

Eyes, Ears, and All My Senses

Digital Ecclesiology, Worship, and the Body

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THE RELIGIOUS USE OF TECHNOLOGY happened upon a kairotic moment with the COVID-19 pandemic. The illness and ensuing stay-at-home orders, physical distancing recommendations, and quarantine restrictions prompted many congregations to employ technology in new ways. With stunning rapidity, congregations installed cameras, aimed them at the altar, and began streaming worship services online. Almost overnight, pastors turned their sanctuaries into livestreaming panopticons. Congregations that had previously only understood themselves as local gatherings suddenly became hybrid communities with both a physical and digital presence.

Christian communities are now faced with adjudicating their decisions—either ending their online worship or continuing it indefinitely. Research conducted by the Network for New Media, Religion, and Digital Culture Studies has found that pastors and congregational leaders are inundated with new questions related to hybrid worship and digital technology in general. In a 2021 report on the role of technology in churches during the COVID-19 pandemic, researchers concluded:

More questions seemed to emerge than answers. Questions include whether congregations should return fully online, fully offline, or in hybrid form, what the implications are for moving online, and finally, and potentially most important, what the liturgical implications of online worship are.¹

Amid the panoply of questions that arise when a congregation engages in online worship, one particular question has the greatest saliency: “A major question and theme among church leadership is how to balance, in the long run, both in-person and livestreamed services. One church pastor identified this as his greatest challenge for the church.”² This research makes it clear that pastors and congregations are struggling to find an ecclesiological equilibrium after a dizzying influx of new technologies, practices, and possibilities.

While many pastors and congregations have only recently explored ecclesiological questions related to digital technologies, the academic field of digital religion has engaged this

topic for several decades. Digital religion has emerged as the primary field for scholarly discourse on how digital technologies are shaping religious groups and cultures. According to Heidi Campbell, a leading scholar in the field, digital religion is “the technological and cultural space that is evoked when we talk about how online and offline religious spheres have become blended.”³ Digital religion is an interdisciplinary field that brings together scholars from disparate disciplines such as religious studies, media studies, theology, sociology, human-computer interaction, computer science, and others.

Since its inception in the 1990s and early 2000s, digital religion has undergone numerous waves of research.⁴ The first wave of digital religion research described new and novel ways in which religion was engaging with the internet. The second wave of digital religion research focused on categorizing various forms of religious expression online. A third wave of digital religion research sought theoretical and interpretive lenses for analyzing religion online. A fourth wave sought to synthesize the previous waves while focusing on further describing people’s media practices in their everyday lives.⁵ A fifth wave of digital religion research has been proposed by Campbell and Ruth Tsuria in the second edition of *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practices in Digital Media*. According to Campbell and Tsuria, this fifth wave of digital religion research involves an explicit focus on digital theology. This emphasis on digital theology “[a]llows practitioners of digital religion their own voice within scholarship . . . [T]his current fifth wave offers a space for the ongoing entanglement of interdisciplinary work, while accounting for the real uses and challenges of digi-

1. The Network for New Media, Religion, and Digital Culture Studies, *When Pastors put on the “Tech Hat”: How Churches Digitized during Covid-19* (College Station, TX: The Network for New Media, Religion, and Culture Studies, 2021), 21, <https://doi.org/10.21423/pastorstechhat>.
2. The Network for New Media, Religion, and Digital Culture Studies, *When Pastors put on the “Tech Hat,”* 21.
3. Heidi Campbell, *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds* (London: Routledge, 2013), 3–4.
4. Heidi Campbell and Giulia Evolvi, “Contextualizing Current Digital Religion Research on Emerging Technologies,” *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies* 2, no. 1 (January 2020): 5–17, <https://doi.org/10.1002/hbe2.149>.
5. Campbell and Evolvi, “Contextualizing Current Digital Religion Research on Emerging Technologies,” 7.

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tal religion.”⁶ This fifth wave of digital religion research gives priority to practitioners—pastors and congregations—as the primary interlocutors deliberating how the church should best live in a digital age.

Digital ecclesiology is actively linking up with other disciplines in order to develop new insights about technologically mediated ministry.

