

Concerns Over A Confession

by [Pr. Dennis D. Nelson](#), Lutheran CORE Executive Director



On September 27 the ELCA released a “Declaration of the ELCA to American Indian and Alaska Native People.” The document contains a full page of confessions to the American Indian and Alaska Native communities of the ELCA and in the U. S. as well as to non-Indigenous communities of the ELCA. A link to that document can be found [here](#).

There is no doubt – there is absolutely no question – but that when settlers from Europe came to America, there were already people living here. There is no doubt – there is absolutely no question – but that treaties were broken, promises were not kept, and people – including children who were forcibly enrolled in boarding schools – were mistreated and abused. There is much that we need to repent of. We also know that all of our homes and all of our churches – and even the ELCA office building on Higgins Road – are all built on land that once belonged to someone else.

I am reminded of the account in 2 Samuel 21, when “there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year” (verse 1). David inquired of the Lord and asked why. The Lord replied, “There is bloodguilt on Saul and on his house, because he put the Gibeonites to death.” The Israelites had made a treaty with the Gibeonites when they first entered into the Promised Land (Joshua 9). Even though the

In This Issue:

- Is the ELCA Saying That the Church of Jesus Has Nothing Unique to Offer?
- Bp. Eaton and “Grace-Filled” Separation
- CRT and the Letter That Kills
- Who Can Pray to the Father in the Name of Jesus?
- New Video Book Review for November
- Do We Allow Ourselves to Think?
- What’s the Latest on the Global Body of Christ

Inside this Issue:

Concerns Over A Confession.	p. 1
CRT v. Cross..., Part II	p. 2
The Banality of Abortion	p. 3
She Just Does Not Get It	p. 4
Introduction to Intercessory Prayer	p. 5
International Perspective; Secular Culture	p. 6
Coming Events	p. 10
Video Book Reviews “Sexuality Mentality”	p. 14

Critical Race Theory (CRT) v. The Cross, Redemption, and Transformation, Part II

by [Pr. K. Craig Moorman](#), Member of the Board of Lutheran CORE

“Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise.” (Galatians 3:23-29, NRSV)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ —

The introduction of *Critical Race Theory (CRT)*, into all segments of our culture, has created a massive outcry throughout our land because of its crushing and deceitful agenda; partly because it attempts to lure the general populace in — especially the most innocent among us, our children — through a dishonest narrative and then will unashamedly ambush and exploit its victims. But many are not taking the bait, and that populace is now waking up to such trickery! *CRT* is misleading and guises itself with different descriptive language to avoid naming itself for what it is, *Critical Race Theory*. It represents a wolf in sheep’s clothing (cf. Matthew 7:15) and a ‘hireling’ (cf. John 10:10-12) and will — *in the end* — morph into a new type of law which is controlling, vindictive, and even destructive. Thank you for allowing me to unpack further the juxtaposed distinctives between the philosophical ways and intent of *CRT* and the theological-biblical ways and intent of the Cross of Redemption and Transformation, specifically in light of Galatians 3:23-29.

As I shared in [Part 1](#) of this article, Dr. Wyatt Tee Walker was one of Dr. Martin Luther King’s closest colleagues and advisers. Dr. Walker was a legendary key leader in the American Civil Rights Movement, having served as the Executive Director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in the tumultuous years of 1960-1964. Too, he was a co-founder of CORE (the Congress of Racial Equality), chief of staff to King, and King’s ‘field general’ in the organized resistance against notorious Birmingham safety commissioner “Bull” Connor, and so much more. He was with King for the March on Washington on August 28, 1963, that produced the “*I Have a*



Dream” speech where King challenged ALL citizens of the United States of America for civil and economic rights and called for an end to racism. His work was *not in vain*!

Waking up to a new reality

Steve Kinsky says this about Dr. Walker, who co-authored an essay with him (“A Light Shines in Harlem,” September 24, 2015, RealClear Politics) regarding education reform and race relations. This is just part of what they wrote: “*Today, too many ‘remedies’ — such as Critical Race Theory, the increasingly fashionable post-Marxist/postmodernist approach that analyzes society as institutional group power structures rather than on a spiritual or one-to-one human level — are taking us in the wrong direction: separating even elementary school children into explicit racial groups, and emphasizing differences instead of similarities. The answer is to go deeper than race, deeper than wealth, deeper than ethnic identity, deeper than gender. To teach ourselves to comprehend each person, not as a symbol of a group, but as a unique and special individual within a common context of shared humanity.*” Their analysis of *CRT* was and is spot on, especially regarding our *shared humanity*. And, from our perspective as Christians, this “shared humanity” involves original sin and, ultimately, our great need for the Cross — The Cross of Redemption and Transformation, not *CRT* or any other such false narrative, pedagogy, or gospel! It’s been six years since the publication of the Kinsky-Walker article, and now thousands upon thousands of parents are witnessing first-hand how some public schools are shaming, harassing, confus-

Continued on [page 8](#)

The Banality of Abortion

by [Ken Coughlan](#), Media Director and Christian Apologist, Joppa, Maryland

Have you ever been working on a project and felt like you were moving on “automatic”? You hit a rhythm and find yourself going from one step to the next without even needing to think about it. Whatever you are doing is so familiar that it has become second nature. We’ve all been there at some point. We act, but we don’t necessarily think about our actions.

