Suffering and persecution as a mark of the church: a perspective from Australia

Rev Dr Dean Zweck

Dean Zweck is lecturer in Church History at Australian Lutheran College. This article is based on a paper that was read at the 5th World Seminaries Conference of the International Lutheran Council, 8-11 August 2013, at Palanga, Lithuania. The conference theme was ‘Suffering, persecution and martyrdom as a mark of the church’.

Lutherans in Australia today know very little of suffering and persecution in the way that other Christians have experienced them in the history of the church. Furthermore, because of our geographical isolation ‘at the ends of the earth’, the sufferings of this present time (Rom 8:18) endured by sisters and brothers in faith seem remote, unreal, almost incomprehensible—even when suffering and persecution are actually occurring nearby, for example, in Indonesia. And yet, paradoxically, the founding narrative of the Lutheran church in Australia is about a group of Old-Lutherans (Alt-Lutheraner) who fled from persecution in Prussia. Furthermore, during the first half of the 20th century with its two world wars, Lutherans in Australia truly suffered, and suffered significant persecution. Nor does the story end there, because in Australia, sometimes described as ‘the most godless place under heaven’,1 suspicion, ridicule, and hostility toward Christianity came at the very beginning with the convicts and soldiers who created the first European settlement—a penal colony—and have been constant factors ever since, especially in recent times.

This paper looks first at why suffering, persecution and martyrdom are said to be a mark of the church. We will then look at how suffering and persecution have been part of the experience of Lutheran Christians in the Australian context. We will see in this story that not all suffering and persecution is endured ‘for righteousness’ sake’ but sometimes is a consequence of unrighteousness. Finally, we will see that suffering for the sake of unrighteousness is to be borne in faith as a participation in the skandalon of the cross.

Suffering, persecution and martyrdom as a mark of the church

It is right and fitting to speak of suffering, persecution and martyrdom as a mark of the church for the simple reason that in numerous places in the gospel narrative Jesus told his followers that true discipleship would mean taking up the cross, following him on the way, suffering as he suffered, being persecuted as he was persecuted, even dying as

1 Ian Breward, Australia: ‘the most godless place under heaven’? Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, 1988.
he was to die. For many, including Luther, the first text that comes to mind is the last of the Beatitudes:

Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matt 5:11,12)

The suffering in which they are blessed will be on account of Jesus, because it is directly related to his own passion. In an apocalyptic discourse on the eve of his own suffering and martyrdom Jesus foretold that suffering and martyrdom would be the lot of his disciples also:

But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. This will give you an opportunity to testify. So make up your mind not to prepare your defence in advance; for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. You will be hated by all because of my name. But not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your souls. (Luke 21:12–19)

The rest is history, as we say. Or more precisely, the rest is church history. Beginning only days after Pentecost with the arrest, imprisonment and interrogation of Peter and John (Acts 4), then the arrest, imprisonment and flogging of all the apostles (Acts 5), and then the suffering and martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 7), there has never been a time in church history when there has not been suffering, persecution and martyrdom for Christ's followers. Paul is perhaps the example par excellence. After his conversion Saul the persecutor became Paul the persecuted, who describes himself as a minister of Christ

...with far greater labours, far more imprisonments, with countless floggings, and often near death. Five times I have received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning. Three times I was ship-wrecked; for a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from bandits, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers and sisters; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, hungry and thirsty, often without food, cold and naked. And besides other things, I am under daily pressure because of my anxiety for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? (2 Cor 11:23–29a)

And so it went on day and night until, according to tradition, he was martyred in Rome and ever since has been counted with Peter and other faithful confessors as those who stand at the forefront of the noble army of martyrs—those ‘who have come out of the great tribulation, … [and] have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb’ (Rev 7:14).

As is well known, Christians endured much suffering, persecution and martyrdom in the early centuries, climaxing in the great persecution under Diocletian. Then there was a sudden turn-around with the edict of toleration of Galerius in AD 311, followed by the edict of Milan in 313, in which Constantine announced that ‘we have given freely and unreservedly to the said Christians toleration to practice their cult’ along with the restoration of property and other rights and privileges.3 Also well-known is the fact that, as Christendom developed in Europe, the church that was once the victim became the perpetrator, and over many centuries persecuted those who believed differently and those who dared to question or criticise church doctrine and practice.