As pastors and congregations struggle to find an ecclesiological equilibrium amid this influx of new technologies and practices, a nascent field of inquiry known as digital ecclesiology is developing. Digital ecclesiology is a more recent and narrowly focused subtopic within the broader field of digital religion. Campbell, in a special edition of *Ecclesial Practices*, says that scholars who consider digital ecclesiology a serious field of study “understand the term as creating a conversation about the relationship of the Christian church to emerging technologies and consider the extent to which this changes contemporary ecclesiological understandings.”⁷ While clearly related to the well-established theological topic of ecclesiology, digital ecclesiology considers how emerging technologies and technologically mediated practices are transforming contemporary ecclesiological understandings.

This emerging field of inquiry, according to Campbell, has generated an array of new research questions coalescing around the common themes of ecclesiology and technology:

Taken together, we can see some common themes surfacing through this inquiry. Digital ecclesiology is a phrase used by individuals to reflect on the strategies used, and the motivations behind, churches’ negotiation with digital media. It points to the need to unmask the cultural and theological conceptions that lie behind different definitions of church and assumptions about technology. The idea of a digital ecclesiology invites a robust conversation about what the theology of the church should look like in a digital age. Specifically, it asks church leaders and theologians to consider what factors should inform choices relat-

ed to technology use in liturgy, worship, and mission, and to carefully reflect on how such decision making might transform or support established church traditions.⁸

Campbell suggests that digital ecclesiology is actively questioning what factors should inform choices related to technology use in liturgy, worship, and mission. In asking what factors should inform choices related to digital ecclesiology, Campbell is essentially asking what is needed for a robust conversation about what the theology of the church should look like in a digital age. This article will argue that Christian anthropology—more specifically, a first article understanding of worship—is needed for thoughtful consideration of how the church should best live in a digital age.

DIGITAL ECCLESIOLOGY: REACHING OUT OR REACHING IN?

While existing prior to the coronavirus pandemic, digital ecclesiology gained considerable exigency as a result of the global pandemic. According to Campbell and John Dyer in *Ecclesiology for a Digital Church: Theological Reflections on a New Normal*, “To date there is little in-depth reflection that focuses primarily on theological concerns related to church praxis and ecclesial identity in relation to issues raised by the global coronavirus pandemic.”⁹ Theologians and pastors must navigate these difficult questions in an environment in which, according to Campbell and Dyer, “very little systematic and concentrated attention has been given to how integration of digital technology in church ministry and worship may have broader theological implications.”¹⁰ This article—as well as this entire issue of *LOGIA*—will seek to fill some of this scholarly void.¹¹ Some theologians have suggested that digital ecclesiology should reach out and engage epistemological approaches from beyond the field of theology. There is a tendency among digital ecclesiology scholars to borrow theories, methodologies, or insights from other disciplines. Like hypertext, digital ecclesiology is actively linking up with other disciplines in order to develop new insights about technologically mediated ministry. For example, Paul Soukup uses the language of “theological affordances” to describe how ecclesiological traditions can either allow or disallow certain actions related to technology. The language of “affordances” comes from the design scholar Donald Norman and his understanding that there is a relationship between object and agent that determines how an object can be used.¹² Appropriating the language of affordances for

6. Heidi Campbell and Ruth Tsuria, *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2022), 10.
7. Heidi Campbell, “Introduction: Studying Digital Ecclesiology: How Churches are Being Informed by Digital Media and Cultures,” *Ecclesial Practices* 7, no. 1 (April 2020): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22144417-bja10001>.

8. Campbell, “Introduction,” 4.
9. Heidi Campbell and John Dyer, *Ecclesiology for a Digital Church: Theological Reflections on a New Normal* (London: SCM Press, 2022), 2.
10. Campbell and Dyer, *Ecclesiology for a Digital Church*, 3.
11. Additionally, my pending PhD dissertation, “Put It on the Scales: Bringing Reflective Equilibrium to Digital Ecclesiology,” seeks to further fill this scholarly void.
12. Donald Norman, *The Design of Every Day Things*, revised and expanded ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2013).

use within digital ecclesiology, Soukup transplants this concept within Avery Dulles' schema¹³ of various models of the church. Soukup argues that specific ecclesiological models (that is, institution, sacramental, herald) function as theological affordances that make certain actions either possible or impossible. According to Soukup, "ecclesiological traditions can limit church actions in uncertain times, channeling it toward the old."¹⁴ He argues:

The combination of the affordances of ecclesiological traditions and the affordances of technological possibility can correct the limitations of each: where the technology may foster individualism, the ecclesiology counters with community. Affordances do not guarantee outcomes, but they do describe possibilities.¹⁵

Borrowing the language of affordances from the fields of design and user-experience, Soukup uses this non-theological concept to elucidate the project of digital ecclesiology.

