

THROUGH THE LENS OF BRENZ:
HOW LUTHERAN CHRISTOLOGY IS NOT ACTUALLY LUTHERAN

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the Christology of Johannes Brenz and its significant influence on the development of Lutheran theology, particularly through the lens of its departure from Martin Luther's original teachings. Brenz, a prominent Reformer of the Late Reformation era, played a pivotal role in shaping Christological doctrine during a period of intense theological conflict and consolidation. By examining Brenz's writings on the incarnation, communication of attributes, ascension, and the Lord's Supper, this study investigates whether Lutheran Christology is fundamentally "Lutheran" or, more accurately, "Brenzian." The analysis situates Brenz's thought within the broader theological debates of his time, highlighting his impact on key figures like Jakob Andreae and the eventual formulation of the Formula of Concord. This thesis contends that Brenz's systematic and doctrinal approach not only bridged the gap between early and later Lutheranism but also redefined the understanding of Christ's nature and presence, leaving a lasting legacy on Protestant theology.

INTRODUCTION

After the death of Luther in 1546, it was a tumultuous time for the Lutherans. It was a time of traitors and Interims. It was a time of Gnesio-Lutherans and Adiaphorists. It was a time of controversies and polemics. This was the Late Reformation era—when the Lutherans and other Protestants were trying to solidify their own identities, which led to the golden age of Lutheran Orthodoxy beginning in the 1570s. During this time, while the Gnesio-Lutherans and the Adiaphorists fought, it was the leader of the Swabians, Johannes Brenz, in Schwabisch Hall and Stuttgart, who was anchoring the teachings of Luther so that his protégé, Jakob Andreae, and his contemporary, Martin Chemnitz, could eventually bring about the Formula of Concord.

Johannes Brenz had an astounding impact in Württemberg and beyond to the point where his Christology may have superseded Luther's teachings on Christology. It is because of this impact that we will try to briefly cover the important moments of his life. If we look at what we call Lutheran Christology, are we looking through the lens of Brenz? Or are we seeing Luther's Christology shining brightly? Is Lutheran Christology really Lutheran? Or is it actually Brenzian? To find the answer to these questions, we must wade through the deep waters of Christology by swimming through the ocean of work Luther and Brenz left us.

LITERARY REVIEW

To understand anyone's Christology, especially if they have been dead for roughly 450 to 480 years, is to read what they wrote on the subject. Luther's Works are very useful in understanding Luther's Christology, especially those works which are quoted in the Formula of Concord—*Against the Heavenly Prophets; That These Words, "This Is My Body," Etc., Still Stand Firm; Confession Concerning Christ's Supper; Brief Confession Concerning the Holy Sacrament; and Treatise on the Last Words of David*. These writings were very helpful, along with his lectures on Galatians and his sermons on John and 1 John.

Of equal or greater importance are the Christological writings of Johannes Brenz. Three of the four can be found in *Werke Eine Studienausgabe* edited by Martin Brecht—*De Personali Unione; Sententia; and De maiestate Domini Nostri Iesu Christi*. The fourth, *Recognitio Propheticae et Apostolicae Doctrinae de vera maiestate Domini Nostri Iesu Christi*, is not found in that critical edition by Brecht but can indeed be found in the Post-Reformation Digital Library. These are critical in understanding the Christology of Brenz. Beyond his sermons and commentaries, these writings are the only place where Brenz lays down his Christology in clear, systematic terminology. While he sometimes uses philosophical terms, he avoids using philosophical axioms. Credit is due to Rev. Aaron Jensen for assisting with the translation of the Christological works found in the critical edition by Brecht.

It should be noted that Luther and Brenz wrote a veritable ocean of works. Luther wrote voluminously in his pastoral style, while Brenz wrote over 500 published works. Admittedly, this

study did not have enough time to digest every work these two men wrote. Processing and understanding everything these two men wrote could take a lifetime.

One who has made amazing progress in understanding everything that occurred in the Reformation era is Robert Kolb. His numerous volumes on Luther, his life, and his teachings are a treasure trove of information. His works are not only necessary for understanding Luther's Christology, but he also provides numerous sources that pertain to Brenz's life and teachings.

Hans Christian Brandy's work is also important because he provides an extensive modern look into Brenz's Christology. While he mainly interacts with the work of Theodor Mahlmann, he provides his own view of Brenz's Christology, which often goes against what Mahlmann had written earlier in the 20th century.

WHY BOTHER WITH JOHANNES BRENZ?

If someone were to ask you who the three most important first-generation Reformers are, who would you say? The first two are obvious. Martin Luther is, of course, the most important of the first-generation Reformers. Philipp Melanchthon is the second most important because he wrote the Augsburg Confession, the Apology, and other writings and his reform and restructuring of the school system within the German states. The third is one that some people could argue. One could say Nicolaus von Amsdorf because he was a staunch defender of Luther's teachings in their purity without any interpretation. He was also one of the main leaders of the Gnesio-Lutherans, who bitterly fought against the Adiaphorists and the Crypto-Calvinists.¹ One could say Johannes Bugenhagen because of his ability to introduce, establish, and organize the churches of many regions, such as Scandinavia, Denmark, and Prussia. Still others could say Justus Jonas, Andreas Osiander, Matthias Flacius, or even Martin Bucer. These are all potential choices in their own right; however, there is one that was far more influential and had an even bigger impact not only with his writings on Christology but also with his ability to organize state churches. Johannes Brenz, between his sheer volume of work—over 500 imprints throughout his life—his ability to organize state churches, and his systematical approach to Christology to explain the doctrine of real presence in the Lord's Supper, was able to bridge the gap between

1. Following Luther's death in 1546, and the implementation of the Augsburg Interim and Leipzig Interim, the followers of Melanchthon, Adiaphorists and later the Crypto-Calvinists, split with those who wanted to remain true to what Luther taught. Those followers of Luther were called Gnesio-Lutherans and were primarily located in Magdeburg. The Adiaphorists and Crypto-Calvinists were located primarily in Wittenberg. The result of the polemical back and forth of the two parties is covered in the Formula of Concord because of the controversies that spawned due to the break between the two parties.

Luther's death in 1546, and the work of Martin Chemnitz. His life and work helped tie the second Martin to the work of the first.

It should be noted that while this section will include details of Brenz's life, there is no real need to go into great detail on his life, as a number of talented authors have extensively covered this.² It is important to review this information because Brenz is often overlooked, which could be because his name is not Martin or Melancthon. His works are mainly untranslated even though they hold a trove of theological gold, some of which is discussed later.

While there is not much known about the early life of Johannes Brenz, what we do know is that his father and grandfather, in addition to their regular jobs, also each served as the mayor of Weil der Stadt, which is located about twenty miles from Stuttgart in the territory of Wuerttemberg.

Brenz's father wanted to ensure that young Johannes had good schooling. This is evident from where Johannes attended—Weil der Stadt, Heidelberg, and Vaihingen—all before the age of thirteen. At the age of thirteen, young Johannes entered the University of Heidelberg. Two years later in 1515, he received his Bachelor of Philosophy degree. He then pursued theology for his master's degree, which he earned at the age of 18 in 1518.³

Brenz was well-versed in Latin from his early schooling. While at the University of Heidelberg, he studied Greek under Johannes Oecolampadius. The Brenz and Oecolampadius studied Hebrew together from a converted Jew.⁴ While studying under Oecolampadius, Brenz

2. These talented authors include the likes of Hans Christian Brandy, Martin Brecht, Theodore Mahlmann, James Martin Estes, and Robert Kolb. Their works are found in the bibliography of this work.

3. James Martin Estes, "Johannes Brenz and the German Reformation," *Lutheran Quarterly* 16.4 (2002): 374.

4. Estes, "German Reformation," 374.

was exposed to the humanist teachings of Erasmus, of whom Oecolampadius was a pupil. In his circle at Heidelberg were his fellow students Martin Bucer and Johann Isenmann.

The turning point from humanism for young Brenz came when Martin Luther came to the University of Heidelberg in 1518 for a disputation. Brenz and Bucer attended the disputation and were greatly moved by what they saw and heard. So much so that they arranged to meet with Luther the next day in his private chambers to discuss the points that Luther had said during the disputation.⁵ As he and Bucer walked into that meeting with Luther, Brenz was walking in as a humanist, but when he left, he was a true Lutheran. So convinced was Brenz in what Luther was saying that as soon as he could have sanctioned classes at the university, he began teaching the same doctrine as Luther.

Brenz's lectures were incredibly popular. As a Master of Arts, he was required to give lectures in his bursa⁶; however, his lectures were so well attended that they overflowed the room and had to be moved to the university proper. The problem was that Brenz was giving lectures on philology, philosophy, and theology. Since, at the time, Brenz did not yet have his Master of Theology, he was not permitted to give theology lectures outside of the bursa. This was solved once Brenz received his Master of Theology in 1518. He immediately began instructing according to the theology of Luther. While the impact of humanism never truly left Brenz, it seems to have become less evident after his meeting with Luther.

5. James Martin Estes, *Christian Magistrate and State Church: The Reforming Career of Johannes Brenz/James Martin Estes* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1982, n.d.), 3–4.

