Sonderdruck aus

Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte

Jahrgang 103 · 2012

Offprint from

Archive for Reformation History

Volume 103 · 2012

Gütersloher Verlagshaus

Pastoral Care as Protestant Mission: Ministry to the Sick and Suffering in Evangelical Church Ordinances*

By Ronald K. Rittgers

One of the central yet understudied goals of the Protestant reformers was to change rather radically how their contemporaries understood and coped with the suffering that was so much a part of early modern existence. The reformers believed that evangelical theology – especially justification by faith – had profound implications for how Christians were to contend with misfortune. In their eyes many of the means of dealing with suffering that passed for Christian in their day were nothing of the sort; they were pagan and needed to be abolished so that the gospel could be "rerooted" in Europe. A crucial part of the reformers' larger mission to re-Christianize Christendom was to persuade their contemporaries that they needed to suffer differently.[1] In order to effect this reformation of attitudes toward suffering, the reformers expended a great deal of effort in training up a new breed of pastors who could instruct the common folk in the proper evangelical understanding of misfortune. Nowhere is this concern to change attitudes toward suffering through a reformed version of pastoral care more evident than in the numerous evangelical church ordinances *(Kirchenordnungen)* that appeared in sixteenth-century Germany. The treatment of suffering in the church ordinances provides not only interesting insight into the continuities and discontinuities between the pastoral care of sick and suffering Christians in the Protestant Reformation and in the later Middle Ages, it also reveals a side of evangelical pastoral care that has received very little attention from scholars.

Church ordinances were printed guides for worship, belief, and behavior that evangelical reformers and rulers produced to replace existing episcopal, synodal,

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* This article began as a conference paper at the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference in 2005. I also gave a revised version of it at the Stipendiatenkolloquium of the Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel in Febrary 2009. Finally, this article draws on chapter seven of my forthcoming book, *The Reformation of Suffering: A Study of Pastoral Theology and Lay Piety in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany* (Oxford University Press).

1. On the Reformation as re-Christianization see Scott Hendrix: "Rerooting the Faith: The Reformation as Re-Christianization," in: *Church History*, 69:3 (2000), pp. 558–578, and id., *Recultivating the Vineyard: The Reformation Agendas of Christianization*, Louisville 2004. See also C. Scott Dixon, *The Reformation in Germany*, Oxford, Malden 2002, pp. 166 and 177–178.

and papal legislation, along with the late medieval pastoralia.[2] They were an attempt on the part of Protestant leaders to effect a comprehensive reform of Christianity within their lands, not only in terms of worship and doctrine, but also in terms of ecclesiastical structures, education (both of the clergy and the laity), moral discipline, ministry to the poor, and pastoral care. The church ordinances treated all of these issues, and in this respect they constituted a new genre, a new kind of summa, as there was nothing quite like them in the later Middle Ages, certainly not in terms of scope; they sought to gather together in one place what had previously been scattered in many. Early on there was interest in producing a single evangelical church ordinance (as in the case of Philipp of Hesse), but such efforts soon went the way of every other attempt at centralization in early modern Germany; by the end of the sixteenth century there were literally hundreds of church ordinances. Scholars have attempted to group them into families that share a common "ancestor" or original source, usually authored by one of the leading reformers (e.g., Melanchthon, Bugenhagen, Jonas, Aurifaber [Vratislaviensis], Brenz, Osiander, Bucer, Rhegius, Dietrich, Andreae, Chemnitz, or a Lasco). It has been customary to set the number of families at five,[3] although recent research has challenged this number and the methods used to arrive at it. There clearly were filial connections between the church ordinances, but these relationships appear to have been more complicated than previously realized.[4] Further research is required before we can fully understand this complexity. Whatever their interrelations, we know that church ordinances had the force of law, being

2. The following paragraph draws on material from Jeffrey P. Jaynes, "Church Ordinances," in Hans J. Hillerbrand (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, vol. 1, New York, Oxford 1996, pp. 345–351.

3. The origins of the five families have been traced back to the following sources: 1) Bugenhagen's 1528 Braunschweig Church Ordinance, 2) Osiander and Brenz's 1533 Brandenburg-Nuremberg Church Ordinance, 3) Brenz's 1536 Württemberg Church Ordinance, 4) Bucer's church ordinances for Strasbourg (1534) and Hesse (1539), and 5) the 1563 Palatine Church Ordinance that was influenced by the 1550 London Church Ordinance of John a Lasco. See Jeffrey P. Jaynes, "'Ordo et Libertas:' Church Discipline and the Makers of Church Order in Sixteenth-Century North Germany," Ph.D. Dissertation, Ohio State University 1993, p. 88.

4. See the discussion in Jaynes, "Ordo et Libertas," pp. 83–91. See also Annaliese Sprengler-Ruppenthal, "Kirchenordungen II/1," in: *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, vol. 18, pp. 670–703. Sprengler-Ruppenthal uses the language of church ordinance families, but does not employ the customary five-family grouping, instead choosing to provide a territory-by-territory analysis in which she lists numerous important church ordinances. To my knowledge, no one has done a comprehensive study of the church ordinances that provides reliable statistics on overall numbers of publication. Jaynes has confirmed via private correspondence that he is working on such a project.

issued in the name of local princes or city magistrates, who financed their production and provided for their distribution.[5]

Much of the previous work on the church ordinances has fallen under the general rubric of confessionalization. Scholars have emphasized their importance in the eventual hegemony of temporal rulers over the church and the concomitant promotion of confessional uniformity, moral discipline, and a reinvigorated patriarchalism.[6] By way of contrast, relatively little has been made of the stipulations regarding pastoral care in the church ordinances. This is unfortunate, because the church ordinances are one of our most valuable sources for determining the nature of pastoral care in the Protestant Reformation, at least at a prescriptive level. They are one of the few sources that temporal authorities required the parish clergy to possess. (The other sources usually included a hymnal, a postil, and a catechism).[7] The growing literature on the early modern Protestant clergy includes several important treatments of the education and social location of evan-

5. Fortunately for the historian, many of the church ordinances have been published, thanks in large part to the efforts of the late Emil Sehling and his successors. See Emil Sehling (ed.), *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts*, 19 vols., Leipzig, Tübingen, 1902–1913, 1955- (There are twenty-four volumes planned in this series). See also Aemilius Ludwig Richter (ed.), *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts: Urkunden und Regesten zur Geschichte des Rechts und der Verfassung der evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland*, 2 vols., Weimar 1846; repr. Nieukwoop 1967. In citations from Sehling and Richter, "a" refers to the left-hand column on the page, while "b" refers to the right-hand column.

6. In addition to Jaynes, several other scholars have examined the church ordinances. See James Kittelson, "The Confessional Age: The Late Reformation in Germany," in Steven E. Ozment (ed.): *Reformation Europe: A Guide to Research*, Saint Louis 1982, pp. 361–381. See also Steven E. Ozment, *The Reformation in the Cities: The Appeal of Protestantism to Sixteenth-Century Germany and Switzerland*, New Haven 1975, pp. 151–164; and id., *Protestants: The Birth of a Revolution* New York 1992, pp. 89–117. On the role of church ordinances in the organization of the church and enforcement of moral discipline, see Martin Brecht, *Kirchenordnung und Kirchenzucht in Württemberg vom 16. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart 1967; Werner-Ulrich Deetjen, *Studien zur Württembergischen Kirchenordnung Herzog Ulrichs 1534–1550*, Stuttgart 1981; and James Martin Estes, *Christian Magistrate and State Church: The Reforming Career of Johannes Brenz*, Toronto 1982. For a discussion of the connection between church ordinances and confessionalization, see Heinz Schilling, *Religion, Political Culture, and the Emergence of Early Modern Society: Essays in German and Dutch History*, Leiden 1992. On church ordinances and patriarchalism, see Lyndal Roper, *The Holy Household: Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg*, Oxford 1989.

7. On the importance of postils in the spread of Christian theology to the laity, see John M. Frymire, *The Primacy of the Postils: Catholics, Protestants, and the Dissemination of Ideas in Early Modern Germany*, Leiden, Boston 2010, p. 34, who notes that secular officials could support the production and distribution of postils in their lands. Patrick T. Ferry, "Confessionalization and Popular Preaching: Sermons Against Synergism in Reformation Saxony," in Andrew Pettegree (ed.), *The Reformation: Critical Concepts in Historical Studies*, vol. 1, London, New York 2004

gelical pastors,[8] along with examinations of Protestant preaching[9] and the ongoing struggle of pastors to contend with a resurgent anticlericalism, especially in rural districts.[10] Insofar as this literature discusses pastoral care, it treats it as an example of social discipline that the laity largely rejected.

[Originally published in *Sixteenth Century Journal* 28:4 (1997), p. 213, similarly observes that the Saxon church ordinances and visitation ordinances required pastors to possess postils.

8. For three older studies on the social origins and education of Lutheran pastors, see Martin Brecht, "Herkunft und Ausbildung der protestantischen Geistlichen des Herzogtums Württemberg im 16. Jahrhundert," in: *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 80:4 (1969), pp. 163–175; Bernhard Klaus, "Soziale Herkunft und theologische Bildung lutherischer Pfarrer der reformatorischen Frühzeit," in: *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 80:4 (1969), pp. 22–49; and Susan C. Karant-Nunn, *Luther's Pastors: The Reformation in the Ernestine Countryside*, Philadelphia 1979, pp. 13–21. For recent studies of the education of Protestant pastors, see Thomas Kaufmann, *Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung: Die Rostocker Theologieprofessoren und ihr Beitrag zur theologischen Bildung und kirchlichen Gestaltung im Herzogtum Mecklenburg zwischen 1550 und 1675*, Gütersloh 1997; id., "The Clergy and the Theological Culture of the Age: The Education of Lutheran Pastors in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in C. Scott Dixon, Luise Schorn-Schütte (eds.): *The Protestant Clergy of Early Modern Europe*, Houndmills, Basingstoke 2003, pp. 120–136; R. Emmet McLaughlin, "The Making of the Protestant Pastor: The Theological Foundations of a Clerical Estate," in Dixon, Schorn-Schütte (eds.), p. 62; Peter Alan Dykema, "Conflicting Expectations: Parish Priests in Late Medieval Germany," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Arizona 1998; id., "Handbooks for Pastors: Late Medieval Manuals for Parish Priests and Conrad Porta's *Pastorale Lutheri* (1582)," in Robert J. Bast, Andrew C. Gow (eds.): *Continuity and Change: The Harvest of Late Medieval and Reformation History: Essays Presented to Heiko A. Oberman on His 70th Birthday*, Leiden 2000, pp. 143–62; Amy Nelson Burnett, *Teaching the Reformation: Ministers and Their Message in Basel, 1529–1629*, Oxford, 2006; Marcel Nieden, *Die Erfindung des Theologen: Wittenberger Anweisungen zum Theologiestudium im Zeitalter von Reformation und Konfessionalisierung*, Tübingen 2006; and Matthew P. Wranovix, "Parish Priests and Their Books: Reading, Writing, and Keeping Accounts in the Late Medieval Diocese of Eichstätt," Yale University Dissertation 2007. For recent studies of the social origins of Lutheran pastors, see Luise Schorn-Schütte, *Evangelische Geistlichkeit in der Frühneuzeit: deren Anteil an der Entfaltung frühmoderner Staatlichkeit und Gesellschaft; Dargestellt am Beispiel des Fürstentums Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, der Landgrafschaft Hessen-Kassel und der Stadt Braunschweig*, Gütersloh 1996; and id., "The Christian Clergy in the Early Modern Holy Roman Empire: A Comparative Study," in: *Sixteenth Century Journal* 29:3 (1998), pp. 717–731.