That is the essence of a concept proposed by 20th century Jewish political philosopher Hannah Arendt. She called it “the banality of evil”. Arendt fled Nazi Germany and eventually settled in New York. Then in 1961 she covered the trial of one of the primary organizers of the Jewish Holocaust, Adolf Eichmann. Afterwards, she published a report describing her impressions of Eichmann as she watched him throughout the legal proceedings. We may expect that she would describe a man who resembled so many of our Hollywood villains. The only thing he would be missing is the handlebar mustache that he could twirl with his fingertips. But that not what she saw. According to Arendt,

Eichmann was not Iago and not Macbeth, and nothing would have been farther from his mind than to determine with Richard III “to prove a villain.” Except for extraordinary diligence in looking out for his personal advancement, he had no motives at all. And this diligence in itself was in no way criminal; he certainly would never have murdered his superior in order to inherit his post. He merely, to put the matter colloquially, never realized what he was doing. ... In principle he knew quite well what it was all about ... He was not stupid. It was sheer thoughtlessness – something by no means identical with stupidity – that predisposed him to become one of the greatest criminals of that period. And if this is “banal” and even funny, if with the best will in the world one cannot extract any diabolical or demonic profundity from Eichmann, that is still far from calling it commonplace.

To put it simply, Eichmann’s attitude was no different than anyone else who was just doing his job. Of course, we can all recognize that his job involved perpetuating some of the vilest acts in history, but he simply never thought about it. He no more thought about the details of what he was doing than a baker deeply ponders his actions while baking 12 dozen rolls to get ready for the morning rush. He just hits that groove and goes through all the necessary motions. In Arendt’s words, the evil that Eichmann committed had become, to him, banal. It wasn’t that he thought through what he was doing, performing some ethical calculus and deciding it was the right thing to do. He never thought about it at all. If he was motivated by anything it was to do a good job and advance his career, in a similar sense to so many



of us. And that is what made his actions all the more frightening.

Arendt argued that this “banality of evil” was a stereotypical feature of totalitarian regimes. However, even if you don’t live under the thumb of such a regime, this banality can still raise its ugly head. “Totalitarian solutions may well survive the fall of totalitarian regimes in the form of strong temptations which will come up whenever it seems impossible to alleviate political, social, or economic misery in a manner worthy of man.”

An animal can become violent when it feels threatened and backed into a corner. Survival instincts kick in and it will act in a way that it may not if it wasn’t in that desperate predicament. As humans, our “corner” may be the weight of extreme economic, social or political pressure. Someone who falls on hard times and doesn’t have enough money to make ends meet may feel tempted to illegally take something from another person. The stronger the weight, the bigger the temptation. Any time these things happen, according to Arendt, people may start treating evil acts as if they are nothing out of the ordinary. They allow themselves to *not* think about the moral implications of their actions and eventually come to genuinely believe that their actions are no different from the actions of anyone else who is innocuously going about their day.

Arendt’s description has an uncanny resemblance to some modern attempts to justify abortion. Take, for instance, the oft repeated line that abortion is a private medical procedure and as such the decision is

Continued on [page 11](#)

She Just Does Not Get It

by [Pr. Dennis D. Nelson](#), Lutheran CORE Executive Director

After reading two recent communications from ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, the only conclusion I can come to is this. She just does not get it.

The first communication is dated September 3, 2021 and is entitled, “We Are the Body of Christ.” A link to that communication can be found [here](#). In that letter Bishop Eaton writes about the great, long-standing animosity between Jews and Gentiles, and about how in the early church, these two groups of people were able to be brought together. She refers to the council in Jerusalem in Acts 15 as well as to the second chapter of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, and to how “the dispute between the two groups was healed.” She said that this healing “went to the very core of what it meant to be part of the church.” She then said, “They were one body. We are one body. . . . Yes, we have significant disagreement about very important issues, but our cultural and political differences cannot dissolve this bond.” I was absolutely floored by what she wrote next. “We can take heart from the example of the early church. If, by the Spirit’s power, they could set aside their differences – which were far greater than any of ours – then we, too, by the power of the Sprit, can live into the unity that already exists in Christ.”

She just does not get it. The differences between confessional Lutherans today who hold to the authority of the Bible and who believe that the Lutheran Confessions are a reliable interpretation of the Bible and those who would call themselves the “progressives” are not far less than, instead they are far greater than the differences between Jews and Gentiles in the early church. For example –

No one in the early church led the young people of that church in denouncing the views of the more traditional folks as a lie from Satan that needs to be renounced – unlike what happened at the 2018 ELCA youth gathering.

The apostles did not ignore, dismiss, minimize, or marginalize the Hellenists when they expressed their concern that their widows were being neglected (Acts 6). Instead, they appointed seven deacons to resolve the matter. In contrast, those with traditional views are usually totally ignored when they express their concerns to those in positions of power.

Heresies in the early church were dealt with (for example, see Colossians 2) rather than just accepted



or even celebrated as culturally sensitive ways to contextualize the Gospel.

After the early church made their decision in Acts 15 as to how uncircumcised Gentiles could be a part of the church, they did not then a few years later claim to have decided something else. Their honesty and integrity in holding to what they had decided stands in sharp contrast with the way in which the ELCA has expanded and re-interpreted what was actually voted on and approved in 2009 so that they are now able to embrace the full LGBTQIA+ agenda.

The apostles did not break promises and ignore commitments as the ELCA has done by its not giving a place of honor and respect to traditional views and those who hold them. I have heard of white male seminarians with traditional views being told to put tape over their mouths and not speak. I also know of people whose ordination candidacy process was cancelled or who were denied entrance into the candidacy process because of their traditional views.

Yes, Bishop Eaton just does not get it. The differences between confessional Lutherans and those who would call themselves the “progressives” are not far less than, instead they are far greater than the differences between Jews and Gentiles in the early church.

