

A Contextual Analysis of the Two Regiments in the Swedish Luther Renaissance

Leif Svensson

Doctoral Student, Umeå University

leif.svensson@religion.umu.se

In the 1930s and 1940s, a number of influential theologians in Germany used Luther's so-called two-kingdoms doctrine to legitimate and support the National Socialists. Not surprisingly, the doctrine has ever since been controversial and a topic of much dispute. The Swedish Luther Renaissance dominated theology in Sweden during the first half of the twentieth century. This Swedish "rediscovery" of Luther is sometimes presented as providing alternative interpretations of the doctrine of the two kingdoms, not subject to the theological objections raised against it – and Luther's ethics more generally – in the wake of the Second World War. I will argue that this conclusion needs to be modified. To that end, I will examine Einar Billing's and Gustaf Wingren's interpretations of the two regiments doctrine, which is a name used in Sweden for the parts of Luther's teaching usually covered in the two kingdoms doctrine. I will show that Billing and Wingren to varying degrees fail to salvage Luther's two kingdoms/regiments doctrine from the widespread critique levelled against it. The essay also relates Billing's and Wingren's readings of Luther's ethics to their historical and social contexts. In this connection, I will discuss how the Luther research of Billing and Wingren influenced their own theological thinking and activity in the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Sweden.

Keywords: Einar Billing, Gustaf Wingren, Luther interpretation, Lutheran ethics, two kingdoms/regiments, law and gospel, church and state, vocation, neighbor-love, social critique

Introduction

Theology in Sweden during the first half of the twentieth century was intertwined with what was known as the Swedish Luther Renaissance, which lasted up until the 1960s.¹ In fact, for a long time Swedish theology was almost identical with Luther interpretation. It is common to divide the movement into three generations. Einar Billing

and Nathan Söderblom were the key figures in the first stage of the renaissance, Gustaf Aulén and Anders Nygren were the most important in the second, and Gustaf Wingren was the central figure of the third and final stage. Each generation was confronted with different challenges and a common denominator is that the scholars in most cases tried to use Luther as a theological solution.² In retrospect, it

is also possible to see how context-dependent the research of the Swedish Luther Renaissance was. None of this seems very surprising as it is well-known that it has often been difficult to distinguish modern Luther interpreters own point of view from their descriptions of Luther, which is, of course, connected to the fact that the majority of Luther scholars have belonged to the Lutheran tradition.³

The Swedish Luther Renaissance was also a phenomenon of international significance. It was for quite some time the most important development in Luther studies outside of Germany. There were many connections between the Luther research in Sweden and the more famous Luther Renaissance in Germany initiated by Karl Holl.⁴ Nevertheless, the Swedish Luther Renaissance has often been considered as an alternative to tendencies in German Luther studies. At no point is this perhaps more true than when it comes to the so-called two kingdoms doctrine, which is notoriously difficult to define but still has been a starting point for much modern Lutheran ethics. Generally speaking, the doctrine of the two kingdoms can be understood as an attempt by Lutheran theologians to try to understand, on the one hand, the difference and relationship between the church and state and, on the other hand, the difference and relationship between Christian duties in private life and in public service. The doctrine is connected to a number of important distinctions in Luther's theology, such as the ones between the kingdom of the world and the kingdom of God, the worldly regiment and the spiritual regiment, law and gospel, and between being a Christian person and a person of the world.

In the 1930s and 1940s, some influential Lutheran theologians in Germany –

including Paul Althaus, Werner Elert, Friedrich Gogarten and Emanuel Hirsch – used the two-kingdoms doctrine to legitimate and support the National Socialists. Their understanding of the doctrine is connected to what can be described as the two-spheres idea, which is sometimes claimed to have been invented by Christoph Ernst Luthardt and at other times attributed to Ernst Troeltsch and Max Weber. In any case, according to this notion the spiritual and temporal are understood in terms of two spheres, meaning that an inner, private sphere is distinguished from an outer, public sphere. Faith is reduced to an inner spirituality that must be separated from the natural, secular world. The worldly sphere is attributed autonomy from God's revelation in the church. Political and social life is understood as independent from Christian faith. The public sphere has its own autonomous and rational laws, which can be known apart from Christ and the gospel. Nationalist theologians supporting the Nazi regime coupled this two-spheres idea with an emphasis on the orders of creation. The social structures in the world are divine, that is, ordered by God, and must therefore be unconditionally accepted. In fact, God speaks to us through these orders, to which one must also include the life and history of a nation. Hitler's rise to power could therefore be theologically interpreted as an act of God. Moreover, those who accepted the two-spheres idea understood Christian faith as separated from the autonomous social sphere.⁵ In their view, faith does not say much concrete about how the good life should be lived in society. Of course, they never denied the duty of Christians to do the good in the world. However, they did deny that God's revelation in Jesus Christ and the church tells us something specific

about the outer form of those works. Thus, there can be no specific Christian critique of the Nazi state. Many Lutherans did of course not indulge in such a view.⁶ Nevertheless, the way National Socialism was legitimated with the help of the two-kingdoms doctrine and a theology of orders undermined Lutheran ethics in the eyes of many for a long time.

The Swedish Luther Renaissance is sometimes presented as providing alternative interpretations of the two-kingdoms doctrine, not subject to the theological critique levelled against the teaching in the wake of the Second World War.⁷ There is some truth in that view: a lot of Swedish theologians were critical of what happened in Germany and a characteristic trait of Luther research in Sweden has been to stress that God's rule is extended to all areas of life, which is a position resistant to an unqualified legitimation of secular authority. However, I think this conclusion needs to be modified. In this essay, I will describe two important interpretations of Luther's ethics in the Swedish Luther Renaissance and argue that they, in varying degrees, separate Christian faith from political and social life in ways that remind of the two-spheres idea described above. Einar Billing and Gustaf Wingren are the two theologians I have chosen to focus on. Their interpretations of Luther were very influential and in their dissertations they also paid attention to the two-kingdoms doctrine, which they, like other Swedish theologians, preferred to call the doctrine of the two regiments. There were also others that made substantial contributions to the thinking on the doctrine in the heyday of the Swedish Luther Renaissance. Especially one comes to mind: Gustaf Törnvall, who wrote an influential dissertation on the subject.⁸ However, he did not pursue an

academic career and there is almost nothing written about his life. This makes Törnvall of less interest here because I am also interested in contextualizing the interpretations of Luther in focus. Much is written about Billing and Wingren, which makes it a manageable task to relate their understandings of Luther's ethics to their historical and social contexts. One area of special interest is how Billing's and Wingren's Luther research influenced their own theological thinking and activity in the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Sweden. It is now time to begin the study by turning to Billing.

Einar Billing

Einar Billing (1871-1939) was a Professor of dogmatics in Uppsala between 1909 and 1920. In 1920, he became bishop for the diocese of Västerås in the Church of Sweden and he remained in Västerås for the rest of his life. It is difficult to overestimate Billing's impact on Swedish theology. Together with Nathan Söderblom, Professor of history of religion and later on Archbishop of Uppsala and a leader of the Ecumenical Movement, Billing was one of the key figures of the theological renaissance in Sweden at the beginning of the twentieth century.⁹ As already noted, Billing's research played a fundamental role in the creation of the Swedish Luther Renaissance. He furthermore was one of the leaders of the Young Church Movement (*ungkyrkorörelsen*) and also developed the influential folk church idea (*folkkyrkotanken*).

