

CONCORDIA
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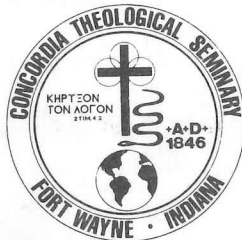
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1985

Announcements

The Ninth Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions

Sponsored by the
International Center of Lutheran Confessional Studies
Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, Indiana
January 22-24, 1986

“The 450th Anniversary of the Wittenberg Concord”

Wednesday, January 22

- 2:00 Introduction: The Current State of Sacramental Theology
- 2:30 James Kittelson: The History Surrounding the Wittenberg Concord
- 3:00 M. Eugene Osterhaven: The Wittenberg Concord: A Reformed View
- 5:30 Dinner
- 7:30 Symposium Concert—Kramer Chapel
- 8:30 Reception—Commons

Thursday, January 23

- 7:00 Breakfast
- 8:30 Morning Prayer
- 9:00 Richard Shuta: The Sacramental Presence in Luther's Theology
- 10:00 Eugene Klug: The Sacramental Presence in Lutheran Orthodoxy
- 11:00 Arnold Koelpin: The Sacramental Presence in the Theology of the Synodical Conference
- 12:30 Lunch

- 2:00 Organ Recital
- 2:30 Vespers
- 3:00 Kenneth Korby: The Use of John 6 in Lutheran Sacramental Piety
- 4:00 Lowell Green: The Use of John 6 in the Lutheran-Reformed Debate on the Lord's Supper
- 6:30 Banquet

Friday, January 24

7:00 Breakfast

8:30 Morning Prayer

Morning Topic:

Are Lutherans Closer to the Reformed Today Than
They Were at Wittenberg?

9:00 Robert Jenson: A View from within the New Lutheran Church

10:00 Robert Preus: Views from the Position of the Synodical Conference

11:00 M. Eugene Osterhaven: A View from the Conservative Reformed
Position

11:30 Panel Response

12:15 Closing Vespers

12:30 Lunch

The Speakers

Lowell Green, pastor of Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Buffalo, New York (LC-MS).

Robert Jenson, professor at Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania (LCA).

James Kittelson, professor of history and department chairman at Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

Eugene Klug, professor of systematic theology and department chairman at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Arnold Koelpin, professor of religion and history at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota (WELS).

Kenneth Korby, pastor of Chatham Fields Lutheran Church, Chicago, Illinois (LC-MS).

Paul Maier, campus pastor (LC-MS) and professor of history at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Kurt Marquart, professor of systematic theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

M. Eugene Osterhaven, professor of systematic theology at Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan (Reformed Church of America) and participant in Lutheran-Reformed Dialogue.

Robert Preus, president of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, and professor of systematic theology.

David Scaer, academic dean and professor of systematic and exegetical theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Richard Shuta, professor of religion and department chairman at Concordia College, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Registrations are due January 3, 1986. Please enclose payment with your registration.

Registration:

Registration fee (includes one banquet ticket): \$60 per person.

Registration fee with spouse (includes two banquet tickets): \$75.

Registration fee for Pastor Emeritus (includes one banquet ticket): \$45

Registration fee for Pastor Emeritus and spouse (includes two banquet tickets): \$55

Registration fee for one day only (does not include banquet ticket): \$20.

Housing:

Limited campus housing is available with 2 people per room at \$8 a night per person.

For off-campus housing call or write:

Don Hall's Guesthouse, 1313 W. Washington Center Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46825. 1-800-348-1999.

Sheraton Inn, 5250 Distribution Drive, Fort Wayne, IN 46825. 1-800-325-3535.

Signature Inn, 1734 W. Washington Center Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46825. 1-800-822-5252.

Marriott Inn, 305 East Washington Center, Fort Wayne, IN 46825.
219-484-0411.

Coliseum Motor Inn, 505 Coliseum Boulevard East, Fort Wayne,
IN 46825. 219-482-8161.

Meals:

Tickets for Wednesday supper, Thursday breakfast and lunch.

Friday breakfast and lunch: \$16.50 per person.

Banquet ticket only: \$12.50 per ticket.

Transportation:

Transportation from public carriers is available at \$10 per trip with
48 hours advance notice to symposium coordinator.

Send requests for registration with the proper fees to: The Symposium
on the Lutheran Confessions, Concordia Theological Seminary, 6600
North Clinton Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 46825; or call (219)
482-9611 for further information.

A Preliminary Schedule for the
First Annual Missions Congress
Concordia Theological Seminary
April 25-27
“God’s Mission in Action”

Friday, April 25

- 1:00 Introduction
- 1:15 Missions in the Missouri Synod Today
- 2:00 Missions: St. Paul and the Early Church
- 3:15 Luther the Missionary
- 4:15 Missouri’s Mission Beginnings
- 6:00 Banquet: A Successful Mission Model

Saturday, April 26

- 8:15 Chapel
- 8:30 Missions in Action with a Partner Church
- 9:30 Missions from Another Point of View
- 10:30 Brunch
- 11:45 Church Growth: A Model for Missions?
- 12:15 Panel on Church Growth

Sunday April 27

Mission Themes in Area Churches

Note: Speakers have not been listed for the various topics because, although they have been contacted, not all have confirmed their participation. The exact title of the above topics may be revised by the individual presentors before a final schedule is announced, but the basic structure will be as outlined above. Dates and times are firm.

John Bugenhagen and the *Comma Johanneum*

Franz Posset

1. The Setting (Wittenberg in 1527)

John Bugenhagen, almost two years younger than Luther, was the professor's pastor and student at the same time. As pastor at Wittenberg he heard Luther's confession when the reformer thought he would die in the summer of 1527—ten years after the publication of the ninety-five theses on indulgences and during the worst months of Luther's mid-life crisis.¹ Luther offered a course on John's First Epistle later in the summer and the autumn of 1527² in which Bugenhagen most likely participated.

While the majority of the professors and students had left Wittenberg at that time because of the pestilence, and the University officially had moved to Jena for the time being, Luther stayed and so did Bugenhagen. Luther mentioned in a letter that he himself and the pastor Bugenhagen together with his two chaplains, Georg Rörer and Johannes Mantel, had remained in town,³ obviously because Luther was convinced that for certain people, at least, it is not allowed to flee from death.⁴ Pastors belong to this group of people—a conviction he mentioned in his lecture on 1 John of September 30, 1527. According to the printed version of Luther's commentary on 1 John (published by Neumann in 1708), he is reported to have declared: "There are also other occasions, as for example, when there is a pestilence. Then, preachers should remain in order that they may lay down their lives for the brethren."⁵ This was exactly the situation at Wittenberg in 1527. It appears to be a correct assumption that the preacher Bugenhagen was an obedient student of Luther's teaching in this regard, for he stayed in Wittenberg during the plague. So did the two previously mentioned chaplains. One of them, Rörer, was Luther's "graduate student" in the course of 1 John. Rörer's notes on Luther's lectures on 1 John are the most important source for our investigation on the reformer's position on the *Comma Johanneum*. Whether Bugenhagen also was a course participant can only indirectly be determined from another one of Luther's letters, in which Luther mentioned that Bugenhagen's and Rörer's families had moved in with him at the former Augustinian monastery where Luther had his permanent home even after his marriage. Luther wrote, furthermore, that at that time his home looked more like a hospital; as Rörer's wife lay dying there, Bugenhagen suffered from constipation and had to take a purgative, Luther's baby John was teething, and his wife Kate was expecting their second child soon.⁶ Even if Bugenhagen

was not directly a course participant and thus would not have directly learned Luther's position on 1 John, it is most likely that he heard about it when living under the same roof with the Luthers and the Rörers. In order to understand Bugenhagen's position on 1 John 5:7, it must be considered in relationship to Luther's position, about which he lectured in his home.

2. Luther's Lecture on the *Comma Johanneum*

There are several sources which reveal the professor's opinion about 1 John 5:7. There is the *Table Talk*⁷ and three students' lecture notes.⁸ The statement in Luther's *Table Talk* (No. 7101) does not appear to have originated in the setting of the lectures on 1 John in 1527, but rather stemmed from a situation when Luther dealt with his German translation of the New Testament:

"There are three who give testimony," etc. (1 John 5). Why is this locus not translated in the German translation? He responded: I and others believe that it is sort of added, that it is added by some ignoramus. We do not want, however, to translate it because of the word "testimony," because in heaven there will be no need for a testimony . . . as it is written: "we will see God face to face." There, the Trinity will declare Himself.⁹

Never did Luther use 1 John 5:7 as proof for the doctrine of the Trinity.¹⁰ Who is the "ignoramus" who inserted verse 7 into the text? Luther's answer to this question is preserved in lecture notes. One set of these is labeled as scholia,¹¹ the other two, as student lecture notes, one set written by Rörer and the other attributed to Probst.

Like the *Table Talk*, the scholia (=S) includes a reference to 1 Corinthians 13, where Paul speaks of the fact that what is imperfect will be "evacuated," S refers to verse 10 while the *Table Talk* quotes verse 12. Both S and the *Table Talk* show that Luther argued with the word "testimony," saying that 1 John 5:7 is superfluous because in heaven one does not need any testimony or faith, because one will see God as He is (1 John 3:2). We may conclude that both sources, S and the *Table Talk*, reveal virtually the same position of Luther on the *Comma Johanneum*. Source-critically speaking, however, the student lecture notes (R and P) are more precise than a report on a remark at table or the source S, which are both more fragmentary in character than the two students' notes.

What did Luther teach in his course on 1 John on 30 October 1527, when he came to speak on 5:7? P (and thus Neumann's printed version of 1708, upon which the American Edition of Luther's works

is based) reads as follows: “. . .but this verse seems to have been inserted by the Catholics because of the Arians, yet not aptly.”¹² The “ignoramus” of the *Table Talk* is identified by Luther (according to P) as “Catholics” opposed to Arius. Since P is available only in the printed version of the eighteenth century, one could take this explanation as a redactor’s interpolation. Such contamination is possible considering the editorial work that went into the printed version of which the original is lost. Furthermore, P has no reference to 1 Corinthians 13. What P reports Luther to have said is that John did not speak *passim* (without discernment) about witnesses in heaven but on earth.¹³ In the light of this evidence one is dependent upon the chaplain Rörer (R), the “graduate student” in Luther’s course on 1 John. R reads as follows:

“For there are three.” This locus the Greek codices do not have. It seems that it was inserted ineptly by the eagerness of ancient theologians against Arius, if one looks at the analogy of faith. Where God is seen, there is no need for a testimony, but here it is needed, here we have it in the word, and we do not want to have it any other way, since there is no testimony in heaven and no faith, which are of this life. Therefore, we leave out this text. Also the subsequent text ridicules this verse. And I can make fun of it easily because there is no more inept locus for the Trinity.¹⁴

This is the most precise stenogram of Luther’s lecture on the *Comma Johanneum*. Essentially, Luther said the same as in the *Table Talk* and in S and P. According to R, Luther identified the “ignoramus” with “ancient theologians” opposed to the Arians, which is the same group as the “Catholics” of P. Thus Luther in the classroom must have made reference to these “Catholics” as “ancient theologians.” P and R complement each other, and we may be rather certain about Luther’s position on 1 John 5:7.

The idea that verse 7 is inserted by anti-Arians was expressed in Erasmus’ annotations to the New Testament,¹⁵ where Luther probably read it first since he used Erasmus’ edition of the Greek-Latin New Testament. Beyond the information in the *Table Talk*, in S and in P, R mentions Luther considering verse 7 inept because of its contextual incongruity (*et sequens textus eludit hunc locum*) Thus, Luther continued in his lecture, “I can make easily fun of it, because there is no more inept locus for the Trinity.”

Summarizing Luther’s position on the *Comma*, we must point out that Luther presupposed the trinitarian faith, but he does not use 1 John 5:7 as a proof-text for this doctrine. He considered verse 7 as

superfluous because of its friction with the immediate context and because, after all, the Greek codices do not include it. In the lecture on 1 John 5:7 he went a step further than in the *Table Talk*, where only the reference to the self-declaration of the Trinity and to "some ignoramus" is made. In the lecture the professor identified the "ignoramus" as ancient Catholic theologians whose efforts may be ridiculed. Luther did not see any need for verse 7 and, therefore, excluded it from the New Testament as Erasmus had done in his first editions of his Greek-Latin New Testament. Luther and Erasmus repeated Jerome's remark that the verse was directed against the Arians. Luther did not need this verse to defend the orthodox position of the trinitarian faith.

3. Bugenhagen's Position

It is in Bugenhagen's exposition of the prophet Jonah, edited several years after Luther's death, in which we find the pastor's position on the *Comma Johanneum*.¹⁶ He conjured all printers and learned men to delete 1 John 5:7 for the sake of the truth and the honor of God and thus to give back to the Greek text its original purity. The reason is that this verse conflicts with its context and the matter with which John deals here.¹⁷ This is exactly the position of Erasmus and Luther, who argued from the incongruity of verse 7 with its context. It is a literary-theological argumentation. More clearly than Luther Bugenhagen was concerned with the purity of the Greek original.

Both were equally concerned with the doctrine of God, which is not threatened by the exclusion of verse 7. Yet Bugenhagen opted for the deletion of the text for the sake of the honor of God and the truth, while Luther had been content with ridiculing the ancient theologians who thought they could refute the Arians by adding verse 7 to the text. Bugenhagen dwelt more on the theological argumentation and saw verse 7 in reality as the product of the Arians themselves! It is they who introduced it into the epistle!¹⁸ Here, Bugenhagen went beyond any previous argumentation. Bugenhagen elaborated further on the ineptitude of the verse and declared it an "Arian blasphemy." Bugenhagen argued that if Father, Logos, and Holy Spirit were one as Spirit, water, and blood are one, then the Arians are the winners; for this verse states (in the eyes of Bugenhagen) only a unity of consensus, not a unity of essence.¹⁹

Bugenhagen's position represents an elaboration of Erasmus' initial position on the *Comma*, which was repeated and maintained by Luther throughout his life. When Erasmus changed his mind in this

regard, Luther and Bugenhagen did not follow the humanist scholar, but maintained their theologically grounded position. But strangely, Bugenhagen did not refer to Luther in this regard. A possible explanation could be that Luther's commentary on 1 John was never published during Luther's or Bugenhagen's lifetime, and it seems that Bugenhagen did not have his chaplain Rörer's notes available. All that Bugenhagen had at hand in printed form was Erasmus' editions of the New Testament and Luther's German version based upon the initial Erasmian position of deleting verse 7. Luther's lectures on 1 John (1527) had been given almost a quarter of a century earlier than Bugenhagen's publication of his exposition on Jonah with his opinion on the *Comma Johanneum* (1550). Therefore, it is now understandable that Bugenhagen wrote only about Erasmus, to whom one should be grateful that he had pointed out the unauthentic character of verse 7, that only one Greek manuscript had it, and that also many old Latin manuscripts lacked it. Jerome was the one who was responsible for the *additio* of verse 7, as he himself had pointed out in his prologue to the Catholic Epistles. In Bugenhagen's opinion, Erasmus was not correct to have accepted the verse in his later editions. Philologically and text-critically Bugenhagen was indebted to Erasmus (as was Luther); theologically Bugenhagen was a Lutheran who believed with Luther in the Trinity²⁰ but not on the basis of 1 John 5:7. The pastor Bugenhagen and the professor Luther deleted verse 7 because of its incongruity with the context. Bugenhagen developed the Lutheran position further and spoke of the "Arian blasphemy" contained in the added verse.

Why did Bugenhagen feel compelled to write at all about this problem? He did so chiefly because in 1549 a volume of gospels and epistles was printed in Wittenberg in which the debated 1 John 5:7 was included²¹ quite in contrast to Luther's teaching. Apparently, as we have seen, Bugenhagen knew Luther's position and therefore protested against the inclusion of the verse in such a publication; but since Luther had not published his lectures on 1 John, nor had his students edited their notes on the lectures, Bugenhagen could not refer at all to Luther's position but only to Erasmus'.