One of those who did was Martin Luther, who, because of what befell him and his followers, came to include persecution in his ecclesiology. In the third part of his 1539 treatise On the Councils and the Church,4 Luther elaborated his understanding of the church, and in particular the seven true marks of the church according to holy scripture. We are accustomed to thinking of word and sacrament alone as the true marks of the church (article 7 of the Augsburg Confession). In Luther’s enumeration in this treatise, that accounts for the first three: (1) the word, (2) holy baptism, (3) the sacrament of the altar; to which he adds (4) the office of the keys, (5) the ministry, (6) worship,5 and (7) persecution.6

Concerning the seventh mark Luther writes:

Seventh, the holy Christian people are externally recognized by the holy possession of the sacred cross. They must endure every misfortune and persecution, all kinds of trials and evil from the devil, the world, and the flesh (as the Lord’s Prayer indicates) by inward sadness, timidity, fear, outward poverty, contempt, illness, and weakness, in order to become like their head, Christ.7

---

4 LW 41:9-178; third part 143-178.
5 LW 41:164. The actual words used are: ‘prayer, public praise, and thanksgiving to God’.
6 Luther’s enumeration of seven marks of the church can remind us not to be judgmental toward those who number seven sacraments. It is acceptable to count seven sacraments, as long as baptism and the Lord’s supper are held to be pre-eminent; and in the same way it is acceptable to enumerate seven marks of the church, as long as the means of grace—word and sacrament—are given pre-eminence.
7 LW 41:165.
The expression ‘possession of the holy cross’ is unusual. Apparently Luther is ‘satirising the custom of requiring the possession of a relic before a church can be consecrated’. The church is not made holy by the possession of a holy relic of the cross—a sliver of wood encased in glass and adorned with jewels—rather, the church is made holy by ‘actual participation in the cross of Christ’. For Luther, there is a direct connection between the passion of Christ and the sufferings of his true people, the church. The essential task of the church is to proclaim the gospel, the message of the cross: that Christ ‘was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification’ (Rom 4:25). This message is odious and offensive to the world. The proclamation of Christ crucified is ‘a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles’ (1 Cor 1:23). The unbelieving world rails against this message and those who steadfastly proclaim it. Commenting on the ‘stumbling block of the cross’ in Galatians 5:11, Luther writes:

Here someone may say: ‘Christians must be quite insane if they expose themselves to dangers voluntarily. For all they accomplish with their preaching is to gain for themselves the anger and hatred of the world and to create stumbling blocks ….’ ‘This fact’, says Paul, ‘does not offend or bother us at all; it only makes us courageous and optimistic about the growth of the church, which flourishes and grows under persecution’.

‘The connection of persecution with the pure Gospel is so strong for Luther’, comments Robert Kelly, ‘that he can say that the presence of persecution is a sign of the presence of the gospel and the absence of persecution is a sign of the absence of the gospel’.

Reading Luther, it may seem as if all suffering and persecution of Christians should be directly related to the gospel, and in particular to the theology of the cross. In reality, it may not be as simple as that, as may be shown from the experience of suffering and persecution in the story of Lutherans leaving their homeland in Silesia and coming to live in Australia.

Suffering and persecution in the story of Lutherans in Australia

In 1838 Pastor August Kavel and a group of Old-Lutherans from Klemzig in Silesia left their homeland because of religious persecution and made their way to Australia. Many more Old-Lutherans left for the same reason and made their way to America. The person instigating the persecution was not a godless tyrant raging against the gospel, but a devout king, Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia, who wanted his country to be strong, united and Christian. His wife and most of his subjects were Lutheran; he himself and a