9. For a recent treatment of preaching in the Reformation, see Larissa Taylor (ed.), *Preachers and People in the Reformations and Early Modern Period*, Boston, Leiden 2003.

10. The study of lay resistance to Protestant Christianization efforts got its start among American Reformation scholars from Gerald Strauss's important work, *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation*, Baltimore, London 1978. For recent studies that focus on the opposition that the late medieval and early modern clergy experienced as they sought to minister to their flocks, especially in the countryside, see Hans-Christoph Rublack, "'Der wohlgeplagte Priester.' Vom Selbstverständnis lutherischer Geistlichkeit im Zeitalter der Orthodoxie," in: *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 16:1 (1989), pp. 1–30; id., "Success and Failure of the Reformation: Popular 'Apologies' from the Seventeenth and Eighteenth

It is clearly the case that the evangelical clergy experienced great difficulty in seeking to re-Christianize the common folk. But the scholarly fascination with social discipline has meant that relatively little attention has been given to the clergy's ministry of consolation.[11] The church ordinances are an ideal source for examining this topic. Similarly to priests in the later Middle Ages, it is likely that the evangelical clergy learned pastoral care through an informal apprentice system – there were no courses devoted to the *cura animarum* at the university level.[12]

Centuries," in Andrew C. Fix, Susan C. Karant-Nunn (eds.): *Germania Ilustrata: Essays on Early Modern Germany Presented to Gerald Strauss*, Kirksville 1992, pp. 141–165; Robert Scribner, "Pastoral Care and the Reformation in Germany," in James Kirk (ed.): *Humanism and Reform: Festschrift for James Cameron*, Oxford 1991, pp. 77–97; Euan Cameron, *The European Reformation*, Oxford 1991, pp. 411–416; Gerald Strauss, "Local Anticlericalism in Reformation Germany," in Peter A. Dykema, Heiko A. Oberman (eds.): *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Leiden 1993, pp. 625–637; Susan C. Karant-Nunn, "Neoclericalism and Anticlericalism in Saxony, 1555–1675," in: *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 24:4 (1994), pp. 615–637; Jay Goodale, "Pfarrer als Außenseiter: Landpfarrer und religiöses Leben in Sachsen zur Reformationszeit," in: *Historische Anthropologie* 7 (1999), pp. 191–211; id., "Pastors, Privation, and the Process of Reformation in Saxony," in: *Sixteenth Century Journal* 33:1 (2002), pp. 71–92; and C. Scott Dixon, "Rural resistance, the Lutheran pastor, and the territorial church in Brandenburg-Ansbach-Kulmbach, 1528–1603," in Andrew Pettegree (ed.): *The Reformation of the Parishes: The Ministry and the Reformation in Town and Country*, Manchester, New York 1993, pp. 85–112. For a study that takes a somewhat more optimistic view of the Lutheran clergy's ministry in rural areas, see Bruce Tolley, *Pastors and Parishioners in Württemberg During the Late Reformation, 1581–1621*, Stanford 1995. Tolley also discusses the social origins, education, and material conditions of the clergy.

11. There are older treatments of pastoral consolation in the Reformation period, but very little that is recent, aside from studies of Luther. On Luther see the following: Ute Mennecke-Haustein, *Luthers Trostbriefe*, Gütersloh 1989; Neil R. Leroux, *Martin Luther as Comforter: Writings on Death*, Leiden, Boston 2007; and Dennis Ngien, *Luther as Spiritual Adviser: The Interface of Theology and Piety in the Luther's Devotional Writings*, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, Waynesboro 2007. Aside from my *Reformation of Suffering*, the only recent examination of consolation in the Reformation with which I am familiar is Susan Karant-Nunn's *The Reformation of Feeling: Shaping the Religious Emotions in Early Modern Germany*, Oxford, New York 2010. The most important older works are August Hardeland, *Geschichte der Speciellen Seelsorge in der Vorreformatorischen Kirchen und der Kirchen der Reformation*, Berlin 1897–8; and Paul Althaus, *Zur Charakteristik der evangelischen Gebetsliteratur im Reformationsjahrhundert*, Leipzig 1914. This work was later included in Althaus's *Forschungen zur evangelischen Gebetsliteratur*, Hildesheim 1966.

12. I know of no scholarly work on the role of apprenticeships in the formation of evangelical pastors, although the importance of such practical training has been noted for the lower clergy on the eve of the Reformation. See R. Emmet McLaughlin, "The Making of the Protestant Pastor: The Theological Foundations of a Clerical Estate," in Dixon, Schorn-Schütte (eds.), *Protestant Clergy* (n. 8), p. 62; and Dykema, "Handbooks" (see n. 8), p. 151. Ernst Riegg, *Konfliktbereitschaft und Mobilität. Die protestantischen Geistlichen zwölf süddeutscher Reichsstädte*

Beyond this, recent scholarship has emphasized – perhaps overemphasized – the lack of formal theological education among a significant percentage of evangelical pastors well into the late sixteenth century.[13] It is therefore reasonable to assume that the clergy looked to the church ordinances as a primary source of guidance when they sought to minister to parishioners who suffered in body or soul. At

zwischen Passauer Vertrag und Restitutionsedikt, Leinfelden 2002, p. 47, provides a very brief discussion of the persistence of the apprenticeship model in the Reformation period.

13. Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia and Euan Cameron have suggested that the evangelical clergy was quickly transformed into a highly educated elite. See R. Po-Chia Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe 1550–1750*, London, New York 1989, p. 15; and Cameron, *The European Reformation* (see n. 10), p. 393. More recent scholarship maintains that this change took place rather slowly. Dixon and Schorn-Schütte argue in the introduction to *Protestant Clergy* (see n. 8), p. 23: "Well into the early decades of the seventeenth century, the general level of learning among Protestant pastors consistently remained much lower than has previously been assumed." Kaufmann makes the same case in his article, "The Clergy and the Theological Culture" (see n. 8), p. 125, maintaining, "Even in the closing decades of the sixteenth century numerous examples can be found of Lutheran pastors who became preachers without ever having attended a university." Elsewhere, Schorn-Schütte, "The Christian Clergy" (see n. 8), pp. 722–723, 731, argues that owing to educational reforms in the 1580s, some 80 per cent of the evangelical clergymen in Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel attended university between 1585 and 1630. However, this did not mean that they earned a degree and only a small number completed an advanced course of theological studies. Karant-Nunn, "Neoclericalism" (see n. 10), pp. 626–627, has argued that by 1575 one half of the Saxon clergy had attended an institution of higher learning, usually the University of Wittenberg. She further maintains that by 1617 "virtually every pastor had spent several years in advanced study." Karant-Nunn does not specify how much formal theological study was included in this higher training. Karant-Nunn, *Reformation of Feeling* (see n. 11), p. 75, has recently restated her argument that higher training for the majority of Lutheran clergy emerged only in the early seventeenth century. Against the recent scholarly emphasis on the lack of theological training among evangelical pastors it should be stressed that theology was certainly present in the general arts curriculum of universities, as well as in the curriculum of the Latin schools that the majority of future pastors attended. (See Riegg, *Konfliktbereitschaft und Mobilität* [n. 12], pp. 45, 54–5, 323.) Beyond this, future pastors could also receive theological training in the residential colleges where many lived as stipend holders. On the stipendiary system in Tübingen, see Charlotte Methuen, "Securing the Reformation through Education: The Duke's Scholarship System of Sixteenth Century Württemberg," in: *Sixteenth Century Journal* 25 (1994), pp. 841–851; on Hesse, Walter Heinemeyer, "'Pro studiosis pauperibus.' Die Anfänge des reformatorischen Stipendiatenwesens in Hessen," in id. (ed.): *Studium und Stipendium. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des hessischen Stipendiatenwesens*, Marburg 1977, pp. 77–100; on Heidelberg, Eike Wolgast, "Das Collegium Sapientiae in Heidelberg im 16. Jahrhundert," in: *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* 147 (1999), pp. 303–318. I am grateful to Amy Nelson Burnett for drawing my attention to these sources on the availability of theological education for future pastors who either did not attend university or who did not proceed to formal theological study after having completed bachelor level courses in an arts faculty.

least this is what the framers of the church ordinances hoped, as did the temporal rulers who required local pastors to possess and follow them.

One of the most striking things about the treatment of pastoral care in the evangelical church ordinances is that in comparison with late medieval pastoralia the Protestant literature has a great deal to say about suffering. Popular late medieval aids for pastoral care such as Guido de Monte Rocherii's Curates' Handbook *(Manipulus Curatorum)* (1483), the anonymous Summa for Simple Priests *(Summa rudium)* (1487), and Johannes Auerbach's Curates' Guide *(Directorium curatorum)* (compiled ca. 1420, printed 1469) mention suffering only in passing and instead focus on the teaching of basic doctrine and the proper administration of the sacraments.[14] The decision of Protestant church ordinance authors to give the topic of suffering so much attention constitutes an important new development in the pastoral care literature of Western Christendom. The regular inclusion of specific treatments of suffering in a pastoral care literature that the common clergy was required by law to possess was an invention of the Protestant Reformation.[15] Why this new development?

In the first place, this development is indicative of a change in Latin Christendom regarding what was expected of the clergy and the pastoral care they provided. This change predated the Protestant Reformation and also received further encouragement from it. Owing in large part to the duty of hearing and responding to annual private confessions, and to the increasing demand of burghers for good sermons, at least a portion of late medieval parish priests were required by both the church and the (urban) laity to offer a ministry of verbal consolation to their flocks. The traditional ministry of ritual consolation, while still important, no longer sufficed, especially in the towns and cities. Those entrusted with the care of souls needed to be able to console laypeople with words, as well as with sacraments and sacramentals.[16] The evangelical church ordinances reflected these expectations and also increased them, now applying them to a new situation: the common clergy's ministry to suffering Christians. The evangelical pastor had to know what to say to a parishioner who suffered in body or soul; simply administering the Eucharist to him was no longer adequate, although it still figured prominently in Lutheran ministry to the sick and the suffering, as did private absolu-

14. For a discussion of these sources see my *Reformation of Suffering*, ch. 1.

15. This is not to say that the topic of suffering is completely neglected in the late medieval literature on pastoral care. Works that deal with the Sacrament of Penance could contain separate treatments of suffering. For example, see the discussion of Bruder Berthold's *Rechtssumme* in *Reformation of Suffering*, ch. 1. But the fact remains that none of the most important general treatments of pastoral care in late medieval Germany contain similar discussions of suffering.

16. See Rittgers, *Reformation of Suffering*, ch. 1.

tion. More was expected of pastors in the church ordinances, even more than was required of late medieval priests. One sees these heightened expectations very clearly in the church ordinances.

The inclusion of specific treatments of suffering in the evangelical church ordinances may also be attributed to the framers' desire to combat approaches to misfortune that they viewed as pagan. The attempt to reform popular attitudes toward suffering was part of a larger effort to re-Christianize Europe along lines that were more identifiably biblical, at least according to evangelical lights. The authors of the church ordinances believed that if they could change the way people dealt with suffering, they would have gone a long way toward making Europe more Christian.

There was nothing new about this endeavor. The effort to curtail recourse to non-Christian means of coping with suffering reached back centuries. The assault on superstition was clearly not a uniquely Protestant concern.[17] However, evangelical reformers expanded this assault to include much of Catholic piety (e. g. invocation of saints, recourse to relics, use of various sacramentals, etc.), which they saw as similarly pagan in origin. The framers of the church ordinances viewed the pastoral care of the sick and suffering as a prime opportunity to root out a whole host of pagan and quasi-pagan beliefs and practices that they believed had flourished in Christendom for some time. Pastoral care of the suffering presented an excellent opportunity to evangelize and catechize the common folk, whom the reformers considered to be nominally Christian at best. Therefore, the authors of the church ordinances thought it was extremely important to provide the new evangelical clergy with a clear statement of the (magisterial) Protestant approach to suffering that they could readily employ in the care of suffering souls. The need for such instruction was acute, because evangelical reformers sought to deprive the laity of many of the means they had traditionally used to understand and cope with suffering – and yet suffering remained, of course. The reformers needed to provided some satisfying evangelical *ersatz* if their movement was to make any headway at all with the laity. Thus, a great deal was at stake in this unprecedented effort to reform attitudes toward suffering, from the evangelical point of view, the very future of the Protestant Reformation itself.