Melanchthon, on the other hand, who was not present in Wittenberg when Luther lectured on 1 John, had made use of 5:7 in his revised *Common Places* of 1535 as proof of the nature of the Holy Spirit. Martin Chemnitz in his *Loci Theologici* of 1556 defended verse 7 as authentic, while Matthias Flacius used the verse in his *Clavis Scripturae Sacrae*.²² These Lutherans were un-Lutheran in regard to the *Comma Johanneum*, mainly because they did not know of Luther's lectures as Bugenhagen did. These inconsistencies in the Lutheran

Church must be attributed to the neglect of Luther's lectures on a Johannine text. In the light of these inconsistencies the error may be excused which today is still found in the American Edition of Luther's works: "The so-called Johannine Comma had been omitted from the first edition of Erasmus' Greek New Testament; its appearance in subsequent editions accounts for its translation into the standard versions, including Luther's own."²³ That this statement is not correct in regard to "Luther's own" version we have seen from the examination of Luther's *Table Talk* and the lecture notes of his students. Bugenhagen had conjured all printers and learned men to leave out this verse because of Arian blasphemy.

ENDNOTES

1. Cf. Heinrich Bornkamm, *Luther in Mid-Career, 1521-1530* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), p. 555.
2. Cf. *Weimarer Ausgabe* (=WA) 20: 599-801. It is my working hypothesis that Bugenhagen was a course participant.
3. Cf. WA Br 4:232,25 with n. 19 on p. 233.
4. Cf. WA 23:323-373.
5. WA 20: 713,27-29 (P), *Luther's Works* (=LW) 30:277-8.
6. Cf. WA Br 4:275,12-276,28. Cf. 269,14-15.
7. WA 48: 688,15-20(No.7101).
8. In WA 20 there are Probst's notes (=P) on which the printed version of 1708 is based and thereupon the English translation in LW 30. Also in WA 20 there are Rörer's notes (=R), which are generally considered the most precise notes among all of Luther's students' lecture notes. In WA 48: 313-23 there are "scholia" (=S) on 1 John attributed by the WA editor to Luther as lecture preparation notes. I prefer to take these so-called scholia as an anonymous Saxon student's lecture notes. It is my speculation that this source could be the chaplain Johannes Mantel's notes, if he was indeed a course participant. All that we know is that Mantel was in Wittenberg at the time of the course on 1 John offered by Luther in 1527. See note 3 on Luther's letter.
9. WA 48: 688,15-20(No.7101).
10. Cf. Ezra Abbot, "1 John V. 7 and Luther's German Bible," *The Authorship of the Fourth Gospel and Other Critical Essays Selected from the Published Papers of the Late Ezra Abbot* (Boston: G. H. Ellis, 1888), p. 460.
11. The arguments of the WA editor to take this source to the Luther's own preparatory notes are questionable. It is not the place here to enter into a detailed discussion. See my dissertation, "Luther's Catholic Christology according to

- His Johannine Lectures of 1527" (Marquette University, Milwaukee, 1984; University Microfilms International, No. 85-02593, pp. 29-40.
12. LW 30: 316. See note 8.
 13. WA 20: 781,27.
 14. WA 20: 780,21-781,2.
 15. I used the copy of the Newberry Library (Chicago), p.617. On Erasmus' positions see Henk Jan de Jonge, "Erasmus and the *Comma Johanneum*," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 56 (1980):381-88. Still very valuable is August Bludau's study, "Der Beginn der Controverse über die Aechtheit des *Comma Johanneum* (1 Joh. 5,7. 8.) im 16 Jahrhundert," *Der Katholik* 26(1902):25-51 and 151-175.
 16. *Ionas Propheta Expositus* (Wittenberg, 1550), as referred to by A. Bludau, "Das Comma Ioanneum (1 Io. 5,7) im 16. Jahrhundert," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 1(1903):393 ("Blasphemie der Arianer").
 17. Cf. *ibid.* See also Lic Vogt, "Melanchthons und Bugenhagens Stellung zum Interim und die Rechtfertigung des letzteren in seinem Jonascmentar," *Jahrbücher für protestantische Theologie* (1887), pp. 33-34: "Er beschwört dabei die Buchdrucker, die fälschlich eingeschobenen Worte v. 7 aus den Bibeln fernzuhalten. . ." (p.33).
 18. Cf. *ibid.*, see n. 16.
 19. Cf. *ibid.*, see n. 16.
 20. Cf. WA 18: 606,24-28: "Christ the Son of God is made man. God is triune and one. Christ suffered for us and will rule eternally."
 21. Cf. A. Bludau, *Biblische Zeitschrift* 1 (1903):379.
 22. Cf. *ibid.*, 390-402 Note that Cardinal Cajetan had doubts about the authenticity of verse 7; cf. *ibid.*, 402-3. Calvin was undecided; cf. *ibid.*, 392. Zwingli, following the early Erasmusian deletion of verse 7, did not refer to it at all in his *In Epistolam Joannis Canonicam Expositio* (Opera, VI:2; Turici ex Officina Schulthessiana, 1838), p. 338.
 23. LW 30: 316, n.13.

Roman Catholic Reflections on Melanchthon's *De Potestate et Primatu Papae*

George H. Tavard

I.

The first point that I find remarkable about Melanchthon's treatise, when seen in the light of contemporary theology, is the shift of problematic between his time and ours. This is striking in the very first lines of his treatise, where he formulates his main objections to the papacy in three points. These have to do with supremacy *divino jure*; with the claim to wield "the two swords," still *divino jure*; and with the idea that belief in these doctrines is necessary to salvation. As it appears from these basic objections, the doctrine of primacy that Melanchthon has in mind is that of the eleventh session of the fifth Lateran Council (1516), which had generally approved the bull *Unam Sanctam* of Boniface VIII (1302) and explicitly endorsed its conclusion.¹ Yet Melanchthon hardens the doctrine to a significant degree. In the first place, the constitution *Pastor Aeternus* of Lateran V was a predominantly political act: with the agreement of Francis I it nullified the "pragmatic sanction" of Bourges (adopted by Charles VII in 1438) which had restricted papal authority in the kingdom of France; moreover, the approval of *Unam Sanctam* was qualified by endorsement of the declaration *Meruit* of Pope Clement V, which had itself toned down the claims of Boniface VIII. In the second place, *Unam Sanctam* in fact makes no direct reference to *jus divinum*, though it argues from biblical texts (which I take to be the substance of an appeal to *jus divinum*). Nor does it affirm that the pope wields the two swords of the temporal and the spiritual powers; it says rather that the spiritual sword is above the temporal one. It does assert, however, that "it is altogether necessary to salvation for all creatures to be subject to the Roman Pontiff" (D.-S., n. 875).

Contemporary assessment of the authority of the bishop of Rome is, however, quite at odds with that of 1302 or 1516. Three remarks will suffice. In regard to papal authority deriving *ex jure divino*, the section of the new Code of Canon Law (1983) concerning the Roman Pontiff does not use the expression. Instead, it says, *statuente Domino*,² thus expressing the view that the authority of the bishop of Rome is grounded in the New Testament. The contemporary theological understanding of *jus divinum* and *ex jure divino*, as these formulae were used in the past (e.g., in the Code of 1921, canon 219, regarding the

moment when the bishop of Rome receives "the full power of supreme jurisdiction," or at Vatican I, is well formulated in the *Final Report* of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission. Negatively, "*Jus divinum* in this text need not be taken to imply that the universal primacy as a permanent institution was directly founded by Jesus during his life on earth" (Authority II, n. 11). Positively, the phrase conveys the belief "that a universal primacy expresses the will of God" (n. 12) or, in the consensus of the Anglicans and Catholics responsible for this document, "the primacy of the bishop of Rome can be affirmed as part of God's design for the universal *koinonia*" (n. 15).³

In regard to the medieval doctrine of "the two swords," the distance that has been travelled since the sixteenth century can be measured in the light of Pope Pius XII's judgment on the doctrine of Boniface VIII. This judgment was expressed on September 7, 1955, in an address to the Tenth International Congress of Historical Sciences. After pointing out that Boniface's doctrine was "the strongest formulation of the medieval idea concerning relations between the spiritual and the temporal powers," Pius XII noted that, according to Boniface himself, "this concerned normally only the transmission of authority, not the selection of its holder," and added: "This medieval conception was conditioned by its time. Those who are acquainted with its sources will probably admit that it would be still more surprising had it never seen the day."⁴ As this implies, the subordination of temporal power to the church's or the pope's authority is itself a surprising conception, understandable in the circumstances of the fourteenth century, but not valid in the absolute. There is no allusion to such a subordination in Vatican I or Vatican II. In fact, the teaching of Thomas Aquinas on the autonomy of the temporal order is universally held in Catholic theology today.

Concerning the question whether belief in the primacy of the bishop of Rome is necessary to salvation, Vatican I made no such statement. Vatican II simply taught the very rich doctrine that the church was founded by Christ as "the sacrament of salvation" (*Ad gentes*, n. 5) and, accordingly, that all human beings, even those who "have not yet received the gospel, are oriented in diverse ways to the People of God" (*Lumen gentium*, n. 16).⁵ In other words, the notion of "necessity of salvation" is no longer operative in Catholic theology; what is necessary to salvation is known to God alone.

II.

I should now venture a fourth remark. For I am convinced that one should question the accuracy of Melancthon's description of the Ro-

man doctrine and practice of the primacy, even as these were upheld in his time by the adversaries of the Lutheran movement. The title used by Melanchthon to summarize the position of the Roman Pontiff in Roman theology has, in fact, no standing in the tradition. Melanchthon objects that the partisans of the Roman Pontiff see him as a "universal bishop" (*intelligunt esse episcopum universalem*, n.5).⁶ Now, even though this may, at first sight, seem appropriate to delimit the scope of authority of one who has immediate jurisdiction in the whole church, the notion of "universal bishop" has never been in use in Roman Catholic theology and canon law. It has even been carefully eschewed. I would be curious to know what Melanchthon quotes when he mentions the Greek-sounding title *oecumenicus episcopus* (in the German text). In recent times the notion of the pope as universal bishop was rejected in the collective letter of the German bishops of February 1875. In this letter the bishops of Germany, put on the defensive by the *Kulturkampf*, defended an interpretation of papal authority which, on the one hand, summed up the previous tradition and, on the other, was approved by Pius IX himself in the apostolic letter, *Mirabilis illa Constantia*, of March 4, 1875.⁷ The bishops' letter explained that the Roman Pontiff is the bishop of the diocese of Rome and of no other diocese and, therefore, that the principle and the exercise of his authority in the universal church must respect the authority of the bishop of each diocese. In other words, the pope is not a universal bishop. Yet the letter also remarked that it is as bishop of the Roman see that the Roman Pontiff has authority in the universal church; he is *Hirt und Oberhaupt der ganze Kirche*. He is not a universal bishop, yet his authority is, in the words of Vatican I, "truly episcopal." The qualification is important. It corresponds to the belief that whoever is bishop of Rome has by that very fact primacy in the universal church. It is not the bishop who is somehow universal; it is his universal-primatial authority which is episcopal. The adjective conveys at least two essential points of Catholic doctrine. First, the primacy is attached to the fact of being in one particular see, which the patristic tradition connects particularly with the preaching and martyrdom of the two apostles Peter and Paul. Secondly, the primate can do outside of his own see of Rome what a bishop does; but he can do it only in such a way as to respect and promote the episcopal authority of the bishop of each diocese. Today we would add a third point, which, however, was not explicitly made at the time of Melanchthon: it is as the first in the college of bishops that the bishop of Rome exercises his primatial leadership. The adjective "episcopal" implies the collegiality of the primacy and of its exercise.

Admittedly, Melanchthon give a special tone to the expression

“universal bishop.” As he explains it, this reflects the Roman claim that “all bishops and pastors all over the world must ask [the bishop of Rome] for ordination and confirmation”; he alone can “elect, ordain, confirm, depose all the bishops” (n. 5). This, however, needs to be looked at carefully. For Melanchthon has considerably oversimplified the situation. On the one hand, he has not referred to the infinitely more nuanced relationships that exist between the bishop of Rome and the bishops of Eastern churches in communion with him. The medieval canon law with which Melanchthon was acquainted dealt, like the contemporary code of 1983, only with the Latin Church, relations with other churches being regulated by bilateral agreements between these churches and the papacy.⁸ One should remember that the Council of Florence had united to Rome an Armenian Church (November 22, 1439), a Coptic Church (February 4, 1442), a Syriac, a Chaldaean, and a Maronite Church of Cyprus (September 30, 1444, and August 7, 1445). Union with the Church of Greece and the Ecumenical patriarch, declared on July 6, 1439, did not last; but the other unions, albeit partial, have lasted to this day. The main body of the Maronites had been in communion with Rome since 1181. The relations of the bishop of Rome with these Oriental Churches is quite different from his relations with the Latin dioceses. Only with these is there any primatial right to elect and confirm the bishops, this right belonging in each of the Eastern Churches to the highest authority in that church. On the other hand, even in the case of the Latin dioceses, the thing is not so simple as Melanchthon put it. Authority is ascribed to the bishop of Rome “to make laws in matters of rituals” and even “in doctrine,” but not to “change the sacraments.” Moreover, the “articles, decrees, laws” of the pope are not considered “equal to divine laws.” Canon lawyers, in fact, have always carefully distinguished between the different kinds and degrees of assent which law (*jus*) and equity (*equitas*) require, depending in part on the exact nature of the law (*lex*) in question. A doctrinal definition is not on a par with a *motu proprio*, an apostolic letter, an encyclical, a disciplinary decision, or a liturgical rubric. Perhaps polemical exaggeration was unavoidable in the circumstances of the sixteenth century. But there is no excuse today to keep the same distorted image of the papacy and its exercise of authority.

III.

I wish now to draw attention to two ideas which Melanchthon suggests, which I consider to be highly positive and which may be of value not only to assess and understand the primacy of the bishop

of Rome, but also to re-organize it in a more ecumenical direction. One could, of course, discuss the biblical and historical argumentation adduced by Melanchthon. The texts and events that he mentions have acted as two-edged swords, being taken by some as a basis to accept a doctrine of the papacy, by others as a ground to reject such a doctrine. My concern at this time is not directly with the exegetical or historical aspects of the problem. However, I cannot avoid touching on what Melanchthon writes of the famous controverted text, "Tu es Petrus" (Matt. 16: 18), and the companion text of John 21:15, "Pasce oves meas." Far be it from me to believe that one can draw a straight line from these texts to the papacy. I generally agree with the assessment of the Petrine texts that is contained in the collective volume, *Peter in the New Testament* (Minneapolis, 1973), and I was instrumental in including a moderate assessment of them in the *Final Report* of the ARCIC. But to admit that such references do not necessarily imply a primacy, still less a papacy, is one thing; to hold that one cannot learn anything from them concerning the primacy which has historically and, I believe, providentially developed is quite another thing. Precisely Melanchthon provides two broad hints as to what one may learn about the primacy from the biblical texts.

The first hint is found in his understanding of the *ad hoc* verses of Matthew and John. Melanchthon writes: "In omnibus illis dictis Petrus sustinet personam communem totius coetus apostolorum" (n. 23) ("In all these sayings Peter stands for the common person of the whole group of the apostles"). In Matthew Jesus's question, "Who do you say that I am?" is addressed to all the apostles; Peter alone answers, but in the name of his companions. In response, Jesus addresses Peter ("I will give you the keys. . . whatever you will bind. . ."), telling him something that he tells all the apostles elsewhere. In John 21 the words to Peter, "Feed my sheep," are followed by words to all the apostles, ". . . sins you will remit. . ." Melanchthon concludes that the keys have been given not to one man, but to the entire church: "Tribuit principaliter claves ecclesiae et immediate" (n. 24) ("He gave the keys principally and immediately to the church"). As to Peter, Melanchthon also concludes: "Therefore in these sayings Peter necessarily stands for the person of the whole group of apostles."