9 Ibid.
10 ‘Lectures on Galatians’ 1535, LW 27:43.
small minority were Reformed. Friedrich Wilhelm thought the way to achieve Christian unity in his kingdom would be to get all his subjects to use one Agende, one liturgy book.\textsuperscript{13} He took a personal interest in this project and became something of a liturgical specialist. In many respects the liturgy he tried to impose was actually more faithful to 16\textsuperscript{th} century Lutheran liturgies than the one being used by Old-Lutherans in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century (the so-called ‘Wittenberg Agenda’).\textsuperscript{14} While most of his subjects went along with the Agende, Old-Lutherans refused to use it because they believed that to do so would be to compromise the Lutheran doctrine of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord’s Supper.\textsuperscript{15} The king was initially patient, but he ended up persecuting those who would not co-operate, believing them to be disloyal, disobedient and stubborn. The resulting persecution was real. Pastors who refused to use the new worship book were sacked, property was confiscated, churches were shut down, people were fined and some were even imprisoned. Kavel and his people at Klemzig in Silesia petitioned the king for permission to leave and this was reluctantly granted.\textsuperscript{16} After many delays they made the long and dangerous voyage to South Australia, arriving on the 20\textsuperscript{th} November 1838.

And so it is that this year, 2013, Lutherans in Australia are celebrating 175 years of being a Lutheran church in Australia. But the question has been raised, ‘Should we be here?’\textsuperscript{17} That is, did those Old-Lutherans really have to leave their homeland as religious refugees and come to Australia? In our Australian Lutheran telling of the history we have tended to demonise Friedrich Wilhelm III and the Prussian government and to paint a picture of Kavel as the bold confessor leading his flock into exile rather than compromise the Lutheran faith by conforming to the Agende, that much maligned worship book.\textsuperscript{18} This is all true, but it needs to be nuanced. The reality is that the king was no ogre, no Hitler, and the Lutherans who stayed in Prussia ended up gaining the concessions they needed to stay truly Lutheran. The reality is that Kavel and the Old-Lutherans were uncharitable in designating

\begin{footnotes}

13 Kirchen-Agende für die Hof- und Domkirche in Berlin, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed, Dieterich, Berlin, 1822.


15 They protested in particular about the distribution formula (ibid 23): ‘Unser Herr und Heiland Jesus Christus spricht: “Das ist mein Leib, der für euch gegeben wird, das thut zu meinem Gedächtniss.” Unser Herr und Heiland Jesus Christus spricht: “Das ist der Kelch, das Neue Testament in meinem Blute, das für euch vergossen wird: solches thut zu meinem Gedächtniss.”’[Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ says: “This is my body, which is given for you, do this for the remembrance of me.” Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ says: “This is the cup, the new testament in my blood; do such for the remembrance of me.”] In Lutheran orders the wording was, and still is, direct and explicit: ‘This is the true body of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ’, etc.]

16 The correspondence can be seen in English translation in David Schubert, Kavel’s people, Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, 1985, 58–61,64.

17 David Schubert, ‘Should we be here?’, 147–56.


\end{footnotes}
the Reformed church and the union as ‘heathen’, they were stubborn in spurning the king’s attempts to grant them concessions and meet their objections, they were unorthodox in insisting that there is only one form of church government that is scriptural, and they were unjustified in regarding themselves as the only true Lutheran church.\(^\text{19}\)

The point made is this: while it was right to take a stand for the truth of the gospel, in this case the gospel in the sacrament, not all suffering in a persecution situation is suffering ‘for righteousness’ sake’. Sometimes in a context of strife and persecution Christians unnecessarily aggravate authorities or those with whom they are in conflict by acting in defiant, self-righteous, arrogant and loveless ways.

Problems continued in Australia. After a happy landing and promising beginnings there were soon ‘fightings within’ and then later ‘fears without’, to use the words of St Paul (2 Cor. 7:5). Lutherans in Australia suffered terribly because of their sad internal divisions. Out of their fragmentation into as many as nine small synods there emerged over a period of time (1874–1926) two Lutheran churches. Both were strongly confessional and yet they stayed divided until 1966. They spoke ill of each other, they despised each other, they made each other suffer, they all but persecuted each other. When representatives from both sides finally began to meet to find a way forward, the debates were often acrimonious. Until 1949, there were no prayers to begin or conclude their meetings because for some that would have been ‘sinful unionism’. Erich Renner, an active participant on the long path to Lutheran unity in Australia, has wryly remarked on more than one occasion that when he first joined the inter-synodical committee the meetings ‘were prayerless as the smokers on both “sides” (as they were called) pulled out their pipes and sent their smoke offerings no further than the ceiling of the meeting room’.\(^\text{20}\)

