no special authority was conferred on an office; quite the opposite: those who were called and those who were not called were equal in their authority, remaining together in the fellowship of *communio sanctorum*, which was to be understood as a "community of

25. Leppin: Transformationen (see note 8), 57.
26. Cf. Barth: Priester sein (see note 1), 37.
27. Luther: Nobility (see note 5), 441. Cf. also Grane: Bedeutung (see note 24), 6.
28. Luther: Freiheit (see note 11), 35.
29. Cf. Church Office of the VELKD (ed.): Allgemeines Priestertum, Ordination und Beauftragung nach evangelischem Verständnis. Eine Empfehlung der Bischofskonferenz der VELKD, Hannover 2004, 10. This text was revised for 2006. Cf. Church Office of the VELKD (ed.): Ordnungsgemäß berufen. Eine Empfehlung der Bischofskonferenz der VELKD zur Berufung zur Wortverkündigung und Sakramentsverwaltung nach evangelischem Verständnis, Hannover 2006. The passages on ministry, however, remained identical.
30. Cf. Goertz: Allgemeines Priestertum (see note 12), 205-219.
31. Cf. Barth: Priester sein (see note 1), 43. Nevertheless, the calling did not mean that congregation and ministry could not come into conflict when it came to their respective significance. Cf. on this, the passages on the limits of the "priesthood of all believers."
32. Cf. Harald Goertz / Wilfried Härle: Priester/Priestertum II/1, in: TRE 27 (1997), 402-413, here: 405.

authority".[33] Jan Rohls even speaks at this point of the "original equality of the common priesthood and the special spiritual office which existed iure divino".[34] The underlying concept was therefore that a vocation was granted to do "what all the baptised had authority to do". It was not a matter of "new, holy, better priests",[35] but of a calling from the midst of all the faithful. At the same time, such a vocation was mandatory: "It is true that all Christians are priests, but all are not pastors. [...] This call and command make pastors and preachers."[36]

In this double usage of "priest" and "pastor" lies a potential ambivalence which almost inevitably led to challenges when it came to practising the doctrine. At the same time, however, the strong element of the "priest" also contains the explosive power of the "priesthood of all believers", because it is indeed here that the lay element is strengthened in a special way.

1.2 The limit of the theological figure

The theological figure of the "priesthood of all believers" was intended to have a broad impact; it placed every believer's individual relationship with God at the centre. However, this breadth quickly came to be limited and thus lost its power to shape identity. This is evidenced by the restriction of its intention and addressees, but also by the question of how far it had a sustained effect on the formation of the confession as well as by the limitations of content, which focussed increasingly on the ordered ministry.

To go into particulars: first of all, Luther had already specified the theological figure of the "priesthood of all believers" in 1520, whilst at the same time placing it under a kind of restriction by addressing this fundamental treatise explicitly to the "Christian Nobility of the German Nation" and not to all believers.[37] This means that it was first and foremost the authorities that were to act in the interests of the Reformation. They formed the instance that Luther obviously considered most capable of adequately implementing the

33. Voß: Gedanke (see note 8), 50-55.

34. Jan Rohls: Das geistliche Amt in der lutherischen Theologie, in: Kerygma und Dogma 31 (1985), 135-161, here: 139.

35. Grane: Bedeutung (see note 24), 11.

36. Martin Luther: Der 82. Psalm ausgelegt (1530), in: WA 31-1, 183-219, here: 211 (for an English translation see: https://godrules.net/library/luther/NEW1luther_d21.htm).

37. Cf. Luther: Nobility (see note 5), 376-465.

new doctrine.[38] To be more exact: Luther considered that the authorities had the task of protecting the nation, and one element of this protection was the realisation of the urgently necessary reform of the Church, which could only succeed with the help of the nobility.[39] Accordingly, in his treatise, Luther frequently and clearly calls upon the authorities and the nobility to fulfil this duty.[40]

In this way, the evaluation of the theological figure of the "priesthood of all believers" is also given a new dimension: it was no longer decisive for this figure to lead to a movement supported by wide sections of the population. Rather, the important point was that here an instrument was defined that was capable of legitimising and supporting authoritarian behaviour in the interests of the Reformation. Ultimately, the entire treatise to the Nobility serves this purpose: the actions of the authorities – presumably first and foremost those of the Electorate of Saxony, Luther's own rulers – commanded the focus of interest, because a legitimation during the events of the Reformation which were just beginning was needed. Here, the authorities' responsibility for leadership in the Church was emphasised, whereby a topic was taken up which had already been discussed at the end of the 15th century, at least in Saxony. Now, however, the theological legitimisation was delivered – as was also a limitation in the concretion of the "priesthood of all believers", which was now concerned with "an understanding of the transition from theology to political action".[41] In other words: "At this point, theology becomes politics"[42] so that in a society of various estates, it was obvious that not all estates could participate.

Secondly, Timothy J. Wengert persistently points out that the "priesthood of all believers" never found its way into the Lutheran confessional writings. Therefore, it could not be understood as a theological figure that was sustainable, and therefore identity-forming, but had to be considered a "myth".

38. Cf. Leppin: Transformationen (see note 8), 63.
39. Cf. Luther: Nobility (see note 5), 397.
40. This approach is neither innovative nor surprising. Making the authorities responsible for the course of the Reformation by granting them special gifts and possibilities can also be found, for example, in Thomas Müntzer: Auslegung des zweiten Kapitels des Buches Daniel (1524), in: Armin Kohnle / Eike Wolgast (eds.): Thomas Müntzer. Schriften, Manuskripte und Notizen (Thomas Müntzer Edition. Kritische Gesamtausgabe 1), Leipzig 2017, 302-322, no. 6. However, Müntzer took up a much more martial position when he threatened the authorities that they would suffer punishment if they did not carry out their office in the sense he described.
41. Leppin: Transformationen (see note 8), 29.
42. Volker Leppin: Die fremde Reformation. Luthers mystische Wurzeln, Munich 2016, 151.

It was only Pietism – namely through Philipp Jakob Spener – that referred to a "spiritual priesthood", although in contrast to Luther's intention this was only a designation for the laity.[43]

It is indeed to be questioned against this backdrop whether there is real evidence for the sustainability of this theological figure in the sense of creating and preserving identity. If the Lutheran confessional writings are taken here as a litmus test, the challenge is obvious. The *Confessio Augustana* names the ordered ministry in all clarity when it states that no one may preach or teach who has not been called to do so.[44] At the same time, it is a matter of dispute whether CA V (Concerning the Ministry in the Church) speaks at least implicitly of the "priesthood of all believers" – or whether this theological figure was not completely pushed into the background when formulating a first confession in a difficult (ecclesial) political situation.[45] This suspicion seems to be confirmed at the latest when the "Anabaptists" are named as a foil to distinguish the correctly exercised ministry. They are criticised for teaching "that we obtain the Holy Spirit without the external word of the gospel" as the source of faith. This, of course, contradicts the inaccessible interplay of *sola scriptura, sola fidei* and *sola gratia*.[46] Here, then, the ministry is particularly reinforced in relation to the principle of the Spirit.

This forms, as it were, the intonation of the third aspect: the limitation of content through the special emphasis on the ministry. Hans-Martin Barth notes that the "priesthood of all believers" lost its "emancipatory power" in the course of the Reformation. It was clearly sidelined by the ordered ministry – even as early as 1523 and thus even before the more intensive conflicts with the Anabaptist movement. Gudrun Neebe contradicts this and points out that there was "no tension between an institutionalised ministry and the common priesthood", since the services performed in both cases correspond to each other and all are involved in the selection and vocation.[47] This is

43. Cf. Timothy J. Wengert: Das Priestertum aller Glaubenden und andere fromme Mythen, in: Lutherische Beiträge 23 (2018), 221-252. Cf. also id.: Priesthood, Pastors, Bishops. Public Ministry for the Reformation and Today, Minneapolis 2008.
44. Cf. Art. 14 of the CA, in: Robert Kolb / Timothy J. Wengert (ed.): The Book of Concord. The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Minneapolis 2000, 46f. See also Rohls: Amt (see note 34), 140.
45. Cf. Goertz / Härle: Priester/Priestertum (see note 32), 406. Cf. also Gudrun Neebe: Allgemeines Priestertum bei Luther und in den lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften, in: Reinhard Ritter (ed.): In Christus berufen. Amt und allgemeines Priestertum in lutherischer Perspektive, Hannover 2001, 57-79, here: 73f.
46. Cf. Art. 5 of the CA, in: Kolb / Wengert: Book of Concord (see note 44), 40.
47. Cf. Neebe: Allgemeines Priestertum (see note 45), 66. Similarly: Church Office of the VELKD: Allgemeines Priestertum (see note 29), 11.

disproved not least by her own finding that, at the latest in the Smalcald Articles (1537), ordination and thus vocation were placed in the hands of the bishops. This was indeed done "for the sake of love and unity, but not out of necessity". Nevertheless, it represents a significant change because it took ordination and confirmation completely out of the hands of the entire priesthood.[48] Therefore a noticeable restriction on the "priesthood of all believers" occurs here.

2. Doctrine in practice – and its limitation

The explosive power of the theological figure of the "priesthood of all believers" was particularly revealed as various different groups adopted it for themselves and put it into practice. In other words, Luther's initial idea with the "priesthood of all believers" was to place all Christians under a special obligation. With the knowledge that they were all members of the "priesthood", both individually and autonomously, it was clear that from now on they bore a deeply individualised joint responsibility for the Church and thus also for its renewal.[49] From Luther's perspective, this led to problems precisely when this responsibility was exercised by people and groups whom he mistrusted – in some cases ever more deeply. To put it quite plainly, these were the groups that did not belong to the ruling classes and were therefore in Luther's eyes not suited to bring the Reformation into safe waters. In these cases, it was drastically evident that the theological figure of the "priesthood of all believers" reached its limits, for despite all equality of humans before God it was never intended to guarantee free appropriation, and on no account to enforce significant changes in the social order. A short look at the examples of the peasants, the Peasants' War and the Anabaptist movement makes this clear – and defines at the same time an essential limitation of the "priesthood of all believers".

2.1 Peasants, Peasants' War – and "priesthood of all believers"

In the early phase of the Reformation, the peasants were primarily concerned with their concrete liberation from a practice of rule that they experienced as

48. Cf. Article 10 of the Smalcald Articles, in: Kolb / Wengert: Book of Concord (see note 44), 297-328, here: 323.

49. Cf. Kaufmann: Reformation (see note 4), 300.

existential oppression. In the late Middle Ages, this resulted in riots, insurrections and uprisings between Basel and Speyer. In at least 70 % of all cases, the peasants wrote letters demanding the abolition of serfdom, which was understood as unacceptable oppression.[50]

The most important document of this period is the "Twelve Articles" of March 1525,[51] probably written by the Memmingen furrier and army secretary Sebastian Lotzer (1490-1525) and provided with a preface by the preacher Christoph Schappeler (1472-1551). They are the most significant programmatic tract of the Peasants' War and demonstrated how the Lutheran concept of freedom could be adapted and translated into the reality of peasants' lives. This also includes the empowerment inherent in the "priesthood of all believers". In other words, with the "Twelve Articles" the peasants once again accepted comprehensive responsibility for their own lives, but in this case – unlike in the period of other uprisings – used a new figure for their justification, namely the new insight into their freedom and immediate God-given dignity. The individual articles, which basically aim at a life in accordance with the gospel, deal with the free choice of preachers, the giving of tithes, the right to hunt and fish freely in forests and rivers, the use of the forests, meadows and fields, and issues of compulsory labour and rents. The text concludes by emphasising that all the objections and demands of the peasants could be examined and discussed on the basis of the Holy Scriptures.

The third article, which calls for the abolition of serfdom, includes the peasants' desire for freedom in a special way and thus also refers to the "priesthood of all believers". The article states that until then it had been the custom to hold people as property. But now – in the present Reformation situation and with the knowledge of the "freedom of a Christian" and thus also with the knowledge of the "priesthood of all believers" – it was obvious that Christ had delivered and redeemed all people by his blood. Accordingly it was consistent with Scripture that the peasants should be free and wished to be so.

However, the peasants did not see this as a freedom outside the conditions of society or the actions of the authorities; on the contrary, God's commandments taught them to see in the rulers their neighbours and to approach

50. Cf. Peter Blickle: Der Bauernkrieg. Die Revolution des gemeinen Mannes, Munich 2011[4], 55; id.: Die Zwölf Artikel der oberschwäbischen Bauern. Das Scharnier zwischen Bauernkrieg und Reformation, in: Görge K. Hasselhoff / David von Mayenburg (eds.): Die Zwölf Artikel von 1525 und das „Göttliche Recht" der Bauern – rechtshistorische und theologische Dimension, Würzburg 2012, 19-42, here: 24.

51. Cf. Die Zwölf Artikel, in: Adolf Laube (ed.): Flugschriften der Bauernkriegszeit, Berlin 1975, 26-31 (for an English translation see: https://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/pdf/eng/Doc.52-ENG-12%20Articles_en.pdf).

them with humility. Thus, the peasants wanted to be obedient to their authorities "in all proper things becoming to a Christian"[52] and therefore also took it for granted that they would now be released from their serfdom in order to live henceforth as true and right, i.e. free Christians. The "Twelve Articles" end by asking numerous theologians – among them Martin Luther as the first-named – to make an assessment of these articles and thus also of the peasants.

And Luther did respond. He reacted to the "Twelve Articles" with an admonition to peace, which already appeared in mid-April 1525. It was probably followed in May 1525 by the tract "Against the Murderous, Thieving Hordes of Peasants" and finally by the "Open Letter on the Harsh Book Against the Peasants" (July 1525).[53]

His answers, however, make it clear how much the ideas of freedom and thus also of empowerment now collided with one another. Obviously, Luther for his part did not think that socially relevant demands could and should be derived from the dignity of the "priesthood of all believers" and its inherent freedom. In Luther's "Admonition" of 1525, his first reaction is to let the princes know that some of the Twelve Articles are "just and right". He also points out that it is the task of the authorities to care for their subjects and not to oppress them. Yet Luther does not say a single word about the freedom of the subjects and their corresponding free decision to obey the authorities, should they act on the basis of the gospel. Instead, he rants against the peasants: "You assert that no one is to be the serf of anyone else, because Christ has made us all free. That is making Christian freedom a completely physical matter"[54] This third article of the peasants, which dealt with freedom from serfdom, was therefore contrary to the gospel, said Luther, for freedom which only applied to the "inner person" and therefore described personal, inner liberty, would mean using the gospel for political demands and thus making it "physical".

Instead, the peasants would have to come to terms with the fact that the worldly kingdom would always depend on inequality and could only function well without freedom and participation of all. This idea finds its anal-

52. Ibid., 28.

53. Cf. Martin Luther: Admonition to Peace. A Reply to the Twelve Articles of the Peasants in Swabia, in: Hans J. Hillerbrand (ed.): Christian Life in the World (The Annotated Luther 5), Minneapolis 2017, 288-332 (German: Ermahnung zum Frieden auf die zwölf Artikel der Bauernschaft [1525], in: WA 18, 291-334); id.: Wider die räuberischen und mörderischen Rotten der Bauern (1525), in: WA 18 357-361; id.: Ein Sendbrief von dem harten Büchlein wider die Bauern (1525), in: WA 18, 375-402.

54. Luther: Admonition (see note 53), 325.

ogy in considerations of the difference between office or ministry and the "priesthood of all believers". On the spiritual level, everyone belonged to this priesthood, but the number of those then called to the ministry should be much smaller. This was certainly strong enough to establish a hierarchy and ultimately a "pastor's church" and thus inequality. From Luther's point of view, however, this corresponded exactly to the social order and presumably also to the worldly kingdom, which was based on inequality.

But that was not sufficient: in subsequent writings, Luther intensifies his hostile attitude towards the peasants and even calls on the authorities to smite, slay, and stab the peasants, as he writes in the tract against the "hordes of peasants". He also emphasises, especially in the "Open Letter", that the authorities must maintain order between lords and servants, otherwise chaos would break out, which would do harm to the Word of God in the world.[55]

But what caused Luther to react so violently? One explanation probably lies in Luther's lack of access to information on the events of the peasants' revolts. Another reason is to be found in the fact that the Peasants' War suddenly broke out in Thuringia and Franconia as well – thus in Luther's immediate vicinity. But a third important reason is probably that Luther, in advocating freedom, did not want to build a bridge between spiritual and secular rule, because then the gospel would indeed have become "physical", i.e. secular, political. Possibly this is also an expression of Luther's "conservatism in matters of theological order"[56], which led him to be loyal to the princes for rational purposes. For this reason, he sought to limit the commitment which was based on his own understanding of freedom and thus also of the "priesthood of all believers". For the moment, this was a success: the peasants' revolts were put down. However, this proved at the same time to be a turning point in the Reformation, which was no longer essentially supported by the "common man". Instead, it was the authorities in the cities and individual rulers who took over completely, so that the political dimension of the Reformation now had a clearly different accentuation.[57] At this point, therefore, the "priesthood of all believers", as understood by the peasants in their adaptation, came to an end and could no longer develop any power in forming identity.

55. Cf. Luther: Sendbrief (see note 53), 390-393.

56. Kaufmann: Reformation (see note 4), 500.

57. Cf. Nicole Grochowina: Reformation, Berlin / Boston 2020, 111-123.

2.2 Anabaptist movement and "priesthood of all believers"

Not only the peasants, but also the Anabaptist movement made attempts to put life into the "priesthood of all believers" in their own terms – and thus drew harsh criticism from Luther. With the Anabaptists in mind, he also emphasised the ordered ministry even more strongly. It is not least the relevant article in the Smalcald Articles (1537) – written by Luther – which gives rise to this supposition; in it he refers explicitly and exclusively to the Anabaptist movement in his acrid justification of the ministry.[58]

In the 1520s there was nothing to suggest this development. Here Luther had rather adopted the position that all those who were not yet convinced of the new doctrine should be won over exclusively by the Word of God, not by coercion.[59] But in view of the growing number of Anabaptists, the passing of the "Mandate against the Anabaptists" at the Diet of Speyer in 1529 and then finally the events of the Anabaptist Kingdom of Münster in 1534/35, it seemed to dawn on Luther that such a moderate stance was not expedient, at least for him. Too great were apparently the differences based on the adaptation of the "priesthood of all believers" and thus also on the relationship to the authorities.

In 1536, Luther finally addressed the question of how the secular authorities should deal with Anabaptists in a memorandum. In the meantime, the Anabaptist kingdom in Münster (1534/35) had been installed and already consigned to history again.[60] Here, a reform-minded group around the preacher Bernhard Rothmann had first gained influence, before in the further course of the Reformation and accompanied by disputes between the cathedral chapter, the sovereign, the guilds and the municipal magistrate, the Anabaptists first gained power legitimately through a council election. This was followed by the establishment of a council of elders, then later the kingdom with the introduction of polygyny, and the mission to prepare for God's coming into the world by destroying the "ungodly". This provoked both Catholic and Protestant authorities, who besieged the city, almost starved it, finally stormed it and then executed the Anabaptist leaders.

58. Cf. Article 10 of the Smalcald Articles, in: Kolb / Wengert: Book of Concord (see note 44), 323f. On the Anabaptist movement, cf. Grochowina: Reformation (see note 57), 27-48. Further literature can also be found here.

59. Cf. Nicole Grochowina: Das intolerante Erbe der Reformation. Umgang mit nicht-konformistischen Bewegungen, in: id. / Rainer Oechslen (eds.): Streit der Religionen – Konflikte und Toleranz, Erlangen 2013, 69-89.

60. On the Anabaptist kingdom of Münster, cf. Grochowina: Reformation (see note 57), 147-159. Here you will also find the main sources and further reading.

In Münster, the "priesthood of all believers" was appropriated in full. Furriers, bakers and other artisans claimed to receive instructions from the Holy Spirit and put them into practice in a setting they themselves had created and formed. Thus it was the lay people who constituted the main element here – as in the rest of the Anabaptist movement. In addition to this, they assumed that they were taught directly by the Holy Spirit and thus able to put into practice what they had heard, independent of any qualified scrutiny, so that they were ultimately preparing for the imminent return of Jesus at the end of time. In other words, the Spirit principle dominated in a remarkable way over the scriptural principle and led to deeds that were immediately carried out.[61] In Münster, the Anabaptists then established a hierarchy that extended as far as kingship, regardless of their own stance as critics of authorities.[62] They saw themselves as simple people who heard the Word of God directly and put it into practice together.

Luther followed the events at Münster. In this respect, it is not surprising that he referred to it in his memorandum of 1536, making it clear that in considering how to deal with heretics he did not differentiate between those who were violent and those who were peaceful, for example between the Münster Anabaptists and the Swiss ones. In his "Reservations" of 1536, Luther first wrote what he knew about the Anabaptists. They taught that Christians should not hold office, accept no rulers, leave their families and marriage to become Anabaptists, in short: "It's obvious: these articles directly undermine the outward, civil government: the magistracy, the oath, personal possessions, marriage, etc."[63] Thus Luther identifies the threats posed by the Anabaptist movements: the empowerment of individuals who had not been appointed to a ministry in a regular way, but had declared themselves to be pastors,[64] would lead to chaos and had the potential to destroy the entire social order. In this respect, according to Luther, the secular authorities had no choice but to regard the Anabaptist articles as seditious, because they were not restricted to spiritual matters, but also had consequences for the secular authorities. To prove his point, he then explicitly cites the Anabaptist kingdom in Münster, where the Anabaptists with their "improper worship ser-

61. Cf. Goertz / Härle: Priester/Priestertum (see note 32), 406.

62. Cf. ibid.

63. Martin Luther: Dass weltliche Oberkeit den Wiedertäufern mit leiblicher Strafe zu wehren schuldig sei, etlicher Bedenken zu Wittenberg (1536), in: Manfred Hoffmann (ed.): Toleranz und Reformation, Gütersloh 1979, 38-40, here: 38 (for an English translation see: https://www.mennoniteeducation.org/Documents/Anabaptist%20Dramatic%20Readings/Anabaptist%20Dramatic%20Readings%2024.pdf).

