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Preaching as Master's Discourse. A Foucauldian Interpretation of Lutheran Pastoral Power

Abstract

Michel Foucault acknowledged that the Reformation was a pastoral battle and a reorganization of pastoral power. He did not, however, analyze Protestantism much further. This article broadens the scope of critical research on Protestantism, focusing on Lutheranism. Preaching is a fruitful way to overcome overemphasis on confession. In this endeavor I apply Foucault's concept of "master's discourse." I argue that while, in Lutheranism, conversion through comprehensive soul-searching is an individual matter, at the same time it relies on technologies aimed at a collective audience, such as preaching. Since preaching is divine speech, the Lutheran priest wields enormous spiritual power: the preacher is the truth-teller and the subject is required to listen to and internalize the proclaimed truth, instead of confessing their sins.

Introduction

Michel Foucault distinguished three types of power relations: first, the legal system pertaining to the sovereign, territorial state; second, the disciplinary devices related to controlling the bodies of the subjects and put into practice via police, medical, and penitentiary techniques; and third, the apparatus of security pertaining to population and the practice he calls "the government of the living," in which individuals are subjected to procedures of truth-telling (Foucault 2009, 6–79; 2014b). Governmental techniques are derived from the church. The Christian pastorate and its guidance of souls towards salvation became the model of political government during the sixteenth century when the state adopted forms of power peculiar to the church (Dean 2010).

In a nutshell, "pastoral power" is both an individualizing and totalizing technique that is concerned with the individual and the collective. It is "economic" in the sense that it is derived from the *oikos*; instead of coercion, legislative or sovereign power, pastoral power is essentially administration of human beings, things and wealth (Foucault 2009, 94–97, 103, 205–206; also Agamben 2011, 110–111). According to the economic paradigm, power is less a confrontation between two or more adversaries than a question of guidance (Foucault 1982, 789). Integral to pastoral power is thus the conduct of conduct: how one molds oneself into a subject, that is, subjectivation (Dean 2010, 18).

Giorgio Agamben (2011) shows that this concept has certainly helped us understand the genealogy and the peculiar nature of modern governmental power. As one dimension, he analyzes priesthood (*ministerium* and *officium*) as a paradigm for modern public office (Agamben 2013; also

Dean 2017).[1] Other applications of pastoral power vary from medical (Mayes 2009) to leadership studies (Niesche 2011). On the other hand, as Jeremy Carrette (2000, 28, 38) has pointed out, because Foucault's focus was on the patristic period (ca. 100–450 CE) and the consequences of events such as the Lateran Council in 1215, a legion of important theological and historical transformations were ignored or mentioned only in passing. Foucault acknowledged that teaching, preaching, confession, and spiritual guidance are different forms of the pastoral, but he overemphasized the idea of confession, resulting in blindness to other facets of Christianity (Foucault 2005, 363; Carrette 2000, 39; Elden 2005).

Consequently, although Foucault (2009, 149–150) acknowledged that the Reformation was "a profound reorganization of pastoral power" and "a great pastoral battle," it was left on the margins of his oeuvre. Despite occasional hints as to what an investigation of Protestant forms of pastoral power might comprise, these ideas were never brought to fruition because he moved on to discuss how political power incorporated pastoral techniques. Alas, his focus of the relation between religion and politics was mainly on the state, with the strong, centralized secular French state as the primary example (Rosenthal 2009, 63–65).

The purpose of the article is to broaden the scope of critical research on Protestantism, focusing on Lutheranism. In Protestantism pastoral power took forms that were significantly different than those developed under the auspices of the Catholic Church. To illustrate this development, I discuss two studies on Protestant pastoral power by Alistair Mutch (2017; McKinley and Mutch 2015) and Christina Petterson (2014). The former has analyzed Scottish Presbyterianism, while the latter has examined Danish Lutheranism in Greenland. Drawing on these two studies, I conceptualize Lutheran pastoral power in terms of preaching. In this endeavor I apply Foucault's concept of "master's discourse." My claim is that considering preaching is a fruitful way to overcome the overemphasis on confession. I pay particular attention to how Lutheran pastoral power is exercised. Instead of a historical analysis of practices writ large in society, my theoretical focus is on how a Lutheran priest wields power when preaching, and what kind of subjectivation this involves.

I seek to show that pastoral power is a different combination of practices in Lutheranism than in Catholicism. While the conversion of the individual through comprehensive soul-searching is strictly a private matter, it depends heavily on technologies aimed at the congregation as a collective, such as preaching. Moreover, the confessional roles are switched: the preacher is the truth-teller and the subject is required to listen and internalize the proclaimed truth. This is

[1] In Agamben's reading, office is a secularized rationalization of priesthood in the providential *oikonomia*: the priest as the agent of cultic practice effectuates the divine government by distributing grace via liturgical (i.e. public) acts.

important because the tension between the individual and the socio-political structure is essential to governmental techniques.

In the first section I analyze the most crucial elements of pastoral power. Next, I look at the place of the Reformation in Foucault's thinking and move on to discuss Scottish Presbyterianism and Danish Lutheranism. The topic of the third and fourth sections is preaching as a form of Lutheran pastoral power. The third section focuses the role of preaching in Lutheranism, while the fourth one examines preaching as master's discourse. While concepts such as "Lutheran" and "Lutheranism" can also be problematic, it is important to note that my treatment of the topic is based on Martin Luther's works (or commentaries of his writings), the Augsburg Confession (CA) and the Large Catechism (LC).