In this explanation Melanchthon broaches the topic of the "corporate personality" of Peter. Melanchthon's expression, "stands for the person," which is reinforced in one place by the adjective, "common" ("stands for the common person of the whole group of apostles") leaves no doubt as to what is meant. Peter represents all the apostles. But he does not simply represent them from a distance, as an ambassador may represent his country abroad. He represents them

by having in himself, as the one who has spoken for the apostles the words of faith in Jesus the Messiah, a personality which is common to all. One might argue that perhaps Melanchthon simply means that the name "Peter" functions as a collective designation for the group without Peter as a human person sharing in the corporate dimension of his name. Yet this would make no sense in the context of the gospels, in which it is Peter as a person who speaks and who is addressed by Jesus. The name is the name of this man and no other, of the man who was Simon and was renamed by Jesus. The text conveys the conviction of the gospel writers, echoed by Melanchthon, that Cephas, at those two moments at least, had, as his own personality, that of the whole group of apostles. As the first of these two moments belongs to the active ministry of Jesus of Nazareth and the second to His appearance as the Risen One, we gather the idea that the "common" personality recognized in Peter by Jesus of Nazareth has been, as it were, made permanent by the Risen Lord: that which derives from the Risen One shares in His now permanent and glorious status.

The notion of corporate personality is not unknown to the Old Testament. It corresponds to one aspect of the Semitic conception of humanity and, more to the point, of the self-understanding of the Hebrew and Jewish people as the people of God. Abraham, Moses, Elijah, David, some of the prophets, and, above all, the prophetic image of the *Ebed Adonai* in deuterio-Isaiah and the apocalyptic image of the *Bar Enash* in Daniel stand for the whole people of God at some moment of its history or in some aspect of its destiny. Jesus Himself, as the Lamb of God bearing the sins of the world, stands for the common person of the new Israel. What happens in the exchanges between Jesus and Peter in Matthew and John is that Jesus highlights a dimension of the renaming of Cephas which was not obvious in the renaming itself. This amounts to saying that Peter, the Rock, is all the apostles (he is their common personality) and that *vice versa* the apostles are Peter, the Rock.

Now this analysis, which I take to be somewhat more than implicit in Melanchthon's tractate, does correspond in part to the traditional idea that the Rock in question is not just Simon Peter as a man who followed the Lord, but Simon Peter as spokesman for the apostles and, more exactly, as spokesman for the faith of the apostles. The classical discussion of whether the Rock is Peter himself or the faith of Peter, which illustrates the two main lines of interpretation of the "Tu es Petrus" in the patristic tradition, does not produce mutually exclusive meanings. Clearly Peter the person could not be the Rock in any real sense without the faith of Peter. And to maintain that it

is the faith alone which is the Rock without the person who holds that faith would disembody or idealize the nature of salvation in a way that would contradict the entire orientation of the Scriptures toward a real Savior of flesh and blood who came to save those of flesh and blood through their faith in Him.

The two lines of interpretation are found side by side in Augustine's *Retractationes* (I, ch. 21).⁹ Augustine remembers that in one place he took Peter to be the Rock on which the church is built; later, however, he identified the Rock (*petra*) as the Christ confessed by Peter (*Petrus*). Augustine continues: ". . . as though *Petrus*, named by this *petra*, represented (*figuraret*) the person of the church." This is again the corporate personality of Peter. "May the reader choose" between the two interpretations. By adding this admonition, Augustine suggests that the difference between them is not too important. What is important is, precisely, the corporate personality of Peter. This corporate personality is presupposed in the two views, for the church could not be built on Peter unless Peter had a corporate personality.

Admittedly, the notion of Peter's corporate personality raises the question of its own limits. If Peter "stands for the person" of the apostles (Melancthon) or of the church (Augustine), does not every one who believes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, also stand for the apostles or the church? This was Origen's insight in his commentary on Matthew's Gospel (tract. 1): "If therefore we, the Father (as we have said) revealing it to us, confess Christ the Son of the Living God, we shall have been Peter, as to us also is said by God the Word: *Thou art Peter. . . , etc.*, for the rock (*petra*) is everyone who imitates Christ."¹⁰

Beginning in patristic times, a long tradition emphasized the Christian notion of the corporate personality of the church and its members. It had reached a high point in the monastic spirituality and theology of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In most cases, however, the image of Mary rather than that of Peter effected the passage between the collectivity of the church and each believing soul. The figure of Mary as corporate person of the church was more at home in the meditations of the spirituals, as in the text of Isaac Stella (c. 1110-c. 1169): "The heritage of the Lord, in a universal sense, is the church; in a special sense, Mary; in a particular sense, each faithful soul. In the tabernacle of Mary's womb Christ remained nine months; in the tabernacle of the church's faith, He remains until the consummation of the world; in the knowledge and love of each faithful soul, He will remain forever and ever" (Sermon 61).¹¹ When it came to the structure of the church, the figure of Peter was the dominant one, as suggested in this text of Hincmar of Rheims (845-882): "Although

apparently given by the Lord to Peter alone, the power to loose and to bind must be acknowledged, without any doubt, as given also to the other apostles. . . For as all were addressed in general, the one Peter answered for all; likewise, what the Lord answered Peter He answered all in Peter. Similarly today, the same function is given the whole church in the bishops and priests" (Schedule for the Synod of Douzy, 860).¹² Thus, we all share the corporate personality of Mary or Peter. But this did not mean in the medieval tradition that the bishop of Rome had no special relationship to that corporate personality.

In these interpretations of corporate personality, Peter or Mary do not represent only their contemporaries or immediate followers; they stand for the whole church and its faithful members throughout all subsequent times. The corporate person extends not only in space but also in time. Admittedly, the strictly Roman tradition—and by this I mean the tradition of which Pope Siricius (384-399) is, in the present state of the evidence, the first witness—took the meaning of Peter in a restricted sense. As eloquently elaborated by Pope Leo the Great (440-461), Peter's corporate personality extends in a unique way to the bishops of Rome: in their decrees and decisions of Peter still presides over and guides the church.¹³ Peter is mystically present in the bishop of Rome. Yet this strictly Roman interpretation has always been in tension, within the Catholic tradition, with the broader view of Peter's corporate personality.

IV.

At this point it seems appropriate to make several remarks:

(1.) Melancthon's appeal to the "common person" of Peter and the apostles was in line with the patristic and medieval understanding of the scriptural image and role of Peter, who did not stand alone before Christ but spoke for all the apostles and was addressed by Jesus as their spokesman.

(2.) Melancthon remained in the broad tradition when he extended Peter's common personality to the church, as in his conclusion: "it is necessary to hold that the keys do not belong to the person of one specific man, but to the church" (n. 24).

(3.) Yet Melancthon also narrowed the tradition in a hitherto unusual way when he drew the consequence that, since Peter stood for "the whole group of the apostles," he therefore held "no prerogative, superiority, or domination" (n. 24). He seems to have taken the representativeness of Peter to be purely nominal, just a practical way of speaking at that moment with no implications for Peter himself and for his function in the future. As he was close to late medieval

nominalism both in time and by his interest in the Renaissance, reading the name as no more than a convenient label may have come naturally to him. By and large, the Catholic tradition has been more realistic in its understanding of words and situations: what Peter was said to be, he was.

(4.) Melanchthon further narrowed the tradition by holding that whatever Peter was or meant in relation to the apostles entailed no special status for the bishop of Rome. He did not perceive that the "common person" of Peter in the Gospels of Matthew and John created, if it was real, an unbreakable bond not only between Peter and the apostles, but also between Peter and the whole church. A common personality belongs to the whole group for which it stands; it need not vanish with the death of its central model, focus, or symbol. It was precisely the "common person" recognized in Peter that allowed later times to speak of a "successor of Peter." The medieval identification between the church, Mary, and the believing soul, or between the church, Peter, and the bishops and priests, came closer to the heart of what common personality entails. This made possible the development of the papacy as the embodiment of a universal primacy in the church. For the group which had a focus in Peter could well preserve this focus in a new central figure which would fulfill the function of Peter as "common person" for the whole. Melanchthon, of course, rejected the universal primacy, but he did so on grounds—Peter's common personality—which could logically justify what he was rejecting.

(5.) Turning our attention to the contemporary scene, we should note that the appeal to Peter's common personality took a new turn at Vatican Council II. This common or corporate personality gives substance to the position of the council on episcopal collegiality. The key statement is the following: "Just as, by the Lord's decree, St. Peter and the other apostles constitute one apostolic College, likewise the Roman Pontiff, successor of Peter, and the bishops, successors of the apostles, are closely tied together" (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 22).¹⁴ This tying together is what the council also calls the episcopal college or episcopal collegiality. The conciliar statement assumes of course three points: first, Peter and the apostles formed one college; second, the bishops have succeeded the apostles in general, and the bishop of Rome Peter in particular; third, there is a structural similarity between the two colleges. The bishops are not apostles, any more than the Roman Pontiff is Peter; but their places in the community of the church are similar in some sense. The sense which is suggested by the text is that each college is characterised by "common personality." The words, admittedly, are not in the letter of Vatican II.

Yet this is the most logical way to understand the council. By their common personality Peter and the apostles were mutually co-responsible, Peter being the representative and spokesman of the group (n. 19); on the same pattern, the bishop of Rome and the bishops in general "communicate in the bond of unity, charity and peace" (n. 22), the bishop of Rome being the special representative and spokesman of the college, but all being also involved in the concerns of the whole. The personality of a college or a group in general is, of course, of the moral order, though it may have legal and juridical aspects, and it may well be embodied in one or several particular offices. In the theological context of the Christian community, it also pertains to the sacramental order, that is, it stands as an effective symbol of divine grace as the church is guided by the Holy Spirit in its life, teaching, and preaching of the Gospel.

This line of thought of Vatican II is embodied in canon 336 of the new code of canon law. As is to be expected from a code of law, the language is not personalistic but juridical. Yet it puts in legal terms the insight that the bishops and the bishop of Rome constitute one college, one common moral and sacramental person: "The College of bishops, whose head is the Supreme Pontiff and whose members are the bishops by virtue of sacramental consecration and hierarchic communion with the head and members of the College, and in which the apostolic body perdures without break, is, together with its head and never without it, the subject of supreme and full authority in the universal Church."¹⁵ The tone is notably more ultramontane than that of Melanchthon. Yet it derives from the same fundamental insight into the "common person" of Peter and the apostles, drawing from this insight realistic conclusions that are opposite to those of Melanchthon.

Melanchthon, for himself and for the Lutheran movement in general, inferred from the same biblical starting-point that "Peter" and, by implication, the bishop of Rome, whether he is or is not successor of Peter, has no "prerogative, superiority or domination" (n. 24). The code, however, in keeping with Vatican I and II, also formulates canon 331: "The bishop of the Church of Rome, in whom there perdures a responsibility given by the Lord singularly to Peter, the first of the apostles, and destined to be transmitted to his successors, is the head of the College of bishops, the vicar of Christ, and on this earth the Pastor of the universal Church, who, by virtue of his responsibility, enjoys an ordinary, supreme, full immediate and universal authority in the Church, which he must be able always to exercise freely." Thus we have, as between Melanchthon and the contemporary understanding of the papacy in Catholicism, contradictory conclusions, but one fundamental principle.

V.

Another point is made by Melanchthon which seems to me relevant to the way in which the primacy, once it is admitted in principle, should be exercised. Still interpreting, "Tu es Petrus . . .," Melanchthon writes: ". . .certainly the church has not been built on the authority of one man, but on the ministry of the confession made by Peter, in which he proclaimed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Thus He addresses him as a minister: 'On this rock,' that is, on this ministry" (n. 25). Melanchthon continues by explaining that this ministry is not tied to places and persons as in the Old Testament, but is "dispersed throughout the world," wherever God sends his "gifts, apostles, prophets, pastors, doctors: and the ministry has value, not by the authority of any person, but by the word transmitted by Christ" (n. 26). Peter was ordered to "lead the flock, that is, to teach the word or to rule the church with the word, which was common to Peter and the other apostles" (n. 30).

I fully sympathize with Melanchthon when, in the following pages, he shows that such a ministry has not been operative in Rome, that the popes have behaved like secular princes, that whereas the authority of the apostles was "purely spiritual" (n. 31), the popes have used the sword, have slighted kings and emperors, have abused whatever authority they had. Indeed, the history of the papacy has abounded in abuses of authority, in shady deals, and in unsavory financial transactions. The designation of specific popes as antichrist had become part of the medieval rhetoric. And it was the common teaching of the scholastics that a heretical pope is not a true pope and must not be obeyed.

The positive point in Melanchthon's antipapal argumentation at this second section of the tractate lies in his notion of ministry. On the ministry of Peter and the apostles the church is built; and this ministry is the ministry of the word, preached, distributed to the people, explained for their edification, coming alive in their faith. Undoubtedly, Melanchthon's treatment of the episcopate, at the end of his tractate, differs greatly from that of Vatican II. The chief source of difference is that, of the two main patristic and medieval understandings of the origin and nature of the episcopate, Melanchthon followed the line of St. Jerome, who saw the episcopate as emanating from the presbyterate, whereas Vatican II followed the more oriental line, for which the presbyterate emanates from the episcopate. On this matter, Thomas Aquinas was closer to Melanchthon than to Vatican II. And I am not aware that the decision of the council about the sacramentality of the episcopate necessarily does away with the legitimacy of the Hieronimian-Thomist theology. This is the direc-

tion which I have myself followed in my book, *A Theology for Ministry*.¹⁶

Whoever is right on this point, Catholics have tended to give more importance and pay more attention to the effective ministry that has, in fact, been carried out in the church alongside of even blatant abuses of authority. The church has never been left without saints and prophets, even in the darkest periods of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. But this is not the main point I wish to make. Rather, I find it indicative of a new mode of relations between Lutheran and Catholics that Melancthon's central point about ministry is made, emphatically and repeatedly, by the Second Vatican Council. The Council did not take "super hanc petram" to mean, in the context of Matthew 16, "on this ministry." Whether one takes the expression as equivalent to "on this faith" or "on this ministry of the word" or "on this rock that you are," one cannot escape the fact that the faith, the ministry, and the rock are *of the apostle Peter*. Vatican II, however, focussed its understanding of the episcopate, and therefore of the papacy, on the notion of *ministerium*: "The bishops have received the ministry of the community. . ." (*Lumen Gentium* n. 20); "The pastors are. . . ministers of Christ. . ." (n. 21); ". . . through their eminent service [Jesus Christ] preaches the word of God to all nations and continually administers the sacraments of faith to the believers. . ." (n. 21); "The bishops. . . have received from the Lord. . . the mission of teaching all nations, and of preaching the gospel to every creature. . ." (n. 24); "This task, which the Lord has entrusted to the pastors of his people, is a true service, which is significantly called *diaconia* or ministry in the sacred Letters" (n. 24); "In the exercise of their task as fathers and pastors, the bishops must be like servants in the midst of their own. . ." (*Christus Dominus*, n. 16).

One could multiply the quotations. Their cumulative effect would be to show that the tone and the doctrine of Vatican II were aimed especially at promoting the ministerial aspect of the episcopal and papal functions. With this purpose in mind Pope John called it a pastoral council. Melancthon spoke in a context where he had seen a contradiction between the theory of episcopal and papal service or ministry and the practice of authority. When this seems to happen, or really happens (for it is not impossible to have bad bishops and bad popes), the Catholic instinct is to allow for the benefit of the doubt, to grant leeway, to give oneself time, to wait in silence, if necessary, before making a final negative judgment. What seems an abuse to one may well be service in the mind of another. The church, being a body of sinners, should leave sinners time to repent, even when sinners are in positions of authority. Patience is necessary in any human congregation.