One of the things that brought Lutherans in Australia together was the ‘fear without’, that is, the terror coming from the outside—the pressure and persecution of two world wars.\(^\text{21}\)

The Lutherans who first came to South Australia, far from being persecuted, were well received by the predominantly English community. An English philanthropist and founder of the colony of South Australia, George Fife Angas, had heard of their plight in Prussia and personally assisted their passage and settlement in South Australia. Having fled oppression and persecution in Germany, they regarded their new country as a paradise of freedom and soon declared their loyalty to Queen Victoria and the government,\(^\text{22}\) even though they tended to form tight-knit communities around church and school, retaining their own language and culture. As devout confessional Lutherans, they had a strong theological position concerning government and one’s obligation to obey authorities instituted by God. There was no real issue anyway because of the good relations between Britain and Germany.

\(^{19}\) Schubert, ‘Should we be here?’, 149,150.
\(^{22}\) Schubert, Kavel’s people, 101–104.
This happy situation began to change in the late 19th century when Bismarck came to power and Germany became more aggressive in its quest for empire and colonies, also in the Pacific region. This had some impact, not a lot, on attitudes towards German people living in Australia. But when Britain declared war against Germany in August 1914 the situation deteriorated rapidly. While some people remained fair minded, many were influenced by the anti-German propaganda that was being churned out. There was a high level of propaganda because of the need to attract conscripts to replenish the ranks that were being decimated by the carnage in Europe. Church buildings were vandalised and burnt down. People of German descent and things German were vilified in the press. In South Australia all but three of the church’s 41 schools were closed. German language and literature were often prohibited, and even the use of German as a community or church language came under fire. All German place names were replaced with English names. Soon after the outbreak of war, President Theodor Nickel of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia declared the loyalty of his church in a letter to the prime minister23 but was nevertheless arrested and held for a month without cause at the Keswick barracks in Adelaide. A significant number of people of German descent, even some pastors, were arrested and put in internment camps. The persecution was quite severe, even to the point where injustices and acts of torture were not only perpetrated, but then covered up by the authorities.24 The worst example of this was the internment camp on Torrens Island in the Port River near Adelaide, where internees were treated so badly—including severe floggings, shootings, and bayoneting—that the officer in charge, Major Hawkes, was suspended, the camp was shut down, the prisoners were moved to New South Wales and the truth about what had happened was suppressed.25

Anti-German feeling lingered after the war. By the late twenties the situation was almost back to normal, but then the rise of Nazism in the 1930s set the stage for another tough period for Lutheranism in Australia. Persecution and injustice during World War II were not as severe as during the First War, and pale into insignificance when compared with what happened under the Third Reich and especially in Hitler’s death camps. It is significant that in the lead-up to the Second World War the President of the then Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia, Dr William Janzow, was not only aware of the plight of persecuted Jews in Germany, but actually sought ways and means to bring

23 Everard Leske, For faith and freedom, 150 (excerpts from the letter, dated 14 December 1914, are given).
them to Australia as refugees and find homes and support for them. At the outbreak of war the two Lutheran churches again quickly announced their loyalty to Australia and its government. Nevertheless, Lutherans had to bear the stigma of being ‘the German church’. There were unjust internments, media-driven vilification, vandalism and arson against church property. A company of soldiers with fixed bayonets stormed Immanuel College and Seminary in 1940 and arrested Professor Riedel who was unjustly interned for most of the war. German missionaries in New Guinea were treated harshly and unjustly by Australian military and government officials.

For the most part, however, this was not religious persecution, but racial. Lutherans were being persecuted not because they were Christians, but because they were regarded as Germans. One of the ironies of this is that the British royal family was hardly less German, and had more recent ties with Germany, than many Lutherans in Australia. In its toughest times of persecution Lutherans in Australia were not suffering directly for Christ and the gospel, but for their ethnicity as people of German descent. In terms of Matthew 5:10,11, they were not so much suffering for righteousness’ sake—that is, as Jesus says, ‘on my account’—as for the unrighteousness of racism and war hysteria.

