***The Lord’s Legacy of Holy Communion***

**THE REAL PRESENCE: MOMENT and MYSTERY?**

**Understanding God’s *presence* in his Supper has had a long and checkered history ─ from its background in the Hebrew Passover, through its fulfillment as the “new testament in Jesus’ blood,” to its meaning in the Christian church over the centuries.[[1]](#footnote-1) The transition from Israel’s ceremonial law to the structured supper instituted by Jesus has caused its own set of questions and makes studying the Lord’s festive meal historically and theologically critical for the Christian church in each generation.**

**Over the years the teaching and practice of the Lord’s Supper has been loaded with verbal and interpretive *landmines*. Aware of this fact, Martin Luther attached his first comprehensive formulation of the Christian faith to his grand “Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper” (1528).[[2]](#footnote-2) Revisiting the Lord’s Supper as a keystone of faith therefore can *help* us understand Jesus’ *presence* in the Holy Supper. Or, as some say, the dogma of God’s presence in bread/wine is irrelevant and uninteresting to present-day generations who claim wrestle with more authentic concerns. As a result gaining an understanding the Lord’s Supper is vital to the Christian faith today and is discussed with renewed intensity.[[3]](#footnote-3)**

**We pray that God’s Spirit assist us in finding right words and fitting expressions for discussing the Lord’s Supper. Past history, the use of dogmatic phrases, Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic practices, and Reformed philosophy have put their own burden on the subject. They keep us constantly on alert as we consult God’s Word in Bible texts and aim to put its vital message in a true and simple way.[[4]](#footnote-4)**

**I. The Lord’s Presence**

**A quick review of the *changeover* from Passover to the Lord’s Supper is important as a contextual framework for understanding the Lord’s presence at his banquet. Jesus indicates that the Passover is to be his final meal for a reason. He is eating the Passover with his followers because he knows that he is going to die shortly and he does not want the purpose of his death to be lost on future generations [1Co 11:26]. The lamb of sacrifice prepared at the Jewish Passover is about to be to be overshadowed by Jesus’ own sacrifice as “the Lamb of God” [Jn 1:35; Acts 8:32-34; 1Pe 1:19].**

**From Passover to Lord’s Supper**

**By changing the old feast, Jesus *freed* the Passover meal from its former legal restrictions. He changed the rite, but not its meaning. Among God’s people Passover [*pesach* in Hebrew, Ex 12:1-30] was not an ordinary celebration. Mosaic Law prescribed its activities. The Passover meal, never eaten alone, traditionally consisted of enough persons to consume a one-year-old lamb. At mealtime flat loaves of unleavened bread (*matzah*) called ‘exodus bread,’ stood on the table.**

 **Unleavened bread had a twofold meaning. It indicated Israel’s *haste* in preparing to flee [Ex 12:11]. It also recalled the days of *exodus* when Israelites ate bread unleavened. “Bread of affliction,” they called it, recalling hardships accompanying their flight to freedom [Dt 16:3]. Households in Israel called to remembrance the day in Egypt when the Lord mercifully saved the firstborn from death. Lamb’s blood smeared on the doorframe – a sign that they believed God’s word and promise – spared those marked for death in the plague that struck throughout Egypt. The centerpiece of Israel’s national celebration, therefore, was to sacrifice a lamb, an unblemished lamb in thanksgiving [Ex 12:1-11]. Ceremonial customs changed over time, but the sacrificial lamb stayed an essential element of worship.**

**The Passover ritual**

**With what rites did Israel celebrate the Passover in Jesus’ day? We do not know exactly. Passover rites probably consisted of seven elements as *memorial signs of God’s presence*, his attendant care and his special promise to Israel. The roasted lamb and unleavened bread are central at the table. Next to them stand a ritual wine cup to be ceremonially filled four times, bitter herbs, two dishes of vinegar and salt water, and a tasty red mixture of nuts and fruit.**

**Preparation of the Passover (*paschal*) lamb *is prescribed* by law. Lambs, selected in advance, normally are brought to the Temple grounds in early afternoon. The Levites slaughter the lambs and burn the animal’s fat, kidneys, liver and tail on the altar as a sacrifice to the Lord. The Priests catch the lamb’s blood in gold or silver vessels and pass them on to a designated altar where the blood is spilled on the altar as *atonement* for sin. In God’s eyes the animal’s lifeblood covers the people’s sin, just as blood on the doorframe had done in Egypt [Ex 12:7; Heb 9:20-22].**

**The offerer then carries the lamb’s carcass, wrapped in the skin, back home where he roasts it over red-hot embers, taking care not to break a bone [Ex 12:46]. At sunset the roasted lamb is set on the table and the Passover feast begins.**

**At Mealtime**

**At the meal Jewish families orally rehearse the story of Passover. The sacred story unfolds as the meal progresses [Ex 12:26f]. After sharing the 1st cup (the cup of *sanctification*), the head of the household dutifully explains the significance of the special food elements [Ex 12:26f]. As he tells the story of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt, he interprets as he goes [Dt 26:5-11].**

**Intentionally he highlighting the meaning of three things that reflect *God’s presence with Israel*: (1) the Passover lamb, the unleavened bread, and the bitter herbs: The Passover lamb because God mercifully ‘passed over’ (*pasah*) the houses of the children Israel in Egypt [Ex 12:27]; (2) The unleavened bread because under God’s direction the fathers were released from Egypt; (3) the bitter herbs because the Egyptians embittered their lives [Ex 1:14].**

 **The abiding *presence of Israel’s covenant God* is then made personal by partaking of the Passover’s memorial *signs*. Each person breaks a piece of bread off the flat round loaf and dips the bread (*matzoh*) in the sauce. After drinking a 2nd cup (the cup of *deliverance*), the family traditionally chants from the great Hallel, Psalm 113-114, which praises the Lord God of Israel for his majesty and for his mercy on the lowly. The diners then enjoy the meal.**

**As they drink from a 3rd ceremonial cup (the cup of *thanksgiving*), they give thanks to God as the Giver of all good gifts, especially for release from bondage. The family then sings the last part of the great Hallel from Psalms 115-118 and ends the meal on a note of thanksgiving. Drinking the 4th and final cup (cup of the *kingdom*) signals that the celebration is done. At the close all joyfully repeat the refrain from Psalm 136 “His love endures forever,” praising the Lord of Israel as Creator and Redeemer. The unforgettable feast is over.**