Billing's dissertation *Luthers lära om staten*¹⁰ [Luther's Teaching on the State] (1900) is often highlighted as the starting point of the Swedish Luther Renaissance. The study, and also the development of Billing's own theology, can be related to the rise of the historical-critical method in

biblical studies. When Billing and Söderblom were students of theology it was still customary among Protestant theologians in Sweden to take for granted the infallibility of the Bible as the firm foundation of Christianity. Billing and Söderblom describes it as a shocking experience when they became familiar with historical criticism after reading Julius Wellhausen's *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*. It now seemed clear to Billing and Söderblom that their teachers presented an unhistorical understanding of the Bible. The Luther of the Swedish orthodox or confessional Lutheranism did not fare any better in their eyes. Orthodox theologians hardly distinguished between Luther and Lutheranism. The main way to learn Lutheran theology was through dogmatic writings, which did not directly deal with Luther. It seems to be the case that Luther's texts were very seldom read. So for Billing and Söderblom, the historical-critical method challenged, what they considered to be, two important characteristics of nineteenth century orthodox Lutheranism in Sweden: the idea of the infallibility of the Bible and an uncomplicated view of the Lutheran tradition.¹¹

As it happened, Billing and Söderblom found an alternative to the traditional orthodox understanding of the Bible and Luther with the help of German liberal theology and through their own studies of Luther's writings. The famous liberal theologian Albrecht Ritschl was important to the method that Billing adopted in his Luther research. In contrast to the somewhat unhistorical approach of many – though of course not all – orthodox Lutheran theologians in Germany, Ritschl used the historical-critical method when analyzing Luther's texts. Billing, to a significant degree, follows Ritschl's historical-critical approach in his dissertation.

The method used in *Luthers lära om staten* is also influenced by Wellhausen.¹² Billing writes that the purpose of the study is to connect Luther's basic ideas on the state, and Christian life more generally, to their historical context. It is also important for Billing to relate the meaning of Luther's main terms to Luther's own linguistic usage.¹³

It is certainly the case that Billing displays an awareness, not in small part due to his study of historical criticism, of methodological difficulties related to Luther interpretation. The detailed descriptions in *Luthers lära om staten* help to make the complexity of Luther's thought manifest. However, the presentation can be very difficult to follow at times.¹⁴ Billing's critical attitude to Luther's texts is also notable. He now and then states when he thinks it is necessary to leave Luther's understanding of a certain issue behind. Billing is, for example, critical of Luther's thinking on the second use of the law and the cross in Christian life.¹⁵ One should, of course, not exaggerate his distance to Luther. Billing is, after all, the author of a book called *Luther's Greatness*, in which it is argued that Luther's impact on church history is on a par with Paul's and Augustine's.¹⁶ It is also striking that next to the Bible, Luther is the most important source of Billing's own theology.

Billing discusses medieval theology at length before turning to Luther's thinking. Characteristic of the medieval outlook is, says Billing, that the church should regulate all aspects of human life through the law. The gospel was absorbed by the law and so the true knowledge of it was lost. What is new in Luther's outlook, that which separates it from medieval Christianity, is his understanding of the gospel as being diametrically opposed to all kinds of law. Billing concludes that eve-

rything written by Luther is governed by the gospel. It should therefore not come as any surprise that the gospel of the forgiveness of sins is one of the key systematic starting points in *Luthers lära om staten*: the final purpose of both the spiritual and worldly regiments is the proclamation of the gospel.¹⁷ In later studies, Billing would keep to the idea that in order to understand Luther correctly one must relate every aspect of his theology to the gospel of the forgiveness of sins.¹⁸

Billing, and also Nathan Söderblom, identified the essence of faith with Luther's thinking on the gospel of the forgiveness of sins. This "discovery" can be understood as a solution to the dilemma that the historical-critical method in biblical studies confronted them with. In this way, the gospel rather than the Bible itself could be thought of as the secure foundation of Christianity. It was now possible for Billing to use the content of the gospel as a yardstick, which different portions of the Bible could be measured against. To Billing, this seemed to rescue Christian faith from the threat of historical criticism.¹⁹

In *Luthers lära om staten*, Billing could also say that the distinction between law and gospel is fundamental to Luther since almost every thought in his thinking can be connected to either law or gospel. The law can be connected to works and is often identified with the sword, meaning the maintenance of peace and justice in society through coercion. This use of the law or the sword is the purpose of the worldly regiment, which can be connected to the state. The spiritual regiment, which can be identified with the church, must, on the other hand, be ruled by the gospel or the Word. The gospel can be understood as the forgiveness of sins, the offering of divine grace, which is received

in faith. But one must not forget from view that the church has to preach the law or works in order to awaken the repentance necessary for receiving the forgiveness of sins. In general, the worldly regiment is supposed to govern the body and the spiritual regiment the soul or the heart.²⁰

The theocratic perspective is, together with the emphasis on the gospel and on the connected distinction between the law and gospel, central to Billing's systematic description of the two regiments. Billing can write that everything in Luther's understanding of the world is controlled by the theocratic idea, which means that God is the supreme ruler in all aspects of life. God is, in the end, the only true authority and God controls both the worldly and the spiritual regiment. God, so to say, works in, and rules, the two regiments, though in different ways.²¹ These three aspects – the gospel, the distinction between the law and gospel, and the theocratic idea – must be kept in mind in order to understand Billing's analysis of Luther's thinking on the two regiments. It is now time to turn to the details of Billing's interpretation in *Luthers lära om staten*.

With the worldly regiment Luther has in view, Billing writes, God's government of natural orders like the family, trade, and all social relations. God governs the worldly regiment with the help of legal laws, customs, estates, public offices, etc. Important in this regard is the coercive force of secular authority, the sword. The sword is the ultimate means with which God maintains justice and order in the world and so keeps sin in check. This is the so-called first, civil, use of the law, which is necessary for life in society and the well-being of humans. Furthermore, God's final purpose with the worldly regi-

ment is to keep the peace that makes the preaching of the gospel possible.²²

Billing emphasizes, what he considers to be, Luther's conservative understanding of life in society. God stretches down from heaven to the world through different authorities. The authorities make sure that the foundational orders of society – like marriage, school, and church – can work. Lords, public officials, parents etc. represent God and must be considered God's gifts to us, which also make us duty-bound to obey them. Obedience is the highest virtue. The created order is generally perceived as a great hierarchy. Specific estates, offices, gifts, and duties are stressed. Difference is the general principle in force in society. This hierarchical "system of difference" (*olikhetssystem*) is divine and must not be shaken. Furthermore, Billing stresses the role of the German people in Luther's theology. The only viewpoint that can compete with the religious and the ethical in Luther is, writes Billing, the patriotic. The national conditions are given by God and it is a duty to serve one's native country. However, it should be noted that Billing relativizes the patriotic tendency by noting that the religious perspective is, in the end, determinative for Luther.²³

One can speculate that the emphasis on the role of the nation in Luther's theology might be related to Billing's own views. He was a member of the conservative student's association Heimdal. He was also, together with Manfred Björkquist, J. A. Eklund, and Nathan Söderblom one of the leaders of the Young Church Movement, which was a sort of nationalistic renewal movement within the Church of Sweden in a time of crisis.²⁴ It is true that Billing did not develop the kind of strong nationalism that Björkquist, Eklund, and Söderblom could express. All the same, it

is a fact that Billing's thinking was influenced by a sort of romantic nationalism.²⁵

To return to *Luthers lära om staten*, Billing does not think that Luther gives limitless support to secular authority. There are times when Christians have the right to resist authorities and when the proclamation of the gospel is threatened even active resistance can be in place. Obedience to God stands above obedience to authorities in society. One should also note that Billing's Luther interpretation highlights the importance of biblical revelation for secular reason and authority. The worldly order is subject to reason, which provides insight into the natural law. However, reason has been corrupted by sin and the devil. Reason is to be highly valued and is not completely blind, but because of sin we might need the Bible in order to make a correct interpretation of the natural law. It is therefore necessary for the church to preach about the content of moral life, not least in order to give ethical guidance to authorities in society. This preaching should be based on the interpretation of the natural law in the Ten Commandments, which is summarized in the command to love one's neighbor. Furthermore, the Old Testament can be very useful since it contains many good examples that can be used to instruct secular authorities.²⁶

It was made clear above that Billing connects Luther's thinking on the spiritual regiment with the forgiveness of sins, which is received in a personal way by faith. In the church, God offers the justifying and pious-making grace to individual human beings through the proclamation of the gospel. The Word is synonymous with the gospel and it, even more clearly than the gospel, demonstrates the importance of God's address to single human beings. The individual's relation-

ship to God is immediate. No one has the right to intervene between the individual and God, which also means that personal faith is needed. In contrast to the worldly regiment, all differences between human beings disappear in the spiritual regiment. Everyone is a sinner, everyone is in distress, everyone is bound to death, and due to this everyone needs salvation. All external differences are irrelevant when it comes to the inner heart. As was also highlighted earlier, Billing argues that Luther understood the fundamental error of the medieval church to be that it connected the teachings on the law to justification. The law must at every point be separated from justification. At the same time, however, the so-called second, theological, use of the law is in work in the spiritual regiment. This means that God uses the law to inform us of our sins, which in turn awakens repentance and drives us to Christ and the gospel.²⁷