17. See Ernst Walter Zeeden, *Katholische Überlieferungen in den Lutherischen Kirchenordnungen des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Münster 1959, pp. 83–86.

MINISTRY TO THE SICK AND DYING

The framers' comments on suffering are sprinkled throughout the church ordinances, but are especially concentrated in two places: the sections on ministering to the sick and dying, and the stand-alone sections devoted specifically to the theme of adversity.[18] The vast majority of church ordinances contain the former while fewer include the latter.[19] Many of the sections on ministry to the sick and dying are rather brief, simply exhorting pastors to fulfill their obligation to visit the infirm,[20] and then calling upon them to explain the evangelical view of suffering to their flocks, which included instructions on how to confess, absolve, and communicate sick people. But other sections are more detailed and provide pastors with specific instructions about ministering to members of their flocks who suffer in body or soul. As Claudia Resch has shown, these more detailed sections had an important "normativizing" influence on the pastoral care of the sick and suffering in the Protestant Reformation. They drew upon earlier works of consolation and established official expectations for what the evangelical *cura animarum* was supposed to entail. As Resch also notes, these expectations varied little from church ordinance to church ordinance.[21]

18. For an older treatment of the sections of the evangelical church ordinances that deal with ministry to the sick, see Hardeland (see n. 11), pp. 326–337. For a more recent treatment, see Claudia Resch, *Trost im Angesicht des Todes. Frühe reformatorische Anleitungen zur Seelsorge an Kranken und Sterbenden*, Tübingen, Basel 2006, pp. 132–136.

19. Resch (see n. 18), p. 134, asserts, "Dem Besuchen und Trösten von Kranken- und Sterbenden wird in nahezu jeder Kirchenordnung ein Sonderkapitel zugestanden."

20. One frequently encounters the expectation in the church ordinances that evangelical pastors must fulfill their obligation to visit and console the sick, the clear implication being that their late medieval predecessors had been lax in this duty, a problem that apparently persisted into the Reformation period. Both the 1544/45 Calenberg-Göttingen Synodal Constitutions and the 1570 Livland Church Ordinance depict the visitation of the sick as a special opportunity to minister to Christ Himself (Matt. 25: 35–36). Sehling (see n. 5), 6, p. 875a, and ibid., 5, p. 102a. The 1581 Hoya Church Ordinance contains the following exhortation: "Die pastoren sollen dieser ursach halben insonderheit fleissig bey der hand und daheim sein, auf das sie ihren zuhören in ihren krankheiten tröstlich sein mögen, und wenn sie von denjenigen, so sie für Christen halten, gefordinancet werden, sollen sie nicht lange seumen noch sich bey dem trunk finden lassen oder ungedültig sein, das man sie von der guten gesellschaft abfordinancet. Sollen auch sich in bier- und weinkeller nicht suchen und durch ihr eigen gescheft aufhalten und verhindern lassen, sondern verrichten mit lust und willen ihre ampt und eilen nach dem kranken und trostbedürftigen Christen" (Sehling [n. 5], 6, I, 2, p. 1164a). Resch (see n. 18), p. 135, notes that the church ordinances insist time and again that evangelical pastors must visit the sick and the dying not just once, but on an ongoing basis until they either recover or pass away.

21. Resch (see n. 18), pp. 133–34.

Among the more noteworthy treatments of ministry to the sick and dying is the section entitled "How one should advise and console sick people" (*Wie man kranke leute berichten und trösten sol*) in the 1539 Church Ordinance of Duke Heinrich of Saxony,[22] which was authored by the Wittenberg reformers Justus Jonas and Caspar Crucinger.[23] This section was adopted in full or in part by several other important church ordinances, thus making it one of the most influential treatments of the topic in the church ordinance literature.[24] The section opens by instructing pastors to say the following to a sick person: "Dear friend, because our Lord God has visited you with weakness of your body, you should know [several things] so that you may surrender it to God's will. First, that such illness of our bodies is sent to us by God the Lord for no other reason than sin alone, and that original sin, which we have inherited from Adam, brings with it death and all that belongs to the dominion of death, like bodily infirmity, illness, misery, distress, etc. If we had remained without sin, death would not have been able to do anything to us, much less any kind of illness."[25]

After establishing the basic point that bodily suffering is a punishment from God for original sin and its fruit, the church ordinance goes on to say that Christians need not despair because the gospel teaches that "Christ, God's Son, makes us free and loose from sin, if we believe in His promise." Pastors are to tell sick

22. Sehling (see n. 5), 1, I, pp. 269b-270b.

23. Sehling (see n. 5), 1, I, p. 91.

24. See the 1540 Brandenburg Church Ordinance (ibid., 3, pp. 74b-75b), the 1542 Pommern Church Ordinance (ibid., 1, I, pp. 362a-365a), the 1552 Mecklenburg Church Ordinance (ibid., 5, pp. 208a-209b), the 1556 Kurpfalz Church Ordinance (ibid., 14, pp. 170a-171a), the 1566 Hessen Church Ordinance (ibid., 8, pp. 326a-327b), and the 1580 Herr August, Duke of Saxony Church Ordinance (ibid., 1, I, pp. 370a).

25. "Lieber freund, weil euch unser herr gott mit schwacheit eurs leibs heimgesucht, damit ir es gottes willen heimstellet, solt ir wissen. Zum ersten, das solche unsers leibes krankheit uns von gott dem herrn umb keiner ander ursachen, denn allein umb der sünden willen zugeschickt wird, und das die erbsünde, welche von Adam auf uns geerbet, den tod und alles was in des todes reich gehört, als gebrechen, krankheit, elend, jamer etc. mit sich bringet, denn wo wir on sünde blieben, so hette auch der tod, viel weniger anderlei krankheit, an uns nichts schaffen mögen." Ibid., 1, I, p. 269b. This is a difficult passage to translate accurately, as the relationship between *sünden* and *erbsünde* is not entirely clear. Similarly, the precise referent for the final subjunctive clause is also unclear – does it refer to original or actual sin? I have taken *sünden* to refer to actual sin(s) and the final clause to refer to original sin. Therefore I have rendered the last two lines in the pluperfect tense because the reference appears to be to the sin of Adam in the Garden of Eden. I do not believe the authors intended to say that death would have no dominion over Christians if they could remain without sin at the present time, although this reading is more literal than the one for which I have opted. This simply does not make theological sense given that death is the result of original sin in the minds of Jonas and Cruciger.

people that liberation from sin occurs in two ways: Christ purifies human hearts and consciences through the gospel and sacraments, and then the purification of fallen human nature takes place. The ordinance clearly states that the sin in human nature must be "destroyed" and Christians must finally be perfected in godly righteousness and purity so they may live with God eternally.[26] God accomplishes this gradual process of cleansing by sending sickness and death. God does this not out of wrath, as if He wished to destroy Christians, but "out of great grace, because He wishes to move us in this life to true repentance and faith, and ultimately to set us free from all the sin in which we are still stuck, and from all misfortune, both bodily and spiritual."[27] The ordinance then cites two passages from Scripture to underscore this latter point: I Corinthians 11 [:32] ("If we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we will not be damned with this world") and Romans 8 [:28 and 35] ("All things must serve the best for those who love God. [...] Nothing can separate them from the love of God in Christ Jesus, be it fire, sword, hunger, death, or life.").

The church ordinance goes on to stress that because of the death and resurrection of Christ, the sick Christian may be absolutely certain that all of his sins have been completely removed and eternally destroyed by Christ. This means that "before the face of God there exists no reason for wrath or damnation for believers, rather, only grace, consolation, life, and salvation, because our dear Lord God now sees you not as an evil, damned sinner who was born from Adam, but as a completely justified and holy beloved child in Christ." The source of the believer's confidence in this new life before God is the knowledge that Christ bore his sins and endured God's wrath on account of them by dying on the cross. The suffering believer is thus to console himself with such grace and know that sin, judgment, death, and hell have nothing more to do with him, because Christ, the Lamb of God, carries them (John 1 [:29]) and has overcome and eternally destroyed them in Himself. Therefore, the Christian may confidently commend himself to God,

26. "Zum andern, wenn aber unsere gewissen der gestalt von sünden gereiniget, und mit gott dem vater durch den glauben versünet sein, mus auch die sünde aus unser natur und wesen ausgefeget und vertilget, und wir endlich von allen sünden gereiniget, und in göttlicher gerechtigkeit und reinigkeit volkomen werden, damit wir mit gott ewig leben sollen." Ibid., 1, I, p. 270a.

27. "(...) so schicket uns unser lieber herr gott krankheit, ja auch den tod zu, nicht der meinung, das er mit uns zörne, und uns verderben wolt, sondern aus grossen gnaden, das er uns in diesem leben zu warer busse und glauben treiben, und endlich aus der sünden, darin wir noch stecken, und aus allem unglück, beide leiblich und geistlich, frei machen will (...)." Ibid., 1, I, p. 270a.

his heavenly Father, provided he believes the good news.[28] Following this instruction in the care of suffering souls, which includes private absolution, the church ordinance provides a brief form for communicating the sick person.

One can see in these instructions on the pastoral care of the sick several of the key themes in the evangelical approach to suffering, especially the importance of justification by faith and its assault on the connection between suffering and salvation that was so important in late medieval penitential theology.[29] The goal of the church ordinances was to explain these themes in a way that made sense to simple pastors. One can also see in these instructions much that was already present in traditional Christianity. A good deal of what Jonas and Crucinger had to say echoed themes already well established in the medieval Christian consolation literature:[30] the sovereignty of God over sickness and suffering; the connection between sin and misfortune; the connection between spiritual health and physical health; the salutary aspects of divinely imposed suffering, including the purification of sinful human nature; the belief that suffering was a divine gift that the Christian was to receive humbly and gratefully; and the recourse to private confession and the Eucharist as sources of consolation in the face of sickness and impending death. Other evangelical church ordinances drew on

28. "Zum vierden, weil nu dem also, und du aus dem heilgen evangelio durch den mund des sons gottes unsers herrn Jesu Christi gepredigt, und mit seinem tod und auferstehung bezeuget, des aufs allergewissest und sicherst bist, das alle deinen sünde von dir auf Christum, ja nu auch von Christo ganz und gar hinweg gethan und ewig vertilget sein, und also gar fur gottes angesicht kein ursach des zorns und verdamnis uber die gleubigen furhanden, sondern eitel gnade, trost, leben und seligkeit, sintemal unser lieber herr gott dich nu in seinen augen hat, nicht als ein bösen verdampten sünder von Adam geborn, sonder als ein ganz gerechtes und heiligens liebes kind in Christo, in welches gerechtigkeit und leben du so gewislich leben und selig sein solt (so fern du es gleubest) ewiglich, als gewis und warhaftig er, nicht in seinen eigenen, sondern in deinen sünden gottes zorn getragen und gestorben ist, so sihe, und tröste dich solcher gnaden, und wisse, das die sünde, gottes gericht, der tod und helle, gar nichts mehr mit dir zu schaffen haben, sondern Christus das einig lamb gottes tregt sie, Johan. 1, der sie auf sich genomen, und nicht allein auf sich genomen, sondern auch durch sich selbs uberwunden und ewig getilget hat, derhalb du durch und in dem selbigen deinem herrn Jesu Christo aller gnaden, trosts, heils und seligkeit, zu gott dem vater versehen, und in solcher tröstlicher zuversicht in seinen genedigen veterlichen willen dich ergeben solt, und sagen, der herr ist mein licht, fur wem solt ich mich fürchten? Mein vater im himel, sein wille geschehe, in deine hende befelhe ich meinen geist." Ibid., 1, I, pp. 269b-270b.