However this may be, Lutherans and Catholics today can make ministry, the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, the central point of their converging concerns about the church of the future. In this country the dialogue between Lutherans and Roman Catholics has reached a great deal of consensus on ministry (1970) and also on papal primacy as a ministry to the universal church (1974). The international dialogue between Anglicans and Roman Catholics has also reached a high degree of consensus, and some of the formulations of the ARCIC statements would not be rejected by Melancthon: "The Church's teaching authority is a service. . . ; but the assurance of the truthfulness of its teaching rests ultimately rather upon its fidelity to the gospel than upon the character or office of the person by whom it is expressed" (*Authority in the Church II*, n. 27).¹⁷ Thus *magisterium* is valid only as *ministerium*; the teacher is first of all a student; that which is higher must make itself lower. Ultimately, the Lutheran movement and the Catholic Church can be reconciled in a theology of the cross.

ENDNOTES

1. *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta* (Basel: Herder, 1962), pp. 614-621.
2. *Codex Juris Canonici* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice, 1983), canon 330. The expression comes directly from Vatican II (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 22). For the following reference to Vatican Council I, see Denzinger-Schonmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, n. 3158.
3. Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Final Report* (London: CTS-SPCK, 1982) pp. 85, 88.
4. Pius XII, "Address to the Tenth Congress of Historical Sciences," September 7, 1955 (*Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, XXXXVII; series II, 13), p. 678.
5. Austin Flannery, ed., *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Pillar Books, 1975), pp. 817, 367. I have modified the translations.
6. I have worked directly with Melancthon's Latin text and its official German translation. Readers may refer to Theodore G. Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press), 1959.
7. D.-Sch., n. 3117. For the following citations from the bishops' letter see D.-Sch., n. 3113 and 3060.
8. This was truer than it is today, when these relations, codified in an "Oriental Canon Law," are supervised by the Roman Congregation for the Oriental Church. On the Council of Florence and the Oriental Churches, see *C. Oec. D.*, pp. 510-535 (for the Armenians), 543-559 (for the Copts), 562-567 (for the Syrians and the Maronites). For the agreement with the Greeks see pp. 499-504.

9. Augustine, *Retractationes*, I, 20, n. 1; cf. Mary Inez Bogan, ed., *Saint Augustine: The Retractations (Fathers of the Church, 60)*; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 1968), pp. 90-91.
10. See text in GSEL, *Origenes*, 10 (Leipzig, 1935), p. 85.
11. Isaac Stella, Sermon 51 (P. L., 194, 1865C).
12. Hincmar de Rheims, *Schedula seu Libellus Expostulationis*, ch. XXVI (P. L., 126, 609CD).
13. See Sermon III, ch. III (P. L., 54, 146C).
14. Flannery, p. 374.
15. Canon 336.
16. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 21. *A Theology for Ministry* (Wilmington,: Michael Glazier, 1984). For the following texts of Vatican II, see Flannery pp. 372, 373, 378, 572.
17. *The Final Report*, p. 94.

Dr. George Tavard has provided in this essay a Roman Catholic view of the Tractatus.

Theological Observer

CRITICAL CHRONOLOGY AND THE EXODUS

The date of the Israelite exodus from Egypt is one of those watershed issues which clearly distinguish the conservative exegete from the critic. Contemporary Old Testament scholars who accept the infallibility of Scripture place the exodus in the middle of the fifteenth century before the birth of Christ. Almost all practitioners of higher criticism, on the other hand, allocate the exodus to a later point in time, namely, within the thirteenth century B.C. or at most a few years prior. Even some scholars who would call themselves conservative, or whom others would so designate, accept the late date of the exodus or else declare neutrality. Like the theory of evolution among high school science teachers, the late date of the exodus is iterated and reiterated so frequently in critical circles that it generally passes for established fact, one of those "assured results" of higher criticism. William H. Stiebing, Jr., associate professor of history at the University of New Orleans, thus refers to the mid-thirteenth century B.C. as the "G.A.D." (generally accepted date) of the exodus and takes up the cudgels to defend it against all comers in a recent article entitled "Should the Exodus and Israelite Settlement Be Redated?"¹

Much of Stiebing's cannonade is directed, fairly enough, against such radical reconstructions of ancient history as those espoused by Anati and Velikovsky. Emmanuel Anati, professor of palaeoethnology at the University of Lecce in Italy, pushes the exodus back into the third millennium B.C. on the basis of his tenuous identification of Har Karkom as Mt. Sinai.² Such an early date is as impossible to reconcile with Scripture as is the usual critical chronology. It is true that Immanuel Velikovsky, followed by Donovan Courville, professor emeritus of biochemistry at Loma Linda University in Loma Linda, California,³ assigned the exodus to a mid-fifteenth century date on the basis of biblical testimony. Unfortunately, these scholars then proceeded to subject both Egyptian and Palestinian chronology to a drastic overhaul which, in the end, still yields results at variance with the historical books of the Old Testament (particularly Kings and Chronicles). Velikovsky's interpretation of the miracles surrounding the exodus as natural phenomena produced by a cosmic disturbance is not only bizarre but also inconsistent with the biblical depiction of these events. The earth, according to Velikovsky, was passing through the tail of a comet which, ejected from Jupiter, was to become the planet Venus.⁴ Yet, according to Moses, the various plagues imposed upon Egypt, so far from being worldwide, left the Hebrews completely unaffected.

The "generally accepted date" of the exodus defended by Stiebing is, however, an excrescence of modernist mythology, since its defiance of Scripture is apparent. Stiebing admits that "a literal reading of 1 Kings 6:1" would lead one to conclude that the exodus occurred in the mid-fifteenth century.⁵ Indeed, the sixth chapter of the Book of Kings begins with these clear words: "And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Ziv, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord." Contemporary conservative exegetes generally commence Solomon's reign with the year 970 B.C., and few if any scholars, however critical, stray very far from this date. (Stiebing,

for example, refers to 960 as "a date that everyone can agree is at least very close to the truth.")⁵ Adherents of biblical infallibility, therefore (assuming this initiation of Solomon's reign), place the foundation of the temple in the year 967 and, consequently, the Israelite exodus from Egypt in the year 1446 B.C.

Stiebing makes no attempt to elude the "literal reading of 1 Kings 6:1" by means of some hermeneutical quibble. The basic assumption of higher criticism is the fallibility of Scripture, and so few critics have any compunctions in labelling this verse as an example of inaccuracy. The basis of the critical rejection of biblical authority in this particular case is the supposed testimony of Palestinian archaeology; all the other depositions provided by the adherents of the late date of the exodus are adduced only as corroboration of this basic rationale. Stiebing, for instance, opens the case for the late date by stating, "Scholars have established a G.A.D. for the exodus by placing it just before the Israelite settlement in Canaan." He then alludes to "abundant evidence for a change in the material culture of Palestine in about 1200 B.C.," which he then connects with the emergence of the Israelites in Canaan.⁵ Palestinian archaeology, however, has yet to unearth the "missing link" between the changes around 1200 B.C. and the original Israelite invasion of Canaan. After all, even some critical "scholars question whether these changes evidence the arrival of a new people."⁵ In any case, Stiebing and most critics are bold enough to challenge Scripture openly.

Compromising theologians, on the other hand, have endeavored (like theistic evolutionists) to mediate between the "assured results" of modern science and the explicit testimony of Holy Writ by appealing from the literal reading of the text to some metaphorical interpretation. R.K. Harrison provides a choice illustration of such exegesis in his treatment of 1 Kings 6:

If this construction is to be dated about 961 B.C., the exodus would thus have taken place ca. 1441 B.C. If this sequence is meant to be taken literally, it is a powerful argument for a fifteenth-century date. However, while such a figure represents the unanimous testimony of the manuscripts, it can be questioned on other grounds, particularly when it is examined against the background of oriental symbolism. The number 480 can be resolved into units of twelve generations of forty years each. A double cycle or *motif* may be involved in consequence, having the effect of relating the concept of a generation to each of the twelve tribes. If, however, the symbol of forty years as constituting a generation is reckoned more realistically in terms of the period extending from the birth of the father to the birth of his son, a figure of twenty-five years would be a more appropriate estimate for a generation, yielding about 300 years and bringing the Exodus into the mid-thirteenth century B.C.⁶

Harrison's flight of imagination soars even higher in succeeding paragraphs--indeed, reaches an exegetical stratosphere from which he can survey a stream of symbolic numbers coursing through Scripture from Jacob's altar at Bethel to the Second Temple in Jerusalem. The cynosure of Harrison's vision is a supposed "pattern of twelve generations of High Priests between the erecting of the wilderness Tabernacle, which prefigured the Temple, and the actual construction of the Temple by Solomon."⁶

The attempts, however, of mediating theologians to squeeze Scripture into a critical mould are always vain. A number of considerations clearly expose the irreconcilable conflict of 1 Kings 6 with a dating of the exodus in the thirteenth century. (1.) In the first place, the one meaning of any assertion of Scripture intended by its par-

ticular author (*sensus literalis unus*) must be equated with the common meaning (*sensus literae*) of the words unless the context or analogy of faith compels us to accept a different meaning. In the case of 1 Kings 6:1 nothing in the context or anywhere else in Scripture would make us prescind from the everyday meaning of the words "in the four hundred and eightieth year." The text, after all, does not even use some such phraseology as "in the twelfth forty-year period," so that one might argue with less appearance, at least, of axe-grinding that the term "forty-year period" could refer metaphorically to a generation or whatever. Nor will it ever suffice to say that a figurative meaning of a word or phrase would make good sense in a particular passage; one must demonstrate the unacceptability of the basic usage. Like the Reformer in his struggle for the *estin* ("is") in the words of institution, we reject unnecessary tropes as human delusion which makes of God's Word a waxen nose to be twisted into whatever shape anyone wishes.

(2.) Another principle essential to the proper understanding of Scripture is that the interpretation of any word or assertion must accord with its context (unless the analogy of faith compels one to accept a different interpretation, an exception which, as previously stated, does not obtain in the case of 1 Kings 6:1). Now, the Book of Kings consists from first to last in sober historical prose. Chronological data (especially concerning the reigns of various kings) abound which are clearly intended as numbers of the common garden variety. To give a metaphorical meaning to numbers in a thoroughly historical context is as topsy-turvy as investing the symbolic numbers of the apocalyptic genre with a literal significance. Indeed 1 Kings 6:1 emphasizes the exact chronological intent of the 480 years between the exodus and the temple's foundation by citing as well the specific year of Solomon's reign and even the precise month of the occurrence ("in the month of Ziv, which is the second month").

(3.) In any case, the assumption of mediating scholars that the Old Testament people conceived of forty years as representing a generation has never been proven. It is true that Israel wandered about in the wilderness for forty years until the whole generation which had rebelled against the Lord perished (Num.32:13). Numbers 14:34, however, explains why the Lord specified forty as the number of years of punishment: according to the number of days which the spies despatched by Moses passed in the land of Canaan, "for every day a year," the Israelites who followed the lead of most of these spies in defying God's will were to bear their iniquity and know God's displeasure for forty years. We might deduce from Numbers 14, quite to the contrary, that the ancient Hebrews conceived of a generation as consisting, not in forty years, but in twenty, since twenty years of age was the boundary between those who were to die in the wilderness and those who were to enter the promised land (see especially verses 29, 31-33). A related line of demarcation appears in the census of Numbers 1 (vv. 3, 45, etc.). Perhaps, then, if one were to assume (erroneously) that the 480 years of 1 Kings 6 represent a certain number of generations, one would have to conclude that the reference involves, not twelve, but twenty-four generations—a deduction which would, of course, militate against a thirteenth century date of the exodus. It is difficult, moreover, to conceive of the ancient Israelites using forty years to represent a generation, as mediating scholars assume, if, as the same exegetes also suppose, the typical Hebrew generation was, in actuality, only twenty years in duration.

(4.) A fallacious method is, in the end, the root of all the exegetical evil involved in higher criticism generally and, more specifically, in the critical dating of the exodus and the figurative interpretation of 1 Kings 6 based upon it. The adherents of a thirteenth century exodus have decided its date on the basis of archaeological evidence (as interpreted by erring mortals) and have then sought to bring the Word

of God into line with their preconceived notions. Such an enterprise is, of course, doomed to failure. Even if we should allow the allegorization of 1 Kings 6, discrepancies still remain between the biblical data and the "late date" of the exodus—for example, the length of the period of the judges and the identification of the pharaoh who died while Moses was in Midian (Ex. 2:23-25). Thus, while accepting the "general reliability of biblical history beginning with the Israelite monarchy," Stiebing admits that "the generally accepted archaeological chronology presents difficulties for the Biblical account of the Exodus and the settlement in Canaan."⁷ Stiebing offers this rationalization of his approach:

For the period before the Israelite monarchy, most Palestinian archaeologists and Biblical scholars recognize that the Biblical account cannot be accepted as we would accept a modern historical account. That is why archaeology presents problems for the pre-Monarchic Biblical account. The Biblical accounts of the Exodus and the conquest of Canaan took form over a long period of time. Aetiological, anachronistic and sometimes legendary material became imbedded in these stories. The Biblical authors of these accounts were not trying to "tell history," as we would understand this; they were making theological points.⁷

Such a divorce of history from theology is, in the first place, inconsistent with Stiebing's own admission of the general historical reliability of those accounts emanating from the monarchical and subsequent periods (even though these accounts too, of course, all have their own "theological points" to make). More importantly, Stiebing and other critics confuse the Old Testament with the Koran. The scriptures of every other religion (Hindu, Buddhist, Mohammedan, etc.) do, indeed, enunciate systems of theology which have no essential relation to any occurrence in history. The Christian Scriptures, on the other hand, are unique in making the validity of their theology completely dependent upon their historical truthfulness. Indeed, the occurrence of certain events such as the incarnation and the resurrection (cf. 1 Cor. 15) constitutes the very core of biblical theology. The first question to ask, therefore, in deciding the date of the exodus is this: "What saith the Scripture?" In the reconstruction of any event the sworn deposition of reliable witnesses must take precedence over the interpretation of circumstantial evidence. The data of Palestinian archaeology consists, by the nature of the case, almost exclusively in circumstantial evidence and often, indeed, in negative evidence (e.g., the absence of any artifacts of a certain nature in a specific space on a given level). The only reasonable procedure is to conform the interpretation of such data to the impeccable testimony of the biblical historians and, after all, of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the divine authorship of the entire Bible necessarily precludes the use of any external evidence to change the otherwise apparent understanding of any assertion of Scripture. The Book of Kings clearly places the exodus 480 years previous to the foundation of Solomon's temple, and one can, in fact, interpret the pertinent archaeological data in such a way as to support the Scripture rather than contradict it.

1. William H. Stiebing, Jr., "Should the Exodus and the Israelite Settlement Be Redated?" *Biblical Archaeology Review*, IX (1985): 4 (July-August), pp. 58-69.
2. Emmanuel Anati, "Has Mt. Sinai Been Found?" *Biblical Archaeology Review*, IX (1985): 4 (July-August), pp. 42-57.

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3. Donovan A. Courville, *The Exodus Problem and Its Ramifications*, 2 vols. (Loma Linda: Challenge Books, 1971).
 4. Immanuel Velikovsky, *Worlds in Collision* (Garden City: Nelson Doubleday, 1950); cf. *Ages in Chaos* (Garden City: Nelson Doubleday, 1952).
 5. Stiebing, p.61.
 6. Roland K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969), p.317.
 7. Stiebing, p. 68.