The distinction between the church as institution (*anstalt*) and communion (*samfund*) is crucial in Billing's interpretation of Luther's ecclesiology. The institutional character of the church is connected to the Word and the communion character of the church to faith. The church's visibility in the created world is a result not of human beings, but of the activity of God. It is God who makes the gospel visible in the world through the administration of the Word and sacraments. The church is furthermore an object of faith and an invisible communion of the faithful. Faith is a personal and inner experience, standing in contrast to the external world in general, and works in particular. It is therefore impossible to draw a sharp boundary between Christians and non-Christians. Another consequence is that Christian faith cannot be expressed in some specific form of organization. The

distinction between inner faith and external works is related to the doctrine of justification. Faith must be separated from the world, where works have their place, or it turns into an achievement. Faith receives and is a gift from God and must not be confused with "works-righteousness." Faith trusts in God's grace alone. Good work belongs to Christian life but they are secondary and always follow after inner faith and love, which is primary. One can say that the church's proclamation of the gospel frees human beings to loving service in the world. Furthermore, the theocratic perspective makes it necessary to insist that good works are the result of divine, and not human, activity.²⁸

Billing pays attention to the role of vocation in Luther's ethics. A human being can be understood as a part of a huge organism. Everyone has a vocation and therefore a specific task, a distinct role to play, in God's created orders. We are called to work in the place where we are put by God. Servants, craftsmen, public officials etc. are all tools in God's hand. Ordinary labor is an expression of God's love. The work in our calling can be understood as the external frame of Christian ethics. "Vocational work" (*kallelsearbete*) is not a self-chosen ascetic work. It is, rather, a God-given work, which in a specific way contributes to the great work that God wants to do with human beings. The duty toward God is fundamental to one's calling. God must always be one's highest lord. Furthermore, the foremost duty that God burdens Christians with is a forgiving love of the neighbor. So vocational work should be characterized by a loving service of one's neighbor. That which distinguishes Christians from non-Christians in their vocational work is their motivation. They have a greater willingness to

serve their neighbor and participate in worldly, societal work. Christians are those that best contribute to external peace and the maintenance of the worldly orders. They are also the only ones that correctly perceive these orders as divine. Billing also wrote a book on the doctrine of vocation, entitled *Vår kallelse (Our Calling)*, in which he especially drew upon Luther's thinking.²⁹

Billing also connects the greater willingness of Christians to serve the neighbor to Luther's concept of Christian freedom. Faith is enough when it comes to justification. No law, no works, are relevant to justification. Christians are, in this sense, free from law and also from the world. The freedom won in justification is enough for a Christian, who does not need anything from the world. At the same time, this means that instead of trying to gain something from the world for their own sake, Christians can dedicate their whole lives to a loving service of others.³⁰

Finally, the so-called dramatic-dualistic motif in *Luthers lära om staten* should not go unnoticed. Billing argues that the great struggle between God and the devil constitutes the main theme in Luther's understanding of human history. To begin with, the orders of the world are created in the best possible way. However, the evil of humanity results in confusion and disharmony. To this one must also add the attacks of the devil on the divine orders. By using all possible means, the devil tries to ruin what God wants to accomplish through the regiments. In the worldly regiment, the devil primarily aims to destroy peace, which makes the proclamation of the gospel possible, by spreading disobedience, rebellion, and war. The wrath of the devil is at its height in the spiritual regiment, where no efforts are spared to distort the gospel. The

struggle between God and the devil is, of course, uneven, but it still results in much damage. Against the hosts of evil, God sends the good and powerful angels. God also wants every human being to contribute to the struggle, which one for example does by taking care of one's duty in the best possible way.³¹

There is an apparent connection between Billing's own ecclesiology and his interpretation of Luther. Billing was, as has been noted above, one of the leaders of the nationalistic Young Church Movement, and the theologians of this movement argued in favor of an understanding of the church as a folk church. The prevenient grace (*den förekommande nåden*) is at the center of Billing's folk church idea, which has made a lasting impact on Swedish theology. He emphasizes that the church is a tool in God's hand and that human beings are primarily objects of God's actions. God comes to meet us and not the other way around. God's grace precedes our activity. We are offered the forgiveness of sins before we have made any effort, before we have asked God about it. The church's main task is to mediate the forgiveness of sins by proclaiming the gospel. It is essential that the organization of the church manifests that salvation in Christ is offered to everyone without exception. Church membership can therefore not be connected with any demands. Furthermore, the church mediates God's Word, the gospel of grace, to each human being individually. Nothing should stand between the individual and God. Christian community is only of secondary importance and plays no important role in Billing's folk church idea. Individuals in the church are generally, though not exclusively, described as passive receivers of grace.³²

Billing relates his thinking on the folk

church to, what he considers to be, the main thoughts in Luther's theology. Especially important in this regard is the emphasis on the forgiveness of sins, which according to Billing is the central characteristic of a Lutheran church. The stress on the activity of God, the impossibility of drawing a boundary between Christians and non-Christians, the understanding of grace as preceding faith and works, and the importance of a personal and unmediated relationship with God are other examples of themes in Billing's interpretation of Luther that are relevant to his folk church idea.³³ There are, of course, other sources to Billing's folk church idea, and of special importance in this regard is his exegetical work on ethics and primitive Christianity.³⁴

Luther also plays a role in Billing's contribution to debates in the Church of Sweden. In fact, Billing's understanding of Luther seems to have been an important factor to his attitude towards a number of issues related to church and state. Generally, Billing argued that the church's relationship to the state should be adjusted to that which benefits the gospel of the forgiveness of sins, which Billing, as we have seen, thought of as the essence of Luther's theology. In accordance with that, Billing advocated voluntary membership in the church because it is only possible to receive the gospel in personal freedom. In the same vein, he pointed out that a close connection between church and state is motivated as long as it helps the proclamation of the gospel, but no further. Billing was not uninterested in social issues, but he considered the detailed solutions to those issues to be the business of the state. He reduced the social responsibility of the church to the preaching of the gospel, which, according to him, has life-changing effects and so is good for socie-

ty as a whole.³⁵

Together with Nathan Söderblom, Einar Billing lay the foundations of the Swedish Luther Renaissance. To a large extent the Swedish Luther studies up until the 1960s followed Billing's and Söderblom's emphasis on the gospel of the forgiveness of sins, the theocentric idea, the dramatic-dualistic perspective, and the universal significance of Luther, that is, Luther as a teacher for all Christians. It is often argued that later Swedish theologians followed the method developed in *Luthers lära om staten*.³⁶ It is true that the method pursued in Billing's Luther interpretation was a breakthrough in comparison with earlier analyses of Luther in Sweden. And Billing's and Söderblom's systematic approach to Luther certainly was influential. However, one can question if this is really the case with the historical element of Billing's method. The motif research method of Aulén and Nygren, which will be further discussed below in connection with Wingren, was very important to the generation of the Swedish Luther Renaissance after Billing and Söderblom. Aulén's and Nygren's method is characterized by a purifying tendency that makes the task of doing justice to a complex thinker like Luther quite difficult. In comparison with this motif research, *Luthers lära om staten* seems more successful in taking into account different aspects of Luther's theology. Nevertheless, this should not detract from the fact that Billing's dissertation is a very important milestone in Swedish Luther research. Internationally, however, Billing's Luther research had no influence to speak of, which has a lot to do with the fact that *Luthers lära om staten* was never translated from Swedish. The case was different with Gustaf Wingren, to whom we now turn.

Gustaf Wingren

Gustaf Wingren (1910-2000) was one of few Swedish theologians that won international reputation during the twentieth century. He was a professor of systematic theology in Lund between 1951 and 1977. Among other things, Wingren became famous for his interpretation of Luther, emphasis on the doctrine of creation, critique of the Christocentric tendency of modern theologians such as Karl Barth, and his later kerygmatic approach, which underlined the theological importance of the preaching of the gospel in the church. His influence on Swedish theology has been considerable, not least his impact on the Church of Sweden. Wingren's relationship to the Church of Sweden was complicated, but he nevertheless held several leading positions in the church and also represented it in different international contexts.