29. For a discussion of the connection between suffering and salvation in late medieval penitential theology, see Rittgers, *Reformation of Suffering*, ch. 1.

30. For a general introduction to Christian consolation literature see Günter Stemberger, Eike Kohler, "Trost," in: *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, vol. 34, pp. 143–53, and Kristian Bosselmann-Cyran, "Trostbücher," in: *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. 8, cols. 1048–51. See also Rittgers, *Reformation of Suffering*, ch. 2.

similarly traditional themes in their instructions to pastors on ministering to the sick and suffering.

But the authors of the church ordinances did not always mean the same thing as their late medieval forbears when they employed these and other traditional themes. For example, when the framers counseled private confession, they did not have the Sacrament of Penance in mind, but the new evangelical version of the practice that Luther valued so highly.[31] Evangelical private confession (Beichte) did not require the traditional enumeration of sins and performance of assigned penances – there were no penances of any kind in the new rite, including divinely imposed suffering. Nor was there the traditional concern with assessing degrees of contrition for sin. In the new evangelical rite an examination of the confessant's knowledge of the Protestant faith (*Glaubensverhör*) took the place of the examination of conscience, which now fell largely to confessants to undertake on their own. Once confessants had acknowledged their general sinfulness, they were free to confess or not confess whatever specific sins they had committed. If they felt they needed help from their pastor in believing that God forgave them a specific sin, they were to mention it, but if they did not require this help, the confession of general sinfulness would suffice. The emphasis of the rite was on instruction, absolution, and consolation. Confessors set before confessants the divine promises of forgiveness found in Scripture, which confessants were to receive by faith. Like the Sacrament of Penance, evangelical private confession (eventually) became a mandatory prerequisite to participating in the Lord's Supper. However, its status as a sacrament remained undecided throughout the Reformation period.

This version of private confession was a regular part of the ministry to the sick and dying enjoined by evangelical church ordinances, at least those that looked primarily to Wittenberg for inspiration. This provision marks an important difference not only between Lutheran and Catholic *cura animarum*, but also between Lutheran and Reformed pastoral care. While church ordinances from sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Basel allow private confession on a voluntary basis,[32] most Reformed church ordinances in German-speaking Europe

31. On the the plight of private confession in the German Reformation, see Ronald K. Rittgers, *Reformation of the Keys: Confession, Conscience, and Authority in Sixteenth-Century Germany*, Cambridge, Mass. 2004.

32. See Nelson Burnett, *Teaching the Reformation* (see n. 8), pp. 51, 246. See also the *Catechismus, Oder Kurtzer Underricht Christlicher Lehr wie der in Kirchen unnd Schulen der Statt Basel getrieben wirdt: Sampt der confession und Kirchen Ceremonien*, Basel 1602, which contains provisions for voluntary private confession and absolution of the sick and dying. This source may be found in the Staatsarchiv Basel-Stadt, Signatur: Bibliothek Bf 1 (Bd. 2 der Mandatsammlung),

do not. (There is a similar concern to restrict use of the Lord's Supper for fear of a return to the alleged superstitions and abuses of the old faith.) For example, church ordinances from the Electoral Palatinate that were commissioned by the Lutheran ruler Otto Heinrich contain private confession in their treatments of ministry to the sick and dying,[33] while ordinances that appeared in the early 1560s under Otto Heinrich's successor, Friedrich III, a staunch Calvinist who sought to turn the Electoral Palatinate to the Reformed faith, make no mention of the practice.[34] Similarly to Lutheran ordinances, the Calvinist guide for worship and belief states that illness and impending death frequently tempt Christians to despair of God's goodness, and that it is therefore important to console such troubled souls with evangelical soteriology. But in the Reformed ordinance the sick and the suffering are to grasp the divine promises of God's goodness and grace by faith without the distraction (and assistance) of human rites like private absolution. Clerical and lay consolers are to offer the sick and dying solace from Scripture and the Heidelberg Catechism, but no one is authorized to declare to them that their sins are forgiven and no one may offer them tangible confirmation of divine mercy in bread and wine. At least in the ministry of consolation, the Reformed God was believed to work apart from such creaturely means.

Another church ordinance that contained an important treatment of the clergy's ministry to the sick and the dying was the 1540 Brandenburg Church Ordinance. Its principal author was Jacob Stratner, who was the court preacher in Berlin. The ordinance was sent to Wittenberg for comment, where Luther, Melanchthon, and Jonas approved its contents.[35] The Brandenburg ordinance adopted Jonas and Cruciger's section on ministry to the sick and dying, and added to it a rather lengthy discussion of how pastors should prepare their parishioners

"Ceremonien" von 1602, pp. 127, 130. I am grateful to Dr. Philipp Wälchli for sharing an electronic version of the relevant sections from this source with me. Church ordinances from Zürich do not include Confession and Communion. See "Bewilligung und confirmation eines BM. und ersamen kleinen und grossen R. der stadt Zürich über die restitution und verbesserung etlicher mängeln und missbrüchen, so sich bi den dienern des wort Gottes zuogetragen (...) (1532), in Emil Egli (ed.), *Aktensammlung zur Geschichte der Zürcher Reformation in den Jahren 1519–1533*, Nieuwkoop 1973, Nr. 1899, p. 832, items 13 and 14. I am grateful to Dr. Philipp Wälchli for drawing my attention to this source.

33. See Otto Heinrich's 1547 Kirchenordnung in Sehling (see n. 5), 14, p. 110b. See also the 1556 Kurpfalz Church Ordinance in ibid, 14, pp. 139b-140b.

34. See the section entitled *Von besuchung der krancken* in the 1563 Kurpfalz Church Ordinance in ibid., 14, pp. 401a-404a. It does not mention private confession or the Lord's Supper. However, Sehling notes that a 1563 synod allowed both on a voluntary basis. See ibid., 14, pp. 46–47.

35. Ibid., 3, p. 6.

to deal with times of adversity. Drawing on a familiar theme in late medieval *ars moriendi* literature (which sections like this one were trying to supplant), the ordinance urges pastors to remind the laity of the uncertainty of the hour of death and the ferocity of the Adversary. Christians must prepare themselves in times of health and peace lest they be overcome in times of adversity and assault. But their preparation takes on a uniquely evangelical character. Christians are to be outfitted with "spiritual weapons," namely, the Word, and especially the consoling sayings from Scripture that speak of the grace of Christ. Christians are to close up such sayings in their hearts, think of them frequently, and then turn to them for comfort and strength in their hour of need. Believers are also to participate regularly in private confession and the Lord's Supper.[36] According to Stratner, to postpone such godly preparation for suffering is to risk eternal loss, for the lessons of the law and the gospel cannot be quickly learned at death's door, and even require considerable effort for the committed Christian and pastor to master.[37]

This preparation also helped lay people minister to each other, a theme that recurs in the church ordinance literature.[38] Although the authors of the ordinances were engaged in an effort to provide well-trained clergy for Protestant churches, they realized that the clergy would never be able to respond to every pastoral need; therefore they regularly made provisions for lay people to console the sick and dying when necessary. In fact, some church ordinances specifically charge pastors with training laypeople for such situations.[39] Stratner includes an interesting and somewhat unusual provision along these lines in his 1540 ordinance. In the absence of a pastor he authorizes lay people to recite of the words of eucharistic institution, although they are not to consecrate and administer Communion. The sick person is to feed on the Word by faith and thus enjoy the Lord's Supper spiritually (*geistlich geniessen*).[40]

Stratner's ordinance explicitly promotes the evangelical re-Christianization campaign, seeking to abolish alleged popish idolatry. It prohibits monks from

36. Ibid., 3, p. 76a.

37. "Da nu das volk mit solchem fleiss teglich zur letzten sund [sic] bereitet wird, ist es soviel leichter durch göttliche gnade, wenn die anfechtung und letzte zeit hergehet mit inen zu handeln, wiewol es allweg mühe und arbeit erfordert und nachlessigkeit und schedliche sicherheit zu vermeiden." Ibid., 3, p. 76b.

38. This emphasis on lay ministry may also be found in the late medieval *ars moriendi* literature. See Resch (n. 18), pp. 42–44.

39. See "Kirchenordnung des Noppus" (Regensburg 1543), in Sehling (n. 5), 13, III, p. 410a; "Kaspar Löners Kirchenordnung" (Nördlingen 1544) in ibid., 12, II, p. 315b; and the "Herzogtum Pfalz-Neuburg Generalartikel von 1576" in ibid., 13, III, p. 196a.

40. Ibid., 3, p. 77b.

tending to the sick, lest they "lead the people away from Christ and to their superstition," and thus deliver them to the devil.[41] The ordinance also reveals something of the spirit in which evangelical pastors were to carry out this campaign with their suffering parishioners. The Berlin preacher writes that when a pastor attends a Christian who is suffering in body and who is deficient in faith, he is not to approach him and those gathered around him with an obstinate spirit (*stürrigem gemüte*), as some clergymen do. As Stratner puts it, "this is not the time to frighten, but to console" *(denn da ist nicht die zeit des schreckens, sondern trösstens).*[42] To be sure, the pastor must not overlook sin, and should remind the suffering Christian of how seriously God takes human transgression. But this is only to prepare the way for grace and thus to ensure that the person does not die in doubt.

Nuremberg's well-known preacher, Veit Dietrich, also provided an important treatment of pastoral care for the sick and dying in his church ordinance, the influential 1543 "Liturgy Booklet for Pastors in the Countryside" *(Agend-Büchlein für die Pfarrherrn auff dem Land).*[43] Dietrich had especially close ties to Luther, having served as his personal secretary in Wittenberg. Dietrich lived in Luther's home, the former Black Cloister, and provided early transcriptions of the Table Talk *(Tischreden)*, as well as an edition of Luther's Hauspostille after moving to Nuremberg. As is true of the Saxon and Brandenburg ordinances, Dietrich's section on ministering to the sick includes many traditional elements, including the belief that suffering comes from God as a punishment for sin, and that spiritual health affects bodily health. He states that the only way to achieve lasting well-being, both in this life and the next, is to deal with sin. Dietrich reveals a sterner side of the evangelical approach to suffering when he urges pastors to press sick people to confess their sinfulness – though not their specific sins – to them. The pastor is to say, "What do you answer me? Do you acknowledge that you are a poor sinner and have spent your days in both intending and doing much evil against God, His Word, and your own conscience? Does this cause you sorrow in your heart so that you wish you had not done it, and that if God should grant you further life do you resolve not to do it any longer, but to follow God's Word and will more dutifully?"[44] Here the sick person is simply to answer, "Ja." The discussion of consolation then follows.

41. Ibid., 3, p. 77a.
42. Ibid., 3, p. 77a.
43. For a brief treatment of this work see Resch (n. 18), pp. 191–96.
44. "Was antwortest du mir? Bekennest du dich, du seiest ein armer sünder und habst deine lebtag wider Gott und sein wort und dein eigen gewissen vil böses tun und zu tun im sinn gehabt? Ist dir solches auch von herzen leid, das du woltest, du hettest es nit tun, und gedenkst es auch, wo Gott dir das leben weiter gönnet, nit mer zu tun, sonder dich fleißiger nach Gottes wort und willen zu halten?" Sehling (see n. 5), 11, p. 509a.