Even more out of touch with reality is what Bishop Eaton wrote in the second communication, which is dated October 20, 2021, and is entitled, “A pastoral letter from the ELCA presiding bishop regarding the actions of the Reformed Church in

Continued on [page 12](#)

An Introduction to Intercessory Prayer

by [Pr. Cathy Ammlung](#), Former Secretary of the Board of Lutheran CORE

Many of you know that I write intercessory prayers that are posted on the Lutheran CORE website and sent to many individual pastors and congregations. I've done this for over 10 years, motivated to improve on clunky, theologically weak, or odd prayers provided by various resources. Additionally, pastors and laity charged with leading intercessory prayers are often terrified by the prospect of "winging it" or writing prayers every week, and appreciate good resources. Occasionally, pastors repurpose their sermons in the guise of intercessory prayers –advising God to help parishioners get the point made earlier, expand on it, and Just Do It. Laity (and some pastors, especially in informal settings) often want prayers to be plainspoken and down to earth. That's a laudable goal not well served by a "Lord Father God I just wanna" style! Finally, when left to our own devices, we sinners focus on Us, Ourselves, and We, rather than "the Church, the world, and *all people according to their need.*"

I have taught sessions on intercessory prayer at several Society of the Holy Trinity (STS) local retreats, and in congregational study groups. I want to share some of what I've learned and taught, in two articles. Because I'm drawing from notes used for those presentations, there aren't any formal citations in this article. However, I drew from three major works on liturgy: by Dom Gregory Dix (*The Shape of the Liturgy*), Luther Reed (*The Lutheran Liturgy*), and Frank Senn (*Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical*).

In this month's article, let's begin with some historical background. Many elements of first-century synagogue worship were retained by the early Church. The whole pre-communion liturgy –Scripture (including Old Testament), psalms and other hymns, exposition, prayers, and benediction – retain the shape of worship that would have been familiar to Jesus and his disciples. As the Church spread and developed, there were local peculiarities but unity in the essential parts of the liturgy. With regard to intercessory prayers, an early church father, Cyprian, detailed the solemn need to pray for the Church, catechumens, penitents, the emperor, magistrates, those in affliction, travelers, prisoners, and any local concerns.

Intercessory prayers were dubbed "The Prayer of the Faithful." Following a sermon or other exhortation, and after short prayers for catechumens (who then left for instruction), the faithful would continue in intercessory prayer. As the Body of Christ, the



faithful prayed *to the Father, in Christ's name (more, in his person, as his Body), by the power of the Spirit.* Like the recitation of the Creed and Lord's Prayer and the reception of Holy Communion, these public, intercessory prayers were therefore *only for the baptized.*

Here's how Gregory Dix explains that.

"The church is the Body of Christ and prays 'in the name of' Jesus, i.e. according to the Semitic idiom which underlies the phrase, 'in his person.' The Spirit of adoption whereby the church cries to God in Christ's Name, 'Abba, Father' with the certainty of being heard, 'Himself makes intercession' with her prayers. The world had a right to hear the gospel; but those who have not yet 'put on Christ' by baptism and thus as 'sons' received his Spirit by confirmation *cannot* join in offering that prevailing prayer. *All who had not entered the order of the laity were therefore without exception turned out of the assembly after the sermon.*

Now this notion was a revelation to me! **All the baptized participate in one of the "orders" of the Church.** An "order" might be described as a recognizable "group identity" based not in race, gender, or class, but in "priestly role in worship as part of the Body of Christ." These orders included laity, deacons, and priests/bishops. This "priesthood of the baptized" gives each order its proper role in all aspects of worship, perhaps most prominently in the Prayers of the Church. Some of that sense is lost when only the priest or pastor prays, and the laity are reduced to saying "Amen!"

In fact, deacons were especially important in

Continued on [page 13](#)

International Perspective; Secular Culture

by [Dr. Don Brandt](#), Director, [Congregations in Transition](#)
for Lutheran CORE

The signs were there, even before this pandemic. North American culture seems to be moving toward an increasingly secular worldview at breakneck speed. One particular moment when this sank in for me was the finding, by a large-scale Pew Research Institute survey, that the offspring of Boomers in the U.S. were only half as likely to attend church as when their Boomer parents were young. That is a dramatic change in just one generation. And this was *before* Covid started negatively impacting church attendance across the country.

Consider an illustration — from contemporary media — about how Americans are now living in a truly secular age. It comes from the HBO drama series “Silicon Valley.” One tech company employee explains to a co-worker why their company’s chief executive just “outed” another employee as a believer. “You can be openly polyamorous, and people here will call you brave. You can put microdoses of LSD in your cereal, and people will call you a pioneer. But the one thing you cannot be is a Christian.”

Admittedly there are days when I despair that the Body of Christ is at risk of becoming completely inconsequential, a relic of the past. But that was before I read an article in the most recent issue of the Fuller Seminary quarterly magazine. The title was *The Strange New Habitat of the Global Church*, and was written by Professor Veli-Matti Karkkainen, a Finnish (and Lutheran) member of the Fuller faculty. He shares, in this article, the latest information on the **global** Body of Christ.

As you probably already know, the epicenter of the universal church is definitely moving south. Well, the pace of that movement is only accelerating. Some details from this article:

a) The current number of Christians worldwide is 2.4 billion. (That’s with a “b”).

b) The great majority of Christians now live in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

c) By 2050, only about one-fifth of Christians will be non-Hispanic whites. Karkkainen quotes a book from Oxford University Press, *The Coming of Global Christianity: The Next Christendom*. “Even now a typical contemporary Christian is a woman living in a village in Nigeria or in a Brazilian favela or a young, often poor, person anywhere in the megacities of the Global South.”

d) An interesting quote from Karkkainen himself:



“With the shift of the majority of Christians to the Global South, with societies and cultures more traditional than those in Europe and North America, conservative and traditional mindsets will be strengthened globally even when theological liberalism and pluralism reign in Western academia.” (You might want to read that quote again.)

e) Of the over 200 million migrants in the world, about one-half are Christians, with the majority of them in the U.S. and Europe.

f) Among American ethnic group ministries it is Hispanic churches that are experiencing the greatest growth.

g) Black churches in the U.S. continue to grow.

h) From a global perspective, Karkkainen writes, “Secularism has not won the day. Over against the overwhelming majority of the world’s population self-identifying as adherents to a particular religion, only about 15% label themselves as religiously unaffiliated.” Fifteen percent. That is approximately one billion; compared with 2.4 billion Christ followers.

