

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

A LUTHERAN THEOLOGY OF EXPERIENCE

SUBMITTED TO PROFESSOR JOHN SMITH  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
ST000 CLASS I

BY  
EXAMPLE ESSAY PAPER  
MONTH DAY, YEAR

## Introduction

The time that I felt most filled with the Holy Spirit was when I kissed my wife of peace and joy.... That is a personal experience, just like you're having your own personal experiences. My personal experience with my community is that we bear witness to the beautiful fruit of the Spirit of God being in my relationship with my wife and my children.<sup>1</sup>

Notice the heading and block quote. The headings and quote can be found in the "styles" window in Microsoft Word.

Those were the words of a lesbian

Christians with competing perspectives

therapist<sup>2</sup> at "The Christian Closet"

personal experience is both *inward*

Spirit, the emotions of peace and joy. She has the outward experience of fruits of faith, witnessed

by family and community. These have formed her theology to include those in same-sex

relationships into the Kingdom of God.

The Confessional Lutheran—dedicated to Scripture alone and hyper-vigilant against theological enthusiasm—would cringe at her confession of faith. But what about this statement:

It is the actions of public worship that move us from the liminal to the real as we participate in standing together, sitting together, reading together, confessing together, singing together, and communing together. As Paul declared, . . . "Because there is one bread, we, who are many, are one body, all of us partaking of the same bread" (1 Corinthians 10:16, 17).<sup>3</sup>

A quote becomes a block quote as soon as it reaches 5 lines of text.

1. "Can You Stop Being Gay? | Middle Ground," video debate, posted November 23, 2023 by Jubilee, YouTube, 16:09–39, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lx1bkzg807A>.

2. An affirmative therapist is a therapist who works particularly in supporting LGBTQIA+ youth coming from backgrounds that do not support their sexual or gender orientation, often from Christian, Muslim, Jewish, or other conservative communities.

3. Joel Gawrisch, "More Worship Words to Wrestle With: Participation," *Worship the Lord* no. 124 (January 2024), 4, emphasis his.

To Pastor Joel Gawrisch, the actions of public worship are an example of a way God shapes and forms us. These outward experiences mold our inward experience, moving “us from the liminality of *self* to the unity of *us*.” A Confessional Lutheran is always skeptical of an enthusiast. Yet when a Confessional Lutheran puts outward experiences—standing, sitting, reading, praying, confessing and singing together—in the same breath as communion—together

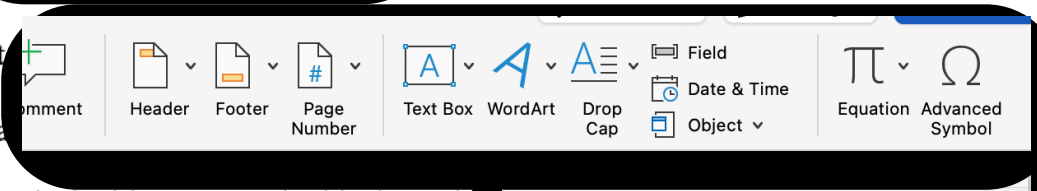
You only need to cite the translation the first time if you cite the Bible. However, if you’re using multiple translations, you must cite it every time.

pointing to another place where we can find God forming and shaping the other way, can we really say that God uses outward experience to form us? It might seem a simple, “Yes.” “Of course God uses our experiences to change us, but we must be cautious. “We take captive every thought and make it obedient to Christ” (2 Cor 10:5 NIV). Whatever experience we have, dreams or visions or

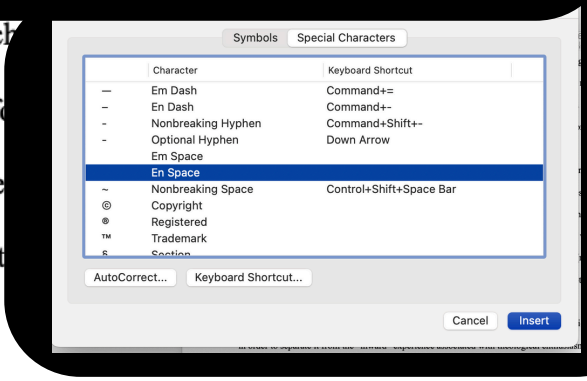
En dashes are the type of dash used between numbers. You can find them in “insert, symbol, special characters” tab in Word.

otherwise, it is but straw; and a hammer that breaks a rock apart (Jer 23:28–29). Confessional Lutherans cling not just to the Word of God’s means of grace. “Therefore

Bible books are always abbreviated, unless they are the first words in a sentence. “1 Corinthians says...” VS “In 1 Corinthians...”