The pastor is to comfort the sick sinner with the gospel, assuring him that he has a merciful God who has sent His Son to die for his sins. Provided the sick person professes faith in this good news, the ordinance instructs the pastor to absolve him in the name of the triune God. The sinner can now be certain of forgiveness and eternal life, and may surrender himself to the hands of God, trusting His divine will, come what may. As we saw in Jonas and Cruciger's ordinance, sickness and death have now taken on new meaning. As Dietrich explains, "if sickness and death follow, they are no longer a sickness owing to sin (*sündekrankheit*) or a death resulting from wrath (*zorntod*), rather, everything is together an encouragement for us to come to that end that Christ merited for us with His suffering and death, that is, eternal life."[45] The pastor is to explain to the sick Christian that God has desired to help His children become surer of these promises by confirming them in Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The administration of the latter immediately follows in both kinds, and Dietrich uses this occasion to lambaste the papists for depriving sick people of the cup of Christ's blood, something he sees as essential to consolation, as well as to the church's obedience to its Lord.

As in Jonas and Cruciger's ordinance, Dietrich avoids the traditional argument that Christians can receive remission of the penalty of sin through the patient endurance of suffering and thus merit heaven. Christ alone provides access to heaven through His work on the cross, the benefits of which are to be received through faith – considerations of human merit, including the acquiring of divine merit through good works, have no place in Dietrich's ordinance. The Nuremberg preacher maintains that God uses suffering to move the Christian to daily repentance, prayer, and faith, so that he does not become entrapped in the devil's snare and fall away from salvation.[46] This suffering does not earn heaven, but keeps the Christian on the path toward heaven, and is finally richly rewarded once

45. "denn obschon die krankheit anhelt und der todt folget, so ist es doch ferner nit mer ein sündekrankheit noch zorntod, sonder es ist alles miteinander ein fürdering, das wir zu dem kommen, welchs uns Christus mit seim leiden und sterben verdient hat, das ist zum ewigen leben." Ibid., 11, pp. 509b-510a.
46. "Nit darumb, als solt solche krankheit, leiden oder gedult den himel verdienen. Nein! Solches hat allein Christus mit seim sterben ausgerichtet. Sonder das es Gottes gnediger wil und seliger rat also ist, das er auf solche weis uns richten wil, die wir sonst in sünden one buß fortfarn und von tag zu tag je lenger je tiefer in des Teufels netze uns verwickelen und je lenger je weiter von der seligkeit weg würden kommen. Solchem unrat wehret Gott, das er durch die krankheit von sünden uns abhelt und zum gebet und dem wort so gnediglich reizet." Ibid., 11, pp. 513a-513b.

the Christian reaches heaven.[47] Suffering and even death are thus to be seen simply as the means through which the Christian is set free from his sinful body and prepared for eternal life and joy. Armed with the knowledge that suffering produces many good things in the Christian's life, and that its ultimate cause, sin, has been removed in Christ, the Christian is to receive it obediently and even thankfully.

As the framers of the church ordinances sought to encourage this obedience and gratitude, they paid special attention to the internal struggles of conscience that could attend afflictions of the body. The ordinances frequently observe that physical illness can provide occasion for one to dwell on themes of sin, death, and damnation, and thus pose a challenge to one's faith in the goodness, power, and mercy of God. As a matter of highest priority, pastors are instructed to ask sick people if, in addition to their physical maladies, they are suffering from doubt or despair. Johannes Brenz observes in his 1543 Church Ordinance for Schwäbisch Hall, "although bodily illness is not always fatal and many recover from illness through God's grace, nevertheless, because of sin, sickness has a such a nature that it burdens not only the body, but also the soul, and drives into the conscience the fear of death and eternal damnation."[48] The 1569 Braunschweig and Lüneburg Church Ordinance, authored by Jacob Andreae and Martin Chemnitz, similarly instructs pastors to "console the sick not only against the pains and weakness of the flesh, but also against all manner of internal assaults of the heart. These two pieces are both necessary when ministering to the sick, so that they may learn to expect good from God and thereby be moved to peace and patience more easily."[49]

47. "Denn weil wir christen sind, und durch den glauben an Christum vergebung der sünden haben, da gewinnet es mit unser krankheit und andern anfechtungen durch solchen glauben ein andere meinung. Nemlich: das sie Gott nit allein halten wil als straf der sünden, dadurch wir zur buß gefordert werden, sonder auch als einen gehorsam und ein rechtes, gutes, wolgefelliges werk und opfer. Darumb redet Paulus hie [Rom. 8: 18 and 2 Cor. 4: 14f.] also davon, das solches gutes werk sein belonung in jenem leben werde haben und wir an jenem tag selb sagen werden, Gott habe uns zu vil reichlich ergezet alles jamers und hartsal, den wir auf erden gelitten und getragen haben." Ibid., 11, p. 513b.

48. "Wiewol die leiblich kranckheit nicht alweg tödtlich ist, und vil aus der kranckheit, durch Gottes gnad widerumb gnesen, yedoch, hat die kranckheit von wegen der sünd, ein solche natur, das sie nicht allein den leib, sonder auch die seel, beschweret, und jagt in das gwissen, die forcht deß todts und ewigen verdamnus." Richter (see n. 5), vol. II, pp. 20b-21a.

49. "Zum andern die kranken auch nicht allein gegen die schmerzen und schwacheit des leibs, sonder auch allerley inwendige anfechtung des herzen trösten; denn die zwey stück sein beiderley nötig bey kranken leuten, damit sie sich in ihrer krankheit guts zu Gott versehen lernen und desto besser zu friede und gedult begeben mögen." Sehling (see n. 5), 6, I, 1, p. 170a.

In such comments one clearly sees the ultimate concern of Lutheran pastoral care: to provide relief to troubled consciences. This concern was not unique to the Protestant Reformation; the late medieval clergy shared it as well, as may be clearly seen in the literature on sacramental confession. In fact, there are direct parallels between the instructions given to late medieval confessors and those provided to evangelical pastors in the church ordinances. One striking feature of the sections on ministering to the sick and dying is how they employ language and images from late medieval confession manuals to instruct evangelical clergy in the care of suffering souls. The church ordinances can exhort evangelical pastors to immerse themselves in the Scriptures so they can be like "an understanding doctor" who knows how to apply the appropriate medicine to the appropriate wound.[50] This provision echoes the wording of Canon 21 from the Fourth Lateran Council, which informed and motivated much of the late medieval literature on confession.[51] Given that an important part of the overall evangelical agenda was to reform and expand pastoral care, and given that pastoral care was focused especially on confession in the later Middle Ages, we should not be surprised to find the framers of the church ordinances using similar images for the evangelical version of the care of souls. Both the evangelical pastor and his Catholic counterpart were to be skilled physicians of suffering souls.

50. The 1544 Merseburger Synodal Instruction contains the following exhortation to pastors who are ministering to the sick: "Sollen auch auf die kranken gut achtung geben, wie sie in ihrem gewissen geschickt sein, damit, so sie zuvorn erschrocken, nicht weiter erschrecken, sondern vilmehr getrost werden, dan die leute nicht einerlei weise sollen vormahnet werden. Dan anders sol man vormahnen die ihre sunden erkennen und bereuen, anders aber, die ihre sunde nicht erkennen, ungedultig und rohe seint. Also mussen sie sich in anderen vormanung der personen auch halten, nach gelegenheit der personen, *wie ein vorstendiger arzt* [my emphasis]." Sehling (see n. 5), I, II, p. 18b. The 1540 Brandenburg Church Ordinance contains similar instructions for pastors as they minister to the sick and suffering: "Aber dieweil die kranken nicht einerlei sind, auch mit unterschiedlichen anfechtungen beladen, einer nicht so wol unterricht als der ander, einer auch nicht also vermügend unterrichtung als der ander zuhören, und mit etlichen geeilet mus werden und gnugsam, das man inen einen tröstlichen spruch oder zween vorsage, darauf sie sich zu verlassen. Demnach müssen die seelsorger uber die gemeine gestelte form, anderer besser ordnung nach, sich zu richten wissen, nach gelegenheit zu verkürzen oder auszubreiten und nach gelegenheit des gebrechens den leuten rethig zu sein, darzu inen keine andere wege und mass anzuweisen und zu geben, denn das sie sich mit fleiss im göttlichen wort uben, das sie auch aus andern gelerten schriften und sonst sich erkunden und befragen und des warnemen, damit sie die betrübte gewissen trösten sollen." Sehling (see n. 5), 3, p. 77a. See also Brenz's 1543 Church Ordinance for Schwäbisch Hall, Richter (see n. 5), vol. II, pp. 20b-21a.

51. See Norman P. Tanner, S.J., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1: Nicaea to Lateran V, London, Washington, D.C. 1990, p. 245, ll. 1–23, especially l. 14, which calls upon the confessor to be a "peritus medicus."

The difference between the two may be seen in the remedy each was to offer to troubled consciences. Both sought to console through assurances of divine grace, but whereas the Catholic priest offered sacerdotal absolution that typically required (and allowed) some measure of human response or cooperation for its efficacy, the evangelical pastor offered the promise of unconditional forgiveness in Christ contained in the Word and received by faith alone. (The Catholic priest could also console suffering souls with assurances of saintly intercession, while the evangelical pastor simply offered the prayers of the church militant.) In other words, the remedy that Luther found for his troubled conscience is taken as normative and universally applicable to the suffering faithful.

HOW TO UNDERSTAND SUFFERING

In addition to the sections in the church ordinances that deal with the practical pastoral care of the sick and dying, there are also more theologically elaborate sections that seek to teach pastors how to think about suffering and its place in the Christian life. Bearing titles like "Concerning Tribulation" *(Vom trübsal)* or "Concerning the Cross and Suffering" *(Vom kreutz und leyden)* or "Why Has the Christian Church Been Placed Under the Cross?" *(Warum die christliche kirch unter das creuz gelegt sei?)*, these stand-alone sections underscore the importance that framers of the church ordinances attached to the proposed "reformation of suffering." Philipp Melanchthon was the first evangelical reformer to include a specific treatment of suffering in a church ordinance; he did so in his enormously influential 1528 *Instructions for the Visitors*.[52] One of the most important reformers to adopt Melanchthon's brief treatment of suffering was Nuremberg's famous (and infamous) preacher Andreas Osiander, who provided a comparable statement about adversity in his 1528 *Articles of Doctrine*, which he, similar to Melanchthon, had drawn up for a church visitation.[53] Osiander developed this

52. Melanchthon stated in the *Unterricht der visitatoren an die pfarrherrn im kurfürstenthum zu Sachsen* that pastors should teach people that all suffering comes from God and its purpose is to move them to repentance so they will not be damned along with the world. When they suffer, people should call upon God in prayer, resist the devil's attempt to deprive them of faith, and trust that God will provide help. See Sehling (n. 5), 1, I, p. 158a. On the importance of this treatment of suffering in the subsequent church ordinance literature, see the brief comment in Annelise Sprengler-Ruppenthal, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zu den Kirchenordnungen des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Tübingen 2004, p. 472.

53. Osiander repeated in his *Lehrartikel* Melanchthon's assertion that suffering comes from God, but in addition to moving Christians to repentance, adversity also tests faith and patience,

brief outline on suffering in the Christian life into what was arguably the most significant treatment of the topic in the church ordinance literature.