64. Cf. Voß: Gedanke (see note 8), 83.

vices and heretical acts"[65] had also made themselves guilty to a great extent towards the secular authorities.

The argument of sedition thus ensured in this case as well that the boundaries between spiritual and secular action were blurred in cases of conflict, even if Luther's real problem with the Anabaptists was their theology and their presumption of an office to which they were not legitimately called. His understanding of the events in Münster can also help to explain the severity of the Smalcald Articles (1537). These belong nonetheless to a tradition of persecution of the Anabaptist movement, which first culminated in the "Mandate against the Anabaptists" of 1529, which was passed as an imperial law.

"It has often been regretted that the Protestant churches have become 'pastor churches'."[66] With polemical exaggeration, Hans-Martin Barth declares that the question of the ministry and also of its significance was the litmus test which determined the lasting formative power and scope of the "priesthood of all believers". In his confrontation with the Anabaptist movement, but also with the spiritualists of his time[67], Martin Luther set far-reaching limits and thus ultimately strengthened the ministry in the long term compared to the "priesthood of all believers".

3. Conclusions

The question remains open and at the same time highly stimulating: did Martin Luther ultimately "betray his own approach" with his reaction to the peasants and the Anabaptists and the resulting, increasingly narrow evaluation of the "priesthood of all believers"? Did he thus prevent any sustainable creation and preservation of identity, as he smoothed and strengthened the path towards a ministerially oriented "pastor's church"[68], as Hans-Martin Barth put it? After all, it is striking that it was anything but unproblematic to convey this theological figure into the reality of people's lives. At first, more people (peasants, Anabaptists) appropriated it than Luther had intended, since he had explicitly turned to the authorities, hoping to win them over in support of the Reformation.

Nevertheless, this appropriation was also logical, since the "priesthood of all believers" was aimed basically at all Christians. In the course of the Ref-

65. Ibid., 39.
66. Barth: Priester sein (see note 1), 29.
67. Cf. Voß: Gedanke (see note 8), 81-83.
68. Barth: Priester sein (see note 1), 29 and 50.

ormation, however, there was increasing controversy as to which Christians were actually meant from a Lutheran perspective. Luther himself, at least, did not think that the peasants and the Anabaptists belonged to them. In his diction, they had too explicitly turned against the ruling authorities, and thus against those who were still most likely, in Luther's mind, to live the "priesthood of all believers" responsibly.

Thus Luther had several possibilities to react to the different transfer processes whilst holding on to his ideas of orderliness. First, he increasingly reminded the authorities of their duty to take proceedings against the peasants and Anabaptists, whose actions he simultaneously condemned in the strongest terms. At the same time, however, the ordered ministry, including the orderly vocation to the ministry, came to the fore increasingly. This culminated in the Smalcald Articles (1537), which were published two years after the suppression of the Anabaptist kingdom of Münster and now called on the bishops to make and confirm appointments to the ministry and thus the ordained office. Here, at the latest, the difference to Luther's original thinking becomes obvious.

The "priesthood of all believers" is thus a theological figure that has the power to shape identity in Lutheranism. However, that is precisely why it does not go unchallenged when in certain circumstances a supposedly well-founded imbalance is created between the common priesthood and the special, ordained ministry. One can assume that these circumstances have favoured the development of an institution that actually would be in a position to put the empowerment and personal responsibility of the individual clearly and easily at the centre of its existence. Maybe this is precisely what needs to be relearned in the 21st century, so that the "priesthood of all believers" can then – once again – unfold its power to shape identity.

Lutheran Identity in the Diaspora

Klaus Fitschen

1. The origins of Lutheranism: the venture of a minority existence

If Martin Luther had not enjoyed the protection of his sovereign, Frederick the Wise, he would have been arrested, condemned and executed at the latest after the Diet of Worms in 1521, like his predecessor, the Bohemian reformer Jan Hus, who was burned at the stake at the Council of Constance in 1415. He might have saved his life by recanting, but that would not have spared him from sanctions. One can assume that the same is true for Luther's followers. Even if they had held on to his teachings, Lutheranism would probably have become only one marginalised heresy among several, maybe similar to the Waldensians. But it is not really necessary to spin out the thread of history theoretically in order to come to the sober conclusion that from the very outset the new movement was already strongly challenged by polemics, and in many places also by persecution.

On the basis of its origins, Lutheranism could easily have been condemned to minority existence. The Reformation – not only that of Luther – was a venture, even if Luther and other reform-minded people were offering solutions to the ecclesiastical grievances of their time. Luther's pamphlet of 1520 "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate" is a prime example of this. Reform initiatives which had already existed in the late Middle Ages were mainly the preserve of the elites: neither the Council of Constance, nor the Gravamina ("One hundred grievances") of the German princes, nor even a relatively fictional programme such as the "Reformatio Sigismundi" were able to mobilise the clergy or the church laity. At best, they served to prepare the ground for what then motivated the public in church and society in the Reformation period. And yet the success of the Reformation could not have been foreseen; it gathered way quite spontaneously after Luther had posted his theses. It may still be a moot point whether that was a heroic deed, but it was in any case a "striking" event, which led to the swift spread of Luther's 95 theses.

Now Luther and the Reformation movement were not interested in gaining strategic majorities, but rather in liberating the gospel, and thus Christianity as a whole, from the distortions of scholastic theology and the paternalism of the Roman hierarchy – even if Luther hoped that his insights would gain general acceptance because of their plausibility. But that was not the case, since they found their limits in the confessional policies of the states and cities in and outside Germany. Thus Lutheranism found a majority within individual imperial cities and territories, but not in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, nor in other states in which it had taken root. At the latest after the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, it became a question of majorities and minorities, of how confessions were privileged or marginalised, or of the confessional identity of rulers and population. The spread of Lutheranism came to a standstill or was re-shaped by the "second Reformation", in which rulers such as the Brandenburg Elector Sigismund converted to the Reformed confession. This was different in the Northern European countries, where Lutheranism was centrally and comprehensively imposed as the state denomination, although this was a long drawn-out process in Sweden.

The Thirty Years' War represented a great danger for Lutheranism. Here, too, one may venture the hypothesis that Lutheranism could well have become a small minority in Germany – its only centre would then have been Northern Europe, where it had become established in the meantime. At any rate, this was the situation in 1629, when Denmark withdrew from the military alliance against the Catholic emperor and Northern Germany was open to re-Catholicisation, which was attempted with the "Edict of Restitution". If this had remained the case, the situation would have been similar to that in Bohemia or other areas, where the Habsburgs marginalised Protestantism and thus also Lutheranism, forcing it into a diaspora existence. The last bastions of Lutheranism in Germany were the Electorate of Saxony and some small states which tried to offer political resistance to the imperial policy of re-Catholicisation, also by coming to terms with the imperial power.

2. Freedom of belief for the world, saved at Breitenfeld ...

Without the intervention of the Swedish King Gustav Adolf II in 1630, these Lutheran territories would also have come under imperial rule. The course of the war leads to this inevitable conclusion. The total destruction of the Lutheran imperial city of Magdeburg and the threat to Saxony from imperial troops showed that resistance to the re-Catholicisation policy was futile.

Although the Saxon Elector and other Protestant rulers were critical of the Swedish invasion at the time, fearing that they would now be taken over from that side, the imperial superiority forced them to side with Gustav Adolf. At the same time, the princes were wooed with the argument that Gustav Adolf wanted to liberate Protestantism in Germany, which he effectively achieved. The battle at Breitenfeld close to Leipzig in September 1631 ended in victory for the Swedish troops, and this put a stop to the re-Catholicisation of Northern Germany. The death of Gustav Adolf at the battle of Lützen in 1632 could not alter this.

The memory of Gustav Adolf as the saviour of Protestantism (and not just Lutheranism), which has long been cultivated in the Protestant areas of Germany, sums it up perfectly. "Freedom of belief for the world, saved at Breitenfeld, Gustav Adolf, Christian and hero", it says in a rhymed German epitaph on a memorial for the Battle of Breitenfeld erected in 1831. However, since the 19th century this memory has been overshadowed by the accusation that the Swedish king was only interested in power and possibly even the crown of the German empire, and Protestant pacifism has branded him a militarist, especially in present times in his Swedish homeland. Without him, however, Germany would have become a Catholic country with a few scattered Lutheran or Protestant regions. Whether this state of permanent religious coercion would have been more desirable than the recovery of a Lutheran political and military basis is in any case a purely hypothetical question from the present-day point of view. At any rate, it was only the stabilisation of the denominational situation through the Peace of Westphalia – admittedly to the detriment of minority denominations – that allowed a Lutheran identity to find sustainable form in Germany, theologically secured beyond the Book of Concord of 1580 by representatives of "(Old) Lutheran Orthodoxy", even if the Book of Concord did not apply everywhere.

Lutheranism in Germany was thus spared an existence as a diaspora, at least within the borders of single German territories, whether large (like Saxony) or small (like the counties in Westphalia). It was different where Lutheran territories stood out like islands in the ocean of another majority denomination, after the Counter-Reformation had pushed back the spread of Protestantism as a whole, which was especially the case in the Habsburg Empire. After years and decades in which Lutheranism was repressed, although it had already become established in many regions, it fell into a permanently defensive state, which shaped its identity there. In the 19th century, this was supplemented by a self-image that went in the other direction, namely seeing itself as the harbinger of cultural and social modernisation.

However, the confessional Lutheran identity continued to be threatened wherever the rulers of one German state changed confession, switching from

Lutheranism to Catholicism or the Reformed confession. This would theoretically have entitled them to force their own territory, and thus also the population, to a change of confession. The main example of the first case is the conversion of the Saxon Elector Frederick Augustus I ("Augustus the Strong") to Catholicism in 1697, the principal example of the second case is the conversion of the Brandenburg Elector John Sigismund to the Reformed confession in 1613. Frederick Augustus took this step for political reasons, as it was the only way he could obtain the Polish royal crown; John Sigismund acted in the course of the "second Reformation", in which several rulers converted from the Lutheran to the Reformed confession.

Even though the majority of the population in these individual German states remained Lutheran, a certain pressure was exerted on them. In Saxony, this came to nothing, as the nobility and the Lutheran clergy forced the king to limit his practice of the Catholic religion to his closest surroundings. In Prussia, however, the ruling house's inner-Protestant change of denomination promptly led to conflicts, whose most prominent victim was the staunch Lutheran and well-known hymn writer Paul Gerhardt. He was expelled from Prussia in 1666 and had to move to Saxony. Thus denominational tolerance for people who resolutely based their religious identity on Lutheranism did not exist in Prussia, and this became even more widely apparent in the 19th century. When the union between members of the Reformed and the Lutheran confession was introduced from 1817 onwards, those who did not wish to be forced into this alliance because of their resolute Lutheranism were persecuted, and this led to the emergence of the "Old Lutherans", who were not granted freedom of religion in Prussia until 1845. Lutheran identity did exist in Prussia under the umbrella of the Union, but also in opposition to it. All in all, the Union (which was not only introduced in Prussia) was a nightmare for many people in Germany who saw themselves as resolutely Lutheran, so that they combatted it by emphasising their own identity all the more strongly. In 1848, representatives of German Lutheranism gathered for the first time at a "Lutheran Conference". Here there were already plans for an alliance of the German Protestant regional churches, but only of those that were Lutheran.

3. Formation of Lutheran identity in opposition to the Union

The theological faculties of the universities of Erlangen and Leipzig became centres of a decidedly anti-unionist Lutheranism, but their respective region-

al churches (Bavaria and Saxony) followed the course of a staunch Lutheranism as well. The Lutheran identity of the 19th century thus arose from a delineation that was no longer only directed against Catholicism, but also against the union with the Reformed. Lutheran forces came together in Saxony and were strengthened from Erlangen. The resulting "Neo-Lutheranism" took on a virtually state-supporting function in Saxony. In Bavaria, where the majority was Catholic, Lutheranism developed a strong self-confidence, which is mainly connected with the person of Wilhelm Löhe. His decidedly Lutheran positioning aided the formation of the identity of the regional church in Bavaria, which had only evolved since the expansion of the Bavarian state in the early 19th century had led to the inclusion of areas with a Protestant population. Lutheranism also gained a new self-confidence in the Kingdom of Hanover. This was mainly due to the Hanoverian pastor Ludwig Adolf Petri, who also founded the first Lutheran "Gotteskastenverein" (Mite Box Association) in Germany in 1853, the predecessor of the diaspora aid organisation "Martin-Luther-Bund", founded in 1932.

Such tendencies led to the founding of the "*Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Konferenz*" (General Evangelical Lutheran Conference) in 1868, which was ultimately a reaction to Prussian expansion. Prussia's expansionist policy had spread to Hesse, the Kingdom of Hanover and to Schleswig-Holstein in 1866, and the rallying of Lutheranism was a reaction to the anxious apprehension of possible consequences in church policies, i.e. the expansion of the Prussian Union. However, the expansion of the Union was no longer in Prussian interests, and the king guaranteed the Lutheran confession in the annexed territories. The Lutheran Conference published a newspaper, the "*Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung*", founded by Christoph Ernst Luthardt, a theology professor in Leipzig. Luthardt was one of those who had come to Leipzig from Erlangen, bringing Franconian Lutheranism with them to Saxony.

This growing confessional self-confidence – nowadays often negatively interpreted as Lutheran confessionalism – also strengthened the Lutheran identity in the diaspora, although this term is used to describe various different circumstances. Bavarian Lutheranism was a minority with regard to the Kingdom of Bavaria as a whole, but represented the majority in traditionally Lutheran areas such as Middle Franconia, which now belonged to Bavaria. The situation then changed gradually and in all areas on account of labour migration in the course of industrialisation, which brought people from Lutheran to traditionally Catholic areas.

4. The discovery of the diaspora

During this period – that is to say, in the 19th century – the existence of Protestant minorities became an issue, characterised by the term diaspora. The first addressees of diaspora aid were Protestant congregations existing in Catholic regions in Germany or Austria. In some cases a distinction was drawn between Lutheran diasporas and those of other Protestant denominations, which led to the formation of separate Lutheran aid associations called "*Gotteskasten*" (Mite Boxes), which later became the Martin-Luther-Bund in the 20th century. The Gustav-Adolf-Verein was much more open to the spectrum of Protestants; it had been founded in 1832 as a "living memorial" commemorating the Battle of Lützen. Even down to the 20th century, the Lutheran diaspora work greatly distrusted the Gustav-Adolf-Verein, suspecting it of unionist tendencies, even though its headquarters were in Lutheran Saxony.

In the 19th century, and even still in the 20th century, Protestant and thus also Lutheran minorities (apart from the Lutheran mission churches) were considered to be "diasporas", which meant that they were identified as recipients within an asymmetrical relationship. Part of this asymmetry included the "theologisation" of minority status with the expression "diaspora". Significantly, however, this was rarely adopted as a self-designation. At the turn of the 20th century, the concept of diaspora was additionally charged with political and nationalistic content. The Lutheran diaspora was now the "German diaspora abroad", a perception that became even stronger after the First World War and was tinged with additional political ideology during the National Socialist era and the German occupation of large areas of Eastern Europe. The Lutheran churches in the occupied countries of Northern Europe – Sweden and Denmark – were able to avoid or even oppose German ideological and ecclesiastical influence.

The asymmetries between large Lutheran churches and those in a minority situation (and in general between large Protestant churches and those in a minority situation) were gradually broken down and depoliticised after 1945. This was largely due to international Lutheran ecumenism, which took shape in the Lutheran World Federation as successor of the Lutheran World Convention. Although the leading roles were taken at first by the Lutheran churches in America, Germany and Northern Europe because of their size, minority Lutheran churches in Europe and churches on other continents also participated from the beginning. The Hungarian Bishop Lajos Ordass was one of the first Vice-Presidents of the LWF in its founding period. From the beginning, the membership list of the LWF showed a great diversity of Lutheran churches in terms of size. For most of these churches, minority existence within the borders of individual countries or continents was and is

the normal state of affairs, whether they originated in Europe from the dynamic spread of the Reformation, from missionary work in Africa and Asia, or from European emigrants in North and South America. The diaspora existence is thus ultimately the "normal" one, and that could well have been so for German Lutheranism.

That this will also soon be the case for the Lutheran churches in Europe is unmistakable, not only in Germany, but also in the Scandinavian countries, where the membership of the former Lutheran state churches is continually declining. This process affects all Christian churches, so that in the global North there will ultimately be an ecumenism of minorities, in which all are in a diaspora amidst the secular surroundings, while in the global South it remains to be seen what new constellations between the denominations will come about in face of the dynamic growth of the Pentecostal movement. This trend also has an impact on the relationship between the Lutheran churches among themselves and on their understanding of a minority existence, even though the very small Lutheran churches exist alongside others which are quite large and in some cases have incomparably greater resources.

Within CPCE, the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe, this has led to a thought process on the subject of "diaspora" involving most Protestant denominations and culminating in the adoption of a study document in 2018, which was updated again in 2022. One essential result of the underlying considerations is that one should not think that self-evaluation as a minority is equivalent to the acceptance of a state of deficiency, followed consequentially by resignation and mourning for what has been lost. On the contrary, the situation should be accepted as an opportunity, taking into account a theologically interpreted concept of diaspora. The leitmotif ought to be sowing, not distraction, meaning entering into relationships with society and not isolating oneself. In face of the dynamic secularisation in large parts of the world, Protestant and Lutheran identity thus becomes an identity challenged by social changes in which minorities are also involved.

Seeing the diaspora issue solely from the perspective of mutual aid does not go far enough, and it has long proved problematic to use the expression diaspora in the sense of an asymmetry between givers and receivers, as was the case for a long time. The LWF World Service could see itself as responsible for this – as it did in its early days – but it has almost completely lost sight of the diaspora issue. The aid agency Martin-Luther-Bund is an actor which also sees itself as a "place of common theological and spiritual deepening in exchange with the minority churches of the Lutheran confession all over the world" (according to one of its eight programmatic theses), but with its partner churches it only covers a small part of worldwide Lutheranism.

5. Outlook

Lutheran identity will be increasingly shaped by the experience as a minority, which should produce more than just regret about this situation and withdrawal into preoccupation with itself. It can be helpful here to recall the original experience of Lutheranism, namely to be in a position where reflection on the basic theological concern is important in spite of the threat of marginalisation, and where identity is gained from the fact that its foundation is the gospel message of justification by faith. The appropriate hymn texts by Martin Luther would be "Though devils all the world should fill" or "Lord, keep us steadfast in your Word", maybe rewritten if necessary.

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Is there a Lutheran Identity?

Reflections from a historical-theological perspective

Christian Volkmar Witt

The following cursory reflections are based on the panel discussion in which I was able to take part during the conference "Lutheran Identity: Communion between Cultural Imprint and Reformation Heritage" on 23 February 2022. As a Protestant theologian and church historian, I was asked to speak on the question of the determinability and form of a Lutheran identity. I was glad to do so, and here I will try to summarise my assessments at that time. Admittedly, my necessarily pointed remarks reveal certain scientific characteristics and positional preferences which are and need to be worthy of discussion in their argumentative thrust. Conceptual similarities to names such as Ernst Troeltsch, Max Weber or Reinhart Koselleck are therefore readily acknowledged, especially since the following impulse is expressly intended to open up further discussion.

But to move on now from the original context to the matter at hand: from a historical point of view, "identity" is a result of the multi-faceted interactions of one's own attributions and perceptions of oneself with those imputed by others. Sociocultural formation and connections play just as important a role in the formation of an "identity" as the respective historical contexts and social structures. The resulting historical conditionality of an "identity", including a religious one, means that it cannot appear static in retrospect. The "identity" based on these interactions, whether of a historical player or even of a (religious) social form consisting of a group of players, varies according to the specific historical background and changes accordingly. Moreover, the content of a fluid "identity" is always dependent on other equally fluid "identities" towards which it reacts either with acceptance or rejection, which is why historical processes of dynamic formation and assertion of identity must always be considered in the plural of historically conditioned and variable "identities".

In view of all this, it is more appropriate to speak of identity constructions and fictions of stability than of "identities". The postulate of (exclusive) timelessness and (exclusive) continuity does indeed belong to the historically observable propria of (not just) religious identity constructions. At the institutional level, however, such efforts of transcendence serve recognizably to stabilise the religious order; with their help, the historical conditionality, contingent emergence and transitory form of the respective "identity" or "identities" remain invisible – to the benefit of factual or normative claims to validity. Within the field of the history of denominations and against the backdrop of processes of theological differentiation and institutional pluralisation, the fictions of stability and unity erected in this manner can be traced back to competitive religious phenomena and thus, for their part, localised precisely in history. In short, it is not possible to establish a "Lutheran identity" that is metaphysically and timelessly continuous and correspondingly static and singular, however it is to be described.

Rather, both from the synchronic and diachronic point of view, it is to be assumed that the multitude of various *Lutheran identity constructions,* which were socioculturally determined and historically conditioned, were products of the aforementioned multi-faceted interactions. However, this already implies that constructions of identity that have become historical and correspondingly transitory can very well be questioned in terms of their common roots and characteristics, also along the fictions of stability they have erected. The question would then not so much concern the form of the one "Lutheran identity" to be determined in some way or another, but rather the aspects connecting the various constructions of identity and assertions of validity in terms of religious culture, which make them diachronically and synchronically recognisable as Lutheran phenomena in the first place. What, for example, do Lutheran social forms in the 17th and 20th centuries have in common theologically, institutionally and culturally, so that they present themselves to us as Lutheran social forms? Or what do Lutheran churches and congregations in Brazil, Namibia and Poland have in common today, so that they (can) appear to each other and to the outside world as confessionally coherent entities – after the sacred, hierarchical church as a visible institution of salvation, law and doctrine was rejected by the Reformation?