6. A “bursa” is essentially a college or hall of a university. It was the place where students would eat, sleep, pray, study, and sometimes have small lectures. It was also how students could identify each other based on how they dressed. A modern-day example could be the houses from Harry Potter. Some public universities and colleges have halls where certain majors live, study, and can eat together. They also sometimes have classes there as well.

Because Brenz was lecturing on Luther's theology, he became known as a partisan for Luther, which normally would not be bad unless you are talking about being a partisan for Luther in the 1520s. After the Diet of Worms, the ruler of the Palatinate⁷ outlawed the teaching of Luther's ideas. This became a cause of concern for Brenz, as he was drawing large crowds of students to his lectures on precisely that topic. While Brenz was not required to cease teaching Luther's theology, he seemed in potential danger. However, a timely call to be the preacher at Schwabisch Hall came in 1522 and rescued Brenz from potentially facing court.

At the recommendation of one of Brenz's former classmates, Johann Isenmann, originally from Schwabisch Hall, Brenz received the call to be the preacher at St. Michael's. Brenz was installed after a trial sermon in 1522 and was later joined by Isenmann, who was appointed the head pastor at St. Michael's. As Brenz was not yet ordained, he took holy orders in the spring of 1523 and performed his first mass in Weil der Stadt.⁸

It took a lot of courage for the city council of an Imperial free city to hire someone who was already being accused of being a follower of Luther.⁹ Here in Weil der Stadt is where Brenz came into his own as a reformer. He worked with the city council to slowly enact Lutheran reforms. In 1524, Brenz defeated his strongest opponents, the local Franciscans, in a disputation that the city council had arranged.¹⁰ Following their loss in the disputation, the Franciscans disbanded and surrender their monastery, which was eventually converted into a school. With great difficulty, Brenz and Isenmann convinced the city council to abolish the feast of Corpus Christi. At this time, the city council also began to legislate according to the principles of the

7. Ludwig V von der Pfalz

8. Estes, *Church Magistrate*, 5.

9. This is due to the fact that the imperial free cities relied on the Emperor for protection, and at any time, the Emperor could come in and take control which would be seen later at the end of the Schmalkaldic War.

10. Estes, *Church Magistrate*, 5.

Reformation.¹¹ However, it was not until 1526, on Christmas Day, that Brenz could officiate the first fully Lutheran celebration of the Lord's Supper. By this time, the doctrine, the ceremonies, and the personnel of the city churches were completely Lutheran in character.¹²

Along with the organization of the church, Brenz also pushed for more schools for boys and girls. This supported Luther's idea that a qualified woman should teach little girls reading and writing.¹³ He pushed for elementary schooling in German, especially for those destined for the manual trades. For those destined for university and professional careers, they would go on to receive schooling in Latin.¹⁴ Brenz published a large and small catechism in 1527/28, nearly a full year before Luther published his own as part of his aim for German instruction in both city and countryside. Both it and the revised edition of 1535 served as the basis for instruction in the rudiments of reading, writing, and basic religious instruction. Brenz's catechism was used throughout Wuerttemberg until the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806.

In 1525, Brenz's former teacher, Oecolampadius, wrote a book he addressed to his fellow Swabians—those he had taught at Heidelberg, mainly Brenz, Isenmann, and Bucer. In this book, Oecolampadius supported Zwingli's doctrine of the Lord's Supper and denied the doctrine of Real Presence. He aimed to win over his former pupils to Zwingli's side. However, this forced Brenz, who was unequivocally on Luther's side in this dispute, to take up the cudgel against his former mentor. At a conference held in Schwabisch Hall in October 1525, Brenz's reply, *Syngramma Suevicum*, was signed by thirteen other pastors from the Swabian region. This Book of the Swabians enraged Zwingli, vexed Bucer, and pleased Luther so much that he had it

11. Estes, *Church Magistrate*, 5.

12. Estes, *Church Magistrate*, 5.

13. Estes, *Church Magistrate*, 6.

14. Estes, *Church Magistrate*, 6.

translated into German and personally wrote a preface for the German version.¹⁵ This was Brenz's opening salvo in his largely successful campaign to keep southwest German Protestantism firmly in the Lutheran camp.¹⁶

Because of the popularity of the *Syngramma Suevicum*, Brenz attracted the attention of Margrave George of Brandenburg-Ansbach, who quickly adopted Brenz as his go-to advisor in all questions of theology and church order. In 1529, while Landgrave Philip of Hesse was planning the Marburg Colloquy, Margrave George suggested to Philip that he should include the "admirable, learned, good-tempered man" Johannes Brenz among the Lutheran theologians to be invited.¹⁷ While Brenz did attend the colloquy, he did not participate much. However, his account of the proceedings is one of the principal sources of our knowledge of what happened at the first failed attempt to produce unity between Zwinglians and Lutherans.¹⁸ Brenz's attendance at the Marburg Colloquy established him as one of the important theologians of the Reformation.

Brenz attended the Diet of Augsburg as part of Margrave George's retinue. At Augsburg, he worked closely with Melancthon to revise the confession that the Saxon delegation had brought to be presented to the emperor. While firmly opposing an alliance with the Zwinglian Swiss, Melancthon and Brenz did their best to try to reconcile with the Catholics; however, their efforts were fruitless and only earned them criticism from their own side.¹⁹ After the Diet of

15. Estes, "German Reformation," 377–8.

16. Charles L. Cortright, "Christ at the Center, Johannes Brenz and His *Expositio epistolam S. Pauli ad Philippenses*" in *Propter Christum: Christ at the Center: Essays in Honor of Daniel Preus*, edited by Scott R. Murray, Aaron M. Moldenhauer, Carl D. Roth, Richard A. Lammert, Martin R. Noland, Charles L. Cortright, and Michael J. Albrecht. Luther Academy, 2013, 71.

17. Estes, "German Reformation," 385

18. Estes, "German Reformation," 385

19. Estes, "German Reformation," 385

Augsburg, Brenz attended nearly every major diet, colloquy, or council with Christology/Theology as one of the main talking points until his death in 1570.^{20 21}

Brenz was deeply sought after by Dukes and Margraves alike, who wanted his expertise in establishing church orders. From 1528 to 1532, Brenz helped Margrave George negotiate a joint church order between Ansbach and Nuernberg. Brenz worked closely with Andreas Osiander over six weeks in 1532 to hammer out the final draft of the joint church order. This church order, printed in December of 1532 and then promulgated in 1533²² by both governments, became the model for church orders for many other territories and Schwabisch Hall a decade later.²³ Brenz's close working relationship with Osiander, along with his own conciliatory nature, is likely the main reason why Brenz and the Swabians sought reconciliation and patience during the Osiandrian controversy.

Brenz was especially important to Duke Ulrich and Duke Christoph of Wuerttemberg. He was tasked with fixing the Reformation in Wuerttemberg that Duke Ulrich had started because the Duke had tried to duplicate what Landgrave Philip of Hesse had done. Still, Ulrich failed mainly due to the ineptitude of the chosen Lutheran and Reformed Ministers. Brenz was called in to finish the Reformation in Stuttgart. Once he had accomplished this with his Church Order of 1536, Ulrich once again called him to help reform the University of Tubingen. Melanchthon had originally been asked to replace Schnepf, but he was not free to do so. So, Melanchthon

20. This would include the Diet of Schmalkalden, the Colloquies of Hagenau, Worms, and Regensburg (twice), the Colloquy with Lasko, and even the Council of Trent, where he had been asked to defend the *Confessio Virtembergica*.

21. Estes, "German Reformation," 389-90

22. This was the Brandenburg-Nurnberg Church Order of 1533.

23. Estes, "German Reformation," 386

recommended Brenz, who, for one year, from 1537 to 1538, served as the ducal commissioner for university reform.

In 1538, Schwabisch Hall finally joined the Schmalkaldic League. However, in December of 1546, the city surrendered to Charles V's troops, and Brenz was forced to temporarily flee Schwabisch Hall. He was able to return in January 1547 but not for long. In May of 1548, the Augsburg Interim was established, forcing the reimposition of Catholicism in all the Protestant territories of the empire.²⁴ While the city council of Schwabisch Hall was forced to implement the Interim, Brenz denounced the Interim, calling it *Internitus Germaniae*,²⁵ and he refused to abide by it.²⁶ This news quickly spread to the imperial court, where Brenz's arrest was ordered. So, on his forty-ninth birthday, June 24, 1548, Brenz was forced to flee with only a few minutes warning, never to return to Schwabisch Hall.²⁷

Due to the Interims still being in place, Duke Ulrich and Christoph did not risk giving Brenz an official title and position in government.²⁸ Yet, in spite of all of that, the last two decades of Brenz's life were his most important. After getting remarried in 1550 to Catherine, the oldest daughter of his friend Isenmann, Brenz was called back to Stuttgart by Duke Ulrich.²⁹ Sadly, Ulrich died later that year, and his son Christoph inherited the duchy of Wuerttemberg.

24. Estes, "German Reformation," 390

25. Destruction of Germany

26. Estes, "German Reformation," 391

27. Wilbert R. Gawrisch, "On Christology, Brenz and the Question of Ubiquity." in *No Other Gospel: Essays in Commemoration of the 400th Anniversary of the Formula of Concord, 1580-1980*, ed. by Arnold J. Koelpin (Northwestern Pub. House, 1980), 231–234.