And yet, from another perspective, it was a suffering for righteousness’ sake. Their situation was similar in some ways to that of ‘the exiles of the Dispersion’ in 1 Peter. Not all their suffering was specifically because they bore the name of Christ. Some, for example, suffered injustice because they were slaves. To them Peter writes:

> For it is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps (1 Pet 2:19-21).

In a similar way, Lutherans in Australia suffered many kinds of injustices during the period of the two world wars, not in the first instance because they were Christians, but because they were German or of German descent. The suffering of faithful Lutherans at that time was unfair and undeserved, and yet not in vain. The words of 1 Peter apply here: ‘If you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval’. There is a parallel here to the beatitude in Matthew 5:10, ‘Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven’. Their doing of righteousness is a response to the saving righteousness of God revealed in Jesus as the kingdom

---

26 Peter Monteath, 2005. Dear Dr Janzow: Australia’s Lutheran churches and refugees from Hitler’s Germany, Australian Humanities Press, Unley SA. A report about his advocacy for Jewish refugees appeared in the Times of London 18 November 1938 (p 2) that resulted in him receiving more than 70 letters from despairing people in Germany and Austria (some of the letters are printed in chapter 6, 61–106).


28 Christine J Lockwood, “We are here to round up Nazis”: the military raid on Immanuel College and Seminary in World War Two’, Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia, 36 (2008), 75-90.
breaks into an unrighteous world. As Bonhoeffer has commented: ‘It is important that
Jesus gives his blessing not merely to suffering incurred directly for the confession of his
name, but to suffering in any just cause. They receive the same promise as the poor, for
in persecution they are their equals in poverty’.29

Only the old generation of Lutherans in Australia can remember the sufferings that were
endured because of wartime anti-German feeling. Today Lutherans are no more and no
less likely to suffer for their faith than other Christians. In Australia religious freedom is
enshrined in law and protected by law. The state does not persecute Christians and there
are laws that protect all people of faith from such things as vilification, acts of violence
and arson. This does not mean Christians do not suffer for their faith. For example, it is
very hard for young men in Australia to go to church regularly and be open about their
faith—they are likely to be rubbedッシュ by workmates or team-mates in sport, mocked,
ridiculed and made to feel excluded. It is also hard for young Christian women, especially
in a university context, although the rejection and ridicule may not be as vicious. There is
a long history of anti-Christian feeling in Australia, going back to the convict beginnings
of European settlement in Australia in 1778. Some convicts were victims of a harsh
and unjust system, others were hardened criminals, and together they despised the
British system that exiled them to the ends of the earth—an establishment of which the
church was an integral part. These harsh beginnings contributed toward the general
godlessness and antipathy to Christianity for which Australia has a reputation, and with
the serious decline of most churches in recent decades Australia has become one of the
most secularised countries in the world. For all that, at this time in our history Lutherans,
like other Christians in Australia, are not being openly persecuted for their faith, and the
kinds of suffering they endure for their faith seem minor compared with what Christians
in other countries have had to endure over the last century, the century that is said to
have witnessed more Christian martyrs than all the others put together.30

Suffering for the sake of unrighteousness as a participation in the
skandalon of the cross

The noble army of martyrs. We admire them. We might even ponder what it would be
like to suffer true persecution for righteousness’ sake, for the gospel’s sake, for Christ’s
sake. But sometimes that is not what Christians suffer for. Instead they suffer for
unrighteousness’ sake: they suffer the evils and injustices that befall people in a fallen
world; they also suffer for the sins of the church and for the lovelessness Christians
sometimes show toward one another. We have seen how Lutherans in Australia suffered
unrighteousness from outside the church—ill-will, ethnic vilification and persecution in
the time of the two world wars. And we have seen how Lutherans in Australia suffered

30 ‘In two millennia of Christian history, about 70 million faithful have given their lives for the faith, and
of these, 45.5 million—fully 65%—were in the last century, according to Antonio Socci in The New
within the church when they turned on each other in loveless and bitter factionalism. Yet these kinds of suffering for unrighteousness’ sake, these too can be a participation in the righteous suffering of Christ for the unrighteousness of a sinful world. It becomes that when, despite the unrighteousness endured, ‘you do right and suffer for it…. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps’ (1 Pet. 2:20,21). There is also participation in Christ’s suffering when Christians acknowledge their own unrighteousness and turn in repentance and seek forgiveness at the cross.