Another example of digital ecclesiology reaching out to other fields comes in the work of Jonas Kurlberg. Drawing on behavioral scientist B. J. Fogg's concept of persuasive technology, Kurlberg invites a recognition in how designed technologies have the capacity to sway an individual's behaviors and thoughts. Kurlberg connects this well-established concept from the world of technology and applies it to the liturgy as a mediated and formative practice. According to Kurlberg, "[L]iturgy could be understood as a form of persuasive technology"¹⁶ that inculcates a community through a formative experience. Kurlberg explores how the liturgy, not unlike social media, directs individuals and groups to behave and think in specific ways through repetition and emotional triggers. Functioning as a persuasive technology, liturgy shapes worshippers' deep-seated hopes and desires by directing them toward certain ultimate aims. According to Kurlberg,

Framing liturgy as persuasive technology, then, gives license to a discerning assessment of the liturgical potential of digital technology . . . it forces us to both reconsider past and present liturgies, and their purposes, as well as take seriously the formative and liturgical power of technology.¹⁷

As with Soukup's concept of theological affordances, Kurlberg's notion of liturgy as persuasive technology arises

through a transdisciplinary conversation that engages concepts beyond theology.

The very language of "digital ecclesiology" prioritizes the digital over the ecclesiological.

It is inevitable that digital ecclesiology will reach out and engage concepts from fields such as the philosophy of technology, digital humanities, human-computer-interaction, and other disciplines. Nevertheless, prematurely reaching outside of theology gives priority to the logic of digital media so that theology is forced to comport to the rule of technology. Even the very language of "digital ecclesiology" prioritizes the digital over the ecclesiological. Pastors and congregations would do well to think about ecclesiology so as to give priority to the permanence of doctrine that now lives and moves and has its being in a digital age. There is nothing wrong with reaching outside of theology to engage concepts from other fields; however, foundational theological concepts must serve as the matrix of understanding for these external conceptions.

ALL MY SENSES: WORSHIP AND THE BODY

In order to demonstrate how foundational theological concepts can provide understanding for how best the church should live in a time of technological change, I will argue that Christian anthropology in general and the bodily senses in particular are essential for thoughtful reflection on ecclesiology in a digital age. One cannot address the myriad of questions that arise with online worship apart from a robust understanding of the human body as created by God and what happens to that body when it engages with digital media.

Martin Luther, in his explanation of the first article of the Apostles' Creed, offers a basic understanding of what it means to be an embodied human creature: "I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them." Luther invites an understanding of creatureliness in terms of the bodily sense organs such as the eyes, ears, and corporeal members. Creatureliness and the bodily senses are inexorably connected. Scripture speaks of the bodily senses both discretely and collectively, individually and communally. For example, it is possible to isolate a single sense within a single person: "for my eyes have seen your salvation" (Luke 2:30). It is also possible to isolate a single sense within a community of persons: "We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you" (2 Chron 20:12). Thus, sensory creatures have the capacity to consider which of the bodily senses are being engaged and which of the senses are being neglected. Furthermore, Scripture speaks of sensory perception,

13. Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (Garden City, NJ: Image Books, 1987).
14. Paul Soukup, "A Practical Challenge to Ecclesiology and Self-Understanding of the Christian Churches," in *Ecclesiology for a Digital Church: Theological Reflections on a New Normal*, eds. Heidi Campbell and John Dyer (London: SCM Press, 2022), 40.
15. Paul Soukup, "A Practical Challenge," 40.
16. Jonas Kurlberg, "Liturgy as Persuasive Technology: Exploring Liturgical Practices in Online Worship," in *Ecclesiology for a Digital Church: Theological Reflections on a New Normal*, eds. Heidi Campbell and John Dyer (London: SCM Press, 2022), 132.
17. Kurlberg, "Liturgy as Persuasive Technology," 135–136.

such as when Paul encounters the sights and sounds of Athens and declares, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious” (Acts 17:22). While this does not exhaust the fullness of creatureliness or Christian anthropology, it is clear that to be a human creature is to possess and depend upon the bodily senses.