These and similar questions could certainly be pursued in a historically and theologically sound manner, for they are aimed above all at the complex context of events that we generally summarise under the category of "Reformation" and at its global history of impact. And this already brings up a commonality which is not insignificant and serves to form profile. Whether in the 17th century or in the 20th, whether currently in Brazil, Namibia, Poland or elsewhere – the affirmative reference to certain movements and figures of

the Reformation is likely to be characteristic of religious social figures or actors who see themselves as Lutheran. One could go on to make further reflections on unifying normative fundamentals – such as the Bible and (selected?) confessional writings – and common basic theological assumptions – such as the immediacy of the relationship between God and humankind, the human being as the object of the divine work of grace, the dialectic of law and gospel, the priesthood of all believers (or baptised?), etc. – without immediately lapsing into ahistorical talk of a "Lutheran identity" or ultimately doctrinal narrowness that would be untypical for Reformation theology.

Naturally, the aspects cited as examples are not to be had without historical and other preconditions, on the contrary: historically, the socioculturally conditioned appropriations and interpretations of those documents and theologumena are for their part neither static nor frictionless between themselves. At different times and in different places, the confessional writings were evaluated and variously interpreted individually and as *corpus doctrinae*; the mode of operation of the dialectic of law and gospel or the concrete implementation of the priesthood of all believers/baptised were and are controversially discussed. Nevertheless, they offer approaches to the ecumenically responsible search for common ground within the inherent diversity of Lutheranism as a historical entity, which then differentiates it from – or possibly even connects it with – other denominational or religious phenomena that are equally historical. And is it not perhaps an important part of the Lutheran confessional profile in its decidedly Reformation character when it enters into historically informed dialogue about unifying theological elements, whilst conscious of the historical conditionality of its own religious claims to identity as well as that of others?

Perspectives from the Worldwide Communio

Lutheran Identities in the Lutheran World Federation

Chad M. Rimmer

1. Lutheran identity and the Lutheran World Federation

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has been engaged recently in a conversation about Lutheran identity. Yet, the conversation has been taking place throughout its history.

The LWF was founded at a time when Lutheran churches aspired for greater fellowship and solidarity among themselves. Initial attempts to convene a global body resulted in the formation of the Lutheran World Convention from 1923-1946. Early efforts to describe the theological basis of such a global unity focused on several aspects of theological, confessional, ecclesial and social realities. Following the Second World War, the LWF was constituted on the basis of four pillars: common initiatives in mission, common response to ecumenical challenges, rescue for those in need, and joint efforts in theology.[1] The earliest joint efforts in theology led by the Commission on Theology focused on Luther studies.

In the wake of the Second World War, Lutherans were faced with the devastating consequences of an uncritical appropriation of confessional and religious identity. The way in which the theological heritage of Martin Luther and the confessional witness to the gospel were co-opted for political and racial ends compelled Lutherans around the world to retrace our steps and return to the liberative and critical aims of Luther's theological reform. The gift of liberation and the promise of cosmic inclusion had been turned into a tool of ethno-national identification, and social exclusion to the point of genocide.[2]

1. Jens Holger Schjørring / Prasanna Kumari / Norman A. Hjelm (eds.): From Federation to Communion. The History of the Lutheran World Federation, Minneapolis 1997.
2. For an analytical exploration of this phenomenon of ethno-nationalism and exclusion, see Simone Sinn / Eva Harasta (eds.): Resisting Exclusion - Global Theological Respon-

In this socio-political context, we see why the notion of identity needs to be revisited and negotiated in every generation. As much as we like to think we remember and learn from our history, recent political trends in Brazil, the United States, Sweden, or India reveal a resurgence of ethno-nationalist discourse in public space. The "Identitarian Movement" began as a pan-European effort to associate race with culture and claim white supremacy as the basis of western culture. This right-wing brand of identitarianism has grown into a global sentiment that reminds us that the very notion of identity is contested and should be interrogated.[3]

2. The dynamic between personal and social identities

In the field of cognitive psychology, the term "identity" usually assumes an awareness of the self, and a capacity for self-reflection.[4] Erik Erikson was one of the first Western psychologists to focus on the concept of identity, per se. Erikson's framework relies on a distinction between the psychological sense of continuity with others across time and space, and personal traits or idiosyncrasies that distinguish an individual from others within a given group. While we can debate his understanding of the priority given to the personal and social, Erikson points to the relationship between personal identity and social or cultural identity.

Sometimes the collection of social roles that any individual might receive in a given national, social or religious group can form a positive source of identity and pro-social behaviour. And of course, sometimes those social or cultural roles can constrain the development of an individual's personal identity, or worse, deny and negate one's identity. When systemic social or cultural expectations gender or racialize individuals, we see the intersectionalities of racism, sexism, and myriads of other *xenophobia* that often result in exclusion, isolation, emotional abuse, spiritual, psychological and physical violence, or death.[5] Ultimately, any conversation about identity is an analysis

ses to Populism, Leipzig 2019.

3. For more information on the Identitarian movement, I recommend José Pedro Zúquete: The Identitarians. The Movement against Globalism and Islam in Europe, Notre Dame 2021.

4. Mark R. Leary / June P. Tangney (eds.): Handbook of Self and Identity, New York 2012^2, 3.

5. The concept of "intersectionality" was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in her paper:

of the ways in which the social dimensions of identity liberate and promote an open, pro-social sense of belonging; or suppress and lead to isolation. In other words, identity is neither radically individuated, nor entirely socially determined. Identity is a relational complex of dynamic personal and social dimensions.

The social dimensions of identity include anthropological (gender, age, ability, etc.), linguistic, cultural, familial, ecological and religious aspects. The current LWF process on Lutheran identity focuses mainly on the religious aspects of our relational identity. Broadly construed, "religious" includes a variety of ritualized aspects of faith practices such as exercising the means of grace in corporate worship and individual prayer or devotion, reading the Bible, being engaged in ecclesial fellowship in a local congregation, acts of service, education, initiation rites of baptism, confirmation and other rituals, *etc*. More specifically, the term "religious" includes the theological and confessional aspects of the Lutheran tradition that inform our knowledge about God as revealed in Jesus Christ, and the religious experience of the Trinity through the work of the Holy Spirit that forms the ways we know God as relating to us, and in whom we relate to all creatures and creation itself.

3. Dimensions of a Lutheran theological and confessional identity

Among the theological and confessional aspects of religious identity that contribute to a Lutheran's self-understanding in the LWF will be found:

- a confession of the primacy of the Word, which is God's good news for all creation revealed in Jesus Christ, as born witness to in the words of Scripture (which are the norm for Christian doctrine, life and service), summarized in the doctrine of justification by grace through faith and proclaimed as gift and promise through preaching and the administration of the sacraments (as described in Articles IV-VII of the *Confessio Augustana*).
- an agreement that the Ecumenical Creeds, the *Confessio Augustana* and the Small Catechism are pure expositions of the Word.

Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex. A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics, in: University of Chicago Legal Forum, Vol. 1989, Iss. 1, Art. 8, 139-167.

– the contours of various theological commitments such as law and gospel, Christian liberty, faith (*coram Deo*) and good works (*coram mundo*), theology of the cross (which includes the relationship between reason and revelation), the priesthood of all the baptized, the real presence of Christ, among others.

These confessional and theological commitments are not a mere "vocabulary" that define the parameters of what it means to be Lutheran. They provide a "grammar" by which Lutherans discern what it means to be in the world as a Christian today. Lutherans receive this confessional and theological heritage along with the socio-historical traditions of various Lutheran churches, including the liturgical, musical, rhetorical, philosophical and literary cultures.

The diverse expressions of our shared tradition are due to the diverse cultures and individual bodies in which the Spirit bears its fruit. Within those diverse cultures and bodies, the gospel engages in dialogue and critical dialectic with various anthropological, linguistic, cultural and familial relationships. Luther affirmed that our common Christian vocation is expressed in the spiritual and temporal realms, through the three estates of the home, the church, and the state. Today, we should add a fourth, ecological estate. The natural result are diverse vocational expressions of Christian liberty across the Lutheran communion.

For this reason, early discussions in the current process revealed a broad consensus that it is accurate to speak of a shared "Lutheran Identity" and a diversity of "Lutheran identities" at the same time. The good news of Christian liberty not only frees us, but compels us to express a diversity of identities in matters which are *adiaphora*, or non-essential to the purity of the gospel of justification by grace through faith (*doctrina evangelii*). However, in a wonderful twist of logic, those personal and social elements that are "non-essential" to the proclamation of the gospel are "essential" to the process of forming a liberated identity.

4. Faith formation and transformation

The synergy between our faith tradition, our personal gifts and our social realities are all part of our theological anthropology. This means we are not merely products of our immediate contingent and contextual reality, nor are we merely recipients of a universally significant text or tradition. The catholic or universal Christian tradition needs to take flesh within our contextu-

al reality if it is to be cosmologically significant and offer a framework for making meaning of the world and our place in it. On the other hand, if we only interpret the tradition through our contextual place in the world, we risk domesticating the gospel to our own philosophical, political or cultural systems. We risk creating a god in our own image.

Our faith tradition should exist in an interpretive loop with the various disciplines of our cultural context. Closing the circle between catholicity and contextuality encourages a critical and constructive relationship that transforms our understanding of both the received tradition and our context. Brazilian educator Paulo Freire reminds us that creating a pedagogical cycle between text and context transforms us into people equipped to read the word and read the world.[6] The transformational quality of this hermeneutical circle is equally true of Christian formation as it is with general education. From a Lutheran perspective, Christian formation engages us in ecumenical, interfaith and interdisciplinary dialogue and dialectic.

This integrated approach to formation honors our personal or differentiated identity and the social or cultural identity in which we live. Our identities are formed as we situate our uniquely gifted selves within the diversity of relationships to God, human beings, and the more-than-human creation. Peter Weinreich names this formative process as "the situated self". Weinreich's Identity Structure Analysis (ISA) describes identity as "a structural representation of the individual's existential experience, in which the relationships between self and other agents are organised in relatively stable structures over time … with the emphasis on the socio-cultural milieu in which self relates to other agents and institutions."[7]

For the purposes of describing a Lutheran identity, Weinreich's concept of identity points us towards the transformative dynamic between our faith tradition and culture. Such questions are the aim of a theological sub-discipline known as intercultural theology. However, as a way to move beyond Niebuhr's five ways of conceptualizing the relationship between Christ and culture, Weinreich's complex concept of identity reminds us that questions of intercultural theology must go much deeper than Christ's relationship to culture. God's incarnational relationship to creation is a cosmic horizon in which our relationship to Christ and to our culture grounds us and at the same time liberates us to participate in the transformation of ourselves, our cultures, and the whole of creation. This deep understanding of identity helps

6. Paulo Freire / Donaldo Macedo: Literacy. Reading the Word and the World, South Hadley, MA, 1987.

7. Peter Weinreich / Wendy Saunderson (eds.): Analysing Identity. Cross Cultural, Societal and Clinical Contexts, London / New York 2003, 1.

us to hold our various identities in a creative and critical embrace that nurtures transformation. Weinreich affirms, "One's ethnic identity is defined as that part of the totality of one's self-construal made up of those dimensions that express the continuity between one's construal of past ancestry and one's future aspirations in relation to ethnicity".[8]

In terms of our future, those aspirations include liberation from all cultural, political, economic or social systems that oppress, exclude or divide. Faith equips us to participate in God's mission to reconcile, renew and transform creation which was begun in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:18). This is why our primary identity as Lutherans comes from the Creator who identifies us as beloved, and baptizes us into the body of Christ. In Baptism, we are given an identity that comes through belonging to a community in which we receive and experience a living tradition. In Baptism, the Holy Spirit calls, equips and frees us to express that tradition in diverse and new ways. The Eucharistic feast of reconciliation provides an eschatological horizon of hope from which the reality of God's future is present among us in a way that we can see, hear, taste, smell and feel. In the Eucharist we remember the body of Christ, as the mystical body into which we are baptized is re-membered around the table. There we tell the story of who we are in words and rituals of reconciliation. The story of cosmic creation, reconciliation and transformation equips us to resist other narratives that would colonize or conform our identity to exclusionary or restrictive political, social or economic ends. This encounter bears Christ to us. Christ's real presence in faith is the Holy Spirit's gracious work (*charis*) that nurtures gifts (*charismata*) that bear new fruit of righteousness (*coram mundo*).

In light of this aspiration for all the baptized to participate in the reformation and transformation of the world, the Lutheran tradition holds a creative tension between the continuity and discontinuity that Weinreich describes. Though Christians who belong to a tradition that claims the mantle of reform, the Lutheran tradition does not actually strive for discontinuity. Luther's project, and that of most of the Lutheran reformers, was largely focused on retracing the steps of the Christian tradition and forging a path towards ecumenical consensus. Such was the heart of Luther's and Melanchthon's theological reforms. For example, Luther's attempt to simplify the philosophical and theological accretions of debates about the relationship between nature and grace led to his focus on law and gospel as the primary framework for understanding the relationship between God, humans and

8. Peter Weinreich: Identity Development in Migrant Offspring. Theory and Practice, in: Lars Henric Ekstrand (ed.): Ethnic Minorities and Immigrants in a Cross-Cultural Perspective, Lisse 1986, 3.

the world around us, including the relational aspects of sin, grace, and sanctification. Anyone who can confess the good news of God's love for all creation revealed in Jesus Christ as the source of our justification by grace through faith identifies as a Christian.

5. Faith and culture: interrogation and integration

This confessional unity proposed in the Lutheran tradition is different from the juridical or liturgical unity proposed in the Roman Catholic, Anglican or Orthodox traditions for example. While we share many of the same doctrinal, liturgical, and ministerial contours of these members of the Christian family, confessional unity is a distinct part of Lutheran identity. However, confessional unity is not the same as "confessionalism". Confessionalism implies doctrinal boundaries as a threshold for inclusion, which creates a prescriptive identity. On the other hand, "confessional" is a way to describe the real and visible unity that is shared by all who confess Christ. This ecumenical openness vis-a-vis the Christian confession is the basis for the familiar adage: To be Lutheran is to be ecumenical.

The confessional documents, particularly the *Confessio Augustana*, and the Formula of Concord, are ecumenical documents that record theological negotiations and the conversations between the gospel, ecclesial traditions and political and cultural realities in which the Lutheran tradition was evolving. Because the tradition continues to evolve, each generation must engage in dialogical and dialectical discernment using faith and reason.

A healthy integration of embodied and cultural aspects of our personal and social identity is a key to living well. The personal and relational aspects of our identities always remain "underneath", epistemologically speaking, and inform our contextual reception and practical expression of faith for better or worse. Therefore, maintaining a rightly integrated relationship between reason and revelation was part of Luther's theology of the cross, outlined in the theological and philosophical theses of his Heidelberg Disputation of 1518. Reason and revelation are not discontinuous; they simply need to be integrated in a right relationship to one another. In terms of a revelation of God's love, Lutherans point to those things that proclaim or bear Christ to us (*was Christum treibet*), namely Word and sacraments. That means that by our reason, we cannot look to our relationship to culture, creation or our own reason in order to discern the good news. However, our reason and relationship to culture, creation and ourselves can communicate or embody something about our relationship to God and creation. For this reason, Ar-

ticle XV of *Confessio Augustana* teaches that local cultural traditions "ought to be observed which may be observed without sin, and which are profitable unto tranquillity and good order in the Church, as particular holy days, festivals, and the like", as long as they do no burden consciences with thinking such traditions are necessary to salvation.

Being Lutheran certainly does not require the disintegration or renunciation of personal and cultural gifts that the Spirit can use to nurture the Word into the diversity that we see across the communion. Rather, the Creator redeems and reintegrates aspects of our lived realities in light of the gospel. Throughout its history of the LWF, several studies have explored different aspects of this dynamic relationship between Lutheran identity and culture, notably the 1977 *Lutheran Identity, Final Report of the Study Project* "The Identity of the Lutheran Churches in the Context of the Challenges of our Time" and the report on *Asian Lutheran Identity and Self-Understanding,* held from 16 - 21 November 2015 in Manila, Philippines. Today, our exploration acknowledges the interfaith, intercultural and interdisciplinary aspects of our living tradition, in addition to its ecumenical dimensions.

6. The current Lutheran Identity process

The 12th LWF Pre-Assembly messages and Assembly resolutions raised questions related to the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of LWF churches using language of church renewal, revival, or practices of spirituality. They called the communion to provide a framework for addressing these fundamental questions as Lutherans. Similar to the impulse for a shared self-understanding that led to the formation of the Lutheran World Convention, the current LWF strategy aims to "develop a shared understanding of the theological identity of LWF member churches through which they will continue recognizing each other, belonging to the communion, while witnessing in their diverse contexts."[9]

For this reason, the Theology Unit launched a theological study process that would take a descriptive, inductive and participatory approach to explore ways that Bible, the Catechism, the *Confessio Augustana* and other confessional writings, the means of grace and common contours of fellowship and ministry form our Lutheran identities through a diversity of lan-

9. With Passion for the Church and the World. LWF Strategy 2019-2024, Geneva 2018, 19 (available at: https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/2018/documents/strategy-2019-2024/screen/lwf-strategy-2019-2024-report-en-low.pdf; viewed on 2.11.2022).

guages, cultures, forms of worship, spirituality, service, and expressions of public witness in majority and minority contexts.

Phase 1 of the process began with a consultation hosted by Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus in Addis Ababa, in which representatives of member churches, theologians and practitioners explored the lived experience of the Holy Trinity shaping the ways they proclaim and teach (*kerygma*), worship (*leiturgia*), witness (*martyria*) and serve (*diaconia*). The consultation featured creative and transformational theological reflection, and generated questions that provided the basis for a global survey. The full report of the consultation is available on the LWF website.

Phase 2 of the study process began at the end of 2020. The planned methodology of regional gatherings was rendered impossible by COVID restrictions. However, we were able to create new modes to pursue the themes that emerged from the Addis consultation. We (1) hosted a series of webinars on the themes, (2) published the book *We Believe in the Holy Spirit: Global Perspectives on Lutheran Identities*[10], (3) launched small-scale test projects in the Africa, European and Asia regions, and (4) deployed the global survey and discussion guide to member churches.

6.1 Summary of Phase 2 global survey findings

Based on the major findings, the participants of the Addis consultation helped frame the questionnaire. It became clear, that Lutheran identity is formed through a normative theological tradition including the Bible, *Confessio Augustana*, the catechism and lived experience and spirituality of worship and *tentatio* in daily life. Therefore, these two areas provided the frame for qualitative and quantitative questions. The survey was published in German, French, Spanish, English, Swahili and Portuguese. It was made available to member churches and online in order to collect input from a variety of diverse voices at the grassroots of our communion. The survey was a good tool to see how the assumptions and findings of the consultation matched the reality of LWF members.

The Communion Office received over 2800 responses. Unfortunately, the regional representation was unbalanced. Over half of the responses came from North America. 400 responses came from Central and Western Europe

10. Chad M. Rimmer / Cheryl M. Peterson (eds.): We Believe in the Holy Spirit. Global Perspectives on Lutheran Identities (LWF Documentation 63), Leipzig 2021 (available at: https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/2021/documents/20210624_-_doc_63_being_lutheran_-_en.pdf; viewed on 2.11.2022).

(mainly German language), with the rest from other regions. This perennial problem is due to multiple factors that we mitigate in later phases of the process. While it means the statistical weight of a particular response should be considered, each seriously engages the tradition from their contexts and are significant in their descriptive and reflexive capacity.

The results identify trends and broad correlations. An analysis of the results correlates strongly with the findings of the consultation, with some exceptions and new discoveries. The answers from the German language respondents seemed more critical and reserved towards the questions. For example, on the question of whether Lutheran identity is personally significant, only 61 % of the German surveys agreed (perhaps reflecting a growing secular, ecumenical, majority context), where 79 % of the Spanish and English respondents agreed.

Across all languages, there was a high percentage of daily or weekly engagement with the Bible and strong affirmation of the Bible as a source of faith that guides discernment of daily life. Results strongly affirmed that Lutherans should care for creation and gender justice. With respect to the experiential aspects of Lutheran spirituality, people widely affirmed that they can feel God's Spirit outside the church and through the liturgies of Word and sacrament. Over 50 % confirmed that the Holy Spirit gives them energy in life and nearly 90 % that prayer has an impact on their daily life. Keyword analysis across all responses shows that the most used to describe Lutheran traditions are *worship* and *communion*. Results show that people feel liturgy is highly significant for faith formation and as a dialogical aesthetic that connects spirituality with discernment of daily personal and social life.

Respondents indicate a clear understanding of the breadth of spiritual gifts for building up the life of their community and identify their gifts. For example, the results of the word cloud show that the most named spiritual gifts among the English responses are teaching leadership and preaching, German is prayer, listening and love. These differences raise interesting questions about cultural or ecclesial differences. However, responses indicate ambivalence towards ways the church talks about spiritual gifts or helps people discern spiritual gifts and spirits of the age. Spanish and English respondents are slightly less positive whereas German language respondents give a clearly negative result.

Compared to a highly positive engagement with the Bible, baptism and liturgy, engagement with confessional documents like the Catechism, *Confessio Augustana* and Book of Concord were quite low. Participants reported consulting these normative texts only a few times per year or never.

Despite this low engagement with confessional documents a high percentage (76 % German, 79 % English, 86 % Spanish) report that they can explain

what it means to be Lutheran, and the meaning of several key Lutheran doctrines such as law/gospel, justification, priesthood of the baptized, etc., and that they influence their discernment of life. What is clear is that while people may not point to the confessional writings as the basis of their theological identity, most respondents clearly articulate what we would call functional theologies. So, a question emerges about the source of these functional theologies. If catechesis or ongoing engagement with confessional documents is not the source of theological formation, it would seem that the experience of preaching, spirituality of practicing the means of grace (Word and sacrament), and congregational life do form our theological identities.