28. Because Brenz had referred to the Interims in such a negative light, Charles V wanted Brenz arrested, so Brenz was forced into hiding, which was provided by Ulrich and Christoph. Once the Interims were lifted Brenz was once again able to preach publically without fear of persecution or retribution from Emperor Charles V.

29. Gawrisch, "On Christology," 231–234.

Christoph's first order of business was to retain Brenz in his service.³⁰ Even though Brenz entertained multiple calls to Leipzig, Magdeburg, Königsberg, Prussia, Denmark, and England, he remained loyal to his fellow Swabians and to Ulrich and Christoph. Between 1550 and 1551, Brenz wrote the *Confessio Virtembergica*,³¹ which Duke Christoph requested for presentation at the Council of Trent.³² This also became the official adopted confession of the Wuerttemberg church. On January 24, 1552, the *Confessio Virtembergica* was officially presented to the Council of Trent. The *Confessio* was intended to be a harmony of the 1530 Augsburg Confession and Brenz's additions that addressed the current situation. Even though the Interim was still in effect, Brenz himself led the delegation from Wuerttemberg in March 1552 to explain and defend the contents of the confession. But the Council never received him and his fellow theologians,³³ and with rumors of war starting in Germany, they returned home.³⁴ Those rumors proved correct as "Judas of Saxony"³⁵ once again committed a betrayal when he defeated Charles V's troops, resulting in the Peace of Passau.

This peace allowed Christoph to finally appoint Brenz to an official position, making Brenz the Provost of the Stuttgart Collegiate Church in 1553.³⁶ From 1553-1556, Brenz primarily focused on writing and organizing the church order that came to be known as the Great Church Order of 1559.³⁷

30. Estes, *Church Magistrate*, 15–16

31. Confession of Wuerttemberg

32. Estes, *Church Magistrate*, 16

33. The sheer audacity of Brenz to walk into the very teeth of the enemy without fear or trepidation is to be commended to him. He was not afraid of anyone and was always willing to defend his faith.

34. Estes, "German Reformation," 400.

35. Mortiz of Saxony

36. Estes, "German Reformation," 400

37. Estes, *Church magistrate*, 16.

Brenz was not initially involved in the Second Lord's Supper Controversy between the Reformed and the Gnesio-Lutherans because, by his own admission, of the burden of his excess work.³⁸ He was also dealing with the problems of the Osiander controversy at this time.³⁹ It was not until the spring of 1556 that Brenz finally broke his silence. He had three sermons on 1 Corinthians 11 and John 1:14 from his time at Schwabisch Hall that were reprinted as a special edition.⁴⁰ In these sermons, Brenz justifies the Lutheran view of the presence of the body of Christ in the meal with the certainty of Christ's promised word; while also refuting any possible objections, he returns to a Christological theme centering on his understanding of ascension, of *dextera Dei*,⁴¹ of the unity of natures, as well as the fundamental supra-spatiality and supra-temporality of God.⁴² In 1556, John à Lasko requested a colloquy with the Lutherans. He was looking for help for his exiled community in Frankfurt, which was in distress because of its Reformed faith. Lasko received a bitter rebuff from Brenz; there would be no compromise with the Reformed theology. However, Brenz did arrange for à Lasko's living expenses to be paid and a substantial amount of support from the church treasury.^{43 44}

The Catholic response to the *Confessio* did not come until 1555. The *Confessio* was heavily criticized by a Spanish Dominican, Pedro de Soto. Brenz countered this attack with a five-part "Apology," which was not finished until 1559. In December of 1559, in what

38. Hans Christian Brandy, *Die Späte Christologie Des Johannes Brenz*. Beiträge Zur Historischen Theologie: 80. J.C.B. Mohr (P. Siebeck), 1991, 45.

39. Brandy, *Die Späte Christologie*, 45.

40. Brandy, *Die Späte Christologie*, 45.

41. Right hand of God

42. Brandy, *Die Späte Christologie*, 45

43. Brandy, *Die Späte Christologie*, 46

44. It should never be said that Brenz was not one to help out his fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, even when they were so tainted by the doctrine of the Reformed.

concluded the Stuttgart synod dealing with the matter of Bartholomaeus Hagen, who had Calvinistic tendencies, a confession was written by Brenz and signed by all involved called “Confession and Report of the Theologians and Church Servants in the Principality of Wuerttemberg on the True Presence of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in the Holy Supper.”⁴⁵ In this important confessional document, Brenz’s Christology became a binding doctrinal norm for the first time, and it finally became widely known. The Wuerttembergers had long agreed on their own confession and defended it against opposing movements. This finally set the ball rolling in the dispute over Christology.⁴⁶

The escalation of events in 1559 gave rise to a desire in Brenz to write a Christological commentary. This happened in the context of a literary feud with Heinrich Bullinger in Zurich.⁴⁷ Although Bullinger had hoped for concord, he ultimately became the foe on which Brenz honed his Christology.

Starting in 1561, the first of Brenz’s four Christological writings was published, titled *De Personali Unione* (Concerning the Person Union of the Two Natures in Christ). This came out simultaneously as Bullinger’s *Tractatio* (Discussion). In response to Brenz’s *De Personali Unione*, Petrus Martyr Vermigli responded with his *Dialogus de utraque in Christo Natura* (Discourse Concerning Both Natures in Christ), which provided a thorough and astute critique of *De Personali Unione*. In response to Bullinger’s *Tractatio* and Vermigli’s *Dialogus*, Brenz wrote his *Sententia* (Thoughts), to which Bullinger responded with his *Responsio* (Response by which is Revealed the Thoughts about Heaven and the Right Hand of God) in 1562. At the Fall Fair in 1562, Brenz published his great work *De Maiestate Dominostri Jesu Christi* (Concerning the

45. Brandy, *Die Späte Christologie*, 53

46. Brandy, *Die Späte Christologie*, 53

47. Brandy, *Die Späte Christologie*, 54

Majesty of Our Lord Jesus Christ) in Frankfurt. Bullinger had one last response for Brenz, his *Fundamentum Firmum* (Firm Foundation). This led Brenz to write his last public Christological work, *Recognitio Propheticae et Apostolicae Doctrinae de vera maiestate Domini Nostri Iesu Christi* (Examination of the Doctrine of the Prophets and Apostles Concerning the True Majesty of Our Lord Jesus Christ), which was published in Tübingen in 1564.⁴⁸

After 1564, whether it was from advanced age or health, Brenz pulled back from many of the public duties he had performed that had shaped his life and work. Instead, he relied on his protégé, Jacob Andreae, to go in his stead. Brenz, whom Luther had compared to the quiet, gentle whispering of the spirit in 1530, showed a different side in his last years. In Brenz's will, he stated, "In particular, I expressly and specifically condemn and condemn from the bottom of my heart the false teaching of the Zwinglians.... It was devised without any basis in the Holy Divine Scripture, deceptive, damnable, and contrary to the true understanding of the personal union of both divine and human nature in Christ and the majesty and glory of Christ." When it came to the question of the majesty of Christ, Brenz no longer saw any moderate peacefulness.⁴⁹ On September 11, 1570, Johannes Brenz finally got to see that majesty of Christ he had defended so valiantly.

Brenz left an indelible impact on southern Germany and many other territories throughout Europe. Besides the church orders he wrote that provided the framework for church organization in over a half dozen territories at the time of his death, his voluminous commentaries were widely popular, which have since fallen into neglect and ought once again to be studied systematically. His catechism was translated into several other languages, including

48. Brandy, *Die Späte Christologie*, 56–60

49. Brandy, *Die Späte Christologie*, 2

Latin, French, English, Dutch, Danish, Polish, Czech, and Italian. In the nineteenth century, it was even translated into some African and Asian languages by German missionaries. Nothing else Brenz ever did was used to teach so many people for so long.⁵⁰ The last, and what could arguably be the most influential, part of Brenz's legacy, which is also the subject of this study, was his doctrine of the Lord's Supper and Christology, which some have termed *Communicatio Idiomatum Realis*.⁵¹ We will dive deeply into Brenz's Christology in the next section.

No other theologian of his generation who was loyal to Wittenberg yet lived and worked outside it contributed as much in many ways and with such lasting effect to the Reformation.⁵² Johannes Brenz is eminently worthy of our attention, especially in the matters of Christology.

50. Estes, "German Reformation," 405–7

51. Theodor Mahlmann, *Das Neue Dogma Der Lutherischen Christologie; Problem Und Geschichte Seiner Begründung*. [Gütersloh]: Gütersloher Verlagshaus G. Mohn, [1969], 127.

52. Estes, "German Reformation," 408

THE CHRISTOLOGY OF JOHANNES BRENZ

When one looks at a person's Christology, one must understand the context in which they are writing. The four writings of Johannes Brenz that deal specifically with Christology were written to combat the writings and the errors of the Sacramentarians—Ulrich Zwingli, Heinrich Bullinger, and Peter Martyr Vermigli. While Brenz's Christology gradually formed throughout his life from 1518, it was not until the 1560s that his Christology was stated clearly and firmly. It is from these four major writings, which were mentioned above, that we will be looking at Brenz's Christology.