Pastoral power and the rupture within

Foucault (2009, 129) argues that "power of a pastoral type" sprung from the pre-Christian East, consolidated within the Christian churches, and subsequently spread into the whole social body. This development culminated in the modern welfare state as the shepherd that guided its population towards wellbeing. Because detailed knowledge of the flock is needed, revealing the truth about oneself is a key feature (Foucault 1982, 783–784). Initially the phenomenon pertained to sex, as it was seen as a fundamental duty to pass everything to do with it "through the endless mill of speech"— i.e., confession (Foucault 1978, 21). The urge to confess became a defining characteristic of modern power to such a degree that "Western man has become a confessing animal" (Foucault 1978, 59; Bernauer 2005, 561–562).

Pastoral power means conducting and guiding people, watching and urging them a step at a time all through their existence (Foucault 2009, 165). In accordance with the figure of the shepherd, the priest is someone who takes care of his "flock"; he keeps watch, treats the injured and guides them along the path of salvation (Foucault 1979, 230, 237–238; 2009, 127). Care and nurture of the flock—"multiplicity in movement"—is more important than protecting a clearly defined territory (Dean 2010, 91).

There are three elements peculiar to pastoral power.[2] First, the priest and his "sheep" are bound together by a complex web of reciprocities. They have a common destiny, which results in joint responsibility. The priest needs to guarantee the salvation of everyone together; no sheep shall be lost. Each individual personally submits to the shepherd who has to be aware of the state, needs, and acts, not only of the whole flock, but also of each "sheep" – *omnes et singulatim* (Foucault

[2] For a more comprehensive discussion of the elements see Tilli (2013, 47–58).

1979, 230, 237–238; 2009, 128, 175). The priest is accountable for his sheep at any time; whatever comes to pass to them is to be held happening (or being done) to himself. The priest must repent his own deficiencies with the purpose of keeping himself humble for the sake of the flock. As a result, the pastor acts in a subtle economy of merit and fault that he manages but in the end is decided by God (Foucault 2009, 169–173).

As regards the second crucial element, self-examination, the purpose is not self-awareness to assure self-mastery, but to unveil to the director the depths of the soul, the truth about oneself to ensure subordination (Foucault 2009, 183; 2014a, 92; 1993, 210–211). Continuity is vital: the sheep must be led through any rough passage victoriously, without leaving them for a second. Being guided is a state, and one is hopelessly lost if one tries to free oneself from it; in pastoral power the aim of obedience is obedience (Foucault 2009, 177). Simply put, it is a combination of productive and repressive power that produces individuals precisely in order to block off individuality (Caputo 2004, 128; see Foucault 1984, 32–40).

Third, pastoral power culminates in self-renunciation: there can be no truth without one becoming other than oneself (Foucault 2005, 15, 254–257). There thus is a break within the subject. This dimension of Christian subjectivation can be examined using the concept of *metanoia*,[3] which *Metanoia* means a radical change of the soul, regret of past sins, and a rebirth. It refers to the movement of the soul towards itself in order to gain access to truth about oneself and to make it known to the "orthogonal gaze of God"—to be asked to be forgiven (Foucault 2014b, 128–129, 133; 2005, 255–256). One thus needs to testify against the old self to reach salvation (Foucault 1997, 242; 2010, 359). As Kenneth Burke (1970, 190–192, 200–201) has pointed out, self-mortification is an integral element of Christian governance; with one aspect believers keep saying no to another aspect of themselves.[4]

Foucault devoted his attention to two main techniques of *metanoia*, namely *exomologesis* and *exagoreusis*. The former originates from early Christianity. Someone who had committed a serious sin could enter the order of penitents through almsgiving, fasting, and enduring public humiliation. This involved the laying on of hands, having one's head shaved, and donning a hair shirt and ashes. Chloë Taylor (2009, 19) has noted that *exomologesis* was often seen through a medical metaphor: to heal a wound, one must first expose it to a physician. Similarly, to rid oneself of the corruption of

[3] The idea has secular origins in the physical motion of turning. As a rhetorical figure, *metanoia* refers to modification of a statement by withdrawing and expressing it in a better way (Myers 2011, 8). As a spiritual concept, it refers to conversion or turning one's soul to the divine (Peace 1999, 346–347).

[4] Foucault (2001, 139) stresses that the "form" of *metanoia* is spiral: the more we discover the truth about ourselves, the more we have to renounce ourselves; and the more we want to renounce ourselves, the more we need to bring to light the reality of ourselves.

the flesh one must first show it to the public, that is, to acknowledge the truth about oneself and destroy it symbolically. To summarize, occurring at the end of the period of penitence, *exomologesis* is a manifestation of one's status as a sinner and a visual indication of remorse (Foucault 2014b, 201–202, 209–210, 212; see also Taylor 2009, 19–20).