However, it seems that we have to find new ways to use confessional documents as pedagogical tools, if we want to sharpen our confessional profile and strengthen this foundation of our identity.

Finally, an open question about "What difference does it make in your life to be Lutheran?" gave insight on the diverse and various approaches of understanding Lutheran Identity today. There are mainly three kinds of answers. (1) People name "grace", "liberation" and "freedom", but often without explanation why these concepts are significant for them. (2) Many pointed to cultural or family tradition (e.g., "I was raised Lutheran and is what I tell people what I am.") (3) Many people clearly relate their spirituality to their capacity to express faith in life (e.g.: "It is a particular lens through which I see God, the world, and myself", or "Seeing myself as saint and sinner at the same time allows me to be open to accepting change and also contributing to change.")

6.2 New questions and directions for the future

In addition to revealing confirmations and misconceptions, every good research leads to new questions. In the course of this process, from the Addis consultation through the webinars and in the survey, the following questions emerge as fields for fruitful study about Lutheran identity.

- The relationship between the work of the Holy Spirit and Christ is not always clear. This affirms the need for this Trinitarian approach to interpreting our tradition. (*We Believe in the Holy Spirit: Global Perspectives on Lutheran Identities* describes the need for a pneumatological Christology or a Christological pneumatology).
- The relation between indigenous/ancestral/cultural traditions and Lutheran identity is deeply important. However, many express that they cannot

always express these identities in the context of their congregations. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa Youth League explored this question of faith, religion, youth culture and indigeneity, in a process that hosted focus group conversations in over 40 parishes on what it meant to be young, African and Lutheran today. More work is needed here, particularly on worship as dialogical aesthetics.

- Ecclesiologically, people identify with their congregation and pastors more than with the concept of the Church. What does this mean for our identity as a communion of churches, specifically related to reconciled diversity and the mission of the Church within the larger field of *Missio Dei?*
- The balance between ethical and theological engagement in social issues and the spirituality of faith practice and formation is a frequent topic, but one with uneven appreciation (i.e.: "It seems my church has become more a social services agency than a pastoral care community").
- Gender justice is clearly associated with Lutheran identity.
- The relationship between doctrinal theological commitments and spirituality (meaning an experience of the Spirit) through the means of grace and in daily life are clearly felt and there is a desire to deepen this spiritual engagement with the work of the Holy Spirit. We hope to get a better understanding of how Lutheran spirituality helps to make meaning in the dynamic context of our faith communities, and how our spirituality equips us to participate in God's work in the world (*Missio Dei*) and to bear witness through ethical engagement in the public space. This approach will be included in the Study Document that forms the heart of phase 3.

6.3 Outputs and outcomes of the Lutheran Identities Study Process

There are four main outputs of this study process.

1. The full report of the consultation, which is available for download on the LWF website.[11]
2. *We Believe in the Holy Spirit: Global Perspectives on Lutheran Identities* (LWF Documentation 63)
3. Webinar recordings and web-based resources
4. A Study Document on Lutheran Identities

11. See: https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/2021/documents/2020_dtmj_addis_ababa_lutheran_identity_consultation_a4_en.pdf (viewed on 2.11.2022).

The final Phase 3 of the process is nearing its completion at the time of writing. We reconvened a group of theologians and practitioners who are currently drafting a study document that will synthesize the findings from Addis Ababa, global surveys, webinars, and creative projects into a pedagogical tool for LWF member churches. The study document will be a pedagogical resource that member churches can use to discern how the shared normative theological and spiritual gifts of our Lutheran tradition are instruments for God's Spirit to form our identities through the diverse cultures, ecumenical commitments, interfaith dialogue and interdisciplinary dialectic that we experience across our global communion.

The main outcome of this process aims to inspire our communion to appreciate our diversity and deepen our understanding of the work of God's Spirit that reconciles our diversity in communion, binding us into one body, one Spirit and one hope, as we head towards the 13th Assembly in Krakow.

Lutheran Identity in Africa

Protest and prospect

Kenneth Mtata

1. Introduction

African Lutherans have made important contributions to the self-understanding of contemporary Lutheranism. African Lutherans have brought to the fore some aspects of Lutheranism that would otherwise remain latent and untested. In this short reflection I begin by showing that the contribution to Lutheran identity by Africans begins in the pre-Reformation period. I then go on to demonstrate how African Lutheran identity was refined in intercultural, political, missional, and pneumatological dimensions of the Lutheran heritage. I follow a biographical approach to highlight the contributions of some few individuals. It is obvious that these Africans enjoyed the support of others, including Lutherans from other parts of the world in developing their theological contribution. I declare upfront that my sample of these Africans is neither exhaustive nor is it comprehensive.

Before getting into the heart of this discussion, it will be important to note that there are many reasons why clarity on Lutheran identity has become an urgent issue today. First, while in the past global Lutheranism was dominated by three centres, Germany, Nordic countries, and North America, today the fastest growing Lutheran churches are in the Global South, particularly in Africa. African Lutheran churches have a numerical responsibility to represent Lutheran identity. Such identity must be shaped by both the local African churches' lived experiences and the African cultural imprint, but must remain faithful to the Lutheran confessions and the scriptures. Only this way will it respond in coherent and plausible ways to the contemporary challenges in the African context and the world. Lutheran identity in Africa must therefore be able to show how it keeps a healthy tension between its incarnational faithfulness and universal accountability.

Second, while Christians and Lutheran Christians are increasing in Africa, the generality of populations in Africa lives under social, economic, and political

conditions that contradict the promises of the gospel of abundant life. For this reason, Lutherans in Africa have an obligation to recover from their Lutheran heritage those theological resources that equip them for a meaningful role to enrich the public life in Africa. If Lutherans in Africa are going to make a meaningful contribution to global Lutheran identity, they must prove that their faith is consistent with their witness to the kingdom of God in their own context.

Third, in the past, clear collective self-understanding among most Lutherans globally helped them in their ecumenical engagement with other Christians. These ecumenical dialogues tended to be confined to resolving historical dogmatic differences especially among the churches of the Global North. Highlights of such dialogues include, for example, the Joint Declaration of the Doctrine of Justification in 1999 and the reconciliation with churches of the Anabaptist tradition (the Mennonite Action) at the Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Stuttgart in 2010. Today Lutherans are under growing pressure, not necessarily to resolve dogmatic differences with other Christian traditions, but to find coherence among Lutherans themselves. In the last few years Africa has become the new battleground where the International Lutheran Council is working hard to win over Lutherans in Africa. At the same time, the LWF must also work hard to prove why African Lutherans must maintain their membership. African Lutherans have a huge responsibility to define Lutheran identity for themselves so that they could serve as a catalyst for unity between Lutheran families.

Fourth, African Lutheran identity has also become an urgent matter because there are many new types of Christianity in Africa, some which tend to attract African Lutherans. Many of these churches are of a charismatic and neo-Pentecostal type. Since African Christianity in general tends to have a more pneumatological than Christological emphasis, African Lutherans could draw on this character to contribute to global Lutheranism.

Fifth, clarity is urgent on Lutheran identity in Africa since Lutherans in Africa see mission to the Global North and to Asia as their contemporary primary mandate. Indeed, many African Lutheran pastors and laity see it as part of their role, to re-evangelize the nations that brought them the gospel. How do they carry out this mission as Lutherans? It is urgent that such missionary enterprise be imagined in Lutheran terms.

2. African influence on the Reformation

There is a tendency to look at Lutheran identity from a synchronic perspective – as something fixed and finalized once the confessions were written on

paper. Such a canonical approach to Lutheran identity misses the internal dynamic even within the confessions, which allows a diachronic approach – which sees the question of Lutheran identity as an ongoing spiritual work of the Holy Spirit that precedes and even continues after the 16th century Reformation. As such Lutheran identity in Africa has tended to be viewed from the post-reformation and missionary legacy which Africans must try to maintain. As a matter of fact, Africa is not only a recipient of missionary Lutheranism. It also shaped Lutheranism at its birth. Let us look at some two examples.

2.1 Augustine the African

If one wants to be anachronistic, one could say that just as St Paul was the first Jewish-Roman Lutheran, St Augustine was the first African-Roman Lutheran! Of course, it is not possible for both Paul and Augustine to be Lutheran because they precede the 16th century Reformation of Martin Luther. Yet, we can safely say that it was Paul's letters read through the lens of Augustine, that put Martin Luther on his reformatory trajectory. While it is generally known that Martin Luther was an Augustinian Monk, it is not always appreciated that this Augustine was a Roman citizen of North African descent, just like some of us Africans who today live in the diaspora in Europe or other foreign countries. It is inevitable to link the Protestant Reformation to Augustine and the way the Reformers read and adapted his writings, and it should hardly be conceivable to appropriate Augustine's writings and thought without taking his Africanness seriously.

Recently among other scholars, Mark Ellingsen has observed the impact of Augustine's Africanness on his thought.[1] He says that in order "to understand Augustine and the sort of concerns he addressed, it is necessary to examine his ancient North African context and his African roots."[2] Augustine grew up in a multicultural context in present-day Algeria among mainly

1. Mark Ellingsen: The Richness of Augustine. His Contextual and Pastoral Theology, Louisville 2005, 1f. Mark Ellingsen is not the only one to appeal to Augustine's African roots. See also Yosef Ben-Jochannan: African Origins of the Major "Western Religions", Baltimore 1991, 100. I think Judith Chelius Stark: Feminist Interpretations of Augustine, Pennsylvania, 2007, struggles to present Augustine as a Romanised African by suggesting that "Monica's piety and practice seem to reflect the African Christianity that Augustine subsequently tried to replace with Catholic, or Romanized, Christianity" (59).
2. Ellingsen: Augustine (see note 1), 7.

three ethnic groups, the Italian immigrants, the Punics who were children of the Phoenician immigrants and the indigenous black Africans called the Berbers Kabyle clan.[3] Augustine's mother, Monica, was likely from the Libyan or Numidian (named after the god Mon) clan and would have been from the indigenous African cultures. Augustine's son's name, Adeodatus, which means Godsent, reflects a well-known customary nomenclature in Berber tradition.[4]

North Africa in Augustine's time was obviously Romanised having been occupied from 146 BC, just as we in Southern Africa have become anglicised after British colonialism more than two centuries ago. While one would have adopted Latin language and culture to enhance one's upward mobility, this would have been filtered through the local cultural lens of conceiving reality, just as Southern Africans would speak English and act like the English but in African ways. Indeed, one needed to adopt the Roman ways of doing things if they were to climb the social ladder, hence the quest of Augustine's father, Patricius, who sought to bequeath his son with this cultural capital by giving him classical education. It was his study of the Roman orator and lawyer Cicero (160-143 BC) that convinced Augustine of the inseparable connection between the skill of oratory and all quest for truth.[5] It is through such study that Augustine also subscribed for a moment to the Manichean teaching of the human trap in the cage of "cosmic struggle between good and evil, light and darkness."[6] Augustine left this belief system to embrace Neo-Platonic philosophy before joyfully converting to Christianity and being baptised in Milan and returning to Africa to live a coenobitic monastic life, which was founded by Pachomios, who lived parallel to Anthony, and also was an Egyptian. Augustine was reluctant but accepted ordination into priesthood in 391 and was latter consecrated as Bishop of Hippo, a position he held until his death in 430.[7]

The fact that Augustine could have been of mixed race does not weaken his ethnic and cultural self-consciousness.[8] His African self-consciousness is evident in his argument with his North African compatriot Maximus regarding the issue of ancestor veneration and the value of the indigenous cosmology when he says, "For surely, considering you are an African, and that we are

3. Ebd., 7.
4. Ebd., 9f.
5. Ebd., 11.
6. Ebd., 11.
7. Ebd., 12.
8. Ebd., 8.

both settled in Africa, you could not have so forgotten yourself when writing to Africans as to think that Punic names were a fit theme for censure."[9] It has been observed that in North Africa of Augustine's time, Punic was a language of any non-Roman indigenous person. So, he argues: "And if the Punic language is rejected by you, you virtually deny what has been admitted by most learned men, that many things have been wisely preserved from oblivion in books written in the Punic tongue. Nay, you even ought to be ashamed of having been born in a country in which the cradle of this language is still warm, i.e. in which this language was originally, until very recently, the language of the people."[10] In his response to the Italian Bishop Lulian's rhetoric against North African Christianity's stance towards Pelagius, Augustine also evinces some of his ethnic self-understanding when he says, "Don't out of pride in your earthly ancestry dismiss one who monitors and admonishes you, just because I am Punic. Your Apulian birth is no pledge over Punic forces."[11] This statement completely rules him out as having Italian ethnic background, according to Ellingsen.[12]

That Augustine was African, was also noted by later opponents of Luther. For example, in his argument against Luther, Erasmus reasoned, condescendingly that Augustine's shortcomings came from two factors; his African origin and his love for women.[13] Augustine's cultural self-consciousness was not only for purposes of argumentation. His African identity also shaped his theology from which the father of the Reformation, Martin Luther, drank. Did Africa then contribute to Lutheran identity before the Reformation? The answer should be, yes.

It is not within the purview of this short paper to go into details about what from the African identity would have shaped aspects of Augustine's theology. Let us rather provide another example of African influence on the Reformation and hence Lutheran identity.

9. Quoted ebd., .9.
10. Quoted ebd., 9.
11. Quoted ebd., 10.
12. Some scholars like John D. Caputo (et al.) do not see this as evidence enough of the African ethnic background of Augustine. See John D. Caputo / Michael J. Scanlon (eds.): Augustine and Postmodernism. Confessions and Circumfession, Bloomington 2005, 233.
13. In Arnoud S. Q. Visser: Reading Augustine in the Reformation. The Flexibility of Intellectual Authority in Europe. 1500-1620, Oxford 2011, 37ff.

2.2 When Martin Luther met the African theologian

In his recent compelling study, Stanislau Paulau has alerted us to an important encounter between Martin Luther and an Ethiopian Christian, Abba Michael (Abba Mikaʾel).[14] It was on 31 May 1534, when the Ethiopian monk arrived in Wittenberg to make contact with the reformers Martin Luther and Philipp Melanchthon, an encounter that left a lasting impression on Luther and his colleagues. Melanchthon first reported on this unexpected but exciting visit on the same day in a letter to his friend, the Wittenberg jurist, Benedikt Pauli (1490-1552).[15] During the encounter, the Ethiopian cleric, Abba Michael, whom Melanchthon and Luther considered a genius, had intensive theological discussions with Wittenberg scholars until 4 July 1534.[16] Luther and Melanchthon did not leave Wittenberg for "almost the entirety" of Abba Michael's stay.[17]

Paulau has made many important observations in his analysis of this encounter. Let me highlight three content and methodological lessons for African Lutherans as they reflect on Lutheran identity not only as a fixed issue but a dialogical process. First, the story of Abba Michael had a lasting impression on Luther who even years later, recalled in his Table Talks the agreement on matters of faith that he and his fellow believers had reached with the Ethiopian monk: "Three years ago an Ethiopian monk was with us, with whom we discussed through an interpreter. He summed up all our articles [of faith] by saying: 'This is a good credo (that is, faith).' "[18] The reformers found affirmation that their reformation project was consistent with the core tenets of the Christian faith shared by other Christians, namely, those in Ethiopia Africa.

Second, Paulau rightly observes that probably the most important outcome of this "proto-ecumenical dialogue was the conviction" that "despite doctrinal differences", their churches belonged to the one common Church of Christ.[19] This African theologian helped Luther to appreciate that there was theological diversity that could be allowed to coexist without undermining the essence of faith. The theological dialogue included subjects like the Trinity, Lord's Supper, and ecclesiology. From the encounter Luther said,

14. Stanislau Paulau: Das andere Christentum. Zur transkonfessionellen Verflechtungsgeschichte von äthiopischer Orthodoxie und europäischem Protestantismus, Göttingen 2020, 21–72.
15. Ebd., 22.
16. Ebd., 22.
17. Ebd., 22.
18. Quoted ebd., 65.
19. Ebd., 52.

> "For although the Oriental Church observes some deviant customs, yet he [Abba Michael] judges that this difference neither annuls the unity of the Church nor contends with the faith, *because the kingdom of Christ is spiritual righteousness of heart, fear of God, and confidence through Christ" [italics mine]*. Having established agreement on the central questions of faith (the doctrines of the Trinity and the Lord's Supper), agreement was also reached on the understanding that the existing differences in rite were to be regarded as adiaphora …The ecumenical understanding with the Ethiopian monk made the belief that the followers of the Wittenberg Reformation, despite the break with Rome and despite the ongoing confessional fragmentation within the Reformation camp, were part of a worldwide, Catholic Christian community, not only derivable from the creed, but also concretely experienceable."[20]

The African helped the Reformer appreciate "unity in diversity" very early on in the Reformation process.

The third significance of this encounter is a methodological one. Paulau raises the question "why the encounter of the Wittenberg reformers with the Ethiopian monk is still overlooked in historical scholarship."[21] Even where the encounter is recognized, the Monk is not identified as an African. Sometimes he is identified as from the Greek Orthodox church. Paulau observes that until "the 20th century, editors found it difficult to see Abba Mikaʾel as an Ethiopian and to give this letter of recommendation of him an appropriate heading. It was not until a volume of Luther's correspondence, compiled by Reformation historian Ludwig Enders (1833-1906) in 1903, that the text is titled 'Letter of Recommendation for an Ethiopian, named Michael'".[22] Even when the letter found its way into the Weimar Luther edition, Paulau notes,

> "unlike other texts in this volume, the letter was not assigned a sequential number and was not included in the table of contents. The marginalization of this historical document, which further complicated its reception, was expressed not least in the absence of translations: Since its first German publication in 1784, the letter has not been retranslated into German or any other modern language, while the original translation from the late 18th century has never been reprinted since. The handling of the letter of recommendation exposes the mechanisms of marginalization to which the memory of the Reformer's encounter with Abba Mikaʾel and their ecumenical understanding had been subjected over the last two and a half

20. Quoted ebd., 52f.
21. Ebd., 65.
22. Ebd., 70f.

centuries. Ultimately, these memory mechanisms led to the Ethiopian monk's visit to Wittenberg being suppressed from the archive of collective memory."[23]

If African thought contributed to the 16th century Reformation, search for African Lutheran identity must not begin with the missionary Lutheranism, important though it is.

3. Lutheran Identity in Africa after the Reformation

The above section seeks to contribute to the decolonisation of historiography by making visible African influence on Reformation and subsequent Lutheran identity. The next section seeks to further demonstrate how even missionary Lutheranism was received, reshaped, and contextualized by Africans. Lutheran identity in Africa in this regard, is an unfinished product.

3.1 Identity as intercultural

Missionaries who brought the Lutheran faith to Africa were not always aware where the gospel core ended and where their concerns for culture began. One reason Christianity in general and Lutheranism in particular only started to thrive after missionaries had left was because the locals knew how to address cultural issues among their own. Most Lutheran churches were established in Africa by European missionaries in a period coterminous with colonisation of the region. In this contact between different cultures, the more powerful group, namely the missionaries who had the support of the armed colonialists, could impose cultural identities upon Africans. In this situation, the boundaries between European culture and Christian or Lutheran identity were sometimes blurred.

When the Lutheran World Federation was established in 1947, it was largely a German, American and Nordic project. It worked with western cultural assumptions, not only in theological argumentation, but also in its governance and administration. As Josiah Kibira pointed out in his acceptance speech as president of the LWF in 1977: "I envisage a time in the future when even the Rules and Procedures (for debates, etc.) of the LWF Assembly

23. Ebd., 71.

and the Executive Committee will be affected so that both Anglo-Saxon and other European procedures will be modified by 'tradition', 'Ujamaa' ones – namely, where we sit and talk until we agree."[24] In the 1950s, there was a growing concern even among Lutherans from the Global North, how the Lutheran churches in the Global South could be integrated into the global Lutheran family. A decision was taken at a meeting in Hoekelum, Holland in October 1954 to hold consultative meetings on Lutheran identity in Africa in 1955 and one in Asia in 1956. The idea was to go to the next LWF assembly in Minneapolis having had these consultations. The result of this decision was the 1955 All Africa Lutheran Conference in Marangu, Tanzania.[25]

The Marangu Conference was very important because it brought together European Lutheran missionaries in Africa, indigenous African Lutherans, and Lutherans from the global fellowship. A real dialogue of cultures took place because for the first time, many Africans who had not been in contact because most of their countries were under colonialism, met in one of only three free African countries. It was a 'safe space' outside the surveillance of their colonisers. Here for the first time Africans were aware of their double identity: African and Lutheran Christians. There were other challenges at this meeting though. Apart from the fact that Africans were struggling to agree among themselves on what cultural aspects could coexist with their Lutheran faith, they also needed to understand the cultures of other fellow Lutherans from other parts of the world in relationship to their own cultures. This struggle is evident in the debates between Hanns Lilje of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover and Josia B. Hove of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).

Hanns Lilje was a renowned Lutheran leader with impeccable credentials. He had been imprisoned for his resistance against the Nazis. He was a Lutheran leader with a passion for the unity of Lutherans globally, having been elected in 1936 to be the Executive Secretary of the Lutheran World Convention, the predecessor to the Lutheran World Federation. He was one of the leading ecumenists, having attended the Mission conference in India in the 1920s and being among the founding personalities behind the World Council of Churches. Lilje was also a respected theologian, having been visiting scholar in Germany and the USA. He generally embodied "a new kind

24. Bishop Josiah M. Kibira: Speech of Acceptance of the Presidency of the LWF, in: In Christ – A New Community. Proceedings of the Sixth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. June 13-25, 1977, Geneva 1977, 64.