If God does not want to deal with us except by his three children, how can a Christian say that outward experiences “move us,” shaping and forming our assumptions? Secondary outward experience affects the inward experience insofar as it is filtered through the inward experience created by the Word of God’s Word and sacraments.



4. SA III 8 10. All quotations from the Lutheran Confessions will be from Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds, *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2000).

## A Definition of Outward and Inward Experience

It is necessary to dig further into this distinction between inward and outward experience. When

rebuke experience as a source of theology, they are usually speaking of

however, experience is an incredibly flexible term in the English language.

the topic, John Daniel Anderson and Atle Ottesen Søvik point to no less

of the word by an everyday English speaker.<sup>6</sup> The key definition in their

work is their first: experience is “an event in space and time where a person has mental content (which could be conscious or possibly subconscious) by virtue of certain conditions.”<sup>7</sup>

In other words, “experience” is when something happens, and a person filters it through their understandings and assumptions. Though this may feel vague, it catches the broadness of the concept. Outward experience is always being interpreted by the inward experience. The two are inextricably linked. For example, I experienced being on a middle school soccer team when I played for the soccer team at St. Paul’s Muskego. An event took place in space and time (my being on the team, over two months) and I connected it to my understandings and assumptions about sports, teams, soccer, playing, games, and more.

This essay will take this definition of experience, but use the term “outward experience,”

in the “inward” experience associated with theological enthusiasm.

5. For example, the term “enthusiasm” itself, “god within”; or the enthusiasm of the office of the Papacy, where “all laws are in the shrine of his heart,” SA III 8 4.

6. They are: 1) events, 2) conditions, 3) mental content, 4) persons, 5) results, and 6) the whole world. They state there can be more, depending on the philosopher and theologian. John Daniel Anderson and Atle Ottesen Søvik, “Aspects of Experience and Their Role in Systematic Theology,” *Theology and Science* 20, no. 4 (2022): 387.

7. Anderson and Søvik, “Aspects,” 387, emphasis theirs.

Here’s an example of a journal citation in a footnote.

After a title, the first paragraph is not indented. This should be set up to happen automatically if you use the Subheading 1 style.

Notice the period and the extra wide space in the citation. This extra wide space is called in “en space” and can be found in the same place as en dashes.

Though as this definition shows, it is important to note that “outward experience” is still, in many ways, subjective. It is not completely objective. Anderson and Søvik write:

Is it possible to speak of “people having the same experience”? In our view, people might have mental content caused by or referring to the same state of affairs in the external world, but the mental content a person has will always be uniquely influenced by that person’s brain and therefore vary between people (even if it will often be very similar). In other words, even though people refer to the same thing . . . it will inevitably be experienced in different ways as mental content. Different feelings, emotions, senses, and so on can be involved, which means the mental content of the experience is influenced by the experiencing person.<sup>8</sup>

To restate, inward and outward experience may be too intertwined to separate them. However, there is a distinction between “mental content that represents the world external” from mental content “without being activated . . . by the external world.”<sup>9</sup> The second kind includes events such as “experience of the internal world, thinking, imagining, etc.” An enthusiast can imagine “god within” because of external or internal experience. Perhaps a prayer answered at precisely the right time leads the enthusiast to imagine they hear the voice of God. Alternatively, they could imagine God’s voice without any external prompting. While both are internal events in some capacity, there is a difference between the two which validates the use of different terms.

Inward and outward experience affect one another in two ways. First, outward and inward experience shape each other reciprocally. My outward experience shapes my inward experience: then, inward experience interprets the next outward experience. The cycle could continue with the next outward experience once again shaping the inward. For example, Candice had the outward experience of kissing a woman. That led to an inward experience of joy and peace. That joy and peace then was the filter she applied to her next outward experience, the

---

8. Anderson and Søvik, “Aspects,” 393.

9. Anderson and Søvik, “Aspects,” 390.

Notice the shortened citations. After the first citation, you only need the last names of the authors and a key word or words from the title.

fruits of faith which she saw both grow in her relationship and bless her community. Those fruits then added more fuel to the flame of her inward experience, and on and on it goes. Pastor Gawrisch sees the outward experience of standing, sitting, praying together as then affecting the inward experience. Our inward experience of self versus unity has been shaped by outward experience of joint action.