Exagoreusis, in turn, denotes permanent avowal of oneself, "the perpetual putting oneself into discourse" (Foucault 2014b, 307). The focus is on thoughts, wishes, and desires; everything that enters one's mind at a given moment is to be tested. It is crucial to know whether what is happening within oneself comes from God, other people, or Satan. In other words, *exagoreusis* is a linguistic activity that purports to establish a relationship to the self that is as analytical and detailed as possible, by meticulously analyzing the inner workings of the mind in order to equip one against the internal other (Foucault 2014a, 164–165).

The master to whom thoughts are verbalized is integral. The believer is lost without a guide who assesses the results of the exegesis of the self, absolves the penitent and assigns penance. It is also important to note that the "endless mill of speech" is based on a link between the text and the self. There is an obligation to believe in the scripturally revealed truth, but at the same time it is important to discover a truth within the self. As a result, the two dimensions condition each other: "I must know my truth to adhere to the truth of the text, and it is the truth of the text that is going to guide me in the search I pursue among the secrets of my conscience" (Foucault 2014a, 166–168). In this process the priest offers the truth (of the text) as a metaphorical mirror in which the subject can see their own reflection (Foucault 2005, 14–17, 25–30, 255–256, 408).

In this way we have a non-discursive and a discursive indication of repentance. The two technologies also include corresponding regimes of truth. *Exomologesis* is the ontological pole, whereas *exagoreusis* is the epistemological pole of *metanoia* (Foucault 1993, 222; 2014b, 212, 307). Despite their differences, they have an important trait in common: dramatic or verbalized disclosure and the renunciation of the self (cf. Bernauer and Mahon 2005, 166). What is revealed is rejected.

In what Foucault held as a formative moment, the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 decreed that every Christian must confess all of their sins at least once a year.[5] This cemented verbal confession, *exagoreusis,* as a practice whereby people became willing agents of their own submission (Foucault 2014b, 211; Heinämäki 2017, 134). It meant that the exegesis of both the text and the self were to be practiced under the strict control of the Catholic Church. From now on salvation was negotiated with a priest who represented God and who was to have a complete control

[5] The canon in question (21) was not completely new; it merely confirmed existing custom and legislation.

of the subject's will (Beard 2007, 28–29). The obligation was subsequently given a legal emphasis, which contributed significantly to what we now know as Protestantism (Stroumsa 1999, 167, 170, 175).

Towards Protestant pastoral power

For Foucault (1982, 782) the movements which took place in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and were mainly expressed through the Reformation should be analyzed as a great crisis of Western subjectivity:

> It seems to me that what we see during the Reformation was of course a refusal of the Church's authority in its institutional structure; this was the refusal to submit the hermeneutics that one practiced on the text to a dogmatic institutional authority; it was also a refusal to submit the hermeneutics of the self to the jurisdictional authority of the priest within an institution or a sacrament such as penance. Freeing both the hermeneutics of the text and the hermeneutics of the self: that is what Protestantism achieved. (Foucault 2014a, 92, 168)

In this way, for Foucault, the protest of Protestantism pertained to the ways in which the Christian subject was molded. The key issue was internalization: the truth of the text is what one should find within oneself, and conversely what one finds within oneself should be the truth of the text, without the obligation to confess—and to submit one's salvation—to a clerical authority (Foucault 2014a, 169). Or, in the words of Kenneth S. Rothwell (1988, 81), the Reformation resulted in relocation of power of unimpeachable authority to the impeachable self—"the ordeal of the individual self." The question of how Christians were to be governed led to a profound reorganization of pastoral power (Foucault 2009, 150).

It is worth noting that Luther's attitude to confession was complex, to say the least. The Reformer held that obligatory confession had "tyrannical" qualities reminiscent of "rape," thus being contrary to his emphasis on justification by faith (Taylor 2009, 63). Moreover, because confession had become a compulsory routine, it was unlikely that it would be genuine speech reflecting the truth (Springer 2017, 99). However, Luther regarded confession as useful as long as it took place voluntarily and pertained only to sins that "oppressed most grievously" (quoted in Barth 2013, 250; CA XI). In any case, as a result of Luther's and other reformers' stances, the institutional and sacramental role of auricular confession diminished gradually but steadily (Barth 2013, 250–251; Bayer 2008, 269).

In Foucault's reading this had two consequences. First, due to the accumulated effects of the Protestant and Catholic reformations, pastoral technologies increasingly intervened in everyday life

(Raffnsøe, Gudmand-Høyer, and Thaning 2016, 265). A comprehensive apparatus of self-examination and control gained ground. From the early seventeenth century onwards, the modern state began to take shape, taking on the pastoral function. Foucault describes the spread of clerical practices beyond their ecclesiastical context as "in-depth Christianization" of society (Foucault 2003, 177; Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983, 175–176). Second, importantly for the matter at hand, pastoral power practiced *within* the church transformed. In Catholic countries the role of the confessor and private confession strengthened with the Catholic Reformation (Foucault 2003, 177). In Protestant countries, spiritual direction evolved differently. This is unfortunately the point where Foucault stopped. Though he mentioned that the "reformed pastorate" was hierarchically supple and meticulous while the "Counter-Reformation type" was hierarchized and centralized, he did not take these ideas further (Foucault 2003, 184; 2009, 149).