25. Marangu. A record of the All-Africa Lutheran Conference. Marangu, Tanganyinka, East Africa, 1955. Edited by the Lutheran World Federation Department of World Mission, Geneva, 1956, 28f.

of international orientation, strikingly different from that of the previous German Lutheran church leaders."[26] He attended Marangu conference as the president of the LWF.

Hanns Lilje's interlocutor at Marangu, Josia B. Hove, was not as celebrated. He had finished his pastoral training at Oscarsberg Seminary in Natal in 1931 but was only ordained in March 1937. He was not even ordained by a bishop but by another pastor, Rev Othenius, who had been specially commissioned by the Swedish archbishop to perform the ceremony. Hove became the first ordained Black pastor of the African Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Rhodesia. Though he was not as decorated as Lilje, Hove was a very creative, intelligent, and adventurous character who broke many boundaries. Not much is written about him because at the end of his carrier he had a broken relationship with the Swedish missionaries – apart from a story reported in the Dagens Nyheter Newspaper of 16 November 1952 by Brodjaga of Alma Braathen when Josia B. Hove visited Stockholm through his personal arrangement. During the visit Josia B. Hove met King Gustav VI Adolf and he presented him with a traditional axe from the Karanga people and a letter explaining its origin and function. The gift was a token of gratitude for the fact that in 1874 the Royal Court had sanctioned the establishment of the Swedish Church Mission Board, thus paving the way for missionary work in Southern Africa and elsewhere.

At the Marangu conference, Hanns Lilje was asked to speak on the topic: "Our Heritage, Our Faith". His presentation was followed by a plenary discussion. His presentation was meant to introduce participants to the Lutheran faith. Following him on the conference program was Josia B. Hove who was asked to speak on "Christian and African Heritage". Hove's paper was meant to introduce the African cultural heritage and its relationship to the Christian and Lutheran faith. Hove's paper was not discussed in a plenary. Soon after Hove's presentation the next paper was presented by another German, Heinrich Meyer, who spoke on "The Relevance of our Confession Today".[27] There was a plenary discussion after Meyer's paper.

As for content, Lilje started by recognizing Africa's place in the history of Christianity going back to the "old and unbroken tradition of the Christian

26. Jens Holger Schjørring / Prasanna Kumari / Norman A. Hjelm (eds.): From Federation to Communion. The History of the Lutheran World Federation, Minneapolis 1997, 31.

27. Two years before Marangu, Heinrich Meyer, had just written a book designed to help mission churches to remain confessional under the title: Commitment to Confession and Formation of Confession in Young Churches. Gütersloh 1953. Before this, Meyer had spent several years in India as a missionary before doing his habilitation at the University of Heidelberg in the discipline of missiology in 1951. He was elected the bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lübeck in 1956.

church in Egypt and Ethiopia … St. Augustine …" and in the "great century of Christian missions."[28] He noted that Christianity was also an African heritage because it was at home in Africa. He, however, did not refer to the roots of early Christianity in Africa possibly coming from the Ethiopian Eunuch mentioned in Acts 8:26 or to the witnesses of Pentecost coming from Libya mentioned in Acts 2. He highlighted that like the Germans, Africans had received outsiders to share the message of the gospel with them, but this message was supposed to be incarnated because the "history of the church is the continuation of the incarnation."[29] Lutheran identity, said Lilje "must be a reality in our own life." Every culture must hear God who "has many ways of speaking" but who "finally and conclusively spoke to us through His son (Heb. 1:3)." Aware that Africans were asserting their own cultural independence in the context of colonisation, Lilje warned that in an "attempt to rediscover Africa's heritage, in her present situation of radical change we must not do away with our Christian heritage."[30] Lilje warned against adapting Christianity "to such an extent that little of the biblical Christianity would be left" because there is an "element of timelessness in our faith. The word of God is above human and historic changes."[31] But what would constitute this "timelessness" in the Word of God? "Forgiveness of sins, life eternal and the courage to live under the commandments and promises of God – these are elements of the faith which are valid in every generation," Lilje concluded.[32]

Josia B. Hove's opening statement seemed to be responding to the universal claims of Lilje: "Africans, like all other races, have their own heritage of legal ideas, beliefs and social life."[33] He went on to describe these customs, laws, beliefs and practices of the Africans and demonstrated how these affected human behaviour. He highlighted how ceremonies, rituals and performances were the "essence of the African society." Key moments in these ceremonies were singing because "Africans are very fond of music."[34] After this survey of African culture, Hove then related this to Christianity and Lutheran faith. He pointed out that the gospel that is being shared with Africans has "had centuries of development in different countries and among different races and nations. During this period, it must have been influ-

28. Marangu (see note 25), 28f.
29. Ebd., 29.
30. Ebd., 31.
31. Ebd., 31.
32. Ebd., 31.
33. Ebd., 33.
34. Ebd., 34.

enced by elements which were not purely Christian, but racial and national. It should not be assumed that everything that the gospel brings along is of real Christian heritage as it was from the beginning except for the central fact in the Christian gospel: salvation by faith alone."[35]

Hove concluded by pointing out that every nation and race had been given its own culture but because cultures were tainted by sin, there was need to take which was useful and reject that which was not. But as far as he was concerned, "in the African heritage there is much which is still in accordance with the plan of the Creator. It is therefore our duty as African Christians to discern in the light of the Word of God, what part of the African heritage is opposed to the will of God. Likewise in the light of the Word of God we must try to realise what gifts the Creator has given us in our African heritage and have them purified by the work of the Holy Spirit and see to it that they are made use of to the glory of God and in the service of those we are called upon to serve."[36]

There are many issues that could be drawn from this discussion at Marangu. For our purpose, we highlight a few. First, both Lilje and Hove understood themselves to be Lutheran and Christians. Lilje was creative in summarising what the core of this Lutheran identity consists of, namely "forgiveness of sins, life eternal and the courage to live under the commandments and promises of God." But for Hove, the summary was "salvation by faith alone." While we cannot doubt Lilje's familiarity with the accurate Lutheran language, it should interest us that Hove found it best to sum up the heart of the Lutheran faith as "salvation by faith alone". Second, while Lilje emphasised the universality of the faith and the relativity of culture, Hove saw both as gifts of God but because of sin, both carry the potential for good and evil. In fact, for Hove, the task of the Christian is not only to appropriate the faith, but also to understand and celebrate the goodness in one's own culture. Only this way does one become truly Christian and Lutheran. Third, we can see that both Hove and Lilje would have recognised some core or timeless element of the Lutheran Christian faith, but both would agree that how this was expressed would depend on local cultural customs and traditions. This gave each culture group an immense task of being faithful to the thought patterns and cosmologies of its own people in a bid to better communicate this core or timeless truth of the gospel.

The debate between Hanns Lilje and Josia B. Hove cannot be looked at as a 1950s to the 1960s problem. It is a huge challenge still today because culture looms large in the way Lutherans seek to live their identity. On

35. Ebd., 35.
36. Ebd., 35.

the one hand they have diverse cultures and on the other hand they must find ways of being brothers and sisters in the kingdom of God. The future of Lutheran identity in Africa is an intercultural identity, because as global contact increases, all cultural groups must learn to respect each other despite their cultural difference. There will be need for efforts to be made so that one culture group does not equate its culture to Lutheran identity. There will be need for vigilance, especially among African Lutherans, because the current culture wars between conservatives and liberals are also playing out in the church. Africans must refuse to be boxed in these foreign wars. Africa must remember that many missionaries who brought Lutheranism to the continent came from the conservative wing of the western churches, yet many church leaders were educated in the liberal universities in the north. In this regard, African Lutheran identity is suffering a schizophrenic condition where the laity is theologically highly conservative, and the theologians tend to be liberal. Such a situation makes African Lutheran theologians communicate one message to Western audiences and another different one to their own audience back home. This double talk is dangerous in seeking to build a Lutheran identity that is faithfully local and global.

3.2 Identity as Holistic Mission

From the 1960s to the 1970s, many African countries were becoming politically independent and their participation in the global Ecumenism and Lutheran World Federation was increasing. They also began to raise concerns as to how faithful the Lutheran churches in the Global North were to the Christian and Lutheran message. This was noted in the keynote address of Mikko Juva during the first LWF Assembly to be held in Africa: "It is essential to the growth of our fellowship that we now at last convene on African soil. During the past seven years the voice of African churches has become one of the most challenging and distinctive in our global fellowship. We have heard this voice in the courageous open letter of the Namibian churches denouncing the evils of racism. We have heard it in the letter of the Mekane Yesus Church defending the wholeness of the mission of the church."[37] It is this voice I want to highlight in the two areas mentioned, namely, in the understanding of the mission of the church and then in the next section, in the church's public witness.

The African reaction to skewed western missionary orientation was best

37. Kibira: Speech (see note 24), 12f.

articulated in a letter written by the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus in 1972. The letter was a complaint to the Lutheran World Federation against the lopsided availing of money by missionaries and donors only for "development projects" over against the church's "evangelism work." So, the letter was "challenging the particularistic approaches to human needs and to society as well as the dependency structures which western churches impose on churches in Asia, Africa and Latin America; this dependency is analogous to the dependency found in cultural, economic and political relationships between countries in the North and those in the Southern hemisphere."[38]

The General Secretary of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (ECMY), Rev Gudina Tumsa (1929-1979) of Bodji, Wallaga, is said to have been the opinion leader and the mind behind the letter. Tumsa was not driving his personal opinion in this re-evaluation of mission within global Lutheranism, but understood this debate as a theological self-understanding of Lutheran churches in Africa. In a follow-up to this letter, Tumsa wrote another letter which clarified to members of the ECMY and other African churches what was at the heart of the first letter on holistic mission. I will quote extensively Tumsa's thinking behind the letter in the internal communication found in the archives:

> "We have addressed letters upon my return to Bishop Moshi of ELCT [Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania], and Bishop Payne of the Liberian Lutheran Church as well as to Dr. Carr of AACC [All African Conference of Churches], requesting them to make their positions clear as regards the document the ECMY presented to the LWF requesting the Donor Agencies of the Federation for reconsideration of their criteria. In my opinion reconsideration of criteria and review of policies by the Western churches require a theological re-thinking which has led to the laying down of the criteria.
>
> In Africa there are some thinkers who are interested neither in the Western nor in the Eastern ways of thinking. The one divides one man into various parts while the other denies the reality of the religious dimension of human existence. In Africa we are not interested in this. We have, if we are to develop healthy societies, to look at life as a total unit and try to cater to its needs. This trend of thinking is being advocated by African politicians for example – President Nyerere of Tanzania and President Siad Barre of Somalia."[39]

38. The Identity of the Church and its Service to the Whole Human Being, Geneva 1977, 2.
39. Internal letter written by Gudina Tumsa, the General Secretary of the ECMY on the 11th of December 1972 (LWF 214.2.3.1.28 Box "Africa Churches General. Ethiopia").

First, Gudina Tumsa sees the situation created by this letter as a matter of relationship between Lutheran churches in the north and the south. He therefore is reaching out to influential Lutheran churches, not only to get political support, but also to build convergence with the Pan-African Lutheran family. Second, Tumsa does not see this letter only as a matter of unequal relationships between donors and recipients. He also sees this as a theological matter. He sees that the theology that informs donor funders is western, and this western understanding is different from the African one. Tumsa is convinced that the theological anthropology that informs his African theology is consistent with African cultural anthropology. He therefore finds support from other African thinkers like Nyerere and Siad Barre. Here Tumsa wants to suggest that theological assumptions that inform the LWF and the German donor community is not self-reflexive and self-critical. The third point that Tumsa raises in this letter is the issue of power. He is suggesting that the donor community and the churches in the Global North have a paternalistic view of the churches in the south which they call "younger churches." He thinks because of this, the ideas and theologies that are generated in Africa are not received on merit. In the context of defining Lutheran identity, Tumsa is protesting that ideas from Africa are not taken with the same respect as ideas from the north. So, he concludes: "The time is approaching to do away with this term (younger churches) so that the statements we make may be considered on their own merits. I should have liked to clarify some points on this matter, but time does not allow it. I hope you will continue to stand by our statement."[40]

The ECMY letter reshaped the Lutheran understanding of mission. It redefined understanding of LWF member relationship from donor and recipients to partnership. It was an African Lutheran contribution to Lutheran identity. As a result of this letter, there was huge and protracted debate on mission within the LWF, its member churches and the broader ecumenical movement. The letter was followed by the "Ethiopian Consultation" organized by the LWF Commission on Church Cooperation at Villach in Austria on 4 November 1972. There was also a joint WCC-LWF consultation on "Education in Mission" at Hothorpe Hall in England on 17 to 20 November 1972. Although support for evangelism did not substantially increase, the idea of holistic mission became a generally accepted character of Lutheran mission identity at global level.

One anthropological feature to be drawn from Gudina Tumsa key for African Lutheran identity is that of holistic anthropology. Kwame Bediako and others drawing from the work of Victor Turner, have seen this as one of the

40. Ebd.

six features of the primal religious orientation of African culture. This feature is the conviction that the human being "lives in a sacramental universe where there is no sharp dichotomy between the physical and the spiritual. Accordingly, the physical acts as vehicle for spiritual power, whiles the physical realm is held to be patterned on the model of the spiritual world beyond."[41] African Lutheran identity must bring to global Lutheranism this aspect of the totality or indivisibility of the human being and hence the indivisibility of dogma and life. This understanding challenges the traditional Lutheran understanding, in some circles, of privileging purity of confessional belief above everything else. There are Lutherans for whom only one element constitutes their identity, namely correctness of belief as it has been written. This reduction of faith to statements of beliefs or confessions is not consistent with African anthropology that does not see belief (what we confess) as separate from what we do in our other dimensions of life.

3.3 Political dimension

Apart from the protest letter from Ethiopia regarding mission and paternalistic relationships within the LWF, concern also emerged from the churches in Namibia and South Africa under apartheid. While more and more African countries were getting independent from the 1960s to the 1970s, countries in Southern Africa remained under colonial and apartheid rule. What was troubling was that some Lutheran churches did not find it hard to discriminate fellow Lutheran churches on the grounds of race. Several debates on the Lutheran teaching on Two Kingdoms / Realms ensued especially in centres like Umpumulo where missionaries from different Lutheran countries found themselves in a racially segregated society. They wanted to know what their Lutheran heritage said to this situation of racism.

One of two related questions on racial segregation brought to bear on Lutheran identity was whether it could be defined only as a political or also as a theological matter. The second challenge was whether the nature of the LWF would allow it to censor its member churches. If it did, it meant that it had more ecclesial authority than previously assumed. Through the theological reflections of the Lutheran theologians from the region, in 1977 at the Sixth Assembly of the LWF in Dar es Salaam, the LWF declared that the situation of apartheid in the church constituted a matter of confession or *status confession-*

41. Kwame Bediako: Jesus in Africa. The Christian Gospel in African History and Experience, Akropong-Akuapem, Ghana 2000, 88.

is. It also agreed to suspend the churches affected at the next assembly in 1984 in Budapest.

Among the key proponents of the church's resistance against apartheid was Bishop Zephaniah Kameeta who used the scriptures to articulate their theology of resistance. This use of *sola scriptura* against tyranny was typical in the Lutheran Reformation when scriptures were not only related to God's communication but also as God's way of freeing those who are oppressed. Of significance in Namibia under apartheid occupation was Bishop Kameeta's use of the Psalms to speak to the contemporary situation in Namibia. Below is an example of his use of Psalm 1.

> Happy are those who reject the evil advice of tyrants,
> who do not follow the example of sell-outs
> and are not resigned to live as slaves.
>
> Instead they find joy to be in God's commission
> for the liberation of the oppressed,
> and they work day and night without rest.
>
> They are like trees that grow beside a stream,
> that bear fruit at the right time,
> and whose leaves do not dry up.
> They succeed in everything they do.
>
> But the traitors of the liberation cause are not like this;
> they are like straw that the wind blows away.
> Puppets in the hands of the oppressors
> will be condemned by God.
> They will have no share in the blessings of the Lord.
>
> Those in God's service for the liberation of the downtrodden
> are guided and protected by God.
> But those who are instruments in the hands of the oppressors
> are on the way to their doom.[42]

This reading of the Psalms was obviously informed by Kameeta's understanding of the liberating power of the word of God not only from personal sin but also from structural sins. He also translated the bible in local and contempo-

42. Zephaniah Kameeta: Why O Lord? Psalms and Sermons from Namibia (The Risk Book Series), Geneva 1986, 24 (No. 28).

rary language just as Martin Luther translated the bible into the vernacular. Kameeta's translation is also an interpretation just like all translations. He intended to make the ancient scriptures speak to contemporary audiences by bringing their lived realities in the text. In so doing, Kameeta made the word of God address contemporary questions of injustice with the same force as it would have been heard by the original audiences. This was a way of being African and Lutheran at the same time – taking seriously the African experience and exposing and judging it in light of the life-giving word of God.

The impact of such contextualisation of theology and other statements of Kameeta, like his address to the LWF assembly in Budapest, enabled the LWF to accept its responsibility to be a confessing church in the face of injustice. In other words, African Lutherans like Kameeta used their African theological creativity to show why not acting on racial injustice practiced in the church would compromise the integrity of the LWF and its member churches. It was indeed an African contribution to how Lutherans understood and applied the confessions and the scriptures to their life together. For Lutherans, a case supported by both scriptures and confessions was always going to win the day.

3.4 Identity as pneumatological

After the attainment of independence by South Africa in 1994, many African theologians, who were at the forefront of fighting against colonialism and apartheid, decided to "go back to the pulpit". This was later proved to be a big mistake because post-colonial Africa found itself with the challenges not too different from those during the colonial period. But the reason why many church leaders saw it as their urgent task to focus on the internal rebuilding of the church was the existential threat of the Pentecostal movement which was preying on the membership of the mainline churches. The church leaders had two options. The first was to pursue an ecumenical route and another was to fend off the threats of Pentecostalism by reclaiming the Holy Spirit from the Lutheran heritage itself.

While there has been a general sense of ambivalence about the Holy Spirit in traditional Lutheranism, growth of charismatic and neo-Pentecostal trends even in the fastest growing Lutheran churches in Madagascar, Tanzania and Ethiopia has raised renewed interest for the recovery of Lutheran pneumatology from the Lutheran heritage. This interest has been evident in the life of the LWF, which has organized several conferences and seminars on the Holy Spirit in the Global South but mainly in Africa. Only in the last

twenty years there have been at least four meetings organized by the LWF focusing on the theme of the Holy Spirit. One was held in July 2008 in Soweto, South Africa, under the title "Critical Lutheran Beliefs and Practices in Relation to Neo-Pentecostalism."[43] Another under the title, "The Role of the Holy Spirit in Shaping Lutheran Identity in Asia" was held in Hong Kong from 2-6 May 2019. At the end of 2019, a global conference was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, under the theme, "We Believe in the Holy Spirit: Global Perspectives on Lutheran Identities." This interest of the Holy Spirit as part of Lutheran identity seems to be even informing the 2023 LWF assembly sub-themes, namely, "the Spirit creates, the Spirit reconciles, the Spirit renews."

The fact that most of these consultations on the Holy Spirit took place in the Global South, and particularly in Africa shows that this is one Lutheran identity issue that African Lutheranism is expected to enrich. The Holy Spirit is taken as a matter of fact in Lutheran self-understanding since this self-understanding is trinitarian. Yet, it is clear that the Lutheran tradition has tended to be clearer in its Christology than its Pneumatology. As it has been shown by Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, even though the "Reformation viewed faith as the decisive work of the Holy Spirit, the later development of Reformation soteriology, especially in the Lutheran tradition, was expressed more in Christological than in pneumatological terms."[44] With the strong emphasis of the Holy Spirit and charismatic experience in Africa, we can observe some ways African Lutherans have already contributed to the deepening of understanding of the Holy Spirit within the Lutheran churches globally.

In a paper presented at the 2019 LWF conference on the Holy Spirit in Ethiopia, I showed how African Lutheran theologians like Bishop Manas Buthelezi of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA) contributed to the thinking on the Holy Spirit shaped by his Lutheran and African perspectives.[45] I see his understanding of the Holy Spirit contributing in three distinctive ways to Lutheran pneumatology. First, it brings to the fore the aspect of sanctification and *transformation* which have not found enough emphasis in Lutheran theology. Second, it brings back *experience* to the Lutheran faith. Third, this African emphasis of the Holy Spirit contributes

43. See Karen L. Bloomquist (ed.): Lutherans Respond to Pentecostalism, Minneapolis 2008.

44. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen: Pneumatology. The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective, Grand Rapids 2002, 84f.

45. Kenneth Mtata: Martin Luther to Manas Buthelezi. Toward a Lutheran Pneumatological Identity, in: Chad M. Rimmer / Cheryl M. Peterson (eds.): "I Believe in the Holy Spirit". Global Perspectives on the Lutheran Identities (LWF Documentation 63), Leipzig 2021, 23-36.

to the *renewal* and dynamism of the church especially in worship, preaching of the word, and ministries of healing and reconciliation. This has been evident in two main phases of Buthelezi's life. In the first phase, Buthelezi is a liberation theologian whose interlocutors are the intellectuals in universities, the public sphere of the apartheid government and the activists. Here intellectual logic, still informed by Lutheran theology is evident. In the second phase Buthelezi is one who is charismatic and whose focus is on the spiritual experiences of the ordinary Christians in his church. In the first phase Buthelezi has a strong Christology and in the second a strong pneumatology.