Second, inward experience cannot be divorced from outward experience, making objectivity difficult. One could say all my teammates had the experience of playing on a middle school soccer team. However, the one awkward teammate<sup>10</sup> who was made fun of by the other team members may have had quite a different experience. So, too, one could also say your church family has the experience of worshipping together. But the man whose wife just passed away—who sat in that church with her for fifty years—will have a different experience, than the young mom who is busy while wrangling her rambunctious toddler. While they have a probably similar outward experience, it cannot be divorced from their inward and outward experiences. When you are intertwined with postmodern assumptions and conclusions, it is helpful.<sup>11</sup> These examples illustrate that experience need not be committed to a postmodern relativistic shrug toward objectivity. Rather, it is helpful to consider all the factors in outward and inward experiences that make them so complex. Even in their relativistic assumptions, Anderson and Søvik say this:

10. Who will remain anonymous. Middle schoolers can be some of the harshest people on the planet—but I can only say that due to my outward experiences with middle schoolers affecting my inward experience, my opinions of and feelings toward middle schoolers.

11. Their conclusion is that of the four sources in the Wesleyan Quadrilateral—Scripture, Tradition, Reason, and Experience—ultimately are couched within experience, as you cannot separate the outward experience from the inward mental content. In addition, theology must be drawn from all four sources through the lens of experience. Anderson and Søvik, “Aspects,” 397.

An EM dash is the type of dash used for asides or side comments, similar to commas or parenthesis. It has taken over parenthesis as the main way to do this in academic literature to separate it from parenthesis in citations.

If you're adding a comment to a citation, do that before the citation.

“We have reason to believe that there is more to the world than merely mental content. There seems to be something external to our mind that influences the content of our mind. As many have pointed out, the success of scientific theories within the natural sciences are difficult to explain without any reference to an external reality.”<sup>12</sup> If all that exists is our own internal world, then the sciences would not function. This assertion alone can rescue some from pure postmodernism. However, rather than pointing to science as the external that influences, Lutherans point to a different influencing outward experience. The primary outward experience is God’s Word, particularly the gospel, and his sacraments.

### Outward and Inward Experience in Confessional Lutheranism

Confessional Lutheranism’s theology of experience finds its fuel in Walther’s famous quote about the school of experience and Luther’s concept of *tentatio* or *anfechtung*. However, worship has become a growing area of discussion within the WELS concerning L

Notice the second-level subheading. It’s also in the Styles pane. Use this for level for a point that falls underneath a larger point.

#### C. F. W. Walther’s Theology of Experience

First, the quote from Walther, thesis three in *Law and Gospel*: “Rightly distinguishing law and gospel is taught by the Holy Spirit in the school of experience.”<sup>13</sup> Pastor Harold Senkbeil clearly sees this as an appeal to outward experience. “[The pastor] is *habituated*—shaped and formed into a shepherd of souls—by being actively engaged in the work of shepherding. Gradually,

12. Anderson and Søvik, “Aspects,” 395.

13. C. F. W. Walther, *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*, ed. Mark Ryman (St. Louis: Concordia, 1929), 49.

This is how you do a citation with an editor.

workman that does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”<sup>14</sup> “The art of the right distinction and application of law and gospel is a skill you never master, but continually acquire in the school of experience as you minister to both proud/arrogant sinners and broken/contrite sinners.”<sup>15</sup> Senkbeil is emphasizing the measured molding of experience, like a river wearing away a stone. Repeatedly applying law and gospel gradually shapes the mental content of the pastor. This contrasts with the “all-at-once” enthusiasm of modern Evangelism, typified by Candice. The feeling of peace and joy wash over the Christian through the immediate working of the Holy Spirit, in response to an outward experience.

Walther’s primary referent, however, is not *outward*, but *inward* experience. The “school of experience” is the experience of the theologian who himself has felt the burden of the law and the relief of the gospel.