Douglas MacCallum Lindsay Judisch

Homiletical Studies

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

December 1, 1985

Paul does two things at once. He thanks God for the Thessalonians and offers petitions to God on their behalf. Paul's thanks are due to the news from Timothy that the Thessalonian Christians are continuing in faith and love (3:6). Paul makes these petitions because he has spent only a short time in Thessalonica and wants to complete what is lacking in the faith of his friends. Furthermore, his efforts have been cut short by persecutors of the faith (2:14-16), and so he is uncertain as to the Thessalonians' spiritual health. Paul uses the word "tribulation" to describe his present woes as he, torn from the Thessalonians, waits alone and impatiently while Timothy travels north to ascertain the Thessalonian situation. The tribulation, then, is not merely some future trouble for the church, but present difficulties faced by Paul and by all Christians. Christians today need to see the Biblical response to tribulations as God's message of hope in their often difficult Christian lives. God's answer to the tribulation is twofold. First, ultimately He will deliver us by the parousia (coming or appearing) of our Lord Jesus. Second, in the meantime He comforts, strengthens, and prepares us today with the ministry of the apostolic Word. Since no one knows the day of the parousia (5:2), Paul is more anxious to prepare and strengthen his people than to discern any divine secrets. Knowing the health of the Thessalonians' faith Paul's petitions for them are really more of a blessing or benediction than pious wishful thinking. His words also provide us an excellent summary both of what Paul's ministry was to accomplish and what the ministry of the apostolic Word can accomplish today, especially in terms of preparing for the coming of the Lord.

Introduction: Thanksgiving and Christmas are times when we either visit loved ones or are visited by them. Thanksgiving was just three days ago and perhaps visitors may still be in the worship service this morning. In our visits we tend to talk about sports, food, family, church, and almost anything under the sun. Paul wanted to visit his friends and talk about something more important and to prepare them for an even more important visit. He wanted to talk about Jesus Christ and prepare the people for Christ's coming. When we listen to Paul's words, not only shall we know how to be prepared, but listening will prepare us.

When Christians Listen to God They Become Prepared for Christ

- I. When Christians listen to God, their faith is completed.
 - A. The content of our faith (what we believe) grows through hearing the Word.
 1. For example, one may know Jesus as his Savior but be confused about His Supper. Listening will help.
 2. For example, one may know God's love but not be certain of the events surrounding the second coming. Listening will help.
 - B. The more information from the Bible we have the stronger we will be.
 1. Since we are so sinful and blind by nature.
 2. Especially since, as Christians, we suffer tribulation.
 3. Since so many false teachings are confronting us.

- Not only does God's Word give us information about Christ, but
- II. When Christians listen to God, they increase in love.
 - A. God in Christ causes us to love.
 - B. Especially, we love other Christians.
 1. Since we are one with them.
 2. Not just in attitude but through actions.
 - C. We also love all people.
 1. As a witness.
 2. Since we are constrained.
 - D. Paul is a good example of this love.
 1. He sacrificed himself for his people.
 2. He gave himself to serve others.
- The Word causes us to love others only because it has powerfully saved us, for
- III. When Christians hear the Word of God, their hearts are established.
 - A. Established to live blameless lives (cf. Php 2:15).
 1. "Blameless" describes our conduct.
 2. Even this blamelessness comes from Christ.
 - B. Established in a state of holiness.
 1. This state is Christ's gracious doing.
 2. This state of holiness is not a gradual accomplishment.
 3. This state of holiness is the cause of blamelessness and not its effect.
 - C. Prepared to stand at the coming of Christ.

Conclusion: Hearing God's Word prepares us because our faith is completed by it, our love is increased by it, our hearts are established by it. We prepare for any visitor on holidays and special occasions. Since Christ is coming at any time, we must be prepared at any time. We prepare ourselves in the same way as the Thessalonians almost two thousand years ago—by hearing the message of Christ.

Klemet Preus
Grand Forks, North Dakota

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Philippians 1:3-11

December 8, 1985

As in the Epistle for the First Sunday in Advent, in this text Paul deals with the topic of sanctification in the wider sense. He is not so much concerned with our specific good works as he is with God's working in us. Paul again is thanking God for fellow Christians. His prayer for them offers a description of the sanctified Christian. The prayer, while begun in verse 4, is not expressed until verse 9. Verses 5-8 are the basis for his prayer. Verses 5-7 talk of the Philippians' condition. Verses 9-11 talk of the natural expression of this gracious condition. Both sections commence with an expression of Paul's affection (vs 3-4, 8), and both sections refer to the "day of Christ Jesus." Incidentally, the expression "fellowship" in the Gospel (v 5) seems most naturally understood as a close equivalent to "common faith" or the "fellowship of grace" in verse 7. Some commentators take the expression to mean a monetary gift or sharing in mission work. While these activities would spring from "fellowship" in the Gospel, such a definition tends unnecessarily to narrow the term.

Introduction: Today the world is full of gloom and doom preachers and all sorts of bizarre claims about the end times. People often are more concerned about deter-

mining the impossible than preparing for the inevitable. The beauty of Christianity is that it is a religion not of conjecture but of comfort. The Word gives us confidence not only that Christ will come but that God has prepared and continues to prepare us for this coming. So a Christian is not just someone who anticipates and waits for Christ but one who is ready and prepared for Him.

God Prepares Us for the Day of Christ

- I. God prepares us for the day of Christ by giving us the Gospel.
 - A. God alone is responsible for the creation of my faith.
 1. I am too sinful to create faith or cooperate with God.
 2. The idea of grace excludes my efforts.
 3. This creation is through the Gospel.
 - B. God also preserves and perfects my faith.
 1. He does so by the Gospel.
 2. He does so alone.
 - C. God's work in me enables me to stand confidently on the last day.
 1. Since I am standing in Christ.
 2. Since my standing depends not on me but on God's grace.

While God prepares us for the day of Christ by the giving of the Gospel, this Gospel also produces something in us.

- II. God prepares us for the day of Christ by bringing forth fruits in us.
 - A. These fruits spring from our righteousness in Christ.
 1. They have value because we are in Christ.
 2. And so by them God is glorified.
 - B. These fruits are produced gradually.
 1. As we grow in our relationship to Christ (knowledge).
 2. As we grow in our moral experience (insight).
 - C. These works done in us will stand when Christ comes.
 1. These works will be pointed out publicly (Matthew 25:34ff).
 2. But our sins, being forgiven, will not be mentioned.

Conclusion: God prepares us for the day of Christ (1) by giving us the Gospel and faith which gives us our standing before Him and (2) by bringing forth fruits in us which will be publicly praised as glorifying God when he comes. Why should we get distraught and disquieted over all the confusing and silly theories about Christ's coming? Let us look to the Gospel instead. Thereby we are prepared, perfected, and made ready. This way is far better.

Klemet Preus

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Philippians 4:4-9

December 15, 1985

The theme of Advent takes a different shape this Sunday and the lessons assist in this shift of mood. The strong tone of judgment, characteristic of the first two Sundays of Advent, now makes room for a burst of joy and the "peace of God which passes all understanding" (Php 4:7). The Epistle from Philippians is the old introit for this Sunday and serves to bind together the three lessons around the theme "Re-

joice!," a most appropriate choice for this "Gaudete" Sunday. For the theme of joy is a dominant one in Philippians (1:4,18,25;2:2,17,18,28,29;3:1; 4:1,4,10) and is always juxtaposed with suffering, for the Christian lifestyle is always characterized in Philippians as joy in the midst of suffering. In his captivity Paul is preoccupied with communicating to the Philippian community that his sufferings for Christ are not a negation of the Gospel but an affirmation of his authenticity as an apostle of Christ.

Thus, the theme of joy in the midst of suffering dominates this epistle from beginning to end, giving it an eschatological flavor that reaches a climax in this pericope. Joy is the stance of the Christian in the midst of suffering because the parousia is near. By prayer and supplication the Christian may petition God to ease the anxiety of a life lived out in imitation of Christ so that, through forbearance, he may have the peace of Christ. These are lofty goals for the Philippians and for our communities. But every Christian community receives them as part of the apostolic tradition that is handed down generation after generation through the Word: "what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me" (v 8). Paul sets himself up as a model of joy in the midst of persecution, but calls all Christians to imitate Christ in the qualities of His life and His attitude in suffering. So the Philippians are encouraged to have the same mind of Christ as portrayed in the great hymn of Christ's humiliation and exaltation (Php 2:6-11). Most commentators take verse 8 of our pericope as a list of Hellenistic virtues, but they are more likely the attributes of Jesus Christ, the perfect gift from above. These are the same kind of attributes that are used to describe Christ and the Christian in the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:1-12).

For the suffering church that is anxiously preparing for the celebration of the incarnation, where the Savior is born in a manger in Bethlehem, these are sumptuous themes upon which to dine on this third Sunday in Advent. Our anxiety over life in a broken universe gives way to joy inside our tears. And so what we truly anticipate and what we actually prepare for is the inbreaking of God's peace in the Christ child, a peace which passes all understanding. The paradox is that joyful tears yield lives of peace with God. Zephaniah announces the joy and demonstrates God's presence in our midst, while Luke shows us how the Holy Spirit helps us prepare by cleansing the way and anticipating the consummation of all things.

The mood of this pericope is the imperative to live in the theology of the cross. Consider the following internal structure of this pericope (imperatives italicized):

- (4) *Rejoice* in the Lord always. . . *Rejoice!*
- (5) *Make known* your forbearance before men.
- (6) *Do not be anxious.*
- (7) *Make known* your petitions before God.
And the peace of God will keep. . .
- (8) *Consider* these things. . .
- (9) *Do* what things you learned, you received, you heard, and you saw.
And the God of peace will be with you.

With this internal structure in mind the following outline recognizes the theme of the Third Sunday in Advent and the overall theme of Philippians that finds its climax in this pericope.

Joy Inside Our Tears

- I. For joyful tears make known our forbearance before men (v 5).
 - A. Forbearance that recognizes that the Lord is near (v 5).

- B. Forbearance that petitions God (v 6).
 1. By prayer and supplication.
 2. With thanksgiving.
- C. Forbearance that keeps our hearts and minds in the peace of God (v 7).
- II. For joyful tears show our imitation of Christ.
 - A. Imitation of His Christlike qualities (v 8).
 1. Received in Baptism when we become "Christ's."
 2. Detailed in the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5).
 - B. Imitation of His suffering for the Kingdom (Php 3:10).
 1. Suffering in our fight against opponents of the Gospel (Php 1:27-30).
 2. Suffering with the same mind of Christ detailed in the incarnational poem of Philippians 2:6-11.
 - C. Imitation of the apostolic tradition that assures us that the God of peace will be with us (v 9).
 1. By recounting what we have learned, received, heard, and seen from the apostles (v 9).
 2. By proclaiming the incarnate Word whose birth we celebrate at Christmas time.
 3. By celebrating God's peace in the Eucharist.

Arthur Just

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Hebrews 10:5-10

December 22, 1985

On this Fourth Sunday of Advent, the church now hunkers down and focuses on the essence of the holy season. The theme of this Sunday is christological. There is a conscious attempt in our lessons to see God's incarnational purpose riveted in the crucified body of the Messiah. Micah announces the ancestry of the Son of David born in Bethlehem; Mary proclaims that the child in her womb is the Messiah-Christ; and the author of Hebrews uses Psalm 40 as the means for declaring that the incarnate Lord is the one to be offered up upon the cross as the final sacrifice for the world's sins.

Thus, this last Sunday before the Nativity of our Lord is dominated by a theme that inextricably binds together the incarnation and the atonement. As we stand on the holy ground of Christmas, this is a fine theme for us to consider. And the Epistle from Hebrews is a marvelous vehicle by which to proclaim this message. Our pericope immediately precedes the climax of the Epistle to the Hebrews in 10:11-18, where Christ is proclaimed as the exalted High Priest. But today's lesson is seminal in understanding this Epistle, for it brings forth the basic understanding that, in Christ, the old becomes new, that "He [Christ] takes away the first in order to establish the second" (v 9). He does so by making a sacrifice of Himself, once-for-all. The distance between the atonement and Christmas is only temporal, for when the child is born in Bethlehem, His death is already seen as the climax of His incarnation.

It is fair to say, therefore, that Jesus Christ is born to die. And it is also fair to say that with the birth of Jesus Christ, the old becomes new, the old covenant of sacrificial offerings giving way to the new covenant of the once-for-all sacrifice of God's Son for the sins of the world. The author of Hebrews sees in Psalm 40 a pro-

phetic statement in which the Messiah is seen as doing “the will of God” by His self-sacrifice. For the people of God who gather to celebrate the incarnation and the atonement on this Fourth Sunday of Advent, their eyes should be focused on the sanctifying power of Christ’s offering that cleanses them from all their sin. For it is here that God’s people are declared holy; it is here that they are set apart as the body of Christ; it is here that they see themselves as new creatures in the new creation. With the shift from old to new, there is a power unleashed, a spiritual power, that rocks the universe. One does not usually associate power with Christmas, but if this season is what our Epistle says it is, then there is a power breaking into the world that changes the world forever. One cannot preach in this holy season of our Lord’s birth without recognizing that the incarnation, the atonement, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ are power-laden events.

As one considers the following outline, an introduction might discuss how God cloaks His power in humble images—it is the sleepy village of Bethlehem, not Rome, where the Savior is born; it is shepherds, not Pharisees, who come to worship the child; it is a manger, not a palace, where the birth takes place. How strange for our God to use His power, not for the glory of man, but for the saving of man. God’s powerful kingdom comes through abject humility, for in humility and weakness God’s power is released, an understanding that unlocks the mystery of the incarnation and the atonement. Christmas is the season of power because of the reason for the birth of the child—Jesus Christ was

Born to Die

- I. A death that abolishes the sacrificial cult.
 - A. The old covenant sacrifices are not desired (v 5).
 1. They were to be a reminder of Christ’s atonement (He 10:3).
 2. The blood of bulls and goats do not take away sin (He 10:4).
 - B. The old covenant of the law is a shadow of things to come (He 10:1).
 1. In Christ, the law is fulfilled, as is written in the roll of the book (v 7).
 2. In Christ, the will of God is fulfilled, as is written in the roll of the book (v 7).
- II. A death that is an offering up of Himself.
 - A. The body of Christ has been prepared in the new covenant (v 5).
 1. The atonement reveals the mystery of the incarnation (v 5).
 2. The atonement unleashes the power of a new age.
 - B. The body of Christ (the church) has been sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ once-for-all (v 10).
 1. To be sanctified is to be part of the new creation.
 2. To be sanctified involves participation in the death of Christ.
 - a. By remembering in our Baptism that we die and rise with Christ.
 - b. By partaking of Christ’s body and blood in the Eucharist.

Arthur Just

CHRISTMAS DAY

Titus 3:4-7

December 25, 1985

Titus was a Gentile, a companion of St. Paul. The apostle, after a brief stint of service on the island of Crete, left Titus in charge. It was his task and ministry to bring stability to newborn Christians and infant churches there. The writing of the letter falls around 63 A.D. while Paul may have been in Macedonia. Titus 3:4-7, the Christmas Day Epistle, is a profound statement of grace by St. Paul. It was God's *philanthropia* (love for mankind) which prompted Him to send the gift of His Son into the world at the nativity of our Lord. Paul defines grace simply by stating that God's love is given to man, not because he was deserving of such love, but rather as a free gift.

The power of God's grace in Christ is brought to us by the "washing of regeneration," which clearly refers to baptism and not to an outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. While Paul does not mention the part that faith plays in this drama where God is clearly the actor and initiator of His love, it is implied when he says that those who are recipients of God's grace in Christ are made heirs, the inheritors of eternal life. It is in faith that man appropriates God's gift of grace and makes its blessings his own now and into eternity.

Introduction: I have before you a nicely wrapped present and on the box it says, "Open at Christmas." I wonder what it might be? A special gift for the pastor? A sum of money for the church to pay the mortgage or to buy a new organ? Well, we shall never know what is in this gaily wrapped box unless we open it. So let us open the gift! There, it is open, but all that is inside is a slip of paper. What does it say? "A gift to the congregation—the gift of My grace in Jesus Christ." Signed: "God the Father." Amidst all the gifts that you have received this Christmas, I trust you will treasure this gift above all others, the gift of God's love and grace in Jesus Christ. This Christmas:

Let Us Open the Gift of God's Grace

As we do, we shall find.