Luther understood worship to be a bodily and sensory experience.

Beyond creatureliness in general, Luther understood worship to be a bodily and sensory experience. Christ comes near to worshippers by means of the eyes, ears, and all the bodily senses:

God has given us Baptism, the Sacrament of the Altar, and absolution to bring Christ very close to us, so that we can have Him not only in our heart but also on our tongue, so that we can feel Him, grasp Him, and touch Him . . . He wants to come to you, plant Himself before your very eyes, press Himself into your hands, and say, “Just listen to Me and take hold of Me, give Me eye and ear; there you have Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar. Open your mouth, let Me place My hand on your head. I give you this water which I sprinkle over your head.”¹⁸

Although worship is thoroughly spiritual, it is ineffably physical. This insight is not limited to Luther or the Lutheran tradition; it is echoed within other traditions such as Reformed, Eastern Orthodox, and Roman Catholic.¹⁹ A first-article understanding of worship reveals how God draws near to his people through both word and sacrament so that his grace is heard and felt, tasted and touched, by sensory creatures.

Working from a Christian anthropological approach, John Kleinig further extrapolates the relationship between worship and the bodily senses.²⁰ Sensory engagement with God in the divine service of worship is mediated by bodies. Kleinig emphasizes the interaction between the means of grace and the bodily members through which it is delivered and received:

[God] deals with us through his embodied word—the spoken word that is preached and taught with a human mouth; the saving word that is heard and received with human

ears; the living word that is enacted with human hands for people with human bodies in baptism and delivered with human hands into human mouths in the Lord’s Supper . . . All this means that Jesus cares for us and our bodies most certainly and tangibly in the divine service of worship.²¹

Not only does God draw near to sensory creatures in the divine service of worship, but sensory creatures are used by God to deliver his means of grace and the gospel of Christ Jesus. As worship engages the bodily members and senses, worshippers respond with thanksgiving and praise as they rely on the Holy Spirit to “Give us lips to sing Thy glory, / Tongues Thy mercy to proclaim, / Throats that shout the hope that fills us, / Mouths to speak Thy holy name.”²²

Just as the divine service of worship is mediated by bodies, it is composed of bodies and dependent upon Christ’s body. Paul Griffiths, in an essay entitled “Christians and the Church,” argues that the supremely real body is Christ’s body; the body belonging to the second person of the Trinity is the body by which all other bodies must be thought about and understood.²³ Griffiths argues that any other body is derivative from and dependent upon the reality of Christ’s body; the degree of reality that particular bodies have depends upon the degree to which they participate in Christ’s body. The church is a real body—the Body of Christ—because it derives from and depends on Christ’s body:

For Christians, the Church, because it is Christ’s body, is the paradigm of community: all others are understood to be such in terms of this paradigm, and assessed as to their goodness in terms of their approximation to it. Once again, this mode of approach provides criteria for distinguishing between real and imaginary social bodies or communities.²⁴

The body talk that Christians engage in is not empty linguistic allusion, but instead a confession of the church’s utter dependence upon Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

The church is a real body because of its dependence upon Christ’s body. The church depends upon Christ’s body as it gathers around the word and partakes of the Eucharist, thereby eating what it is. The church, therefore, ought not be thought of as an imaginary social body or community, but instead as the embodied gathering of a very real body. Since the Body of Christ is a real body, this has implications for how we bring our individual bodies to bear upon this real body. Griffiths argues that, unlike an imaginary body such as a nation-state or political party, “Real bodies require a degree of loyalty and commitment not properly given to imaginary bodies.”²⁵ The degree to

18. Luther, *Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, Chapters 1–4*, LW 22: 420–21.

19. This topic is discussed in greater detail in my article “Worship in the Metaverse,” *Religion and Liberty* 35, no. 4 (October 2022).