Now, since a person under the pedagogy of the Holy Spirit learns rightly to distinguish the Law from the Gospel and to divide both, it follows that genuine Christians, be they never so feeble otherwise, as long as they have duly experienced the force of the Law and the consolation of the Gospel or the power of faith, are best prepared to apply to others what they have experienced in their own lives.<sup>16</sup>

Herein lies a clue to a Lutheran theology of experience. The pedagogy of the Holy Spirit is not some inward enthusiasm, but the external Word. The Holy Spirit uses the means of God’s two messages, law and gospel, to create the inward experience. The force of the law is outward and external, but rests on the heart inwardly and internally. The consolation of the gospel is the same. “Since faith is a response to the proclamation of Holy Scripture, ecstasy also does not exist in a vacuum, but is called into existence through the work of God the Holy Spirit using the means of

---

14. Harold Senkbeil, *The Care of Souls: Cultivating a Pastor’s Heart* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 20, emphasis his.

15. Senkbeil, *Care*, 173.

16. Walther, *Law and Gospel*, 48.



the external Word.”<sup>17</sup> This is the experience that pastors have in their own lives. This experience then qualifies them to apply law and gospel to others. That external application to others is an outward experience: as the Spirit works through the event in space and time of the pastor speaking to the proud or contrite, he also works through those words on the pastor.

### Martin Luther’s Theology of Experience

This is intertwined with Luther’s concepts of *tentatio* (testing) or *anfechtung* (distress). Luther wrote in the preface to the German edition of his works that “a correct way of studying theology” is found in “three rules, amply presented through the whole Psalm [119]. They are *Oratio*, *Meditatio*, and *Tentatio*.”<sup>18</sup> Of these three rules, the Latin *tentatio* or the German *anfechtung* relate to experience. But what kind of experience is this?

Just as Walther, there are inward and outward components. “First came the *tentatio* from within. After years of uncertainty and terrors of conscience . . . God led [Luther] to an understanding of the Gospel of the free grace of God, which he had previously known by his own heart and conscience . . . how consoling, God’s Word is. . . .”<sup>19</sup> *Tentatio/anfechtung* starts when the theologian experiences the inward experience through the outward experience of the law. This is “spiritual *anfechtung*,. . . the necessity of despairing of

This is how you do an ellipsis, the three dots, when the ellipsis is in the middle of the sentence.

This is how you do the first quotation from something from Luther’s Works.

17. Paul Lehninger, “On the Cross and in the Cradle: The Mystical Theology of Martin Luther,” *Journal of Lutheran Theology*, no. 4 (2018): 12.

18. Martin Luther, “Preface to the Wittenberg Edition of Luther’s German Writings,” in *Luther’s Works*, Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann, eds, American Edition (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1955–1986), 34:285.

19. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. 1 (St. Louis: Concordia, 1950), 189.

This is how you cite the volume of a work.

oneself.”<sup>20</sup> Then, *meditatio*, meditation on God’s Word, is an outward experience that leads to the inward experience of the consolation of the Gospel.<sup>21</sup>

After this cycle comes the second *anfechtung*. While testing and distress can be internal, John Klenig writes, “The use of the German word ‘*Anfechtung*’ indicates that it involves some kind of attack upon the person. Luther makes it clear that this happens in the public domain; it involves public antagonism and opposition to those who are pastors or about to become pastors. It is an attack upon the ministry of the word.”<sup>22</sup> How does God use this persecution of the theologian? In Martin Luther’s case, “in this affliction he learned to ‘seek and to love God’s Word.’”<sup>23</sup> The outward experience of persecution drove him to the inward experience of loving God’s Word. God’s Word is the outward experience that shapes and molds the Christian. So “in the distress coming from within and without we are driven into the Word of Scripture and cling to it as the only immovable divine force in the universe.”<sup>24</sup> Only in Christ crucified do we take up our own crosses, and our crosses drive us back to Christ crucified. “Christ for us . . . gives this world and our experiences in it not only real value, but eternal value, and therefore motivate us to continue to struggle.”<sup>25</sup> Luther defines it this way:

For as soon as God’s word takes root and grows in you, the devil will harry you, and will make a real doctor of you, and by his means will teach you to seek and

---

20. Lehniger, “On the Cross,” 9.

21. Lehniger makes the beautiful summary. “Instead of discarding the external Word after it leads to *meditatio* and *contemplatio*,” as the mystic would have done, “Luther recommends the reading and, we would assume, hearing of Scripture continually in connection with meditation; he says that true meditation is reading and rereading.” Lehniger, “On the Cross,” 12.