- I. The Savior of the world (v 4).
 - A. He is presented to us out of love.
 - B. We are undeserving of such love (v 5).
- II. The gracious act of baptism (vs 5,6).
 - A. Baptism regenerates and saves by grace.
 - B. The Holy Spirit is poured into our lives through baptism.
- III. The assurance of an eternal inheritance (v 7).
 - A. In faith we make the blessings of grace our own.
 - B. In faith we lay hold of eternal life as God's heirs.

Conclusion: There are some gifts which are treasured for a lifetime because of the sentiment behind the gift. The greatest gift-giver is God. There is deep sentiment behind His most precious Christmas gift—the gift of His grace in Christ Jesus. Shall we treasure this gift or despise and cast it aside as we do the wrappings from a gift we have received? Not only would God have you open His gift, but He would have you receive it in faith and treasure it to all eternity.

Edmond E. Aho
Yuma, Arizona

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Hebrews 2:10-18

December 29, 1985

The authorship of the letter to the Hebrews remains a moot point. Was it Paul, with his burden for his "brethren"? Was it Barnabas the Levite, the companion of Paul, to whom Tertullian of Carthage credited the authorship? Was Hebrews, as Luther argued, the product of several authors? Regardless, it is a profound letter written before the end of the first century to direct Hebrew Christians to the roots of their faith in the Old Testament, to urge them not to "cave in" as they faced persecution and arguments from their fellow Jews, and to point them to Christ, the "Seed of Abraham," the Messiah sent from God. (The Jewish faith was an accepted religion of the Roman realm, but Christianity was considered a sect.)

Hebrews is essentially a Christological epistle. It reveals how Christ has, in all things, fulfilled God's plan of the ages and is Savior of Jew and Gentile alike, for they are true children of Abraham who, like this father of believers, have faith in God's Messiah. Thus, this text for the Sunday after Christmas, which is traditionally a low day for pastors and parishes after the enthusiasm and excitement of Christmas, fairly bursts with a joyful proclamation of Christ, the flower that has bloomed in the midst of winter to reveal the beauty of God's plan of victory and salvation for all people.

Introduction: In a hauntingly beautiful Christmas song by Pietro Yon we hear these words:

When blossoms flowered 'mid the snow
Upon a winter night,
Was born the child, the Christmas Rose,
The King of love and light.

Again the heart with rapture glows
To greet the holy night
That gave the world its Christmas Rose
Its King of love and light.

Let every voice acclaim His name,
The grateful chorus swell.
From paradise to earth He came
That we with Him might dwell

If the simple beauty of our Christmas celebration tells us anything, it surely tells us this:

A Rose Has Burst Forth in Splendor

Christ is that Rose:

- I. He has burst forth in His Nativity.
 - A. He has become our brother, our Immanuel (vs 11, 14, 16, 17).
 - B. He has become our brother to fulfill God's purpose (vs 10, 18).
- II. He has burst forth that He might suffer.
 - A. God's justice and mercy have kissed each other (Ps 85:10).

- B. His beauty is meant to be shared by all mankind (vs 10, 12, 13, 16, 17; Ps 22:22; Is 8:17, 18)
- III. He has burst forth that He might conquer.
- A. Suffering without victory is hopeless (vs 10, 17).
- B. Christ, through suffering, has overcome the devil (v 4).
- C. In Him we become more than conquerors (v 18).

Conclusion: In many areas of the country and our world, living now in the depths of winter solstice, to find a rose in bloom would be most unusual. But there are places in our country and the world where roses are indeed in full bloom. In any case, important thing is to find the Rose whose stem goes back through the ages to David, to Abraham, to Noah, to Adam, to God. It is none other than God's own Christmas Rose, the Rose that burst forth in splendor on the first Christmas.

Edmond E. Aho

THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-18

January 5, 1986

In order that Christians might fulfill the purpose in this life which God intended (to live to the praise of His glory, vs 6, 12) the Apostle Paul reminds the Ephesians (and us) that reasons for praising God reach back much further than Jesus' coming to earth on the first Christmas. God's love and grace toward us were evident "before the foundation of the world" (v 4) was laid.

The Church Is Born

- I. The church was born in the mind and will of God before creation.
- A. God chose us to be His long ago.
1. He would not endure the estrangement of the crown of His creation caused by sin.
 2. God's choice was prompted by His great love and undeserved kindness toward us (v 6).
 3. God's choice was meant to stir us to praise.
- B. God carried out in time what He chose to do in eternity.
- II. Jesus' birth is the key to the birth of the church.
- A. Through Jesus we are made holy and blameless (v 4).
1. We receive the benefit of Jesus' righteousness by faith. In God's eyes we are righteous.
 2. This righteousness Jesus earned for us by His holy life.
 3. This righteousness frees us from the guilt of sin. To feel guilt when we have been freed of it is unnecessary and an insult to the grace of God and the Savior who freed us.
- B. Jesus in His suffering and death endured the punishment for our sin.
1. Through faith we are free of the punishment of our sin.
 2. We need not live in fear of this punishment.
 3. God means for us to serve Him and praise Him.
- C. Through Jesus and the working of the Holy Spirit we become God's sons (v 5).

III. Faith-filled Christians are evidence that the church is alive (v 15).

A. Faith shows itself in love.

1. Faith shows itself in the love of God.
2. Faith shows itself in the love of one's fellowmen.

B. Faith shows itself enlightening the eyes of the heart (v 18).

1. To know God and Jesus Christ.
2. To know a glorious hope for this life and for heavenly life.
3. To talk to God in prayer, thus maintaining the relationship.

Conclusion: Reflect on these blessings from God and praise Him always!

Rudolph A. Haak
Cambridge, Minnesota

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Acts 10:34-38

January 12, 1986

The great marvel of Christmas is that God became man. The great marvel of Epiphany is that this man is also true God. Being both true God and true man, He is the Savior of all men. For the Jew of the early Church this truth was a tremendous challenge to faith. Even the Apostle Peter, after being filled with the Holy Ghost (on Pentecost), could believe this truth only by virtue of a special vision from God (vv 9-16).

In the book of Acts Cornelius is the third Gentile to become a member of the household of faith (cf. the Ethiopian eunuch, 8:27; Nicolaus the proselyte, 6:5). In this special outreach of the Lord He teaches us again in a very special way that

The Good News of Peace Is for All People

I. Jesus is the center of the Good News of peace.

A. Jesus is "Good News" only to those who recognize the rupture caused by sin between man and God.

1. Many who feel the guilt of sin do not understand its consequences, namely, God's just anger and our eternal separation from Him.
2. Every person, of every land, in every condition of life is affected by sin. The consequences in this life and in eternity are dreadful unless one is rescued from them by God through the "Good News."

B. The Good News is Jesus Christ.

1. He has delivered every person from the guilt, punishment, and slavery of sin by His life, death, and resurrection.
2. In Him is life, new life now and life in eternity.

II. The Good News is meant to be delivered in person.

A. The Good News of peace once came to Cornelius in a vision, but being a "devout man," he had, no doubt, already read the Old Testament Scriptures.

1. The Good News comes to us in Holy Scripture. We contemplate the written word and are blessed when we use it.
2. We send the written word all over the world in Bibles, tracts, and periodicals. The Spirit attends its use and brings blessings through it.

B. God intends that His people "go" to proclaim, to teach, and to baptize.

1. God Himself not only proclaimed His news through the writings of the Old Testament, but in the fulness of time He also sent His Son. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn 1:14).

2. Peter rose and went and talked to Cornelius (v 23). Cornelius needed the witness of Peter.
3. The Lord tells us, "Go!" (Mt 28:19; Mk 16:15). To tell about peace and reconciliation between sinful man and His God is good. God will bless the hearers of the news with faith. The "Good News" is best proclaimed when the message comes from a person who is reconciled to God and whose countenance beams with the peace which only God can give.

Conclusion: Go therefore to every person who has not yet heard, and to all who have. Go therefore to every person who is a sinner. Go therefore to every person for whom the Savior lived, died, and rose from the grave. Go therefore to every person whom God would reach, that none for whom he gave His Son may be lost.

Rudolph A. Haak

THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

January 19, 1986

1 Corinthians 12 is set within the greater context of Paul's instruction to the Corinthians concerning spiritual gifts (12-14): Why were these gifts given? How are they bestowed? How were they to be used? The Corinthians were apparently impressed with the more visible *charismata* and were selfishly seeking after these gifts. (This is exactly what Paul is saying in verse 31 if the verb *zeloute* is taken as indicative instead of imperative, as all the translations have it. The context would argue for the use of the indicative.)

But God is not a God of chaos and discord, allowing His precious gifts to be dispensed randomly according to our selfish whims or by virtue of the earnestness of our seeking. The individual is stressed in these verses. Each Christian is given a gift or gifts. The "one God" gives to each a gift through His Spirit, and it is the same Spirit who dispenses varieties of gifts. Our duty as Christians, then, is not to seek after gifts but to recognize and rejoice in our God-given spiritual gifts. A sermon based on the outline below would seek to instill in Christians the sense of honor implicit in their own individual spiritual gifts, knowing those gifts are determined, custom-made, and built within them by God.

Introduction: We admire gifted people. Those with intelligence, good looks, or impressive skills usually control the inside track on popularity and success. Gifted people also exist within God's church. And here also we might be tempted to think that some are thereby more favored than others. But St. Paul tells us that we are all special to God; we are all holders of this title:

The Gifted Christian

- I. Spiritual gifts come from God.
 - A. The same Spirit that calls us to faith in Jesus bestows upon us "varieties of gifts" (vs 3-4).
 1. By virtue of our faith we "are not lacking in any *charismata*" (1 Cor 1:7).
 2. God sees to it that there are sufficient gifts for His church in any given place.

- B. We are just the way God wants us to be.
1. We are endowed with the gifts "He wills for us" (v 11).
 2. To seek jealously after other gifts is not only unnecessary; it calls into question God's unique ordinance for our place in His kingdom.
- II. Spiritual gifts are "for the common good" (v 7).
- A. In diversity there is unity.
1. God coordinates and compliments the gifts in His church.
 2. Every gift and, therefore, every individual is important if the common good of God's kingdom is to be achieved.
- B. It is necessary, then, that we recognize our individual gifts and use them (A description of the gifts in verses 8-10, or other gifts listed elsewhere in Scripture, as they apply to the specific congregation may be given.)
- Conclusion:* How important we all are to God! He not only calls us by name to confess His name in faith; He also honors each of us further with special and vitally important gifts. Truly, we are "gifted Christians."

Paul E. Cloeter
Kimball, Minnesota

THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

1 Corinthians 12:12-21, 26-27

January 26, 1986

Whereas the emphasis in 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 is on the individual and the diversity of spiritual gifts which God bestows on "each one" (vs 7,11), our text, which incorporates essentially the remainder of chapter 12, is Paul's instruction concerning the unity of these varied individual gifts in the body of Christ. This body, the church in its broadest sense, is to be a well-organized and smooth-running operation. Paul illustrates this by the analogy of the human body. Individual members are to use their divinely ordained and bestowed gifts so that the body may function as intended.

Like the Corinthians, many Christians within the church today are individualists who (1) want to work independently and, thereby, often counter-productively in the church; (2) try to be or acquire in terms of spiritual gifts what God never intended them to have; (3) look down on others with less dramatic gifts; (4) feel inferior or even worthless because their gifts are less "showy" or contribute in a less apparent way than others. The goal of the sermon outlined below is to remind Christians that our spiritual gifts, no matter what they may be, are valuable. But they find value only as they are put to use in concert with the whole body of Christ.

Introduction: When it comes to joining together with others in accomplishing a goal, it seems everybody wants to be, or dreams about being, the proverbial quarterback. We like the glory of being able to stand out. But as any employer or coach will tell you, it is the multitude of people doing their tasks well behind the scenes that makes success possible. St. Paul employs the same principle in our life together in the church. He motivates us to success in our text with

Body Language

- I. Christ is the body.
- A. Through His body, Christ has reconciled us.
1. He has reconciled us first to God.
 2. He has reconciled us also to one another as we "drink of the one Spirit" (v 13).

- B. We, though many and diverse, find identity and unity only in His body.
1. We were baptized into Him by the one Spirit (v 13).
 2. Through this action we have become one with Christ. (Compare John 17:21, Romans 6, and other Pauline references to the mystical union of believers "in Christ.")
- II. We are the individual members.
- A. Each has unique gifts and intended functions.
1. These gifts are determined by God (v 18).
 2. There is no room in the body, therefore, for criticism, envy, or feelings of inferiority and uselessness (vs 15-17,21).
- B. We have a vested interest in each other.
1. We care about each other. The pain and suffering of one member affects us all adversely. Likewise, the honor of one member makes all members feel good (v 26).
 2. Working together, the body functions and accomplishes its goal.

Conclusion: In the heat of the Revolutionary War, Benjamin Franklin is credited with saying, "We all better hang together, or we'll all hang separately." By virtue of our calling as Christians, we form an important part in the overall working of Christ's church. The body of Christ is no place for individualists. By hanging together and exercising our gifts to the fullest, the body flourishes, to the honor of its members and to the glory of Christ.

Paul E. Cloeter

THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

1 Corinthians 12:27-13:13

February 2, 1986

The manner in which this text has been sentimentalized and even trivialized by careless readers of it is well-known. Genuine love is an easily misunderstood concept. Letting the Word speak in its proper context is the means of illuminating the profound truth that Paul is seeking to teach.

Clearly love is a "still more excellent way" (v 31). All spiritual gifts have a purpose, but genuine love (*agape*) binds them all together. Its value is understood by the repeated use of conditionals ("if") in the early verses of chapter 13. The frequent employment of the negative ("not") in verses 4-7 proves that love is not easily defined by human language, which can often describe only that something is not, instead of what it truly is. Love in truth is the premier divine quality which gives significance to every other valued Christian gift, including faith and hope (v 13). The goal of the sermon is to lead the hearers to begin to understand the surprising value of love as God bestows it and they practice it. The problem is that we have a tendency to emotionalize love, which makes it subject to our unreliable feelings. The means to the goal is the carefully considered understanding of the fullness of love and how we love because He first loved us.

Introduction: The words of this "Love Chapter" are both amazing and surprising, worthy of more than an inscription on a wall plaque or a reading at a wedding. Love is part of the very nature of God and the enduring quality which is most to typify His people. If we by the Spirit's guiding truly let Him speak to us in this text, we will learn of

The Suprising Value of Love

- I. It gives meaning to the Christian life.
 - A. No spiritual gift has any purpose without love (vs 1,2).
 1. The ability to speak in tongues is a useless gift without love.
 2. The gifts of prophecy and understanding have no point without love.
 - B. No heroic act of service does any good without love (v 7).
 1. Giving away everything, as commendable as it may seem, accomplishes nothing without love.
 2. Surrendering one's self in martyrdom does not mean anything without love.
- II. It gives definition to the Christian faith.
 - A. Believing in Jesus has no lasting value without love (v 2).
 - B. Believing in Jesus is defined in a visible, dramatic way by Christians who love as the Savior loved.
- III. It gives completion to the Christian hope.
 - A. Spiritual maturity increases as genuine love increases and leads to hope for the life to come (vs 9-12).
 1. In love we grow in confidence.
 2. In love we "see" more clearly (v 12).
 - B. Full understanding based on abiding love is our sure hope that will not disappoint us.

Conclusion: Perhaps it seems surprising that Paul would "rank" love above the essential qualities of faith and hope. Yet the value of love is always surprising as it lends meaning to the Christian life, faith, and hope. It is the "tie that binds," the divine quality that lasts forever.

David E. Seybold
Fredonia, Wisconsin

THE LAST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

2 Corinthians 4:3-6

February 9, 1986

It is sometimes difficult for Christians to understand how unbelievers can persistently reject a faith which to the believer is so valuable and sensible. Paul touches on this subject in this text, honestly observing that the Gospel is veiled to those who are perishing. What he calls "the god of this world" (v 4) has blinded their minds. Grammatically and theologically this phrase can properly be translated, "the god which is this world," reflecting what we believers know too well, namely that worldliness can be totally distracting as it devours the attention of far too many people.

