Becoming Lutheran Catechesis Aid

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Preface

Evangelicals face very large hurdles, obstacles, and bring with them several presuppositions that need to be addressed and resolved during their Lutheran catechesis process. Research conducted in this area through the author’s ongoing and unpublished Major Applied Research Project at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis will serve in a foundational manner to this teaching aid.

This catechesis aid is not designed to replace the catechism curriculum of the local Lutheran parish. Otherwise stated, this aid is not to be a substitute for the Small Catechism nor does it function independently from a more comprehensive catechism curriculum. Rather it is an educational tool intended for former American Evangelicals that is to be laid alongside the Small Catechism (i.e., Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation, published by Concordia Publishing House, 1984) and any additional material that will be presented in a new member’s class/catechesis class.
Introduction

Welcome to the Lutheran Faith! If you are reading this, chances are that you have just completed the journey from American Evangelicalism into Confessional Lutheran thought.

Regarding this document that you are now reading, you may have received this from the new member’s/catechism class at your new Lutheran Church. If this is the case, this catechesis aid is designed to help you in this journey as you catechize into the Lutheran faith.

Question:

What is meant by catechism? What do you know about Luther’s Small Catechism?

While your catechesis class is an example of a nonformal education, an educational venue where you do not obtain college credit, it is nonetheless extremely important. The catechesis class will lay forth a systematic and comprehensive picture of the Lutheran faith through what is called Luther’s Small Catechism. This nonformal education will provide a valuable foundation for you as you continue to receive from other nonformal education opportunities in the church (i.e., Adult Sunday School, Divine Service, and Bible studies).

Furthermore, this nonformal education will also provide a vital foundation that will help you process informal learning opportunities that happen inside and outside the church; learning that is, “spontaneous, unstructured learning that goes on daily in the home and neighborhoods, behind the school and on the playing field, in the workplace, marketplace, library and museum, and through the various mass media.”

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Homework:

Take time to study questions #9-12 in Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation, for these questions and answers deal directly with the issues of what is a catechism and the Small Catechism in general.

Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), 52-53.

So, is this journey from American Evangelicalism into Lutheran thought a big deal?

Research has shown that the journey is indeed a rather large transition. This is most especially true when it comes to multiple layers of how you learn, think, act, and talk. Many testimonies from individuals who have made this transition point out that what you have gone through and will continue to go through will include many radical shifts, changes, and transitions.

In the upcoming sections we will explore some of the radical shifts, changes, and transitions that you are faced with as you continue to be catechized into the Lutheran faith. In fact, it is the belief of the author that without a catechetical aid, such as this document, you and your pastor may find yourselves ‘lost in translation.’ In other words, because of the differences between American Evangelicalism and Confessional Lutheranism you and your pastor may be speaking with the same words, but may have a totally different meaning attached to those words. It is the intent of this catechism aid that many of those ‘lost in translation’ moments may be reduced and that your catechesis journey will run smoother for you and your instructing pastor.

Defining American Evangelicalism

Before we progress any further, it is necessary that we pause in order define what is meant by being a former American Evangelical. American Evangelicalism in America can be
thought of as a large melting pot of spirituality. There is a wide breadth to American Evangelicalism which makes it difficult to pinpoint a concise definition. Furthermore American Evangelicalism lacks official denominational lines, and has very minimal confessions. Does this mean that it is completely undefinable? No, but when we define it, it must be defined with broad brush strokes. For the sake of this catechesis aid, a former American Evangelical is defined by someone who has a background in a number of varying Evangelical churches, churches such whose signs contain descriptions such as Baptist, Non-Denominational, Assembly of God, etc... Furthermore the average American Evangelical has been influenced by 3.8 different theological movements such as: revivalism, pietism, dispensationalism, fundamentalism, and/or the church growth movement. Finally, the average journey for someone from American Evangelicalism into Lutheran thought is around 1-4 years.

What is Epistemology?

Epistemology, “deals with questions of knowledge: What is truth? What are the sources of knowledge? How do we know? Concerns of this sort probe into the nature and validity of human knowledge.” Epistemology is important for it, “presents the theory of knowing and knowledge and therefore is closely related to teaching and learning.”