22. John Klenig, “*Oratio, Meditatio, Tentatio*: What Makes a Theologian?” *CTQ* 66, no. 3 (July 2002): 264.

23. Pieper, *Dogmatics*, 189.

24. Pieper, *Dogmatics*, 189.

25. Lehniger, “On the Cross,” 13.

This is how you do a quote within a footnote.

Notice the Concordia Theological Quarterly shortened title. Many have abbreviations, but quite a few - like Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly - don’t.

love God's Word. I myself (if you will permit me, mere mouse-dirt, to be mingled with pepper) am deeply indebted to the papists that through the devil's raging they have beaten, oppressed, and distressed me so much. That is to say, they have made a fairly good theologian of me.<sup>26</sup>

Luther can say the outward experience of the devil's oppression, through the means of persecution, has made him a theologian. Why? Because the outward experience of his own cross has driven him to seek and love God's Word. In that way, outward experience moves and changes us. Yet our cross, or whatever experience we may have, is not our foundation. The cross of Christ is. "The Word of promise creates faith which then believes what is contrary to the evidence which the eye can see: the presence of God in Christ, in the church, and in the individual soul. This [faith] is true religious experience."<sup>27</sup> Outward Word creates inward faith, which trusts when the secondary outward experience of cross drives it back to Word and Sacraments. Luther summarizes this well in *Against the Heavenly Prophets*:

Now when God sends forth his holy gospel he deals with us in a twofold manner, first outwardly, than inwardly. Outwardly he deals with us through the oral word of the gospel and through material signs, that is, baptism and the sacrament of the altar. Inwardly he deals with us through the Holy Spirit, faith, and other gifts. But whatever their measure or order the outward factors should and must precede. The inward experience follows and is effected by the outward. God has determined to give the inward to no one except without the outward. For he wants to give no one the Spirit or faith outside of the outward Word and sign instituted by him, as he says in Luke 16:[29], "Let them hear Moses and the prophets."<sup>28</sup>

This is what separates the Confessional Lutheran from Candice. Her primary outward experience was kissing a woman, which led to the inward experience of peace and joy. The primary outward experience of those who walk the gospel.

26. LW 34:287.

27. Lehniger, "On the C

28. Martin Luther, "Again the Heavenly Prophets," in *Luther's Works*, Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann, eds, American Edition (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1955–1986), 40:146.

This is how you do the following citations of something from Luther's Works.

But, if you cite something new, you do the full citation again for Luther's Works.

### Scriptural Theology of Experience

Luther quoting Luke 16:29 proves that this back-and-forth cycle between primary outward experience, inward experience, and secondary outward experiences is not a Lutheran invention. When the rich man implores Abraham to send Lazarus raised from the dead to his family, Abraham's response is, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead" (Luke 16:31). The outward experience of someone rising from the dead cannot be interpreted by the sinful mind. Only with the inward experience of understanding caused by the primary outward of God's Word, can the secondary outward of a miracle be interpreted. In other words, "Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified; a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles" (1 Cor 1:22–23). Miracles matter—do not have power in themselves to change an unrepentant heart; only the Word of grace do.

Notice the shortened Bible book titles.

While Luther pointed to Ps 119 as proof of the inward and outward *tentatio*, Psalms 32 and 34 provide insightful examples as well. In Ps 32, David describes the inward experience of guilt. This is Luther's first *anfechtung*. "When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long" (v. 3). But when he confessed his sin in the outward word, David rejoiced. "You are my hiding place, my strength, my refuge, my deliverance, my rock, my stronghold, my refuge, and my savior. Trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance" (v. 7). David could then "instruct you and teach you in the way you should go" (v. 8). His outward and inward experience of law and gospel on himself give him the ability, like Walther says, to teach and apply it to others.

Notice the verse numbers if you're citing from the same bible chapter in a paragraph.