The practical implication of the above information is that foreign mission support by you and your congregation is as vital as ever. (Many of our Boomer Lutherans currently have significant disposable income and assets; most likely over and above what your congregations needs from them to “make ends meet.”) Also, here in the U.S. there might be incredible opportunities for your congregation to reach out, in particular, to the Hispanic population; either directly or by financially supporting effective Hispanic ministries.

So the Body of Christ is, even in this secular age, alive and well. So take heart! Millions of people around the world are still responding to the Gospel.

Concerns Over A Confession

Continued from [page 1](#)

Gibeonites had tricked the Israelites into making that treaty, Joshua knew that they still needed to keep their promises. But several generations later – during the time of King Saul - those promises were broken. Israel needed to deal with the fact that they had not kept their word. They had to face what they had done. It was only after they had done so that God would again bless them. 2 Samuel 21: 14 tells us that after Israel made things right, “God heeded supplications for the land.” It makes you wonder if part of the reason for all of the problems within our country – as well as within the ELCA – is because of promises that have been broken.

But there are a couple sentences within that declaration/confession that make me deeply troubled. In the first paragraph it says, “We have devalued Indigenous religions and lifeways.” In the second paragraph it says, “We confess that we are complicit in the annihilation of Native peoples and your cultures, languages, and religions.” I completely agree that it is severely wrong to devalue other people and their lifeways. It is absolutely wrong to annihilate other peoples and their cultures and languages. What I want to address is the ELCA’s confessing its devaluing indigenous religions. I read that statement in the light of the “Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment,” which the ELCA Churchwide Assembly overwhelmingly approved in 2019. A link to that document can be found [here](#).

What concerns me about the ELCA’s Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment is the section entitled, “Limits on our knowing.” In that section it says, “We must be careful about claiming to know God’s judgments regarding another religion.” Instead it says that “all we know, and all we need to know, is that our neighbors are made in God’s image and that we are called to love and serve them.” Certainly our neighbors are made in God’s image. Certainly we are called to love and serve them. But since it is a fact that people who are not followers of Jesus also love and serve their neighbors, then the ELCA is saying that the church of Jesus has nothing unique, valuable, and important to offer to other people.

If the church of Jesus has nothing unique, valuable, and important to offer to other people, then I could see why we might feel the need to confess devaluing other religions. But if the church of Jesus does have something unique, valuable, and important to offer to other people, then it is not that we devalue other religions. Rather it is that we value people.

We love people, and we want people to know and love Jesus and to know that Jesus loves them. We would not be loving and serving our neighbors if we did not tell them about Jesus.

Are the only options either devaluing other religions or feeling that as followers of Jesus we have nothing unique, valuable, and important to offer? The account of the apostle Paul in Athens in Acts 17 says that there is another option. Please notice five things from this account.

First, verse 16 says that Paul was “deeply distressed to see that the city (of Athens) was full of idols.” Are we deeply distressed over the ways in which people place so many other things before and above God?

Second, in verse 22 Paul began his message in front of the Areopagus on a very positive note. He did not blast the people for all of their idols. Instead he said, “Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way.” In our relating to people who do not know Jesus, do we begin on a positive note and do we maintain a positive spirit?

Third, we see in verse 23 that Paul had taken the time and had put forth the effort to become familiar with their culture and the objects of their worship. He said, “As I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship.” Do we do the same?

Fourth, he found a connecting point. As Paul looked carefully at the objects of the Athenians’ worship, he came across an altar with the inscription, “To an unknown god.” (verse 23) Do we look until we can find a connecting point? Can we identify the aspects of our culture that reveal the spiritual yearnings and longings of people?

Fifth, he was able to relate to the people by quoting from their poets, who had said, “In him we live and move and have our being” and “We too are his offspring.” (verse 28) Are we able to relate to and connect with people today by quoting from the sources that give expression to their feelings, needs, and longings?

So either devaluing other religions or feeling that as followers of Jesus we have nothing unique, valuable, and important to offer are not the only options. Like the apostle Paul, we need to recognize the spiritual yearnings and longings of people, and then we need to find ways to connect with them. We do this, not because we devalue their religions, but instead because we value people. We love people, and we want people to know and love Jesus and to know that Jesus loves them.

CRT v. The CRT, Part II

Continued from [page 2](#)

ing and often brainwashing their precious children, often pitting child against parent (cf. Luke 12:51-53)! In other words, mothers and fathers do know better than the largely compromised system of public school education on what is best for their children and what they should be taught! Many parents are waking up to the problems and underlying deceit of CRT. They are now quickly discovering that it is weighty, cumbersome, disorienting, and massively intrusive. It is an illegitimate ‘disciplinarian,’ without any sense of grace or mercy. Law without Gospel. (Perhaps) without knowing so, they are gaining strength through Galatians 3:25 — *“But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.”* Reflect just a moment on the fullness of this one verse and how it speaks volumes on the acute errors of CRT.