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2 Around 50% of respondents to the Major Applied Research Project stated that they have backgrounds in the Baptist denomination and/or Non-denominational churches.


Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 22 discusses that the Jews identify signs as ways of getting at knowledge and the Greeks get at knowledge through wisdom, logic that is. Each person’s epistemological system can be thought of as a knowledge system that gathers data from one source or a plethora of sources. Each and every one of us derives knowledge from somewhere. Several sources for our epistemology exist including but not limited to: authority (e.g., How do I know? Because Albert Einstein told me.), pragmatism (e.g., How do I know? Because I welded it up that way in my shop, tried it out in the field, and it has never failed me since.), conventional wisdom (e.g. How do I know? Because nearly everyone in my community thinks so.), observation (e.g., How do I know? Because I was there and saw it for myself.), senses (e.g. How do I know? Because I touched it, and it felt hot, and it smelled as if something were burning.), logic (e.g., How do I know? Because, since A was greater than B, and B was greater than C, I concluded that A was greater than C.), empiricism (e.g., How do I know? Because many studies that used very large samples of the total population of people who have this disease confirm a high statistical correlation between salt intake and the aggravation of this disease.), revelation (e.g. How do I know? For the Bible tells me so; or, Thus saith the Lord). The knowledge that we gather helps us in our quest for truth.\footnote{Warren S. Benson, Christian Education: Foundations for the Twenty-first Century, Ed. Michael J. Anthony, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2001), 27.} 

\footnote{Truth is often seen as an abstract item that is drifting around in time and space that mankind stretches out to acquire, understand and harness. However, as Christians we would funnel truth down to not an abstract ideology or philosophy but rather a person, Christ. Jesus in John 14:6 states, “I am the way and the truth and the life…” Jesus says that He is truth. Furthermore, Christ not only applies the truth to him but also uses a definite article to essentially say, “I am not ‘a’ way, ‘a’ truth…” but rather “I am ‘the’ way, ‘the’ truth…” Andrea Köstenberger in the first chapter of the book, “Whatever Happened To Truth?” (Crossway, 2005) argues that truth is a person, a crucified person, rather than some abstract ideology. In}
Epistemic Crisis and Transition

Since you are most likely attending a Lutheran catechesis class right now, you have made and are making the jump from one set of epistemological sources to a new and different set of epistemological sources. This shift is what is called an epistemological transition. The transition is most likely due to what is called an epistemological crisis. In other words, what likely happened in your past was a conflict over where you acquired knowledge. There may have been a point where you began to question and/or reject American Evangelical sources of knowledge and began to learn from new Confessional Lutheran sources of knowledge. In fact that transition may be coming to full fruition right now as you are studying and embracing the Small Catechism for the first time.

As you think about this shift in where you acquire Christian knowledge it is important to realize that this is more of a seismic shift than a mere bump in the road. John Wright states that an epistemological crisis occurs when,

A person’s narrative account is no longer an adequate account for the data at hand... The collapse of a previously held narrative brings with it a new and often awkward self-consciousness and vulnerability... An epistemological crisis grants a self-knowledge that otherwise would escape our own understanding of ourself. As in tragedy, we stand exposed in front of new data. The new data interrogates us.\(^7\)

\(^7\) John Wright, *Telling God’s Story: Narrative Preaching For Christian Formation* (Downer’s Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 43.
You would not be alone in thinking of this epistemological crisis as paralyzing. Wright affirms the pain of an epistemological crisis saying, “The pain of an epistemological crisis, while ultimately helpful, initially sends shock waves through individuals and congregations.”

Essentially what is at stake in an epistemological crisis is the assessment and comparison of two or more different and competing sources of knowledge. These different sources of knowledge yield different assumptions that yield different worldviews that will yield different behavioral patterns and feelings. Thus, you can see the profound impact and reaching breadth of this crisis. It is certainly something that should not and cannot be minimized.

Let us examine this shift a bit closer and in a much more personal manner.

**Question:**

Where did you receive and acquire your Christian knowledge when you were in American Evangelicalism?

Before American Evangelicals began their journey towards and into Confessional Lutheranism research results show they acquired their Christian teaching from popular bestselling authors who seemed to be at the top of Evangelical bookstore top 10 lists at one point or another. More specifically these authors are not historic, but currently alive, with the exception of C.S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer. Besides popular books, American Evangelicals also acquired a majority of their Christian teaching from what their local pastor was teaching.⁹

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⁸ Ibid.