Wingren's dissertation is called *Luthers lära om kallelsen* (*Luther's Teaching on Vocation*) (1942). At least three things need to be taken account of in order to understand the context of the study: Wingren's experiences in his native Valdemarsvik, earlier Luther research in Sweden, and his critical view of modern theology.

Luthers lära om kallelsen can be connected to Wingren's experiences during his childhood and adolescence in Valdemarsvik, a small manufacturing town. In Valdemarsvik, Wingren, according to his own testimony, experienced a lack of integration between different parts of life. He especially writes about how Sunday worship contrasted with everyday life. Already in his youth, Wingren seems to have been interested in the relationship between ordinary life and faith, and between creation and the proclaimed gospel.

He can, in an idealizing manner, talk about how he was influenced by his father's thoughts on God's hidden activity in the world, not least in ordinary work.³⁷ Wingren's licentiate thesis on Irenaeus and Marcion also give witness to an interest in the doctrine of creation.³⁸ So the first article on faith on God as creator became important to Wingren early on.

After Einar Billing, Luther's thinking on creation and law was somewhat neglected in Sweden. In the 1930s, the Swedish theologians Gustaf Aulén and Ragnar Bring recognized this and asked for further investigations of Luther's thinking on creation, the orders of creation, and the calling.³⁹ Their wish was, at least partly, fulfilled in the dissertations of Herbert Olsson,⁴⁰ Gustaf Törnvall,⁴¹ and Gustaf Wingren. *Luthers lära om kallelsen* is influenced by Herbert Olsson's lectures on the law, which Wingren listened to as a postgraduate student. Wingren's dissertation is furthermore inspired by Olsson's and Törnvall's dissertations. Bring is likewise important to Wingren's early Luther research.⁴² Billing also had a role to play. In fact, Wingren can, later on, call Billing his "main partner" in the discussion in *Luthers lära om kallelsen*. Wingren is certainly influenced by some aspects of Billing's interpretation of Luther, but he is at the same time critical of what he understands as Billing's negative attitude against the law and the worldly regiment.⁴³

In Wingren's view, the first article on creation has been disregarded by modern theologians, who, instead, have given one-sided accounts of Christian faith based on the second article of faith on Christ and the third article of faith on the church. It is not an exaggeration to say that Wingren attacks every theology that separates Christianity from everyday human

life. Many theologians draw a problematic distinction between the Christian and the non-Christian, which, so argues Wingren, results in the loss of a true understanding of the doctrine on creation. Christian faith becomes unrelated to the things all humans have in common. This lack is according to him characteristic of all modern theology. Karl Barth and Anders Nygren are two of Wingren's favorite targets.⁴⁴ *Luthers lära om kallel-sen* can even be understood as a sort of critique of Nygren's way of isolating and purifying Christianity from the things all humans have in common. Nygren emphasizes that which is specifically Christian. Wingren, on the other hand, is interested in the world and everyday human life.⁴⁵

Methodologically, however, Wingren began as a disciple of Nygren. The motif research of the theologians Anders Nygren and Gustaf Aulén had just made its breakthrough in Lund when Wingren was about to start working on his dissertation. They understood a motif as a religion's basic conception. The central aim of their motif research method was to objectively determine the unique and distinctive features of Christian faith by purifying it from alien influences. In the famous work *Agape and Eros*, Nygren argued that agape (*love*) is the fundamental motif of Christianity.⁴⁶ From a methodological point of view, Wingren, as he writes himself, followed Nygren in *Luthers lära om kallelsen*.⁴⁷ If one compares *Agape and Eros* with *Luthers lära om kallelsen* it also becomes clear how both studies offer a remarkably homogenous presentation of a complex historical material.⁴⁸

Wingren aims at a strictly or purely historical presentation in his dissertation, which, to him, means that the exclusive

focus of the study is on Luther's writings. Luther's thinking is not connected to contemporary theology and there is no comparison between Luther and other historical theologians. Wingren also avoids describing the historical development of Luther's theology and he does not relate Luther's texts to their historical context. It is, according to Wingren, possible to leave out this kind of more complex historical analysis since Luther's thinking on vocation can be portrayed without consideration of its origin. *Luthers lära om kallelsen* is, not surprisingly considering Wingren's schooling in the motif research-tradition with its purifying tendencies, characterized by a neglect of aspects of Luther's thinking that are difficult to reconcile with the emphasis on the first article on creation. Furthermore, Wingren restricts his study to texts written by Luther after 1521. This choice is motivated with the assumption that Luther's theology was fully developed after this year and also with Karl Holl's claim that Luther first used the term vocation in 1522. Wingren's method also includes a systematic aspect. The purpose of the study is to relate Luther's ideas on the calling to Luther's basic theological outlook, that is, fundamental concepts like law and gospel, sin, freedom, and the work of Christ. In particular, Wingren connects Luther's doctrine on vocation to Luther's thinking on the two regiments, God and the devil, and the human being.⁴⁹

In a similar way as Billing, Wingren presents the theocratic perspective and the distinction between law and gospel as key ideas in Luther's theology. God governs all things. Both regiments are in God's hand. God rules over the body in the worldly kingdom and over the conscience in the spiritual kingdom. The law and gospel distinction is crucial to under-

standing the two regiments. God uses the law in its so-called first civil use in the worldly regiment as an external barrier to evil and sin, which means that order is maintained in society through the enforcement of justice. This use of the law also pushes unwilling hearts to do good for others. In the spiritual regiment, God uses the law, its so-called second or theological use, to convince us of our sins. We are, in this way, prepared for receiving the gospel and the proclamation of the gospel is the main task of the church. God wants to save us through the preaching of the gospel of the forgiveness of sins, which we receive in faith. God also wants to wipe out our sins with the help of the gospel. Our sins begin to disappear from our lives when we listen to the gospel, but we will be completely free from sin only after death.⁵⁰

Wingren also connects Luther's understanding of the regiments to the human being's relationship to God and to others. The spiritual regiment has to do with one's relationship to God. In this regiment, one stands alone before God. Faith and not works is at issue here. God does not need our works. What God wants to do in this regiment is to save us, to free our consciences from false reliance on the power of our works. In the worldly regiment, on the other hand, one stands in relationship not to God but to other human beings. This is where our works are important as a service to our neighbors. The law rules the body on earth and forces it to labor and works. To summarize, there are two things that God wants to do with us: to save us and to serve our neighbors through us. We must distinguish these things in order to avoid thinking of our works as making us just before God. At the same time, these two things belong together because faith pro-

duces love of the neighbor. The two regiments can also be connected to two types of righteousness, namely a civil righteousness and a Christian righteousness. Our works contribute to a civil or external righteousness in the world, which is of highest importance to life in society. However, in the spiritual regiment we are given a Christian righteousness that is constituted by the forgiveness of sins. This is the only righteousness that counts before God.⁵¹

The role of the regiments in God's struggle against the devil is another important aspect of *Luthers lära om kallelsen*. Wingren's description of the so-called dramatic-dualistic perspective resembles that of Billing. Wingren is obviously also influenced by Gustaf Aulén⁵² and Ragnar Bring,⁵³ who developed this theme in the second generation of the Swedish Luther Renaissance. According to Wingren, Luther thinks that the world would be instantly destroyed by the power of evil if it was not for God's rule through the regiments. God uses the regiments to fight against, and also rule, the devil, who, on the other hand, tries to attack and destroy the regiments. In the end, the struggle is about the human being. The will of a human being is held captive either by God or the devil. There is no third option. God wants to save us from sin. The devil tries to keep us in sin by inflaming us with sinful desires and accusing our consciences. In this way, the work of the devil confuses the two regiments. Instead of freedom of conscience and discipline of the body, the devil tries to bind the human conscience and free our external behavior from restrictions, which distorts the law and gospel. However, God's battle-axe is a correct use of law and gospel. The law is used by God to keep the body in check and the

gospel is used by God to put an end to the accusations in our consciences.⁵⁴

Wingren deals with worldly work and not vocation in some other sense. Our callings belong to earth and not heaven. He argues that the key to decide whether or not an occupation is a true vocation in Luther's sense is if it benefits the neighbor. Works done in order to earn one's salvation has no place in the world. Our works must be direct downward, to other people, and not upward, to God. Public offices, secular occupations, biological orders like father, mother, son and daughter etc. can be included in a calling. Ministers proclaiming the gospel also work in a vocation in which the neighbor is served. The calling can be understood as a continuation of God's work of creation. God gives to human beings what they need through different callings. The one who does not want to help the neighbor is still used by God to benefit others through vocational work. The calling is an instrument in God's hand. God uses the worldly work of ordinary people to give to other people what they need.⁵⁵