Recently, the state of Virginia became the epicenter of intense debate over CRT — a veritable spiritual battleground for the soul of the next generation of Virginians. The decisive outcome of the vote for the next governor of Virginia (and many other key public servants) reflected a complete repudiation of not only CRT but other radical agendas. So, why such a dramatic voting shift in the opposite direction? I strongly believe it was *not* because the citizens of Virginia suddenly wanted to support “white supremacy” (as the mainstream media purports, along with other vicious comments) but, instead, they were intuitively aware of the overwhelming and insufferable nature of CRT. To speak plainly, folks in general are fed up with hearing such hateful and racist rhetoric being spewed towards fellow human beings. Virginians, and many Americans, have been experiencing a ‘foretaste’ of how a new type of ‘guiding principles’ — *law* — might transpire and begin to dictate what is right and wrong, and how it could literally upend our nation as we know it. Good people are upset and voted accordingly. They love their children and their children’s children. Mama Bear has been poked and has now awakened!

A word from Galatians 3:23-29 — *There is NO distinction*

In light of the headline passage from Galatians 3:24-29 above, we celebrate that Christ has come and that the world, potentially, has been and can be set free: *“Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith.”* (v. 24) In this verse, the Greek word for *disci-*

plinarian is παιδαγωγός/[paidagōgos](#) which translates as trainer, a tutor, not only a teacher but one who had charge of the life and morals of the boys of a family. He was a legally appointed overseer, authorized to train (bring) up a child by administering discipline, chastisement, and instruction, i.e., doing what was necessary to promote *development*. In our present-day public ‘schooling’ environment, we entrust our children with teachers — whom we have authorized — to train and ‘bring them up’ in particular ways. But now that environment has radically changed and the *disciplinarians* are those we have NOT authorized, those carrying the CRT teaching. As Christian parents, our identity and authority rests in Christ and Christ alone. It is upon that foundation we claim Christ as our final *disciplinarian*. I believe this is what people genuinely desire. Christ did not come as a cruel and condemning taskmaster but as Saviour (John 3:17). We are no longer subject to a disciplinarian and *under* the law (Galatians 3:25; 5:18), for in Christ Jesus we are *all* children of God through faith (Galatians 3:26). Apart from Christ, the <Mosaic> law can quickly become burdensome and even deadly. In 2 Corinthians 3:6, Paul writes: *“He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant — not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”* Of course, the Law of Moses, a grouping of books (Torah) or “letter/s”, was a series of writings to regulate moral and civil actions telling people what they could and could not do; but, too, they were instructions on how to live in the land; i.e., in Deuteronomy 8:1-*“All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply ...”*, Psalm 119:1-*“Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord!”*, and dozens of other biblical references. As the cloud of confusion is lifting, it’s becoming clear that those behind CRT are bent on writing their own “series of writings to regulate moral and civil actions telling people” what they can and cannot do, hoping to remove and replace the traditional role of parents serving as the primary disciplinarian ... and, especially the parents who place their faith, ultimately, in Jesus Christ as their disciplinarian, not CRT.

“Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed” (Galatians 3:23) Luther had profound insight regarding “the law” apart from faith, specifically in light of this verse: “The Law is a prison to those who have not as yet obtained grace. No prisoner enjoys the confinement. He hates it. If he could he would smash the prison and find his freedom at all costs. As

Continued on [page 9](#)

CRT v. The CRT, Part II

Continued from [page 8](#)

long as he stays in prison he refrains from evil deeds. Not because he wants to, but because he has to ... But the Law is also a spiritual prison, a veritable hell. When the Law begins to threaten a person to death and the eternal wrath of God, a man just cannot find any comfort at all. He cannot shake off at will the nightmare of terror which the Law stirs up in his conscience.” Any law, even the Mosaic Law, will lead to bondage. By now, I think you understand that I am not comparing CRT to the Mosaic Law but only suggesting that CRT is becoming law, except without God involved in any way, shape, or form. Through the implementation of CRT, the State/Government desires to become the schoolmaster, the custodian, the guardian, and the disciplinarian. Again, with the State, there may be no grace, no freedom, nothing but confinement indeed. (Project Wittenberg, Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, 1535 by Martin Luther/trans. by Theodore Graebner, Chapter 3, pp. 135-149, Galatians 3:20-29, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1949)

The other obvious problem with CRT is how it automatically marks and makes a distinction with people groups through a hodgepodge of terminology. For instance, it regularly employs the label ‘white privilege,’ typically defined as a “concept that highlights the unfair societal advantages that white people have over non-white people. It is something that is pervasive throughout society and exists in all of the major systems and institutions that operate in society, as well as on an interpersonal level.” (<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-white-privilege-5070460>, “What Is White Privilege” by Arlin Cuncic, updated on August 25, 2020) At least a part of this particular definition, along with the rest of the noted article, kind of makes sense but then breaks down quickly when left as absolute fact/law without grace and mercy; and, especially, if not filtered through the heart and mind of Christ and His redemptive and transformative work at the Cross. From Galatians 3:28 we read, “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for ALL of you are one in Christ Jesus.” There is no distinction!

[Walter Myers III](#), who is the Principal Engineering Manager at Microsoft Corporation in Irvine, CA, holds a master’s degree in Philosophy from Biola University’s Talbot School of Theology, and is a member of the Advisory Board for the California Policy Center (CPC), recently wrote a fascinating piece on CRT. This is how he concludes his essay:

“How will we ever find peace among the races if we can’t look at each other as individuals, person to person, based on actual facts and intentions? We simply cannot reconcile as a people if we allow ourselves to be judged by the ethnic, race, and gender essentialism of Marxist-style power groups, and thus we should reject CRT ... Indeed, America has had a long and horrific period of chattel slavery followed by Jim Crow and racial codes that persisted well into the 1960s and 70s. But these practices ended as more Americans understood the gross violations of the U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence. As a black man, I have seen tremendous progress over my lifetime, and while I’m cognizant racism will always exist, simply because evil will always exist, the only systematic oppression I see currently is the failure of public-school systems across America to prepare black and brown children for future economic success. It is the greatest tragedy of our time. And what is abundantly clear is CRT does nothing to advance the basic mission of K-12 education, while doing much to detract from it.” (Discovery Institute, American Center for Transforming Education, [“Critical Race Theory — The Marxist Trojan Horse”](#)) Certainly, CRT is becoming more than a distraction. Its *disciplinarians* are hoping to steal away the hearts and minds of our children. Jesus Christ, our *disciplinarian*, has set us free through His blood of redemption and transformation.