While there are many ways to structure a study of Christology, it is best to structure this study in the same manner the subject addresses his Christology. As Brenz began his war of words with the Zwinglians, he focused initially on Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper, and then as the discussion progressed, he focused more precisely on Christological topics, such as the Incarnation of Christ, the communication of attributes, Christ sitting at the right hand of God, and others. As the polemics continued, Brenz shifted his focus from the Lord's Supper to the person of Christ because that was the issue at the heart of the second Sacramentarian controversy. This study will utilize the structure of Brenz's Christological writings from 1561–4.

Concerning the Incarnation of Jesus Christ

What is the incarnation of Jesus Christ? What is this event that we also call the personal union of the divine nature and the human nature in Jesus Christ? For Brenz, his understanding of the

incarnation or personal union begins with the first chapter of the Gospel of John, then on to the ecumenical councils, primarily Ephesus and Chalcedon, and finally rests with Luther.

For Brenz, the incarnation is that event which “through faith we know with certainty that the Son of God assumed the Son of Man into the same person and adorned him with all his majesty, and raised him to the right hand of God the Father so that just as the Son of God was of immense power from the beginning, in the same way now the Son of Man ... is of the same majesty and personally governs all things.”⁵³ The incarnation is where “the Word became flesh.” (John 1:14 EHV) For Brenz, this means “that the Son of God united a human nature to himself such that he is just one and the same perpetually inseparable person.”⁵⁴

The Word, the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, assumed the Son of Man, not like a coagmentation or an agglutination.⁵⁵ The two natures are so intimately, so personally, so inseparably united that “nothing, neither time nor place, neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities nor powers, neither the present nor the future, neither height nor depth nor any other creature can divide it and tear it apart.”⁵⁶ The incarnation is something that human reason is unable to grasp. It is a mystery. Since Christ’s ascension, humanity has tried its best—usually with philosophy—to rationalize and understand exactly how the personal union works.

53. Johannes Brenz, *Werke: Eine Studienausgabe/ Johannes Brenz; Im Auftrag Des Vereins Für Württ. Kirchengeschichte Und in Verbindung Mit Ernst Bizer Und Gerhard Goeters Herausgegeben von Martin Brecht Und Gerhard Schäfer*. Vol. V. 3. Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1970, 22.

54. Brenz, *Werke*, 238.

55. Johannes Brenz, *Recognitio Propheticae et Apostolicae Doctrinae de vera maiestate Domini Nostri Iesu Christi*. Tübingen: Ulrich Morhard, 1564, 13.

56. Brenz, *Werke*, 218.

Philosophy is not how Brenz views the incarnation,⁵⁷ and Luther agreed.⁵⁸ Brenz and Luther may sometimes use philosophical terminology that sounds Neoplatonist; however, they refuse to use philosophical idioms to explain theology. Philosophy and human reason have led to such condemned heresies as Cerinthianism, Arianism, Nestorianism, and Eutychianism. Each one of these heresies has either divided or mixed the two natures in the person of Christ. Yet in the union, the divine nature is not changed into the human nature, and the human nature is not changed into the divine nature, nor are they mixed together. They are so united that both natures are intact and inviolable, and the union cannot be dissolved.⁵⁹ The two natures establish one person, not two. In this one person, Jesus Christ, the divine nature pours out all its majesty into the human nature and adorns it with all of its heavenly power, glory, and honor, so it can truly be said that all of God is man, and all of man is God.⁶⁰

When Brenz talks about the human nature, he is not merely talking about the accidental properties—attributes that can change, i.e., suffering, physical location, death—of humanity, but the very essence or substance of humanity—the attributes of humanity that do not change, i.e., rational soul and body, created by God.⁶¹ Similarly, the divine nature has no accidental properties⁶², but it signifies a spiritual substance, i.e., from eternity, and is the creator of all

57. Brenz, *Werke*, 238.

58. Martin Luther. *Luther's Works*. American edition, Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan. Vol. 73. Saint Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 1955–1986, 271.

59. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 12.

60. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 13.

61. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 13.

62. This can be rightly said because all of God's attributes/properties are essential, meaning that they do not change.

things, of the person of Christ.⁶³ Since the two natures remain intact and inviolable in Christ, we can understand that the substance of divinity is not changed into the substance of humanity by mixing, nor is the substance of humanity changed into the substance of divinity by mixing. Both substances continue in their own essences.⁶⁴ For divinity does not become humanity, nor does humanity become divinity, but they are united to become one person, Jesus Christ.⁶⁵ For Brenz, from the moment the Word became flesh in the virgin's womb, no division ever existed between his divine and human substances, and throughout his entire life and his entire bodily growth, every single one of his actions at all times were the actions of one united person.⁶⁶ Just as within the Trinity, there is the mystic union, where each person of the Godhead is distinct, yet equal in majesty, power, and divinity, and yet, are united in one God, so to the personal union unites the distinct natures of divinity and humanity in the one person, Jesus Christ. It is like this: "The Son of God ... the second person in that one eternal essence of divinity, is true and eternal God, of the same essence, majesty, and glory as the Father and the Holy Spirit. So also, it is clear and not at all in doubt, that the Son of God, as true God, fills heaven and earth."⁶⁷ Scripture talks about the majesty of God, "In truth, the heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you" (1 Kgs 8:27); and "Can you explore the essence of God? Can you find a limit to the perfections of the Almighty? They are as high as the heavens. What can you do? They are deeper than hell. What can you know? His dimensions are greater than the earth and wider than the sea" (Job 11:7–9);

63. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 13.

64. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 14.

65. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 14.

66. Brenz, *Werke*, 18.

67. Brenz, *Werke*, 120.

and “This is what the LORD says. The heavens are my throne, and the earth is a footstool under my feet” (Isa 66:1); and “Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD.” (Jer 23:24) Brenz uses these passages as evidence that the ancient church fathers rightly explained these passages of Scripture as God was present everywhere in essence and power.⁶⁸ Therefore, Brenz states that “the Son of God, as true and eternal God, fills all things and is present everywhere with his essence and power without any exceptions inside or outside of heaven. It is not without merit to ask what prerogative that Son of Man whom the Son of God assumed from the virgin Mary was ahead of other men and what distinction there is between God dwelling in Christ and other men.”⁶⁹

Here, we need to clarify what Brenz is saying, as he could be misunderstood. Brenz says, “God dwells in Christ with various graces or gifts, and he also does so in Peter and Paul... because God is completely simple in his essence, wherever he is, he must truly be whole.”⁷⁰ And “Therefore in every man, you have both natures, that is to say, the divine, which fills all things, and the human, which is sustained and preserved by the divine.”⁷¹ This very easily could be misunderstood as *theosis*, where man is deified by God dwelling in us as believers. This was an incorrect assertion. Brenz is not talking about *theosis*. Brenz, most likely, would have condemned the idea of *theosis*.⁷² So where does Brenz get this idea if not from *theosis*? It comes from the doctrine of God’s providence. This can be seen in the second quote above: “sustained

68. Brenz, *Werke*, 120.

69. Brenz, *Werke*, 120.

70. Brenz, *Werke*, 122.

71. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 15.

72. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 122.

and preserved by the divine.” Brenz gets this idea from Luke when he writes, “Though he is not far from each one of us. ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’” (Acts 17:27–28) This is God sustaining all of creation with his divinity. This is called a repletive presence and will be discussed later.

According to Brenz, one of the results of the incarnation is the exaltation of the human nature in Christ.⁷³ Brenz points to what Paul says, “It is as great as the working of his mighty strength, which God worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, authority, power, and dominion, and above every name that is given, not only in this age but also in the one to come” (Eph 1:20,21); and “Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth.” (Phil 2:9,10) Brenz points out that Paul is speaking in these passages about the exaltation of the human nature in Christ, but when Paul speaks only about the majesty of Christ after his resurrection, he is only talking about the power that Christ has over every creature.⁷⁴ This is an important distinction because, as Brenz says, “Such majesty would not be fitting for Christ if he were not true God and man in one undivided person, it follows of necessity that as soon as the Son of God assumed the man into one person in Mary’s womb, he immediately exalted him with him above all creatures such that where his deity is, there also is his humanity.”⁷⁵ Brenz also states, “It is not to be felt that the humanity of Christ was first exalted to the highest sublimity, and received all power in heaven and on earth, when he ascended visibly from the Mount of Olives into

73. Brenz, *Werke*, 122.

74. Brenz, *Werke*, 122.

75. Brenz, *Werke*, 124.

heaven, but when the Word was made flesh, and when in the come of a virgin, God assumed man in the same person.”⁷⁶ For Brenz, there is no greater exaltation than when man is assumed by God. This did not happen for the first time when Christ rose from the dead and ascended visibly into heaven. It happened when he was incarnated in the womb of a virgin.⁷⁷ Brenz states, “It was not the first time that the Lord said to our Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand’ when the cloud took him on the Mount of Olives, out of the sight of the disciples, but when Mary said to the angel, ‘Behold the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your word.’”⁷⁸

There is a general consensus among those who have studied Brenz over the decades that points to this and says that this is where Brenz is conflating the humiliation and exaltation of Christ. However, if you understand that at the moment of the conception, that exact moment of the incarnation, that the divinity has assumed the humanity, then the humanity is united to the divinity. They cannot be separated. The divinity is wherever the humanity is, and the humanity is wherever the divinity is. So, it is right to say that Christ, according to his divinity, was seated on the throne, ruling over heaven and earth from eternity, and his humanity was there with the divinity on the throne since the moment of the incarnation for eternity. For if his deity is somewhere where his humanity is not, it would be most certain that the person would be divided, which is impossible.⁷⁹ Luther also talks in similar language, “So too, Christ says in John 3[:13], ‘No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven,’ whereby he shows indeed that his body is at the same time in heaven and on earth, yes,

76. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 122.

77. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 122.

78. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 122–3.

79. Brenz, *Werke*, 124.

even at the ends of the earth. For by his glorification, he did not become another person, but before and after was present everywhere.”⁸⁰ The Formula of Concord also uses similar language in Article VIII:

We also believe, teach, and confess that the assumed human nature in Christ not only has and retains its natural, essential characteristics but also that through the personal union with the deity and, afterward, through the exaltation or glorification, this nature was elevated to the right hand of majesty, power, and might over all things that can be named, not only in this world but also in the world to come. Christ did not receive this majesty to which he was exalted according to his humanity only after he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, but he received it already when he was conceived in his mother’s womb and became a human being, and the divine and human natures were united personally with each other.⁸¹

Brenz is not conflating Christ’s states of humiliation and exaltation but is simply following what Jesus himself said in John 3:13, what Paul said in Eph 1:20–21, and what Luther taught.

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus gradually revealed his majesty and glory, first with the resurrection, then with the ascension, then the sending of the Holy Spirit; the final revelation of his majesty and glory will come on the last day when all of creation will see his majesty and glory.

Concerning the Communication of Attributes

Because there is a great distinction between the substances of the two natures in Christ and their properties, yet as a result of the personal union, there must be a communication of attributes between the two natures in Christ. The substances remain perpetually inviolable and neither one

80. *LW* 37:66.

81. FC SD VIII 12–3. Every reference from the Book of Concord is from the Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis (Minn.): Fortress press, 2000).

is changed into the other. Obviously, the divine nature is a spiritual substance or essence and is not created but was from eternity; however, the human nature is a bodily essence, consisting of soul and body, and was not from eternity but was created in its time by God. Brenz describes the result of the incarnation in this way, “These two substances remain uninjured and unchangeably united in the one person of Christ. But the properties and actions of these natures are by these terms such that one communicates to the other its properties or actions. This is called the ‘communication of attributes.’ And although some properties are changed, the substances, however, remain unchanged.”⁸² Brenz gives the example that “being immortal is a property of the divine nature, but being mortal is a property of the human nature.”⁸³ Brenz gives this example so that we can understand that the properties of each nature are their own, and each nature communicates its attributes to the other in the united person of Christ.

Now if we speak about Christ in a proper sense, Christ was not in his human nature necessarily liable to death for the simple reason that Christ did not have any of the sin through which death entered into the human and no deceit in his mouth. (1 Pet 2:22) Yet, of his own will, he became mortal and undertook death not according to its cause but only for the sake of freeing the human race.⁸⁴ If the divine nature in Christ is immortal, was it really made a participant in the sufferings and death of Christ? We cannot deny that the divine nature participated in its own way.⁸⁵ Brenz explains it this way,

For although the divine nature is in and of itself immortal, yet, because it is united in Christ with the human nature into an undivided person, it was not only present with it in the sufferings and death as with other saints but also became so personally a participant

82. Brenz, *Werke*, 132.

83. Brenz, *Werke*, 132.

84. Brenz, *Werke*, 132.

85. Brenz, *Werke*, 132.

of them that it could truly be said: God himself has suffered and died. Then, after Christ rose from the dead and became immortal also according to his human nature, who would say that he for this reason does not remain true man.⁸⁶

Because of the personal union and the communications of attributes, because “God is man, and man is God”⁸⁷ in the person of Christ because “we Christians must ascribe all the *idiomata* of the two natures of Christ, both persons, equally to him. Consequently, Christ is God and man in one person because whatever is said of him as man must also be said of him as God, namely, Christ has died, and Christ is God, therefore God died—not the separated God, but God united with humanity.”⁸⁸ We should all rejoice in this because God, in his inexpressible grace, let his dear Son become like us, a man and our brother!⁸⁹

The attributes communicated in the personal union are not those that are changeable. The divine nature does not have attributes that change because God does not change. (Mal 3:6) As stated previously, all of the attributes or properties of God are essential to his essence and are not accidental. The human nature does have attributes that change, i.e., location, death, sickness, suffering, hunger, thirst, and the like. According to his human nature, Christ was bodily and locally here on earth because the attributes of the human nature were not replaced, erased, or rewritten in the communication of attributes.⁹⁰ The Son of God poured all of his majesty into the

86. Brenz, *Werke*, 132.

87. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 97.

88. *LW* 41:103.

89. *LW* 41:103.

90. The communication of attributes is not a *physica communicatio vel essentialis transfusion* (an essential natural communion or transfusion), but a *realis communicatio* (the imparting or communion that takes place in fact and in truth). This means the natures are not mixed in their essences or essential characteristics, but that the communion happens in fact and in truth as a true explanation of the majesty of Christ, as it is explained in FC SD VIII 62–3.

Son of Man as a supernatural gift because of the personal union.⁹¹ Therefore, we can rightly say that whatever belongs to the Son of God through nature belongs to the Son of Man through a supernatural gift.⁹²

Scripture declares that God fills all things. “Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the Lord.” (Jer 23:24) This property is fitting only for the divine.⁹³ Because the divine nature in Christ assumed a human nature into one undivided person, there is no doubt that the divine nature shares the property of “filling all things” with the human nature since there is no place where the divine can be separated from the human.⁹⁴ In the context that Brenz writes, this does have implications for Christ’s real presence in the Lord’s Supper. The Reformed would have us believe that while the divine nature of Christ fills all things, Christ, with his physical body, is excluded from the earth and the Supper and is circumscribed in the “empyrean” heaven and that Christ bodily walks back and forth in that new heaven.⁹⁵ All this teaching does is divide and separate the natures and create two Christs. Brenz responds to this teaching, “Although Christ, true God and true man, fills all things with both his divinity and humanity, yet, he has this majesty originally not from the humanity itself, which by nature cannot exist except in one place, but from the divinity, from which in no place is the humanity separated.”⁹⁶ Christ fills all things with his humanity. So,

91. Brenz, *Werke*, 24.

92. Brenz, *Werke*, 22.

93. Brenz, *Werke*, 134.

94. Brenz, *Werke*, 134.

95. Brenz, *Werke*, 134.

96. Brenz, *Werke*, 134.

while the Zwinglians teach a representation, Scripture teaches that Christ's body and blood are truly present in the bread and wine of the Supper. More on this will be discussed later.

But is not God the only one of infinite power, infinite wisdom, infinite goodness, and infinite righteousness? When the Word became flesh, the Word became united to the flesh in such a way that it poured out all the majesty of his deity into the flesh.⁹⁷ The Apostle Paul says, "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him" (Col 1:19); and "All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in him" (Col 2:3); and "For all the fullness of God's being dwells bodily in Christ." (Col 2:9) It is true that God is only one who is infinitely powerful, wise, good, and righteous. Through the Son of God pouring out all his majesty into the Son of Man as a supernatural gift in the personal union, we can say with Scripture, "It is as great as the working of his mighty strength, which God worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, authority, power, and dominion, and above every name that is given, not only in this age but also in the one to come." (Eph 1:20–1) It is certain that God raised the Son of Man into infinite power, wisdom, goodness, and righteousness.⁹⁸

Matthew writes in his Gospel, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matt 28:18); and Paul writes, "God also placed all things under his feet." (Eph 1:22) To have all authority in heaven and on earth and to have all things placed under his feet is to be omnipotent and to have infinite and immense power. Yet, Scripture teaches that Christ is true man and did not lose any of his humanity. Therefore, he was limited by his human nature to the

97. Brenz, *Werke*, 22.

98. Brenz, *Werke*, 24.

conditions of this world, yet he was capable of the infinite.⁹⁹ But Brenz's opponents asked the question, "How is it possible for a finite thing to be capable of an infinite thing?"¹⁰⁰ This argument not only applied to Christ's omnipotence, but also his omnipresence. To answer this Zwinglian and Schwenkfeldian dogma, Brenz goes first to Scripture. First, to Isaiah, "A shoot will spring up from the stump of Jesse, and a Branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him: the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord" (Isa 11:1,2); then to the words of John the Baptist, "In fact, the one whom God has sent speaks God's words, for God gives the Spirit without measure" (John 3:34); then to Paul's letter to the Colossians, "All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in him." (Col 2:3)¹⁰¹ Brenz's point is to show from Scripture that God poured out his Spirit on the man Jesus and did so without measure. "To receive the Spirit without measure is to receive the immense and infinite gifts of the Spirit. To have the treasures of wisdom stored up is to have infinite wisdom."¹⁰² In addition to showing that Christ had infinite wisdom, Brenz then adds the vivification of Christ's flesh. He points to Christ's own words, "The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the Last Day" (John 6:54); and what Paul says to the Corinthians, "The first man, Adam, became a living natural being. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit." (1 Cor 15:45)¹⁰³ By Christ's own words, his flesh and blood are alive. This makes him far different from the first

99. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 30–1.

100. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 31.

101. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 32.

102. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 32.

103. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 32.

Adam, who consisted of spirit and body only and could not give life to others. But Christ not only lives in his own flesh and spirit but also his flesh unified with the Word through the personal union can vivify others.¹⁰⁴ To explain this further, Brenz quotes the words of Cyril of Alexandria:

It is the Spirit that gives life, the flesh does not profit anyone who adds to it. Do not ignorantly deny that there is living flesh at all. For if it is understood alone, nothing at all can vivify, since it needs vivifying, but when you have examined with praiseworthy care the mystery of the incarnation, and have come to know him who dwells in the flesh ... you will still believe that it is made alive. For since the flesh is united with the vivifying Word, the whole is made alive. For the Word of God was not reduced to its corruptible nature, but it was raised to a better power.... For it is the body, not of any man, whose flesh can profit no one, but the body of life itself, and of our savior Jesus Christ, in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily, can do this.^{105 106}

Here, it is clearly stated from the words of Cyril that the nature of the Word vivifies; that the Word gives to the man Jesus the whole power of vivification, and that the flesh of Christ drew not a little, but the whole power of vivification from the Word with which it was united. Christ brought the whole power back into himself in such a way that he can give life to the necessities of life.¹⁰⁷ Now, if the flesh of Christ drew from the Word the entirety of the infinite power of vivification, it cannot be denied that Christ's flesh also drew infinite power and presence. "For from nothing to being, or from death to life, there is an infinite and interminable space, or interval. But to permeate this space, and to produce something out of nothing to be, or to bring back from death to life, and to preserve it in life, requires infinite power and presence."¹⁰⁸

104. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 32.

105. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 33.

106. Brenz is quoting Cyril of Alexandria's book 4 on John, chapters 15 and 20.

107. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 34.

108. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 34.

In addition to infinite power, infinite gifts of the Spirit, and infinite life-giving power, there is also the kingdom of Christ. There is no doubt that God placed the man Jesus Christ in the heavenly kingdom and made him King of Kings and Lord of Lords. This kingdom, which is of infinite extent, is of infinite duration.¹⁰⁹ “There will be no limit to his authority and no end to the peace he brings. He will rule on David’s throne and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from now on, into eternity. The zeal of the Lord of Armies will accomplish this.” (Isa 9:7) It is the zeal of the Lord that accomplishes all of this. Even though the nature of things does not allow for the finite substance of a king to be capable of an infinite kingdom, yet this is done easily by the zeal of the Lord of Hosts.¹¹⁰

Ultimately, whoever denies that the man Jesus is capable of infinite power, of infinite gifts of the Spirit, of infinite life-giving, and of an infinite kingdom is really denying the incarnation of God and the personal union of God and man. He denies that Christ is man and God.¹¹¹

Since Christ is true God and true man and, because of the personal union, the divine nature and human nature have communicated their attributes to each other in the united person of Christ, it can truly be said that Christ is omnipotent and omnipresent. Zwingli and his followers accused Brenz and Luther of teaching Christ’s ubiquity, which means that the Zwinglians accused Luther and Brenz of establishing a local, extended, dilated, and enlarged body so that not even God himself could be said to be everywhere.¹¹²

109. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 34–5.

110. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 35.

111. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 35.

112. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 37.

The term “ubiquity” was first coined by the Zwinglians to accuse the Lutherans of being ignorant.¹¹³ In fact, Brenz loathed the term; however, the Zwinglians would not stop using it to describe the real presence. Since they were explaining the omnipresence of Christ, Brenz conceded to use the term however detestable it was to him. In the Württemberg Confession, Brenz spoke about the omnipresence of Christ, which was ridiculed by Melancthon as “Hechinger Latin” because, according to Melancthon, it contradicted the old, pure teaching of the Church, which is what he claimed was the way he taught about the Lord’s Supper.¹¹⁴ This old, pure teaching of the Church is taking the words of institution in a strictly literal sense. As a result of Brenz’s biblical Christology, the Zwinglians also accused the Lutherans of making Christ multi-bodied, multi-locational, and omnilocational. They called the Lutherans Capernaitans, carnivores, bloodsuckers, Thyestes, Everywhere-ists, Everyplace-ists, Ubiquitists, Omnilocationsists, Bread-Worshippers, and Impanators of God, as well as many other horrible nicknames.¹¹⁵

The ancient church fathers themselves rejected the expression “Christ’s humanity is everywhere.” Brenz also did not approve of this expression if by “everywhere” a locality is meant.¹¹⁶ Yet, because the Zwinglians were so pleased to continue using the term “ubiquity”, Brenz decided to use the term in a way that could be properly understood. Brenz proposed, for the sake of teaching, a three-fold ubiquity, namely, local, repletive, and personal.¹¹⁷ This follows

113. Brenz, *Werke*, 6.

114. Brandy, *Die Späte Christologie*, 44.

115. Brenz, *Werke*, 10–2.

116. Brenz, *Werke*, 42.

117. Brenz, *Werke*, 42.

how Luther spoke of the different modes of presence of Christ. There is nothing, either spiritual or corporeal, which is everywhere, with respect to local ubiquity. God alone is everywhere by his own nature, which is the repletive ubiquity. After the Son of God united humanity to himself, it follows by necessity that this humanity, which the Son of God assumed into a unity of person, is everywhere. This is the personal ubiquity.¹¹⁸ Brenz points out that the “typical use includes a locality spread out and stretched from all sides. But in the expression ‘Christ’s humanity is everywhere,’ this term ‘everywhere’ does not mean any locality, for deity itself is not locally spread out and stretched either.”¹¹⁹ Paul says, “He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.” (Eph 4:10) If we were talking about the geometric space of places, the humanity of Christ is not everywhere. If the discussion is about the celestial manner of filling all things, and if we believe in the personal union of the two natures in Christ, then we have to admit that Christ’s humanity fills all things. Otherwise, we are only giving “lip-service” to the doctrine of the unity of the two natures in Christ, but in reality, we are dissolving the unity and making two persons, one who is in one place with his humanity, and the other is somewhere else apart from his humanity.¹²⁰

In his *Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper*, Luther describes the modes of presence this way:

There are three modes of being present in a given place: locally or circumscriptively, definitively, repletively.... In the first place, an object is circumscriptively or locally in a place ... if the space and the object occupying it exactly corresponds and fit into the same measurements, such as wine or water in a cask ... a man walking in the open air takes up no more space than the air around him, nor does the air yield more, than the size of the man.... In the second place, an object is in a place definitively, i.e., in an

118. Brenz, *Werke*, 44.

119. Brenz, *Werke*, 44.

120. Brenz, *Werke*, 44.

uncircumscribed manner, if the object or body is not palpably in one place and is not measurable according to the dimensions of the place where it is, but can occupy either more room or less. Thus it is said that angels and spirits are in certain places. For an angel or devil can be present in an entire house or city; again, he can be in a room, a chest or a box, indeed, in a nutshell.... Thus we read in the gospel that the devil possesses men and enters them, and they also enter into swine.... This I call an uncircumscribed presence in a given place, since we cannot circumscribe or measure it as we measure a body, and yet it is obviously present in the place.... This was the mode in which the body of Christ was present when he came out of the closed grave, and came to the disciples through a closed door, as the gospels show.... He took up no space, and the stone yielded him no space, but the stone remained stone, as entire and firm as before, and his body remained as large and thick as it was before.... In the third place, an object occupies places repletively, i.e., supernaturally, if it is simultaneously present in all places, yet without being measured or circumscribed by any place, in terms of the space which it occupies. This mode of existence belongs to God alone ... this mode is altogether incomprehensible, beyond our reason, and can be maintained only with faith, in the Word.¹²¹

The way Luther explained the modes of presence influenced Brenz and how he described the different modes of presence of Christ. Brenz's understanding of ubiquity or the phrase "Christ's humanity is everywhere" is based on his understanding of the personal union and the communication of attributes, which was discussed above.

The Formula of Concord also speaks about the three different modes of presence that Christ has as it quotes from Luther in Article VII, Concerning the Lord's Supper. The first mode is the "circumscribed corporeal mode of presence, as when he walked bodily on earth, when he occupied and yielded space according to his size."¹²² Scripture gives examples in Luke, "And she gave birth to her firstborn son, wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.... After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions" (Luke 2:7,46); and again, in Matthew, "When he got into a boat, his disciples followed him." (Matt 8:23) The

121. *LW* 37:215–6.