In Ps 34, David's cross is "when he pretended to be insane before Abimelek, who drove him away, and he left" (34 heading). His *anfechtung* is now a secondary *outward* experience, rather than inward. "This poor man" experienced the Lord who heard him, who saved him from

saved him from all his troubles (v. 6). He interpreted Abimelek driving him away through the framework of the means of grace. This was God's deliverance; this was God's saving. In his own sinful mind, his only interpretation could be the Lord abandoning him. But with the inward framework created by God's Word, he could interpret his situation rightly. His personal experience calls others to use the same interpretative framework: "Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him" (v. 8). In other words, "I tasted, and I saw, the truth of God's Word in my experience, and I see the same thing I taste and saw. Let your troubles drive you to see the same thing I taste and saw. Trust in God was the mental content that allowed David to see the same thing I taste and saw. David calls every Christian to the same thing I taste and saw, to interpret life's crosses.

Theological words (law, gospel, justification, sanctification) are not capitalized. Proper names for the Bible (Scripture, Word) are.

So, the outward experience of applying law and gospel as well as the outward experience of distressing events can shape and mold us. The inciting incident is outward law, which drives to inward despair; external gospel creates internal trust; this trust is the mental content that integrates whatever outward experiences come into the framework that God provides in his Word. This is not just Walther or Luther's understanding. It is the understanding of Scripture. No outward experience, not even a miracle, can form or shape us. Only the primary outward can influence the primary inward, which interprets all other outward. How, then, can we speak about worship shaping and molding us?

Usually provide titles when citing people for the first time. Pastor Joel Gawrisch, Dr. Michael Berg. Following that, you do not need to.

Theology of Experience in Worship

of experience has been a popular topic of conversation in the

of the *Worship the Lord* articles from the past year confirms this.

Dr. Michael Berg, in "Nutrition and Formation," emphasizes the power of outward experience.

“We are psychosomatic people that eat, use words, and worship. This means that words, eating, and physical realities like rituals, rites, architecture, and art form us. They make us who we are. We can be malformed, or we can be formed beneficially.”<sup>29</sup> I already quoted Pastor Gawrisch’s words above, but they are worth repeating: “It is the actions of public worship that move us from the liminality of *self* to the unity of *us* as we participate in standing together, sitting together, reading together, praying together, confessing together, singing together, and communing together.”<sup>30</sup> A few months later, Pastor Jon Zabell wrote, “Spread out over a lifetime, good patterns in worship have a way of shaping and molding us in our habits and our focus, keeping our eyes on Christ.”<sup>31</sup> How can we speak that way?

The answer is in this cycle of outward and inward experience. Outward law leads to inward despair. Then, outward gospel leads to inward trust. Then, inward trust interprets outward experience within the framework of the means of grace and, because of that, is molded by outward experience.

An example from the Lutheran Confessions is helpful. In the Adiaphoristic Controversy, Lutherans debated if adiaphora—such as ceremonies in worship—communicated anything, or if the Word alone was God’s communication. The Philippists, loyal to Lutheran professor Philip Melancthon, were convinced that compromising on externals of worship with the Catholic church did not matter, following their professor’s example. The Gnesio-Lutherans, though, were unwilling to compromise with the Catholic church and felt betrayed by their former teacher.

---

29. Michael Berg, “More Worship Words to Wrestle With: Nutrition and Formation,” *Worship the Lord* no. 123 (November 2023): 2.

30. Gawrisch, “Participation,” 3

31. Jon Zabell, “More Worship Words to Wrestle With: Understanding and Embracing Good Worship Patterns,” *Worship the Lord* no. 126 (May 2024): 3.

They taught that “liturgical expressions of the faith and other matters of practice were in reality inseparable from the teaching with which they were associated; lay people were insightful enough to sense that, even if they could not always articulate such feelings”<sup>32</sup> Adiaphora is not adiaphora “when what is free to be done or left undone is not so neutral in the perceptions of opponents or parishioners.”<sup>33</sup> So, when the secondary outward experience of worship is interpreted through the mental content of trust created by the means of grace, that outward experience can have an effect. If it is compromise, the negative effect tied to perception may be that the Reformation was wrong.

However, the secondary outward experience can have a positive effect as well. The German text of the *Apology to the Augsburg Confession* states, “Therefore signs instituted without God’s command are not sure signs of grace, even though they perhaps instruct the rude children or the uncultivated, or admonish as to something as a painted cross.”<sup>34</sup> A painted cross, which is an outward experience within a worship space, may instruct because it is interpreted through the message of Scripture.