What the world needs now is HESED — Steadfast Mercy!

Our hope lies in this Word from Galatians 3:23-25, notably as it speaks on our freedom in Christ: *“Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.”* Throughout the history of the People of God (the Israelites), it was imperative that they remain ‘dependent’ upon the continual and merciful intervention of God. This ongoing and unfailing mercy of God was and is known as God’s Hesed; otherwise, they were lost and would die. Hesed is a Hebrew word almost beyond description, even pushing the boundaries of our comprehension. Hesed kept the law in balance. Apart from the “Hesed”/ חֶסֶד of the Lord God YHWH — the *completely undeserved, unconditional, loving kindness and mercy of God* (named over 245 times in the Old Testament), the Mosaic Law could breed guilt and harshly assign punishments for violating the law, even issuing death sentences

Continued on [page 10](#)

Critical Race Theory (CRT) v. The Cross, Redemption, and Transformation, Part II

Continued from [page 9](#)

to offenders with seemingly very little — if any — grace and mercy attached to it. Of course, this Law was “*only a shadow*” of what <was> to come ... “*the substance <belonging> to Christ*” (Colossians 2:17). As a stiff-necked people with very clayish feet, we are *always* tempted to fall back into the law, any law ... even a law of lawlessness, especially when we drift from Hesed ... the *completely undeserved, unconditional, loving kindness and mercy of God*. And now, of course, we have been set free! Here’s the incredibly Good News — this ‘hesedness’ was eventually fulfilled in the Incarnation of God, the Father, in Jesus Christ! We can now be proclaimers of such mercy and breathe life into our world, no matter what we face. We can’t say it enough: What the world needs now is mercy, especially revealed fully in Jesus. And, of course, we’ve been called to communicate this message of mercy, and shout it from the rooftops (cf. Matthew 10:27) — MERCY! If we don’t, others WILL fill that void with a counterfeit form of mercy — like CRT! Do you see what’s happening?

Unlike the present-day “law of the land,” aptly described in our primary “letters,” the Constitution/ Bill of Rights and Declaration of Independence, CRT has no grounding in a Judeo-Christian God. In the end, it is god-less. It has no biblical understanding of Hesed or Mercy. Because of the God-void in every human heart, CRT has created this false narrative in trying to communicate mercy. It answers only to itself, thus “*keeping us subject to a disciplinarian*” and “*under the law*” (Galatians 3:23 & 25). I believe this terrible reality is exactly what our nation has been experiencing without being able to name it, an intuitive sense that something is not right. What our country — the world — needs now, more than anything else, is Hesedness, the Lord’s steadfast and unfailing Mercy, not a pseudo-mercy that is, in the end, merciless.

We all understand that the Cross lies at the very heart of the Christian faith, and without the Cross we have no faith at all. What took place at Golgotha was the single most important event in all of history — it was the central event of the human race. And, herein, lies the inherent flaw and great deceit/lie of CRT. Where there is no mercy with CRT, the Cross exudes Mercy. In Part I of this article, I clearly articulated that racism is a reality. It is dreadfully sad and awful,

and damages each of our souls. In Walter Myers III words, “... *while I’m cognizant racism will always exist, simply because evil will always exist, the only systematic oppression I see currently is the failure of public-school systems across America to prepare black and brown children for future economic success ... And what is abundantly clear is CRT does nothing to advance the basic mission of K-12 education ...*”

In the end, for all of us, this life is *all* about pursuing and proclaiming the steadfast love and mercy of Jesus Christ and Him alone. There is a harvest of folks (cf. Matthew 9:35-38), including many of the so-called CRT proponents, who have not yet tasted such a mercy. Let us consider how we can effectively and faithfully engage in such a challenge. In the final installment of this article, Part III, I hope to raise two simple, logical and rationale questions: What is the end-game/purpose of CRT? And what was/is the end-game/purpose of Calvary? Until next time, stay the course ...

In His Immeasurable Love and Mercy,

K. Craig Moorman

Mission Developer/Pastor of *River’s Edge Ministries*/NALC-LCMC

Mt. Airy, Maryland

What the world needs now is mercy, especially revealed fully in Jesus.

Coming Events

- **NALC Life Conference** - Culpeper, VA - January 20, 2022. Click [here](#).
- **2022 March for Life** - Washington, DC - January 21, 2022. Click [here](#).
- **NALC Pastor's Conference** - Orlando, February 17, 2022. Click [here](#).
- **The NEXUS Institute** - June 12-18, 2022. Click [here](#) to register.

The Banality of Abortion

Continued from [page 3](#)

best left to a woman and her doctor. If we were talking about removing an appendix or getting wisdom teeth pulled, few people would disagree. These are normal, everyday procedures about which we rarely give much thought.

But if we allow ourselves to think, there is a fundamental difference between removing an appendix and removing the unborn. As Francis J. Beckwith says,

the conceptus is a new, although tiny, individual with a human genetic code with its own genomic sequence (with 46 chromosomes), which is neither her mother's nor her father's. From this point until death no new genetic information is needed to make the unborn entity an individual human being. Her genetic makeup is established at conception, determining to a great extent her own individual physical characteristics ... The conceptus, from the very beginning, is a whole organism, with certain capacities, powers, and properties, whose parts work in concert to bring the whole to maturity.

This science, however, never enters into the “private medical procedure” argument. It is not that the scientific data is considered and rejected. It is never even considered.