**The Lamb’s High Feast**

**Jesus ate his last supper in *obedience* to Passover law [Mt 5:17]. At mealtime he informed his disciples: “I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God” [Mk 14:25]. Since that time God’s people no longer need to celebrate the Passover in the old form. Why? Because what Jesus *fulfilled*, he did not destroy. He transformed the Passover into an even more glorious meal. The old is past; the new has come.**

**All four Bible records highlight the *blood* of the new covenant as important. The use of blood gave Old Testament sacrifices their meaning. In Israel blood sacrifices carried a distinct message. God said, “I have given it [blood] to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life” [Lev 17:11]. In God’s eyes, *atonement* is the key to understanding the use of blood. This insight helps us understand what Jesus means when he says, “Take drink, this is the new covenant *in my blood*.” What does atonement mean?**

**Then as now, atonement has to do with an *exchange* that takes place between God and us by an act that the Bible calls *imputation*. In the Scriptures the act of imputation visually demonstrates how a person can come to be pure, just, and right in God’s sight. Old Testament Jews understood imputation because it was demonstrated graphically in Israel’s worship life.**

**After the exodus from Egypt, God formally set Israel’s worship pattern *at Sinai*. In it the promise, once given to the Hebrew patriarch Abraham, was reinforced by the sign language of sacrifice. Animal sacrifices graphically showed how God was present to justify guilty people. The sacrifices portrayed God’s atonement in action. God viewed blood on the altar as a covering for a person’s guilt. By such atoning sacrifices people once separated from God by sin were reunited with him. God shifted people’s guilt to the animal as a substitute.**

**What made Israel’s worship completely different from pagan sacrifices was God’s *promise*. The five steps in Israel’s a sin offering, for example, show the difference and help us to understand the new rite of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross and *his presence in the Supper*. Under the old covenant, sacrifice *pre-enacted* what happens in the new and was essentially *God’s* work done through human instruments. Here, in short, is what happened.**

***Step 1*: Consecration of the animal. The sinner selects an unblemished animal [lamb] from the flock and presents the animal to the priest for sacrifice. This action takes place by God’s design and the animal is set aside (*consecrated*) for God’s purposes.**

***Step 2*: Imputation of sins. The offerer presses his hand firmly on the head of the sacrificial animal and imputes his sin to it. By this action the animal is officially removed from the possession of the worshiper and devoted to God. Now it is God’s appointed vehicle to bear the sinner’s guilt. It is God’s own sacrifice.**

***Step 3*: Death contends with life. The priest slaughters the animal and it dies. But the victory belongs to life because, as God sees this action, the animal’s death is the means to obtain the blood for atonement.**

***Step 4:* Atonement by blood. Streaming blood of the slaughtered animal is immediately caught in a basin and stirred by the priest’s finger to prevent clotting. Blood is the sign of life. And the shed-blood is used for the purpose God clearly designated when he said: “For the life of the creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that make’s atonement for one’s life” [Lev 17:11].**

 **With this action the exchange is done. The blood is ritually sprinkled on the altar. In this way the animal’s death brings believers new life. By God’s design its life-blood is substituted for death that a law-breaker deserves. Blood, spread on the mercy seat in the Tabernacle, covers the sins of the worshiper as clean white-cloth can hide filth from sight. The worshiper is free of sin for the sake of the substitute. He stands justified in God’s court. He trusts God’s verdict is true. “This faith,” as the Christian confession states, “is imputed to us for righteousness. [Ro 3:21-26; 4:5; CA IV].**

***Step 5*: Dismissal in peace. Burning the animal’s fat and flesh ends the sacrifice. The pungent smell of burning parts creates an odor well pleasing to the Lord [Ex 29:18]. This graphic Jewish expression indicates how God delights in faith-born sacrifices, just as God “smelled the pleasing aroma” of Noah’s sacrifice after the Flood [Ge 8:21]. Thus Israelite worship ends dramatically. Guilty lawbreakers are declared free. Sinners are sentenced, but not to death as they deserve. Their sentence is commuted to life with God eternally. They are dismissed and return home in peace.**

**After the changeover from Passover, *God’s presence* in the new Supper is no longer by promise but *in person*. Only two ingredients make up the new Supper, an earthly element (bread/wine) and a heavenly element (Jesus’ body/blood). The centerpiece of the new supper is not a slaughtered animal but Jesus Christ himself. He is the lamb of sacrifice and his services are superior to priestly sacrifices under the old covenant because they are unrepeatable and permanent [Heb 7:26f].**

**In the historic transition from the Passover to the Lord’s Supper, the meal went from shadow to *reality* (our key topic word). The *real presence* of Christ under the form of bread/wine superseded God’s promise made under the cover of law. Although Jesus ate his last supper in obedience to Passover law [Mt 5:17], he transformed it into an even more glorious meal. The old festival prefigured and forecast the coming of Christ. Now “the *reality* is found in Christ” [Col 2:16f].**

**Into God’s presence**

**When Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper, he gives compelling reasons for its continuation. At the last Passover he set precedent for future meals by stating explicitly, “*Do this*, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me” [1 Co 11:25]. This mandate is much *more* than a worshipful act of remembrance. The memorial act aims at *doing* what Jesus said and *receiving* what Jesus is giving. An important reason for Jesus’ invitation to come to the new supper therefore is that believers receive their legacy, namely, forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God. But significantly, in receiving his body/blood, the faithful at the same time come *into God’s presence.***

**Receiving a bequest by means of a meal may strike us as unusual. *Inheritances* normally come to us by use of legal papers. But God guarantees our inheritance in a more personal way. He invites us to supper. By attending Jesus’ feast, we come *into God’s presence* to receive our inheritance, signed and sealed with Jesus’ blood. How can this be?**

**We need to recall that Jesus’ presence on earth did not end with death, as ours does. It is true that Jesus ate the Last Supper in anticipation of his death. But when he died, death gave way to *life* [1 Co 15]. Jesus left earth alive, only to return to his heavenly Father [Ac 1:9-11]. In leaving, however, the Lord Jesus did not leave us without his presence. He promised to be with us always until the world comes to an end. Today Jesus is present *everywhere* and he fills heaven and earth with his presence [Mt 28:20].**