Speaking of seven sacraments in and of itself means nothing. A cross in and of itself teaches nothing. Standing together, kneeling together, and singing together in it of themselves mean nothing. An unbeliever who stands, kneels, and sings with other believers is not moved beyond the liminality of self because she has just stood, kneeled, and sung within a worship service. For “the mind governed by the sinful flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s

---

32. Charles P. Arand, James A. Nestingen, and Robert Kolb, *The Lutheran Confessions: History and Theology of The Book of Concord* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 181.

33. Arand, Nestingen, and Kolb, *Confessions*, 182.

34. Ap XIII:3.

law, nor can it do so” (Rom 8:7). Just because a bunch of people stood or sat at the same time will not change their hearts of stone into hearts of flesh.

However, within the mental framework of the means of grace—the inward experience created by the primary outward experience of God’s Word—these secondary outward experiences do mean something. They do shape and form us. I stand for the reading of the Gospel of Mark because I am standing in the presence of my King Jesus. I kneel for confession because my posture reflects being humbled by God’s law. I do these things with these people in this time and space because we together are the body of Christ; standing and confessing and kneeling and singing and praying—and communing elbow to elbow rather than one at a time—they all express my unity with these Christians here. That cross makes me think of my Savior, so it moves me to tears. The pattern which sings the *Agnus Dei* before taking Communion informs me that this meal takes away my sins and is the very body and blood of the Lamb of God himself. Of course, the outward experiences do not in it of themselves shape and form the Christian. But with the mental content God created in the Christian, now, they do.

### **Conclusion**

The primary outward experience is God’s Word and Sacraments. This shapes our inward experience, our feelings and understandings of the world external: first through the distress of conscience, then the joy of forgiveness. This inward experience then deals with secondary outward experience, interpreting it through the lens of the primary, God’s Word. That secondary can be cross or worship or otherwise; either way, they only shape the Christian by God’s Word. This is not just a Lutheran theology of experience; it is the Scriptural theology of experience.



This is how to do a bibliography. There should be a Bibliography style in the styles pane, but it should be already set in the document.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Andersen, John Daniel, and Atle Ottesen Søvik. "Aspects of Experience and Their Role in Systematic Theology." *Theology and Science* 20, no. 4 (2022): 386–400.

Arand, Charles P., James A. Nestingen, and Robert Kolb. *The Lutheran Confessions: History and Theology of The Book of Concord*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012.

Berg, Michael. "More Worship Words to Wrestle With: Nutrition and Formation." *Worship the Lord* no. 123 (November 2023).

Kolb, Robert, and Timothy J. Wengert, editors. *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2000.

"Can You Stop Being Gay? | Middle Ground." Video debate. Posted November 23, 2023 by Jubilee. YouTube, 46:29. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lxlbkzg807A>.

Gawrisch, Joel. "More Worship Words to Wrestle With: Participation." *Worship the Lord* no. 124 (January 2024).

Klenig, John. "Oratio, Meditatio, Tentatio: What Makes a Theologian?" *CTQ* 66, no. 3 (July 2002): 255–68.

Lehninger, Paul. "On the Cross and in the Cradle: The Mystical Theology of Martin Luther." *Logia* 27, no. 4 (2018): 7–14.

Luther, Martin. *Luther's Works*. Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann. American Edition. Vols. 34 and 40. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1955–1986.

Pieper, Francis. *Christian Dogmatics*. Vol. 1. St. Louis: Concordia, 1950.

Senkbeil, Harold. *The Care of Souls: Cultivating a Pastor's Heart*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019.

Walther, C. F. W. *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*. Edited by Mark Ryman. St. Louis: Concordia, 1929.

Zabell, Jon. "More Worship Words to Wrestle With: Understanding and Embracing Good Worship Patterns." *Worship the Lord* no. 126 (May 2024).

### Some things to note:

1. Cite the city and state if the city is not well known. For example, St Louis is well known, but Bellingham, WA isn't.
2. Only give links for resources that can be accessed no other way. So, provide a link for a YouTube video, but not a journal that was also physically published.
3. Italics for book titles, quotation marks for journal titles.