Recent research has begun to fill this gap. Mutch (2017, 83; also McKinlay and Mutch 2015) discussed "the fissiparous tendencies" of Protestantism. He traces three distinctive traditions in from the earliest days of the Reformation, namely Episcopalianism, Lutheranism, and Reformed Protestantism, each of which developed their own religious and social practices. Of these Mutch has focused on the Reformed tradition, Scottish Presbyterianism in particular. Examination, accountability, and organizing as good emerge as the key dimensions of Presbyterian pastoral power. Examination is a thread that runs throughout the church, on an individual and collective level. Everyone was to keep a confessional diary, members of a church examined each other's conduct, and parishes were visited regularly by a committee of the presbytery (Mutch 2017, 85). As Mutch (89) notes, while in confession the focus was on counting the sins of the laity, with visitations the Reformed tradition turned more attention to the clergy.

Another particular feature of the Scottish Presbyterian polity was the idea of keeping record and being accountable. Public disciplining of sins was accompanied with a scrupulous (covert) process of arriving at verdicts that mirrored secular legal practices. The elders looked for signs of infraction of church discipline and individual adherents were made accountable before the church session (McKinlay and Mutch 2015, 250). Since communion was available only to those judged worthy of it, one's spiritual record was of crucial importance. Accountability pertained to financial matters, which were to be taken care of with piety (Mutch 2017, 86–87). The third prominent Presbyterian theme was an emphasis on order. Order (and organizing) were valued as good in their own right, a mark of the faithful, and even a religious goal to be achieved (88–89).

This analysis of Scottish Presbyterianism illustrates the meticulous character of Protestant pastoral power. While the clergy indeed was hierarchically supple and lay involvement heavy, mechanisms of control defined the existence of a believer. Instead of regular confession of sins,

one's life was regulated and calculated in a manner perhaps even more pervasive than in the Catholic Church. The economic nature of pastoral power was not without historical consequences. By creating a peculiar type of subject, "accountable creatures" accustomed to systemic accountability, Scottish Presbyterianism contributed significantly to the development of capitalism (McKinlay and Mutch 2015).

Christina Petterson (2014), in turn, has examined Lutheranism's role in the Danish colonization of Greenland. She shows how incessant study of catechism replaced pastoral care. A process of colonization entailed subjectivation and the identity of indigenous population was transformed. In the course of the seventeenth century, Lutheran doctrine was deployed to create a clearly defined social structure.[6] Drawing on Luther's *Haustafel* and the catechism, the focus of Lutheran instruction in Greenland was on propagating a family unit in which the proper relationship to parents was taken as a point of departure for all authority. A tripartite order for fostering subjectivities emerged, based on patriarchy and hierarchy: king–subjects, minister–disciples, and parents–children. The parents teach and look after their "children," and they all serve God by obeying the master. This provided an insight into the duties of the individual and a model for proper societal relations (Petterson 2014, 87–88).

Writing was a way for the new elite individuals (selected by missionaries) to make sense of themselves as well as to produce abstractions of Greenlandic identity. It also carried an absolute authority due to its connection to both scripture and the power structures it enabled via controlled access to education and training (185–186). However, while learning to read and write, the Greenlanders were presented with an image of themselves and their traditions as false, backward, and superstitious in contrast to the Lutheran rational order. The Greenlanders were inculcated into the Lutheran model of society with a textually generated sense of self that was essentially based on estrangement (112–113, 150). In the Protestant view, nature is the realm of ecclesiastical civilization in which indigenous practices have no place. Thus, in order to enter into the Protestant framework, the former lifestyle had to be renounced (85). The Lutheran practice is both a sanctification of the private sphere and a declericalization of Christian instruction, as well as a dissemination of the pastoral into the capillaries of everyday life (88).

[6] According to Lutheran societal thought, God governs the world through law and spirit. In the secular realm, consisting of *politia*, *oeconomia*, and *ecclesia* (the institutional church), law and authority govern. In contrast, in the spiritual realm, God rules through the word and the spirit. Christians belong to both: as earthly creatures to the secular realm and as Christians to the spiritual one (Luther 1961, 366–373; Barth 2013, 313–348). The two realms must be kept separate while acknowledging that they are both instituted by God. All authorities are "fathers" who administer their "houses" based on the power vested in them by God (LC 150–151).

Elisa Heinämäki (2017, 138; also Rosenthal 2009, 65–67) has observed that because in Lutheranism confession is no longer a personal act but refers to the institutionally organized whole of believers, "the general confessional apparatus," it became an instrument for unifying the nation. Confessional uniformity was understood to be the best way to construct political identity; thus, the catechism also functioned as an important technique in "confessionalization of the laity" (see Ihalainen 2005, 583–588). Petterson's analysis of Lutheran Danish colonialism testifies to how a Lutheran religious technique spread beyond its ecclesiastical context in practice. Not only Catholic confessional practices contributed to the profound Christianization of society.

Foucault (2009, 95) asserted that an essential trend in the spread of "governmentality" has been the economization of power. To govern means exercising supervision and control over one's subjects, wealth, and the conduct of all and each, as attentively as a father watches over his household and goods. Initially management of the family provided a model for governing, but during the eighteenth century family transformed into an element within the population and a source of knowledge for state administration (104–105). In the sphere of religion, however, it remained first and foremost a paradigm of power. The examples discussed in this section shed light on Foucault's claim from a Protestant viewpoint.