20. John Kleinig, *Wonderfully Made: A Protestant Theology of the Body* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2021).

21. Kleinig, *Wonderfully Made: A Protestant Theology of the Body*, 78.

22. LSB 578, “Thy Strong Word.”

23. Paul Griffiths, “Christians and the Church,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Theological Ethics*, eds. Gilbert Meilaender and William Werpehowski (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

24. Griffiths, “Christians and the Church,” 401.

25. Griffiths, “Christians and the Church,” 403.

which we give ourselves and the extent to which we will be inconvenienced or even endangered depends on whether or not something is a real or imaginary social body.

When we bring our bodies to worship, we are making the Body of Christ identifiable for all to see. David Yeago has argued that, in the bodily gathering of the church,

[T]he church at the same time becomes the concrete locus where Christ's life is present in and for the world. That the church is the body of Christ is therefore no mere trope but a serious affirmation. The church is the locus of the identifiability and availability of Jesus Christ for others, just as we are all identifiable by and available to one another by virtue of our bodies.²⁶

Bringing our bodies to corporate worship concretizes the Body of Christ so that the Word become flesh dwells within the world as a public witness. The public witness of our bodies gathered together in worship can have a formative impact on the world. The body and soul, eyes, ears, members, reason, and senses of others unavoidably perceives the incarnate gathering of the Body of Christ that happens in the corporate worship of the church.

In summary, worship is an inextricably bodily experience. God's gracious promises in Christ Jesus are heard and felt, tasted and touched, by sensory creatures. The human body is used by God in the divine service to deliver his means of grace and the gospel of Christ Jesus. The church is a real body because it exists by virtue of the supremely real body of Christ. And, finally, Jesus Christ, through the corporate gathering of our bodies in worship, makes himself identifiable for the world.

DIGITALLY MEDIATING THE BODY: A DISMEMBERED BODY

Does any or all of this body talk preclude digital engagement? Can God's gracious promises in Christ Jesus be heard and felt, tasted and touched, by sensory creatures online? Is the church no longer a real body when it uses digital media to extend the message of the gospel to distant members or bodies that are far from the sanctuary?

In order to begin answering these questions, one must consider what happens to the human body when it interacts with digital media. The influential media scholar Marshall McLuhan has lucidly articulated what media does to the human body. McLuhan, in his books *Understanding Media: Extensions of Man* and *The Medium is the Message*, argues that media serves as an extension of various parts of the human body. Looking at a digital photo enables our eyes to be transported elsewhere. Listening to a digital audio file allows our ears to be extended elsewhere. Similarly, a digital video extends both the visual and auditory senses so that our eyes and ears can

be located somewhere entirely different. Meanwhile, the other bodily senses remain where they are: the tactile and chemical senses remain with the rest of the body while the visual and auditory senses are extended somewhere far away.

The public witness of our bodies gathered together in worship can have a formative impact on the world.

McLuhan argued that this extension of the human senses has a tremendous impact on the human body and our perception of the world: "The extension of any one sense alters the way we think and act—the way we perceive the world. When these ratios change, men change."²⁷ McLuhan described this as "self-amputation," wherein media temporarily amputates our eyes and ears from the rest of our body. Just as an actual amputee must adjust to life with different bodily ratios, digital amputees must adjust to life with technologically altered sense ratios. We must accommodate having our eyes and ears engaging messages that are disconnected from our hands, mouths, and noses. Digital media rearranges our sense ratios so that parts of our body—but not our whole body—is extended elsewhere.

What exactly, therefore, is at stake in our digital media use? Nothing less than the integrated and harmonious functioning of our bodily senses. This is known as common sense (*sensus communis*). When all the bodily senses—body and soul, eyes, ears, members, reason and senses—interact as a cohesive whole, then we are experiencing common sense or a communion of the senses. However, a rupture in the bodily senses results in a loss of common sense. Digital media ruptures our common sense by amputating part of our body away from the rest of it. Watching a digital broadcast of a worship service extends our ears and eyes into the sanctuary while the rest of our body and senses remain elsewhere. This means that we are partially present, but not fully present. We are there, but not fully there. To be certain, the same body parts are being used in online worship and in-person worship, yet the sense ratios are different. And, if McLuhan is right, that means that the way worshippers think and act and perceive the world will be different as well.