In both phases, Buthelezi emphasized the role of the Holy Spirit as one who transforms individuals and systems, gives experiences of God's presence, and renews and revitalizes the church to continue with God's mission. We see this playing out in his own life during apartheid and after apartheid. During apartheid he desired to see transformation of the oppressive system and a bolder participation of the church in the power of the Holy Spirit. After apartheid, he was invited by "his national church (ELCSA) and abroad (LWF) … to study conferences as well as for preaching and Bible weeks … strengthening of a young Lutheran Church there … events which should open people for counting on the Holy Spirit in their life."[46] He would also be invited to take part in such conferences as the LWF "worldwide conference in Tanzania dealing with the reality of the Holy Spirit and of spiritual life in the church from the leadership to the local congregation." He would be asked to facilitated processes of "Spiritual Renewal of Congregational Life", for example in the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) in Chemnitz. In South Africa, he would feel led by the Holy Spirit to be diaconically present among those living with HIV / AIDS.[47]

This comprehensive understanding of the Holy Spirit breaks the boundary between salvation and sanctification and presents God as being actively at work among God's people wherever there is need for healing, restoration, reconciliation, and justice. At many of the prayer and healing conferences he organized as bishop in South Africa, Buthelezi spoke of the Holy Spirit as the power of God at work in the church today. This African Lutheran contribution to our reappropriation of the Holy Spirit within global Lutheranism is urgent. When we see the inertia created by the forces of secularism against the vitality and growth of the church, Lutherans need to recover this centrality of the Holy Spirit and the spiritual experience that will enrich

46. Ernst-August Lüdemann: The making of a Bishop. Personal Reflections by a Companion along the Way, in: Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae 42 (2016), 142-158, here: 156f.

47. Ebd., 156f.

renewal, healing, and reconciliation. Such vitality will enable the effective proclamation of the word and the other way round. Buthelezi's emphasis on personal and communal transformation is important even in African Lutheran churches where sometimes spiritual vitality does not correspond with the ubiquitous injustice, poverty, corruption, and other ills that should be on recession if Christians were fully living the life of spiritual power. Maybe a fuller appreciation of the Holy Spirit power is the missing ingredient of Lutheran identity today both in the north and in the south. Maybe Lutherans are in need of the Holy Spirit who is not only working in the hearts to cause belief but who also works outward to transform that belief into transformative action of peaceful coexistence, justice, and abundant life for all people. This is the Spirit of Pentecost who does not only cause acceptance of salvation but also causes the transformation of structures of economic injustice and ethnic exclusion (Acts 3-7).

4. Lutheran Identity and future challenges

The above discussion did not highlight some of the contributions of African Lutherans to ecumenical unity, gender justice, economic justice, and interfaith relations. There are examples for all these areas, but space does not allow for all those cases to be highlighted. What this paper sought to do was to highlight the contribution of Africans to global Lutheranism. It showed how the African influence begins before the Lutheran reformation of the 16th century and continued after the missionary Lutheranism. There are many other challenges that Lutherans in Africa may need to overcome if they are going to continue making meaningful contribution to global Lutheranism. Two of them are mentioned here in passing without major discussion.

The first task for Lutherans is to familiarise themselves with the Lutheran confessions not as fixed canons but as hermeneutical resources through which the scriptures are read in light of the lived experiences in Africa. African churches will need to develop theological competencies that help not *what* to read but *how* to read.

The second task is sustainability of the church. Churches that are not self-sustaining but too dependent on other churches cannot meaningfully contribute to Lutheran identity since they fear to offend those who sustain them. This is fully implied in the debate around the 1972 letter of ECMY. Lutheran churches in Africa must reach a point where they are economically interdependent so that they can be theologically interdependent. If the

churches in Africa are economically poor, they cannot enrich global Lutheranism with their rich identity which makes them to currently thrive.

Lutheranism in the Brazilian Multi-religious Context

Wilhelm Wachholz

1. Introduction

Talking about God not only reveals something about him, but also about the person who speaks. On the basis of this supposition, three ways of speaking about God can be identified in the multi-religious cultural Brazilian context. Firstly, a way that is characteristically Roman Catholic, almost in the sense of a fatalistic speaking about God, which can be subsumed under the theme "This was the will of God" or "God allowed it to happen". On the other hand, one can identify a characteristic Pentecostal or neo-charismatic evangelical way of speaking which states that God's blessing is available, and the believer only has to grasp hold of this blessing. In this case, the influence of the indigenous religions and of various African and Afro-Brazilian religions is clearly recognisable, one of which is Umbanda[1]. One may suggest that the third way of speaking about God is a Lutheran theme: "Let God be God". In this case, the conception of God is not fatalistic, nor is God referred to in a religious manipulative way. In this third case, meaning the way Lutherans speak of God, it should be pointed out that the Lutheran churches in Brazil make up barely 0.5 % of the population and are thus only a minority. Currently there are about one million Lutherans in Brazil. If "ethnic" Protestantism (or immigrant Protestantism) is understood as Lutheranism, it has existed in Brazil for about 200 years, since 1824.

By way of introduction, here are a few remarks about Lutheranism in Brazil:

1. Lutheranism – like Protestantism in general – came from overseas and was only tolerated. This was the state of affairs between 1824 and 1891, after the promulgation of the Republican Constitution of Brazil, which established

1. Umbanda can be characterised as a magical religion, steered by charismatic personalities (the "mães and pais-de-santo cult leaders") who play a prominent role.

the separation of church and state. Catholicism was recognised as the official state religion.

2. As already mentioned, the Lutheran churches were and are a minority in Brazil. It should be taken into account that this – and especially the stigmatisation by majority groups – plays a decisive role in the formation of identity. Catholicism remains the majority denomination until today. But the "evangelicals", namely the Pentecostal and neo-charismatic evangelical groups or churches, are growing. These growing groups or churches see Lutheranism as "Catholic", while Catholicism sees Lutheranism as a group separate from the "true church".

3. A third observation concerns the cultural context. Brazilian Lutheranism started out with immigration into a foreign cultural context, namely that of Portuguese Brazilians (Luso-Brazilians) and Roman Catholics. In this sense, Miriam Zimmer rightly states, "The ethno-religious organisation thus becomes a centre of ethnic tradition, religion and mutual support."[2] It was not only the religious offers that were important to the believers; the ethnic elements were also indispensable. As a result of the assimilation of a great number of cultural elements of the Luso-Brazilian host society, the need for offers coming from the ethnic German Protestant background is dwindling and calling the existence of the "ethnic" church into question.[3] In the face of this danger, the ethnic church is forced either to shut itself away from the host society or do the opposite and open up to it. Both of these consequences result in internal church conflicts and crises of identity.

4. Actually, Brazil is not experiencing a process of secularisation, but a "religious renewal" which emanates in particular from the Pentecostal and neo-charismatic movements and drives Lutheranism out to the religious periphery. Or to put it another way: if in Germany, for example, people say there is "too little" sense of religion, one would have to say in Brazil that there is "too much" sense of religion.

Let us now return to the question of Brazil's diverse or multi-religious contexts, where Lutheranism exists as a minority.

2. Miriam Andrea Zimmer: Assimilation und religiöse Organisation. Der Umgang ethnischer Kirchen mit der (strukturellen) Assimilation ihrer Mitglieder am Beispiel der Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no Brasil, Göttingen (Georg-August-Universität) 2012, 25.

3. Miriam Andrea Zimmer: Assimilação e organização religiosa. Como as igrejas étnicas lidam com a assimilação (estrutural) de seus membros, tendo por base o exemplo da Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no Brasil, Blumenau 2014, 19f. 24.

2. The Brazilian context

The beginnings of Protestantism in Brazil lie in the 19th century. As a result of the immigration of German speaking people to Brazil since 1824, Protestants, or Lutherans, began to establish themselves in the form of an ethnic church. It was also in the 19th century that a Christian movement originating from England established itself in Brazil via the USA as so-called missionary Protestantism, initially represented by the Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Baptist and Methodist churches. In the second decade of the 20th century, the Pentecostal movement established itself and in the second half of the 20th century, more precisely since 1970, another new face emerged in Protestantism, namely the neo-charismatic movement. That is why "Protestantism" in Brazil today has to be understood as a variety of manifestations.

As Protestantism was established in Brazil in the 19th century, the fundamental question was that of identity. What kind of identity was wanted? Exclusively Catholic, or with an element of Protestantism? Black, mulatto or white? Monocultural or diverse? The system of sovereign nation states that followed from the Peace of Westphalia had been overcome, so that England's dominant position under the "dogma" of the free market was to be consolidated and to determine the conception of identity. This has also had consequences for the face of religion in Brazil as from the 19th century.

England's mercantile supremacy and the consequences for Christianity manifested themselves as follows: as a cultural model, Roman Catholic Christianity had to give way to Anglo-Saxon culture. Accordingly, a hierarchy of Christian cultures was constructed. Since then, Protestantism has been associated with Anglo-Saxon culture and Roman Catholicism with Latin culture, the former being considered superior. In this way, Protestantism has reimposed on Latin cultures the former degradation that Roman Catholicism had previously applied to Indigenous and Black people.[4]

This leads us to the observation that "in most migration contexts [...] a small ethnic group nonetheless stands up to an established majority society"[5] which fights against it. In the 19th century, as ethnic Protestantism was established in Brazil, religion was regulated by the state[6], and thus Roman Catholicism was the official state religion. Afterwards, with the proclamation of

4. Lauri Emílio Wirth: Protestantismos latino-americanos. Entre o imaginário eurocêntrico e as culturas locais, in: João Cesário Leonel Ferreira (ed.): Novas Perspectivas sobre o protestantismo brasileiro, São Paulo 2009, 15-46, here: 27-29.
5. Zimmer, Assimilation (see note 2), 17.
6. On the religious market regulated by the state, see: Zimmer, Assimilação (see note 3), 57.

the Republic (1889), the religious market was opened equally to all religious institutions, at least in theory. However, ethnic Protestantism retained its ethnic character, meaning that it did not change into a "missionary" religion.

In this context, ethnic Protestantism, which means Lutheranism, is also being culturally tackled on two fronts, both religiously and theologically, from one side (Catholicism) and the other (Pentecostal and neo-charismatic movements or churches). Actually, one could describe it as a revenge of the gods. Roman Catholicism was taken over from the Iberian Peninsula and adopted as the official religion in Brazil. The attempt was made to act as in Portugal and maintain the country's spiritual unity under the Roman Catholic Church by controlling the influx of so-called "foreign" elements. More than three centuries of Catholic exclusivity in Brazil led to a heavy burden on the indigenous and African populations, even though they had to adopt Catholicism. And so this is precisely what might be called the revenge of the gods: since Catholicism was introduced under pressure and as a foreign element, the indigenous and African religions tried to survive within Catholicism by behaving outwardly as Roman Catholics whilst retaining their traditional culture and religion inwardly. The result was a hybrid or syncretistic religion, as can currently also be seen in Pentecostal and neo-charismatic movements or churches. Here, the diverse varieties of the Brazilian world of faith must be taken into account. The interplay of medieval Christian, indigenous and African religions has led to a downright utilitarian and materialistic Christianity, first and foremost in the Catholic popular belief during Brazil's time as a colony. According to Hahn, these influences led to "religion [being conceived] not [...] as man's response to the love and goodness of the Creator and Redeemer, but as a 'useful instrument' for the attainment of material advantage".[7]

A supplementary aspect here is the concept of magic as manipulation of the sacred. According to Meslin, "magic comes into play as wishful thinking as soon as people try to force a deity to fulfil their own will".[8] By means of magic, a person tries to turn hindrance into help, to foresee and dictate the future in the present, in other words, to move what is sacred or divine into the secular world. Magic is driven by the desire for immediate gratification, the striving for security and welfare. Therefore, magic can be an expression

7. Carl Joseph Hahn: História do Culto Protestante no Brasil, São Paulo 1889, 303. See also Antônio G. Mendonça: Protestantismo no Brasil. Marginalização social e misticismo pentecostal, in: id. / Prócoro Velasques Filho: Introdução ao Protestantismo no Brasil, São Paulo 1990, 240-247.

8. Michel Meslin: A Experiência Humana do Divino. Fundamentos de uma antropologia religiosa, Petrópolis 1992, 69.

of despair, fear and uncertainty. In this sense, the magical is, according to Meslin, "an exaggerated anthropocentrism of the religious".[9]

Sacrifice is closely connected with magic. Magic is brought about by means of a sacrifice. The *sacrificus* consecrates, offers or sacrifices (*sacrificium*) sacred things to the gods. By their own *sacrificium* or that of another person or thing that is sacrificed or offered, the *sacrificus* establishes a connection between two worlds, the sacred and the profane. It is not the *sacra,* i.e. the sacred things, but the *sacrificium* that generates a source of energy that is meant to manipulate the holy one/God and thus gain its/his favour.[10]

Brazilian religions, as a syncretism between indigenous and African religions including medieval Christianity, are strongly marked by the idea of sacrifice and by magic and manipulation of the divine. The manipulation of the divine is not intended to "let God be God" (Luther), but is oriented to the market in order to promote the consumption of religious goods. This market orientation is typical for the modern age.

According to Campos, the strong growth of Pentecostal and neo-charismatic churches has to do with the offer of "physical healing, spiritual causes of diseases, holism, trance, magic".[11] In his view, a primitive world of beliefs ("religiosidade matricial") dating back to before the European conquest still lived on in the Pentecostal movements, especially in Latin America and Africa, enriched by African or spiritualist cultures and religions. This Pentecostal synthesis had its basis in "the hardship caused by the modern world, by secularisation, by religious pluralism, which also results from the abundance of offers in the field of religion, together with the emergence of post-modernity or ultra-modernity."[12] Mariano presents a similar assessment of Pentecostal movements:

> "As a Christian religion, the Pentecostal churches are essentially connected with Brazilian popular belief through faith in Jesus, demons, miracles, biblical myths, sin, healings and supernatural interventions, sorcery and eschatological images. The distinctive practice here is also that one can enter into direct contact with God as a layperson, independent of mediation by church or clergy"[13]

9. Ibid., 71.
10. Ibid., 72-78.
11. Leonildo Silveira Campos: As origens norte-americanas do pentecostalismo brasileiro. Observações sobre uma relação ainda pouco avaliada, in: Revista da USP 67 (2005), 100-115, here: 102.
12. Ibid., 103. See also Ricardo Mariano: Crescimento Pentecostal no Brasil. Fatores internos, in: Revista de Estudos da Religião - REVER 8/4 (2008), 68-95, here: 88.
13. Ibid., 85. Mariano quotes Willems, according to whom "the prevailing ideas in popular

3. Lutheranism in Brazil

As already indicated, every statement by a human concerning God not only says something about God, but at the same time about the person speaking. Therefore, a distinction must be made between God and the person speaking about him, without separating the two. Such a separation would lead to an objectification of God. Moreover, this would also mean that the person speaking of God would not be implicit in what is said and how it is said. That is why Luther maintains "that speaking of God has to do with an event in which this speaking itself participates".[14] Theology and religion which separate God and the person speaking of God amalgamate him into anthropology and deny his ontological reality.

Luther's way of speaking of God is somewhat provocative. Confronting the temptation of speech that objectifies God, Luther's theology poses the question of how to speak or remain silent about God. Statements such as Nietzsche's "God is dead" then do not seem to differ greatly from those that postulate a "useful God", as for example in the current Brazilian "Religião da Prosperidade" (Prosperity Gospel), and this is because both reduce God to the object of interest of the person speaking of God, or even do away with him.

Culturally, it should be noted that Lutheranism in Brazil has asserted its identity as "German-Brazilian". So one must speak of a "midway", perhaps "midway between Wittenberg and Salvador/Bahia". Of course, this is not so simple; after all, it could indicate a floating identity that presents itself as "transplanted". On the other hand, it could also be meant positively as an identity on the move. This could then be of fundamental importance, also theologically, for the perennial question of *ecclesia semper reformanda*, of an unfinished identity, which in the sense of Lutheran theology is always on a pilgrimage, *incarnanda*.

Identities are revived in the close connection with their location. In the case of ethnic Protestantism, one must take into account the way it has been influenced and marked by confrontation with other cultures, religions and Christian denominations, as well as with local politics, economy and society. No identity can exist outside time and space. The problem lies precisely in

Catholicism about mystical experiences, possession, miracles, evil spirits, sorcery and demons have facilitated the spread of Pentecostalism. Together with spiritualism and Umbanda, this [also today] contributes to upholding such ideas in the culture" (Emilio Willems apud ibid., 8f.).

14. Gerhard Ebeling: Martin Luther. Einführung in sein Denken, Tübingen 2006[5], 298 (Portuguese: O pensamento de Lutero. Uma introdução, São Leopold 1988, 206).

the fact that this is ignored. If one's own identity serves as a frame of reference, it should not be surprising when this truth has led to the disqualification of the culture of "others".

4. Lutheranism on the way

Westhelle introduces the concept of the eschatological congregation, which he connects with two characteristics of the church to be found in Acts (2:46; 5:42). On the one hand, in its ecclesial quality, it comes together as the "church in the house of...". In its eschatological quality, on the other hand, it is "on the way" (hodós[15]). In the house it finds refuge, shelter, rest, security and identity. On the way, it can be shaken up, its values and identity called into question.[16] In our case, we may say that "at home" ethnic Protestantism is reminded of its history, tradition, identity and heritage. "On the way", this Protestantism is "threatened" by other cultural, religious or confessional identities and driven into crisis.

Westhelle proposes a place located between house and way: *choros*.[17] *Choros* is a place of transition, of development (in the momentary events), of growth, a temporary place midway that leads into house and home, but also onto the road ahead. *Choros* has no existence of its own, it is rather a function of pilgrimage. It is an opportunity to encounter the others and speak with them. That is why *choros* is a place of crisis.

This seems to us to be the place where Brazilian Lutheranism is to be found today. The situation is all the more critical because in the *choros* Lutheranism has been subject to the syndrome of being rejected as a minority since its arrival in Brazil. The rejection by the Catholic Church in the 19th century led to fears of its total extinction. Even then, and for a time in the 20th century, it was eyed with suspicion by missionary Protestantism. In view of the rise of the Pentecostal and especially the neo-charismatic movements, Lutheranism felt outdone and threatened by their success. Now it even has to relinquish the qualification "evangelical" to them.

Now Lutheranism's path must necessarily be monocentric and polycentric at the same time: *monocentric* with regard to its confessional basis under the principle of justification by grace and faith, and on the basis of Christology.

15. From Greek ὁδός = way, street.

16. Vítor Westhelle: Perfis de ministério, in: Wilhelm Wachholz (ed.): Igreja e Ministério. Perspectivas evangélico-luteranas, São Leopoldo 2009, 16-29, here: 27.

17. Ibid., 27. From Greek χώρος = space, location, place, site.

Here monocentric means Christocentric. The focus on Christ with justification by grace and faith is shown in intercultural ministry that welcomes other kinds of people into its midst, regardless of ethno-cultural "merit". On this monocentric confessional basis, the identity of Lutheranism will be *polycentric* in terms of ethnicity, culture and liturgy. This means that Lutheranism does not have to sweep its history and identity under the carpet; but neither will it want to impose it as a universal norm. In short, it is about unity in diversity. Or in Bonino's words:

> "The general validity of salvation history does not mean the dissolution of specific, ethnically differentiated spaces. It is not a matter of denying ethnic distinctiveness as God's creation, as the place of the living implementation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is very much a rejection of the self-contained space. The apostle Paul rejects 'ethnicity' as merit. The universal validity of grace has nothing to do with conformity of race, gender or social standing, but with liberation to exercise love.
>
> An autonomous doctrine of creation leads to the idea of folk tradition as a closed, unchanging space that is self-justifying and can only recognise domination in its relationship to others. This is how the theological ethnicity of apartheid, of the '*Deutsche Christen*' (German Christians), of American missionary zeal in terms of Manifest Destiny, of the 'Christian Occident' and the 'mission of the white race' are to be understood. At the other extreme, an autonomous doctrine of redemption reduces the human being to an anonymous sinner who belongs to no country, no people, no culture and no family, and who – in its usual subjectivist, individualist version – also belongs to no body and no community!"[18]

In this way an autonomous doctrine of Creation – separate from the trinitarian framework – transforms one's own ethnicity and culture into something immutable and closed that can only be conceived from the relationship with the other as a domain or instrumentation for ecclesial purposes. At the other extreme, an autonomous doctrine of redemption – without the holistic trinitarian framework – reduces the human being to a sinner without name, land, people, culture or family, and, in the subjective and individualistic version that has affected us so much as Protestants, a human being turns into a person without body or community!

Lutheranism must not try to swallow and digest the other culture; conversely, it must not let itself be swallowed either. In both cases its relevance

18. José Miguez Bonino: Rostos de Protestantismo Latino-Americano, São Leopoldo 2003, 95f.

would be ignored. Lutheranism must not engage in ethnic proselytism. It must be continually translated into different environments, whether in America, Africa or Asia. On the other hand, "Wittenberg" must learn to translate the challenges presented here and in distant lands by the rediscovery inherent in the Reformation. A good example of this is the Pauline "translation" of Christianity for the Gentiles. At the *choros*, the challenges of culture as well as of the gospel must always be meaningfully related to each other.

Lutherans from Russia in the Land of the Reformation

Gottfried Rösch

1. The language of acceptance

"What language does God speak?" asked a Russian-German teacher who is now a member of the parish council, and she gave the answer herself: "God speaks the language of acceptance."

"They don't feel as Protestant as we do," said a young female deacon from Bavaria about Germans from Russia.

The question arises: Who is "we"? How decisive are acceptance, mutual feelings of strangeness, disparities or changes? The deacon recognised very well that the "we" has to undergo a change so that we can live together successfully. The boundaries between groups shift, and with them the emotions, the attitude to the world and the understanding of symbols. What are the consequences? Who is allowed to decide on the symbols? By participating and sharing, by meeting one another, people open up interculturally. This article describes how some Lutheran congregations in Bavaria made an intercultural new start and investigates how identity can be shaped in an intercultural context. The focus is on the perspective of Germans from Russia who are active in local parishes.[1]

2. Germans from Russia in Germany

Germans from Russia can be found all over the world, also in Canada, in the USA, in Latin America, etc.[2] There were two Volga German villages in the

1. One basis for this is the empirical study Gottfried Rösch: Deutsche aus Russland und die Kirche. Zum Verhältnis von Migration und Religion, Münster 2021.
2. Victor Dönninghaus / Jannis Panagiotidis / Hans Christian Petersen (eds.): Jenseits

Kilimanjaro area, founded by Germans who had left their villages on the Volga and settled at the foot of what was at that time the highest mountain in the German territories.[3] German explorers and missionaries from the Russian Empire travelled to all parts of the world.[4]

When the Soviet Union collapsed, many young people immigrated to Germany, to a country that did not yet really see itself as an immigration country and where political leaders were worried about the ageing of society and the consequences this would have. The unification of West and East Germany coincided with this period, and thus with a reorientation after the "Cold War".