In Scottish Presbyterianism, one's personal, spiritual, and collective ecclesiastical life was subjected to different forms of "bookkeeping" – an economy of merits and faults – in ways that imbued everyday existence with economic practices. In Danish Lutheranism, the economic model was present as the household paradigm that functioned as the basis for societal authority. It was a hierarchal society of masters and subordinates, an order in which transgressions were seen as rebellion against God. However, although the Danish and the Scottish case studies both contain acute observations about Protestant pastoral power, an important aspect has not been examined thus far, namely proclamation of the Word. Next, I analyze Lutheran pastoral power from the perspective of preaching.

The role of preaching in Lutheran theology

The Reformation was marked by a war of words: understandings of language and its use were central (Vind 2017). Regardless of how the reformers gained their new theological insights, sermons were the means of bringing their doctrines directly to their followers in the vernacular and applying these doctrines to the needs of the people. The pulpit[7] was perhaps the most important

[7] The shift towards preaching was also visible in the architecture and arrangement of Lutheran churches, such as the increased visibility of the pulpit and accessibility of the altar table (White 1989).

means of communicating information in the sixteenth century. The role of the sermons in making the Reformation a mass movement can scarcely be overestimated—the spread of printing technology hastened their diffusion. (Grimm 1958, 50; see Ihalainen 2003). The reformers used them to pit the spiritual and scriptural against the temporal and thus opened up an ideological space, a discursive framework, in which to pose alternative forms of conduct and thought, with a number of moral obligations (Wuthnow 1989, 149–150).

It is no exaggeration to claim that the Protestant Reformation would not have been possible without preaching, which is emphasized in Lutheran theology. The doctrinal basis is explained in the Augsburg Confession (IV–V). Justification before God by one's own strength or works is not possible; one is justified only through faith, which is engendered by the Holy Spirit in those who hear the word. For this purpose "the Ministry of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments" was instituted (CA V). In a nutshell, preaching produces faith, the only criteria for salvation.

Lutheran *metanoia* consists of two stages. First, contrition, that is, terrors smiting the conscience through the knowledge of sin. Second, the gospel gives birth to faith and delivers the conscience from terrors (CA XII). Repentance is thus a private and internal event caused by preaching. Drawing on this scheme, the preacher's first step is to teach penitence and proclaim the law. However, stopping at sin would amount to wounding without healing. As the second step, the promise of forgiveness by which faith is aroused must also be preached (Luther 1961, 55–73). The Lutheran irony is thus that preaching intensifies the very sense of guilt for which it provides absolution (Burke 1970, 234). Or, in Foucauldian terms, preaching attempts to mend the rift within the subject it has created.

How, then, are the rupture and the subsequent rebirth manifested in Lutheranism? Because of its aversion to obligatory confession and acts of satisfaction in justification, Lutheranism espouses a peculiar way of manifesting one's status as a sinner. Good works follow as fruits of repentance, but they cannot merit forgiveness of sins (CA XII, XX). The Lutheran paradox is that despite the seemingly heavy emphasis on ethical behavior, lack of good deeds is not necessarily a sign of anything; it is only faith that counts. Good works are necessary but not sufficient for salvation (Hendrix 2010, 50). Instead of separate deeds to make up for sinful actions, the believer's entire life should be of repentance (Luther's Thesis I). That is, instead of dramatic (*exomologesis*) or verbal (*exagoreusis*) rituals, everyday existence is to be filled with renunciation of the self.

In contrast, as Max Weber (2001, 43–45) has famously argued, this led to an understanding that one could attain salvation by accepting one's calling as divine ordinance and fulfilling one's

everyday duties diligently. According to the Lutheran ethic, one could ensure one's salvation by fulfilling one's daily vocation. For Foucault (2011, 247) the meaning of the break represented by Luther and the Reformation consists precisely in the acceptance that, instead of ascesis in the confines of a monastery, access to the world above is defined by a life that conforms to existence in the world below.

In the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, all Christians are priests in the sense that no occupation is holier than another, but the church chooses its preachers (Luther 1961, 345–346). Once selected, the spiritual fathers who "govern and guide by the Word of God" are ranked highly in the Lutheran hierarchy of authority (LC 164–167): preachers, like parents or political leaders, carry out godly duties; priests, however, are to be esteemed twice as much as "temporal fathers" (Barth 2013, 252–255).

The office of preaching serves the authorities by keeping the public peace, but also by protesting against inappropriate behavior by the political authorities (Barth 2013, 334). Although they will most likely be faced with resistance and contempt, preachers should not shy from their obligation to remind temporal authorities of their duty to meet the bodily and spiritual needs of their subjects (LC 164–167). Indeed, Luther often complains of their corrupt nature; more often than not, they are "fools" with "a perverse mind" (Luther 1961, 383–384, 395; LC 37). The preacher, however, should never resort to violence or coercion. The priest's power lies in God's word alone, because Christians can be ruled only by it—"political impotence" is part of the priest's spiritual power (Luther 1961, 392; quoted in Barth 2013, 331).

Although Foucault did not analyze Protestantism in detail, he provided a conceptual apparatus for understanding Lutheran pastoral power in terms of preaching. This pertains to what he called "master's discourse" (Foucault 2005, 348). In this undertaking I follow Christina Petterson (2014, 74) who designates the Lutheran shepherd as "master" in order to underline the reach of pastoral power, particularly in issues related to gender, class and race, in the system of domination propagated by the catechism. I use the concept here to tease out what kind of power technique preaching is.