The treatment appears in the influential 1533 Brandenburg-Nuremberg Church Ordinance in a section entitled "Concerning the cross and suffering."[54] (Johannes Brenz assisted Osiander in writing the church ordinance, but the section on suffering was the work of Osiander alone.)[55] The Nuremberg reformer opens the section of the church ordinance on the cross by observing that wherever the gospel is preached and people seek to live accordingly, suffering will follow, because Satan cannot bear either and opposes both with all his might.[56] There was nothing new about the idea that Satan opposed the church and caused suffering and persecution, but reformers like Osiander believed that such demonic activity had greatly increased since Luther's discovery of the gospel. The devil opposed evangelical Christians with unprecedented fury because he knew that they alone possessed the weapon that would cause his doom. In light of this heightened demonic resistance, Osiander argues that "it is absolutely necessary for the servants of the Word dutifully to instruct, console, and strengthen their people so that they will be able to know what to do in the midst of suffering and learn to overcome it with patience."[57]

Confirming modern scholars' assertions about the fierce resistance evangelical pastors could experience when seeking to re-Christianize the common folk, Osiander complains that one hears many blasphemous and superstitious things from those who suffer, especially from "simple peasants" (*einfeltigen paursvolck*). He writes, "When one tells them that suffering comes from God, they respond, 'Yeah right! It comes from the devil and not from God' (*Ja wol, es kumbt vom teuffel und nicht von Gott*). When one consoles them, saying that God disciplines those whom

and crucifies the flesh. Osiander emphasized that evil people could not harm Christians without God's permission, therefore Christians should not become angry with those through whom God sends misfortune, but rather pray for them. The Nuremberg preacher argued that suffering is a sign of God's fatherly love and that God would surely help those who call upon him. Gerhard Müller, Gottfried Seebaß (eds.), *Andreas Osiander d.A., Gesamtausgabe*, 10 vols, Gütersloh 1975–1997, here 3, p. 153, ll. 1–12. Hereafter referred to as OGA.

54. On the influence of the 1533 Brandeburg-Nuremberg Church Ordinance in the German Reformation, see Sehling (n. 5), 11, pp. 122–125. See also Sprengler-Ruppenthal, "Kirchenordnungen" (see n. 4), pp. 683–686.

55. OGA (see n. 53), 5, p. 44, n. 51.

56. Ibid. 5, p. 97, ll. 19–22. I am working with the version of the church ordinance found in the critical edition of Osiander's work rather than the one found in Sehling. The former is more faithful to the original than the latter and also has a more sophisticated critical apparatus, including line numbers.

57. Ibid., 5, p. 97, l. 34-p. 98, l. 2.

he loves [Heb. 12:6], they respond, 'Well, then I wish that He did not love me so much' (*Ey, so wolt ich gern, das er mich nicht so lieb hette*)."[58] And when such people experience adversity or misfortune that they cannot understand they attribute it to magic and then seek healing and protection from the same, something that according to Osiander evokes divine wrath. In order to uproot such "abominations" (*greuel*) and to produce "true patience" (*warer gedult*) in the common folk, Osiander provides a five-point instruction on suffering for pastors to employ when ministering to the laity. His central goal in this instruction is to stamp out idolatry and superstition by emphasizing divine sovereignty and the subsequent need for patience and faith in the midst of adversity.

As we have seen in other evangelical church ordinances, the Nuremberg reformer's five-point instruction is remarkably traditional. It emphasizes the sovereignty of God over all evil forces, whether human or diabolical; the benevolence of God in the midst of suffering; the requirement that Christians take up the cross and follow their Lord in the way of suffering; the importance of the cross in the slaying of the "old Adam"; the presence of Christ in the Christian's suffering;[59] and the educative or pedagogical function that suffering serves in the Christian life – Osiander argues that God uses suffering as "the proper school" (*die rechte schul*) in which Christians learn a variety of lessons, including the ability to see their sinfulness and God's goodness. The Nuremberg preacher is especially concerned to emphasize this latter point – i. e., the goodness of God – in his treatment of suffering.[60]

After noting how some Christians learn of their sinfulness in the school of

58. Ibid., 5, p. 98, ll. 4–7.

59. Osiander argues, "Es ist auch unser leyden in das leyden Christi eingeleybt, und wir sein durch den tauff in seinen todt gepflanzt, Roma. 6 [4], auff das sir ja gewiß mögen sein, das unser leyden Gott auch wolgefalle wie das leyden Christi. Dann ist er unser haubt und wir sein glyder, so muß das leyden gemein sein; darumb saget er zu Paulo, da er die Christen verfolget: 'Saul, Saul, warumb verfolgest du mich?'" (Acts 9:94). Ibid., 5, p. 105, ll. 8–13. This emphasis on Christ's presence in the Christian's suffering is curiously absent from other treatments of suffering in the evangelical church ordinances. Osiander's mention of it here is unique in the church ordinance literature.

60. At the beginning of his treatment of the lessons to be learned in the "rechte schul" of suffering, Osiander makes the following general observation, which demonstrates his desire to stress the goodness of God: "Man lernt aber manicherley unter dem kreu[e]tz und tru[e]bsal, welliches doch alles dahyn dienet, das man Gottes gutten und gnedigen willen gegen uns erkenne. Davon wo[e]llen wir dir fürnembsten stu[e]ck anzaygen." Ibid., 5, p. 100, ll. 11–13. Later on in his treatment of the school of suffering Osiander asserts that when God punishes Christians for failing to judge themselves and repent (I Cor. 11:30–31), "so strafft Gott nicht auß zorn, sunder auß gnade, das er uns an die sünd mane und zur pu[o]ß treybe, das wir nicht verdambt werden." See ibid., p. 101, ll. 11–13.

suffering, the Nuremberg reformer writes, "Others, however, learn to recognize in the cross not their sin, which God has already forgiven them and covered, rather, [they learn to recognize] the simple goodness of God toward them."[61] Osiander references the story in John 9 of Jesus' encounter with a man who was blind from birth. In this story the disciples ask Jesus, "Master, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus' response directly challenges the disciples' – and later, the Pharisees' – simplistic and self-aggrandizing application of retributive justice: "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but [this happened] so that the work of God might be revealed in him." Jesus then proceeds to heal the man, applying a clay made of dirt and his own spittle to the man's eyes.

Osiander's comment on this gospel story is striking, especially when viewed against the backdrop of currently scholarly fascination with social discipline. He writes, "And suffering of this kind [i. e., the kind intended by God to demonstrate God's glory and goodness] comprises the majority and greatest part of the suffering of all Christians, because God has a much greater desire to give, help, and save than we do to ask and call upon Him for the same."[62] According to Osiander, the primary reason God either sends or permits suffering – the reformer can say both things[63] – is to move Christians to call upon Him so they can learn firsthand how eager God is to help them.[64] The Nuremberg reformer goes on to ask, "Who, then, would not want to be blind for a time if he could experience through his blindness that Christ himself should wonderfully make him healthy with his own hands?"[65] Who would not suffer like David or Job, if he could know that he

61. "Etliche aber lernen nicht ire sünde, die in Gott vorhyn vergeben und zugedeckt hat, sunder die blossen güte Gottes gegen ine im kreutz erkennen (…)." Ibid., 5, p. 101, ll. 19–20.

62. "Und diser art ist der mayste und gröste tayl des leydens aller christen; dann Gott hat vil grössern lust zu geben, zu helfen und zu erretten, dann wir zu bitten und anzurüffen (…)." Ibid., 5, p. 101, ll. 25–26.

63. It should be noted that Osiander possessed a nuanced view of divine agency and suffering. He makes a distinction between God directly causing *(verordnen)* suffering and God simply permitting *(verhengen)* suffering to occur and then working indirectly through creaturely means. See ibid., 5, p. 98, ll. 24–25, and p. 99, ll. 1–2,14–17, and 20.

64. "Und auff das wir sollichen seinen guttenwillen erlernen [mögen], so schickt er uns ein kreutz und zwingt uns gleich, ine anzurüffen, auff das er uns erhöre und helfe, damit wir seinen gutten und gnedigen willen gegen uns erlernen and dardurch getröst, gesterckt und zu dancksagung bewegt werden (…)." Ibid., 5, p. 101, ll. 29–33. Osiander uses similar language earlier in his discussion of the school of suffering, as he seeks to help pastors persuade those who have sought help from cunning folk to return to Christian means of dealing with adversity. Osiander says the reason people turn to superstition is that they fail to understand how good God is and how eager He is to help. See ibid., 5, p. 100, ll. 21–28.

65. "Dann wer wolt nicht gern ein zeytlang blind sein, wann er das darin erleben solt, das in

would be saved, healed, and vindicated? If only Christians would believe and call upon God, Osiander maintains, they could be certain of receiving help. He concludes, "Therefore, the servants of the Word should constantly exhort [the people] to this [perspective] until faith and the practice of calling upon God, which have been so completely extinguished in Christendom, are again established."[66]

That Osiander could place such a strong emphasis on the benevolent rather than the punitive nature of divinely imposed suffering is quite significant. His church ordinance was one of the most influential in early modern Germany; it was one of the traditional five "Urkirchenordnungen." Most of the major Franconian cities, towns, and principalities adopted it, and it stayed in force in certain parts of Franconia until well into the eighteenth century. It also influenced church ordinances in Bavaria, Swabia, Württemberg, Hesse, Mecklenburg, Saxony, Saarland, and even Austria. Owing to the 1533 ordinance's widespread influence one scholar aptly dubbed it the *Stammmutter* of a whole family of Lutheran church ordinances.[67] To the extent that evangelical pastors consulted church ordinances for guidance in pastoral care of the sick and suffering, a not insignificant number of them must have learned this art from Osiander. Those who did so were well equipped to offer assurances of God's goodness and mercy to those who suffered.

Osiander was by no means all consolation; he could also use misfortune to attempt to frighten the common folk by making a direct connection between sin and suffering, something one sees in his plague sermon from the summer of 1533. (His church ordinance was formally adopted in January.) In the printed version of the homily he argues that the pestilence is first and foremost a divine punishment for sin and that the only way to avert it is through repentance.[68] But this is not what he says in his church ordinance. Osiander could have stressed the

Christus selbs wunderbarlich solt mit seinen heyligen henden gesund machen?" Ibid., 5, p. 101, l. 35-p. 102, l. 1.

66. "Darumb sollen die diener des worts hierzu stettigs vermanen, biß doch der glaub und das anrüffen, das so gar in der christenheyt erloschen ist, widerumb angericht werden." Ibid., 5, p. 102, ll. 8–10.

67. Sehling (see n. 5), 11, p. 124.

68. Osiander writes, "Dann wir wöllen inen [those who look to natural causes] solche ihre weyßhait unveracht lassen und nichts darwider fechten, sonder wir wöllen uns als christen zum wort Gottis halten, dasselbig unser höchste weyßhait sein lassen und im glauben und volgen. So werden wir vil pessern und gewissern bericht finden, nemlich das dise greüliche plag der pestilentz kom aus Gottis zorn von wegen der verachtung [one edition adds here: 'seines heiligen euangelions'] und ubertrettung seiner göttlichen gepot." "Wie und wohin ein christ die grausamen plag der pestilentz fliehen soll," OGA (see n. 53), 5, p. 391, l. 22-p. 392, l. 3. Elsewhere Osiander specifically mentions the sins of "unglaub, ungehorsam und undanckbarkait" as causes of the plague. Ibid., 5, p. 393, ll. 4–5.

connection between sin and suffering, as other authors did, but he chose not to. When presented with the opportunity to issue a general statement to evangelical pastors on the purpose of divinely imposed suffering, Osiander emphasized mercy over wrath, and consolation over discipline. He sought to re-christianize through consolation. Osiander endeavored to persuade baptized Christians (through their pastors) that they should reject all pagan means of coping with suffering, because adversity was a tool that the good God used to accomplish good things in their lives – they simply needed the eyes of faith to see things this way, which is what Osiander was trying to provide.[69] This emphasis on the humane side of evangelical pastoral care should be given more than passing lip-service, as is currently the case in much of the scholarly literature.[70]

While Osiander's treatment of suffering is rather traditional, it does contain one important omission that separates it from similar Catholic treatments: it does not present suffering as a penance for sin. It was this omission that caught the attention of the Johannes Eck, who published a refutation of the Brandenburg-Nuremberg Church Ordinance entitled *A Scripture-based Christian Instruction Against the Presumptuous Authors and Posers of the Alleged New Church Ordinance* (1533).[71] In his comment on the section that deals with suffering Eck says that he

69. This account of the divine purposes in suffering was clearly aimed at persuading the common folk to suffer properly, i. e., Christianly. Osiander no doubt believed that his message about God and suffering held true for all baptized Christians – his audience was exclusively comprised of such – but probably only in a conditional way. Those who remained unpersuaded and who rejected the evangelical means of coping with suffering could only interpret adversity as divine wrath, both because they lacked faith to see it any other way, and because this is what suffering in fact became for the baptized who suffered unchristianly.