Generally speaking within Lutheranism you will be studying sources that are older and even authors who have been dead for quite some time. Take for instance the Small Catechism. The Small Catechism is around 500 years old and has been taught to millions of people across the world. Furthermore, you will also be studying material that is very definable and theologically consistent, rather than studying multiple authors, from different theological backgrounds (i.e., backgrounds such as: Baptist, Pentecostal, etc...) and books that pop up on the top 10 list. In Lutheranism you will not be so likely to pick up any book and just take in its truths, rather you may become much more selective in your reading tastes and much more discerning.\textsuperscript{10}

Making the decision to join the Lutheran Church is tangible evidence of the epistemological transition that was spoken of earlier. This transition can be recognized as proof of reform to your epistemology and what we will later learn about, your worldview. As previously alluded to, what most likely happened in your journey from American Evangelicalism to Confessional Lutheranism was that your long held beliefs in Evangelicalism were deconstructed and overridden by a new epistemological framework. Somewhere your confidence in American Evangelical beliefs was brought to a point where questions were placed upon this belief system, essentially eroding it away until it was impossible for you to continue to follow and hold to these beliefs. In other words, the new knowledge sources from

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.
Lutheranism made it virtually impossible for you to depend on your previous knowledge source and system. As a result, the longstanding and familiar sources of knowledge needed to be rejected and the new sources of knowledge affirmed.

Not only is the purpose of the Lutheran Catechesis class, that you are now attending, to introduce to you new knowledge from a new knowledge source (i.e., the Small Catechism and the Lutheran Confessions), but also the class will hopefully bring about epistemological resolution for you. Alasdair McIntyre comments on how this epistemological crisis is resolved. He states that the new information (i.e., Lutheran tenets) must enable, “the agent to understand both how he or she could intelligibly have held his or her original beliefs and how he or she could have been so drastically misled by them.”\(^{11}\) Within epistemological resolution, you should expect that you will process the theology of American Evangelicalism in light of the new epistemological sources that you are receiving in the catechesis class.

During the transition you may have not experienced a comprehensive equilibrium, where there was rest and continuity between the sources of your knowledge, your framework, your worldview and your behavioral patterns. In this epistemological resolution stage though, you will now most likely experience symmetry, which then allows for you to safely reflect upon the journey that has taken place. Within this stage of symmetry you should be able to begin to freely assess the errors that you believed, while also finding comfort in the new truths that you are learning and receiving. In other words, having made the transition from American

Evangelicalism into Lutheran thought you will now find that you now feel safe to explore the differences between your old and new epistemologies.

Homework:

Take time to study questions #1-8 and #57 in Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation for these questions and answers deal directly with the issues of epistemic systems and the source of knowledge for the Christian.

*Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), 47-52, 150.

**Change in Worldviews**

What are the results of changing to different epistemological sources? On the surface it seems as if you are simply swapping books and authors. However, there is much more that is going on beneath the surface. A change from American Evangelical books and teaching sources to Confessional Lutheran sources will bring about a change in your worldview. A worldview is a person’s perception of reality. In other words, each person views the world through a particular lens, these lenses, “are deep, they are generally unexamined and largely implicit. Like glasses, they shape how we see the world, but we are rarely aware of their presence. In fact, others can often see them better than we ourselves do.” According to Paul Hiebert, our worldviews provide us with, “mental models of deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or pictures and images that shape how we understand the world and how we take action.” I have heard it said that worldviews provide maps of how we view reality and life.

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Question:

How do you think your time in the catechesis class interacting with the Small Catechism and other curriculum will impact the way that you view the Bible, God, yourself, and Salvation?

Take a moment and compare how you used to read your Bible within American Evangelicalism and how you read it now. What is the same? What has changed?

Generally speaking, the biggest change in how you will read your Bible will come about in your new understanding of Law and Gospel and the Christocentric nature of the scriptures. This new understanding of Law and Gospel and the Christocentric nature of scripture will help you see how you previously read the Bible as a ‘how to’ handbook on Christian living, but now you will begin to see that the Bible is not about the Christian, but about Jesus Christ and His grace ‘for’ the Christian.¹³

Homework:

Take time to study questions #6-8 and 84-85 in Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation, for these questions and answers deal directly with the issues of Law and Gospel. How does this understanding of Law and Gospel impact the way that you read the Bible?

Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), 51-51,100-101.

Question:

Take a moment and think about how you viewed yourself in Evangelicalism and how you view yourself now (i.e., your opinion of yourself). What has changed? What is the same?

Regarding salvation, generally speaking there will be a change in how you view your fallen-ness. In other words, as you encounter new Lutheran teachings you will begin to see yourselves much worse than you previous once assessed yourself to be. Even though this

sounds depressing, you will also experience a sense of relief and contentment since you will learn that you can’t strive to acquire a sinless condition; you will begin to see yourself simultaneously as a sinner and a saint.\textsuperscript{14}

**Homework:**

Take time to study questions #78-83 in Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation, for these questions and answers deal directly with the issue of sin and mankind’s condition. How does this understanding of sin impact the way that you view yourself?

Take time to study questions #255-#259 in Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation, for these questions and answers deal directly with the issue of what it means to be simultaneously a sinner and a saint.

*Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), 98-100, 214-215.

**Question:**

Take a moment and think about how you viewed the Christian faith (i.e., God, salvation, etc...) in Evangelicalism and how you view the Christian faith now. What has changed? What is the same?

Finally the biggest shift that will occur in your view of the Christian faith is that you will begin to see salvation as not depending on yourself and your works, but on Jesus Christ and his atoning work for you. As previously alluded to, this shift will bring about a tremendous relief and assurance. Furthermore, there will be a change in how you view the sacraments. While in American Evangelicalism, altar calls, the sinner’s prayer, and making decisions for Christ has saving power. However, within Lutheranism though, the Lord’s Supper and Baptism, along with the Word, are now viewed as God’s saving action.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
Homework:

Take time to study questions #156-168 in Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation, for these questions and answers deal directly with the issue of who does the work in your salvation. Furthermore, take time to study questions #239-260 and #285-305, for these questions and answers deal directly with the issue of the sacraments according to Lutheranism.

Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), 149-157, 205-216, 231-244.

The Epistemology and Worldview Relationship

Now that we understand epistemologies and worldviews, we can then ask, “How are epistemology and worldview related?” As we have previously covered, your epistemological system forms your worldview; however, you need to keep in mind that your worldview informs your epistemological system. They are both connected, intertwined and create what is called circularity. The epistemological system informs you what should be considered as appropriate knowledge and the worldview identifies what is and what does not fit the criteria of true knowledge. In other words, the knowledge system forms the lens and the lens processes and delivers knowledge back to the system. Around and around they go, working together.\(^{16}\)

Continual Worldview Conflict

As you go through the Lutheran Catechesis experience, what happens when your American Evangelicalism worldview interacts with the new Lutheran worldview? This may happen when your pastor preaches, teaches, and interacts with you in your catechesis class, as

\(^{16}\) MacIntyre, “Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science,” 140.
well as when you experience interaction with your pastor through the Divine Service, Bible studies, and so forth. So, what happens when these two worldviews interact? Paul Hiebert answers this saying,

> We are similarly largely unaware of our own worldview and how it shapes our thoughts and actions. We simply assume that the world is the way we see it, and that others see it in the same way. We become conscious of our worldviews when they are challenged by outside events they cannot explain.  

Otherwise stated, until your worldview is held up in comparison with another worldview, you will most likely be unaware of the differences and will be relatively unaware of an alternative point of view. While you may have already experienced a collision of worldviews in your journey thus far into Lutheranism, keep in mind that as you continually interact with the Lutheran worldview, it will cause you to self-reflect on your own worldview lens, making you attentive of the tension. Furthermore, when you experience the conflict between the two worldviews, learn to expect possible anxiety for this is a normal reaction. Hiebert comments on this saying,

> To question worldviews is to challenge the very foundations of life, and people resist such challenges with deep emotional reactions. There are few human fears greater than a loss of a sense of order and meaning. People are willing to die for their beliefs if these beliefs make their deaths meaningful. 