Lutheran pastoral power: preaching as master's discourse

Master's discourse means a discourse of truth that characterizes a person who is responsible for directing others verbally (Foucault 2010, 6, 43; 2005, 164).[8] It consists of two roles, the master and

[8] In Foucault's thought rhetoric and *parrhesia* are opposed to each other. Rhetoric does not entail a bond between the speaker and the content, but aims to establish one between the content and the audience. It enables the speaker to say something that may not be what he thinks, but whose effect will produce convictions, induce conduct or instill belief in

the disciple(s), and is deployed in terms of *parrhesia.* It must obey the principle of *parrhesia* if the speaker wants the truth of what is said to become the subjectivized true discourse of the disciple (Foucault 2005, 366, 368).

Parrhesia has three distinctive characteristics. The first one is frankness. The one who uses *parrhesia*, the *parrhesiastes*, uses only direct words and forms of expression: acting on other people by showing them as clearly as possible what he or she actually believes. Second, truthfulness is integral to *parrhesia*. Speakers bind themselves to the content as well as to the act of declaring it—ethos is an integral part of *parrhesia* (Foucault 2010, 65; 2011, 25). This, in turn, presupposes that the speaker has moral and social qualities required for conveying the truth to others, such as courage. The third trait is the risk involved in telling the truth. Unlike ordinary performative acts, *parrhesia* does not produce codified effects; it opens up an unspecified risk (Foucault 2010, 62–64). It can mean losing friendship or popularity, even life, but *parrhesiastes* would rather be truth-tellers than be untrue to themselves and let the truth go unsaid (Foucault 2001, 12, 14–17; 2010, 56, 178–180). To sum up, *parrhesia* is a discourse of truth that is constantly testing itself in both the person who delivers it and the person to whom it is addressed (Foucault 2010, 326–327).

In addition to *parrhesia*, Foucault discusses three other forms of truth-telling. The first one is prophecy. The prophet tells the truth by being a mouthpiece for a voice which speaks from elsewhere and proclaims a fate to come (Foucault 2011, 14–16, 25). Second, the sage does speak in his own name, but the difference is that he is wise in and for himself. Nothing obliges the sage to demonstrate or teach his wisdom to others (17–18). Third, the technician possesses knowledge (practical or theoretical) that he is capable of teaching to others. In contrast to the sage, like the prophet, the technician has a duty to pass on to others what he knows. Unlike the other truth-tellers, however, the teacher does this without a risk to his life (24–25). Common to all four modes of speech is that truth is a reflection of subjective experience; the speakers stand for their truth.[9]

In early Christianity *parrhesia* was most often used to denote trust and confidence in God's love as well as the courageous attitude of whoever preaches the gospel (Foucault 2011, 229–331). The concept is particularly visible in Acts and Letters where it is used by two different human

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the audience. *Parrhesia*, on the other hand, involves a constitutive bond between the speaker and what is said, and through the effect of the truth, makes it possible for the bond between the speaker and the audience to be broken. (Foucault 2011, 13–14.) From the perspective of rhetorical theory, such a strict distinction is open to criticism. For instance, what for Foucault constituted a sincere *parrhesia* might as well be feigned, and what he sees as rhetorically artless is often highly rhetorical (Walzer 2013).

[9] These "modes of veridiction" were often combined with each other (Foucault 2011, 26–27). Socrates, for example, had at the same time qualities related to all of them. Medieval Christianity, in turn, united parrhesia and prophecy in the figure of the preacher who spoke of the Last Judgment and told with *parrhesia* people what their sins were and how they had to change their lives (29).

agents (the Apostles and all Christians in general) towards three different audiences (persecution and trials, other Christians, and God). Here the term means bold speech, trust in God, intimacy among Christians, openness towards God, and intimacy with God, all translated usually into Latin as *fiducia* (Szakolczai 2003, 234–239). In relation to the topic of the present article, it is important to note that preaching is a peculiar type of *parrhesia*. The preacher believes the truth he declares, but the link to scripture denotes a salient difference. The preacher is not telling merely a personal truth; the main task is to teach the revealed Word (McFarlan et al. 2011, 413).

However, with the increasing stress on authority and asceticism in Christian practice and institutions, these meanings were replaced by obedience. One had to fear God and recognize the necessity of submitting to the divine will and to the will representing God. Now *parrhesia* as confidence in God appears as arrogant and presumptuous self-confidence, incompatible with the severe gaze one must focus on oneself (Foucault 2011, 333–334; Szakolczai 2003, 239–240). As a result, *parrhesia* passed from referring to the master's obligation to tell the disciple what is true to the latter's obligation to tell the master the truth about themselves (Foucault 2010, 47, 348). In Foucault's (2011, 339) understanding, the pastoral institutions of Christianity developed around this aspect.