How do people reach this point? If Arendt's theory is correct, it is the natural consequence of strong temptations to relieve seemingly impossible suffering or pressure. An unwanted pregnancy can provide that pressure. We live in a society in which many corners feed women the lie that they cannot succeed if they have children. They are told that if they carry a baby to term, all their hopes and dreams will go down the drain. When women are constantly bombarded with such messaging, it is hardly surprising that they feel trapped and are tempted to rid themselves of the one thing they believe is trapping them: the unborn child. In light of the scientific evidence, though, it is undeniable that this “way out” involves killing a child. If the woman allows herself to think things through, she will have to face up to this reality. The immense temptation, however, produces people who instead permit themselves to see abortion as banal. If they were to think through the moral consequences they may not like the conclusion. So, instead, they simply fail to think about it at all.

Arendt's banality does not explain every pro-choice argument. Some (such as the argument from

bodily autonomy) clearly do acknowledge the humanity of the unborn. But for those that do not, we can fairly ask how it is that someone can come to a place where they do not even give a thought to whether abortion kills an innocent unborn child, especially in light of the overwhelming scientific evidence that this is precisely what is happening. They advance arguments that assume there is no human life and speak as if the act of having an abortion is just as banal as baking twelve dozen rolls in the morning. The remedy, then, if someone's actions are characterized by *thoughtlessness*, is to promote *thoughtfulness* as best we can. Talk to people. Confront them (with grace) with the scientific evidence for the distinct humanity of the unborn, creating something of a cognitive dissonance between what they want to believe and the new information you provide. When that happens, they will eventually have to try to resolve the inconsistency.

Bibliography

Arendt, Hannah. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. New York: Penguin Books, 1963.

— — —. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Orlando: Harcourt, 1966.

Beckwith, Francis J. *Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

¹ Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1963), 287-88 (emphasis in original).

² Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, (Orlando: Harcourt, 1966), 459.

³ Francis J. Beckwith, *Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 67.

She Just Does Not Get It

Continued from [page 4](#)

America General Synod 2021.” A link to that communication can be found [here](#). In that letter she told about one of the ELCA’s full communion partners, which had recently met in General Synod. The final Vision 2020 Report was presented to the assembly, with its recommendations for the future of the denomination “with regard to staying together . . . and grace-filled separation.” Bishop Eaton commended that church body for “adopting regulations to provide an unobstructed pathway for those local churches that will depart the denomination.” She praised their actions, which she says “reflect the RCA’s commitment to walking together, respecting differences, and affirming common mission and ministry.” She described the spirit of the synod as “conciliatory and hope-filled, as delegates shared their disagreements in the bond of peace.”

What she then says in the next paragraph is totally out of touch with reality. She talked about how the ELCA has “traveled this same road.” She uses language from the 2009 social statement, “Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust,” when she says, “It is possible, by the grace of God, to be a church that makes an active choice to live with the disagreement among us, and ‘to accompany one another in study, prayer, discernment, pastoral care, and respect.’” How out of touch can you get? There may have been those who – back in 2009 – were deceived into buying that line so that they were willing to vote in favor of the human sexuality social statement and the changes in ministry policies. But I do not know anyone today who continues to believe that the ELCA has any plans to “honor bound conscience.”

I know that there are ELCA bishops and synod councils who have been gracious in their dealings with congregations who were voting to disaffiliate from the ELCA. But I have also heard many stories of bullying, intimidating, threats to take property, and efforts to get as many dollars as possible from congregations who wish to leave. I know of retired ELCA pastors who were told by their synods that they would be removed from the ELCA clergy roster if they did not leave a congregation that has voted to

I have also heard many stories of bullying, intimidating, threats to take property, and efforts to get as many dollars as possible from congregations who wish to leave.

disaffiliate from the ELCA. I know of a seminarian who was no longer welcome at an ELCA seminary once the congregation that she was affiliated with began the process of leaving the ELCA.

Too many ELCA congregations have not experienced a “grace-filled separation.” Too many ELCA congregations did not find “an unobstructed pathway” when they began the process of voting to leave the ELCA.

I am certain that what Bishop Eaton wrote in her October 20 communication is something that she wishes were true and that she desires to be true. But why does she not know that it is not true? Does she really think that people will believe what she wrote?



Intro. to Intercessory Prayer

Continued from [page 5](#)

prayer – the Prayers of the Church were sometimes called “the deacon’s prayer.” The deacon spoke on behalf of all the people, whose participation and responses in these prayers were critical.

Certain types of public intercessory prayer explicitly featured all three “orders” – laity, deacons, and priest, each with their role. You’ve probably prayed “the bidding prayer” on Good Friday. It’s one of few remaining vestiges of a once-common family of bidding-type prayers. These were important in East, and recovered by Reformation churches. The laity are instructed by the presiding minister to kneel. The priest/pastor announces the “bid” – the topic, such as “The poor, the sick, our enemies, the government,” and so on. There is silence for private, personal prayer by each person, for each “bid.” Kneeling was the posture of private prayer. The people rise to their feet as the deacon prays a *collect* (pronounced COLL-ekt) for each bid. I’ll talk in more detail about collects in the next installment of this work. Why did the people stand at this point? Because just as the deacon’s Collect “collected” the *thoughts*, privately offered up by many pray-ers, into one *prayer*, so also the deacon “collected” all of those individual *prayers* together as the *Body* of Christ, offering up prayer as one *body*. The people stood to indicate that now they were participating in the prayer *of* the whole body, *as* the one Body. The priest often finished the Bidding Prayer with one final collect.