The first article on God as creator is according to Wingren the basis of Luther's ethics, which is characterized by mobility (*rörlighet*). As a creator, God's actions are not bound. God is free and not subordinated to any law. God therefore always creates, and governs the world, in a new, fresh way. This continuous and new creation of the world is directed at the devil's destructive activity. The devil always tries to distort the worldly orders. God, on the other hand, is continuously at work to improve and re-create them. All rigid conservatism is prevented by this understanding of God's work in the world.⁵⁶

Wingren writes that God's creation anew [*nyskapelse*] shows itself in many

ways according to Luther. The most important expression is Christian love, which the Spirit works in the believer. Faith transforms us and makes it possible for us to dedicate our efforts to the well-being of the neighbor with cheerful and loving hearts. Love, so to say, lives in the heart of a Christian. The love that breaks through in faith is always inconceivable, a true miracle. However, when faith and love is not there one stands under the law. Then we experience vocational work as compulsive. We are forced to help the neighbor but we find no joy in doing so. Christian love is given a concrete form in vocational work for the neighbor. And the neighbor, not the law or a certain disposition, is at the center of Christian ethics. The law, a loving heart, and the calling are all meant to serve the neighbor. Furthermore, the vocational work of Christians is a part of God's way of creating afresh in the world and it is therefore characterized by mobility and a freedom to break free from fixed laws. What one should do is decided by the specific situation. The God-given demand to love one's neighbor is, of course, binding. However, precisely this regard for the neighbor makes it necessary for Christians at times to break with the rigid pattern of the law. Missing is clear guiding principles and ethical programs. Christians have a creative freedom to choose the action to be done at a certain moment. There is an important 'freedom of the moment' ('frihet i stunden'). Wingren in this connection indicates that Luther's ethics stands in contrast to the teaching on the so-called third, didactic, use of the law, which emphasizes the law as a guide for Christian life. It is far from Luther's views to confine Christian activity to a fixed framework. Included in Wingren's discussion about other examples in Luther's theology of God's way of crea-

ting anew in the world is the reasonableness characteristic of a good lawmaker who takes into consideration the unique situation of a case, the exceptional leaders who embodies justice and natural reason and are sent by God, the success that God gives to the weak, and prayer that opens up a door to the revolutionary activity of God in the world.⁵⁷

However, Wingren's account of Luther's view on what difference it makes if the vocational work is performed by a Christian or a non-Christian is ambiguous. On the one hand, the worldly orders are divine and good in themselves. God can do good things through both evil and good people. If one's heart is transformed by the Spirit does not matter here. The question about whether an action is good or not depends on its consequences, that is, on whether it benefits one's neighbor or not. But another picture emerges when the teaching on the calling is related to the dramatic-dualistic perspective. God and the devil contend for the persons who serve in the callings and the result of vocational work is dependent on whether a person belongs to God or the devil, that is, whether a person is Christian or not.⁵⁸

Another crucial aspect of *Luthers lära om kallelsen* is that Wingren calls attention to the importance of the death and resurrection of Christ for Luther's understanding of ethics. Through the gospel we receive the message about Christ's death and resurrection and in the sacrament of baptism we take part in Christ's death and resurrection. In fact, the content of the gospel, the message about Christ's death and resurrection, characterizes the whole life of a Christian. So Christian life includes a sacramental aspect, which can also be connected to the two regiments. The old, sinful human being is put to death in the worldly regiment, in vocatio-

nal work under the law. At the same time, a new human being, who is transformed by faith, arises through the preaching of the gospel in the spiritual regiment. One can say that the regiments incorporate a Christian into the death and resurrection of Christ. In this sense, Christ can be understood as a model or an example for Christians. Both death and resurrection are parts of Christian life. The believer encounters both difficulties and hope. The hardships of vocational life, of life in the world, result in the death of the old human being. Still, Christians can meet these difficulties with joy since the hardships of life are signs of the soon-to-be resurrection.⁵⁹

The aspiration to integrate Christian faith with ordinary life is a fundamental driving force in Wingren's theological work as a whole. There can be no question that *Luthers lära om kallelsen* played an important role in Wingren's solution to this problem. We have seen how Wingren stresses the importance of creation, law, and worldly regiment in his Luther interpretation and we find a similar stress in his more constructive works. There are striking similarities between the analysis of Luther in *Luthers lära om kallelsen* and Wingren's own understanding of Christian ethics.⁶⁰ The starting point of Wingren's ethics is the first article on creation. Our existence is the work of God, which also implies a moral pattern before any human thinking or activity. Morality can be said to be given with creation. We have an understanding of the good and what good works consist of independently of revelation. The Bible and Christian faith provide no ethical insights that does not already exist in everyday human life. Wingren can therefore say that there is no specific Christian ethics.

How does Wingren in more detail

describe the content of Christian ethics? We confront the demand to love the neighbor at all points of our everyday lives, not least in our vocational work. When our sins make us unwilling to oblige the demand God can use the laws of society to force us to do good. God is continuously creating anew today and uses us to that end. Furthermore, a good work conforms to the demand of neighbor-love and is not dependent on the ethical quality of the performer. Moreover, the content of the good work demanded cannot be defined in advance of the concrete situation. The love of one's neighbor cannot be bound to any social norms. In one sense, the gospel has no contribution to morality in addition to what is natural and given with creation. However, the gospel at the same time confronts us with what a true human life is like, that is, the life of Christ, which is a reminder of what we already know or should know. So the gospel or the example of Christ gives us a sort of critical distance, which helps us to sort out which of the many demands confronting us in society to meet or not. Nevertheless, there are no detailed guidelines for assessing the demands. In every situation one has to interpret the demands and make up one's mind about them. The primary task of the gospel is not to make demands but to forgive sins and liberate human beings. However, we are transformed on the inside through the gospel, which means that we can enter into new and better relationships to the demands surrounding us. Instead of egoistic aspirations, we become concerned with the well-being of the neighbor. So in this way the gospel helps us to achieve the good life.

In accordance with the Luther analysis in *Luthers lära om kallelsen*, Wingren's own ethics emphasizes morality as given

with creation, the law, the importance of everyday work, God as continuously creating anew in the world, the love of the neighbor, the liberating and transforming gospel, Christ as a model for human life, and so on. Moreover, Wingren is continuously referring to Luther when presenting his own vision of Christian ethics. There is also a similar connection between Wingren's dissertation and how he understands the relationship between the church and social issues.

We saw above that Luther was important to Billing's contributions to debates in the Church of Sweden. It is the same with Wingren, who for a long time did not have much concrete to say about what the church's attitude should be to specific social issues. He thought, much in line with his interpretation of Luther, that the main task of the church is to proclaim the gospel and not to lay down guiding principles for life in society. The church must free people and not burden them with any other demand than the love of one's neighbor. Furthermore, we are changed through the preaching of the gospel and this makes it possible for us to live more loving lives in our callings. This is the church's most important contribution to society.⁶¹ In his later years, Wingren turned to social criticism and, for example, talked about how the gospel helps us to discern what to do in everyday life. Still, his later social criticism was for the most part rather vague.⁶²

Finally, it should be noted that Wingren's interpretation of Luther made a significant impact on Swedish theology. At Wingren's public defense of his dissertation, many seem to have been surprised by the importance of ordinary work in Luther's theology, which the many quotes in *Luthers lära om kallelsen* testifies to.⁶³ Furthermore, Wingren has been impor-

tant to the discussion about Luther's teaching on vocation in international research,⁶⁴ not least because his dissertation called attention to aspects of Luther's thinking – seldom noted by earlier scholars – related to the first article of faith on creation.