Lutherans are not immune to another form of unrighteousness in the church that is currently receiving huge attention in Australian society, the media in particular. This of course is the scandal of child sexual abuse. Disgusting and horrific sins have been perpetrated against little ones by ordained persons, by members of religious orders, by those who are called Christians. The victims here are those who have been abused and their suffering is unspeakable, especially when wrongs have been hushed up and perpetrators have been sheltered and protected by those in authority in the church. The church has been targeted heavily in the media as more and more horrors come to light. It is becoming more and more evident that this is part of a wider and deeply troubling societal problem, and the Australian government has set up a Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.31

Our first instinct, when we hear of these things, is to distance ourselves and protest our innocence. It would be naïve to think that this is primarily a Roman Catholic problem. At the time of this writing the Lutheran Church of Australia has just put out an ‘information kit’ for congregations and LCA agencies in connection with the Royal Commission.32 In the section on prayer we are urged to ‘pray for those churches that might come under serious investigation by the Commission. We stand with them as brothers and sisters in Christ; when one part of the body suffers, we all suffer’.33 At the present time the church, and especially the Roman Catholic Church, is being targeted in the media, but the evidence suggests that this is a massive societal problem: that one out of every four or five persons comes to adulthood having suffered some kind of sexual abuse.34 This is a time of painful humiliation for the church everywhere and not least here in Australia. As Lutherans in Australia this humiliation affects us, too. In a fine article on this issue, Canadian Catholic priest Ron Rolheiser argues that we must not resile from this humiliation, but must carry this scandal biblically:

This scandal is putting us, the clergy and the church, where we belong, with the excluded ones. When Jesus died on the cross he was crucified between two

33 Ibid, 8.
thieves. There wasn’t just one cross at Calvary, but three. The onlookers weren’t looking at the scene and making distinctions, sizing Jesus up as innocent while judging the other two as guilty. Jesus was painted with the same brush as the others, seen as compromised and tainted. Carrying this scandal biblically means precisely to accept that kind of judgement and humiliation without protest. We need to carry it all, as Jesus carried everything, grace and sin, good and bad, without protesting his innocence, even though he was innocent.\textsuperscript{35}

Is there any meaning in such suffering for unrighteousness’ sake, suffering for the sins of others in the church that we get tarred with? Paul speaks, somewhat mysteriously, of ‘completing what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church’ (Col 1:24). Christ suffered for our redemption and sometimes Christ calls on us to suffer redemptively. Christ alone is the innocent victim who suffered for our salvation; he alone is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. But our suffering for his sake can also have a redemptive quality. For example, in the huge societal problem of sexual abuse less than one-percent is perpetrated by wicked clergy and religious, yet currently the focus is very much on the church. Rolheiser makes the point that our being scapegoated, our collective suffering of shame and humiliation for the heinous sins of some in the church, can actually be redemptive if it ‘helps society by bringing the issue of sexual abuse and the devastation of the human soul more into the open’.\textsuperscript{36}

\textbf{Conclusion}

Christ calls his disciples to take up the cross and follow him. The suffering that Christ calls us to is suffering for his name, suffering for righteousness’ sake. Not all suffering that Christians must endure is specifically for Christ’s name. But even when Christians suffer because of the unrighteousness and injustice of a fallen world, or because they are implicated by association in the unrighteousness perpetrated by unfaithful people in the church, this, too, is a participation in the seventh mark of the church:

Seventh, the holy Christian people are externally recognized by the holy possession of the sacred cross. They must endure every misfortune and persecution, all kinds of trials and evil from the devil, the world, and the flesh (as the Lord’s Prayer indicates) by inward sadness, timidity, fear, outward poverty, contempt, illness, and weakness, in order to become like their head, Christ.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{35} Ron Rolheiser, ‘On carrying a scandal biblically’, 7.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid, 6.
\textsuperscript{37} LW 41:165.