122. FC SD VII 99.

second mode is the “incomprehensible, spiritual mode of presence according to which he neither occupies nor yields space but passes through everything created as he wills.... He employed this mode of presence when he left the closed grave and came through closed doors, in the bread and wine in the Supper, and, as people believe, when he was born in his mother.”¹²³ Scripture shows this in the Gospel of John, “On the evening of that first day of the week, the disciples were together behind locked doors because of their fear of the Jews. Jesus came, stood among them, and said to them, “Peace be with you!” (John 20:19) The third mode of presence is,

The divine, heavenly mode, according to which all created things are indeed much more permeable and present to him than they are according to the second mode. For if according to the second mode he can be present in and with created things in such a way that they do not feel, touch, measure, or circumscribe him, how much more marvelously will he be present in all created things according to this exalted third mode, where they cannot measure or circumscribe him but where they are present to him so that he measures and circumscribes them. You must place this existence of Christ, which constitutes him as one person with God, far, far beyond things created, as far as God transcends them; and, on the other hand, place it as deep in and as near to all created things as God is in them. For he is one indivisible person with God, and wherever God is, he must be also, otherwise our faith is false.¹²⁴

Scripture gives evidence of this from Jesus’ own words in John, “No one has ascended into heaven, except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven” (John 3:13); his words in Matthew, “In fact where two or three have gathered together in my name, there I am among them” (Matt 18:20); and “And surely I am with you always until the end of the age” (Matt 28:20); in Paul’s words to the Ephesians, “The church is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way” (Eph 1:23); and “He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things” (Eph 4:10); and also from the

123. FC SD VII 100.

124. FC SD VII 101.

prophet Jeremiah, “Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the Lord.” (Jer 23:24)

Concerning the Ascension and Sitting at the Right Hand of God

The adversaries of Brenz and Luther, whom Luther often called fanatics, always maintained that it was impossible for Christ’s body to be present in the Lord’s Supper because his body should be seated at the right hand of God. Their idea of what “right hand of God” means is “an imaginary heaven in which a golden throne stands, and Christ sits beside the Father in a cowl and golden crowns.”¹²⁵ As Luther says, “From these childish ideas it must follow further that they also bind God himself to one place in heaven, on the same golden throne, since apart from Christ there is no God, and where Christ is there is the Godhead in all its fulness.”¹²⁶ Brenz praises Luther for his great diligence in his teaching and explaining of what “the right hand of God is and that Christ must fill all things with his humanity because of the fact that he is seated with his humanity at the right hand of God, which fills all things.”¹²⁷ Because the Zwinglians were so determined to show that Christ is seated locally in the empyrean heaven, they missed the simple fact that “it can be proven by absolutely no testimony of Holy Scripture that the right hand at which Christ is seated is a certain, definite, circumscribed place in heaven.”¹²⁸

125. *LW* 37:55.

126. *LW* 37:56.

127. Brenz, *Werke*, 172.

128. Brenz, *Werke*, 174–6.

So, if the right hand of God is not a certain, definite, circumscribed place in heaven, then what is it? Why does Peter make it seem like a circumscribed place in heaven when he says, “He went to heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.”? (1 Pet 3:22) Brenz uses this exact passage to answer both questions. He says, “Peter does not want Christ to sit in the corporeal heaven and at the corporeal right hand of God, but that he should take it upon himself to administer the heavenly government, the heavenly power, and subject to himself all angelic and human majesty, so that he himself may surpass and excel all by his majesty.”¹²⁹ To further show that the right hand of God is not a physical place but a symbol of divine majesty and omnipotence, Brenz turns to the words of Paul, “Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Phil 2:9–11) Paul means to say that the majesty of the man Christ is so great that no human or angelic voice can adequately express his name.¹³⁰ For Brenz, this means that Christ “is exalted above all that can be named either in this age or in the next so that he has all things heavenly, earthly, and infernal in subjection to him.... Christ was exalted by his humanity above all things, not only by general dominion and majesty but by his truth he was exalted above his Church, in a singular manner in all things.”¹³¹

For although the humanity of Christ is a created substance and, by nature, finite and measurable, it has already been shown that the finite and measurable substance was made, at the

129. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 54.

130. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 55.

131. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 55.

incarnation, capable of the infinite and immeasurable majesty and, therefore, was exalted and elevated to the government of all things.¹³² No one can deny that man, taken up, is drawn to the highest blessedness, beauty, and happiness, but he would not be supremely blessed, beautiful, or happy unless he were also omnipotent and omnipresent.¹³³ For if Christ were to be circumscribed in place and walked from place to place in a corporeal heaven, then that is not divine excellence but corporeal infirmity. It is not heavenly majesty but earthly smallness. It is not spiritual beauty but carnal deformity.¹³⁴ Brenz puts it this way,

When a great man is taken up, he is raised to the highest majesty, by which he cannot be either greater or more sublime, it is necessary that he also be raised to the highest power, which is omnipotence, and to the highest height, which is omnipresence. This is what the incarnation of Christ wants, what the sitting of Christ at the right hand of God his Father teaches, and the dominion of all things in which the assumed man is placed. For unless that man had become capable of such majesty, the Word could not have become flesh, and the flesh could not have ascended to the right hand of God and assumed the government of all things.¹³⁵

This is by far the clearest Brenz is on what the “right hand of God” is and what it means for the ascension.

The Zwinglians made the point that Christ ascended bodily into heaven. Therefore, he “is bodily confined and circumscribed in a specific place in heaven, so that in this body he is neither willing nor able to be truly and essentially present with us in the Supper that is celebrated according to Christ’s institution on earth. Instead, he is alleged to be as far away or as distant from it as heaven and earth are from each other.”¹³⁶ As the Zwinglians were wont to not provide

132. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 58.

133. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 58.

134. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 58.

135. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 59.

136. FC SD VII 119.

proof from Scripture where they got this idea, Luther provides a counterpoint even though the Zwinglians did not provide any evidence to support their claim. Luther points to Christ's words in the Gospel of John, "Christ says in John 3 [:13], "No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven," whereby he shows indeed that his body is at the same time in heaven and on earth, yes, even at the ends of the earth. For by his glorification, he did not become another person, but before and after was present everywhere.¹³⁷ Luther is fully embracing the *genus maiestaticum* and what it means for both the incarnation, the ascension, and Christ's sacramental presence in the Lord's Supper.

The key to this passage centers on the phrase "who is in heaven." If you were to open up a Greek New Testament, such as the UBS,¹³⁸ one would see that the phrase "who is in heaven" is not there in Greek. This is because the editors felt that the evidence to include it was not substantial enough; however, if you were to look at the apparatus notes, you would notice that the manuscript evidence that includes the Greek phrase for "who is in heaven" is more substantial, which includes numerous lectionaries and quotes from numerous early church fathers. Jerome included it in the Vulgate, which is why Luther has it in his quotation of John 3:13. If you remove the phrase "who is in heaven," you could argue that Jesus is only talking about his eventual ascension or about his current state of humiliation and not about his human nature being exalted at the moment of the incarnation. This could also then be used by those who deny the real presence in the Lord's Supper as evidence that Christ bodily ascended and remain locally circumscribed in heaven. Yet, when the phrase "who is in heaven" is included, the passage becomes about the incarnation. That the human nature was exalted to the right hand of

137. *LW* 37:66.

¹³⁸ UBS 5th edition.

God because it cannot be separated from the divinity, and it is wherever the divinity is. It means that Christ did not ascend bodily but only visibly, which was done for the benefit of his disciples. It means that after the resurrection, there was no need for Christ to bodily ascend to the right hand of God because his body was already there united with his divinity. Yet, because Christ loved his disciples, he visibly ascended before their eyes for their sake.

Brenz describes the things that happen to the person of Christ in their respective steps. The first step is that of divine majesty. “Christ the man always exists in this step already from the incarnation. For from that time, he was never not true God. He was never not in the highest sublimity of the deity, and he will never lose it into eternity.”¹³⁹ The second step that Brenz mentions is that of the inanity or humiliation. “He existed in this grade, as the Apostle says, “in the days of his flesh” until the resurrection.”¹⁴⁰ The third and final step that Brenz has is that of economy or dispensation. “For although Christ’s whole life, in which he dwelt in this world among men, can be called an economy, yet for the sake of teaching we are at present distinguishing the economy from the humiliation and calling the economy the time when Christ after his resurrection and also after his ascension into heaven appeared in one certain place and will appear on the last day.”¹⁴¹ Dispensation is when something is loosened from the ordinary law. Yet, the ordinary law of Christ is his divine majesty, which was conveyed in the incarnation and declared in the resurrection. Therefore, it is dispensation when Christ does something or appears not according to his majesty but according to our comprehension and for our use.¹⁴²

139. Brenz, *Werke*, 336.

140. Brenz, *Werke*, 336.

141. Brenz, *Werke*, 336.

142. Brenz, *Werke*, 340.

Concerning the Lord's Supper

Based on what was demonstrated above, we are able to understand Luther and Brenz's view on the Lord's Supper. For Luther, his theology is centered on the saving work of Christ.¹⁴³ Luther used the communication of attributes to explain what he found to be the logical conclusions of the ancient ecumenical councils.¹⁴⁴ Luther points to the vital nature of understanding the person and work of Christ as a unit when he says, "Whoever stands correctly and firmly in the belief that Jesus Christ is true God and man, that he died and has risen again for us, such a person has all other articles added to him."¹⁴⁵ In the refusal of human logic, Luther made this his conviction:

The Almighty God had been able to place his promise 'under the bread and wine' where he was truly present, and that God can put the good created order of God's material world to use as his instrument of delivering Christ's saving work. Luther held to his affirmation of the true presence of Christ's body and blood and the capability of the human language to create the reality of new life in Christ.¹⁴⁶

It was the words of Christ when he instituted the Lord's Supper that is the foundation and the bedrock of Luther's Christology. Because "the Word of God is not false or deceitful,"¹⁴⁷ Luther trusted and believed completely that Christ gives elements of his body and blood through the bread and the wine to those recipients of the sacrament. For Luther, everything centered on the words, "This is my body." (Matt 26:26) Everything else, all other Christology and Theology, stems from those four words.