Assessment

In the beginning of the essay, I wrote about how some important theologians in Germany used Luther to support the National Socialists. In accordance with the two-spheres idea, these theologians separated an inner faith from political and social life. They also argued that the existing social structures must be accepted as divine. Their way of legitimating Hitler's rise to power and undermining the possibilities of Christian critique of secular authority cast a long-lasting suspicion on Luther's ethics. I will now discuss the similarities between this kind of two-spheres ideology and Billing's and Wingren's Luther interpretations.

In *Luthers lära om staten*, Billing analyses Luther's understanding of the church as a provider of ethical guidance. He also talks about Luther's thoughts on resistance to secular authorities and the necessity of obeying God before human beings. However, Billing's emphasis on authority, hierarchy, obedience, and a functional understanding of the law, that is, that God uses the law to maintain peace in society and work repentance in us, can easily create the impression that Luther is not overly concerned about how Christians can relate critically to developments in society. This ambiguity is removed in Billing's own contribution, not unrelated to his Luther research, to debates in the Church of Sweden. In these debates, Billing relegates the solutions to social issues to the state and reduces the social

responsibility of the church to the proclamation of the gospel. The case is the same with regard to Wingren's dissertation. Luther almost does not have anything more concrete than neighbor love to say about how we should live our lives in the world according to Wingren. Christ as an example is a theme in *Luthers lära om kallelsten*, but it is never connected to more detailed guidelines for Christian life. Furthermore, there is no discussion in Wingren's dissertation about the possibilities of Christians to criticize the state.⁶⁵ The same lack of norms is a fact in Wingren's own ethics, though he tries to say something more about the gospel as a guide in his later years, when he turned to social criticism.

As we have seen, Billing highlights the importance of vocational work in Luther's ethics. However, he tends to focus on inner faith and love when he discusses how Luther understands the character of Christian activity in the world. Billing emphasizes that Luther thinks of the gospel as diametrically opposed to law. Law and works must at every point be separated from justification. Faith needs to exist before good works can follow. Christians are distinguished from non-Christians mainly by their stronger motivation, their greater love and willingness to serve in the world. The outer form of their actions seems not to be much different. This way of putting things comes close to reducing faith to an inner spirituality. A danger that is enhanced through Billing's interpretation of Luther's understanding of the church, which stresses the invisible community of Christians. The church only becomes visible in the world through the administration of the Word and sacraments. The following problem arises: how can Christian faith have a concrete form in the world when the visible church

is restricted in such a way, personal faith limited to an interior sphere, and the community of the faithful understood as invisible?⁶⁶ This is also a problem that can be related to Billing's Luther-inspired folk church idea, which emphasizes that God is the only one who is truly active in the church. We are passive receivers of God's grace. Thoughts on an active response to grace is almost entirely missing. The folk church of Billing seems to lack social embodiment in the world.⁶⁷

Wingren also comes close to reducing Luther's thinking on faith to an inner spiritual sphere. We have seen above how Wingren's interpretation of Luther's ethics emphasizes, among other things, the first article on creation, the centrality of neighbor-love, vocational work, God's creation anew in the world, the uniqueness of the situation, the freedom of the moment, and the necessity to break with fixed frameworks. The only moral demand is love of one's neighbor. At the center of ethics we find the neighbor. The purpose of Christian love is to serve the neighbor. It is faith that makes it possible for us to do good to our neighbors with cheerful and loving hearts. This transformation of one's inner motivation seems like the main contribution of Christianity to ethics. As is the case in Billing's Luther interpretation, Wingren's Luther does not seem to think that there is too much of a difference between the outer behavior of Christians and that of non-Christians. The distinguishing feature is located in an inner willingness. Wingren's analysis of Luther also results in a church that lacks social embodiment. There is avoidance of any talk of the church as a community of believers. The emphasis is on ordinary life in the world. These problems can also be related to Wingren's own understanding of Christian ethics and the church.⁶⁸

It has not been the purpose of this study to discuss to what extent Billing's and Wingren's interpretations adequately reflect the thought of Luther. To do so would be a complicated task and one that would merit a separate investigation. Nevertheless, I will venture to say a word or two about new research that put in question the historical adequacy of Billing's and Wingren's accounts of Luther's ethics. I will focus on two recent developments in Luther studies.

The first concerns the so-called third use of the law, which, as was noted above, stresses the law's role as a guide or norm for Christian life. This means that God uses the moral law – summarized in the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount – to teach us about good works. For different reasons, the existence of a third use in Luther's theology was denied by many influential Lutheran theologians during the last century. Wingren, as we have seen, is one of them. Billing differs from Wingren in this respect, and notes that Luther regards it as necessary, at times, for the church to preach about the divine commandments in order to instruct secular authority. It is clear that Billing pays some attention to what Luther thinks about how Christians can relate critically to authorities and social developments. However, this is an issue often neglected by those Lutherans who deny a third use of the law. Edward Engelbrecht⁶⁹ and Scott R. Murray⁷⁰ are important examples of Luther scholars who recently have offered an articulate defense of a third use. If they are right, there are much more resources for social critique in Luther's thinking than Wingren and to some extent also Billing have acknowledged, since a third use implies that the divine law can be used by Christians to assess and criticize the exercise of power

and problematic developments in society.⁷¹

The second development in Luther research to be noted here is the emphasis on the church's sanctifying practices. Luther's thinking on the marks of the church has only recently received the attention it deserves. The public preaching of the gospel, the administration of baptism and Communion, the public exercise of the keys, public prayer and thanksgiving, and also suffering and persecution are different signs through which Luther thinks that the church can be identified in the world. Theologians such as Reinhard Hütter⁷² and David S. Yeago⁷³ have noted how Luther understands the marks of the church as public practices relevant to sanctification. The Holy Spirit uses these practices to form a holy people and Christians must actively participate in them. In this way, the church's practices are fundamental to sanctification and thus to Christian ethics. As we have seen, Billing and Wingren restrict the church's task in Luther's theology to the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. Their understandings of Luther seem to imply that the Christian community lacks social embodiment. The church's role in ethics is reduced to that of providing an enhanced inner motivation through the preaching of the gospel. This kind of disembodied understandings of Luther are common in much modern Lutheran theology. However, the widespread individualistic and idealistic interpretations of Luther's ethics are challenged by Hütter's and Yeago's analyses, which underline the great importance that Luther attaches to the practices of the church.

To summarize, Billing's and Wingren's understandings of Luther's ethics result in similar problems. Admittedly, Billing presents a Luther with some theological re-

sources for social critique. However, his understanding of Luther tends to relegate faith to an inner spiritual sphere and to say almost nothing about the church's social embodiment in the world. Wingren's description of Luther leads to similar difficulties and adds to this a silence on specific Christian norms. This silence tends to undermine the possibility of a theological criticism of the state. Furthermore, both Billing's and Wingren's research present a Luther who leaves the individual Christian almost alone in everyday life, and to a large extent without help and guidelines for moral action. What to do is more or less left to unconstrained individual choice.

Billing's *Luthers lära om staten* belongs to a period long before the Nazi seizure of power in Germany. Wingren's *Luthers lära om kallelsten*, on the other hand, is written after that took place and he was certainly aware of the way some well-known German theologians had used Luther to legitimate and support National Socialism. It is, therefore, interesting that Wingren's Luther seems more reluctant to theologially criticize the state than Billing's. One could easily expect the opposite from a Swedish Lutheran in the beginning of the 1940s. However, it becomes understandable against the background of Wingren's crusade against, what he identifies as, the neglect of the first article of faith on creation in modern theology. His wish to counter that theology most likely lead him to interpret Luther's ethics in a way that overemphasized the creation-related aspects and also neglected the role of the church and revelation. This, in turn, is an approach that fails to take into due consideration the resources of social critique in Luther's texts.

In the end, one can question if the

theological resources that the Luther interpretations of Billing and Wingren contain really are capable of dealing with the type of challenges that confronted Lutherans in Germany during the time of the Nazi regime. This critical conclusion is, however, not necessarily applicable to

Luther himself, as we have seen. What the new research I have briefly presented suggests is that Billing's and Wingren's accounts of Luther's ethics may need to be complemented and in some instances revised.