A different kind of pastoral power is revealed in Luther's understanding of preaching. To begin with, his criticism of the Catholic Church was visible in his rendition of *parrhesia*. He translated the concept into German using the neologism *Freidigkeit* that merges freedom (*Freiheit*) and brazenness (*Frechheit*) (Bussie 2017, 112; see Nagel 2018). Luther's usage of *parrhesia* to describe preaching is illustrative: "Paulus aber bleib zwey jar in seinem eigen Gedinge / vnd nam auff alle die zu jm einkamen / prediget das reich Gottes / vnd lerete von dem Herrn Jhesu / mit aller Freidigkeit vnuerbotten."[10] Here, as elsewhere (e.g., Acts 4:29; 1 John 2:28, 3:21, 4:17; Hebr. 4:16), Luther uses the concept to refer to speaking God's word with *Freidigkeit*.

In line with his theological emphasis, Luther's neologism introduced a new quality to the Latin *fiducia* used in the Vulgate. In addition to confidence, *fiducia* denotes mutual trust and reliance. In the Roman law it referred to a certain type of contract.[11] Luther's *Freidigkeit*, in turn, emphasizes freedom: brazen confidence to proclaim the truth of gospel freely.[12] Thus Luther added an element of courageous autonomy to preaching (see Springer 2017, 99–100). A Lutheran preacher

[10] "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him" (Acts 28:30–31).
[11] The Latin root *fid-* denotes "trust," in Christianity most often "faith." For the Romans *fides* denoted a sense of trust between two parties.
[12] Occasionally Luther's innovativeness lead to misleading translations when *Freidigkeit* was changed to *Freudigkeit* (joy), which loses the reformer's originality (Kretzmann 1934, 440).

needs all these qualities, because a sermon is a battleground against powers opposed to God (Barth 2013, 255). In addition, as the word is the only weapon against political authorities, the preacher's "own existence is always put in play" (quoted in Barth 2013, 331). As Foucault (2009, 169-173) stressed, the shepherd must be ready to take on both spiritual and temporal enemies of the flock. In this sense, a Lutheran preacher is a *parrhesiastes* par excellence: she or he proclaims an unwelcome truth to (and by) which the speaker is bound and which may undermine the very relationship that makes the discourse possible (Foucault 2011, 11–12).

Preaching has another important trait: divine speech (*Deus loquens*). In the words spoken by the preacher, "God himself is speaking" (quoted in Wilson 2005, 63; see also Beach 1999, 77–90). Luther ascribed an almost sacramental quality to the office of preaching (Barth 2013, 251). When the Word of God is preached, no one is exempted from its benefits (Ngien 2003, 32). However, in order to remain authoritative, Christianity master's discourse must be constantly related to the fundamental speech, that is, scripture (Foucault 2005, 363).[13] This requirement is strict in the Lutheran context: only when the sermon focuses consistently on Christ and his relation to the given audience, and proceeds from law to gospel, is it divine speech (Luther 1962, 65–66; Meuser 1983, 12). Thus, the Lutheran preacher is constituted by a double bind. The first one is what Foucault (2014a, 169) described as the Protestant internalization: the truth of the text must be also his subjective truth. Second, the content of the proclamation needs to be firmly based on the scriptures. This has not always been a simple position (see Tilli 2016).

Third, while Luther emphasized the office of preaching, he stressed that "ears alone are the organs of a Christian"; God requires nothing else (*Luther's Works*, Vol. 29, 224). By the same token, "the church is not a pen-house but a mouth-house" (quoted in Ferry 1990, 271). Dennis Ngien's (2003, 32) description is apt: the Lutheran God cannot be seen but only heard. The result is that the traditional auricular roles prevalent in Catholic confessional techniques are switched: the main role of the shepherd is to speak, or confess, not to listen to a confession. For the subject the focus moves from confessing one's sins to hearkening to the words of a sermon and internalizing the message in a way that the truth of the text is found in the depths of the soul. Contrary to Catholicism, here self-examination does not prepare for confession; it incites the subject to suspect oneself of sins pronounced by the preacher and to purify one's conduct accordingly (cf. Foucault 1978, 18–35).

The fact that this aspect was overlooked is probably caused by a transition in Foucault's work in relation to speaking and silence. Until the mid-1970s, he predominantly saw Christianity as a

[13] For discussion of the divinity of the shepherd, see Foucault (2009, 195–205).

silencing force, whereas later he described it as a power which demands an utterance (Carrette 2000, 36). The later emphasis guides Foucault's examination of master's discourse. He notes that in philosophy, speech requires the listener's silence (Foucault 2005, 342). The ear should be open to what comes from outside; it should be receptive and passive when it meets the logos, to allow the truth of the master to enter and penetrate the soul (Siisiäinen 2013, 92). Here the guided do not have to say the truth about themselves; it is necessary and sufficient to keep quiet (Foucault 2005, 363–364).

However, Foucault's analysis of the master's discourse in Christianity was affected by his emphasis on confessing. Although Foucault (2011, 29, 330–331) acknowledged that preaching was one historical form of master's discourse and "an apostolic virtue," for him, in Christianity *parrhesia* pertained first and foremost to confession. He stressed that the common denominator in the different forms, rules, tactics, and institutions pertaining to Christian spirituality is that people led towards salvation have to speak the truth about themselves (Foucault 2005, 363). As we have seen, Lutheran pastoral power is a silencing force rather than a technique to extract truth statements from the believer. The preacher is now the "endless mill of speech."