In many parishes in Lower Bavaria and the Upper Palatinate, 70 % of the young Protestants in 2010 came from these families.[5] They had been born and brought up in Germany, and were living with parents and grandparents who spoke Russian in their families.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria (ELKB) is not only situated in a multi-religious or post-secular external environment, but 20 % of its own members have migration histories[6], 9 % of its members come from the former Soviet Union.[7] It is not so much a matter of inter-cultural dialogue, but rather of the inclusion that has already taken place, but has still been hardly implemented and represented.

The newly arrived members are well integrated, in that they like to celebrate baptisms, weddings and funerals as well as taking part in religious education and confirmation. In this respect they behave like the majority of the Christians in Bavaria, who live in a secular way, but do not go beyond that to actively seek contact with a local church. The small group of people who

der Volksgruppe. Neue Perspektiven auf die Russlanddeutschen zwischen Russland, Deutschland und Amerika, Berlin / Boston 2018.

3. Waldemar Schmidt: Russlanddeutsche. Die Auswanderung der Russlanddeutschen nach Deutsch-Ostafrika 1906-1913, Regensburg 2008.
4. For example Richard Reusch, Karl Segebrock or Ewald Ovir as missionaries of the Leipzig Mission.
5. According to Eyselein, 43 % of ELKB members in the Cham district in 1998 were Russian-German emigrants, and 36 % in the Passau district. Christian Eyselein: Russlanddeutsche Aussiedler verstehen. Praktisch-theologische Zugänge, Leipzig 2007, 55.
6. Broken down more specifically at: "Ich will euch zusammenbringen!" (Hes 11,17). Gottes Weggemeinschaft wahrnehmen als evangelische Glaubensgeschwister unterschiedlicher Sprache und Herkunft. Study document of the ELKB project "Interkulturell Evangelisch in Bayern", 22-24 (available at: https://www.interkulturell-evangelisch.de/_files/ugd/7f6507_4a2f111a5b7f41b381dee5b8da4ae545.pdf; viewed on 17.11.2022).
7. Eyselein: Aussiedler (see note 5).

uphold the tradition of house churches and often attend Sunday services at church or meet for Bible studies in the church hall also form a point of reference for the secular post-Soviet immigrants, and they shape the image that many pastors or parish councils have of this disparate group. These images can also be linked to the anti-Bolshevik tendencies of German Protestantism.[8] Many Protestant congregations in Germany which do not belong to the regional churches have been founded or are led by Russian Germans.[9]

So who can be included in the Lutheran "we"? Before 1941, and even more so before 1918, German Lutherans in Königsberg, Riga and the University of Dorpat belonged to "us". That was also true of the German-speaking colonies on the Black Sea, in the Caucasus and on the Volga, or the deaconesses from Neuendettelsau (Franconia) working in Odessa and Sarepta. After 1945, on the other hand, Protestants in West and East Germany interpreted their own history within the terms of the Cold War.

Who are "Germans from Russia"? The word "Russia" usually refers to the Russian Empire or the Russian language and culture; what is meant is the traditional and multifaceted Germanic-Slavic cultural exchange that has existed for a very long time, then the urban German influence (trade, armed forces, science and education, administration, engineering, ...), the Baltic Germans (bourgeoisie, nobility, and sometimes political upper class), or the diversity of other colonists (above all agriculture, crafts), especially in the Volga colonies, on the Black Sea and in Volhynia, as well as in Siberia and Central Asia. Only a few of the "Germans from Russia" came from the European part of Russia, but they were mostly from Kazakhstan, many others from Siberia or Ukraine.

Lutherans in the Soviet Union – their family histories show that they were often colonists who became deportees,[10] taken to places that were also hostile to religion. Church structures were destroyed and obstructed in many ways. Christian piety remained as a family tradition oriented towards piety of the heart and a good, decent, responsible way of life, often in pietistic or also in enlightened traditions. In the dynamics of religious oppression they were the neighbours of Catholics, Baptists, Mennonites, Moravians, Adventists: they had the old prayer books and family Bibles, the wealth of hymns, the clandestine baptisms. In terms of religion, public life tended to be dominated by

8. Mirjam Loos: Gefährliche Metaphern. Auseinandersetzungen deutscher Protestanten mit Kommunismus und Bolschewismus (1919 bis 1955), Göttingen 2019.
9. Lothar Weiß (ed.): Russlanddeutsche Migration und evangelische Kirchen (Bensheimer Hefte 115), Göttingen 2013.
10. Viktor Krieger: Kolonisten, Sowjetdeutsche, Aussiedler. Eine Geschichte der Russlanddeutschen, Bonn 2015.

Christian Orthodoxy, while the direct neighbourhood was often Islamic or Buddhist or Daoist or Shamanic – and common to all was the atheist, Marxist-Leninist ideology and the shared Russian language and culture.

György Dalos[11] connects the recruitment of colonists by Tsarina Catherine the Great with the observation that those who emigrated after the Seven Years' War no longer had any direct contact with Western European history: the French Revolution, the founding of the German Customs Union, the Nuremberg-Fürth railway line, the Frankfurt Parliament, the Eisenach Programme of the Social Democrats – none of these form a direct part of their history. In contrast, they were more closely affected by the ongoing conflict between the Russian Empire and the Ottoman Empire, the battle against Napoleon at Borodino, the Russian march into Paris in 1814, the Decembrist Revolt, the Crimean War, the end of serfdom with its consequences in 1861, the lost war against Japan in 1905. Historically, German ethnic identity in Russia and later in the Soviet Union is detached from national German developments in Western Europe. On the other hand, it is also determined by the fact that the colonists felt that they were subjects or citizens in the multi-ethnic empire of Russia. Germans in the tsarist empire often described Russia as their fatherland with deep attachment and quite naturally.

In the 20th century, the roads parted further. Admittedly, with its vision of the "*Lebensraum im Osten*" (Living space in the East) the German Reich made moves toward the groups in Russia. Black Sea Germans were resettled as part of the colonisation under the Generalplan Ost, many into the so-called "Warthegau". "Degrees of Germanisation" were measured, some Black Sea Germans were prominently involved in murders and plundering.[12] Others resisted the violence and destruction, like Alexander Schmorell, who died as a member of the White Rose in Munich and is revered today by the Orthodox Church for it. Very many people, however, were strongly affected by the abolition of the Volga German Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic as a response to the invasion of the Soviet Union by the German Reich in 1941. The inhabitants were deported to Siberia and Kazakhstan under wartime conditions. This was followed by 15 years of life in the Gulag, with labour columns and military authorities.[13] So these areas in the East, in Central

11. György Dalos: Geschichte der Russlanddeutschen. Von Katharina der Großen bis zur Gegenwart, Munich 2014, 32.
12. Prime examples are Karl Stumpp, Georg Leibbrandt or Samuel Kunz, each of whom had very different positions.
13. The labour army was often deployed in the forests or in mines, it had a high mortality rate. Germans were not allowed to leave their assigned district.

Asia, became their next home. The disintegration of the multi-ethnic Soviet Union, with its uncertainties, was painful for many.[14]

These stories are important for the congregations in Bavaria today, even if there is hardly any awareness of them as part of the story of Bavaria and its church. In the meantime, Germany has become a new home for very many, especially Germany as a country of immigration with its post-migrant character. Many people live here gladly and loyally, while continuing to live out their transnational identifications and backgrounds.

3. Third spaces

Post-Soviet immigrants to the Federal Republic of Germany were young, often with many children, and their impressive social advancement in a new country represents in many ways a success story, both for Germany and for these highly motivated and hard-working families. They are reforming the country they have arrived in. They are not all similar, certainly not a single people, but live diversely in Germany's differentiated modern society.[15]

Immigrants form and are responsible for "Third Spaces".[16] They combine what they have brought with them with what they find in their new home, so that something new is created. In Third Spaces, the respective imported characteristics or traditions are not so important as the cultural creativity that can evolve when encounters in the new spaces ensure that established elements do not have to be repeated or passed on. Vibrant new cultural forms develop, worlds of symbolism and orientations for life emerge. Post-migrant spaces live on the new possibilities of combination. Decisive criteria for the social dynamics are the opportunities for participation, the conditions for discourse, the negotiation and redistribution of privileges, the deconstruction and reshaping of what exists. Traditional forms and organisations on both sides are examined to see how helpful they are in shaping the present.

14. Jannis Panagiotidis: Postsowjetische Migration in Deutschland. Eine Einführung, Weinheim 2021, 37f., with reference to further studies on the motivations of the period of "ethnic segregational migration", especially the "concern for the future as a European minority" in newly formed states.
15. Well documented with a lot of statistics: ibid.
16. A technical term in relation to migration and culture, cf. Homi K. Bhabha: The Location of Culture, London / New York 1994.

Homi K. Bhabha[17] describes in post-colonial contexts the "ability of the natives to resemble the English". Those "natives" who took on public responsibility in the British colonial administration in India or wanted to rise socially could "anglicise" themselves, even if this did not make them "English". Conversely, "being English" was inconceivable without the colonial empire, without "India"; it was "India" that helped create modern "England". Mutual dependencies emerge, so that prevailing identities are changed, and the participants undergo change where they come into contact with one another. Stereotypes are used and subverted, attributions and identifications are negotiated against a complicated landscape of exercised power. This tradition offers a good description of today's post-migrant societies.

Research into migration establishes that settling and participation in a democratic society do not have to contradict transnational loyalties, but are on the contrary criteria for the functioning of modern democracies. Russian German migrants in particular see themselves as "twofold foreigners". In the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union they were not Russians, but they also had no connection to Germany. Now they are not long-standing Germans, but they do have German roots, so they do not belong to the non-German "migrants" either. The relationship to Kazakhstan or Siberia is also complicated. Most of them have not lived in the European part of Russia. Conversely, however, this often means that they are familiar with the attitudes of others living in Germany post-migrationally and transnationally and thus reshaping the country.

Increased democratic participation of immigrants in Germany leads to changes. It is now also up to the churches to decide how far they are open to these changes. Borders are becoming less rigid, democratic participation occurs in the social spaces. Whose memories count, which stories are represented? Who decides about that?

Complications of global and thus colonial interdependencies apply to Germany as well, including many particularities. The historian Karolin Wetjen was able to show how the religious upheavals in Germany around 1900 were closely connected with global shifts, with mission and the colonies, and the worldwide entanglements were a subject of discussion even at the time.[18] In my opinion, it is also helpful today in face of current cultural and religious

17. Homi K. Bhabha: Über kulturelle Hybridität. Tradition und Übersetzung, Wien / Berlin 2012. For an introduction to postcolonial theory in German, we recommend: María do Mar Castro Varela / Nikita Dhawan: Postkoloniale Theorie. Eine kritische Einführung, Berlin 20152.

18. Karolin Wetjen: Mission als theologisches Labor. Koloniale Aushandlungen des Religiösen in Ostafrika um 1900, Stuttgart 2021.

changes in Europe to consider the global entanglements, which are often rooted in colonial traditions. The increased presence and voices of people from other countries or parts of the world remind Europe of its own imperial history. Vice versa, European countries have to reposition themselves in newly emerging global coalitions or challenges. What effect does that have on current religious upheavals? In the Soviet Union, Germans concentrated on family traditions in their religious practice. In the migration situation these are challenged, because the immigrant generation lives differently from the next generations. What can be remembered and what can be developed? There are often predetermined, sometimes almost standardised expressions of remembering, sometimes also collective repressions for various reasons.[19] Socially preformed narratives superimpose themselves on family memories, and the individual memories are adapted to them.[20] This can lead to tensions and the feeling that one's own history is disintegrating.

On the other hand, one can recognise that it would be up to Christians to help people find reconciliation with their stories. Church congregations would then function as storytelling cafés where people are heard, where they go in search of their stories together, so that, despite all their plurality, they can then go on their way together and better reconciled.

It can help if, on the one hand, there is a better understanding of the Russian Empire in its colonial tradition and, on the other hand, Germany's expansion eastwards from the Middle Ages down to the 20th century is understood in its colonial dimension. In both cases, it was politically advantageous if colonial traditions and structures were disregarded. This is referred to as the "salt-water test", which restricts the concept of colonisation to far distant overseas colonies, thus excusing the USA, Germany, China and Russia, which each very well justified violent expansions on their own continent in a classic colonial way. [21]

In relation to the tsarist empire, one possible interpretation is to understand the collapse of the Soviet Union as the equally classic collapse of a colonial empire. However, the project of the Russian colonial empire had been carried out in the Age of Enlightenment with strong pan-European participa-

19. With regard to Stalinism, the historian Orlando Figes speaks of "whisperers", since it was crucial for survival or even for social status that family stories were not passed on.

20. Gabriele Rosenthal / Viola Stephan / Niklas Radenbach: Brüchige Zugehörigkeiten. Wie sich Familien von "Russlanddeutschen" ihre Geschichte erzählen, Frankfurt / New York 2011.

21. Cf. e.g. Sebastian Conrad: Kolonialismus und Postkolonialismus. Schlüsselbegriffe der aktuellen Debatte, available at: https://www.bpb.de/themen/kolonialismus-imperialismus/postkolonialismus-und-globalgeschichte/236617/kolonialismus-und-postkolonialismus-schluesselbegriffe-der-aktuellen-debatte/ (viewed on 17.11.2022).

tion, from the Germans among others. With regard to Germany, on the other hand, it must be remembered that for a long time it did not exist as a nation state, and Germans were traditionally economically active within the political framework of the other colonial powers. The loss of the overseas colonies, and even more so the "Land in the East" as the "Land of the Future",[22] is still felt after the two world wars as a painful wound in the history of many German families. The pain that Germans inflicted upon others in these areas also needs to be dealt with further. The decolonisation of Germany in 1918 and 1945 differed strongly from that of England, France, Belgium or the Netherlands, for example. When referring to the later German Volga Republic, it should be pointed out that the settlement of Germans by Catherine II took place in an area that had already been settled by Kazakhs and Kalmyks. Their resistance struggles are described in retrospect as raids by savages. Another special aspect is that in 1941 former colonists became deportees, who then became part of an imperial camp system for 15 years, a system dominated by an often ruthless exploitation of people and nature in the colonial tradition.

Lutherans from Kazakhstan in Germany – they cannot be transformed into long-standing Lutherans, they can only come to look like them. Religious education and confirmation classes, baptisms, weddings and funerals are forms of participation. It is only slowly that changes are taking place which allow the established congregations and structures to open up and accept the global Christian horizon that has arrived in the German regional churches and thus express something new. The regional churches and their parishes are slowly becoming involved in the Third Spaces that have emerged. Innovation is occurring.

4. Lutherans in the land of the Reformation

With regard to the structure of the population, Germany is a country of immigration, all the more among the younger people. Immigration brings cultural shifts and new trends. Europe's post-migrant culture will also affect the religious landscape, including that of Christianity, in the future. Worldwide Christendom is globalised and mobile, so that the land of the Reformation is facing a great reformation.

22. This was the subtitle of a book by Heinrich Hoffmann: Deutscher Osten. Land der Zukunft, München 1942. An example from German literature for the interweaving of old German traditions of eastern colonisation with those of overseas colonies was significant at that time: Hans Grimm: Volk ohne Raum, München 1926.

The changes in Europe mean that Christians belong to relatively secular churches in a post-secular environment. These processes have frequently been described by the sociology of religion. Religious freedom enables self-empowerment for the religious subject, spiritual experiences are concrete and convey a wide range of freedom and liveliness. Christians, too, are seeking and finding hybrid orientations in life on the basis of various experiences; they are "spiritual wanderers".[23] Some speak of a spiritual revolution, others are investigating newly emerging religious hybrids.[24]

Germans from Russia in today's Germany are spiritual wanderers who orient themselves in their life to Lutheran and biblical truths as well as their convictions and traditions – as far as they can be experienced as helpful for life socially and practically. For many, Jesus is a positive reference point amidst the multitude of images that most European Christians also have, but supplemented by additional experiences from Central Asia and the migration that have shaped their families. Alongside the many other religious and ideological offers that exist in Europe today, a Lutheran tradition of piety and formation of the heart, enlightenment, music and a longing for the good life is a great treasure.

Lutheran worship on special occasions, i.e. baptisms, confirmations, weddings or funerals, are experienced as a help in life, and thus convincing. They integrate the stories of the family, which in globalised times have developed in different directions. Religious education and confirmation classes help to shape one's own orientation in life. Personal, systemic and spiritual counselling also offer help, and pastors are often experienced as attentive and perceptive listeners. Living together (convivence)[25] is a good way of life for Christian congregations, a networking of local church commitment related to the surrounding social space. It is helpful to celebrate together. This naturally includes the times of common mourning when it comes to the culture of remembrance, the terrible family tragedies and their effects to this day. Clear and elementary testimony of faith is helpful here and should in every case be heartfelt and honest. A senior church official recently commented on the immigration situation for the churches

23. Christoph Bochinger / Martin Engelbrecht / Winfried Gebhardt: Die unsichtbare Religion in der sichtbaren Religion. Formen spiritueller Orientierung in der religiösen Gegenwartskultur, Stuttgart 2009.

24. Paul Heelas / Linda Woodhead et al: The Spiritual Revolution. Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality, London 2005; Peter A. Berger / Klaus Hock / Thomas Klie (eds.): Religionshybride. Religionen in posttraditionalen Kontexten, Wiesbaden 2013.

25. Dieter Becker (ed.): Mit dem Fremden leben. Perspektiven einer Theologie der Konvivenz. Theo Sundermeier zum 65. Geburtstag, Teil 1: Religionen – Regionen (Missionswissenschaftliche Forschungen, Neue Folge 11), Erlangen 2005.

with the words: "We need to complement 'ora et labora' with 'pray and eat'".

For Lutherans, "the land of the Reformation" is associated with Martin Luther, with Wittenberg and the translation of the Word of God into German. But of course the Reformation took place in many languages and not only in German cities, and it was not limited to "Germany". It is evident that one must pay attention to German particularities. Protestant faith in Germany was often also characterised by Anti-Slavism, in the old tradition of cultural and colonising mission against the East. The Wendish language was also spoken near Wittenberg. In the 19th and 20th centuries, this mission was additionally charged by social tensions between the middle classes and the working classes, often anti-socialist, anti-communist, anti-Bolshevik, at least until the 1950s, in different political contexts in each case.[26] Being Lutheran in Germany in 1933 was experienced by many people as an enthusiastic revival – both religious and ethno-nationalist.

It is obvious that this can lead to irritations or misunderstandings for immigrants who have often regarded the Soviet Union as their home. When there is reference to fascism, to the "Great Patriotic War" or the Holocaust, those who had to pay for many years in the Gulag for being accused of fascism have a different approach from those who grew up in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Today's Evangelical Church in Germany is no longer that of the 1930s or 1940s. But how diverse are the committees and representatives of today's Evangelical Church in the modern Germany of immigration? How German-national-ethnic do its members feel? How inclusive or exclusionary are its language, thinking, and structures? There are many processes in the European churches that are currently promoting intercultural openness and strengthening consciousness for global Christianity. In my estimation, this is a drastic reformation which is currently taking place in Germany.

The uncertainties in connection with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the loss of the Soviet homeland have left their mark on many families. The annexation of Crimea and the years of civil war in eastern Ukraine had disturbed many Germans from Russia. Many in the West have little understanding of the reasons why former Soviet citizens do not see Gorbachev as an illustrious figure. The murder of Boris Yefimovich Nemtsov in 2015 or the poisoning and arrest of Alexei Anatolyevich Navalny were often the subject of heated discussion. The invasion of Ukraine by troops from Russia led to strong tensions in families, and often to conflicts between generations. However, it was often difficult to bridge the gap to "other" circles in the church,

26. Cf. Loos: Metaphern (see note 8).

who mostly took it for granted that Germany was allied to the West and could not understand the influence of a Soviet past. Sympathies for Russia or love of the Russian language or culture could hardly be made understandable in the situation of a war of aggression. Wherever possible, the subject was avoided in order to prevent controversy or ostracism. However, as the violence has continued, it is increasingly difficult to avoid the subject. Germans from the former Soviet Union have often been able to provide concrete help when it came to supporting refugees from Ukraine. Many young Russian-German men are soldiers in the German army, the Bundeswehr, some of them on missions abroad. It will take a lot of reconciliation effort to find ways of living together again after the war in the middle of Europe. On the one hand, many in the West are now taking a fresh look at the complicated, entangled histories of Western Europe, of our neighbours in the East, the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union; on the other hand, the war situation creates strongly confrontational images.

Religion and culture can intensify political confrontations. But they can also circumvent confrontations, connect people and bring them into dialogue with one another – but that is not a matter of course, and not always easy. Injuries and experiences of violence from the past and present need spaces in which they can be healed and reconciled. Peace work that is active, concrete and oriented towards the future can succeed in church congregations by taking many small steps.

Finally, and this is greatly important: intercultural opening occurs by means of participation. Representation helps to achieve this. In the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, about 20 % of the members of the regional church have competence as immigrants – but they are still hardly represented in parish councils, among church employees or in the synods, so that they are almost unnoticeable. Yet in many areas in Europe, active, proactive shaping of diversity is the basis for cohesion, innovation, future viability and sustainability. Intersectionality can help; other mechanisms of exclusion or discrimination have a similar effect. An association that is committed to the inclusion of Germans from Russia with health problems or marginalisation can generate a great deal of strength, develop competences and find many partners.