70. When commenting on the intersection of anticlericalism and state-sponsored confessionalization, Karant-Nunn, "Neoclericalism" (see n. 10), p. 616, writes, "State goals neatly coincided with and reinforced the pastorate's rising self-esteem as ministers intensified their efforts at indoctrination and moral reform, for largely spiritual reasons, we must assume." She neither explores nor revisits these spiritual reasons in the remainder of her article. It should be noted that in her most recent book, Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Feeling* (see n. 11), p. 251, makes much of the Lutheran emphasis on consolation, even suggesting that this emphasis might well have made both clergy and laity in Lutheran lands a little less gloomy than their counterparts in other confessions, especially Reformed Protestantism.

71. The full title of the work is *Christenliche vnderricht mit grund der gschrifft/ wider die Angemaßten setzer vnnd angeber/ vermainter Newer Kirchen Ordnung/ Jüngst in der obern Margraffschafft vnd Nu[e]rmberger gebiet/ Jm tausent fünff hundert vnd drey vnd dreyssigisten Jar/ Ausgangen. Wa sich die selbigen/ Zu[o] verfierischem nachtail viler menschen/ selbs geirrth/ vnnd gro[e]blich gefa[e]lt haben*. I am grateful to John Frymire for providing me with this source. An electronic version is available via WorldCat. On this treatise see OGA (n. 53), 5, p. 60, and Gerhard Pfeiffer, "Die Brandenburg-Nürnbergische und die kurbrandenburgische Kirchenordnung in der katholischen Kritik des 16. Jahrhunderts," in: *Aus Reformation und Gegenreformation. Fes-*

agrees with Osiander's statement that a Christian must take up the cross and follow Christ, but he argues that this injunction loses its meaning when made by the Nuremberg preacher, because he excludes the possibility that suffering can render satisfaction for the penalty of sin. (Osiander makes this argument elsewhere in the church ordinance, basing his position on the full sufficiency of Christ's Atonement and the utter bondage of the human will to sin.)[72] Where Osiander teaches that Christians do not need to suffer in order to merit salvation because Christ has already suffered for them, Eck advises just the opposite: "Christ has suffered, therefore we should also suffer, so that through [our suffering] we might become partakers of the suffering and merit of Christ. Just as he taught: we should not only endure patiently what God sends us, rather we should also take up self-imposed crosses, that is, works of satisfaction, and follow after him; Scripture is full of this."[73] Osiander believed that Scripture contained none of this. The rejection of suffering as a means of penance was one of the clearest dividing lines between Protestant and Catholic approaches to adversity. Protestants reiterated this difference time and again, as did Catholics: both the canons of the Council of Trent and the Roman Catechism insist that suffering can function as a penance for sin, and Trent anathematizes those who disagree.[74] Behind this important division lay the more foundational differences between Catholic and Lutheran soteriology.

The 1542 Calenberg-Göttingen Church Ordinance contains an interesting treatment of these differences in its discussion of suffering, which is simply entitled "Concerning the Cross." The author, Anton Corvin, was an important figure in the reformation of northern Germany, writing several influential postils and composing a number of significant church ordinances. In an extended reflection on cross-bearing in the Christian life Corvin seeks to explain the connection between suffering and salvation. He quotes Matthew 5:10–12: "Blessed are those

tschrift für Theobald Freudenberger = Würzburger Diözesangeschichtsblätter 35/36 (1974), pp. 123–147.

72. OGA (see n. 53), 5, p. 87, ll. 5–9, and p. 144, ll. 19–21.

73. "Christus hat gelitten/ Darumb so[e]llen wir auch leyden/ das wir dardurch des leydens vnnd verdienens Christi tailhafftig werden: wie er geleert hat/ nit allein gedultig leyden/ was vns got zu[o]schickt/ sonder das wir von vns selber so[e]llen das creutz/ das ist peenlich werck annemen/ vnd jm nach volgen/ vnd ist die geschrifft vol." See Eck, *Christenliche underricht* (see n. 71), fol. 39 r. It should be emphasized that according to Eck suffering renders satisfaction for the penalty of sin by accessing Christ's merit, not simply of its own accord.

74. See Concilium Tridentium, Sessio XIV, Cap. IX, Canon XII, Canon XIII, in: Tanner (ed.), *Decrees* (n. 51), vol. II, p. 709, ll. 35–41; p. 718, ll. 13–26. See also Robert I. Bradley, S. J., Eugene Kevane (trans. and eds.), *The Roman Catechism*, Boston 1985, Part Two, Chapter Four, Penance, 75 ("Sufferings as Satisfaction"), p. 294.

who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you on my account and persecute you and falsely speak all manner of evil against you. Be joyful and take delight, because you will be well rewarded in heaven." Corvin applies these verses to Christian suffering, but is anxious to define in exactly what sense endurance of adversity merits eternal life. As in other evangelical church ordinances, here Corvin allows justification by faith to shape his understanding of suffering, as well as his exegesis of Scripture. He writes, "One must mark well here that God does not reward [the endurance of] distress with eternal life because we have suffered it and bear it with patience, but because He has promised and pledged it to us. Such patience is not our work, but God's, which He effects in us by his Spirit, as one sees in Galatians 5 [:22]. If patience is now His work, and if He crowns in us His own work on account of His promise, and rewards it with eternal life, then we have not earned it and it remains in all respects true, that one is saved through faith by grace and not through one's own works (Eph. 2 [:8])."[75]

Patience in suffering might merit eternal life, but according to Corvin the agent in the meriting is God via the Spirit, not the Christian, and so there is no question of the Christian earning heaven. And the only reason patience receives a reward is because of the divine promise attached to it. As we have seen throughout, evangelical reformers would allow for suffering to play a necessary role in the sanctification of the Christian, and in this qualified sense one can refer to cross-bearing as being redemptive for Protestants. But they would never allow it to merit heaven in the late medieval sense of atoning for the penalty of sin; the evangelical Christian was not to view suffering as an opportunity to endure the

75. "Ja, warumb wolten wir in unserm leiden, das uns Gott aus lauter gnad zu unserm besten auflegt, zaghaftig sein, weil uns Christus auch dagegen verspricht die ewige seligkeit? Selig sein die, spricht er Matth. 5 [10 ff.], die umb der gerechtigkeit willen verfolgt werden; denn das himelreich ist ihr. Selig seit ihr, wenn euch die leut schenden umb meinetwillen und verfolgen und reden allerley böses wider euch, so sie dran liegen. Seit fröhlich und habt wunne; denn es wirt euch im himel wol belonet werden! Man mus aber hie merken, das Got unser trübsal nicht eben darumb mit dem ewigen leben vergleichen wil, das wirs also mit gedult getragen und gelitten haben, sonder darumb, das er uns solchs zugesagt und verheissen hat; denn die gedult ist nicht unser, sonder Gotts werk, so er durch seinen Geist in uns wirken mus, wie man sihet zun Galateren am 5. [22]. Ist nhu gedult sein werk, und wil solch sein eigen werk umb seiner zusagung willen in uns krönen und mit dem ewigen leben vergleichen, so haben wirs nicht verdienet und bleibt also allenthalben war, das man aus gnad durch den glauben und nicht durch eigene werke selig wirt, Ephe. am andern [8 f.]." Sehling (see n. 5), 6, I, 2, pp. 769a-769b. I have taken "vergleichen" to be equivalent to "vergelten" (reward). See Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm, 16 vols. in 32 fascicles, Leipzig 1854–1961, 25, Bd. 25, col. 454, Entry 4. On Corvin see *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, 24 vols., Berlin 1953-, 3, pp. 371–2. Hereafter referred to as NDB.

temporal punishment for sin in this life, and thereby to reduce one's suffering in the next. Salvation was an exclusive gift of grace; suffering simply enabled one to retain and grow in this grace, not earn it. Justification by faith cast suffering in a new light, supplied it with a new meaning.

The final substantial treatment of suffering in the church ordinance literature we should consider is Johannes Aurifaber's 1552 Church Ordinance for Mecklenburg, for it reproduces word-for-word Melanchthon's discussion of adversity in his extremely influential *Examination for Ordinands* (1552).[76] (Aurifaber had been dean of the arts faculty at the University of Wittenberg. At the recommendation of Melanchthon he moved to Rostock in 1550, where he was a professor of theology in the city's university and also pastor in its St. Nicolai Church. It was in Rostock that he authored his influential church ordinance, which was adopted in Wittenberg in 1559. He later served as professor and pastor in both Königsberg and Breslau.)[77] Similar to Osiander, Melanchthon's primary goal in his treatment of "Why the Christian church has been placed under the cross?" is to dissuade Christians from recourse to "heathen" means of coping with suffering. He believes such approaches have a deep attraction for the laity and therefore exhorts evangelical pastors to oppose them at every turn. He writes, "The appearance that God's people are subject to suffering and misery in the same way that heathen people are (…) causes reason to stumble. Therefore it is highly necessary to instruct the people well so that they know why the church has been placed under the cross (…)."[78] Melanchthon seeks to provide an explanation for why the

76. The 1552 Church Ordinance for Mecklenburg reproduces Melanchthon's *Examen Ordinandorum* in its entirety; this was the first time the Wittenberg reformer's work was published. See Sehling (n. 5), 5, pp. 132–134. Philipp Melanchthon, *Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia*, Corpus Reformatorum, vol. 23, ed. by Heinrich Ernst Bindseil, Braunschweig 1855, cols. XXI-CX (German) and 1–102 (Latin), provides the 1558 *Examen* in both German and Latin. Melanchthon's treatment of suffering ("Warumb die Christliche Kirche vnter das Creutz gelegt sey, vnd vom trost der betrübten Christen"/ "Quare Ecclesia subiecta est cruci? Loci consolationum") may be found on cols. LXXVI-LXXXII and 75–81. Sven Grosse, *Gott und das Leid in den Liedern Paul Gerhardts*, Göttingen 2001, pp. 58–59, notes that this treatment draws directly on the important discussion of adversity in the 1543 edition of Melanchthon's *Loci communes theologici*, which was entitled "De calamitate seu de cruce, et de veris consolationibus." The 1535 edition of the *Loci* also included a section on suffering, "De afflictionibus seu de cruce toleranda" (Melanchthon, *Opera*, Corpus Reformatorum, vol. 21, pp. 528–536), as did Melanchthon's later German translation. The treatment of suffering in this German edition bore the title "Von Trübsal und Creutz zu tragen" and may be found in Ralf Jenett, Johannes Schilling (eds.), *Philipp Melanchthon Heubtartikel Christlicher Lere. Melanchthons deutsche Fassung seiner* Loci Theologici, *nach dem Autograph und dem Originaldruck von 1553*, Leipzig 2002, pp. 406–417.