**But God’s presence in the Lord’s Supper serves a *specific* purpose. Jesus chose to come to us under the form of bread and wine to assure us of God’s forgiveness in a *personal* way. His presence at the Lord’s Table is a body/blood presence, as he said: “This is *my* body, This is *my* blood.” By faith we cling to Christ’s words as to a mystery of God’s grace.**

**A mystery**

**The Bible calls God’s revelation in Christ a *mystery* – a word that occurs frequently in the New Testament with reference to Christ [Eph 3:4; Col 4:3; 1 Ti 3:16]. In each of these cases the mystery focuses on God’s work of salvation in Christ and helps us to understand Christ’s presence in his holy supper. Christians are used to speaking of this mystery as a *sacrament.* Ever since the Latin Bible used the term *sacrament* interchangeably for *mystery*, Christians, particularly in the West, refer to the Lord’s Supper as a sacrament and his presence in the Supper as a *sacramental presence*.**

**St. Paul identifies Jesus himself as *the* mystery [orsacrament], not in the sense of some mystical truth represented by certain objects, like gods of pagan mystery religions. Jesus, the man born of Mary, is the “mystery of God, namely Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” [Col 2:2]. [[5]](#footnote-5) Christ and his work is *the* mystery because he is truly God hidden in flesh. Far from merely representing God, Jesus is God incarnate.**

**This mystery of God at work on earth unfolds in Jesus’ life, as the Gospels record. In a hymn dedicated to Christ, St. Paul shows how God’s work on earth progresses: “Beyond all question, the *mystery* of godliness is great,” Paul explains: “He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory”[I Timothy 3:16]. In the Latin Bible, Jerome translates the mystery with the term “sacrament.”[[6]](#footnote-6) The Latin word “*sacramentum*” is used to translate, not transliterate, the original Greek word “mystery.” [[7]](#footnote-7)**

**Dr. Martin Luther cites this important passage from St. Paul in his formative treatise on the Roman sacramental system.[[8]](#footnote-8)4 In explaining the significance of the term “sacrament” for our understanding, he does a word study for us:**

**Nowhere in all of the Holy Scriptures is this word *sacramentum* employed in the sense in which we use the term; it has an entirely different meaning. For wherever it occurs it denotes not the sign of a sacred thing, but the sacred, secret, hidden thing itself. Thus Paul writes in I Cor. 4 [:1]: "This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the 'mysteries' of God," that is, the sacraments. For where we have [in the Vulgate] the word *sacramentum* the Greek original has *mysterion,* which the translator sometimes translates and sometimes retains in its Greek form. ...**

**Thus Christ himself is called a “sacrament” in I Tim. 3 [:16]: “Great indeed, is the sacrament (that is the mystery): He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.” Why have they not drawn out of this passage an eighth sacrament, since they have the clear authority of Paul? ...**

**Therefore, sacrament, or mystery, in Paul is that wisdom of the Spirit, *hidden in a mystery*, as he says in 1 Cor. 2 [:7-8], which is Christ, who for this very reason is not known to the rulers of this world, wherefore they also crucified him, and to them he remains to this day folly [1Cor. 1:23], an offense, a stumbling stone [Rom. 9:32-33], and a sign that is spoken against [Luke 2:34] ... Therefore a sacrament is a mystery, or secret thing, which is set forth in words, but received by faith in the heart.**

**How does this insight apply? The answer lies in the way God *reveals* himself so that we can *come* *into his presence*, in Hebrew idiom, how we face him. The secret touches on the secret of God’s glory and majesty. In his wisdom God chose to reveal himself in a way unknown to the world [1Co 2:7-10], in a manner beyond human experience, in a *mystery* that demands faith.**

**Normally, in human experience, something *revealed i*s no longer hidden. A butterfly, for example, comes *out of* hiding in a cocoon to reveal its beauty. But when God reveals his glory, he *goes into hiding* – he conceals himself in flesh. At Bethlehem and on the cross, our eyes see Jesus to be as human as we are. Only by faith are we able to see that Jesus is God – God-and-man in an indescribable, indivisible, and eternal union. Faith grasps the mystery of God’s work on earth and receives its benefits.**

**The meaning of a sacrament**

**Now we know why Jesus instituted the sacrament. He wants to *confirm and strengthen* our faith.[[9]](#footnote-9)5 And his Spirit enables us to look beneath the cover of flesh and to see that “God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ” [2Co 5:19; 1Co 2:10-13]. Now by faith we get the full impact of the prophet’s words “Truly you are a God who *hides* himself, O God and Savior of Israel” [Is 45:15], a passage indispensable for understanding Luther’s reform.**

**But, to our further amazement, God *hides his presence* not once but *twice*. As Creator, he is concealed in his creation, for no one has ever seen nor touched him [Ro 1:20; Jn 1:18]. But as Redeemer, God enters his own creation and *hides* himself there for a reason. God joins himself to the human race, takes on human form, conceals his earthly presence, and dies on a cross to save the world from itself. [2Co 5:19]. This news of salvation is the precious gospel of God’s glory and grace.**

**Then, at his departure from earth, the Savior reveals his love for us once more by hiding his presence from sight. In a telling passage on Psalm 18, 11, Luther observed that in the Lord’s Supper Jesus Christ comes to us “in his *most hidden form*.”[[10]](#footnote-10)6 Hidden from sight yet revealed in his Word, the Savior comes to us and announces quietly, clearly and explicitly, “This is my body and my blood.” Jesus is *present at the meal, hidden under the form* *of bread and wine*, to give us the benefits of his death on the cross, namely, atonement with God.**

**We might harbor the hope that God would come to us *directly*. Moses once asked to come into God’s presence and see God face to face, but God turned him down flat and explained why. God is holy and we are unholy. If God should come to us directly in full-blown glory, we would die. “No one may see me and live,” God says [Ex 33:18-20]. Therefore God comes *into our presence* in lowliness and covers his holiness. He conceals his glory and lets us see him “from the back,” as it were. There we learn to know God as gracious and compassionate, but only by seeing him *from behind*, as he passes by in our history, in our time, in our space, in our place [Ex 33:22; 34:6].**