5. Churches of the Reformation

In an environment of cultural diversity, the readiness of the church to reform in the land of the Reformation is growing. This readiness is growing because

of external pressures, but also due to internal unease. There are some promising and encouraging experiences of new developments in the environment of cultural diversity, and sometimes it is a matter of theological conviction or spiritual revivals. However, future sustainability is also dependent on the struggle for current distribution of resources and strong interests of particular groups.

Theological formation and justification of reformations can act as a steering instrument. In order to determine the future direction theologically, it seems to me that the challenge and the effects of the post-migrant situation have not yet been recognised sufficiently by German church historians, systematic and practical theologians, but they are being realised more and more.

Finally, I want to outline a kind of wish for the contents of a Lutheran reformation; this can also be read as a contribution to the orientation of Lutheran identities in post-migrant, post-colonial Europe: for Lutheran tradition, a *theologia crucis* could be helpful, rather than a *theologia gloriae*. This means focusing on the weak and lowly, tolerating, hearing and supporting stories of suffering, placing hope in a paschal resurrection power which God alone can provide. Pentecost is celebrated as a festival of diversity, multilingualism, global mobility, conscious plurality, consolation and hope. Multidirectional memories complement each other.[27] The churches in Germany are not only churches in a country of immigration, but are themselves post-migrant churches in a global network. Christmas is a festival of incarnation that seeks and finds God in humble surroundings, putting children at the centre.[28] Theology is perceived less as special scientific knowledge or administration of traditions, but rather increases the development of its critical power through its competence for listening, perceiving and coordinating, as well as communicating with appreciation. This definitely also involves the capability to offer criticism in the fields of culture, society and politics.

If church congregations get involved as actors in the social space and willingly seek cooperation, then they will be taken seriously with their offers and resources. This also includes a competence in shaping culture that allows and promotes new ideas cooperatively, organises encounters, abandons unnecessary delimitations, favours contact zones with their potential for change, and cultivates mutual hospitality in joy and hope, sadness and sorrow. It is helpful to celebrate together.

Also helpful is "MissionRespekt" (mission respect), the German imple-

27. Michael Rothberg: Multidirektionale Erinnerung. Holocaustgedenken im Zeitalter der Dekolonisierung, Bonn 2021.

28. In this age group, the "Germans without a migration background" are thus not in the foreground with their ideas and traditions.

mentation of the ecumenical document "Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World".[29] Christian congregations should know and be able to articulate what they are there for, and in doing so can affirm religious freedom and post-secular life and make a constructive contribution. This covers complex contexts as well as elementary forms of religious statements or Christian witness. Intercultural theological competence is needed worldwide, also in Germany. The global horizon of religion is normally present in Germany, so that one can say with regard to Christianity that the cross is not so much a symbol of Bavarian or Western identity, for example, as sometimes maintained in some traditional Christian circles, but is rather an indication of the changes. Christianity in its vast majority is developing new forms outside Europe. In the 16th century, Wittenberg was not a nationalist stronghold, for at that time a nation did not exist in the later sense. Rather, this small but important town with its new university had a wide horizon, and was even visited by Ethiopian monks.[30]

The traditional regional churches do not have to become enclaves without migrants, but should rather integrate themselves into Germany as a country of immigration. To achieve this, they must be prompter and more proactive in allowing and shaping diversity, recognising discrimination and taking countermeasures. While church membership has declined overall, an opposite tendency has brought in 20 % more members over the last thirty years. Germans from Russia have brought a surge of modernity to Germany from the Central Asian steppes. With their immigration skills, they can help the churches in Germany in the future reforms towards diversification. In my estimation, Germans from Russia have an exceptional, liberal approach to the Christian faith through their diverse histories, and thus have a special potential to help shape the upcoming reformations. Various kinds of parishioner with very different attitudes to the world are travelling the road together. "We" are many. Participation and representation form the key to the pending intercultural opening.

29. See: https://missionrespekt.de/ (viewed on 17.11.2022) and https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/christian-witness-in-a-multi-religious-world (viewed on 17.11.2022).

30. Stanislau Paulau: Das andere Christentum. Zur transkonfessionellen Verflechtungsgeschichte von äthiopischer Orthodoxie und europäischem Protestantismus (Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte Mainz 262), Göttingen 2021.

Encountering the Gift of Freedom

Struggle for the identity of Polish Lutheranism after 1989

Jerzy Sojka

The period since 1989 has been a time of intense change for Polish Lutheran identity. One of the most important events of this period was, of course, the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The motto chosen was "Liberated in Christ we change the world". It contains two motifs that seem essential to these changes of identity. First of all, there is the metaphor of freedom and the declaration of change; but the motto also recalls the roots of the Reformation. With regard to the first motif, we see two important factors in the development of Polish Lutheranism: gaining space for assuming responsibility and shaping the existence of the church according to its own ideas, as well as the possibility of a consistent opening for international cooperation. Considering the second motif of our slogan, we want to look at the significance of the Reformation roots of theological thought and what they mean for contemporary Polish Lutheranism.

1. Freedom to shape the existence of the church

The metaphor of freedom and change describes the reality of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland after a decisive social and political change took place in Poland in 1989, the start of the process of transformation from the communist system to democracy. One of the tangible signs of change was the Act guaranteeing freedom of conscience and religion that was passed on 17 May 1989 by the parliament, then completely controlled by the Communist Party, even before the momentous elections on 4 June 1989. It was drawn up after negotiations between the opposition and the authorities within the framework of the so-called "Round Table" and

was an important element of the transformation towards democratisation in Poland. It gave the churches a new space to organise their lives under new conditions. It did away with the situation that had existed until then – having to negotiate many aspects of church reality with representatives of the ruling regime, from staff appointments or the availability of paper for church publications to building materials for church investments.

For the church in the 1990s, the changes made it necessary to carry out a profound reform of its internal workings, so that church structures would be adequate and effective under the conditions of religious freedom and church autonomy. The 1990s were a time of intensive work on internal church law with the aim of adapting it to the new possibilities that had been opened up for the church. This is shown by the example of the partial introduction of women's ordination at the end of the 1990s – albeit only to the diaconate, while the office of pastor and bishop remained the exclusive province of men – which was only made entirely possible by the decisions of the Church Synod in autumn 2021. Up to that point, the decisions taken were not always particularly correct. However, they were a response to the dynamic changes in the situation in which the church found itself and created the basis for its institutional functioning. This was followed by the dynamic development of activities within and outside the church, for example in the field of social work or education. This was a practical application of the church's newly won freedom.

The 1990s and the first decade of the next century were also a time of building up "institutional infrastructure". By this I mean the organisational autonomy of church organisations such as Diakonia Polska[1], which is responsible for coordinating the church's diaconal work, or the establishment of the Centre for Mission and Evangelism[2], i.e. an institution that took on responsibility for a wide range of activities – from evangelisation campaigns to social and educational activities, especially within the framework of the church's pietistic circles in their main area in Teschen Silesia. Publishing houses were also founded. The church publisher Augustana (formerly "Zwiastun", which worked within the church structures) became independent, and "Warto" was founded for publications of the Centre for Mission and Evangelisation. Several associations were founded to support educational activities and to establish Protestant schools, which today operate in Cieszyn, Bielsko-Biała, Gliwice, Kraków, Wrocław and Warsaw.

1. See: https://diakonia.org.pl/de/de/polnische-diakonie/?lang=de (viewed on 1.11.2202).
2. See: https://cme.org.pl/ (viewed on 1.11.2022).

2. International cooperation

The metaphor of freedom points to another important aspect of the development of the church's activities that has significantly shaped its identity. The fall of the Iron Curtain made it possible to intensify international cooperation. This has taken place and continues at various levels. It ranges from cooperation at parish level with partners from Germany or Sweden, for example, to inter-church cooperation at higher levels, and to increasingly active participation in international church organisations such as the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) or the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE).

The most important sign of this commitment is the invitation of the LWF to the next Assembly in Krakow in 2023. The event will take place from 13 to 19 September under the motto "One Body, One Spirit, One Hope".[3]

For the identity of Polish Lutheranism, the less visible aspects of the intensification of this cooperation are of great importance. One of the most important is the reception of the theological accomplishments in church life, principally those of the LWF, and secondly of the CPCE. This is done through the consistent publication of LWF and CPCE documents in Polish, not only the newest ones[4], but also cross-sectional publications on LWF activities in areas such as ecclesiology and church ministry[5], confirmation[6], or care for

3. See generally: https://2023.lwfassembly.org (viewed on 6.04.2023); On the theme of the Assembly, cf. One Body, One Spirit, One Hope. Introducing the Thirteenth Assembly and its Theme, Geneva 2021 (available at: https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/2021/documents/2023a_what_is_the_assembly_booklet_en.pdf; viewed on 6.04.2023).

4. Jerzy Sojka (ed.): Kościół, Biblia i zaangażowanie publiczne [Church, Bible and Public Engagement], Dzięgielów 2017 (Polish edition of LWF Study Documents: "The Self-Understanding of the Lutheran Communion", "In the Beginning was the Word: The Bible in the life of the Lutheran Communion" and "The Church in the Public Space"); esp.: Luterańska tożsamość i ekumenizm [Lutheran Identity and Ecumenism], Warsaw 2020 (Polish edition of the document prepared by the LWF: "The Lutheran World Federation's Commitments on the Ecumenical Way to Ecclesial Communion"and the document published by the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg: "Lutheran Identity"); "Być razem Kościołem w czasie pandemii" – Refleksje z perspektywy ewangelickiej (Focus 29), 2021 (Polish edition of the CPCE study document: "Being Church Together in a Pandemic – Reflections from a Protestant Perspective").

5. Marcin Hintz / Jerzy Sojka (eds.): Kościół i urząd kościelnych w dokumentach i opracowaniach Światowej Federacji Luterańskiej [Church and Church Ministry in Documents and Studies of the Lutheran World Federation], Bielsko-Biała 2014.

6. Jerzy Sojka (ed.): Konfirmacja w dokumentach i opracowaniach Światowej Federacji Luterańskiej [Confirmation in Documents and Studies of the Lutheran World Federa-

creation[7]. There are similar compilations of texts developed by CPCE.[8] If one looks at debates in the church in recent years on such important topics as confirmation or understanding of church ministry, one can recognise that their essential component was firstly the reference to the insights of the LWF[9] and secondly to those of the CPCE. This theological reflection has greatly influenced the reflections within Polish Lutheranism as an important point of reference in the face of the theological and practical challenges of our time.

3. Heritage of the Reformation

The motto mentioned at the beginning of this article contains another theme that is important for contemporary Lutheran identity along the Vistula river. It is about the roots of this slogan, which goes back to the Reformation message of Luther's so-called "Freedom" treatise.

The heritage of the Reformation was present in Polish Lutheranism. This can be seen, for example, in the role that the history of the Reformation played and continues to play in catechesis, or in the importance of the Small Catechism in religious instruction in the church (especially confirmation classes). The church made biographies of Martin Luther and a modest selection of his writings available. The topic of the Reformation was present in church discussions. At the same time, this image was often strongly mythologised, and assessments of the Reformation's significance referred to clichés that were polemical and anti-Catholic.

The 2017 Jubilee brought a major change here. The preparations for it in the preceding years made it possible to present the results of more modern

tion], Bielsko-Biała 2017.

7. Jerzy Sojka (ed.): Wybór tekstów Światowej Federacji Luterańskiej dotyczących troski o stworzenie [Selection of LWF texts on care for creation] (available at: https://www.luteranie.pl/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/2019_materia%C5%82y_troska_o_stworzenie_w_sfl.pdf; viewed on 1.11.2022).
8. Karol Karski (ed.): Wspólnota Kościołów Ewangelickich w Europie. Wybór tekstów [Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe. Selection of Texts], Warsaw 2020.
9. See, for example, the document that emerged from the discussion on confirmation: Potwierdzenie dojrzałości chrześcijańskiej. Rola i miejsce konfirmacji we współczesnym Kościele [Confirming Christian maturity. The role and place of confirmation in the church today], in: Konfirmacja - jej rola i miejsce we współczesnym Kościele [Confirmation - its role and place in the church today], Bielsko-Biała 2019, 25-50 (available at: https://www.luteranie.pl/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/KONFIRMACJA-jejrolaimiejscewewspczesnymKociele.pdf; viewed on 1.11.2022).

mainstream Reformation research in different forms[10], but also to cover controversial topics, such as the attitude towards the Jews, in a wider debate.[11] The importance of this change lies in the fact that it not only encompasses uncomfortable topics which people are unwilling to speak about, but also led to substantial rethinking about the Reformation message on much more fundamental issues regarding Scripture and hermeneutics, the sacraments, ecclesiology, church ministry, and so on.

One of the important impulses for a renaissance of interest in various aspects of the Reformation was a phenomenon that came surprisingly. Namely, in the context of the Jubilee Year 2017, there were numerous anti-Protestant commentaries attacking the figure of Martin Luther and the Reformation. They were published by radically conservative Polish Catholic circles as attacks on the current Pope, criticising among other things his attendance at the joint commemoration of the Reformation in Lund.[12]

However, the interest in the Reformation in Polish Lutheranism is not exclusively concerned with apologetics in the context of inner-Catholic conflicts. The Reformation and its theological thinking in its contemporary interpretation are important indicators as a source of the desperately needed positive identity for Polish Lutheranism. As a minority in an implicitly Catholic country, Lutheranism has mastered its negative identity brilliantly, i.e. in terms of what it is not and why, especially vis-à-vis the dominant Roman Catholicism. There is, however, an increasing demand for a positive explanation of its character.

10. See e.g. Łukasz Barański / Jerzy Sojka: Reformacja. Historia i teologia luterańskiej odnowy Kościoła w Niemczech w XVI wieku [Reformation. History and Theology of Lutheran Church Renewal in 16th Century Germany], Vol. 1-2, Bielsko-Biała 2016-2017. The selection of these publications and translations for the 2017 Jubilee are discussed in more detail in Jerzy Sojka: Windhoek – Warschau – Wittenberg. Das Jubiläum der Reformation weltweit. Eindrücke, Entdeckungen, Ergebnisse – aus der Sicht der lutherischen Diaspora, in: Lutherische Kirchen in der Welt 66 (2019), 119-132, here: 122f.

11. Reference was also made to the statements of foreign Protestant churches (the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Evangelical Church in Hesse and Nassau or the Evangelical Church in Germany, and the LWF). The collection of these studies appeared on one of the web portals operated by the Church: ewangelicy.pl (viewed on 1.11.2022). See: Marcin Luter i Żydzi - refleksja współczesnego luteranizmu [Martin Luther and the Jews - a reflection on contemporary Lutheranism], available at: https://ewangelicy.pl/2019/02/07/marcin-luter-i-zydzi-refleksja-wspolczesnego-luteranizmu/ (viewed on 1.11.2022).

12. For more on this topic, see Sojka: Windhoek (see note 10), 123-125; Sebastian Duda: Erinnerung und Abwesenheit. Fünfhundertstes Jubiläum der Reformation in Polen, in: Johann Hinrich Claussen / Stefan Rhein (eds.): Reformation 2017. Eine Bilanz, Berlin 2017, 41-46.

One manifestation of the search for such a positive identity was, for example, the 2017 edition of the "Lutheran Catechism for Adults"[13], designed as an aid to Lutherans themselves, but also as a modern tool for preparing people to join the church as adults, something which can be observed more and more in large university towns. Further confirmation of the need for such a response is the popularity of studies on the Reformation that have appeared in the context of 2017. The Reformation as a source of positive identity is also an important factor in important controversies that are dealt with in all parts of the church. The debates on confirmation and church ministry, which have already been mentioned in connection with the reception of LWF or CPCE publications, were also marked by the fact that the relevant documents make broad reference to the Reformation heritage, so that they provide inspiration for answers to contemporary questions.[14]

13. See: Bożena Giemza / Marcin Hintz (eds.), Luterański katechizm dla dorosłych [Lutheran Catechism for Adults], Dzięgielów 2017.

14. Cf. the confirmation document mentioned above: Konfirmacja (see note 9), esp. 11-24.

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Verbindende Elemente im globalen Luthertum identifizieren

Das Luthertum hat sich auf verschiedenen Wegen in der Welt verbreitet. Dadurch ist es in ganz unterschiedlichen kulturellen Kontexten heimisch geworden. Kann es dann aber eine »lutherische Identität« geben? Oder gibt es – je nach Prägung – nicht eher »lutherische Identitäten«? Und was verbindet diese, wie lebt es sich also in einer Communio, die zahlreiche Ausdrucksformen der »lutherischen Identität« ermöglicht, und wo sind die Herausforderungen dieses Miteinanders?

In seinem Ringen um Communio, die eine lebendige Kirchengemeinschaft sein soll, steht der Lutherische Weltbund vor eben diesen Fragen. Grund genug, nach Identitätsmarkern, nach Pfeilern einer gemeinsamen lutherischen Identität zu suchen, die für Geschichte, Gegenwart und unterschiedliche kulturelle Kontexte Relevanz besitzen und dabei Theologie und Geschichte miteinander verbinden.

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Carl Stanges Bedeutung für das internationale Luthertum

Die Wiederentdeckung Martin Luthers als Reformator und Theologe war im 20. Jahrhundert eng mit dem Namen Carl Stange (1870-1959) verbunden. Wie kaum ein anderer rang dieser um die Identität der Lutheraner in einer Zeit, in der ökumenische Bewegungen den Ton bestimmten. Die Lutherrenaissance ist Ausdruck dieses Kampfes.

Heiner Frandrich rekonstruiert durch umfängliche Analyse vor allem der Korrespondenz Carl Stanges seine Bedeutung für das internationale Luthertum, das aus historisch-konfessionellen Gründen vor allem als deutsch und schwedisch, aber auch als baltisch wahrgenommen wird. Sichtbar wird: Die »Lutherrenaissance« ist theologisches Programm und persönliche Kooperation, lutherisch und ökumenisch, überstaatlich und national.

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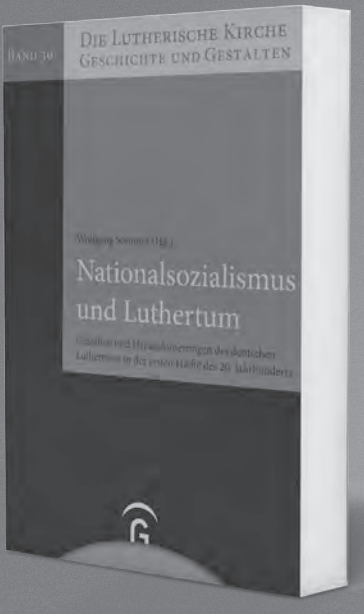
Persönlichkeiten des Luthertums in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus



Die hier versammelten Beiträge stellen bekannte und weniger bekannte Gestalten des deutschen Luthertums und deren Wirken in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus vor. Es handelt sich dabei um Personen, die vorwiegend im Kontext der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche in Bayern agiert haben, deren Wirkungsradius aber oft darüber hinaus wirkte. Sie gehören einer Epoche in der Geschichte des Luthertums an, in der das Luthertum durch die Ideologie des Nationalsozialismus vor einer seiner bisher größten Herausforderungen stand.

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Das Verhältnis von Kirche und Staat im 20. Jahrhundert

Die »Zwei-Reiche-Lehre« gehörte über erhebliche Strecken des 20. Jahrhunderts zu den herausragenden, aber immer auch umstrittenen Leitbegriffen des Luthertums. Als Form der Wahrnehmung des Verhältnisses von Kirche und Staat sollte sie klären, wie die Säkularität eines Staates anzuerkennen und zu würdigen war. Dabei konnte es zu Missbrauch kommen: Die Ansicht, ein Staat und seine Regierung seien gottgegeben und damit nicht zu hinterfragen, kann Unrechtregimes rechtfertigen und gleichzeitig dazu führen, dass Christen sich in politische Belange nicht einmischen, da sie diese als zum »weltlichen Reich« gehörig betrachten.

Der vorliegende Band fragt nach der Bedeutung der Zwei-Reiche-Lehre in unterschiedlichen politischen Konfliktfeldern und lotet das in den Interpretationen vorausgesetzte Verhältnis zwischen Kirche und Staat aus. Zunächst wird hier der historische Rahmen der Debatte beleuchtet; anschließend wird das Verständnis der Zwei-Reiche-Lehre in der BRD und in der DDR untersucht; den Abschluss bildet ein Blick auf die Bedeutung der Zwei-Reiche-Lehre im internationalen Kontext.

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Eine Dokumentation der Arbeit zentraler Hilfsstellen für die Nichtarierfürsorge

als E-Book erhältlich

Bis 1938 hatte sich die Lage der aus rassischen Gründen verfolgten Christen in Deutschland so verschlechtert, dass die Bekennende Kirche nicht länger untätig sein konnte. Sie richtete mit dem »Büro Pfarrer Grüber« eine Hilfsstelle für Auswanderungswillige ein. Diesem Vorbild folgte die bayerische Landeskirche mit zwei Hilfsstellen in München und Nürnberg. Bis Ende 1941 konnten dank deren Hilfe über 120 Menschen ausreisen. Andere wurden seelsorgerlich betreut oder erfuhren in einer Zeit permanenter Entrechtung vielfältige Beratung.

Im vorliegenden Band wird anhand zahlreicher Quellen die Arbeit der bayerischen Hilfsstellen umfassend dokumentiert. Ergänzende Texte aus den Jahren seit 1919 machen deutlich, wie man sich in der Landeskirche zur so genannten Judenfrage stellte und weshalb das Engagement der Kirchenleitung zugunsten der Hilfsstellen angesichts ihres insgesamt ambivalenten Kurses überraschend war.

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