Keep in mind though, that worldview conflicts do and should happen in the church regardless of whether one is going through catechesis. As parishioners interact with each other, there will be point of view collisions. Furthermore, as the pastor preaches the Scriptures and applies the Word to the flock he will be laying forth a particular way of viewing the world that has been

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17 Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews*, 47.

shaped by the truths of the Scriptures a view that will be typically opposed to the general ethos and worldview of our American culture. The grand meta-narrative of the Scriptures will continually form the parish as well as the pastor’s own worldview. Therefore, this is not something that only happens while in catechesis class, but something that continually happens in the church as the Scriptures come into conflict with assumptions in the church, due to worldviews that have not been solely formed by the Bible. Keep in mind that many times worldviews of parishioners are formed by the Scriptures and a variety of other influences in life such as: personal experiences, cultural norms, the media, traditions, folk Christian theology and so forth.

Your epistemological framework lies at the foundation, followed by your worldview. As previously stated, they form and inform each other in a circular fashion. Besides the circular relationship, manifested feelings, values, linguistics, and practices emerge from your worldview. Therefore, what we see visibly on the surface is your behavior patterns, values, practices and feelings that are shaped from your worldview, a worldview that is shaped by your epistemological system. The reason why this is important to understand is that behind your feelings, practices, and behaviors always lays another two layers.19

**Linguistic Confusions**

Different epistemological systems and different worldviews will bring about different linguistics. Therefore, this means that words may have different meanings. Epistemologies and worldviews can load words to mean different things or make words emphasize things different.

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Since this is true in the case of American Evangelicalism and Confessional Lutheranism it is necessary to take time to identify the use, lack of use, and different emphasis placed on words.

**Question:**
What words within American Evangelicalism have a different emphasis in Confessional Lutheranism?

Generally speaking, respondents of the Major Applied Research Project shared that the biggest linguistic emphasis change was in who does the verbs. Otherwise stated, in American Evangelicalism you may have seen yourself as the subject doing the majority of the Christian verbs. However, within Confessional Lutheranism you will experience a shift in seeing God doing the majority of the verbs.\(^\text{20}\)

Beyond generalities about a dozen words were specifically identified as having a change in emphasis from American Evangelicalism to Lutheranism. They are further detailed in the chart on the top of page 19.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>American Evangelical Emphasis</th>
<th>Confessional Lutheran Emphasis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grace</td>
<td>Connected to my decision</td>
<td>God’s gift alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>Self-Generated</td>
<td>God’s gift to me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptism</td>
<td>Mark of my obedience/my action</td>
<td>God delivering forgiving grace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communion</td>
<td>An act of my remembrance</td>
<td>Christ’s true body and blood for the forgiveness of sins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctification</td>
<td>-After Justification</td>
<td>-Christ’s action along with Justification -Work of the Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-My work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gospel</td>
<td>What we need to hear in order to make a decision</td>
<td>Christ Crucified for the forgiveness of our sins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinner</td>
<td>Unsaved People</td>
<td>All People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sin</td>
<td>-My Actions</td>
<td>-Very core of being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Behavior</td>
<td>-Condition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Richard 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocation</th>
<th>Serving God through a ministerial calling</th>
<th>Serving my neighbor through roles where I am placed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Means of Grace</td>
<td>Sinner’s Prayer and Altar Call</td>
<td>Word and Sacrament</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most familiar words used in American Evangelicalism that are no longer being used in Lutheranism are the following: decision, decision for Christ, free will, saved, baptism of the Holy Spirit, invitation, next level, accountability, rapture, anointed, born-again, revival, living the Gospel, altar call, sinner’s prayer, purpose, personal relationship, rededicating life, spirit-led, surrender, etc...  

**Homework:**

Take time to look the following terms up in Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation to be able to understand the meaning of the terms from a Confessional Lutheran perspective.

- Grace: #133-#140
- Faith: #157-#161, #254
- Baptism: #239-#260
- Communion: #285-#306
- Sanctification: #156, #163
- Gospel: #8, #84
- Sinner: #79, #82
- Means of Grace: #236-#238
- Sin: #78, #80, #81, #83
- Vocation: Pages 35-39

**Question:**

What familiar words used in American Evangelicalism are no longer being used in Lutheranism?