The goal of the sermon is to emphasize the value of Christian faith and the way that it makes excellent sense to those who have it. The problem is that the people of the world have been blinded by the world and accordingly try to convince Christians that faith is quite foolish. The means to the goal is the sharing of the Gospel, which is the power of God to lift the veil (v 3) and shine forth as the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God" (v 6).

Introduction: An ancient saying affirms that "concerning taste there is no disputing." Some people prefer red; others like blue. There is no sense arguing about personal preference. Yet unbelievers sometimes like to give the impression that Christians who "prefer" faith over unbelief have chosen a foolish and senseless belief. They cannot see any possible value in Christian faith and are unafraid to dispute what seems so proper for Christians. Do they have a point? Perhaps we ought to ask

Just What Do You See in Christianity?

- I. It is a message veiled to the perishing.
 - A. The god which is this world offers only distractions because it cannot offer any "light" (v 4).
 1. It can succeed only when it keeps people preoccupied and blind to their sin.
 2. It can succeed only by turning the view of people in upon themselves.
 - B. The god which is this world seems sensible to the perishing because they know nothing else.
- II. It is a message valued by the believing.
 - A. The true and only God brings light to sin-darkened minds (v 6).
 1. His people can then see the wickedness of themselves and the world.
 2. His people can then see the value of trusting in the Savior.
 - B. The true and only God leads to genuine understanding; believing in Him makes complete sense and is the ultimate truth.
- III. It is a message illuminated in the preaching of Christ.
 - A. Proclaiming the Gospel of Christ focuses on what God has done to save people.
 - B. Proclaiming the Gospel of Christ reminds people that it is the Lord who alone can open eyes to see what real faith is all about (v 5).

Conclusion: We should not be surprised that unbelievers cannot see any value in our Christian faith and service. The world has distracted them with sin because it has nothing better to offer. We can "see," however, both the deadliness of sin and the value of our salvation because God has in the preaching of the Gospel graciously shined into our hearts with the light of Christ.

David F. Seybold

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

Romans 10:8b-13

February 16, 1986

What do pastors want to happen in the hearts and lives of the people to whom they preach during Lent? Obviously the tone of the season as it concentrates on the suffering of the Savior and the extra services make it an ideal time for faith-building. However, most of our hearers not only claim faith but are probably quite satisfied that their faith is "strong" though it is often misdirected, misinformed, and sometimes just plain wrong. Many things heard or experienced shape what people believe. This Sunday's lessons and especially the text offer a precious opportunity to proclaim again the foundation of faith, the Word!

Introduction: In "The Ancient Mariner" Samuel Coleridge penned the line, "Water, water everywhere, Nor any drop to drink," a pitiful expression of want in the midst

of plenty. This line reminds us of the condition of faith in our world. Faith is much talked about and credited with great things. Still this statement is true: "Faith, faith talked of everywhere, yet so few who do believe." The problem is that too often faith is built on wrong foundations.

The Word on Which to Build Your Faith

- I. People generally do not understand what Christian faith is. Compare the generalities, "I believe in God" and "She's very religious," to what Paul pointedly says in verses 9-10 of the text.
 - A. Faith is, first of all, the conviction of the heart that Christ is Savior.
 1. Faith focuses on the fact of Christ's death and resurrection (cf. Jn 3:16, 1 Cor 15:3b-4, Ro 4:25, 1 Cor 15:57).
 2. But faith is much more than knowledge. It is personal conviction that produces a personal relationship with Christ (Job 19:25, 2 Tm 1:12b, Php 3:7-8).
 3. Too often what is merely in one's head regarding Jesus ("I learned all that stuff") is mistaken for what must be in the heart as well.
 - B. Faith, secondly, produces confession with the mouth about Jesus.
 1. Our Lord expects outward expression as a natural product of the faith in our hearts (Mt 10:32, Ac 4:20).
 2. Witness to our faith is expressed in both what we say and what we do. (Illustrate with examples.)
- II. Saving, life-renewing Christian faith is founded on "the word of faith," the word of the Gospel.
 - A. This word is most certainly "near" us in the abundance of Gospel preaching and teaching which most of us have received since childhood.
 1. The central, simple, clear message of the Scripture is salvation "by grace . . . the gift of God . . . not by works" (Eph 2:8-9, Jn 19:30, 2 Cor 5:19).
 2. There can be no mistake about who it is for whom God intends the Gospel (vs 11-12). (Briefly elaborate on universality of the Gospel and the Great Commission.)
 - B. Unfortunately having the Word in abundance does not guarantee having saving faith.
 1. The Jews (10:1-3) had the word of faith (vs 8, 18), yet in unbelief sought salvation in the law (v 16).
 2. Many today, also in the church, despite their knowledge of the Bible, rest their hope in "my faith" or on doing "the best I can . . ." or they seek a "more relevant" religion in a cult.
 - C. The Gospel must still be unleashed among us if true faith is to exist and grow.
 1. Only by the "word of Christ" is faith created by the Spirit (v 17; Ro 1:16).
 2. "Hearing" involves more than sound on our ears or words on a printed page; it involves
 - a. Listening to God (1 Th 2:13; Catechism, Third Commandment).
 - b. Meditating.
 - c. Listening with the goal of application (Mt 13:3ff.; Lk 11:28; Mt 7:24ff.).
 - d. Using it in battle with evil (Lk 4:1-13).

Conclusion: May our faith increase and be strengthened during this Lenten season, especially as we give attention to the message of Christ, our suffering, dying, yet victorious and living Lord.

Ed Dubberke
St. Louis, Missouri

THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

Philippians 3:17-4:1

February 23, 1986

It is characteristic of sinful man that he does what he pleases for himself and for the here and now. Illustrations of this truth abound in the world around us. Madison Avenue takes advantage of it in its selling techniques. Both of the other lessons for this day illustrate how this same characteristic dominates in many who call themselves God's people but who reject His Word and go their own worldly way. The result is that they put more confidence in the flesh than in the Lord, to use Paul's words in the first part of chapter 3. In their pitiful efforts to become something before God on their own they lose sight of the beauty and power of what believers already are through union with Christ by faith. The apostle's appeal just before the text is both a fitting and necessary reminder for us "Let us live up to what we have already attained."

Introduction: The high value of the dollar in the last few years has moved record numbers of Americans to visit foreign countries. Wherever they go they carry with them their American citizenship. They have both the rights of citizens and the responsibility of representing their homeland. Hopefully they will be recognized as good citizens. The same truth applies to our membership in God's kingdom, of which we are citizens through Christ (Eph 2:19). How essential is it that each of us

Live on Earth as a Citizen of Heaven

- I. It is both natural and to be expected that all believers walk as to the same drumbeat in expression of their oneness in Christ (vv. 16, 17).
 - A. By his appeal to follow his example Paul is urging growth in sanctification, to become more and more Christ-like (Mt 16:24, Jn 13:15; Ro 15:5; Php 2:5, He 12:2).
 - B. A vital factor in Christian living besides the working of the Spirit in the Word is having and following positive examples of faith found in Scripture and in other saints both past and present. (1 Cor 11:1; He 11:1ff).
- II. It is a sad reality that many who profess allegiance to Christ demonstrate just the opposite in their lives.
 - A. Paul defines the characteristics of such false citizens of Christ's kingdom.
 1. They are given to shameless gratification of the desires of the flesh (illustrations from our culture abound).
 2. Their hearts are set on the things of this world, not on the things of God.
 3. Such "Christians" love and serve the very things from which Christ, by His cross, came to free us.
 - B. We need to recognize and shun such "enemies of the cross of Christ" lest they become an influence on us, at the same time grieving over what has happened to them (Lk 13:34).
- III. Paul leaves no doubt as to what genuine citizens of the kingdom are like.
 - A. In terms of their life they are all wrapped up in Christ alone.
 1. Instead of all those things of life that promise to satisfy, their one treasure is Christ (Php 3:7-9).
 2. Their aim in life is to serve Him, not sin (Ro 6:1-7; 2 Cor 5:14-15).
 - B. Also in terms of hope for the future they are all wrapped up in Christ (1 Cor 15:42ff, esp. v 58; Jn 14:1-6; Col 3:1-4).

Conclusion: As we re-evaluate the citizenship which our lives reflect during this Lenten season we do well to heed Paul's final admonition in the text: "Stand firm in the Lord, dear friends."

THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

March 2, 1986

Introduction: The final verses of this text are often used to comfort Christians who are experiencing sickness, economic difficulties, tragedy, even death. Temptation, in terms of such usage, is understood to be the trials referred to in 1 Peter 1:6-9. Actually, the temptation of which Paul speaks here is an inducement to sin, in this context the sin of presumption. To presume, or to have presumption, it "to behave with arrogance or without proper respect, to take something for granted." Paul's line of argument in the text follows from the fear, which he expresses in 9:27, of knowing the grace of God but still ending up disqualified at the end of the race. He warns us not to presume upon God's grace, and yet uses the very same grace as

The Escape from Presumption

- I. In spite of our sin, God's grace renews and changes our lives.
 - A. God was gracious to the Israelites.
 1. They were sinful people. Nowhere are we told that Israel deserved to be saved from the bondage of Egypt.
 2. Yet God delivered them. Theirs was a select relationship as God graciously made them His own people (vv 1-4).
 - B. God is still gracious to us.
 1. On account of our sins we deserve nothing but God's wrath and punishment.
 2. But, as God saved Israel, He continues to cleanse us in the waters of Baptism and gives us to drink from the Rock in whom we have salvation (v 4). He graciously makes us His new Israel to live as such.
- II. In spite of His grace, He punishes us when we live as if nothing is changed.
 - A. It happened to the Children of Israel. Despite the fact that they were saved from Egypt to continue to be His covenant people, their sins were a presumption on God's grace (vv 7-10) and God punished them (v 5).
 - B. We can presume upon God's grace.
 1. By thinking that we are automatically in the kingdom of God by virtue of congregational membership (v 12).
 2. By living as if grace is not always needed, a self-righteousness that denigrates the cross (Ga 2:21).
 3. By, worst of all, claiming to be God's people, yet living completely otherwise (Mt 17:7).
 - C. We can come under God's judgment. "These things are warnings for us." God still overthrows those who presume upon, if not spurn, His grace and live as if nothing needs change.
- III. In spite of our presumption, God is ready to forgive us and protect us against it.
 - A. God knows how we are tempted to presume upon His grace. The text ends on a word of promise, rather than one of doom, as our human condition is understood (v 13).
 - B. He gives us Christ as a way to escape. God's Son confronted the Tempter and won the victory. In Christ we have strength to fend off temptation, forgiveness when we do sin, the capacity to endure and remain as God's people.
 - C. Thus we will not want to presume upon His grace. God is so good to us! Shall we presume upon the love of the One who is so gracious to us? No! By His grace we live as His changed children.

Conclusion: The temptation is to presume upon God's grace. But we never need presume about God's grace. It is evident. It gives us escape from false presumption. It gives us daily victory in Christ.

Luther G. Strasen
Fort Wayne, Indiana

THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

1 Corinthians 1:18, 22-25

March 9, 1986

Introduction: In our pluralistic society we are bombarded with all types of ideas as to whom to listen to next, how to run our lives, where to find satisfaction and how to be sure that we are in control. The advice is actually spiritual, though it certainly is not labeled as such, because it deals with the relationships we have with others (which have much in common with our prior relationship, or lack of such, with God). It is not always easy to sort out all the input as to whether it truly is in tune, if even helpful, for our Christian experience. It is probably easier to attach ourselves to some person or concept that appeals to us and promote whatever it is as being what best empowers our lives. The Apostle Paul was aware that the Corinthian Christians were selecting leadership and advice from all sides and that those who found what satisfied them were haughty and quarrelsome with those who did not have what was deemed the best (1 Cor. 1:10-12). The apostle understood that such behavior and attitudes threaten the power of the cross of Christ (1:17), which is what truly best empowers us. Thus this text still instructs us as we live in the world in our day. What continues to be the best for us is

The Power of the Cross

- I. Power is not found in human signs and wisdom.
 - A. Signs and wisdom have always had high priority (v 22).
 1. The Jews demanded signs (Jn 2:18) and the Greeks sought wisdom, systems of philosophy to guide one's destiny and keep life under control.
 2. It is still so. The Shroud of Turin or the ruins of the ark are considered to be faith-authenticating. Astrology, "how to live" books, sects and their leaders are looked to for spiritual direction and power for daily living.
 - B. But signs and wisdom are found wanting.
 1. Signs do not work faith. The Jewish leaders saw Jesus' burial clothes and still did not believe. The apostles did not carry them about to convince people of Jesus' resurrection. Ark ruins do not make Christians.
 2. All "wisdom" is not true guidance. The "me first" concept of these years inhibits good relationships. The depreciation of the nuclear family has harmed society. Sects last as long as their leaders.
 - C. And those who seek and find inadequate signs and wisdom are perishing even as they think they are succeeding (v 18).
- II. Power is found in the cross of Christ.
 - A. The Christ of the cross is God's power and wisdom (v 24).
 1. The power that saves us when we are weak and faced with destruction (Ro 5:8-9).
 2. The wisdom that presents God's grace to us in the midst of our sin and inability to save ourselves (Eph 2:8-9).
 - B. The world discounts God's power.
 1. It is a stumbling block. The Jews looked to the keeping of the Law, rather than the promise of the Messiah. It is still argued that the idea of God saving us takes away from the dignity achieved in saving ourselves by our own power in which we can boast (Eph 2:9).

2. It is foolishness. The Greeks considered the resurrection to be absurd (Ac 17:32) and it is still attacked today. What is even regarded as more foolish is the undeserved forgiveness which God offers. How ridiculous it seems to forgive with open arms, with no vengeance, without even a period of testing repentance (Lk 15:11-32)! It gives up our power over others.

- C. But to us the cross of Christ is the power and wisdom of God (vv 24-25).
1. Its very foolishness and weakness defeats Satan and destroys the terror of death.
 2. It restores the joy of forgiveness, the power to live for God and others, the certain hope of heaven.

Conclusion: The power of Christ crucified is for all people (v 24). Paul was caught up in the preaching of it. As it empowers us, we rejoice as God uses us to engage others in its power and wisdom that answers our deepest needs (Lk 15:24).

Luther G. Strasen

THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Philippians 3:8-14

March 16, 1986

Introduction: Cheap grace and self-righteousness—neither of these gives glory to God, but they do bring into focus one of the paradoxes of the Christian faith. In Christ, we have perfect righteousness. All the perfection of Jesus Christ is imputed to the believer by faith. Yet this truth is never an occasion for complacency or indifference, but rather it spurs us on to ever greater conformity of life to confession. Although we are perfect in Christ we strive for perfection more and more each day.

The Paradox of the Righteous

- I. Righteousness which we possess perfectly.
 - A. Righteousness comes apart from the law.
 1. The temptation exists to glory in one's own accomplishments, "pedigree," endurance (context).
 2. These can never make or give perfect righteousness (v 9).
 3. Rather they are counted as loss for the sake of Christ (v 8).
 - B. Righteousness comes from God alone.
 1. It is founded in God's actions, not our own efforts (v 9).
 2. It comes for the sake of Christ by grace through faith (v 9).
 3. Although righteous in Christ, we strive for righteousness (v 13).
- II. Righteousness for which we strive.
 - A. The righteous are aware of their own imperfection (lack of righteousness).
 1. We are not perfect (vv 12, 13).
 2. We have comfort and assurance but are not complacent or indifferent (v 12).
 - B. We press on, reaching for what lies ahead in Christ.
 1. Using the means by which God sustains us (vv 10, 11).
 2. Fulfilling the purpose for which Christ has called us (v 14).

Norbert Mueller

PALM SUNDAY**Philippians 2:5-11****March 23, 1986**

Introduction: The text deals with servanthood, self-denial, and obedience. These are all concepts repugnant to the flesh, but characteristic of vital Christian faith. On this Palm Sunday, we ponder again the servanthood of Christ in terms of his self-denial and obedience as it relates to God's great redemptive purpose for the world.