In this regard, there is a substantial anthropological delta between in-person worship and online worship. This delta is described by Antonio Spadaro in his book *Cyberthology*:

If I sit on my couch at home and listen, with a very sophisticated sound system, to a compact disc recording of a

26. David Yeago, "The Church as Polity? The Lutheran Context of Robert W. Jenson's Ecclesiology," in *Trinity, Time, and Church: A Response to the Theology of Robert W. Jenson*, ed. Colin E. Gunton (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011), 203.

27. Marshall McLuhan, *The Medium is the Message* (Berkeley, CA: Gingko Press, 2001), 41.

symphony, can I say that I participated in that concert? In reality, the liturgical event is never technologically reproducible, because it incorporates in its *hic et nunc*.²⁸

From a first-article perspective, there is a certain here-and-now element to corporate worship; broadcasting the worship service that takes place in the sanctuary is offering a digitally distanced reproduction of something existing elsewhere. According to Spadaro, it is the difference between attending the symphony with your whole body and listening to a recording of the symphony with only your ears.

Liturgical habituation brings about character formation.

The anthropological delta between in-person worship and online worship may also include differences in how worshippers act. If digital media results in changes in sense ratios so that worshippers are only partially involved—eyes and ears apart from the rest of the body—then it is possible that character formation will differ as well. If digital media leads online worshippers to merely listen and watch rather than respond, sing, and participate in the worship service, then this may have implications for Christian character formation. Paul Griffiths argues that Christian worship has implications for Christian moral transformation:

[T]he individual's body of flesh is written upon corporate worship, made a member of the church as social body by liturgical habituation . . . The spectacle of Christian wor-

28. Antonio Spadaro, *Cybertheology: Thinking Christianity in the Era of the Internet* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 79.

ship, when participated in rather than observed, is morally transformative in opposition to the transformations wrought by secular spectacles such as sport, the liturgies of war, or the liturgies of money.²⁹

Other theologians such as Bernd Wannenwetsch, Gifford Grobien, and James K. A. Smith have similarly argued that liturgical habituation brings about character formation.

CONCLUSION

Does this anthropological understanding of worship call for a rejection of all forms of digitally mediated worship? Far from it. To be certain, the Holy Spirit can and does work through the word proclaimed, even when that word comes to us through digital mediation and invisible waves, speakers, and screens.³⁰ Nevertheless, ecclesiology in a digital age must attend to the ways in which digital media rearranges bodily sense ratios, thereby altering the embodied experience of worship. The anthropological delta between in-person worship and online worship goes beyond the sense ratios of seeing and hearing; it can also affect what worshippers habitually do. Therefore, digitally mediated worship has implications for not only the human body but also individual and communal Christian character formation.³¹ Since so much is at stake in these practices, much more theological and scholarly work needs to be done in the area of ecclesiology in a digital age—especially from a confessional Lutheran perspective—in order to bring about reflective equilibrium regarding how best the church should live in a digital age. **LOGIA**

29. Griffiths, “Christians and the Church,” 407.

30. This topic is discussed in greater detail in my essay “Virtual Christianity: The Full Gospel and Its Fullness,” in *Luther's Large Catechism with Annotations and Contemporary Applications* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2023).

31. This topic is discussed in greater detail in my article “To Be Online or Not To Be Online: Uncovering the Roots of the Debates concerning Online Worship” (*Journal of Lutheran Ethics* 22, no. 5 [October 2022]).

ERRATA

LOGIA's Eastertide 2023 issue (Volume XXXII no. 2), *Formula Missae*, contained a regrettable typographical error on page 35 in Michael Holmen's translation of J. P. Koehler's article “Our Position on Scripture.” In the first paragraph of section 2, the phrase “modern מְדֹרֶן” should have read “modern theology.” The whole paragraph as it should have been printed is:

Scholarship demands that the doctrine of inspiration cannot be put at the beginning of the theological task. To do so would be the death of all free research. No matter how many different schools “modern theology” might be divided into, they all comply with this demand. It is their own peculiarity to be in conversation with so-called scholarship, more or less, and to be as friendly with scholarship as possible.