**Seeing Christ on the cross is God’s way of dealing with us. By his death Christ carried out his legacy of love to be our Savior. When he left the earth, he left behind God’s legacy in the same way it came, namely, *hidden in a mystery*. He wrapped his legacy of love in his Supper. It was to be his means of having us come *into God’s presence* to live before God in holiness. Mary’s Son promises to deal with us to the end of time by coming to us personally. “Take eat,” he says simply and sincerely, “This is my body which is given for you for the forgiveness of sins.” By means of the sacrament, Jesus is present to give us his body and blood and thereby assures us of his abiding presence.**

**II. Sacramental presence: the words of institution**

**By teaching Christ’s *sacramental presence* we are taking the words of Christ’s institution of his Supper *at face value*. Jesus meant the words of institution to be taken in their literal sense, exactly as they read. The mandate, “Do this in remembrance of me,” refers specifically to taking bread/wine as the words say: “This is my body, this is my blood.” The sacramental presence of the body and blood rests on these words of God.**

**After instructing “Do this in remembrance of me,” Jesus immediately explains precisely what we are to do to remember his death. He took bread and wine and said: “Take, eat and drink. This is my body, thisis my blood.” As the words read, Jesus’ body and blood make the memorial meal of bread/wine into a *sacrament* by uniting earthly and heavenly elements as God wills. Receiving the body and blood of the Lamb who died for the sins of the world makes the Lord’s Supper truly memorable. How does Jesus accomplish his will for us?**

**When Jesus asks us to eat the bread and drink from the cup, he is asking us to take bread and wine into our mouths. But what the mouth receives is more than bread and wine. Jesus specifically indicates that we receive his body and blood. St. Paul explains this *mystery* to the Christians at Corinth by observing: “Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a *joint sharing* in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread which we break a *joint sharing* in the body of Christ?” [1Co 10:16].[[11]](#footnote-11)**

**St. Paul does not claim that the bread itself is Jesus’ body. The bread we eat remains bread, wholly and distinct in itself. Jesus’ body likewise remains the body of the ascended Lord, wholly and distinct. But in the Lord’s Supper the bread is united with Jesus’ body in such a way that we receive him in a manner as mysterious as his own incarnation. What does this mean?**

**When Jesus informs us: “This is my body,” he is using a figure of speech common to all languages. In this particular way of speaking (*synecdoche*), two things are united without eliminating the plain sense of the words. For example, one may say about a red-hot iron: “This is hot.” *This* evidently refers to the iron that has all the qualities of iron. Iron itself is distinct from its heat. Heat, likewise, has its own distinct qualities. But in a red-hot iron, iron and heat are united as one. They *jointly share* their distinct qualities, as we know too well when we tell a child not to touch a hot stove.**

**In a way far beyond human understanding and earthly examples, Jesus reveals what happens in the Lord’s Supper by his manner of speaking. With the words, “Take eat, this is my body,” Jesus does not mean to say he is extending his human body all over the world to eat. Human bodies by nature are limited to time and space. Yet Jesus is more than a human being; he is also God. In him all the fullness of the Deity lives *in bodily form*, as St. Paul testifies [Col 2:9].**

**When Jesus presents his body in his Supper, he does so as *one person* [FC: SD VIII, 5, 16f]. We worship one Lord Jesus Christ and not two, one divine and the other human [1Jo 4:2-3]. His humanity is the offense, not his deity. That *this man* Jesus is God defies all experience and explanation.**

**But the good news is that God became human, one of us, for our sake. God *revealed* this glorious *secret openly* at Jesus’ birth from a virgin, at Jesus’ death on the cross, and at Jesus’ resurrection from a tomb. God spoke clearly about the incarnation of his Son at Jesus’ baptism and transfiguration. In those places God openly claimed: “*This* is my Son, whom I love” [Mt 3:17; 17:15]. If the world had recognized God’s secret wisdom in Christ Jesus, its rulers would never have crucified him [1Co 2:6-10].**

**Now the body of the crucified, resurrected and ascended Lord, once confined to earth in time and space, is given us at the Lord’s Supper [1Co 15:44-49]. When Jesus says, “This is my body,” he assures us that he is *really present bodily* under the form of bread and wine. He is there for us. He wants to give us our inheritance. The real presence of our Lord remains a mystery to the mind and this mystery is grasped only by faith. Faith, like a God-given hand, holds on to mysteries revealed by God, great mysteries of life, such as the creation of the world, God’s revelation of himself as Father-Son-and Holy Spirit, and Jesus’ incarnation [1Co 4:1; 2:6-10; Heb 11:3].**

**Without these divine mysteries revealed in God’s Word, we would not need faith [Ro 10:17; 10:8-12]. Without them we would be understand and comprehend God *on our own terms*. Then God would be no greater than our mind and we would, in fact, be god. Then our belief systems would be a product of our own devising and God a mere extension of our deepest desires [Ge 3:4]. But then we would be self-deceived and the world’s great deception would go into fulfillment in our lives. All this has happened because Satan separated mankind from God in its desire to become “like God” [Ge 3:13].**

**But try as we may, we cannot put God in a box. Christians did not invent the Christian faith. Nor did the Creator call on us to atone for our wrongdoings by making the ultimate sacrifice of our own child! [Mic 6:7]. Nor did *we* ask God to sacrifice his Son to right our wrongs. God chose to reveal his love to us in a way beyond our wildest imagination. He sent his Son to take on our flesh and blood and by his death to be reconciled with us [Jo 3:16; 2Co 5:19].**

**God’s strong love for us freely moved him to give his own Son into death to right the wrongs his Son never committed [2Co 5:21]. God did not spare his own Son. In an act of unbelievable kindness he gave him up for us all [Ro 8:32]. Christians have consistently proclaimed this good news since the beginning of time in their worship of God [Gn 3:15, 20; Mk 9:24]. Under the old covenant worship a consecrated lamb served God’s purposes. But in New Testament worship Jesus is the lamb of sacrifice, and the Lord’s Supper is the Lamb’s high feast. As Jesus explicitly indicates, he himself *set apart his body and blood to be pre*sent at the Table to bring us God’s forgiveness won on the cross.**

**It would be confusing therefore to understand Jesus’ words *this is my body* in a *figurative* way of speaking. Such an understanding would mean that the bread is a mere sign of his body. As one churchman commented, “If the Lord had desired to institute only symbols or signs, he had done better to keep the Passover, which indeed pictured the death of Christ much more clearly. In that case, the New Testament would be governed by the Old.”[[12]](#footnote-12)**

**On occasion Jesus does speak of himself figuratively. When he says, “I am the gate ... the light ... the vine,” he is not speaking literally [Jn 7:9; 9:5; 15:5]. Jesus is not a gate made of stone or wood. The gate illustration merely helps our mind’s eye to see him as “the way” to enter into God’s house [Ac 9:2]. The figure of speech lies in the descriptive words like gate-light-vine. These colorful words are illustrations that help us to picture something vividly in our mind. The figure of speech lies in the illustration, not in the word that links the subject with the picture.**

**But Jesus’ body *is* a *real* body, not a picture or a product of our faith. When Jesus says, “This is my body, which is for you,” he is not talking in picture language about some spiritual, figurative body. He is referring to his real, true body, the body that hung on a cross and now is *really present* and comes to us in sacramental form. The words of Jesus make this clear, and by faith we understand what defies our eyes.**

**Interpreting the words**

**Over the ages the Christian church undertook to define the mystery of God’s presence, a quest that also affected administering the sacrament. In medieval times interpretations arose that were hotly debated because of their philosophic pre-understanding. One interpretation attempted to leave the *mode of the mystery* and *manner of God’s presence* [its που] unsolved and undefined. Others sought to explain the inexplicable by viewing the mystery through the filter of Aristotle’s philosophy. The reformer Martin Luther identifies three distinct traditions: the Augustinian, the Dominican and the Franciscan.[[13]](#footnote-13)7**

**The Augustinian tradition**

**To work through the ins and outs of St. Augustine’s foundational presentation on the sacrament would take us too far a-field, as insightful as the effort might be for understanding of *terms*. Augustine’s views on the sacraments basically originated in what he taught about grace and were honed by his controversies as bishop in defense of the church.**

**In his writings Augustine attempts to show how the sacrament’s *signs* fit with the word. The Supper’s elements, he observed, are visible signs and as such have a certain resemblance to what they represent. So water is a sign of *washing*, bread/wine of *eating*. But, he noted, the signs become what they are because of God’s Word that interprets them. In a classic statement, Augustine confessed the *mystery* of the Lord’s Supper in a simple way: “The Word is added to the element and it becomes a sacrament”[[14]](#footnote-14)8 An Augustinian Eremite, Martin Luther, later latched on to Augustine’s views as a starting point for his debate with the Roman Council [SA III, V, 1].**

**But in struggling to express himself Augustine, it seems, understood his statement in two ways: objectively, as a divine mystery of Christ’s presence, but also *subjectively*, as a product of faith. To explain the latter he poses a rhetorical question: Where does the power come from so that the element that touches our body can purify the heart unless the word effects this? His answer: “Not because it is spoken but because it is *believed.*”[[15]](#footnote-15)9**

**Over a thousand years later Luther and the confessors sought to *clarify* the problem of the *sacramental presence* by *distinguishing*, not separating, the mystery of the Supper from its use (*essence from function*). Without indicating how the real presence occurs, the Lutheran confessors simply and specifically confessed the *mystery* of the real presence: “It is taught among us that the true body and blood of Christ are *really present* in the Supper of our Lord under the form of bread and wine and are there distributed and received” [CA X]. They preferred to use the word “*under”* [Latin, *sub*] because it best conveyed the *hiddenness* of God, the *mystery of Christ’s presence.***

**This *sacramental mystery* was so central to Luther’s reform that any departure from it ran into direct conflict with the core teaching of “Christ and faith,” by which the church stands or falls [SA II, I-II]. Through immersion in Bible study dear Doctor Luther was led by God to take Bible words *at face value* and to reevaluate the approaches of medieval schoolmen concerning Jesus’ presence in the Lord’s Supper. From Scripture he learned how *superficial and limited* all human knowledge and how fragile human deductions are.**

**Scholastic traditions**

**That limitation proved to be the problem of the medieval schoolmen. They subjected God’s Word and his Supper to rational explanations and extended definitions. They relied on philosophic principles to guide their understanding of *reality* and applied these sophistries to explain Christ’s *real presence* in the sacrament. To pursue the intricacies of scholastic thought is an exercise in itself.[[16]](#footnote-16)10 Suffice it to say that two basic universal *views of reality* fought with one another. One maintained that realitylies *beyond* the thing (*res*), the other that reality lies *in* the thing (*res*).[[17]](#footnote-17)**

**From these two *approaches* to the question of reality, monks of the Dominican and Franciscan traditions fought with one another about how Christ’s *presence in his Supper* came to be. By use of Aristotelian terms, each monastic tradition tried to clarify *how* bread/wine are or become body/blood. Following the Dominican Thomas Aquinas, the prevailing opinion was that priestly consecration changed bread/wine into the substance of body/blood. This *transubstantiation*, however, was a reality-change *beyond* the thing. Bread/wine were still *accidentally* there in *form* and we taste them. But God changed the entire *substance* of bread/wine, as it were, supernaturally.[[18]](#footnote-18)11**

**Luther dismisses such teaching as *sophistry.* “As for transubstantiation,” he writes candidly, “we have no regard for the subtle sophistry of those who teach that the bread and wine surrender or lose their natural substance and retain only the appearance and shape of bread without any longer being real bread” [SA III, VI, 5]. On the biblical level Luther calls St. Paul to witness: “That bread is and remains there agrees better with the Scriptures, as St. Paul himself states, ‘The bread which we break’ [1Co 10:16] and again, ‘Let a man so eat of the bread’ [1 Co 11:28].”**

**But the view of transubstantiation held by the Angelic Doctor Aquinas, Luther points out, does not even stand up to philosophic scrutiny. “This opinion of Thomas hangs so completely in the air without support of Scripture or reason,” Luther observes, “that it seems to me he knows neither his philosophy nor his logic. For Aristotle speaks of subject and accidents very differently from St. Thomas.” Therefore “no violence is to be done to the words of God, whether by man or an angel [☺]. They are to be retained in their simplest meaning. ...Unless the context manifestly compels it, they are not to be understood apart from their grammatical and proper sense” [LW 36, 29f].**

**III. The sacramental presence: use**

**While Jesus’ words of institution are vital for Christian faith, the words are simultaneously an invitation to action. “Take and eat,” Jesus says. Invited guests are to partake of God’s heavenly food to be edified, strengthened in faith, and bound by God’s love. These benefits take place during the *entire action* that Christ instituted. Therefore the Supper is only truly celebrated when the *three formal acts* of consecration, distribution, and reception take place as individual parts of the entire administration of the Lord’s Supper.**

**Formally, the meal marks that precious *moment in time* instituted by Christ and consists of basic acts carried out as part of the full action of worship. God not only designated the appointed time [καιρος in Mt 26:18] for the death of the Lord Christ, the moment designed to fulfill his overall plan of salvation. The Lord Jesus also *appoints the time for his sacramental presence*, the moment designed by his specific institution. God wills to be present in his Supper, St. Paul states, so that “*whenever* you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” [1 Co 11:26].**

**It is important to carry out *all the acts* of the Lord’s Supper as Christ ordained. Otherwise the Supper does not serve God’s purposes as a sacrament. Merely to consecrate bread/wine without eating and drinking them fails to fulfill Christ’s mandate. The Lord Jesus intended the blessed bread to be distributed, received and eaten, not stored or carried about in worship. A good guideline to follow is that “nothing has the character of a sacrament *apart from the use* instituted by Christ, or apart from the divinely instituted action” [FC:SD VII: 85].**

**1. Consecration**

**Administration of the Lord’s Supper begins with three distinct acts that take place sequentially but simultaneously: Setting apart bread and wine for God’s purposes (separation); placing God’s blessing on this food by designating it for use in the Lord’s Supper (blessing); and publicly proclaiming the banquet food to be Christ’s body and blood (sacramental union) [1Co 11:23-25]. Taken together, these actions make up the consecration. By these acts worshipers know that they are *in Christ’s presence* and are receiving God’s food for strengthening their faith.**

**St. Paul points to the act of consecration when he writes about “the cup of blessing which we bless” [1Co 10:16], referring undoubtedly to the third cup offered during Passover. Diners had received the cup of blessing for a special reason. By drinking from it they gave thanks to God as the Giver of gifts, especially for gifts from the field and for Israel’s new God-given life freed from slavery. Families worshiped together by singing the great Hallelujah from the Psalms.**

**In the Lord’s Supper Jesus gave new form to the Pascal meal. The exact order Jesus used in switching old forms to new is not clear from the biblical account. Nor do the records indicate specific words Jesus used in blessing. But the Scriptures clearly indicate why Jesus consecrated the new meal. The former cup of blessing is now “the new covenant in my blood” [Lk 22:20]. God’s people now thank God that the bread we eat is a “sharing in the body of Christ” and the cup we drink is a “sharing in the blood of Christ” [1Co 10: 16]. Set before us at the table is the *mystery of God’s love* in the visible form of bread and wine, a witness to his grace.**

**C.F.W. Walther, following John Gerhard, enlarges on the reasons for the consecration. The recitation of the words is *not a mere historical repetition* of what Christ did. What happens in consecrating is important for the mystery of Christ’s presence. The action is:**

**(1) A testimony. “By means of festively repeating the words of institution, the public servant openly attests that he intends to celebrate Christ’s most holy testament according to his institution, ordinance and command, and therefore not according to his own devising but as a caretaker of God's mysteries.”**

**(2) A separation. “By this very action he separates the external symbols of bread and wine from their common use, so that they are no longer mere bread and wine but instruments.”**

**(3) An invocation. “[The minister] earnestly prays that Christ might be present in the sacramental action by virtue of his promise, and himself distribute his body and blood to the communicants by means of these external symbols.”**

**(4) A witness. “[The minister] testifies that the consecrated bread is the communion of his body and the consecrated wine is the communion of His blood by virtue of the ordinance and institution of the truthful and almighty Christ.”**

**(5) An invitation. “The minister admonishes all participants to come forward in true faith and repentance, true fear and reverence, and with an earnest desire to amend their life.”[[19]](#footnote-19)12**

**Consecration in itself therefore is not intended to be the defining moment when the sacramental union occurs, as little as is the beginning of distribution or the moment of reception or any moment in between. Such a chronological fragmentation does not help our understanding of the mystery of Christ’s presence and remains in the realm of theological opinion.[[20]](#footnote-20)13**

**In the act of consecration therefore Christ’s presence lies in what he mandated when he said, “Do this.” In the Book of Concord the gospel-centered Confessors affirm as much: “The truthful and almighty words of Jesus Christ which he spoke in the first institution were not only efficacious in the first Supper but they still retain their validity and efficacious power in all places where the Supper is observed according to Christ’s institution and where his words are used, and the body and blood of Christ are truly present, distributed and received by the virtue and potency of the same words which Christ spoke in the first Supper” [FC:SD VII:75].**

**Because Christ’s institution makes *all formal actions* of the Supper important, the Lutheran confession continues by asserting: “This blessing or recitation of Christ's words by itself, if the *entire action* of the Lord’s Supper as Christ ordained it is not observed (if, for instance, the blessed bread is not distributed, received, or eaten but is locked up, offered up, or carried about) does not make a sacrament. ...Nothing has the character of a sacrament *apart from the use* *instituted by Christ, or apart from the divinely instituted action*.” [FC:SD VII: 83ff]**

**One act indispensable to consecration is a public proclamation of what is happening. Each Bible record shows that Christ sets this meal apart in word and deed. He *took bread* and the *cup* (separation), and *when he had given thanks* (blessing), *he gave it to them, saying* (public proclamation) [1Co 11:23f]. The words Jesus uses, “This is my body ... my blood, given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins,” show the importance of proclaiming God’s word publicly in consecration. Adding God’s word to the earthly element makes it a sacrament, as we heard in an early Christian church’s definition [Augustine in Tract. 80].**

**Whatever order we follow, we should not leave out Jesus’ words of institution. These words make the good news *public and personal*. The words convey Jesus’ death message and its meaning to the audience. St. Paul indicates that “whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are proclaiming the Lord’s death until he comes” [1Co 11:26]. But beyond proclamation the words make the goods news personal. They are meant “for you,” as Jesus explicitly says [Lk 22:19f]. The words stir, strengthen, and assure each believer that the Lord’s Supper is what Jesus says it is and gives what Jesus promises. The sacrament is a gift from the banquet Host. It assures us that his death blots out guilt before God. It extends God’s forgiveness to downcast hearts. We can leave at peace.**

**2. Distribution**

**Distributing gifts involves both the gift and the giver and is an intimate act of sharing. When Israelites celebrated Passover, families shared gifts of food that recalled how God released their**

**Fore-fathers from Egypt. Bittersweet memories were coupled with joy-filled acts of thanksgiving. Each part of the meal highlighted the Lord’s *constant care* and the *prophetic promises* that the LORD God of Israel gave his people. It was a family’s intimate time with God, a celebration of community that was never to be forgotten.**

**In the Lord’s Supper Christians also intimately share in a meal. Under the form of earthly food we receive the body and blood of God’s only Son. Each part of the meal highlights the Lord’s constant care for us: Jesus’ death to make us pure and holy in God’s sight [Ac 20:28; 1Jn 1:7], his crucifixion to free us from death and evil [2Co 1:21-22]. The distribution of bread and wine brings the family of believers these benefits personally and collectively. When we eat at the Lord’s Table together, we are *in the presence of God*. It is a Christian congregation’s intimate time with God – a celebration of communion, never to be forgotten [1Co 11:26].**

**Distribution of God’s gifts takes place in a sequence. Jesus first distributed bread, then wine from a cup. At Passover unleavened bread was used to train Israel in faith. Without leaven (yeast), bread was pure and quick to bake. Eating it signified the *haste* of Israel’s exodus, and the *hardship* [Ex 12:17-20]. It kept God’s promises before each diner’s eyes, as did the traditional use of the cup filled with watered-down wine.**

**But Jesus’ new meal, set free from old testament restrictions, does not focus on the make-up of bread and the cup [Mt 26:29; Mk 14:25]. Using bread is essential, whether leavened or unleavened, baked in loaves or wafers, made of oats, barley, wheat, corn, rye or rice – provided one uses simple bread baked from flour and water [Mt 26:26].**

**The same holds true for the cup. Whether one uses white wine or red, watered-down or the juice of still unfermented grapes is not essential – provided that we drink of the “fruit of the vine” [Mt 26:29, Mk 14:25; Lk 22:18]. Christian churches today freely and almost uniformly follow the past practice of using unleavened bread and wine, primarily because of their historical significance and to honor the example of Jesus.**

**Even distribution customs are not prescribed. To insist on breaking bread because Jesus broke bread at the first supper goes beyond Jesus’ institution [Lk 22:19]. Customs such as reclining at the meal, washing feet before eating, breaking off pieces from flat loaves instead of slicing, or lifting up hands to pray, were meaningful practices in vogue at Jesus’ time [Lk 22:17; Jn 13:2-5; 1Ti 2:8]. But they are not essential in celebrating the Lord’s Supper.**

**Only the formal actions of consecration, distribution, and reception are needed to fulfill the purpose of Jesus’ meal. All else is done in Christian liberty. In matters of custom Christians aim to act in love – fostering meaningful worship in form and beauty [Php 4:8], seeking unity in worship without insisting on uniformity in every custom or ceremony [1Co 10:23-31]. But insistence on one way only in matters of Christian freedom takes away freedom. Such action may call for a witness to those who take away Christian liberty by making custom into a new ceremonial law [Col 2:16f].**

**This freedom also applies to the words spoken at the time of distribution. In serving bread and wine, we repeat words used previously in the consecration for several reasons. Repeating Jesus’ words assure those who come to receive the food of the precious gift they are now receiving. At the same time repeating the words gives a public testimony of Christian faith in clear and unmistakable terms. But the words spoken in distribution may vary.**

**What this means becomes clear from an historical incident. A European government once imposed on Christians a specific word-formula for distribution. The government insisted that state churches use the words: “*Jesus said,* ‘This is my body.’” Congregations who refused to distribute the Lord’s Supper precisely in this way had their churches closed, door-latches chained, and their church leaders imprisoned. Under the circumstances the wording “*Jesus said*” proved to be misleading.**

**The situation was reminiscent of Jesus’ clash with the government. When Pilate officially noted the kingship of Jesus, Jewish opponents let the claim stand only if the record stated: “*Jesus said*, I am a king” [Jn 19:21 KJV]. In the face of this ambiguous statement Christians gave a clear-cut testimony. In emphatic and unequivocal words they stated: Jesus is really and truly a king, and he has come to save the world from sin [Jn 19:35].**

**European Christians likewise found it necessary to oppose the government-imposed wording because it was ambiguous. In the face of the formula, “*Jesus said*, ‘This is my body,’” and for the sake of clarity, Christian confessors distributed the bread with the words: “Take and eat. This is the *true* body of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, given into death for your sins.” This freely worded verbal witness left no doubt what guests at the Table are receiving. It professed the *mystery* of Christ at work in his sacrament and his *real presence* to guarantee life with God. All diners knew that in the high feast Christians celebrate life with God for good reason. They are receiving the true body and blood of the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world [Jn 1:29] and keeps them in the true faith unto life everlasting.**

**3. Reception**

**In the act of receiving the Lord’s Supper we likewise follow Christ’s instructions. When Jesus says, “Take and eat” or “drink from it,” he is giving more than an invitation to the table. He is also issuing a gracious command. He wants nobody in attendance to leave without receiving *both* the bread and the wine. To receive bread alone is not the intent of Jesus’ institution nor should we change his gracious command. To give guests only bread (body) without the cup goes beyond Jesus’ gracious mandate, especially since Jesus says of the cup, “*All of you,* drink from it” [Mt 26:27].**

**How Jesus’ followers received the sacred food at the first Supper is not clear [Mt 26:26f]. We do not know for sure whether Jesus broke off pieces of the consecrated bread for each guest individually or distributed in another fashion, or whether Jesus held the cup to each person’s lips or passed the cup around. Essential for faith is the fact that Jesus distributed the bread and wine with the words of his new covenant. A single word from the mouth of God’s Son is a powerful pledge of God’s love for his creatures [Heb 1:1]. He speaks so that we might believe, and that by believing we might have life in his name [Jn 20:31].**

**Believing God is the ultimate goal of worship because faith takes God at his word, as St Paul testifies [Rm 3:6]. By faith we have *power over God*. By faith we hold God to his word and promises, as Jacob did when he wrestled with God and won [Ge 32:28]. Without faith, we lose God’s grace, mercy, and love for us. Without faith, God loses his glory and majesty in our lives.**

**There is no greater worship of God than to attribute majesty and glory, divinity and truth, wisdom and honor to the Lamb that was slain for us [Rev 6:12f]. Jesus cares. He is the seeker and we are the ones sought [Lk 19:10]. He is the host and the food. The words from his mouth are living, true and powerful, and are able to accomplish what he pleases [Heb 4:12; Isa 55:11].**

**Precisely because the Lord’s Supper is God’s word *to us*, we receive bread and wine in worshipful awe and reverence. We come *into God’s presence* with the same respect that we do when his word is preached. But there is a difference. In the Supper we receive God’s blessings under *visible signs*. Our faith does not make God present. Only God’s gracious word and promise make the Supper what it is. Yet by receiving his holy sacrament faith secures God’s blessings won on the cross.**

**The sacrifice of Christ, *sacramentally received*, moves us to thank him. In view of God’s mercies, we are led by his Spirit to offer our lives wholly to him in God-pleasing service. St. Paul calls this kind of offering a spiritual act of worship [Ro 12:1]. So worship comes full circle. We love him because he first loved us [1Jn 4:19] – and this is love that we walk in obedience to his commands [2 Jn :6].**

**Acting in thanksgiving is a goal of the Lord’s Supper. Christians refer to the Lord’s Supper as the Eucharist for good reason [*eucharistein,* to give thanks: Lk 22:19; 1Co 11:24]. The name comes from the prayer of thanksgiving Jesus used in calling on God to bless the bread and the cup. Following Jesus’ lead, we celebrate the holy Supper by offering God thanks for his mighty acts, especially for the gift, for the *mystery of his presence*, for the salvation freely offered us in Christ.**

**The blessing of salvation comes to us *under the form* of bread and wine set apart (consecrated) for our benefit. The gifts we receive at God’s Table are the very body and blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. By receiving his life-sustaining gifts we exalt his name and end our worship by offering him thanks for his salvation. Offering praise is our way of thanking God for his legacy of love. He has filled our hands and hearts with good gifts and united himself with us in intimate communion [1Co 10:17]. We leave at peace. Our eyes have seen God’s salvation prepared in the sight of all people [Lk 2:29-32].**

**In the holy Supper *words* and *use* coincide as God’s institution: “Take and eat, this is my body. Take and drink, this is my blood,” and together they bring God’s blessing “for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins” – to God's glory and our good! AJKoelpin**

**CA *Augsburg Confession***

 **FC: SD *Formula of Concord: Solid Declaration***

 **SA *Smalcald Articles***

 **LW *Luther’s Works, American Edition***

 **` WA *Weimar Edition of Luther’s Works***

1. This designation of Jesus as “the new testament in my blood” is found in each of the basic biblical accounts: Matthew 26:17ff; Mark 14:12ff; Luke 22:7ff; 1 Corinthians 11:23ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. LW 37, *Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper*, 161-372. The earnestness with which the Reformer wrote this treatise is expressed in the closing words of the pamphlet: “I desire with this treatise to confess my faith before God and all the world, point by point. I am determined to abide by it until my death and (so help me God!) in this faith to depart from this world and to appear before the judgment seat of our Lord Jesus Christ” (360). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Hermann Sasse, *We Confess the Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986) 134-138. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See “Lord’s Supper: The Lamb’s High Feast” in the series *People’s Bible Teachings* [Northwestern Publishing House: Milwaukee, WI. 2007. ISBN 978-0- 8100-1981-2] 83-91. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Colossians 2:2: “του μυστηριον του θεου, Χριστου, εν ω εισιν παντες οι θησαυροι της σοφιας και γνωσεως αποκρυφοι.” [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. I Timothy 3:16: “Et manifeste magnum est pietatis *sacramentum* / quod manifestatum est in carne / iustificatum est in spiritu / apparuit angelis / praedicatum est gentibus / creditum est in mundo / adsumptum est in gloria.” [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. I Timothy 3:16: “μεγα εστιν το τής ευσεβειας *μυστηριον:* ος εφανερωθη εν σαρκι.” [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. 4 LW 36, *Babylonian Captivity of the Church* [1520], 93-95. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 5 CA XIII indicates the twofold use of the sacrament: Baptism as the sacrament of *awakening* faith and the Lord Supper as the sacrament of *confirming* faith [Latin*, confirmandum*]. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. 6 LW 10:119f; WA 3, 124,29ff. Here Luther states that God dwells in darkness [hidden] in a fivefold ay: In the riddle of faith, in unapproachable light, hidden in the mystery of the incarnation, hidden in the church, and “in the sacrament of the Eucharist, where he is most completely concealed (*occultissimus*).” [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The cup of thanksgiving (*eucharistein*) is the 3rd ceremonial cup in the Passover. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. 7 In the Smalcald Article reference to the sacrament of Baptism, Luther gives three sacramental views or traditions current in the Roman Church. He hopes these views would form the basis for discussion at a General Council in Mantua in 1537. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. 8 The Latin “Accedit v e r b u m ad e l e m e n t u m et fit s a c r a m e n t u m” is found in Augustine’s work on baptism, in reference to John 3, Tractate 80; the English in the Nicene/Post Nicene Fathers, First series, VII, 344-45. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. 9 R. Seeberg, *Textbook of the History of Doctrines* (Baker Book House: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1956) Book I, 321f. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. 10 See Seeberg [above, footnote 9] for a summary of the sacramental system in the medieval church. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. *Res* is in Latin word meaning a concrete, substantive or material *thing*, as opposed to what is spiritual or desired. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. 11 Seeberg, ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. 12 C.F.W. Walther*. Pastoraltheologie* (St Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1897) 170f. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. 13 For this insight see Piepkorn, A.C. “The Moment Sacramental Union Begins,” found in *The Church*, *Selected Writings of Arthur Carl Piepkorn,* p. 247. Also, in broader context, see the essay of Thomas P. Nass, “The Moment of the Real Presence in the Lord’s Supper,” a thorough collection of Lutheran views, past and present, an essay delivered at the Mankato Pastoral Conference of the ELS in New Prague, MN, October 3, 1989 (available on-line at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)