77. NDB (see n. 75), 1, pp. 456–7.

78. "Dieser schein macht die vernunft irr, das zu gleich gottes volk im leiden und elend ist, wie andere heidnische völker, die christliche lere öffentlich verachten, als heiden und türken etc. Darum is hoch nötig, die leut wol zu unterrichten, das sie wissen, warum die kirch unter das creuz geleget (…)." Sehling (see n. 5), 5, p. 177a.

church suffers and for how Christians may console themselves in the midst of adversity, with the ultimate goal of dissuading Christians from adopting the heathen view that no group of people on earth is more special to God than another since all suffer equally.

Melanchthon explains that all people are under the penalty of death owing to original sin and that all people suffer divinely imposed bodily afflictions as punishment for actual sins. Here God makes no distinction between Christians and non-Christians, but applies the same standard to all. God does this to remind all people that "He is wise and righteous, and has an earnest, true, [and] great wrath against sin."[79] Melanchthon then references the gospel story of the two criminals who were crucified with Jesus (John 23: 32–43) to illustrate the distinction between the suffering of Christians and heathens. The latter are like the criminal who ridiculed Jesus and suffered eternal punishment, while the former are like the criminal who converted and thus felt joy in his heart and the beginnings of eternal life. Melanchthon also maintains that God frequently reduces the temporal punishment of Christians, as they, like the converted criminal, call upon Him for help in time of need.

Melanchthon then proceeds to offer a more specific account of why the church suffers, a topic that was of keen interest to evangelical Christians following the military defeats of the late 1540s. Similar to other church ordinances, the reasons Melanchthon provides are quite traditional. However, Melanchthon's ordering of these reasons is different from other ordinances, especially Osiander's. Melanchthon insists that the primary reason God sends suffering to Christians is so that "the sinful nature may be broken," not to reveal the goodness of God.[80] Similar to late medieval penitential literature, evangelical guides for pastoral care could alternately emphasize divine justice or divine mercy, discipline or consolation, depending on the theological convictions and temperament of the author, along with his assessment of his audience's spiritual condition and most pressing needs.

79. "Denn gott helt seine regel, euserliche sünden straft er auch mit leiblichen plagen, alle menschen zu erinnern, das er weise und gerecht sei, und habe einen ernsten, warhaftigen, grossen zorn wider die sünd." Ibid., 5, p. 177a.

80. Melanchthon provides the following summary statement of why the church suffers: "Und ist in summa göttlicher rat und will, das die kirche unter dem creutz sei. Und ist solchs durch göttliche weisheit und gerechtigkeit also beschlossen, wenn wir gleich nicht alle ursachen betrachten können. Doch ist die furnemst ursach klar, nemlich, das gott wil das die sündige natur zerbrochen werde." Ibid., 5, pp. 178b-179a.

Melanchthon's treatment of consolation follows. He continues his anti-heathen polemic by insisting that suffering comes from God, it is not the result of blind chance, and therefore the Christian should submit himself to it, because it serves his ultimate spiritual good by causing him to yearn for forgiveness of sin, which is grasped by faith. Melanchthon then repeats his earlier statement that God hears the prayers of those who call upon Him for deliverance from their distress, and can even remove or reduce the temporal punishment for sin. He writes, "(...) as we now receive forgiveness of sin, faith should be more and more strengthened, and it should confidently conclude that God will hear you favorably and be near you and strengthen you. And this hope should shine forth (leuchten), [namely,] that God will reduce misery in this life or completely take it away."[81] God is free not to do so, and it clear from Melanchthon's comments that the Christian's ultimate hope is for a final deliverance from sin and punishment in heaven. In the meantime, the Christian is to take great solace from the fact that the Son of God took on human flesh precisely to offer help to those in distress: He is the Christian's "Immanuel," who bears his punishment and preserves his weak nature via the Incarnation.[82]

Melanchthon's comments on the possibility of divine healing point to a tension in the evangelical approach to suffering. The framers of the church ordinances believed that God would save those who called upon Him in time of need, as the oft-quoted verse from Psalm 50: 15 promised, but they were generally hesitant to guarantee immediate divine healing for those who followed their prescriptions for dealing with suffering.[83] The authors were seeking to deliver their contemporaries from a mentality that desired healing in exchange for services rendered, and thus providing an evangelical version of the same *do-ut-des* ap-

81. "Zum dritten, so wir nu vergebung der sünden empfahen, sol der glaub fur und fur stercker werden und festiglich schliessen, das dich gott erhören wolle, sei bei dir und sterke dich. Und sol diese hoffnung leuchten, das gott das elend auch in diesem leben gnediglich lindern wolle oder ganz wegnemen. Und ob du gleich in diesem leben nicht ganz erledigt wirst, so bistu dennoch ein erbe ewiger selikeit." Ibid., 5, p. 179b.

82. "(...) von der hülf sollen wir wissen, das der son gottes eben darum menschlich natur an sich genomen hat, das er ir hülfe thun und sie erhalten wil in zeitlichen trübsaln und im tode. Denn wie ein menschlicher leib verfaulet und zerfelt, wenn die seel weg ist, also were die ganze menschliche natur ewiglich verdorben gewesen, wenn sie der son gottes nicht ergriffen hette und angezogen, ir leben und gerechtigkeit zu geben. Darum ist er bei uns und unser Immanuel. Und ist dieses ein hoher trost in aller betrübnis, gedenken, das deine natur auch dem herrn Christo am hals hange, der nicht allein die straf fur dich getragen hat, sondern ist auch selb der erhalter dieser schwachen natur, dieweil er sie selb also an sich genomen hat." Ibid., 5, p. 180a.

83. For a discussion of how God could effect healing indirectly through natural medicine, see Veit Dietrich's *Abendbüchlein*, ibid., 11, p. 509a.

proach to religion was at cross-purposes with the authors' larger goal. The authors were also trying to liberate their contemporaries from a piety that sought divine healing through material means which (in their minds) had no basis in Scripture; the tradition of anointing the sick with consecrated oil is consistently rejected in the church ordinances as it was held to rest on faulty exegesis of James 5: 13–16.[84] Still, as we have seen in Aurifaber's ordinance, the framers do encourage evangelical Christians to pray for healing and can even state that those who do so in true faith can expect for their prayers to be heard favorably. Osiander went so far as to claim that the miracles of the apostolic age could take place again in his own time if evangelical Christians would return to faithful prayer.[85] Few evangelical church ordinances made similar assertions.

CONCLUSION

As a matter of highest priority, the authors of evangelical church ordinances sought to educate the common clergy in the Protestant approach to suffering, especially the way it redefined the relationship between suffering and salvation.

84. The 1537 Visitationsartikel for Freiberg, Wolkenstein, and Rochlitz call for Extreme Unction to be abolished (ibid., 1, p. 466b) as does the Calenberg-Göttingen Synodalkonstitutionen of 1544/45 (ibid., 6, I, 2, p. 875b) and the 1556 Reformationsmandat of Otto Heinrich (ibid., 14, p. 112a). The 1574 Christliche Instructio des Thomas Stieber for the Herrschaft Wolfstein provides the following justification for the rejection of Extreme Unction: "Zum achten sollen die pfarhern die kranken mit kainem papistischen, beschwornem öl salben oder schmieren; dann solchem öel [sic] hat man die kraft zuegeschrieben, das dadurch vergebung der sünden, errettung aus leiblichen krankhaiten und sieg wider den Teufel erlangt werde, wie dan die wort, so in actu sacerdotali gehn, also lauten: Ich salbe dich mit dem geweichtem öele, das du durch dise salbung empfahest volkomliche vergebung der sünden. Obwol Marcus [6.13] und Jacobus [5.14] eines öels gedenken, damit die apostel die kranken gesalbet haben, so habe sie doch solchen ihrem öl (wie Jacobus sagt: Fides, oratio salvum faciet aegrotantem, Jacobus [5.15]) diese kraft nicht zugeschrieben, mit welchem das papistisch geschworne öel kain vergleichung hat." Ibid., 13, p. 582b.

85. "Es ist auch seer vil gelegen an dem christenlichen gebete ... dann wir dardurch alles, so wir von Gott durch den glauben gewarten, suchen und empfahen müssen; und ist doch so gar gefallen und erloschen, das schier niemandt mer recht christenlich betet. Aber im anfang der christenheyt war es so starck und brünstig, das vil wunderwerck dardurch geschahen, wie man des vil exempel hat; und geschehe gewißlich noch, wann man mit rechtem ernst und glauben einhellig betet. Darumb, auff das es widerumb angerichtet werde, sollen die prediger und kirchendiener die leut fleyssig darzu vermanen und auff dise weyse davon unterrichten." AOG 5, p. 106, ll. 10–18. This quotation is taken from the opening lines of the ordinance's section on prayer, which immediately follows the section on cross-bearing.

The authors expected common pastors to understand this approach and to employ it as they ministered to suffering Christians through both word and rite. The authors of the church ordinances viewed this massive educational effort as being essential to the survival and spread of the evangelical movement. In many ways, suffering was the most important mission field for the reformers and their movement and they knew it. The reformers instructed pastors to strip their parishioners of all "pagan" and "quasi-pagan" means of understanding and coping with adversity. There was to be no recourse to magic, cunning folk, saints, relics, pilgrimages, penances, and the like. The suffering evangelical Christian was to rely exclusively on his faith in the promises of God's goodness proclaimed to him in sermons and absolution, and attested in the Lord's Supper. Framers of the church ordinances placed a premium on God's goodness and sovereignty; they sought to re-Christianize through consolation, not just through discipline. God had to be good, because now there was no other source of supernatural intercession or help in the universe.[86] This was the way God wanted things, at least according to the evangelical point of view. Whether and how the church ordinances influenced actual pastoral care and lay religious life is a question the church ordinances themselves cannot answer. This literature provides the ideal type, it does not record real experience, even if it seeks to anticipate and respond to it.

Ronald K. Rittgers
Valparaiso University
1409 Chapel Drive
Valparaiso, IN 46383
U.S.A.

86. Evangelical theologians allowed that God might minister to Christians via angels. On angels in the Reformation period, see Bruce Gordon, "Malevolent Ghosts and Ministering Angels: Apparitions and Pastoral Care in the Swiss Reformation," in Bruce Gordon, Peter Marshall (eds.), *The Place of the Dead: Death and Rememberance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge 2000, pp. 87–109; Scott Hendrix, "Angelic Piety in the Reformation: The Good and Bad Angels of Urbanus Rhegius," in Gudrun Litz, Heidrun Munzert, Roland Liebenberg (eds.), *Frömmigkeit – Theologie – Frömmigkeitstheologie: Contributions to European Church History. Festschrift für Berndt Hamm zum 60. Geburtstag*, Leiden, Boston 2005, pp. 385–394; and Peter Marshall, Alexandra Walsham (eds.), *Angels in the Early Modern World*, Cambridge 2006. See also Rittgers, *Reformation of Suffering*, ch. 8.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Beitrag widmet sich den Bestrebungen der Reformatoren, ihre Zeitgenossen mittels einer Seelsorge zu re-christianisieren, die auf der Rechtfertigung aus dem Glauben basierte. Quellengrundlage sind vor allem diejenigen Abschnitte aus den evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des 16. Jahrhunderts, die sich mit der Seelsorge im Angesicht von Krankheit und körperlichen Leiden beschäftigen. Dabei fördert die Untersuchung der Kirchenordnungen wichtige Kontinuitäten und Diskontinuitäten der *cura animarum* vor und nach der Reformation zutage. Während frühere Untersuchungen den Vorrang des Disziplinierungs- und Bedrohungsmoments im Rahmen der protestantischen Seelsorge betonten, zeigt die vorliegende Behandlung des Leidens eine starke Emphase auf Trost und göttlicher Güte und öffnet damit eine neue Perspektive in der Erforschung der frühneuzeitlichen Geistlichkeit.