Over time, the Western and Eastern Churches diverged in language and liturgy, including prayer. In the Eastern Orthodox churches, prayers were long and poetic. They touched on virtually every station of human life. The role of the deacon and laity were emphasized in the liturgical intercessory prayers. The Western Church derived much of its style from its ancient Roman roots. It tended to be polished and pithy rather than wordy and poetic! The deacon’s role was greatly reduced, often because the intercessory prayers were scattered through several portions of the Mass. Primers were published – devotional prayers to be read by the laity during Mass while the priest read the Latin service. This at least acknowledged the deep need for the laity to offer their “priestly sacrifice of prayer,” but it reduced it to personal, private devotions rather than as an intentional offering of the Body of Christ.

Northern Europe in the late Middle Ages, and into Reformation era, retained and developed the “general prayer” or “prayer of the faithful” through

something called “Prone.” After the sermon but before Communion, and in the vernacular (unlike the liturgy done in Latin), occurred a Collect, the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, occasionally the Decalogue, sometimes a brief form of corporate confession and absolution, intercessions for the living and the faithful departed, announcements of the banns, parish notes, etc. Lutheran reformers were relatively conservative in altering the Mass. They retained a form of Prone, often by means of a formulaic General Prayer (prayed by the pastor) between the sermon and the offertory, preceded by Creed and concluded by Lord’s Prayer, all spoken by the people.

Lutherans also re-introduced frequent use of litanies. A common form is used in Evening Prayer, but there’s a longer one called The Great Litany that can be a stand-alone intercessory prayer, chanted by the deacon or assisting minister with chanted responses by the people.

However, Lutherans and Anglicans for many decades often replaced the classic form of intercession or litanies by a “General Prayer” led by the pastor. This could be broken down into individual “chunks,” with the congregation saying “Amen” or “Hear our prayer” after each section, but the role of the laity in public intercessory prayer was being obscured, leaving laity only with whatever private devotional prayer they chose to indulge in. As Luther Reed noted: “18th-century Pietism failed to distinguish between the personal, subjective prayer of the individual Christian and the objective common prayer of the assembled worshippers, or church prayer proper. Rationalism lost all right conceptions of the Church and of prayer alike!”

In the last 75 years, there have been liturgical reforms (sometimes unfortunately followed, in my opinion, by liturgical malpractice!). An assisting minister often takes on a diaconal role. The intercessory prayers may properly be done by that person, with pastor praying a concluding petition or collect. That’s the form I follow when composing intercessory prayers. We’ll delve into that next time.

Some major take-aways of this history: the intercessory prayers have a very long history as the prayers of and by the whole people of God, the Body of Christ himself. They are the Church praying for the Church, the world, the ruling authorities, and those in any tribulation, distress, or sorrow; for peace, for the

As the Body of Christ, the faithful prayed to the Father, in Christ’s name (more, in his person, as his Body), by the power of the Spirit.

Continued on [page 14](#)

Video Book Reviews — “Sexuality Mentality”

by [Pr. Dennis D. Nelson](#), Lutheran CORE Executive Director

Lutheran CORE continues to provide monthly video reviews of books of interest and importance. Many thanks to NALC pastor Mark Werner for giving us a review of Heather Ruesch’s book, [Sexuality Mentality: Creating a Culture of Biblical Integrity](#).

Because we are being bombarded by all sorts of propaganda and lies that the devil uses to deceive and destroy, Pastor Werner feels that we need a book like this one, which views sexuality as a good gift from God which enriches life when people live according to God’s design for healthy relationships. Knowing that many pastors have been worn down and are tired from speaking about sexuality on the floors of synod assemblies, Pastor Werner states that the confessional church is now often too silent and is not speaking the truth in love, particularly in regard to our teenagers. Reminding us that our primary identity is not in our sexuality but in Jesus Christ, Pastor Werner recommends this book as a must read for parents. In addition, it can be used within congregations as youth engage in dialogue with their peers and are able to have honest, faithful conversations with their parents and the pastor. The book is available through Concordia Publishing.

Mark Werner is pastor of Emanuel Lutheran Church in Elmer, New Jersey and is a member of the NALC Executive Council.

This review, as well as eleven others, have been posted on our YouTube channel. A link to the channel can be found [here](#).



Intro. to Intercessory Prayer

Continued from [page 13](#)

propagation of the Gospel; for our enemies; for every manner and estate of humanity; for children and catechumens; for favorable weather and harvest; for deliverance from every affliction, wrath, danger and need; for the faithful departed; and for the salvation of those praying and for all people.



Such intercessory prayers as we write and speak ought to be mindful of this long history, and the cloud of witnesses with whom we are praying. They rightly should possess the Roman virtues of terse, simple, elegant directness, and the Eastern virtues of intense devotion, evocative language, and reverence. They ought not to be mini-sermons, private opinions, lectures, or casual, off-the-cuff “Lord I just wanna’s”!

A final take-away comes from Dom Gregory Dix, from whom I will quote at length.

“Many of the more devout of our laity have come to suppose that intercession is a function of prayer better discharged in private than by liturgical prayer of any kind, so unsatisfying is the share which our practice allows them. The notion of the priestly prayer of the whole church, as the prayer of Christ, the world’s Mediator through his Body, being ‘that which makes the world to stand,’ in the phrase of an early Christian writer, has been banished from the understanding of our laity. Their stifled instinct that they, too, have a more effective part to play in intercession than listening to someone else praying, drives them to *substitute* private and solitary intercession for the prayer of the church as the really effective way of prayer, *instead of regarding their private prayer as deriving its effectiveness from their membership of the church. So their hold on the corporate life is weakened and their own prayers are deprived of that inspiration and guidance which comes from participating in really devout corporate prayer.*”

CORE Voice Newsletter

Published by Lutheran CORE;
[Kim Smith](#), Editor

To contact Lutheran CORE, please
email lcrowebmail@gmail.com or
call 1-888-810-4180