Fourth, while confession takes place privately, preaching is public. Confession directly involves participation, whereas preaching contains spectators who have distance from the performance. The audience is addressed simultaneously as a group and as individuals. As regards the targets of providential guidance, there are at least three "personae" present: the first is the actual audience present at the service (or reading the sermon afterwards); the second is the implied audience projected by the sermon (this is the ideal subject the preacher would have his real auditor become) (see Black 1970); and third, the audience that is rejected or negated in the speech, implicitly or explicitly (see Wander 1984). Publicity renders preaching intensely political. As Agamben (2011, 144–149) has emphasized in the footsteps of Erik Peterson, it is precisely the public character of worship that makes the church political; participation in liturgy founds "the Christian people" (*laos*).

Giorgio Agamben (2011, 68–108) has pointed out that an important feature of the economic paradigm of power is that reign and government are distinguished yet functionally correlated; God reigns but does not govern. In Lutheran pastoral power this is related to the distinction between the Word of God and God—or, in Luther's own words, "God preached" and "God hidden in majesty." The latter remains in solitude, whereas the former is the way God wants to make God's self known to and guide to human beings. Although God acts in ways which are not known through the divine word, for humans God is always clothed in it (Luther 1525, sect. 64; see also Agamben 2011, 284).

As I have illustrated, in the Lutheran adaptation of the theological and economic paradigm, governing takes place through preaching. Preachers are overseers, ensuring that society as a whole leads a godly life, and no sphere or person is beyond their grasp. Thus, the Lutheran conception of preaching contributed greatly to the dissemination of the pastoral into everyday life. Hence, as Foucault (2009, 149) notes, the Reformation resulted in a formidable reinforcement of the pastorate.

Conclusion

Pastoral power depends on self-renunciation of the subject: there can be no truth without one becoming other than oneself, no salvation without a symbolic death and rebirth. Christianity has deployed two main techniques, *exomologesis* and *exagoreusis*, to make the rupture within the subject manifest. The former is a visual manifestation of remorse, whereas the latter is a verbal acknowledgement of sinfulness and repentance. In Foucault's reading, *exagoreusis*, permanent putting oneself into discourse, has been decisive for Western subjectivity.

My interpretation of Lutheran pastoral power offers an alternative perspective to Christian self-renunciation. Based on the theological emphasis, the most important pastoral technique is preaching. It dramatically transforms the roles assigned to the priest and the subject in Foucauldian readings derived from Catholicism. The discursive or textual nature of pastoral power is retained, but it is now the preacher, not the confessing subject, is the truth-teller. The subject must do comprehensive soul-searching in order to align the truth of the text with the truth of the self. This was integral to the reorganization of pastoral power caused by the Reformation.

The paradox of becoming a Lutheran subject is that good works are bound to follow from the metanoic transformation of the self (caused by preaching), but nothing certain can be inferred from one's actions. That is to say, Lutheran self-renunciation may or may not have positive ethical consequences. This severs any necessary link between external manifestation of repentance and the inner state. In Foucauldian terms, there is no telling from outside what the status of the subjectivation process is. Although both are expected, no ontological or epistemological manifestation is required—certainty of salvation is a purely subjective experience (cf. Raffnsøe, Gudmand-Høyer and Thaning 2016, 405; Martinson 2017, 239–240). In this sense the Lutheran subject is truly free.

My second point pertains to the role of the priest in the Lutheran economy of salvation. The paradigm of pastoral power is based on the idea that God is sovereign in the world only through principles administered and put into practice by the pastorate. The historical manifestations of this theological and economic paradigm vary within Protestantism. In Scottish Presbyterianism, spiritual and collective ecclesiastical life was saturated with different ways of being held accountable. In

Danish Lutheranism, meticulous study of the catechism provided a model for a society of masters and subordinates. As regards Lutheran preaching, ministers of the word are indispensable because government of the world according to God's plan takes place through their *parrhesia*. Consequently, although priesthood is not a sacrament or a holy ordinance as in Catholicism, the Lutheran priest wields enormous spiritual power as a preacher. He or she is the master of masters.

Despite the emphasis on freedom, there is more than a little irony in the historical and political consequences of the Reformation. First, the close relation between church and state gave religion enormous power in society, first as Lutheran theologico-political orthodoxy, later in the form of national churches. Second, as a side of the same coin, despite its potential for criticism, the spiritual power of a Lutheran priest has often been placed at the disposal of the secular authorities and their political or military aims. For example, during WWII many Lutheran churches eagerly took part in the war effort (Bergen 2004).[14] Also, in many Protestant, particularly Lutheran, countries where private confession and pastoral care were replaced by preaching and the compulsory study of catechism, biopolitical practices such as eugenics were readily accepted and most successfully implemented (Ojakangas 2015). Third, while the Lutheran subject is not required to engage in rituals of penance, mundane life as a whole is a de-ritualized site of repentance. Hence, while the individualizing and totalizing tendencies at work in Lutheran pastoral power are undoubtedly different from those of Catholic pastoral guidance, they are no less intense.

Finally, I believe Foucault (2014b, 311) was correct to claim that the obligation to tell the truth about oneself has never ceased to exist in Christian culture, and probably in Western societies altogether. Based on the findings presented here, I would add that, in a Lutheran context, there is also a powerful strand of subjectivation that expects the individual to remain silent and listen to the truth being told.

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[14] For a critical analysis of Lutheran WWII sermons, see Tilli 2013.

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