The Servant, Jesus Christ

- I. The Servant who denies Himself.
 - A. Christ has a legitimate claim to deity.
 - B. Christ humbles Himself.
 1. He pours Himself out (v 7).
 2. He takes on the form of a servant (v 7).
- II. The Servant who is obedient unto death.
 - A. He dies the death of the cross (v 8).
 1. In fulfillment of all righteousness (2 Cor 5:21).
 2. In fulfillment of God's prophetic promises of redemption (Mt 20:18; Lk 24:26, 27).
 - B. His obedience makes possible the new creation (v 5).
 1. Every knee will bow at the name of Jesus (v 10).
 2. Every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord (v 11).
 3. Everything redounds to the glory of God the Father (v 11).
 - C. His servanthood becomes a model for our servanthood in the world (v 5).
Norbert Mueller

EASTER**1 Corinthians 15:1-11****March 30, 1986**

Holy Week is hectic for a pastor. Here, however, he may take heart. This text has nothing new or tricky in it. In fact, Paul indicates that he is going to tell his readers again, or remind them, of what he has preached to them before. Here is another chance to preach the Gospel—this time to assure the people of their resurrection. And the preacher may bask in this Gospel himself and be fortified in his own spirit so to proclaim: Christ is risen!

Introduction: Christ is risen! I guarantee it! Such a bold statement might evoke this question: "What would become of me if He were not risen?" Well, if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins; and those who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. In other words, if Christ did not rise from the dead, you and I are in deep, deep trouble (1 Cor. 15:17-19). But Christ is risen! It is with a great sense of relief and joy that we hear from God's Word the good news that

Your Resurrection Is Guaranteed

- I. We need this guarantee of our resurrection. In a world that is moving fast on an unstable course, we need something solid on which to hang our hopes.
 - A. The Corinthians had somehow lost this fundamental teaching of the resurrection.
 1. Paul had taught them about it as one of the foremost teachings of the Gospel, and they had accepted it.
 2. Something happened to raise doubts in their minds—the appearance of a teacher, perhaps, or some rationalization.
 - B. We are not above forgetting or doubting it either.
 1. We have plenty of outside influences, such as the media, banging away at our faith.
 2. We tend to forget because of our natural fear of dying. Since we talk little about death, why talk of rising from the dead? How many times have we stared at a corpse and wondered how it could ever live again?

Transition: We need assurance; we want a guarantee that Christ lives and that we will live also.

- II. The Gospel offers this guarantee to us.
 - A. The Gospel is a valid source.
 1. Paul declares that he did not make it up. He had witnesses to the resurrection: Peter, the twelve, five hundred brothers, James, and finally, later on, Paul himself (vv 5-8).
 2. The Gospel has guaranteeing power. It assured Paul: “O death where is your sting? . . .” (vv 55-57).
 3. The Gospel assures people today. The unbeliever resigns himself to death with an attitude of “whatever will be, will be.” The believer assigns himself to God in the firm and real hope of rising again. Was not this the peace of our departed loved ones who died in Christ? It works!
 - B. The Gospel guarantees because of its content. Christ died and lives for us.
 1. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures (v 3). Isaiah had predicted that the Messiah would be led as a lamb to the slaughter.
 2. Christ was buried (v 4). He was really dead. This makes the resurrection more certain than if He had been dead for only an hour or so.
 3. Christ was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. Psalm 16 stated: “. . . You will not abandon Me to the grave, nor will You let Your Holy One see decay.”
 4. Christ’s resurrection is the center of our Christian faith, from which we gather our hope.
- III. The Spirit leads us to utilize this guarantee,
 - A. To receive it in faith, regardless of our feelings. Luther states (*What Luther Says*, page 1215): “If you want to judge according to what you see and feel and, when the Word of God is set before you, want to pit your feeling against it and say: you tell me much; but my heart speaks a different language, and if you felt what I feel, you too would speak differently—then you do not have the Word of God in the heart but have quenched and extinguished it by your own thoughts, reason, and brooding. In short, if you will not let the Word mean more to you than all your feeling, eyes, senses, and heart, you must be lost, and there is no further help for you.

For we are concerned with an article of faith, not an article of your reason or wisdom or human power. Therefore you must judge solely according to the Word in this matter, irrespective of what you feel and see."

- B. To stand firm in faith. ". . . This is what we preach, and this is what you believed" (v 11).
1. We preach this message over and over because the Gospel is the soil to which the roots of our faith cling.
 2. The only way to remain confident of our resurrection is to remain sure of Christ's resurrection.
 3. We live confidently. We live expecting a resurrection. We live as though there is a tomorrow.

Conclusion: The Gospel guarantees our resurrection. We say with Job: "I know that my Redeemer lives; . . . in my flesh will I see God" (Job 19:26-27).

Lowell F. Thomas
Fort Myers, Florida

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

Revelation 1:4-18

April 6, 1986

Verses 4-6 are a greeting and verses 5b-6 the doxology within the greeting. Verses 7-8 Martin Franzmann calls "a sort of introit" to the worship service of which the reading of the letter was to be a part. These verses are the theme song of the entire book. Verse 7 speaks of the triumphal return of Christ, while in verse 8 the Lord speaks of Himself as the eternal and almighty one. Jesus supplies the power to endure patiently the tribulation which comes to all Christians as members of Christ's kingdom (v 9). Verse 13 makes clear that the eternal Son is in the midst of His church as tribulations come. Although He now wears a human form, He is the glorified Messiah whose divine attributes are graphically described in verses 13-16. Verse 17 describes the reaction of a sinful human being to divine holiness, but also the great comfort given by Jesus Christ.

Introduction: Most people believe in God, but what kind of God? God is known only through Jesus Christ. The text presents the first in a series of visions of the Lord God in the person of Jesus Christ.

What a Lord We Have!

- I. He is above us.
 - A. He is above us in dominion.
 1. He, not Caesar (the emperor Domitian called himself "lord and god"), is the Lord (v 13b).
 2. He rules our world and the universe.
 - B. He is above us in glory (vs 14, 15, 16).
 - C. He is above us in holiness. (He has eyes from which nothing evil is hidden, feet that will pursue evil to punish it, and a mouth that judges all evil.)

Transition: A Lord who is so far above us can frighten us as he did John. But Christ came to John, touched him gently and said, "Fear not." He is not against us.

II. He is for us.

A. Christ showed He is for us by dying for us (v 17).

1. The Eternal, the First and the Last, actually died.
2. He died to make atonement for our sins.

B. He showed He is for us by rising from the dead (v 18).

1. He lives forever (Ro 6:9).
2. He has authority over death (v 18). We need not fear death, for Jesus went through it and conquered it for us.

Transition: He will support us with His power by being with us at the time of death, but every day, right now.

III. He is with us.

A. He is with us in our tribulation.

1. Christ was with His suffering church then (v 13).
2. He is still with His church, which may not be afflicted in the same way as was the church in John's day but which nevertheless is plagued with apathy, indifference, and lovelessness.

B. He is with us to renew and strengthen us.

1. Through the Word and Sacraments He moves us to repentance and firmer faith.
2. He supplies us with the endurance we need to overcome defeat and discouragement.

Conclusion: In Christ we see what a Lord we have, one who is above us, for us, and with us.

Gerhard Aho

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

Revelation 5:11-14

April 13, 1986

The preceding thought unit (vs 6-10) focuses on the Lamb, Christ, who brings and end to the weeping (hopelessness) of the world. By taking from the Creator the scroll on which the future of the church and of the world is written, He shows He has taken up His power and reign. This action evokes the new song of praise which continues in the text, praise that Christ has redeemed all people. The text begins with the host of angels joining in the song of all creatures. This song of praise focuses on Jesus Christ and on what He has done. Following the text, the new chapter (6) begins with an account of the troubles to be loosed upon the world before the final consummation. The praise given to the Lamb in the text makes clear that in the midst of the troubles the Lamb is in control and that all creatures must eventually acknowledge Him to be Redeemer and Lord. The song of praise climaxes with might and glory being ascribed to the Lamb alone and with all those singing His praises falling down in silent adoration.

Introduction: Worship can be a human-centered experience directed toward our own well-being and improvement, so that we become concerned only with our personal returns in worship, with what we individually are going to get out of it. That is a misplaced emphasis in worship. From this obsession and preoccupation with ourselves our text would free us. The heavenly hosts by their action are saying to us:

Give Adoration to Jesus Christ

- I. Because He was slain for our redemption.
 - A. His blood alone could redeem us.
 1. We could not ransom ourselves, and yet blood had to be shed (He 9:22).
 2. His precious blood had power to redeem, for He Himself was innocent (1 Pe 1:18:19; Eph 1:7; 1 Jn 1:7).
 - B. Through His redeeming blood we have come into His kingdom (Re 5:10).
 1. This kingdom is hidden now.
 2. It will finally be revealed and we will reign with Him.
- II. Because He is the supreme Lord.
 - A. The symbol of His supremacy is the throne (v 13). Jesus has been exalted (Php 2:9).
 - B. His supremacy manifests itself (v 12).
 1. He has all power (Mt 28:20).
 2. He has all wealth (2 Cor 8:9; Eph 3:8).
 3. He has all wisdom (1 Cor 1:24; 1 Cor 1:30).
 4. He has all might (Jn 10:18) (resurrection).
 - C. He is to be worshipped as the supreme Lord (v 13).
 1. Everything on the earth, under it, and above it praises Him (Ps 148).
 2. There is satisfaction in acknowledging God in Jesus Christ for who and what He is. We do this well in such canticles as the *Te Deum Laudamus*.

Conclusion: When we focus on God we will be helped. When we adore Christ we will be built up. So let us not only wail our litanies and cry our petitions. Let us also learn the language of praise. There is something mysterious, beautiful, and uplifting taking place when we with the four living creatures say, "Amen," and fall down and worship Jesus Christ.

Gerhard Aho

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Revelation 7:9-17

April 20, 1986

Whenever we confess the third article of the Apostles Creed, we are responding to the future reality revealed in John's Revelation. In this pericope we have a projected glimpse of the "Holy Christian Church" triumphant. The "forgiveness of sins" qualifies the church for white robes and provides the purity they symbolize. Those standing before the throne have experienced the "resurrection of the body." This is a clear vision of "life everlasting" for which the church on earth awaits eagerly. Care must be taken by the preacher so that he does not get carried away with what is "up there" at the expense of what is "down here" now for the believer's comfort and strength. After all, the Book of Revelation is provided for the blessing of believers on earth. The church in glory lives in fulfilment of this vision, and so shall we. The Shepherd who became a Lamb dominates the vision and, of course, should dominate the sermon.

Introduction: Whenever we begin a trip, we usually have some destination in mind. We picture in our minds the country through which we will pass, what we will be able to see when we arrive, and who will be there to meet us. We try to plan the

activities which will occupy us while we are there. Sometimes our plans work, other times not. When Jesus the Good Shepherd invites us to follow Him, He is leading us on a path that will finally end in heaven. None of us has been there, but we are anxious to get there because of John's vision of what it is like there. "We want to be in that number when the saints go marching in." John gives us a glimpse of what is in store for us when

The Saints Alive Arrive in Heaven

- I. They are united, though once divided.
 - A. The divisions in this life are obvious.
 1. Boundaries are drawn according to nation, tribe, people, and language (v 9).
 2. Even Christians are divided into denominations.
 - B. The one fold about which Jesus talked (Jn 10) will be a reality.
 1. The confession of men and angels are united (vv 10, 12).
 2. Through this confession the boundaries dissolve.
 3. Because of this unity, the number is amazingly large (v 9).
 4. We can begin now to praise God for the unity of all believers in Christ.

Transition: "Who are these people?" the elder asks.

- II. They are victorious, though once defeated.
 - A. The saints in heaven have been confronted by the defeat of sin and tribulation.
 1. Sin is like a polluted garment. It disqualifies one for heaven. The residents of heaven were once sinners, just as we are.
 2. We must through many tribulations, great and small, enter the kingdom of God. What are our trials?
 - B. God provides their victory.
 1. He gives His Lamb's blood, in which believers wash their robes (v 14). "The Blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin" (1 Jn 1:7).
 2. The same grace assures us that nothing will be able to separate us from God and His love (Ro 8:38-39). God strengthens us so that we keep the upper hand over our troubles.
 - C. "Salvation belongs to our God . . . and the Lamb" (v 10).
 1. This heavenly song is our confession and our hope. Our victory does not rest in our hands.
 2. Sin and tribulation are temporary. God will give us the victory, too.

Transition: Life on earth is difficult. When we join the saints in heaven we will be forever delivered.

- III. They are secure, though once afraid.
 - A. The opposite of faith is fear. Sometimes our faith begins to buckle under the strains in life.
 1. Thirst, the sun at noon, and scorching heat (Florida in August) represent the whole gamut of life-threatening enemies (v 16).
 2. It is our nature to put off as long as we can the "walk through the valley of the shadow of death" (Ps 23). Even artificial hearts are broken.
 - B. God provides security.
 1. In heaven God will spread His tent over His people with this declaration to all our foes: "Never again!" (v 16).
 2. The Lamb of God will be the Shepherd to give "living water." Compare this water to the medicine that makes a disease go away, never to come again.

3. We shall have no more tears. When God wipes a tear, that is the end of them.

Conclusion: Let us not wait until we die to enjoy the gifts of this vision. By faith in Christ we can draw on the strength of our unity with all believers, the victory Christ won for us, and the security we have in God's power.

Lowell F. Thomas
Fort Myers, Florida

THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

April 27, 1986

Revelation 21:1-5

The first verse of the text immediately confronts us with the concept of newness. While exegetes disagree as to whether God will annihilate the present world or merely re-do it, it seems to this writer that the Biblical language used in various places does not favor the idea of the earth being rebuilt. Suffice it to say, however, that the "new heaven and new earth" will be radically different from the present one. While the "new Jerusalem" is mentioned in verse 2 of the text, that concept is dealt with more fully in the text for next Sunday (cf. v 10ff.). This text gives God's people a vision of what He has prepared for them so that they might be encouraged in their good fight of faith until they receive the crown of life. The problem is that our limited vision in an evil world so easily causes us to become discouraged in and side-tracked from the Lord's work.

Introduction: "Futurists" are people employed by large corporations or governmental agencies to analyze the past and present, evaluate their findings, and project what they feel is likely to happen in the years to come. Thank God, He has given His church a "futurist" - the Apostle John, who by inspiration of the Spirit gives us a peek into our eternal future. As he nears the end of his revelation in our text, John urges our highest anticipation:

Hallelujah! Look Ahead!

- I. Look to a new order.
 - A. The present heaven and earth shall pass away (v 1; I Pe 3:7, 10b, 12).
 - B. The new order is coming.
 1. In his vision John sees it as accomplished (v 1a).
 2. It is created by God (v 5a). It is the same God who created our world at the beginning of time.
 3. Even nature itself looks forward to it (Ro 8:22-23).
- II. Look to a close relationship.
 - A. God dwells with men (v 3).
 - B. It is a covenant of love.
 1. His people.
 - a. It is the opposite of the natural status (I Pe 2:10).
 - b. It is made possible by the sacrifice of the Lamb (I Pe 1:19).
 2. Their God—it recalls the Old Testament covenant with Israel (Eze 37:26-27).
 - C. It is an untroubled relationship.
 1. Whatever his age, each of us can recall his own troubles. (The preacher

can say to his hearers, "Think of two things that cause you anxiety or sorrow. What was it that last caused you to 'cry your heart out'?"

2. Heaven is free of these and all other troubles. Our loving Lord will remove all tears and everything negative in the new life in heaven (v 4; Ro 8:21). He will remove them permanently—ban them (v 4). We shall have glorified bodies. Satan, the ultimate source of evil, will be forever banished. Pain is a warning of something wrong; in heaven nothing will be wrong.

III. