

***"Idem ago in hac Symboli Niceni enarratione ut posteritas
habeat integram Ecclesiae doctrinam":***

Melanchthon Teaching the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed from a Vocational Perspective

Matthew Oseka

Concordia Theological Seminary in Hong Kong
香港路德會協同神學院

"Divinos aperit divina vocatio ductus".¹

I. Relevance of the Topic

In a letter penned ten years before his death, Melanchthon mentioned that he was lecturing on the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed² to ensure that future generations would have a useful explanation of the complete teaching of the church (*Idem ago in hac Symboli Niceni enarratione ut posteritas habeat integram Ecclesiae doctrinam*).³ Melanchthon's

¹ Friedrich Wahl, "*Divinos aperit divina vocatio ductus* [...]," in Samuel Friedrich Willenberg and Konstantin Gottfried Groddeck, *De divina ad officia civitatis secularia vocatione: Vom göttlichen Beruf zu weltlichen Städtämtern* (Danzig: Schreiber, 1730), F4v.

² Hereafter, referred to as the creed.

³ Philipp Melanchthon, "Alberto Hardenbergio (28. Mai 1550)," in *Opera quae supersunt omnia (Corpus Reformatorum)*, vol. 7, ed. Karl Gottlieb Bretschneider and Heinrich Ernst Bindseil (Halle an der Saale and Braunschweig: Schwetschke, 1840), 605-6 [no. 4732]. Hereafter, *Corpus Reformatorum* is abbreviated as CR. Cf. Heinz Scheible, ed., *Melanchthons Briefwechsel: Kritische und kommentierte Gesamtausgabe (Regesten)*, vol. 6 (Stuttgart and Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1988), 57 [no. 5812]. Hereafter, *Melanchthons Briefwechsel* is abbreviated as MBW.

explanation of the creed preserved as two different printed texts⁴ and one manuscript⁵ published recently is one of the least known and researched works of the Wittenberg Reformer.

Melanchthon's exposition of the creed tended to be overlooked on the false assumption that it was a sterile theological commentary on the creed or on the historical origin thereof. Nonetheless, that was not the case. The Wittenberg Reformer expounded the creed from a vocational perspective which was highly unprecedented in the history of ancient and mediaeval interpretations of the ecumenical creeds. The literature on Melanchthon is immense,⁶ so in the present paper, studies of his views on communal life,⁷ good works⁸ and patristic legacy⁹ and

⁴ Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," in *CR*, vol. 23 (1855), 197-346. Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," in *CR*, vol. 23, 349-584.

⁵ Melanchthon, *Enarratio secundae tertiaeque partis Symboli Niceni: 1550*, ed. Hans-Peter Hasse (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1996).

⁶ Wilhelm Hammer et al., ed., *Die Melanchthon-Forschung im Wandel der Jahrhunderte*, vol. 1-4 (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1967-1996); Scheible, *Melanchthon und die Reformation: Forschungsbeiträge*, ed. Gerhard May and Rolf Decot (Mainz: Zabern, 1996).

⁷ Wilhelm Dilthey, "Weltanschauung und Analyse des Menschen seit Renaissance und Reformation," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2 (Leipzig and Berlin: Teubner, 1914), 162-203 [Das natürliche System der Geisteswissenschaften im 17. Jahrhundert, IV, 1-6]; Karl Hartfelder, "Philipp Melanchthon als Praeceptor Germaniae," in *Monumenta Germaniae Paedagogica: Schulordnungen, Schulbücher und pädagogische Miszellen aus den Landen deutscher Zunge*, vol. 7, ed. Karl Kehrbach (Berlin: Hofmann, 1889); Otto Riemann, *Philippi Melanchthonis studia philosophica quam rationem et quid momenti ad ejus theologiam habuerint quaeritur* (Halle an der Saale and Magdeburg: Frieze and Fuhrmann, 1885); David C. Fink, "Against the Busybodies: Philipp Melanchthon and the 'Protestant Work Ethic'," in *Lutheranism and Social Responsibility*, ed. Nina J. Koefoed and Andrew G. Newby (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2022).

⁸ Carl E. Maxcey, *Bona Opera: A Study in the Development of the Doctrine in Philip Melanchthon* (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1980); Christoph Ernst Luthardt, "Melanchthons Arbeiten im Gebiet der Moral," in *Zur Feier des Reformationsfestes*, ed. Max Heinze (Leipzig: Edelmann, 1884); Luthardt, *Geschichte der christlichen Ethik*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: Dörffling and Franke, 1893), 38-53 [I, § 3].

⁹ Peter Fraenkel, *Testimonia Patrum: The Function of the Patristic Argument in the Theology of Philip Melanchthon* (Genf: Droz, 1961); Bernhard Dittrich, *Das Traditionsverständnis in der Confessio Augustana und in der Confutatio* (Leipzig: St. Benno-Verlag, 1983); Klaus Haendler, *Wort und Glaube bei Melanchthon: Eine Untersuchung über die Voraussetzungen und Grundlagen des melanchthonischen Kirchenbegriffes* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1968).

studies of the background and reception of his lectures on the creed¹⁰ were predominately consulted and referred to. Melanchthon's lectures on the creed brought his project of community-oriented theology, which was developed in the second¹¹ and third¹² versions of his *Loci* and in his Catechism¹³ and adumbrated in his two major ethical works,¹⁴ to completion.

II. Challenges and Benefits for Modern Readers

Many of Melanchthon's writings were translated into German in his lifetime and published accordingly. Although reading them requires familiarity with the 16th-century spelling, these German translations

¹⁰ Hasse, "Einleitung," in *Enarratio*, 13-43; Heinrich Heppe, *Dogmatik des deutschen Protestantismus im sechzehnten Jahrhundert*, vol. 1 (Gotha: Perthes, 1857), 32-34 [I, § 4]; Oswald Gottlob Schmidt, "Caspar Crucigers Leben für christliche Leser insgesamt aus den Quellen erzählt," in *Das Leben der Ältväter der lutherischen Kirche für christliche Leser insgesamt aus den Quellen erzählt*, vol. II/2, ed. Moritz Meurer (Leipzig and Dresden: Naumann, 1862), 233-93.

¹¹ Latin: Melanchthon, "Loci theologici (Secunda eorum aetas)," in *CR*, vol. 21 (1854); German: Melanchthon, *Loci communes das ist die vornehmsten Artikel christlicher Lehre*, trans. Justus Jonas (Wittenberg: Rhau, 1536).

¹² Latin: Melanchthon, "Loci theologici (Tertia eorum aetas)," in *CR*, vol. 21; German: Melanchthon, "Loci theologici Germanice (Tertia eorum aetas)," in *CR*, vol. 22 (1855); Viktorin Strigel, *Loci theologici [...] quibus Loci communes [...] Melanchthonis illustrantur [...]*, vol. 1-4, ed. Christoph Pezel (Neustadt an der Weinstrasse: Harnisch, 1582-1584).

¹³ Melanchthon, "Catechesis puerilis (1543/1540): Catechismus, das ist eine Kinderlehre (1543)," in *Supplementa Melanchthoniana: Werke Philipp Melanchthons die im Corpus Reformatorum vermisst werden*, vol. 5/1, ed. Ferdinand Cohrs (Leipzig: Haupt, 1915); Luthardt, "Melanchthons Arbeiten im Gebiet der Moral," 36-41; Luthardt, *Geschichte*, 45-46.

¹⁴ Melanchthon, "Philosophiae moralis epitome," in *CR*, vol. 16 (1850); Melanchthon, "Ethicae doctrinae elementa," in *CR*, vol. 16. These works focused on an interface between the church as communicating God's Word and the state. Strigel, *In Epitomen philosophiae moralis Philippi Melanchthonis ὑπομνήματα*, ed. Pezel (Neustadt an der Weinstrasse: Harnisch, 1590); Pezel, *Epitome philosophiae moralis sive ethicae Philippi Melanchthonis*, vol. 1-2 (Zerbst: Faber, 1589); Luthardt, *Geschichte*, 49-51; Luthardt, "Melanchthons Arbeiten im Gebiet der Moral," 48-59; Franz Költzsch, *Melanchthons philosophische Ethik* (Freiberg: Gerlach, 1889); Wilhelm Gass, *Geschichte der christlichen Ethik*, vol. 2/1 (Berlin: Reimer, 1886), 96-102 [I, III, 23-24]; Albert Herrlinger, *Die Theologie Melanchthons in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (Gotha: Perthes, 1879), 209-343 [III].

are valuable in the age of sharply decreasing Latin literacy.¹⁵ Melanchthon's lectures on the creed were never translated into German or into any other language. This impedes their reception and limits their impact on modern Protestant theology which in its ethical concentration is drawing more or less consciously on Melanchthon's mature thought that proved to be solicitous about the contribution of theology to the community.

While reacting to the Council of Trent in 1546, Melanchthon not only busied himself with doctrinal controversies but also stressed the dignity and importance of communal life.¹⁶ He did not treat communal life as one of many theological topics but rather considered it to be the God-intended purpose which all theology should serve all the time because God called people to serve him by serving one another and living together as a community. Through his caring arrangements for the necessities of daily life, God revealed his loving attitude (heart) towards human beings, as Melanchthon argued. By means of communal life and its institutions such as governance (political, social, economic etc.) maintaining peace and stability, social bonds, complementary services and responsibilities, procreation, family or education, God sustained and developed humankind according to his plan and intent. Thus, God exercised his authority in the world which he created and which he

¹⁵ There have been some attempts to publish Melanchthon's selected works in modern German in the early 19th century and starting from the late 20th century too, in combination with Melanchthon studies. Idem, *Werke in einer auf den allgemeinen Gebrauch berechneten Auswahl*, vol. 1-6, ed. Friedrich August Koethe (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1829-1830); Michael Beyer et al., ed., *Melanchthon deutsch*, vol. 1-6 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1997-2020).

¹⁶ Latin: Melanchthon, "Recusatio Synodi Tridentinae (April 1546)," in *Philippi Melanchthonis epistolae, judicia, consilia, testimonia aliorumque ad eum epistolae quae in Corpore Reformatorum desiderantur*, ed. Bindseil (Halle an der Saale: Schwetschke, 1874), 239-65 [no. 305 (CR 3479b)]; German: Melanchthon, *Ursache warum die Stände so der Augsburgerischen Konfession anhangen, christliche Lehre erstlich angenommen und endlich dabei zu verharren gedenken* (Augsburg: Othmar, 1546); Luthardt, *Geschichte*, 39-41; Riemann, *Philippi*, passim; Hartfelder, "Philipp Melanchthon als Praeceptor Germaniae," 237.

managed on a continuing basis. Melanchthon pointed out that God's constant care and provision for his creatures should not be taken for granted or misused for the sake of self-indulgence but rather discovered and responded with gratitude by serving God and the neighbour.

For Melanchthon, the ecumenical creeds summarised the most basic biblical doctrines and functioned as the instruments invented by the early church to communicate a sense of Christian identity and to share the fundamental understanding of what Christians (i.e. the church) believed (*Ecclesiae doctrina*).¹⁷ Therefore, explaining the ecumenical creeds was regarded by Melanchthon as an indispensable part of any theological curriculum. Such an explanation should convey the "voice of the church" (*Ecclesiae vox*)¹⁸ and be made from a vocational perspective which informed and shaped the way of doing theology both in Melanchthon and in Luther.¹⁹ From the viewpoint of the author of the present paper, the quality of the text published in *Corpus Reformatorum* seems to be mediocre at best and creates unnecessary confusion as far as the incorporation of Caspar Cruciger's writing by Melanchthon is concerned. From original editions, it is clearer which sections of Cruciger's work Melanchthon incorporated into "*Enarratio Symboli Niceni*" and which were original contributions of the Wittenberg Reformer.

¹⁷ Melanchthon, "Reverendis viris doctoribus Ecclesiae Dei in Saxonia et in vicinis regionibus," in *Enarratio Symboli Niceni complectens ordine doctrinam Ecclesiae Dei fideliter recitatem* (Wittenberg: Luft, 1550); (Basel: [s. n.], 1550); Fraenkel, *Testimonia*; Dittrich, *Das Traditionsverständnis*; Haendler, *Wort*.

¹⁸ Melanchthon, "Alberto Duci Prussiae (7. Mai 1550)," in *CR*, vol. 7, 590 [no. 4715]; Cf. *MBW*, vol. 6, 49 [no. 5792].

¹⁹ In Luther's personal confession of faith appended to his Confession concerning Christ's Supper (1528), the concept of vocation and the concept of God's self-giving (self-sharing) played a pivotal role. That document helps us realise how Luther himself defined the core of his own theological reflexion. Both concepts were also laid down in Luther's Large Catechism (1529). Martin Luther, "Vom Abendmahl Christi, Bekenntnis (1528)," in *Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 26 (Weimar: Böhlau, 1909), 499-509 [III]; Luther, "Deutsch Katechismus: Der grosse Katechismus (1529)," in *Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 30/1 (Weimar: Böhlau, 1910), 125-238.

III. History and Structure of Melanchthon's Lectures on the Creed

The statutes of the University of Wittenberg compiled by Melanchthon and published in 1546 mentioned the exposition of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed as a part of the theological curriculum²⁰ and university documents corroborated that.²¹ According to the university announcements, Caspar Cruciger the Elder, one of the leading Wittenberg theologians and a close co-worker of Melanchthon and Luther,²² was lecturing on the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed from February 1546 until his death in November 1548.²³ In his announcement from October 1547, Cruciger highlighted the importance of teaching the creed.²⁴ In 1549, Georg Major, another prominent

²⁰ "Statuta Collegii Facultatis Theologicae," in *Academiae Witebergensis leges quae bis quotannis publice recitantur* (Wittenberg: Klug, 1546), C4r [IV Lex]; Walter Friedensburg, ed., *Urkundenbuch der Universität Wittenberg*, vol. 1 (Magdeburg: Holtermann, 1926), 261-63 [no. 272]. The statutes were printed again in 1560, so this provision was in force from 1546 at least until 1560, namely, in the period under scrutiny: *Scripta publice proposita a professoribus in Academia Witebergensi*, vol. 1 (Wittenberg: Rhau and Rühel, 1560), Nn6r [IV Lex].

²¹ "Rector Academiae Witebergensis (1555)," in *Scripta publice proposita a gubernatoribus studiorum in Academia Witebergensi*, vol. 2 (Wittenberg: Rhau and Rühel, 1561), 106-7 [17. April 1555]; (Wittenberg: Rhau and Rühel, 1562), P2v-P3r. "Rector Academiae Witebergensis (1557)," in *Scripta publice proposita a gubernatoribus studiorum in Academia Witebergensi*, vol. 3 (Wittenberg: Rhau and Rühel, 1559), 87r-88r; (Wittenberg: Schwenck, 1568), 82r-83r; "Rector Academiae Witebergensis (1558)," in *Scripta publice proposita a gubernatoribus*, vol. 3 (1559), 229r-230v; (1568), 219v-220r.

²² Melanchthon, "Declamatio de Casparo Crucigero (1549)," in *CR*, vol. 11 (1843), 833-41 [no. 105]; Gustav Leopold Plitt, "Cruciger, Kaspar [der Ältere]," in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 4 (Leipzig: Duncker and Humblot, 1876), 621-22; Hasse, "Einleitung"; Schmidt, "Caspar Crucigers Leben für christliche Leser insgesamt aus den Quellen erzählt."

²³ "Caspar Cruciger, Doctor (1546)," in *Scripta publice proposita a professoribus*, vol. 1, 149r-149v [11 February 1546]. Contained also in: *Scripta quaedam in Academia Wittenbergensi a rectoribus, decanis et aliis eruditis quibusdam viris publice proposita ab anno MDXLIV usque ad finem anni MDXLV* (Wittenberg: Klug, 1545; 1546), M3v-M4r; *Scripta quaedam in Academia Wittenbergensi publice proposita digesta in duos libros* (Wittenberg: Klug, 1549), M3v-M4r; *Scripta publice proposita a professoribus in Academia Witebergensi ab anno 1540 usque ad annum 1553* (Wittenberg: Seitz, 1553), T2v-T3r. Republished in: *CR*, vol. 6 (1839), 43 [no. 3379]; Hasse, "Einleitung," 14-23 [1.2].

²⁴ "Caspar Cruciger, Doctor (1547)," in *Scripta publice proposita a professoribus*, vol. 1, 190v-191r [23 October 1547]. Contained also in: *Scripta publice proposita a professoribus in Academia Witebergensi ab anno 1540*, A8r. Republished in: *CR*, vol. 6, 712 [no. 4050].

Wittenberg theologian,²⁵ carried on Cruciger's course,²⁶ while Melancthon took over these lectures either by or in early 1550.²⁷ In lecturing on the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, Cruciger published "*De iudiciis piarum synodorum sententia*" (1548)²⁸ which was, as the subtitle declared, an initial stage of his exposition of the creed. An explanatory German translation was produced promptly too.²⁹ This work was subsequently expanded and released in 1548 as "*Enarrationis Symboli Niceni articuli duo*" in the Latin version only.³⁰ The last sentence of Cruciger's writing suggests that he intended to continue his work on the creed which was however thwarted by his premature death.³¹

To facilitate his own lectures on the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, Melancthon compiled "*Enarratio Symboli Niceni*"³² into which, after consulting other distinguished, yet unnamed, theologians,³³ he decided to incorporate Cruciger's earlier work (*Enarrationis Symboli Niceni articuli duo*) as indicated by a special phrase on the title page (*Accesserunt priori editioni plures Symboli partes*) and as attested by

²⁵ Julius August Wagenmann, "Major, Georg," in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 20 (Leipzig: Duncker and Humblot, 1884), 109-111.

²⁶ "Georgius Major, Doctor (1549)," in *Scripta publice proposita a professoribus*, vol. 1, 238r-238v. Contained also in: *Scripta publice proposita a professoribus in Academia Witebergensi ab anno 1540*, g3r-g4r; *Scripta quae a gubernatoribus et professoribus Academiae Vitebergensis publice proposita sunt*, vol. 3 (Wittenberg: Klug, 1549), L2v-L3r; Paul Krell, "Brief an Kurfürst August I. von Sachsen (11. April 1574)," in *Enarratio*, 188 [3.1]; Hasse, "Einleitung," 14-23 [1.2].

²⁷ Melancthon, "Hieronymo Baumgartnero (30. April 1550)," in *CR*, vol. 7, 580-81 [no. 4706]; Melancthon, "Thomae Cranmero (28. Mai 1550)," in *CR*, vol. 7, 605 [no. 4731]. Cf. *MBW*, vol. 6, 45 [no. 5779]; 56-57 [no. 5810]; Melancthon, "Alberto Hardenbergio (28. Mai 1550)," 605-6.

²⁸ Caspar Cruciger, *De iudiciis piarum synodorum sententia: Initio enarrationis Symboli Niceni exposita* (Wittenberg: Luft, 1548).

²⁹ Cruciger, *Von den Symbolis und Conciliis Unterricht* (Wittenberg: Rhau, 1548).

³⁰ Cruciger, *Enarrationis Symboli Niceni articuli duo: Prior de synodis, alter de tribus personis divinitatis* (Wittenberg: Luft, 1548).

³¹ Cruciger, *Enarrationis*, 111r.

³² Melancthon, *Enarratio Symboli*.

³³ Melancthon, "Reverendis viris doctoribus Ecclesiae Dei in Saxonia et in vicinis regionibus," (Wittenberg), A6v-A7r; (Basel), A4v.

Paul Krell's (Crell's) letter.³⁴ In his preface³⁵ and in his eulogy³⁶ for Cruciger, Melanchthon stated that the opening sections of "*Enarratio Symboli Niceni*" concerning the historical context and the trinitarian doctrine were authored by Cruciger whose scholarship he valued and supported as his colleague at Leucorea. Melanchthon also wrote that "*Enarratio Symboli Niceni*" was produced by adding "some sections (capita)" to Cruciger's work. In his letter to Hieronymus Baumgartner from 30 April 1550, Melanchthon mentioned "*Enarratio Symboli Niceni*", which at that time, was about to be printed,³⁷ and admitted that this work was built upon a "previous edition", namely, upon Cruciger's "*Enarrationis Symboli Niceni articuli duo*" to which new sections (capita) were added.³⁸

In his letter to Paul Eber from January 1548, Melanchthon acknowledged receipt of a printed copy of Cruciger's "*De judiciis piarum synodorum sententia*" (1548) with gratitude and joy,³⁹ while in his letter to Baumgartner from May 1548, he wrote that some pages from "*initia enarrationis Symboli Nicaeni*" were enclosed therein.⁴⁰ In the context of the spring of 1548, this reference must denote Cruciger's work "*De judiciis piarum synodorum sententia*" which bore the subtitle "*Initio enarrationis Symboli Niceni exposita*". Likewise, in May 1548, Melanchthon sent a copy of that work to Joachim Camerarius.⁴¹ Indeed, Melanchthon could feel responsible for and proud of Cruciger's lectures on the creed because, as Johannes Sturio disclosed in his dedicatory

³⁴ Krell, "Brief an Kurfürst August I. von Sachsen (11. April 1574)," 188.

³⁵ Melanchthon, "Reverendis viris doctoribus Ecclesiae Dei in Saxonia et in vicinis regionibus."

³⁶ Melanchthon, "Declamatio de Casparo Crucigero (1549)," 837.

³⁷ Melanchthon's preface was dated 25 April 1550.

³⁸ Melanchthon, "Hieronymo Baumgartnero (30. April 1550)."

³⁹ Melanchthon, "Paulo Ebero (3. Januar 1548)," in *CR*, vol. 6, 769-70 [no. 4110]; Cf. *MBW*, vol. 5 (1987), 228-29 [no. 5012].

⁴⁰ Melanchthon, "Hieronymo Baumgartnero (8. Mai 1548)," in *CR*, vol. 6, 900-901 [no. 4234]; Cf. *MBW*, vol. 5, 285 [no. 5148].

⁴¹ Melanchthon, "Joachimo Camerario (8. Mai 1548)," in *CR*, vol. 6, 900 [no. 4233]; Cf. *MBW*, vol. 5, 286 [no. 5152].

letter contained in "*Explicatio Symboli Niceni*" (1561), Melanchthon was the one who encouraged Cruciger to undertake these lectures at the very beginning.⁴²

The title page of "*Enarratio Symboli Niceni*" did not list Melanchthon as the author of the entire book but rather featured it as: "*cum praefatione Philippi Melanchthonis ad doctores Ecclesiae Dei in Saxonia*" (with Philipp Melanchthon's preface for the doctors of the church of God in Saxony). Thus, the impression was given that the whole book might be a result of the collaborative efforts which Melanchthon put together and commended as the senior leader of the Wittenberg Reformation.⁴³ In his letter Baumgartner from 30 April 1550, Melanchthon, while writing about producing "*Enarratio Symboli Niceni*" by adding new sections to Cruciger's work (*Enarrationis Symboli Niceni articuli duo*), used the plural "*adiecimus*" (we have added), not the singular (I have added), so his teamwork mindset was discernible.⁴⁴

Melanchthon referred to "*Enarratio Symboli Niceni*" as a "part" of the exposition of the creed because in his opinion, even this work was not a complete explanation thereof.⁴⁵ He also signalled that the publication of the "rest" (i.e. remaining parts) might follow.⁴⁶ Melanchthon's decision to incorporate Cruciger's work could be construed as generous and prudent because he did not intend to spend much time on the historical background of the creed or on the patristic

⁴² Johannes Sturio, "Epistola dedicatoria," in *Explicatio Symboli Niceni, sicut a [...] Melanchthone piae memoriae in Academia Vitebergensi publice studiosae iuventuti proposita est*, ed. Sturio (Wittenberg: Crato and Rühel, 1561), A2r-A5v.

⁴³ Hasse, "Einleitung," 14-23 [1.2]. Melanchthon, "Georgio Principi in Anhalt (3. Mai 1550)," in *CR*, vol. 7, 589 [no. 4713]; Cf. *MBW*, vol. 6, 48 [no. 5789].

⁴⁴ Melanchthon, "Hieronymo Baumgartnero (30. April 1550)." See plural "*edidimus*" in: "Reverendis viris doctoribus Ecclesiae Dei in Saxonia et in vicinis regionibus," (Wittenberg), A7r; (Basel), A4v.

⁴⁵ Melanchthon, "Hieronymo Baumgartnero (30. April 1550)." Melanchthon, "Thomae Cranmero (28. Mai 1550)"; Melanchthon, "Georgio Principi in Anhalt (3. Mai 1550)."

⁴⁶ Melanchthon, "Reverendis viris doctoribus Ecclesiae Dei in Saxonia et in vicinis regionibus."

trinitarian doctrine but rather planned to focus on the vocational dimension of the creed.⁴⁷ The quality of Cruciger's presentation of the creed's background was so high that there was no need for Melanchthon to work on that again.

"*Enarratio Symboli Niceni*" was included in the Wittenberg edition of Melanchthon's writings⁴⁸ which contained his preface, yet omitted the phrase from the title page which pointed to earlier contributions incorporated into that work. *Corpus Reformatorum* detached the preface⁴⁹ from the text of "*Enarratio Symboli Niceni*" so that Cruciger's authorship of the opening sections was no longer visible.⁵⁰ Drawing clear lines between Cruciger's writings and sections written by Melanchthon is important to discover the originality of Melanchthon's approach to the creed and to honour Cruciger's input. These intertextual relationships can be visualised in a tabular format:

Principal Sections	Cruciger's Writings			<i>Enarratio</i> (Wittenberg: Luft, 1550)
	<i>De judiciis</i>	<i>Von den Symbolis</i>	<i>Enarrationis</i>	
Melanchthon's preface	-	-	-	A2r-A8v
On the resolutions of the [ecumenical] councils	2r-24v	A2r-F2r	2r-24v	1r-12r
The text of the creed	-	F2v-F3v	25r-26r	12v-13v
<i>The first article [of the creed]</i>				
On the resolutions of the [ecumenical] councils	-	-	26r-38v	13v-20r
On the three persons of the Divinity	-	-	38v-66r	20r-34v
On the Holy Spirit	-	-	66r-80r	34v-42v

⁴⁷ Melanchthon, "Reverendis viris doctoribus Ecclesiae Dei in Saxonia et in vicinis regionibus."

⁴⁸ Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni prior (edita anno 1550)," in *Omnia opera*, vol. 1, ed. Kaspar Peucer (Wittenberg: Crato, 1562), 388r-442v; (Wittenberg: Crato, 1580), 388r-442v.

⁴⁹ Published as: Melanchthon, "Pastoribus Saxonis (25. April 1550)," in *CR*, vol. 7, 575-79 [no. 4704].

⁵⁰ Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni."

<i>The second article [of the creed]</i>				
On creation	-	-	81r-95v	43r-51r
On the cause of sin and on contingency	-	-	95v-111r	51r-59r
Sections written by Melanchthon (59r-151v)				
On the creation of a human being; On the fall of first parents and original sin; On free will; On the law; The division of laws; On natural laws; On the Decalogue				59r-140r
<i>The second part of the creed</i>				
[Introduction]				140v-141v
On distinguishing between the Law and the Gospel				141v-143v
On the impulsive and final causes by which the Mediator is God and man				143v-151v

In May 1550, Melanchthon sent copies of "*Enarratio Symboli Niceni*" to Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, Johannes a Lasco, Martin Bucer, Peter Martyr Vermigli, George III (Georg III.), Prince of Anhalt (Fürst von Anhalt) and Albert (Albrecht), Duke of Prussia (Herzog in Preussen).⁵¹ The university announcements of 1555 made by Martin Chemnitz⁵² and by Konrad Becker⁵³ confirmed that Melanchthon continued to lecture on the creed. Nonetheless, the volume of the university announcements covering 1559-1561 gave no further insights into this topic.⁵⁴

In 1561, a year after Melanchthon's death, Sturio from Hof an der Saale, who studied under Melanchthon and served as a minister of the

⁵¹ Melanchthon, "Thomae Cranmero (28. Mai 1550)," 605; Thomas Cranmer, *Memorials*, vol. 3, ed. John Strype (Oxford: Wright, 1854), 299-306 [III, XXIV]; Melanchthon, "Georgio Principi in Anhalt (3. Mai 1550)"; Melanchthon, "Alberto Duci Prussiae (7. Mai 1550)."

⁵² Martin Chemnitz, "In praelectione Locorum theologicorum (1555)," in *Scripta publice proposita a gubernatoribus*, vol. 2 (1561), 109v-110v; (1562), P5v-P6v.

⁵³ Konrad Becker, "De repetitione Locorum theologicorum (1555)," in *Scripta publice proposita a gubernatoribus*, vol. 2 (1561), 144r-145v; (1562), T8r-V1v. Hasse, "Einleitung," 14-23 [1.2].

⁵⁴ *Scripta publice proposita a gubernatoribus studiorum in Academia Witebergensi*, vol. 4 (Wittenberg: Rhau, 1561).

church in Wittenberg,⁵⁵ edited and published Melanchthon's lectures on the creed titled "*Explicatio Symboli Niceni*",⁵⁶ attaching his own dedicatory letter which functioned as an editorial preface to this work.⁵⁷ There, Sturio mentioned that Melanchthon incorporated Cruciger's contribution into "*Enarratio Symboli Niceni*" (1550) as he started lecturing on the creed due to his untimely death.⁵⁸ The Wittenberg edition of Melanchthon's writings⁵⁹ omitted Sturio's dedicatory letter and labelled this work as "*Enarratio Symboli Niceni postrema, absoluta (anno 1557)*". Renaming, though potentially confusing, aimed to position it as a final version of Melanchthon's lectures on the creed initiated by the 1550 version which in that edition was labelled as "*Enarratio Symboli Niceni prior (edita anno 1550)*" and placed in the first volume thereof. Such reference to 1557 could imply that in 1557, Melanchthon lectured on the creed for the last time in his life.⁶⁰

The manuscript of 1550 was the exposition of what Melanchthon depicted as the second and third parts of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed. Both Melanchthon⁶¹ and Luther⁶² realised that the structure of

⁵⁵ Admitted to Leucorea on 6 October 1543 and graduated on 19 February 1549. Karl Eduard Förstemann, ed., *Album Academiae Vitebergensis ab a. Ch. MDII usque ad a. MDLX* (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1841), 207; Julius Köstlin, ed., *Die Baccalarei und Magistri der Wittenberger philosophischen Fakultät 1548-1560 und die öffentlichen Disputationen derselben Jahre: Osterprogramm der Universität Halle-Wittenberg 1891* (Halle an der Saale: Niemeyer, 1891), 7 [44a]; Johann Heinrich Zedler, "Sturio, Johann," in *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexikon aller Wissenschaften und Künste*, vol. 40 (Leipzig and Halle: Zedler, 1744), 1382.

⁵⁶ Melanchthon, *Explicatio*.

⁵⁷ Sturio, "Epistola dedicatoria."

⁵⁸ Sturio, "Epistola dedicatoria," A5r-A5v.

⁵⁹ Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni postrema, absoluta (anno 1557)," in *Omnia opera*, vol. 2, ed. Peucer (Wittenberg: Crato, 1562), 388r-442v; (Wittenberg: Crato, 1583), 210-376.

⁶⁰ Among the lectures, which Melanchthon taught shortly before his death in April 1560 and which after his death were assigned to other professors on 8 April 1561, no lectures on the creed were listed but this is *argumentum ex silentio*. *Urkundenbuch*, 320-22 [no. 311].

⁶¹ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 355-59.

⁶² Luther, "Vom Abendmahl Christi, Bekenntnis (1528)," 499-509; Luther, "Deutsch Katechismus: Der grosse Katechismus (1529)," 182-92 [Auslegung des Glaubens]; Luther, "Die drei Symbola oder Bekenntnis[se] des Glaubens Christi in der Kirche einträchtig gebraucht (1538)," in *Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 50 (Weimar: Böhlau, 1914), 262-83.

the Apostles' Creed and of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed was strictly trinitarian because these creeds articulated faith in God, the Father, the Son and the Spirit so that people could know who God as the Trinity was towards them and what God as the Trinity had done for them. From the perspective of the Wittenberg Reformation, every single statement in these creeds related to the identity and work of the triune God. Nonetheless, it seems that in all his expositions of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, Melanchthon did not follow this trinitarian structure consistently as far as the actual allocation of the theological material was concerned but rather proceeded freely.

Since antiquity,⁶³ the Western church insisted that the Apostles' Creed was produced by the twelve apostles in such a way that each of them contributed one statement thereto, bringing about twelve "articles". This artificial division was even imposed by some Western theologians on the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed⁶⁴ and a trace thereof could be found in Cruciger's work⁶⁵ which Melanchthon incorporated into "*Enarratio Symboli Niceni*"⁶⁶ because Cruciger denominated the statement "*Factorem coeli et terrae, visibilium et invisibilium omnium*" from the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed as the "second article" of the creed. A Western insistence on the mechanical production of the Apostles' Creed by the twelve apostles and its extension to the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed must be perceived as detrimental to the proper understanding of these creeds on three counts. Firstly, such claims contradicted historical facts and were not espoused by the Eastern church fathers commenting on the Niceno-Constantinopolitan

⁶³ At least starting from claims made by Rufinus of Aquileia in his commentary on the Apostles' Creed. Rufinus, "Commentarius in Symbolum Apostolorum," in *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series Latina*, vol. 21, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris: Migne, 1878), 335-86. Hereafter, *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series Latina* is abbreviated as *PL*.

⁶⁴ Guillaume Durand, "De Symbolo," in *Rationale divinarum officiorum* (Neapolis: Dura, 1859), 207 [IV, XXV, 10]; Josse Clichtove, *Elucidatorium ecclesiasticum ad officium Ecclesiae: 1516* (Paris: De Roigny, 1556), 138r [III, Symbolum Nicenum, Concordia Symbolorum].

⁶⁵ Cruciger, *Enarrationis*, 81r.

⁶⁶ Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 238.

Creed.⁶⁷ Secondly, such claims ignored a clearly trinitarian structure of these creeds. Thirdly, they obscured their baptismal origins.

The title page of the 1550 manuscript stated that this exposition was written down (scripta) by Melanchthon, yet delivered publicly as lectures (publice dictata) by Georg Major at the University of Wittenberg in 1550.⁶⁸ This notice implied that by or in early 1550, Melanchthon took over the lectures on the creed from Georg Major in terms of their authorship but not in terms of their classroom delivery which Major carried on at least for a while exactly as Krell reported.⁶⁹ Furthermore, the title page mentioned that this manuscript was a follow-up to the "preceding part" of the exposition delivered by Cruciger which was printed in 1550. This "preceding part" refers to Cruciger's most extensive exposition which was published as "*Enarrationis Symboli Niceni articuli duo*" in 1548 and which Melanchthon incorporated into "*Enarratio Symboli Niceni*" printed in 1550. In 1574, Krell, who was one of Melanchthon's students and who admired his legacy,⁷⁰ solicited for the publication of the 1550 manuscript⁷¹ and wrote a preface to it.⁷² The publication however did not come to fruition for political reasons because Melanchthon's views on the Lord's Supper were misrepresented and misinterpreted amid the intense theological conflicts

⁶⁷ Theodotus Ancyranus, "Expositio Symboli Nicaeni," in *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series Graeca*, vol. 77, ed. Migne (Paris: Migne, 1859), 1313-48. Hereafter, *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series Graeca* is abbreviated as *PG*. Euthymius Zigabenus, "Expositio Symboli," in *PG*, vol. 131 (1864), 9-20; Symeon Thessalonicensis, "Expositio sacri Symboli," in *PG*, vol. 155 (1866), 751-818; Theodore of Mopsuestia, "On the Nicene Creed," in *Woodbrooke Studies*, vol. 5, ed. and trans. Alphonse Mingana (Cambridge: Heffer, 1932). Only the Syriac version is extant.

⁶⁸ Melanchthon, *Enarratio*, 45 [2.1].

⁶⁹ Krell, "Brief an Kurfürst August I. von Sachsen (11. April 1574)," 188-89.

⁷⁰ Admitted to Leucorea on 14 November 1548 and graduated on 29 June 1552. *Album*, 243; *Die Baccalaurei*, 12 [51b, 7]; Ernst Kähler, "Crell (Krell, Crellius), Paul," in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 3 (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1957), 408.

⁷¹ Krell, "Widmungsvorrede an Kurfürst August I. von Sachsen (20. Juni 1574)," in *Enarratio*, 45-59 [2.2]; Krell, "Brief an Kurfürst August I. von Sachsen (11. April 1574)," 187-91.

⁷² Krell, "Widmungsvorrede an Kurfürst August I. von Sachsen (20. Juni 1574)."

of that period.⁷³ Krell was convinced that notwithstanding earlier publications, namely, "*Enarratio Symboli Niceni*" (1550) and "*Explicatio Symboli Niceni*" (1561), the 1550 manuscript should be published to give a full picture of Melanchthon's interpretation of the creed.⁷⁴

In 1589, Christoph Pezel, who attended Melanchthon's lectures for several months shortly before the Reformer's death,⁷⁵ cited a fragment of the 1550 manuscript concerning the Lord's Supper in his work which made extensive use of Melanchthon's writings as illustrated by its subtitle (*contexta ex scriptis [...] Melanchthonis*).⁷⁶ Pezel confirmed that he examined an unpublished manuscript of the "other" part of Melanchthon's exposition of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed⁷⁷ which at that time was in the possession of Johann Major, a Protestant theologian and poet, who studied under Melanchthon.⁷⁸ Instead of quoting from the 1550 manuscript faithfully, Pezel mishandled it in the furtherance of his own theological agenda regarding the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. Pezel labelled this citation as the "summary of Melanchthon's doctrine of the Lord's Supper"⁷⁹ although it consisted of a few isolated paragraphs⁸⁰ extracted from a much longer presentation of the eucharistic doctrine found in the 1550 manuscript⁸¹ and thus,

⁷³ Hasse, "Einleitung," 23-38 [1.3]; 187-97 [3].

⁷⁴ Krell, "Widmungsvorrede an Kurfürst August I. von Sachsen (20. Juni 1574);" Krell, "Brief an Kurfürst August I. von Sachsen (11. April 1574)."

⁷⁵ Georg Buchwald, ed., *Wittenberger Ordiniertenbuch*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: Wigand, 1895), 117 [937 (23. Oktober 1569)]; Friedrich Wilhelm Cuno, "Pezel, Christoph," in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 25 (Leipzig: Duncker and Humblot, 1887), 575-77.

⁷⁶ Pezel, "Praefatio," in *Argumenta et responsiones theologicae contexta ex scriptis [...] Melanchthonis*, vol. 8 (Neustadt an der Weinstrasse: Harnisch, 1589), B1v-B3r.

⁷⁷ Pezel, "Praefatio," B1v-B2r.

⁷⁸ Admitted to Leucorea on 30 May 1549 and graduated on 27 February 1556; *Album*, 247; *Die Baccalaurei*, 17 [143, 5]; Paul Tschackert, "Major, Johann," in *Allgemeine*, vol. 20, 111.

⁷⁹ Pezel, "Praefatio," B1r [Nota marginalis].

⁸⁰ Melanchthon, *Enarratio*, 174-77.

⁸¹ Melanchthon, *Enarratio*, 172-83.

was taken out of context. In citing, Pezel omitted a long section without any indication.⁸² Moreover, in the light of Melanchthon's writings, even the entire presentation from 1550 could not be regarded as representative of his complex views on the Lord's Supper. In 1600, Pezel edited and published a collection of Melanchthon's theological opinions and included this quotation without mentioning his examination of the manuscript and without providing any specific information about it.⁸³ In the 17th and 18th centuries, Melanchthon's writings except for those pertaining to the humanities were seldom published. In the 19th century, the editors of *Corpus Reformatorum* were not aware of the existence of the 1550 manuscript although they republished Pezel's citation taken from his edition of Melanchthon's theological opinions and they should have seen that this quotation was described by Pezel as based on the manuscript (*ex autographo*) and did not match any printed exposition of the creed by Melanchthon.

Melanchthon's explanations of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed must be treated as three distinct works. There are certain parallels between these three works and Melanchthon's Loci (the third version) and Catechism (*Catechesis puerilis*). Nonetheless, these parallels are parallel theological topics and concepts, not borrowings or adaptations. In the present paper, references are made to the text of "*Enarratio Symboli Niceni*" (1550) and of "*Explicatio Symboli Niceni*" (1561) as published in *Corpus Reformatorum*, yet original editions have been consulted. As regards the manuscript of 1550, Hasse's critical edition

⁸² Pezel's citation started with the words "in hac tota hominum" (Melanchthon, *Enarratio*, 174) and reached "instituta est haec sumptio" (Melanchthon, *Enarratio*, 175) to omit the section, which began with "certum est enim" (Melanchthon, *Enarratio*, 176) and ended with "verbum caro factum est" (Melanchthon, *Enarratio*, 176), and to include the paragraph which began with "eodem modo Hilarius" (Melanchthon, *Enarratio*, 176) and ended with "Christus in nobis est" (Melanchthon, *Enarratio*, 177).

⁸³ "Summa doctrinae Philippi Melanchthonis de Coena Domini, ipsius verbis expressa, quibus in explicatione alterius partis Symboli Nicaeni usus est (Descripta ex autographo, quod extat)," in *Consilia sive judica theologica*, vol. 2, ed. Pezel (Neustadt an der Weinstrasse: Harnisch, 1600), 250-51. Republished in: *CR*, vol. 8 (1841), 941-42 [no. 6141].

based on an extant notarised copy thereof⁸⁴ is the only one and it represents the highest possible editorial standards.⁸⁵

IV. Status and Use of the Ecumenical Creeds in the Liturgical Life of the Church

The category of the ecumenical creeds embracing the Apostles' Creed, the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed and the Athanasian Creed (called also Quicumque) is a product of the mediaeval Western church because the Eastern church in late antiquity and the Eastern Orthodox church as its successor considered the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed to be the sole ecumenical creed provided that only this creed was approved by the ecumenical councils.⁸⁶ The ecumenical creeds, especially the Apostles' Creed and the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, which stemmed from baptismal creeds of the Western church and the Eastern church, respectively, on the one hand, formed the faith of church members and on the other hand, were formed by their faith.

The use of these creeds in liturgy and prayer life was different in the Western church and in the Eastern church. The Eastern church used exclusively the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed in the divine liturgy⁸⁷ and in all other liturgical activities⁸⁸ including the liturgy of the hours.⁸⁹ On the contrary, the Western church reserved the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed for the eucharistic celebration,⁹⁰ particularly

⁸⁴ See footnote 200.

⁸⁵ Melanchthon, *Enarratio*.

⁸⁶ To be precise, approved by the First Council of Nicaea and the First Council of Constantinople as well as endorsed continually by all subsequent ecumenical councils. Giovanni (Johannes) Domenico (Dominicus) Mansi, ed., *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, vol. 2-13 (Florentia: Zatta, 1759-1767).

⁸⁷ "Codex liturgicus Ecclesiae orientalis in epitomen redactus," in *Codex liturgicus Ecclesiae universae in epitomen redactus*, vol. 4, ed. Hermann Adalbert Daniel (Leipzig: Weigel, 1853).

⁸⁸ Ibidem. Jacobus Goar, ed., *Ευχολογιον sive rituale Graecorum* (Venetia: Javarina, 1730).

⁸⁹ Βαρθολομαίος Κουτλουμουσιανός, ed., *Ώρολογιον το μεγα περιεχον* (Venetia: Φοινix, 1869).

⁹⁰ "Ordinarium missae," in *Missale Romanum* (Venetia: Gregori, 1519), 121v.

on Sundays and other festivals,⁹¹ whereas the Apostles' Creed was used in the liturgy of baptism (in a dialogical form),⁹² in the liturgy of the hours⁹³ and in the rosary.⁹⁴ The Athanasian Creed could be found in the Western liturgy of the hours,⁹⁵ yet contrary to some misconceptions, it was not utilised on Trinity Sunday⁹⁶ for which the pre-Trent missal prescribed the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed.⁹⁷

Despite their different origins and functions, high and late mediaeval theologians of the Western church grouped these three creeds together, recognising them as doctrinal foundations which their church inherited from the ancient church.⁹⁸ This exclusively Western concept of the three authoritative creeds had a lasting influence on Western theology even in the Reformation era. For instance, the Book of Concord published in 1580 commenced with the three creeds which

⁹¹ Johannes Beletus, "Rationale divinatorum officiorum," in *PL*, vol. 202 (1855), 49-50 [XL]; Sicardus Cremonensis, "Mitrale sive summa de officiis ecclesiasticis," in *PL*, vol. 213 (1855), 112-13 [III, IV]; Alexander Halensis, "De articulis et symbolis fidei," in *Summa theologiae*, vol. 3 (Köln: Gymnich, 1622), 541-42 [III, LXIX, II]; Durand, "De Symbolo," 206-7 [IV, XXV, 1-9]; Guido de Monte Rocherii, "De articulis fidei," in *Enchiridion sacerdotum seu manipulus curatorum* (Venetia: Bertanus, 1575), 231r-231v [III, 1]; Antoninus Florentinus, *Summa theologica*, vol. 4 (Verona: Carattonius, 1740), 457-59 [Titulus VIII, IV, III].

⁹² "Modus baptisandi," in *Agenda Latino et vulgari sermone Polonico videlicet et Alemanico illuminata* (Krakau: Haller, 1514), 1r-32r. "Ordo baptizandi secundum Ecclesiam Romanam vulgatus et impressus," in *Sacerdotale juxta sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae* (Venetia: Boselli, 1555), 15v; Giuseppe (Joseph) Luigi (Aloysius) Assemani, ed., *Codex liturgicus Ecclesiae universae in XV libros distributus*, vol. 1 (Roma: Komarek, 1749), 22-39 [I, II]; Assemani, ed., *Codex liturgicus Ecclesiae universae in XV libros distributus*, vol. 2 (Roma: Rotili, 1749), 1-128 [I].

⁹³ *Breviarium Romanum* (Paris: Kerver, 1531), passim; Alexander Halensis, "De articulis et symbolis fidei," 541-42; Durand, "De Symbolo," 206-7; Guido de Monte Rocherii, "De articulis fidei," 231r-231v; Antoninus Florentinus, *Summa*, vol. 4, 457-59.

⁹⁴ *Der beschlossene Garten des Rosenkranzes Mariä*, vol. 2 (Nürnberg: Pinter, 1505), 283v-287v [XI].

⁹⁵ "Ad primam," in *Breviarium*, 11v-12r; Beletus, "Rationale divinatorum officiorum," 50; Alexander Halensis, "De articulis et symbolis fidei," 541-42.

⁹⁶ "In Festo Trinitatis," in *Missale*, 161r-161v.

⁹⁷ Beletus, "Rationale divinatorum officiorum," 49; Sicardus Cremonensis, "Mitrale sive summa de officiis ecclesiasticis," 112.

⁹⁸ Sicardus Cremonensis, "Mitrale sive summa de officiis ecclesiasticis," 112-13; Alexander Halensis, "De articulis et symbolis fidei," 541-42; Durand, "De Symbolo," 206-7; Antoninus Florentinus, *Summa*, vol. 4, 457-59.

in the Latin version were called the "three universal, namely, ecumenical symbols" (*tria symbola catholica seu oecumenica*),⁹⁹ while in the German version – the "three chief symbols, namely, the confession[s] of faith in Christ used unanimously in the church" (*die drei Haupt-Symbola oder Bekenntnis[se] des Glaubens Christi in der Kirche einträchtig gebraucht*).¹⁰⁰ Likewise, a dialogical form of the Apostles' Creed continued to be used in the Lutheran liturgy of baptism¹⁰¹ as exemplified by West¹⁰² and East¹⁰³ Prussian baptismal liturgies.

V. Ancient and Mediaeval Expositions of the Ecumenical Creeds

The ecumenical creeds have always been ingrained in the liturgical life of the church and in Christian education. The Apostles' Creed and the underpinnings of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed originated from baptismal liturgies and played an important role in preparing adults for baptism in the early church. In fact, the First Council of Nicaea and the First Council of Constantinople drew upon baptismal creeds widespread in the Eastern church, unifying and enhancing them in order to produce the instrument for tackling the trinitarian controversy. Historically speaking, the number of commentaries on the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, which would be to some

⁹⁹ *Concordia pia et unanimi consensu repetita confessio fidei [...]* (Leipzig: Deffner, 1584), 1-3.

¹⁰⁰ *Concordia: [Das] christliche, wiederholte, einmütige Bekenntnis [...]* (Magdeburg: [s. n.], 1580), 1r-3r. This phrase imitated the full title of Luther's writing of 1538: *Idem, "Die drei Symbola oder Bekenntnis[se] des Glaubens Christi in der Kirche einträchtig gebraucht (1538)."*

¹⁰¹ "Codex liturgicus Ecclesiae lutheranae in epitomen redactus," in *Codex liturgicus Ecclesiae universae in epitomen redactus*, vol. 2, ed. Daniel (Leipzig: Weigel, 1848), 185-272 [III].

¹⁰² "Von der Taufe," in *Kirchenordnung: Wie es mit den gemeinen Gebeten, Handlung der hochwürdigen Sakramente und Trauung der Eheleute zu Elbing [...] gehalten wird* (Elbing: Bodenhausen, 1612), E2v-E3r; (Elbing: Corell, 1682), D4v-E1r.

¹⁰³ "Von der Taufe," in *Kirchenordnung und Zeremonien wie es in Übung Gottes Worts und Reichung der hochwürdigen Sakramente in den Kirchen des Herzogtums Preussen soll gehalten werden* (Königsberg: Daubmann, 1568), 32v-37r. "Bei der Taufe," in *Preussische Kirchenagenda oder Verzeichnis der in der Kirche öffentlich vorzulesenden Formularen* (Königsberg: Hartung, 1780), 17-18 [III].

degree comprehensive or substantial, seems to be much lower than those on the Apostles' Creed. In the present paper, seven expositions of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed were identified; four coming from the Eastern church¹⁰⁴ and three—from the Western church.¹⁰⁵ Additionally, Cyril of Jerusalem expounded the baptismal creed used in the church of Jerusalem, which he led as its bishop, and this local creed could be counted among those Eastern baptismal creeds from which the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed emerged.¹⁰⁶ In the present paper, no mediaeval translation of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed into German could be traced except for a 15th-century Prussian manuscript published in 1877.¹⁰⁷

By contrast, more than thirty two expositions of the Apostles' Creed were produced in antiquity (minimum: six)¹⁰⁸ and in the Middle Ages (minimum: twenty six) within the Western church.¹⁰⁹ Different

¹⁰⁴ Theodotus Ancyranus, "Expositio Symboli Nicaeni;" Euthymius Zigabenus, "Expositio Symboli;" Symeon Thessalonicensis, "Expositio sacri Symboli;" Theodore of Mopsuestia, "On the Nicene Creed."

¹⁰⁵ Alexander Halensis, "De articulis et symbolis fidei," 540-54 [III, LXIX]; Johannes Rusbrochius (Jan van Ruusbroec), "De fide et iudicio libellus," in *Opera omnia*, ed. and trans. Laurentius Surius (Köln: Quentel, 1609), 347-55; Clithove, *Elucidatorium*, 137v-140v [III, Symbolum Nicenum].

¹⁰⁶ Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus, "Catecheses," in *PG*, vol. 33 (1857), 331-1060.

¹⁰⁷ "Das nizanische Symbolum (saec. XV)," in *Christliche Lehre und Erziehung in Ermland und im preussischen Ordensstaat während des Mittelalters: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Katechismus*, ed. Franz Hipler (Braunsberg: Bender, 1877), 55-56.

¹⁰⁸ Ambrosius, "Explanatio Symboli ad initiandos," in *PL*, vol. 17 (1879), 1193-96; Rufinus, "Commentarius in Symbolum Apostolorum;" Augustinus Hipponensis, "Sermones CCXLI-CCXLIV: De Symbolo," in *PL*, vol. 39 (1865), 2190-96; Idem, "De fide et Symbolo," in *PL*, vol. 40 (1845), 181-96; Idem, "De Symbolo: Sermones ad catechumenos (I-IV)," in *PL*, vol. 40, 627-68; Idem, "Sermo de Symbolo," in *PL*, vol. 40, 1189-1202.

¹⁰⁹ Petrus Chrysologus, "Sermones (LVII-LXII): In Symbolum Apostolorum," in *PL*, vol. 52 (1894), 357-75; Nicetas Aquileiensis, "Explanatio Symboli," in *PL*, vol. 52, 865-74; Alcuinus, "Disputatio puerorum," in *PL*, vol. 101 (1863), 1136-43 [XI]; Rabanus Maurus, "De ecclesiastica disciplina," in *PL*, vol. 112 (1852), 1224-28 [II, De Symbolo]; Bruno Herbipolensis, "Commentarius in Orationem Dominicam, Symbolum Apostolorum et Fidem Athanasii," in *PL*, vol. 142 (1880), 557-68; Petrus Abelandus, "Expositio Symboli Apostolorum," in *PL*, vol. 178 (1855), 617-30. This work partly overlaps with: Bernardus Claraevallensis, "Super Symbolum Apostolorum," in *Opera*, vol. 7, ed. Johann Coster Schluter (Köln: Kinchius, 1672), 51-54; Joslenus Suessionensis, "Expositio in Symbolum et in Orationem Dominicam," in *PL*, vol. 186 (1854), 1479-96; Sicardus Cremonensis, "Mitrale sive summa de officiis ecclesiasticis," 279-84 [VI, VIII]; "Symboli Apostolici explanatio (Anonymi seculi XII)," in *PL*, vol. 213, 725-36; Alexander Halensis, "De articulis et symbolis fidei," 540-54 [III, LXIX]; Thomas Aquinas, "In Symbolum Apostolorum, scilicet Credo in Deum, expositio," in *Opera omnia*, vol. 16 (Parma: Facciadori, 1864-1865), 135-51; Durand,

old German translations of the Apostles' Creed circulated,¹¹⁰ while high and late mediaeval German translations generally concurred with the German rendition which Luther employed in his Small and Large Catechisms. Actually, Carolingian capitularies (executive orders) of the 9th century mandated clergy to teach all laypeople (men, women and children) the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer both in Latin and in the vernacular.¹¹¹ In the late 15th century, Johann Ulrich Surgant called on clergy to explain the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Decalogue to church members in Latin and in the vernacular on a

"De Symbolo," 206-12 [IV, XXV]; Johannes Wyclif (Wycliffe), "On the Apostles' Creed," in *Select English Works*, vol. 3, ed. Thomas Arnold (Oxford: Clarendon, 1871), 114-16; Idem, "The Poor Caitiff: On the Belief," in *Writings* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1831), 51-59; Johannes Gerson, "Compendium theologiae," in *Opera omnia*, vol. 1 (Den Haag: Hondt, 1728), 233-43 [I]; Johann Herolt, "De articulis fidei (Sermones CXLVI-CXLVII)," in *Discipulus redivivus seu sermones discipuli dominicales quadragesimales et festivos*, ed. Bonaventura Elers (Augsburg: Strötter, 1728), 1094-1105; Idem, "Expositio super Symbolum Apostolorum," in *Discipulus de eruditione christifidelium compendiosus* (Hagenau: Rynman and Gran, 1521), Z3v-AA6v; Stephan Landskrana (von Landskron), *Himmelstrasse im Latin genannt Scala caeli* (Augsburg: Otmar and Rynman, 1510), 82v-85v [XLV]; [Johann Marienwerder], *Erklärung der zwölf Artikel des christlichen Glaubens* (Ulm: Dinkmuth, 1485); *Der beschlossene Garten*, vol. 2, 283v-287v; "De articulis fidei," in *Fundamentum aeternae felicitatis seu Christianae religionis summae utilisimus* ([Köln]: [Werdena], [1509]), I-V. "Feria IV. post Pentecosten: Sermo I. de fidei orthodoxae necessitate et utilitate et brevi Symboli explicatione," in *Parati sermones paratiores reddit in Evangelia et Epistolas* (Köln: Henning, 1649), 379-85; *Der Spiegel des christlichen Glaubens* (Gouda: Leeu, 1478), XXXVIr-XLv [XII Punkte des christlichen Glaubens]; Dionysius Carthusianus, "De vita curatorum," in *Opera minora*, vol. 1 (Köln: Soter, 1532), 481r-483r [XXI-XXI]; Bernardus de Parentis (Parentinis), "De Symbolo Apostolorum," in *Expositio officii missae* ([Strassburg]: [Grüniger], 1487), 25r-46r; [Pseudo-]Nicolaus de Lyra, "De duodecim articulis fidei," in *Preceptorium* (Köln: Fratres Minores, 1501), L6r-L7r; "Monumenta catechetica theotisca," in *Thesaurus antiquitatum Teutonicarum, ecclesiasticarum, civilium, litterariorum*, vol. 1, ed. Johann Schilter (Ulm: Bartholomaeus, 1728), 75-89.

¹¹⁰ Ibidem. Johann Georg Eckhart, ed., *Incerti Monachi Weissenburgensis catechesis theotisca seculo IX. conscripta* (Hannover: Förster, 1713); Hans F. Massmann, ed., *Die deutschen Abschwörungs-, Glaubens-, Beicht- und Betformeln vom achten bis zum zwölften Jahrhundert* (Quedlinburg und Leipzig: Basse, 1839).

¹¹¹ "Capitula a sacerdotibus proposita (802)," in *Capitularia Regum Francorum (Monumenta Germaniae Historica)*, vol. 1, ed. Alfred Boretius (Hannover: Hahn, 1883), 106 [36, 5]; "Capitula de examinandis ecclesiasticis (802)," in *Capitularia*, vol. 1, 110 [38, 9]; "Capitulare missorum (802-13)," in *Capitularia*, vol. 1, 147 [60, 2]; "Capitula de presbyteris admonendis," in *Capitularia*, vol. 1, 238 [120, 3]; "Karoli Magni ad Ghaerbaldum Episcopum epistola et Ghaerbaldi ad dioeceseos suae presbyteros epistola (803-11)," in *Capitularia*, vol. 1, 241-42 [122]; "Capitula duo incerta," in *Capitularia*, vol. 1, 257 [130, 2]; "Haitonis Episcopi Basileensis Capitula Ecclesiastica (807-23)," in *Capitularia*, vol. 1, 363 [177, 2].

continuing basis, at least, on Sundays and to display these texts as posters (in tabulis) on the walls of church buildings to promote Christian education.¹¹² In his work, he included German and French translations of the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Decalogue.

Primary¹¹³ and secondary¹¹⁴ sources demonstrate that the Apostles' Creed prevailed in the mediaeval Western church in all possible domains except for the eucharistic liturgy, which was conducted exclusively in Latin, and that in the German-speaking territories, the Apostles' Creed was firmly rooted in the vernacular (i.e. German) both in laypeople's use and in ministers' instruction. The Athanasian Creed was occasionally employed in Christian education during the Middle Ages and in the present paper, nine expositions thereof were tracked down.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Johann Ulrich Surgent, "De forma recitandi seu exponendi ad populum Orationem Dominica, Symbolum et Decem Praecepta saltem dominicis diebus," in *Manuale curatorium* (Strassburg: Knobloch, 1520), 66v-70v [II, V].

¹¹³ See German texts listed in footnotes 109-110.

¹¹⁴ Paul Bahlmann, *Deutschlands katholische Katechismen bis zum Ende des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Münster: Regensburg, 1894); Johann Geffcken, *Der Bilderkatechismus des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts und die catechetischen Hauptstücke in dieser Zeit bis auf Luther*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Weigel, 1855); Peter Göbl, *Geschichte der Katechese im Abendland vom Zerfall des Katechumenats bis zum Ende des Mittelalters* (Kempten: Kösel, 1880); Vincenz Hasak, *Der christliche Glaube des deutschen Volkes beim Schluss des Mittelalters dargestellt in deutschen Sprachdenkmälern oder 50 Jahre der deutschen Sprache im Reformationszeitalter vom Jahr 1470 bis 1520* (Regensburg: Manz, 1868); Hipler, *Christliche Lehre*. "Ein Katechismus des vierzehnten Jahrhunderts," in *Der Katholik: Zeitschrift für katholische Wissenschaft und kirchliches Leben*, vol. 62/2, ed. J. B. Heinrich and Christoph Moufang (Mainz: Kirchheim, 1889), 619-35; Moufang, *Katholische Katechismen des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts in deutscher Sprache* (Mainz: Kirchheim, 1881); Moufang, *Die Mainzer Katechismen von Erfindung der Buchdruckerkunst bis zum Ende des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Mainz: Kirchheim, 1877), 1-13 [I].

¹¹⁵ Venantius Fortunatus, "Expositio Fidei catholicae," in *PL*, vol. 88 (1862), 585-92; Bruno Herbipolensis, "Commentarius in Orationem Dominicam, Symbolum Apostolorum et Fidem Athanasii;" Petrus Abelandus, "Expositio Symboli Athanasii," in *PL*, vol. 178, 629-32; attributed also to: Bernardus Claraevallensis, "De fide: De Symbolo Athanasii," in *Opera*, vol. 7, 56-57; "Symboli Athanasiani explanatio (Anonymi seculi XII)," in *PL*, vol. 213, 735-48; Alexander Halensis, "De articulis et symbolis fidei," 540-54; Wyclif, "Quicunque vult commonly called the Athanasian Creed," in *Select English Works*, vol. 3, 71-81; Petrus de Osma, *Commentaria in Symbolum Quicumque vult salvus esse* (Paris: Caillaut, [1490]); Pelbartus Ladislaus de Temeswar, "Symbolum Athanasium," in *Expositio compendiosa et familiaris* (Hagenau: Rynman, 1513), 137r-139r; Bernhard von Luxemburg (Bernardus de Lutemburgo), *Divi Athanasii Symbolum cum luculenta expositione* (Köln: Quentel, 1517).

VI. *Conditor et Conservator Omnium Creaturarum*

Melanchthon's mature theological reflexion attended to the doctrine of creation and preservation of the world by God and inferred significant conclusions from it. The Wittenberg Reformer taught that God created the world in its entirety and that God would sustain all his creatures on a continuing basis.¹¹⁶ This fundamental biblical truth was unanimously recognised by the church fathers and by Western and Eastern theologians of the Middle Ages. Melanchthon, however, drew conclusions from it which they did not, largely due to their philosophical, Platonising loyalties and because of their ascetic and monastic proclivities.¹¹⁷

For Melanchthon, although the world's creation and the world's redemption were distinct, both were intended and performed by one and the same God and both revealed God's loving and caring attitude towards his creatures.¹¹⁸ There was neither competition nor conflict between creation and redemption, according to Melanchthon, because both served the same purpose, that is, the well-being of humankind and both were complementary to one another given the emergence of sin which the Wittenberg Reformer understood in relational terms, that is, in terms of horizontal (*coram mundo*) and vertical (*coram Deo*) relationships.¹¹⁹ In his opinion, sin caused the relationship between human beings and God (vertical) to be ruptured and completely misdirected

¹¹⁶ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 355-56, 569.

¹¹⁷ Maximus Abbas (Confessor), "Capita de charitate," in *PG*, vol. 90 (1865), 959-1080; Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Eric Robertson Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety: Some Aspects of Religious Experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine* (Cambridge: University Press, 1990).

¹¹⁸ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 385, 405-6, 532-47, 577; Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 258-68, 298; Melanchthon, "Philosophiae moralis epitome," 91; Melanchthon, "Ethicae doctrinae elementa," 165-276.

¹¹⁹ *Supra*. Melanchthon called horizontal relationships external actions (relations) as pertinent to what people did to one another and the vertical relationship – internal actions (relations) as pertinent to the human heart in front of God. Luthardt, *Geschichte*, 41.

(total damage),¹²⁰ while relationships between (among) people (horizontal) – to be disturbed and distorted (partial damage).¹²¹ Melanchthon argued that sin was purely relational and did not belong to the substance (essence) of human beings, videlicet, did not constitute human beings as human beings but rather pertained to human will in relation to God and in relation to the neighbour. Consequently, sin did not reside in the human body or physicality but rather appeared to be a spiritual heart disease (ἀταξία) which affected, to varying degrees, vertical and horizontal relationships and which applied to the will of a human being as a whole. Therefore, salvation embraced a human being as a whole too.

A volitive and non-essential understanding of sin was attested in patristic theology which betrayed inconsistency in this respect.¹²² On the one hand, the church fathers, especially in the East, on numerous occasions located the root of human sinfulness in the sphere of the human body and sexuality. On the other hand, Augustine espoused the volitive concept of sin and the christological definition passed by the Council of Chalcedon taught that Jesus was of the same being with the Father according to divinity (ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ κατὰ τὴν θεότητα) and of the same being with us according to humanity (ὁμοούσιον τὸν

¹²⁰ To be precise, this mutually positive relationship (marked by love, trust and friendship) between God and humankind was unilaterally torn asunder by the disobedience of human beings. Through the Gospel, this relationship is restored and people are embraced by God's loving kindness in such a way that God is the giver of his grace, while people are recipients thereof.

¹²¹ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 532-40, 577-78; Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 258-68, 290-93, 322-26, 403-5; Melanchthon, *Enarratio*, 60-61; Melanchthon, "Philosophiae moralis epitome," 42-44. In Melanchthon's theology, vertical and horizontal relationships concurred with God's image in the narrow sense and in the wide sense, respectively, albeit the understanding of God's image in the Wittenberg Reformation was complex and could not be examined in the present paper. Cf. Timothy R. Schmeling, "The Image of God in Lutheran Anthropology," *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* 63, no. 2-3 (2023): 105-39.

¹²² Although (Neo)Platonising sympathies were prevailing among the Eastern (Greek) church fathers and the ensuing contempt for human physicality and mundane life was evident, the prayer life of the Eastern church appeared to be healthier from a Protestant point of view. For instance, a famous mediaeval Byzantine prayer to the Holy Spirit (Βασιλεῦ οὐράνιε) read: καὶ σῶσον, ἀγαθὲ, τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν, implying that the human soul was the object of God's saving work. "Ἀκολουθία του καθ' ἡμέραν μεσονυκτικου," in *Ὁρολογιον*, 8 [Βασιλεῦ οὐράνιε].

αὐτὸν ἡμῖν κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα) as well as similar to us in all aspects except for sin (κατὰ πάντα ὅμοιον ἡμῖν χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας).¹²³ The terminology of the council fathers was precise and presumed that according to humanity, Jesus' substance (οὐσία) and our substance (οὐσία) were absolutely identical (ὅμο) because sin belonged not to the substance (οὐσία) of human beings but rather to the phenomenal sphere as it was a manifestation of the misdirected human will in relation to God (complete misdirection) and in relation to the neighbour (partial misdirection). By contrast, Jesus was said to resemble us in all aspects except for sin because in terms of manifestation (resemblance), absolute identity between Jesus and humans existing after the fall could not be predicated.

From Melanchthon's perspective, the Gospel as the message about salvation did not displace or overshadow the world, which God created for the benefit of human beings and to which they belonged, but rather brought consolation and new life to them by restoring the vertical relationship (complete reinstatement) and by empowering horizontal relationships (aiding in motivation) so that in response to God's love for his creatures, people would relate to one another with care and responsibility.¹²⁴ In Melanchthon's opinion, the Gospel allowed human beings to see clearly what God intended to accomplish by creating and sustaining the world and opened their eyes to God's attitude as he dealt with them and as he encouraged them to deal with one another. Thus, the Gospel led people to discover that God invited them to commit themselves to one another in the same way as he committed himself to them through the work of creation, preservation and salvation. Melanchthon did not limit God's self-revelation towards his creatures to the work of salvation attested in the Scriptures but rather believed

¹²³ "Concilium Chalcedonense," in *Sacrorum*, vol. 7, 115-16 [Actio V, Definitio].

¹²⁴ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 385, 422, 471-78, 558; Melanchthon, "Prolegomena in Officia Ciceronis," in *CR*, vol. 16, 573. Luthardt failed to see this function of the Gospel in Melanchthon's theology as motivating humans and casting new light on all their endeavours. Luthardt, *Geschichte*, 52.

that since the very moment of creation, God began to reveal his loving face (the Gospel) and his design for human life (the Law) by orchestrating the world accordingly.¹²⁵ For Melanchthon, a written form of the testimony to God's identity and actions was necessitated by sin which sowed the seeds of mistrust, doubt and confusion in human hearts and minds.

To counter these consequences of sin, God arranged that the message about his kindness towards his creatures (the Gospel) and the message about his standard for human life (the Law) would be put in writing and transmitted from generation to generation.¹²⁶ According to Melanchthon, the Christian Scriptures testified to the life and work of Christ in whom God's loving face towards humankind was ultimately and definitely embodied and revealed, on the one hand, to fulfil the proclamation of God's grace enshrined in the Hebrew Bible and on the other hand, to ensure that the true intention of God's caring arrangements in creating and nurturing the world would be discovered and appreciated by people despite mistrust and doubt arising from sin and confusing their hearts and minds. Therefore, it could be said that the written form of revelation aimed to safeguard the genuine meaning of God's design remaining in human beings as their moral aptitude and their ability to understand and to manage the world in the face of sin.¹²⁷ The Wittenberg Reformer recognised the aforementioned aptitude and ability as God's work in them and God's gift for them.

As Melanchthon observed, philosophers working without the benefit of the scriptural testimony tended to overlook God's kindness underlying the creation and preservation of the world, while the Bible

¹²⁵ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 417-18, 428-30, 441-42, 463-64, 529-32; Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 254-58, 290-93.

¹²⁶ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 355-62, 385, 404-13, 551-56; Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 256-57, 312-14; Melanchthon, "Reverendis viris doctoribus Ecclesiae Dei in Saxonia et in vicinis regionibus."

¹²⁷ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 404-11, 547-52; Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 273-93; Melanchthon, "Philosophiae moralis epitome," 23; Maxcey, *Bona*, 139-40.

emphasised that God created the universe freely, without any coercion, and out of love because he wanted to have partners, namely, his creatures, to love and to interact with.¹²⁸ Thus, God created a human being as his place of abode and his temple, as his icon in the world and his representative among other creatures. Without creating humankind, God could never be a giver and could never share what he had and who he was, while giving and sharing, as Melanchthon argued, belonged to God's identity. God, who himself was giving and sharing, created human beings in and as his image and likeness, that is, for giving and sharing too.¹²⁹ Firstly, a human being was created as unity in duality and duality in unity, that is, as male and female. Both genders were created for the sake of their indispensable physical and emotional union. Secondly, God created people as predisposed to communal life and complementary to one another. That involved giving and taking.¹³⁰

Reacting to the emergence of sin, God provided the Law not only as mirrored in the texture of the world, which he created, especially in the human heart (moral consciousness) but also in a written form so that every single person could find out God's design for human life and learn about the consequences of compliance and non-compliance therewith.¹³¹ In Melanchthon's opinion, God's self-revelation should not be perceived as a single, isolated act of God but rather as his unceasing activity and interaction with his creatures which involved communication between him and people.

¹²⁸ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 383-87, 397-406, 442, 461, 517, 555-58, 582-83; Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 254-58, 297; Melanchthon, "Reverendis viris doctoribus Ecclesiae Dei in Saxonia et in vicinis regionibus;" Melanchthon, *Enarratio*, 133-37, 158-59; Melanchthon, "Philosophiae moralis epitome," 23; Melanchthon, "Ethicae doctrinae elementa," 167-71, 214-16.

¹²⁹ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 397-400, 425, 573; Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 256, 322-26; Melanchthon, "Ethicae doctrinae elementa," 216-17.

¹³⁰ Supra. Cf. Cicero, *De officiis*, ed. and trans. Walter Miller (London and New York: Heinemann and Macmillan, 1913), 22-25 [I, VII, 22], 52-65 [I, XVI-XVIII, 50-61].

¹³¹ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 428-30, 442, 529-32; Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 256-57, 290-93.

For Melanchthon¹³² and Luther,¹³³ such communication was God's self-sharing with (self-giving to) human beings which happened not only epistemologically (i.e. as regards knowledge) but also ontologically (i.e. as regards being). Consequently, God revealed to his creatures who he was towards them and what he had done for them (knowledge aspect) and God imparted himself to them (being aspect).¹³⁴ Luther maintained that the triune God gave himself to human beings fully and completely along with (*samt*) all possible visible and invisible blessings and all possible physical, spiritual and eternal gifts. Luther emphasised that God gave himself totally to humankind with (*mit*) all that he was and all that he had. Thus, God poured out himself to human beings, not keeping for himself anything that would not be given to them, while in Christ and as Christ, God became one of them, namely, became a real human being forever. The Father's work of creation, the Son's work of salvation and the Spirit's work of sanctification could be viewed as the means through which the triune God shared himself unrestrictedly and freely with people, according to Luther. Such convictions were also characteristic of Melanchthon's theology in its mature phase as evidenced by his expositions of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed.

¹³² Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 355-56, 379-85, 397-400, 412, 421-22, 529-32, 555-56; Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 254-58, 298; Melanchthon, "Reverendis viris doctoribus Ecclesiae Dei in Saxonia et in vicinis regionibus;" Melanchthon, *Enarratio*, 88, 133-36; Melanchthon, "Ethicae doctrinae elementa," 177, 227-28.

¹³³ Luther, "Vom Abendmahl Christi, Bekenntnis (1528)," 499-509; Luther, "Deutsch Katechismus: Der grosse Katechismus (1529)," 185 [Auslegung des Glaubens, I], 186 [Auslegung des Glaubens, II], 191-92 [Auslegung des Glaubens, III].

¹³⁴ Church fathers influenced by (Neo)Platonism were inclined to reduce communication between God and people to God's illumination of human souls, alleging that the Invisible One (i.e. God) might enlighten only the invisible one (i.e. human soul or mind). In their view, the Scripture played an auxiliary role, stimulating and guiding the human soul to strive for the mystic union with God who, as they claimed, needed no instruments to interact with the invisible and incorporeal dimension of human beings (i.e. soul or mind) but could not interact directly with the visible and tangible. Maximus, "Capita de charitate."

In describing different modes of God's presence in the world, Melanchthon asserted that God's presence would always involve his activity.¹³⁵ While being present, God was at work, creating and sustaining all creatures as well as saving (justification in God's sight) and transforming (sanctification) those who trusted him. God was neither idle nor isolated from his creatures. In his commentary on the Lord's Prayer, Melanchthon explicated the biblical description of God as being "in heaven", pointing out that in the Scriptures, whenever "heaven" related to God or was juxtaposed with "earth", it referred to the invisible reality, namely, to what was beyond natural human perception in contrast to "earth" which denoted the visible reality, scilicet, what was within natural human perception. Likewise, in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, "heaven" denoted whatever was invisible (πάντα ἄορατα), whereas "earth" – whatever was visible (πάντα ὁρατά).

In the invocation (address) of the Lord's Prayer, God was referred to as belonging to the invisible reality which could not be reached by natural perception of human beings but rather must be revealed by God to people as besought in the first petition. That petition was about God's name, that is, about God's identity as revealed by God towards human beings. Moreover, in the third petition, God belonging to the invisible reality was implored to enact his will in the visible reality in the same way as he would enact it in the invisible reality. God was thought of as ruling over both dimensions of the universe which he himself created to sustain perpetually. By depicting God as being "in heaven", the Scripture communicated that he was invisible (intangible), yet always revealing himself and acting in and through the visible (tangible) sphere (dimension) which he made to preserve forever and which he ultimately became a part of through incarnation. In fact, all petitions of the Lord's Prayer were about God's activity in the world (i.e. on earth), namely,

¹³⁵ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 368-69, 382-87, 528-29, 569; Melanchthon, "Annotationes in Evangelium Matthaei," in *CR*, vol. 14 (1847), 641-69 [Matthew 6].

about God acting upon, among, within and to the advantage of human beings in response to their needs in their place and time, not in heaven or eternity.¹³⁶

The third petition did not indicate that God had two separate wills, one in or for heaven, while the other on or for earth but rather implored God to ensure that his singular, indivisible will might happen both (καὶ) in heaven and on earth in the same way (ὡς). Thus, God was asked to extend and to apply his will, which was being implemented in heaven, to earth and to implement it there with equal resolve and determination. The Wittenberg Reformer rejected a patristic and mediaeval misconception of (Neo)Platonic origin according to which in the third petition, God was asked to transform the "imperfect and impure" material world into the "perfect and pure" immaterial world as if God's work of preservation and redemption meant the process of adapting the material world to the immaterial idea thereof.¹³⁷ Actually, the material world could not be "imperfect and impure" as God's very work, whereas the immaterial world could not be "perfect and pure" on account of evil spirits (fallen angels). From a biblical perspective, God created both dimensions as permanent realities of equal dignity and did not intend to transform one into another. Therefore, the third petition of the Lord's Prayer was not about transformation of the "material and impure" into the "immaterial and pure" but rather about execution and implementation of God's will in both dimensions. This interpretation coincided with the classic Jewish prayer קדיש which was parallel to the Lord's Prayer. There, God doing peace in heaven (עושה שלום במרום) was called on to do it on earth too (הוא יעשה שלום עלינו ועל כל ישראל).

¹³⁶ Supra. First petition: God's identity for us; second: God's authority for us; third: God's action for us; fourth: our need for sustenance; fifth: our need for acceptance; sixth and seventh: our need for protection and safety.

¹³⁷ Maximus, for instance, presumed conflict, competition and mutual exclusion between the material and the immaterial. Maximus, "Capita de charitate."

Melanchthon believed that God would always act through the means (instruments), which he established to accomplish his purpose, both in the invisible dimension and in the visible dimension.¹³⁸ The laws of nature understood as causality, logic and all kinds of regularities embedded in the tangible world were, according to Melanchthon, instruments which God used to create and to sustain the universe. *Creatio ex nihilo* applied only to the creation of fundamental elements and relations within God-given time and space with which God commenced his work and which he utilised, building his world layer upon layer (step by step) until it was completed (Gen. 1:2-2:3).¹³⁹ Nonetheless, Melanchthon rejected the idea that God created some rudimentary physical elements (seeds) so that they could develop by themselves and that afterwards, God simply abandoned the world at such an initial stage to let all things happen and evolve on their own based solely on their intrinsic powers and inclinations.¹⁴⁰

Rather, all laws, regularities and relations, which God enclosed within his time and space and wove into the fabric of the universe,¹⁴¹ all intrinsic powers, which he granted to all things, and all their purposeful designs were his tools which he continued to use intentionally to carry out his agenda.¹⁴² In Melanchthon's opinion, God was not only behind all of them but also in charge of all of them. Thus, God was

¹³⁸ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 387-89; 569; Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 314-20; Melanchthon, "Annotationes in Evangelium Matthaei," 641-69.

¹³⁹ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 384-86, 431, 529-32; 558; Latin: Melanchthon, "Commentarius in Genesin (1523)," in *CR*, vol. 13 (1846), 761-77 [I-II]; German: Melanchthon, *Erklärung oder Anzeigung in etliche schwerste[n] Kapitel des ersten Buches Mosis* ([s. l.]: [s. n.], 1524).

¹⁴⁰ This view Melanchthon conventionally attributed to Stoicism but the question whether and to which degree, such an attribution was accurate is complex and could not be entertained in the present paper.

¹⁴¹ Such laws, regularities and relations were labelled as secondary causes, while God was called the primary cause. Because this scholastic terminology is hardly intelligible to contemporary readers, it is seldom employed in the present paper.

¹⁴² Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 394-95, 418-22, 529-32, 566-70; Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 312-14; Melanchthon, "Commentarius in Genesin (1523)," 762-63, 776-77.

ever-present and ever-active in and through them all. For that reason, they could be called contours of the Divinity in the world and within them, both dimensions (i.e. the visible and the invisible) would meet and fuse. Melanchthon affirmed that God was not subject to the laws, regularities and relations, which he himself set up, but rather exercised control over them and made use of them at his discretion.¹⁴³ What remained constant regardless of the circumstances was God's purpose in using them, that is, the welfare of human beings. In the visible dimension, God employed various instruments including human beings and their mutual relationships. By making human beings complementary to one another and by engaging them to serve one another in different ways, God took care of his creatures. Besides, the Wittenberg Reformer examined the connexion between God and his instruments (laws, regularities, relations, institutions etc.) in the context of communal life which is to be discussed in the following chapter.

VII. *Vincula humanae societatis*

While studying the bonds of human society (*vincula humanae societatis*), that is, the bonds underpinning communal life, Melanchthon denied that civil, political and social structures of human existence were merely human arrangements based entirely on inborn mental powers of human beings and a sense of natural law bestowed by God upon them.¹⁴⁴ Melanchthon stated that although God called people to make use of their intellectual powers in the process of governing and while finding specific solutions to the problems of the community, the framework of communal life was established by God himself and sustained perpetually. From Melanchthon's perspective, God indeed equipped humankind with intellectual and moral powers. These were

¹⁴³ Supra.

¹⁴⁴ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 418-28, 443-44, 551, 566-70, 579; Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 275-76, 298, 314-28; Melanchthon, *Enarratio*, 146; Melanchthon, "Ethicae doctrinae elementa," 246; Melanchthon, "Locī theologicī (Tertia eorum actas)," 991 [XX]; Cf. Strigel, *Locī*, vol. 4, 123 [De magistratu, IV, Paludanus].

necessary tools, which he gave human beings, so that they could manage their shared lives, videlicet, their existence as a community instituted by God because God himself was the very author and guardian of all communal life and he himself wanted people to know him through this gift coming from his loving heart and this work of his caring hands among them.

According to Melanchthon, God designed and effected communal life not only indirectly (i.e. by providing necessary tools) but also directly (i.e. by creating people to live together).¹⁴⁵ Thus, communal life was God's gift and task for humankind. It was to be received with gratitude (passive aspect) and carried out diligently (active aspect) by human beings. Although proper recognition or lack thereof on the human side neither validated nor enabled God's gifts for humankind, God invited and encouraged people to embrace his gifts with gratitude, recognising his intentions. Melanchthon asserted that the civil authorities were God's work and God's gift because through them, the Creator acted and blessed humankind by providing enough tranquillity so that people could manage the world which they were a part of, exchange goods and services with one another, produce and build new things, learn and teach others.

Therefore, Melanchthon disagreed with those who claimed that social tasks and obligations were not directly established by God and for that reason, people could not serve God properly by being engaged in them.¹⁴⁶ In Melanchthon's opinion, social responsibilities were not only useful and necessary for the sake of human beings but also created and sustained directly by God for his glory and for the benefit of his

¹⁴⁵ Supra.

¹⁴⁶ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 417-28, 551-56, 567-69; Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 256-57, 275-76, 298, 312-22; Melanchthon, "Ethicae doctrinae elementa," 216, 245-47, 260; Melanchthon, "Catechesis puerilis (1543/1540): Catechismus, das ist eine Kinderlehre (1543)," 220 [Decalogus, IV, Suntne cultus Dei officia erga homines?]. This paragraph was contained in: Melanchthon, *Catechesis puerilis* (Schwäbisch Hall: Braubach, 1540), 20v-21v [Suntne cultus Dei officia erga homines?], but omitted in: CR, vol. 23, 117-92; Luthardt, *Geschichte*, 43.

creatures. By serving one another, people served and worshipped God (*cultus Dei*) in response to his care and love for them, whereas God upheld communal life through their service. Thus, God used people's service to one another as his own instrument through which he could act in the world continually. The Wittenberg Reformer admitted that human reason was able and obliged to discover that people were predisposed to communal life, namely, created to live as a community but he also affirmed that the social nature of human beings and their communal existence were God's very work (*opus Dei*). Melanchthon never viewed "*civilia officia*" as "human institutions" merely sanctioned in the Scripture but rather firmly embraced them as divine institutions, that is, as God's caring arrangements executed by human beings.¹⁴⁷ These arrangements were caring, benevolent, generous, protecting, sustaining and liberating in tangible terms, yet pointing to the intangible by disclosing God's loving attitude towards people.

Speaking of the indelible social identity of human beings, Melanchthon noted two phenomena: the complementary diversity of human beings and the phenomenon of language.¹⁴⁸ Firstly, while examining the necessities of life, each individual could realise that most things (food, clothes, buildings etc.) and services (nursing, medical help, teaching, transportation etc.) used daily were made or provided by others. Actually, an individual person could not even cause his or her own existence which was brought about by God through the sexual intercourse of this person's parents. Moreover, no one could survive his or her childhood without care and support from parents or guardians.¹⁴⁹ Secondly, the ability and compulsion to speak testified to the social nature of human beings because language and speaking were acquired

¹⁴⁷ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 417-22, 555-56, 567-70; Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 256-57, 275-76, 312-14; Melanchthon, *Enarratio*, 105-6; Melanchthon, "Ethicae doctrinae elementa," 227-28. Fink argued to the contrary. Fink, "Against the Busybodies: Philipp Melanchthon and the 'Protestant Work Ethic'."

¹⁴⁸ Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 254-58, 275-76, 313, 322-26; Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 417-28, 562-78.

¹⁴⁹ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 425.

and practised within the community.¹⁵⁰ Any communication must presume the participation of more than one person and the intention to convey a message from one person to the other person(s). These social implications of the linguistic identity of human beings mirrored God's internal relationships as the One who had been eternally uttering (begetting) his λόγος.¹⁵¹ A human being as God's image in the world was perpetually uttering his or her word, which was the image of whatever he or she got to know, towards the other person(s) and thus, engagement and interaction would occur.

Melanchthon's assertions that by serving one another, people served God and that God invited human beings to relate to one another in the same way as he related to them were also found in the ancient Jewish tradition. To follow God's presence (להלך אחר שכינה) meant, according to the Talmud, to follow God's attributes (מדותיו) which involved clothing the naked, visiting the sick, consoling mourners and burying the dead as God himself did all of that.¹⁵² Similarly, the Grand Midrash to the Book of Leviticus (ויקרא רבה) advised those, who wanted to cling to God's presence, to be engaged in work (בתעסק) as God himself did in his orchard (i.e. the Garden of Eden).¹⁵³ There is no evidence that Melanchthon was familiar with these classic Jewish texts, but certainly, both late ancient Judaism and the Wittenberg Reformation were convinced of the sanctity and dignity of human endeavours in the world, especially those which were useful and helpful to others.

¹⁵⁰ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 562; Cf. Aristoteles, "Politica," in *Opera omnia Graece et Latine*, vol. 1 (Paris: Didot, 1848), 483 [I, I, II, 10-11 (1253)].

¹⁵¹ Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 338. Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 360-361; 500-501; 515; Melanchthon, *Enarratio*, 158-59; Melanchthon, "Commentarius in Genesin (1523)," 766-68; Latin: Melanchthon, "Annotationes in Evangelium Ioannis," in *CR*, vol. 14, 1051-53 [John 1]; German: Melanchthon, *Verzeichnung und kurze Anzeigung in das Evangelium Jo[h]annis* ([s. l.]: [s. n.], 1524); Melanchthon, "Enarratio in Evangelium Ioannis," in *CR*, vol. 15 (1848), 9-15 [John 1].

¹⁵² "מסכת סוטה," in תלמוד בבלי, vol. 8 (Warschau: Orgelbrand, 1860), 14r [no. 14a]; Cf. Matthew 25:35-40.

¹⁵³ "מדרש ויקרא," in ספר מדרש רבות על התורה (Leipzig: Wienbrack, 1864), 335 [no. 25 (Lev. 19:1-20:27)].

Analysing horizontal relationships, Melanchthon resorted to the Greek term *στοργή* (關心) and its derivative *φιλοστοργία* (關愛) denoting a sense of affection, responsibility and care through which God bonded people together, especially within the family.¹⁵⁴ Because *στοργή* belonged to horizontal relationships, as a result of original sin, it was only weakened and distorted but not totally damaged or lost. Rather, *στοργή* as God's work within human beings and his gift for them continued to mould human relationships despite the emergence of sin. Melanchthon denounced the programmatic suppression of human feelings, longings and experiences as articulated in the philosophical ideal of *ἀπάθεια*.¹⁵⁵ For him, this issue was relevant for several reasons.

Firstly, society was the family encompassing many families or in other words, the family of families.¹⁵⁶ Therefore, social relationships could be construed as an extension of family bonds and their application to the wider community, that is, beyond the individual family. Consequently, if *στοργή* as a fundamental instrument of bonding for an individual person and for the individual family was denied and discredited, it would be impossible to think of any social relations. Secondly, in the aftermath of original sin, people faced hardships and suffered. To strive for detachment and insulation from what human beings felt, as most Graeco-Roman philosophers and most church fathers¹⁵⁷ did, was unacceptable to Melanchthon because the Bible

¹⁵⁴ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 406, 429, 577-78; Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 267-68, 275-76, 314-20; Melanchthon, "Philosophiae moralis epitome," 36-55, 70-72, 155-64; Melanchthon, "Ethicae doctrinae elementa," 201-7, 222; Melanchthon, "Prolegomena in Officia Ciceronis," 573; Költzsch, *Melanchthons*, 91, 104; Luthardt, *Geschichte*, 49; Maxcey, *Bona*, 172, 216-17. As to the concept of *φιλοστοργία* in late antiquity, Plutarch's *De amore prolis* is instructive. Plutarch, "De amore prolis," in *Moralia*, vol. 6, ed. and trans. William Clark Helmbold (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press and Heinemann, 1962), 330-57 [493-97].

¹⁵⁵ Most church fathers embraced or even advanced this ideal. Maximus, "Capita de charitate."

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Cicero, *De officiis*, 52-65 [I, XVI-XVIII, 50-61].

¹⁵⁷ Maximus, "Capita de charitate."

portrayed God as the One who suffered and grieved.¹⁵⁸ If it was not unworthy of God to suffer or to grieve, why should people feel ashamed of what they experienced?! Actually, late ancient Judaism did not isolate God from suffering either. The Grand Midrash to the Book of Lamentations (איכה רבה) pictured God as suffering, crying, regretting and blaming himself because he allowed his Temple to be destroyed and his beloved children to be dispersed.¹⁵⁹ Thus, the idea of God suffering in response to the suffering of his people was grounded in the Jewish tradition.

Stoicism stood out from different streams of ancient philosophy because it did not undermine the status of the tangible sphere but rather presumed that the tangible sphere permeated with and governed by the intangible Logos constituted the divine universe in which all elements were interwoven. Therefore, both dimensions of the reality (i.e. the tangible and the intangible) were viewed as necessary, rational, purposeful and permanent. Stoic philosophy also taught that human beings were predisposed to communal life and designed to exist for one another's sake, being complementary to one another. Indeed, Stoicism emphasised the social nature of human beings unreservedly. Nonetheless, Stoic philosophy encouraged its followers to distance themselves from any emotions, worry, sorrow, fear, grief, pain, hurt or excitement, which all were reduced to merely subjective perceptions, and to detach themselves internally from relationships or bonds not related to their own moral (i.e. rational) well-being or not under their control. From a Stoic point of view, a person ought to carry out his or her duties as assigned by the eternal Logos, yet without any external attachment. Similarly, one's service to the neighbour should arise primarily from one's commitment to his or her own moral advancement

¹⁵⁸ In the story of Lazarus (John 11), Jesus felt bonds of friendship (John 11:3, 5, 36), was internally disturbed (John 11:33, 38), distressed himself (John 11:33) and wept (John 11:35). Melanchthon, "Annotationes in Evangelium Ioannis," 1138-48 [John 11]; Melanchthon, "Enarratio in Evangelium Ioannis," 250-65 [John 11].

¹⁵⁹ ספר מדרש רבות על חמש מגלות in "מדרש איכה רבתי" (Leipzig: Wienbrack, 1865), 94-96 [no. 24 (פתיחתא דחכימ)].

and from one's desire to conform to the rational and divine nature of the universe, namely, to the Logos, not necessarily from one's love and care for the neighbour or in response to the neighbour's needs. Thus, this service was to be performed first of all for the sake of the caregiver, not for the sake of the care recipient or the community.

As noticed earlier, Melanchthon's concept of horizontal relationships presumed that all relationships in the community were an extension and application of family relationships to the wider community.¹⁶⁰ A sense of submission, responsibility and dependence originated from family relations and bonds. The Wittenberg Reformer viewed the relationship between those in authority and those under authority in terms of mutuality. Social leaders (e.g. rulers, employers or owners) acted as parents for the community. Therefore, those in authority as communal parents were, on the one hand, entitled to lead and to be honoured, and on the other hand, obliged to care for their communal children who looked to them for guidance and direction and who relied on them while steering their way through the difficulties and uncertainties of daily life. Consequently, both parties, namely, those leading and those led, were mutually bound by submission, responsibility and dependence. In this mutual bondage, both parties were giving and taking constantly. Interestingly, such views on the authorities were expressed by Philo of Alexandria¹⁶¹ and by Cicero¹⁶² whose legacy Melanchthon treasured and researched as a classical scholar.

¹⁶⁰ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 418-22, 567-70; Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 314-20; Melanchthon, "Philosophiae moralis epitome," 88-89; Melanchthon, "Ethicae doctrinae elementa," 216-17.

¹⁶¹ Philo Alexandrinus, "De Decalogo," in *Opera quae supersunt*, vol. 4, ed. Leopold Cohn and Paul Wendland (Berlin: Reimer, 1902), 305 [31, 165-67]; Philo, "De specialibus legibus, Liber IV (De iustitia)," in *Opera quae supersunt*, vol. 5, ed. Cohn and Wendland (Berlin: Reimer, 1906), 251-52 [7, 183-87]. An extant fragment of Philo's *Περὶ προνοίας* cited by Eusebius of Caesarea: Eusebius Caesariensis, "Praeparatio evangelica," in *PG*, vol. 21 (1857), 651-52 [VIII, XIII, 13]; 653-54 [VIII, XIV, 14].

¹⁶² Cicero, *De officiis*, 52-65 [I, XVI-XVIII, 50-61].

From Melanchthon's perspective, office holders carried out God's work and acted on God's behalf as far as they conformed to God's agenda, that is, as far as their actions supported good and suppressed evil in the community.¹⁶³ Melanchthon not only acknowledged that moral flaws of office holders might affect their conduct and performance but also admitted that particular laws or regulations introduced by them might contradict God's intent. God's intent was that all man-made legal provisions, which, as Melanchthon realised, were ever-changing and which varied, would protect good people and punish evildoers. Melanchthon accepted that legal provisions evolved and were conditioned by time and place. In his opinion, the diversity and variability of legal regulations was inevitable because they were meant to address diverse and variable situations to make life in the community safe and prosperous. Although legal regulations were man-made, they enjoyed God's sanction as far as they served as God's instruments for preserving and developing the community and for regulating and stabilising relations therein. Melanchthon asserted that all laws or regulations should aim to shield the innocent from evil and harm. This was a litmus test and the bottom line for Melanchthon as far as the legal system was concerned.

Therefore, Melanchthon believed that Christians were not obliged to obey government if it impelled them to harm the innocent or to do evil.¹⁶⁴ In this instance, Melanchthon preferred passive disobedience to the active one. Nonetheless, he recognised the right of active self-defence in the case of a person in danger of extermination at the hands of a tyrant even if such self-defence would result in the loss of the tyrant's life. It is remarkable because the Wittenberg Reformation hesitated to grant the

¹⁶³ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 418-22, 567-70; Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 275-76, 314-22; Melanchthon, *Enarratio*, 146-48; Melanchthon, "Philosophiae moralis epitome," 88-89, 109-18, 141; Melanchthon, "Ethicae doctrinae elementa," 242-43, 267-68; Költzsch, *Melanchthons*, 114-18.

¹⁶⁴ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 570; Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 317-20; Melanchthon, "Philosophiae moralis epitome," 105-6, 118; Költzsch, *Melanchthons*, 129-30.

right of active self-defence to subjects (citizens) facing outrageous injustice and constant violence or abuse from rulers (government). Melancthon was also open to the possibility that other social leaders would remove a tyrant from power for the common good. From his perspective, God gave his sanction and lent credence to the civil authorities and thus, to those, who were in authority, yet without approving or condoning their misdeeds which were likely to happen in view of original sin.¹⁶⁵ The human abuse of leadership contrary to God's intentions did not tarnish God's gift of leadership because for such abuse, the recipient, not the Giver thereof, was to be blamed. In fact, on account of original sin, people were prone to abuse all gifts (including communal life) which God offered to them.

VIII. Circular Interactions between the Law and the Gospel

Speaking of the Law, Melancthon meant moral law¹⁶⁶ which was God's eternal wisdom and his perfect, unchangeable design for human life informing people about the consequences of their compliance and non-compliance therewith.¹⁶⁷ Melancthon distinguished this Law from other laws which he classified as provisional (i.e. not eternal), particular (i.e. not universally applicable) or nonmoral (i.e. not pertinent to human conduct). In Melancthon's opinion, regulations, which God gave the Israelites and which did not relate directly to morality but rather to worship, diet or social arrangements, were temporary and particular because they were to be in force until the coming of the

¹⁶⁵ Melancthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 418-22, 567-70; Melancthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 314-20; Melancthon, "Philosophiae moralis epitome," 117-24, 267-68.

¹⁶⁶ At times, Melancthon used the terms "moral law" and "natural law" interchangeably but in principle, natural law was a wider category encompassing all divine arrangements which the Creator implanted in the world and which, when applied to morality (i.e. human conduct), were called moral law. Költzsch, *Melancthons*, 65-67. *Infra*.

¹⁶⁷ Melancthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 400-412, 442, 539-49, 567-68, 577-82; Melancthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 290-98, 336-37; Melancthon, "Philosophiae moralis epitome;" Melancthon, "Ethicae doctrinae elementa," 168, 230-31, 267; Melancthon, "Prolegomena in Officia Ciceronis," 573.

Messiah and they extended only to the Israelites. These regulations, however, reflected certain values of moral law and could be perceived as a particular and provisional application of moral law to specific areas of the Israelites' lives which God made to prepare them for the coming of the Saviour.¹⁶⁸ Likewise, Melanchthon did not identify ever-changing and countless laws passed by various rulers (governments) with moral law albeit such man-made laws should in his view reflect and implement the tenets of moral law as applied to the community. Melanchthon's understanding of interactions between the Law and the Gospel dovetailed with his concept of the threefold use of the Law.¹⁶⁹ Three functions of the Law were not three types of the Law but rather indicated the application of one and the same Law to three different spheres. How these functions would be called or numbered is not important because the difference between them is based on different domains to which the Law was applied.¹⁷⁰

According to Melanchthon, God applied the Law to the communal life of all human beings regardless of whether they believed in him or not in order to protect and sustain all of them, believers and unbelievers alike, out of his kindness.¹⁷¹ This application involved the Law engraved in human hearts (minds) and embodied in all institutions of communal life. The social, political and economic identity of human beings was shaped by God prior to the emergence of sin. Originally,

¹⁶⁸ Judaism in late antiquity and in the Middle Ages recognised the privileged position of what Melanchthon called moral law (summarised in the Decalogue) because it was applicable to all people of all times and places but never separated it from other laws which God gave to regulate various aspects of the lives of his Covenant people. In the ancient Jewish tradition, although these "other laws" were regarded as applicable only to Jews, their perennial validity was affirmed.

¹⁶⁹ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 408-12, 550-55; Luthardt, *Geschichte*, 42; Maxcey, *Bona*, 246-53.

¹⁷⁰ From the viewpoint of the author of the present paper, the naming and numbering of these functions of the Law found in the history of Lutheran theology did not help to grasp this fundamental concept of the Wittenberg Reformation.

¹⁷¹ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 398-400, 418-30, 442-43, 532-42, 550-55, 566-69, 578-79; Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 275-76, 290-93, 314-22; Melanchthon, *Enarratio*, 146; Melanchthon, "Philosophiae moralis epitome," 42-44; Melanchthon, "Ethicae doctrinae elementa," 168, 245-47.

God designed people to be his coworkers by inviting and equipping them to manage the world and to create new life (procreation) on his behalf. Thus, human beings were God's partners and agents in making and upholding the world. Melanchthon believed that God intended people to live and work together, to communicate with one another and to care for one another under accountable leadership. In response to the emergence of sin, God introduced disciplinary (punitive) and coercive measures to ensure that communal life would be viable in the face of self-centred and harmful proclivities which were not created by him but which resulted from human opposition to and departure from God's will. Instead of being "added" by God, these measures could be construed as unfolding from God's original warning about the consequences of human disobedience, that is, non-compliance with the Law (cf. Gen. 2:17). God's purpose was to defend and to protect those who suffered the social consequences of sin by attaching such remedial measures which aimed to restrain the outward manifestations of disruptive behaviour within the community. Therefore, in this function, disciplinary and coercive measures must be viewed as necessitated by the emergence of sin. In fact, Melanchthon castigated "blasphemers" who equated society and governance (i.e. civil authorities) with the public use of violence as invented by human beings or who reduced these to mere mechanisms for preventing and curbing interpersonal strife which would be controlled by those in authority.

Furthermore, God applied the Law to all people to judge their conduct in the aftermath of original sin and to let them evaluate their own lives in the light of the Law.¹⁷² Thus, through the Law present in human hearts (minds) and written down in the Scripture, human beings could realise their failure to live up to God's standard, namely, to love God completely and to love the neighbour as themselves. In this function, the Law communicated that God demanded full compliance with the Law and rejected any non-compliance. Nonetheless, God intended to use the Law in this manner to open people's eyes to their

¹⁷² *Supra*.

failure so that they could accept and appreciate his free gift of salvation delivered by the Gospel. The Gospel supplied the righteousness required by the Law to sinners (justification in God's sight) so that it could take root in them and initiate their life-long process of transformation (sanctification).

Moreover, God applied the Law to believers as believers (scilicet, to their renewed nature)¹⁷³ so that they would know what holy life was about and learn how to live in accordance with his will.¹⁷⁴ The Gospel, not the Law, empowered those, who accepted the message about God's kindness, to appreciate and embrace the Law present in their hearts, in the Bible and in all institutions of communal life. The Gospel allowed them to discover that the Law in all its forms and mechanisms was God's precious gift offered for their benefit. In this function, the Law guided and led those, who were empowered by the Gospel, to live as God intended them to live.

All these functions of the Law were not mutually exclusive but rather inextricably intertwined.¹⁷⁵ Prior to their eternal glorification and purification, believers could not be free of sinful nature¹⁷⁶ which still resided in them but without determining who they were in front of God, namely, without defining their status in God's eyes. Therefore, believers needed the Law on all three counts. Firstly, living in the community. Secondly, coping with their own sinful nature. Thirdly, pursuing God's will. Melancthon's model of interactions between the Law and the Gospel might be described as circular, not linear, because the Law prepared human hearts for the Gospel by confronting people with their sins, whereas the Gospel empowered them to embrace and appreciate the Law not out of fear of punishment at God's hands but rather out of

¹⁷³ The renewed nature was also called in the Scripture the new man (Adam), the internal man or πνεῦμα if juxtaposed with σάρξ.

¹⁷⁴ Melancthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 418-22, 478-79, 545, 550-55; Melancthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 268-76.

¹⁷⁵ Supra.

¹⁷⁶ The sinful nature was also denominated as the old man (Adam), the external man or σάρξ when contrasted with πνεῦμα.

gratitude for God's kindness (*nova oboedientia*) which was the reason why God instituted the Law prior to the emergence of sin and why God continued to employ the Law to preserve the universe, particularly humankind, afterwards.¹⁷⁷ In fact, the proclamation of God's grace (Ex. 20:2; Deut. 5:6) served as an introduction to the Decalogue which was a summary of moral law in its written form, as Melanchthon stated. God invited and encouraged people to pursue his will concerning their lives in response to his kindness which manifested itself through his deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt.¹⁷⁸

Melanchthon taught that good works were not activities which people would simply designate as such or would be keen on doing but rather what would serve the neighbour in accordance with God's commandments.¹⁷⁹ Not any actions but only actions, which benefited

¹⁷⁷ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 412-22, 428-30, 541-56; Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 290-301; Melanchthon, *Enarratio*, 91, 146; Melanchthon, "Philosophiae moralis epitome," 60-64, 125; Melanchthon, "Ethicae doctrinae elementa," 228, 242-44.

¹⁷⁸ The Hebrew Scriptures and the entire Jewish tradition recognised the exodus as the first-hand experience of God's love and care for his people and as the tangible evidence of God's commitment to those whom he chose to be his. Each Passover celebration (as spelt out in *הגדה של פסח*) was not only a mere recollection thereof as a past event but also a genuine participation in that saving event, so those taking part in the Passover could participate in God's work of deliverance as if they were present in Egypt and were set free along with Moses and his fellow Israelites. Such timeless participation in an accomplished event meant that the participants born centuries after the exodus might join the original recipients of that saving work and could receive God's gift of freedom along with them. The Lord's Supper of the Christian Scriptures was rooted in the Passover celebration. Jakob Raphael Fürstenthal, ed. and trans., *סדר הגדה של פסח: Hag[ga] Gebete für den häuslichen Gottesdienst am ersten und zweiten Abende des Pessachfestes* (Prag and Breslau: Brandeis, 1900), 35-37 [לפיכך אנחנו חייבים]. Cf. Melanchthon, "Annotationes in Evangelium Matthaei," 1006-8 [Matthew 26 (Prima Azymorum)]; Melanchthon, "Commentarii in Psalmos," in *CR*, vol. 13, 1166-72, 1293-1304 [Psalm 111]; Melanchthon, "Annotationes in Evangelia," in *CR*, vol. 14, 245-49 [De agno mactato in Paschate (Ex capite 12. Exodi)]; Melanchthon, "Annotationes in Evangelium Ioannis," 1145-46 [John 11:55]; Melanchthon, "Postillae Pars II," in *CR*, vol. 24 (1856), 636-91 [A (In die Viridium - Die Paschatis)], 882-86 [A (In Festo Pentecostes: Iohannes 14)].

¹⁷⁹ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 431-39, 448-49, 463-75, 555-56, 566-67, 581; Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 273-84, 312-14, 322; Melanchthon, *Enarratio*, 60-61, 105; Melanchthon, "Prolegomena in Officia Ciceronis," 592; Dilthey, "Weltanschauung und Analyse des Menschen seit Renaissance und Reformation," 198-201; Luthardt, *Geschichte*, 42-43, 52-53; Maxcey, *Bona*, 139-40.

others and conformed to God's will, could be regarded as horizontally good (i.e. in civil terms) and to be vertically good (i.e. in spiritual terms), they must come from faith, that is, be a human response to God's kindness. Although God noted and utilised decent works of unbelievers, his ultimate and overarching purpose was to bring all people to the knowledge of the truth, that is, to faith through which they could be saved (cf. 1 Tim. 2:3-4). Therefore, notwithstanding his recognition and use of unbelievers' works, God desired and called for works, which would also be good vertically, namely, which would be propelled by faith receiving a free gift of salvation from his hands. Melanchthon, on the one hand, cherished all legitimate and useful endeavours in the political and economic domains as the embodiment of service to the neighbour and on the other hand, disapproved of ascetic and monastic activities. These activities Melanchthon perceived as self-invented because in his opinion, they either contradicted the Scripture or were undertaken without biblical support and he construed them as self-serving (self-indulging)¹⁸⁰ because they were not neighbour-oriented from his viewpoint.

Already Origen realised that it might be impossible or even imprudent for an individual person to love and care for all people in the world equally but the gradation of love, which he proposed, was problematic from a Protestant point of view because Origen tried to prioritise those to whom we should extend our love and care (denominated collectively as the neighbour) based on their qualities, usefulness or attitude to us, that is, in view of past, present or future

¹⁸⁰ Self-service (self-indulgence) must be distinguished from a proper sense of self-love. According to the Scripture (Lev. 19:18; Mark 12:31; Gal. 5:14), it is impossible to love other people without loving oneself as God's creature because how one person could treasure the other person as created by God if he or she would not even treasure the fact that God made him or her?! When I love myself in the sense that I am grateful to God for making me through my parents and for sustaining my existence, I can see other people as fellow beings created by the same God who loves and looks after them in the same way as he loves and looks after me. Therefore, Maximus' blanket condemnation of any form of self-love (φιλαυτία) driven by (Neo)Platonising anthropology must be regarded as simplistic. Idem, "Capita de charitate," 985-86 [II, 8], 1033-34 [III, 56-57].

benefits which we could obtain from them.¹⁸¹ Such an approach obviously contradicted Matthew 5:44-48. The Wittenberg Reformation did not question the need for gradation but maintained that each person should serve those entrusted by God to his or her care in view of his or her station(s) in life (e.g. family, work, friendship) and those given by God within his or her reach, to begin with, those found in his or her immediate proximity. This Protestant attempt of prioritisation could be described as a spiral progression of our love for the neighbour in the process of implementing it and bore a resemblance to Cicero's reflexion.¹⁸²

In contrast to Luther,¹⁸³ Melanchthon did not vitiate the canonicity of the Epistle of James and did not presume that there was any real theological contradiction between the Pauline Epistles (especially Romans) and James.¹⁸⁴ Rather, Melanchthon preferred to focus on the verb δικαίω which could denote either to declare (justification in God's sight) or make (sanctification viewed from the perspective of God's action upon humans) righteous or to prove to be righteous (sanctification viewed from the perspective of humans acted upon by God). Actually, the meaning of δικαίω as manifesting one's righteousness is clear

¹⁸¹ Origenes, "In Canticum canticorum homilia II (interprete Hieronymo)," in *PG*, vol. 13 (1857), 53-54 [8 (Song of Songs 2:4b)]; Origenes, "In Canticum canticorum liber III (interprete Rufino)," in *PG*, vol. 13, 155-60 [(Song of Songs 2:4b)]. The Greek original of Origen's explanation of this passage is lost, only Latin translations by Jerome and by Rufinus of Aquileia are extant.

¹⁸² Cicero, *De officiis*, 52-65 [I, XVI-XVIII, 50-61].

¹⁸³ Luther, "Vorrede auf die Episteln S. Jacobi und Judä (1522/1546)," in *Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Die Deutsche Bibel)*, vol. 7 (Weimar: Böhlau, 1931), 384-87.

¹⁸⁴ Melanchthon, *Enarratio*, 83, 100, 115-25; Melanchthon, "Commentarius in Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos," in *CR*, vol. 15, 538, 594-610 [Romans 4]; Melanchthon, "Enarratio Epistolae Pauli ad Romanos," in *CR*, vol. 15, 887-905 [Romans 4]; Melanchthon, "Locis theologicis (Tertia eorum aetas)," 746 [VIII], 759 [VIII], 785-86 [IX, De argumentis adversariorum, 2], 791 [IX, De argumentis adversariorum, 12]; Latin: Melanchthon, "Apologia Confessionis Augustanae (Latina altera amplior)," in *CR*, vol. 27 (1859), 489-92 [De dilectione et impletione Legis]; German: Melanchthon, "Apologia der Konfession (übers. Justus Jonas)," in *CR*, vol. 28 (1860), 115-17 [Von der Liebe und Erfüllung des Gesetzes]. A different German version was contained in the German Corpus Philippicum: Melanchthon, *Corpus doctrinae christianae* (Zerbst: Schmid, 1588), 61-62 [Vom Gesetz und Werken]; Maxcey, *Bona*, 29-35, 58-61, 153-58, 254-77; Cf. Ioannes Calvin, "Commentarius in Epistolam Iacobi," in *Opera quae supersunt omnia (Corpus Reformatorum)*, vol. 55 (83), ed. Wilhelm Baum, Eduard Cunitz and Eduard Reuss (Braunschweig: Schwetschke and Bruhn, 1896), 381-82 [Argumentum], 397-407 [James 2].

from the Psalms 19:10 and 51:6 in the LXX, particularly in the light of parallelisms found there. Consequently, Melancthon believed that bringing the Epistle of James into conflict with the Epistle of Romans was a consequence of a profound exegetical misunderstanding.

To begin with, it should be noted that Romans 4:2, grammatically speaking, formulated *conditio realis* and did not deny that believers were proved to be righteous through works, yet this justification was not the one which took place in front of God (πρὸς θεόν) but rather in front of other people.¹⁸⁵ Such a manifestation of Abraham's faith through his works was not something that could prompt God to regard him as righteous because God regarded sinners as righteous only through their faith in his promises. Therefore, to avoid confusion, it would be prudent to speak of twofold justification: the one in God's sight (commonly called justification) and the one in the eyes of other people (commonly called sanctification). God declared sinners righteous only through their faith which took hold of Jesus' righteousness but this faith and this imputed righteousness were visible only to God, who could read people's hearts, not to other people. Faith and alien (i.e. Jesus') righteousness imputed to sinners immediately began to take root in them, initiating the process of their life-long transformation (sanctification) visible to others.

Justification in God's sight was God's act, not a process, and involved no human works.¹⁸⁶ It was an act through which God recognised sinners as righteous, forgiven and acquitted for Jesus' sake. However, justification in the sight of the neighbour was a life-long process to be completed when believers would enter heaven. In this process, faith bore fruit, came to light, manifested itself through works and was practised through human love for the neighbour which reflected divine love (cf. Gal. 5:6). Both types of justification were interrelated and both were God's instruments. Only God could see faith, while people

¹⁸⁵ Supra.

¹⁸⁶ Supra.

could see only fruits of faith (works), namely, deeds coming from faith. Through faith, God recognised sinners as righteous, while through fruits of faith, God made their faith visible to other human beings.

James 2 explained justification in front of the neighbour and its main concern was how faith authenticated itself through its fruits which were visible to other people and which could be evaluated by them in the light of God's commandments.¹⁸⁷ The verb δικαίωω was used in James 2:21-25 exclusively in the sense of "proving to be righteous", never in the sense of "declaring to be righteous". James 2:23 spoke of God declaring Abraham righteous (justification in front of God) by citing Genesis 15:6 and using its vocabulary (God counted Abraham's faith as righteousness). The invisible faith of Abraham (James 2:23), through which God regarded him as his child and friend, rested on God's grace and could not be seen by others, yet this invisible faith manifested itself through Abraham's actions, to be precise, through his unconditional obedience mentioned in James 2:21. Therefore, James 2:24 stated that in front of others, a human being was proved to be righteous from his or her works which reflected his or her faith. In God's eyes, only faith counted, but in the sight of human beings, only works coming from faith mattered, not faith alone because faith as such could not be seen by people.

The Epistle of James used two examples to demonstrate how faith, which was visible to God, but invisible to people, became recognisable to others.¹⁸⁸ Abraham's status as God's friend was the hallmark of the entire Jewish tradition but the reference to Rahab, who was emphatically designated as a whore (Ῥάβ ἡ πόρνη), must sound highly controversial to the readers of the Jewish background. Nevertheless, by juxtaposing Abraham with Rahab, the Epistle of James could make its point even clearer. In James 2:21, the circumstantial participle ἀνευέγκας communicated how Abraham was proved to be

¹⁸⁷ Supra.

¹⁸⁸ Supra.

righteous from his works as his faith led him to unconditional obedience to God so that he was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac on the altar (Gen. 22). In James 2:25, the circumstantial participle ὑποδεξαμένη communicated how Rahab was proved to be righteous from her works as her faith empowered her to assist messengers (spies) who, on God's behalf, served his people (Josh. 2:9-11).

A literary difference must be observed because in the Pauline Epistles, the noun πίστις and the verb πιστεύω indicated by default genuine faith, whereas in the Epistle of James, they could be applied to fake faith, depending on the context.¹⁸⁹ In the vocabulary of James, faith (πίστις) could be fake, dead or idle if it did not produce any good works (James 2:17). Such "faith" was not real faith but rather a form of self-deception or a fake imitation of genuine faith. A mere acknowledgement of God's existence without accepting God was also a form of fake faith (πιστεύω) which even unbelievers or evil spirits could make (James 2:19). Genuine faith was more than "acknowledgment" because it involved the acceptance of God and all his gifts. Genuine faith was more than "words" because it produced good works (James 2:22).

Finally, Melancthon clarified that the Law was called the Old Covenant, whereas the Gospel – the New Covenant in the sense that the Law, though perfect, could not solve the problem of sin because the Law required righteousness but was unable to supply it.¹⁹⁰ The Gospel was God's solution to this problem. Therefore, the Law was pictured as God's old instrument, while the Gospel – as the new one. The "oldness" of the Law and the "newness" of the Gospel did not indicate that the

¹⁸⁹ Melancthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 454-55, 479-80; Melancthon, *Enarratio*, 69-70, 115-16; Maxcey, *Bona*, 76-83, 153-58, 254-77.

¹⁹⁰ Melancthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 448-61, 471-78, 547-49; Melancthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 279-80, 290-91, 332-38; Melancthon, "Philosophiae moralis epitome," 21-23. The term covenant always presumes at least two parties involved; in this case, God and people. However, the participation of human beings in the covenant with God could be either passive or active, depending on their specific relationship with God. This aspect (passive-active) varied not only according to whether the relationship was that of the Law or that of the Gospel but also according to the functions of the Law and according to the use of the Gospel either in justification or in sanctification.

Law fell into disuse or was replaced with the Gospel because both the Law and the Gospel were God's permanent instruments, different, yet interrelated.¹⁹¹ If the Law was defined as God's measure of righteousness and his demand of it from people, the Gospel might be defined as God's provision of this righteousness to them. The "newness" of the Gospel was that of God's response to the emergence of sin and on account of that "newness", the "oldness" was predicated of the Law. Melancthon criticised a harmful identification of the Old Covenant (the Law) with the Hebrew Bible and of the New Covenant (the Gospel) with the Christian Scriptures which was made by the early church and which could not be argued from biblical texts themselves.¹⁹² The Wittenberg Reformer claimed that both the Law (the Old Covenant) and the Gospel (the New Covenant) were communicated in the same way and to the same degree in both collections of the biblical books, that is, in the collection of Hebrew and Aramaic writings brought about before the coming of the Messiah and in the collection of Greek scriptures written down by Jesus' followers as a result of his life and ministry.

IX. Conclusion and Implications

Situating Melancthon's treatment of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed against patristic and mediaeval interpretations thereof, we can discern its distinctive features elucidating the concept of vocation and the centrality of this concept to the Wittenberg Reformation.¹⁹³ None of these features could be found in the ancient and mediaeval expositions

¹⁹¹ The present paper refrains from the terms "first and second covenants" which most scholars and Bible translators traced back to Hebrews 8 and 9 because the exegetical complexity of these chapters could not be discussed here. In short, it might be possible that ἡ πρώτη found in Hebrews 8:7, 13; 9:1, 18 referred not to διαθήκη but to λειτουργία from Hebrews 8:6. In this instance, ἡ πρώτη would denote the ministry under the Old Covenant or to be precise ceremonial regulations given by God to his people which Melancthon did not view as moral law. The ceremonial context of these chapters might support this interpretation. However, in Hebrews 9:15, ἡ πρώτη διαθήκη was identical with the Old Covenant (i.e. the Law) and the context corroborated that.

¹⁹² Melancthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 506-7.

¹⁹³ Dilthey, "Weltanschauung und Analyse des Menschen seit Renaissance und Reformation," 198-201.

of the creed. Thinking of vocation in the narrowest sense of that term, Melanchthon's concept of vocation in his explanations of the creed might be recapitulated by answering the following questions: who was calling, who was called, what was the purpose of calling and what was the content of calling.

In Melanchthon's opinion, the One who called human beings was God acting through his means, namely, through other people and through institutions of communal life which could be thought of as the framework of human service. All persons were called to serve God by serving one another, yet not all realised that because not all believed in God and not all knew clearly his attitude towards humankind. By engaging people to serve one another within the community, God carried out his agenda (purpose), namely, took care of his creatures. The calling consisted in any form of useful service to the neighbour (called station or office)¹⁹⁴ in line with God's commandments regardless of whether it was prestigious and financially rewarding or not because such service was valuable and precious horizontally on account of help given to the neighbour and vertically in view of faith empowering this service.¹⁹⁵ Besides, one and the same person was usually enmeshed in a complex web of relations by simultaneously giving and receiving goods, services, care, guidance and knowledge.¹⁹⁶

Dilthey rightly concluded that Melanchthon understood the divine light manifested in and through nature (*lumen naturale*) differently from the church fathers and mediaeval theologians who identified it with the ontological or epistemological ladder of perfection or with some kind of mystical communication between the immaterial human soul (mind) and the immaterial Absolute (God). According to the Wittenberg Reformer, that light was purely relational and manifested itself in and

¹⁹⁴ Nowadays, "station in life" may sound too static, whereas "office" may imply the venue. The Wittenberg Reformation understood "station / office" as the scope of one's responsibilities in relation to the neighbour.

¹⁹⁵ Melanchthon, "Explicatio Symboli Niceni," 475, 555-56; Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 297-98; Melanchthon, "Ethicae doctrinae elementa," 181-82.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Cicero, *De officiis*, 22-25 [I, VII, 22].

through στοργή, namely, through responsible and caring relationships bonding people together on God's behalf. However, Dilthey's assertion that Melanchthon construed revelation as supplementary and auxiliary to endeavours of human reason seems to be controversial because for the Wittenberg Reformer, the tangible (visible, material, external, natural) and the intangible (invisible, immaterial, internal, supernatural) as well as the moral aptitude engrafted in the human heart (mind) and the truth written down in the Scriptures, all of that, was simply the self-uncovering, self-disclosure (*patefacere*) of one and the same God, the Creator, the Redeemer and the Sanctifier of all.

Melanchthon's positive outlook on communal life coincided with that of Luther but this was not the only perspective found among the Reformers of the 17th century. Calvin's concept of communal life, for instance, was conditioned by his understanding of the relationship between the mundane reality and the heavenly reality.¹⁹⁷ This relationship Calvin tied to the relationship between the human body and the human soul according to the (Neo)Platonic model which he himself adopted. Since the body was perishable in physical terms, whereas the soul was imperishable, these realities must be separated and could not be interconnected in his view. As much as (Neo)Platonists insulated the intangible from the tangible and despised any physicality including that of human beings, Calvin detached the invisible sphere, which he recognised as spiritual and pure, from the visible sphere which he portrayed as a tragic exile from life proper, that is, from spiritual and eternal life. Identifying the human body as a prison for the human soul and the world – as its grave, Calvin welcomed physical death as an opportunity for returning to the source of human existence. He argued that Christians should hold mundane life in contempt to learn how to appreciate the heavenly reality and might even implore God to bring earthly life to an end. Any commitment or attachment to the tangible might distract their attention from the immortality of the human soul

¹⁹⁷ Calvin, "Institutio Christianae religionis (1559)," in *Opera quae supersunt omnia (Corpus Reformatorum)*, vol. 2 (30), ed. Baum (1864), 523-32 [III, IX-X], 1092-96 [IV, XX, 1-4].

and thus, divert them away from their heaven-bound path. Therefore, the mission of the church was to urge believers to tend exclusively to the intangible as their only purpose in life and to disentangle themselves from whatever tangible. Although Calvin repeated some positive statements of the Wittenberg Reformers concerning the civil authorities and vocation, this affirmation presumed that communal life was evanescent and subservient to religious ideals. If God's kingdom could be fully implemented here and now, communal life would be absolutely redundant in his opinion. For Calvin, communal life was not a permanent phenomenon validated in its own right but rather a sort of provisional arrangement for believers before reaching their ultimate destination which was solely the celestial one, defying all earthly bonds.

Although human life might never be long enough,¹⁹⁸ Melancthon spent his life wisely, imbuing students at the University of Wittenberg with a sense of purpose and meaning seeping through daily responsibilities and ordinary activities and preparing them for a life of service to the community.¹⁹⁹ Thus, the Wittenberg Reformer continued to live in and through his students who worked mostly as church ministers, teachers and public servants²⁰⁰ shaping the landscape of Protestant territories and training the next generations of Protestant

¹⁹⁸ Cf. Marcus Aurelius, *Ad se ipsum libri XII*, ed. Joachim Dalfen (Leipzig: Teubner, 1979), 122 [XII, 36].

¹⁹⁹ Meaning in life is recognised as a relevant topic in modern, non-theological research too. Cf. Alex Chi-Keung Chan et al., ed., *Proceedings of the Meaning in Life International Conference 2022: Cultivating, Promoting and Enhancing Meaning in Life Across Cultures and Life Span* (Dordrecht: Atlantis Press, 2023).

²⁰⁰ For instance, Stephan Schirmeister stemming from Naumburg, who at that time served as public notary in Meissen, authenticated a copy of the 1550 manuscript as genuine on 18 May 1574. In the notarial deed, he added that Melancthon was his revered and distinguished teacher. Schirmeister was admitted to Leucorea on 8 October 1555 and graduated on 4 August 1558. In 1560, he wrote a poetic eulogy at Melancthon's funeral for the City Council of Naumburg where he served as syndic then. *Album*, 311; *Die Baccalaurei*, 20 [154, 35]; Schirmeister, *Querela lugubris de obitu [...] Melancthonis [...] ad prudentissimum Senatuum Numburgensem scripta* (Wittenberg: [s. n.], 1560); "Notarielle Beglaubigung der Abschrift durch Stephan Schirmeister," in *Enarratio*, 183-86 [2.4].

community leaders.²⁰¹ Likewise, his legacy continues to live in and through the readers of his vocation-oriented expositions of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed for God's glory and for the benefit of the neighbour as we know that we are living not for ourselves but rather for the common good (*sciamus nos non nobis sed reipublicae vivere*).²⁰²

ABSTRACT

The present paper explores Melanchthon's lectures on the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, in which the creed was approached from a vocational perspective, and situates Melanchthon's exposition of the creed against patristic and mediaeval interpretations thereof. Melanchthon's lectures brought his project of community-oriented theology to completion and highlighted the centrality of the concept of vocation to the Reformation theology.

撮 要

本論文探討墨蘭頓的《尼西亞信經》教學，在其教學中，墨蘭頓以召命的進路探討《尼西亞信經》。論文同時比較墨蘭頓、教父並中世紀神學對《尼西亞信經》的闡釋。墨蘭頓的教學完成了他的社區為本神學研究，同時突顯召命是宗教改革神學的中心。

²⁰¹ Scheible, ed., *Melanchthon in seinen Schülern* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1997); Gass, *Geschichte*, 102-5 [I, III, 25]; Luthardt, *Geschichte*, 44.

²⁰² Melanchthon, "Philosophiae moralis epitome," 111; Melanchthon, "Enarratio Symboli Niceni," 276; Cf. Cicero, *De officiis*, 22-25 [I, VII, 22].