Notes

1. For overviews of the Swedish Luther Renaissance, see Mary Elizabeth Anderson, *Gustaf Wingren and the Swedish Luther Renaissance* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006); Edgar M. Carlson, *The Reinterpretation of Luther* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958); Hjalmar Lindroth, *Lutherrenässansen i nyare svensk teologi* (Stockholm: Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelse, 1941); Kjell Ove Nilsson, "Den svenska lutherrenässansen," *Svensk teologisk kvartalskrift* 78, no. 2 (2002): 50–63.
2. This has been argued convincingly in Anderson, *Gustaf Wingren and the Swedish Luther Renaissance*.
3. See Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology: Its Historical and Systematic Development* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 3–5.
4. On the Luther Renaissance in Germany, see Heinrich Assel, *Der andere Aufbruch: Die Lutherrenaissance - Ursprünge, Aporien und Wege: Karl Holl, Emanuel Hirsch, Rudolf Hermann (1910-1935)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994).
5. I am following the accounts of the history of the two-kingdoms doctrine in Per Frostin, *Luther's Two Kingdoms Doctrine: A Critical Study* (Lund: Lund Univ. Press, 1994), 2–10; William J. Wright, *Martin Luther's Understanding of God's Two Kingdoms: A Response to the Challenge of Skepticism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 18–36.
6. See Lowell C. Green, *Lutherans Against Hitler: The Untold Story* (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House: Academic Press, 2007).
7. See, for example, William H. Lazareth, *Christians in Society: Luther, the Bible, and Social Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 14–17.
8. Gustaf Törnqvall, *Andligt och världsligt regemente hos Luther: studier i Luthers världs- och samhällsbild* (Lund: Håkan Ohlsson, 1940). For a critical analysis of Törnqvall's dissertation, see Patrik Hagman, *Efter folkkyrkan: en teologi om kyrkan i det efterkristna samhället* (Skellefteå: Artos, 2013), 70–87.
9. For a brief account of the theological renaissance in Sweden, see Arne Rasmusson, "A Century of Swedish Theology," *Lutheran Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (2007): 129–131. For a more detailed analysis, see Björn Skogar, *Viva vox och den akademiska religionen: ett bidrag till tidiga 1900-talets svenska teologihistoria* (Stockholm: Symposium graduale, 1993), 51–77.
10. My analysis of Billing's interpretation of Luther in *Luthers lära om staten* is based on the second edition published in 1971, which includes the unpublished continuation of Billing's dissertation from 1900.
11. I am following the description of the background of Billing's Luther interpretation in Anderson, *Gustaf Wingren and the Swedish Luther Renaissance*, 27–30. See also Gustaf Wingren, Einar Billing: *En studie i svensk teologi före 1920* (Lund: Gleerup, 1968), 9–13. For Billing's own words on his relationship to Wellhausen, see Einar Billing, *Herdabref till Prästerskapet i Västerås stift* (Uppsala: Sveriges kristliga studentrörelse, 1920), 33–35.
12. Anderson, *Gustaf Wingren and the Swedish Luther Renaissance*, 32–35. On Billing's relationship to German theology, see Hans Christoph Deppe, *Wächter und Späher: Studien zu Einar Billing vor dem Hintergrund theologischer Strömungen auf dem Kontinent* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1975).
13. Einar Billing, *Luthers lära om staten* (Karlskrona: Verbum, 1971), 7–8.
14. See further Gösta Wrede, "Förord till andra bearbetade och utvidgade upplagan," in *Luthers lära om staten*, by Einar Billing (Karlskrona: Verbum, 1971), 17.
15. Billing, *Luthers lära om staten*, 112–116. See also Wingren, Einar Billing: *En studie i svensk teologi före 1920*, 68–72.
16. Einar Billing, *Luthers storhet* (Uppsala: Sveriges kristliga studentrörelse, 1917), 3–8.
17. Billing, *Luthers lära om staten*, 9–10, 40–48, 87–89.
18. See, for example, Einar Billing, "Folkkyrkan och förkunnelsen", in *Den svenska folkkyrkan*, by Einar Billing (Uppsala: Sveriges kristliga studentrörelse, 1930), 41; Einar Billing, *Vår kallelse* (Stockholm: Sveriges kristliga studentrörelse, 1920), 6–7.
19. I am following the account of Luther's importance to Billing's theological project in Anderson, *Gustaf Wingren and the Swedish Luther Renaissance*, 36–37.
20. Billing, *Luthers lära om staten*, 89–95, 359–365.
21. *Ibid.*, 179–183, 213.
22. *Ibid.*, 205–206, 307, 319–321, 330–332, 340–342, 345–347.

23. Ibid., 149–152, 188–190, 206–207, 211, 241–242.
24. On the Young Church Movement, see Olle Nystedt, *Från studentkorståget till Sigtunastiftelsen: Ungkyrkörörelsens genombrottsmål* (Uppsala: Sveriges kristliga studentrörelse, 1936); Alf Tergel, *Från konfrontation till institution: Ungkyrkörörelsen 1912 - 1917* (Uppsala: Univ., 1974); Alf Tergel, *Ungkyrkomännen, arbetarfrågan och nationalism 1901 - 1911* (Stockholm: Verbum, 1969).
25. See Einar Billing, “Sveriges ställning i den evangeliska kristenheten”, in *Den svenska folkkyrkan*, by Einar Billing (Uppsala: Sveriges kristliga studentrörelse, 1930), 72–117. For an in-depth discussion of Billing and nationalism, see Jan Eckerdal, *Folkkyrkans kropp: Einar Billings ecklesiologi i postsekulär belysning* (Skellefteå: Artos, 2012), 130–142.
26. Billing, *Luthers lära om staten*, 158–164, 278–284.
27. Ibid., 91–93, 100–105, 244–246.
28. Ibid., 100–109, 114, 205–210, 218–224. I am following the analysis of the distinction between institution and communion in Billing’s Luther research in Gösta Wrede, *Kyrkosynen i Einar Billings teologi* (Karlskrona: Diakonistyrelsens bokförlag, 1966), 63–95.
29. Billing, *Luthers lära om staten*, 110–114, 184–191, 224–225, 232–233, 248–250, 335–337. See also Billing, *Vår kallelse*, 4–12, 20–24.
30. Billing, *Luthers lära om staten*, 95–98.
31. Ibid., 289–290, 297–299, 303–305.
32. Einar Billing, “Den religiöst motiverade folkkyrkotanken”, in *Den svenska folkkyrkan*, by Einar Billing (Uppsala: Sveriges kristliga studentrörelse, 1930), 118–146; Einar Billing, “Lokalförsamlingen - en Guds församling”, in *Den svenska folkkyrkan*, by Einar Billing (Uppsala: Sveriges kristliga studentrörelse, 1930), 54–71. I am following some earlier analyses of Billing’s folk church idea, see Eckerdal, *Folkkyrkans kropp: Einar Billings ecklesiologi i postsekulär belysning*, 69–73, 76–77, 85–88; Thomas Ekstrand, *Folkkyrkans gränser: En teologisk analys av övergången från statskyrka till fri folkkyrka* (Stockholm: Verbum, 2002), 77–79; Wrede, *Kyrkosynen i Einar Billings teologi*, 145–192.
33. See further the discussion on the relationship between Billing’s folk church idea and his Luther research in Thomas Ekstrand, “Folkkyrkan som luthersk kyrkovision,” in *Luther som utmaning: Om frihet och ansvar*, red. Elisabeth Gerle (Växjö: Verbum, 2008), 164–174; Wrede, *Kyrkosynen i Einar Billings teologi*, 50, 80–85, 154–158.
34. Einar Billing, *De etiska tankarna i urkristendomen i deras samband med dess religiösa tro* (Uppsala: Sveriges kristliga studentrörelse, 1936). On the relationship between *De etiska tankarna i urkristendomen* and Billing’s folk church idea, see Eckerdal, *Folkkyrkans kropp: Einar Billings ecklesiologi i postsekulär belysning*, 143–165; Wrede, *Kyrkosynen i Einar Billings teologi*, 96–144.
35. I am following the account of Billing’s attitude to social issues and his understanding of the relationship between church and state in Wrede, *Kyrkosynen i Einar Billings teologi*, 191, 233, 236–238, 241–242, 245–248, 252–253, 260–261, 264–265, 270.
36. See Carlson, *The Reinterpretation of Luther*, 36–39; Lindroth, *Lutherrenässansen i nyare svensk teologi*, 8–9; Wrede, “Förord till andra bearbetade och utvidgade upplagan,” 16.
37. Gustaf Wingren, *Mina fem universitet: minnen* (Stockholm: Proprius förlag, 1991), 34–37, 127–128; Gustaf Wingren, “Mina ämnesval: teologiskt självporträtt,” *Vår lösen* 57 (1966): 494–495. See also Anderson, *Gustaf Wingren and the Swedish Luther Renaissance*, 73–76. There are good reasons to be cautious about making too much of Wingren’s own idyllic portrait of his childhood in Valdemarsvik, see Bengt Kristensson Uggla, *Gustaf Wingren. Människan och teologin* (Stockholm, Stehag: Symposium, 2010), 161–162.
38. See Kristensson Uggla, *Gustaf Wingren. Människan och teologin*, 63–68.
39. Göran Bexell, *Teologisk etik i Sverige sedan 1920-talet* (Älvsjö: Skeab, 1981), 138.
40. Herbert Olsson, *Grundproblemet i Luthers sociaetik*, I (Lund: Ph. Lindstedts univ.-bokh., 1934).
41. Törnvall, *Andligt och världsligt regemente hos Luther: studier i Luthers världs- och samhällsbild*.
42. See Roger Jensen, *Modernisering av lutherdommen - ?: Gustaf Wingrens nye skapelseteologiske tilret[te]legelse av den lutherske kallslaere, i et komparativt perspektiv* (Oslo: Det praktisk-teologiske seminar, 2003), 46–47; Kristensson Uggla, *Gustaf Wingren. Människan och teologin*, 33, 69.
43. Wingren, Einar Billing: *En studie i svensk teologi före 1920*, 69–71, 114.
44. Gustaf Wingren, *Teologiens metodfråga* (Lund: Gleerup, 1954), 98–104, 195; Gustaf Wingren, *Öppenhet och egenart: evangeliet i världen* (Lund: LiberLäromedel, 1979), 13–14, 70–74. I am following the description of Wingren’s critique of modern theology in Ola Sigurdson, *Karl Barth som den andre: en studie i den svenska teologins Barth-reception* (Eslöv: Symposium, 1996), 94–97. See also Kristensson Uggla, *Gustaf Wingren. Människan och teologin*, 45–49.
45. See Kristensson Uggla, *Gustaf Wingren. Människan och teologin*, 70–73. On Wingren’s critique of Barth’s theology, see Sigurdson, *Karl Barth som den andre: en studie i den svenska teologins Barth-reception*, 97–114.
46. See Rasmusson, “A Century of Swedish Theology,” 132–135.
47. Wingren, *Mina fem universitet: minnen*, 59.
48. See Sigurdson, *Karl Barth som den andre: en studie i den svenska teologins Barth-reception*, 131–132.