143. Mark C. Mattes, Robert Kolb, and Charles P. Arand, *Common Places in Christian Theology : A Curated Collection of Articles from Lutheran Quarterly* (1517 Publishing, 2023), 164

144. Kolb, *Common places*, 164.

145. *LW* 34:207.

146. Kolb, *Common places*, 166.

147. *LW* 37:214.

Brenz preferred a literal interpretation of the words of institution, to which Luther also agreed, to not create misunderstandings by making up definitions of what the words meant or represented.¹⁴⁸ It was the words of institution that Brenz regarded as the “foundation that defines and constitutes the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, his position in 1525 and to the end of his life.”¹⁴⁹ There was no other way for Brenz to describe the doctrine of Real Presence in the Lord’s Supper. Christ said, “This is my body”; therefore, it is Christ’s body. The Zwinglians would have us believe that “This” means the whole occasion and not the bread that Jesus was holding, that “is” does not mean “is” but “represents,” and that “body” means a “symbol of a body.” They took the words of institution and twisted them to fit their human reasoning. The Zwinglians point to the fact that Christ is bodily in heaven and, therefore, could not be on earth. Yet, they never answered the question, “Where is the Scripture which limits the right hand of God in this fashion to one place?”¹⁵⁰ Brenz had this to say to the Zwinglians, who were still averse to the mystery:

They may learn that the man Christ fills and governs all things in the presence of his majesty, which he has communicated from God ... that the body of Christ could be present, if not simply in all, at least in several places at the same time, that is to say, in those in which the Lord’s Supper is celebrated.... But we will teach it, as we said, on the authority of the ancients, which are after the Prophets and Apostles, with every exception greater, must be done by the merit of the majority.... that all the writers of the ancient church, to whom even the later ones ascribe themselves, believed, felt, and taught the church that in the Lord’s Supper the body and blood of Christ are truly and substantially present, and are dispensed with those who partake of the bread and wine.¹⁵¹

Because of the personal union and the communication of attributes, it can be rightly said that Christ is truly present in the Lord’s Supper. Because Christ is omnipotent and therefore

148. Brandy, *Die Spate Christologie*, 120.

149. Kolb, *Common Places*, 179.

150. *LW* 37:56.

151. Brenz, *Recognitio*, 101–2.

omnipresent, his humanity and divinity are present in the supper because the two natures cannot be separated. By the very words of Christ, we have assurance that Christ is present. If we were to follow the reasoning and logic of the Zwinglians, we make Christ out to be a liar. We would make two persons, two Christs, two Saviors. We are making a God where his humanity is separated from his divinity, which is no God for us.

To differentiate from the other modes of presence, we call Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper the sacramental presence, which Scripture indicates to us in the words of institution expressed in Matt 26.

THE IMPACT OF JOHANNES BRENZ ON JAKOB ANDREAE

The impact of Brenz on future reformers could easily be a book in and of itself, but for the sake of this study, the scope will be limited to no further than the Formula of Concord. As we look into Brenz's impact, we must look at the work of the one person who had the most exposure to Brenz and who was his most ardent supporter and protégé—Jakob Andreae.

The son of a blacksmith and whose education was sponsored by the Dukes of Württemberg, Andreae very enthusiastically followed the theology and beliefs of his mentor. Following in the similar desire for confessional concord amongst the Lutherans learned from Brenz, Andreae was the one who pushed the most for concord even after receiving ridicule from the Philippists and the Gnesio-Lutherans. It was Andreae who represented the Württembergers at the Maulbronn Colloquy in 1564. There, Andreae argued that the humanity shared in the divine omnipresence and that the divine majesty could not be circumscribed by any place, and thus, in the two natures, Christ's divine nature communicated the divine omnipresence to his human nature.¹⁵² From 1568 to 1570, Andreae toured the German states trying to reach an agreement on concord, but he met with failure. In late 1570, Andreae began writing his *Six Sermons*. These sermons focused on what was needed for concord to happen among the Lutherans.¹⁵³ The greatest evidence for Brenz's Christology appears in the sixth sermon of the *Six Sermons*, which

152. Kolb, *Common Places*, 178.

153. Robert Kolb, *Andreae and the Formula of Concord: Six Sermons on the Way to Lutheran Unity*/ Robert Kolb (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Pub. House, c1977, n.d.), 48–57.

is on the person of Christ, the two natures in Christ, the true communication of attributes, and the majesty of Christ.¹⁵⁴ These sermons became the basis of the Epitome of the Formula of Concord.

According to Lutheran historiography, Brenz's emphasis on the "ubiquity" of Christ's human nature is placed in contrast to the views of contemporaries, especially those who took Melancthon more seriously.¹⁵⁵ However, his actual position, as shown above, does not conform to this judgment, which is also shown in the works of Hans Christian Brandy and Hendrik Klinge.¹⁵⁶ Robert Kolb points out that

Scholars have largely followed Theodor Mahlmann's claim that in general north German Lutherans argued only for the authority of the Words of Institution whereas Brenz, Andreae, and their Swabian colleagues argued more from the Christological axiom that Christ's human and divine nature share characteristics in the communication of attributes. Hans Christian Brandy has shown that Brenz's fundamental foundation for the true presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper rested on the Words of Institution even though he and his Swabian colleagues did speak more prominently of the communication of attributes than did many of their North German colleagues. Hendrik Klinge has further demonstrated that Martin Chemnitz ... came to hold a position on the omnipresence of Christ's human nature that matched that of Jakob Andreae after the two had worked together on the Formula of Concord.¹⁵⁷

From the work done by Mahlmann, Brandy, and Klinge, we can glimpse the impact Brenz had on those theologians during his life and shortly thereafter.

While Brenz did not directly influence Martin Chemnitz, it was Jakob Andreae, whom Chemnitz became acquainted with in 1557 and with whom he later worked together on the

154. Kolb, *Andreae*, 107–20.

155. Kolb, *Common Places*, 178.

156. Kolb, *Common Places*, 178.

157. Kolb, *Common Places*, 180.

Formula of Concord, who influenced Chemnitz. After Chemnitz wrote *On the Two Natures in Christ* in 1570, he sent a copy to Andreae and won his approval.¹⁵⁸

Andreae and Chemnitz were the two main writers of the Formula of Concord. You can see evidence of Brenz's verbiage throughout article VIII in the Solid Declaration of the Formula. It seems that nearly all of the quotes from the *Swabian Concord* by Andreae or the *Torgau Book* are either Andreae using the same language Brenz used in his writings or represent his Christology. This becomes apparent after reading many of Brenz's works.

158. Kolb, *Common Places*, 183.

CONCLUSION

To return to the question at hand, is Lutheran Christology really Lutheran, or is it actually Brenzian? I have demonstrated through the development of this thesis Lutheran Christology is neither Lutheran nor Brenzian. It is scriptural. As we have seen for Luther, Christology started with the words of institution and developed based on numerous other passages that describe the amazing love that God showed for us who are undeserving of such love. For Brenz, Christology starts with the incarnation—the moment in time when God’s love became apparent to creation; from there, it expounds on the soteriological impact it has on us. That is the important part: Christology shows just how much God loves us. It explains what Scripture says about the love Christ had for us. Because of his great love for us, he took on human flesh, took on our infirmities, and put himself under the law which he established, all so that he could free us from that law. Every aspect of Christology is just another example of how much Christ loves and cares for us.

As has been shown above, the emphasis of Martin Luther and the emphasis of Johannes Brenz are the same. They are making and highlighting the same doctrinal points. In fact, when you lay the writings of both men side by side and compare the things that they say, you may start to get them confused because they sound so similar. This is because Luther and Brenz were just saying what is scriptural. That was their foundation, not human reason, arguments, or philosophy.

From 1518, when Brenz met with Luther the day after the Heidelberg Disputation, until his death in 1570, Brenz was a staunch supporter of Luther and gladly taught the “new” theology that Luther brought back into the church. Brenz was most certainly influenced by Luther’s writings, which is evident in the sheer amount of times that Brenz quotes Luther in his writings, as well as the verbiage that Brenz utilizes, which is nearly identical to Luther.

Brenz is often overlooked in Lutheran historiography because of his use of “ubiquity.” However, Luther also taught the idea of Christ’s human nature being omnipresent even though he did not use the term “ubiquity.” Brenz is also overlooked because he believed that the northern Germans misunderstood Osiander during the Osiandrian controversy, even though Brenz would eventually have to back away from his old friend. Yet, his impact is seen in the Formula of Concord, especially in the portions that were quoted above, and throughout Articles VII and VIII. Brenz’s impact is also seen in later theologians who built off of the Christological foundation that he and Luther laid. Like Luther, Brenz had his quirks. He was a dedicated Lutheran and valiantly fought against those who tried to deny the majesty of Christ, and what it means for our salvation. Christology was the foundation for Brenz’s ministry and should be the foundation of our ministries as well.

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