Generally speaking, within Lutheranism you will find that there will be less phrases that are of a directional nature and that there will be less terms that incorporate feelings. Phrases such as: going to the next level, God led me, the Spirit led me, God laid it on my heart, I feel led, I feel His presence, etc...  

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21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.
Question:
What new words have you encountered within Lutheranism?

Within Lutheranism you will encounter words that tend to be multisyllabic, tend to be much older, and may be Greek and/or Latin. Words such as: Law & Gospel, means of grace, liturgy, vocation, simul iustus et peccator, catechism, synod, absolution, justification, sanctification, Lord’s Supper, confession, solas, creeds, 3 uses of the Law, indicative & imperative, various Latin/Greek phrases, various Liturgy words, etc...

Homework:
While you have already looked up many of these terms, take time to look up the remaining terms in Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation.

- Liturgy: Page 267
- Catechism: #10-#12
- Absolution: #265-#266
- Creed: #86-#91
- 3 Uses of the Law: #77
- Simul iustus et peccator: #255-#259
- Synod: Ask your pastor about this term
- Solas: Ask your pastor about this term

Conclusion: Continual Catechesis

As a parishioner of the Lutheran Church both you and your pastor have the scriptures and confessions as your control center. The popular opinions of culture and the popular opinions of the congregation are not the control center. Thus, as you continue to study the scriptures and as your pastor continues to proclaim the truths of the Word, these truths will penetrate your ears, heart, worldview, and epistemological system. These scriptures will

\[23\] Ibid.
challenge your behaviors, feelings, worldviews and epistemological system because God is actually present and exercising power in His Word in oral, written, and sacramental forms.\textsuperscript{24}

As a parishioner coming into the Lutheran Church it is also important to understand that Christian catechesis is always ongoing. In other words, the church as the body of Christ continually comes to the divine service to be ever reformed by the Word. If the church merely gathers together for social or fellowship reasons and the Word does not ever form and reform the body of Christ, the church is no different than a common rotary club. In a striking statement William Willimon once stated, “‘Community,’ untested by any criterion other than our need to huddle in groups, can be demonic.”\textsuperscript{25} Therefore, according to Willimon we should not be surprised when, “modern congregations may express surprise and even offense at hearing the ancient biblical story.”\textsuperscript{26} Willimon goes on to share in his book, \textit{Shaped by the Bible}, that it is not the job of a pastor to apologize for the scriptures but to simply be faithful proclaimers of the Word. Appealing to Jesus he states, “The story caused offense when it was first preached in places like Nazareth; we should not be surprised that it continues to offend. In

\textsuperscript{24} T.R. Halvorson (Personal Communication, July 27\textsuperscript{th} of 2012) says, “Many people say that it does little good to quote the Bible to people who do not already accept the epistemology of revelation. If our doctrine of the Word were merely Fundamentalist or Reformed, we could agree. But in Lutheran theology, the Word is not merely authoritative and inerrant. The Word is living and active. The Word not only is something. The Word does something. It persuades those whom the Holy Spirit converts even though the converted never held either explicitly or implicitly to the epistemology of revelation before, because the Holy Spirit and the Word have the power to effect either or both implicit or explicit epistemological change in the hearer, causing them to, seemingly simultaneously, convert to the Word and to Christ, to the revelation and the Person, and that happens because of the Word being like a sacrament (or the sacraments being like the Word) does something.”


\textsuperscript{26} Willimon, \textit{Shaped By The Bible}, 63.
fact, we preachers ought to be troubled when our handling of the Bible never offends!" Thus, you can learn to expect that the word will continually come to you confronting, exposing, and killing your sinful nature. However, do not be discouraged for what God tears down; he heals and what God strikes down; he binds up. Where there is death, there is also life. This is the nature of the Word; this is the implications of God’s words of Law and God’s words of Gospel to and for you.

In summary, your Christian catechesis class is just the beginning of lifelong catechesis. As you embark on this new journey into Lutheran thought, your pastor will be there for you as a faithful expositor of truth according to the Word and the Lutheran Church’s confessions. Lord willing he will graciously stand by your side as you continue to experience small and large worldview conflicts, as well as small and large epistemological crises that lead to epistemological resolution, peace, and assurance in the blessed Gospel of our Lord Jesus.

Welcome to Lutheranism!

Ibid.
**Bibliography**