49. Gustaf Wingren, *Luthers lära om kallelsen* (Skellefteå: Artos, 1993), 9–12.
50. *Ibid.*, 12, 37–38, 68, 70, 73, 90.
51. *Ibid.*, 18, 23–24, 32, 73.
52. Gustaf Aulén, *Den kristna försoningstanken: huvudtyper och brytningar* (Stockholm: Diakonistyrelsens bokförlag, 1930).
53. Ragnar Bring, *Dualismen hos Luther* (Stockholm: Diakonistyrelsens bokförlag, 1929).
54. Wingren, *Luthers lära om kallelsen*, 34–35, 46–47, 84–86, 90–91, 109.
55. *Ibid.*, 15–16, 18, 20–21, 23–24, 134.
56. *Ibid.*, 14, 46–47, 139–140.
57. *Ibid.*, 50–59, 113–114, 118, 141–145, 149–153, 189–191, 197–198, 210–211.
58. *Ibid.*, 91, 129–130.
59. *Ibid.*, 39–44, 61–67, 69, 76–77, 214–215.
60. Gustaf Wingren, *Credo. Den kristna tros- och livsåskådningen* (Lund: Gleerup, 1974), 35–37, 44, 56–62, 70–74, 90–92; Gustaf Wingren, *Evangeliet och kyrkan* (Lund: Gleerup, 1960), 34–45, 126–128, 167–170, 179–199, 216–217, 223–225, 232–247; Gustaf Wingren, *Skapelsen och lagen* (Lund: Gleerup, 1958), 57–59, 106–110, 117–118, 151–152, 163–176, 203–205. I am also following some earlier accounts of Wingren's ethics, see Bexell, *Teologisk etik i Sverige sedan 1920-talet*, 165–168; Gert Nilsson, "Värdelös eller värdefull?: skapelse och frälsning som problem i teologisk etik," in *Modern svensk teologi: strömningar och perspektivskiften under 1900-talet*, ed. Håkan Eilert (Stockholm: Verbum, 1999), 201–205.
61. I am following the description of Wingren's thinking on social issues in Bo Håkansson, *Vardagens kyrka: Gustaf Wingrens kyrkosyn och folkkyrkans framtid* (Lund: Arcus, 2001), 101, 204, 218, 302, 304–305, 311, 322–323.
62. *Ibid.*, 108, 224, 230–231, 236–237, 310, 320; Kristensson Ugglå, *Gustaf Wingren. Människan och teologin*, 196–223.
63. Wingren, "Mina ämnesval: teologiskt självporträtt," 68.
64. *Luthers lära om kallelsen* has been called "probably the most important work on [Luther's teaching on vocation]," Marc Kolden, "Luther on Vocation," *Word & World* 3, no. 4 (1983): 383.
65. A possible objection is that the absence of a discussion on issues related to social critique in *Luthers lära om kallelsen* is not enough to prove that Wingren back then thought that theological resources in Luther's thinking to criticize secular authorities and developments in society were non-existent. However, one should keep a few things in mind before drawing such a conclusion. To begin with, in his dissertation Wingren emphasized the absence of more explicit norms for Christian behavior in Luther's ethics. Maybe he could say as much as that Luther judged right and wrong in society by the command to love one's neighbor, which, of course, is a vague yardstick. Still, it is possible to doubt even that. If Wingren was of that opinion, why did he not elaborate something similar to this in a study that to a great degree discusses Luther's ethics and his understanding of the relationship between the church and state? This would seem even more puzzling if one takes into account that *Luthers lära om kallelsen* was written in the beginning of the 1940's, when it was well-known how some influential Lutheran theologians in Germany had supported and failed to criticize the Nazi regime.
66. A similar objection is raised against Billing's interpretation of Luther in Wrede, *Kyrkosynen i Einar Billings teologi*, 95.
67. I am following the critique of Billing's ecclesiology in Eckerdal, *Folkkyrkans kropp: Einar Billings ekklesiologi i postsekulär belysning*, 327–328, 331.
68. For a critique of the lack of Christian community in Wingren's theology, see Håkansson, *Vardagens kyrka: Gustaf Wingrens kyrkosyn och folkkyrkans framtid*, 314–319.
69. Edward Engelbrecht, *Friends of the Law: Luther's Use of the Law for the Christian Life* (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 2011).
70. Scott R. Murray, *Law, Life, and the Living God: The Third Use of the Law in Modern American Lutheranism* (St. Louis: Concordia Pub. House, 2002).
71. It is now and then argued that the use of the divine law to, for example, evaluate and criticize those in power is something already included in Luther's first, civil, use of the law. The first function of the law is to maintain the external order in the world. God has instituted temporal authorities, judges, parents, and teachers to this end. Those authorities inculcate the law and coerce their subjects to follow it. This use of the law certainly suggests that it might be possible to use the law as a criterion for how well worldly authorities have executed their God-given assignment. However, I do not see how resources for social critique can be deduced from this function of the law in itself. First of all, this use of the law does not exist in the church, which means that it cannot be directly connected to the church's instruction of Christians and the state about God's commandments. Secondly, the civil use runs from the top downwards, that is, from authorities to subjects. Social critique often goes the opposite direction, for example in the form of objections raised against secular authorities by people without such power.
72. Reinhard Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things: Theology as Church Practice* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub., 2000), 128–133.
73. David S. Yeago, "'A Christian, Holy People': Martin Luther on Salvation and the Church," *Modern Theology* 13, no. 1 (1997): 101–120.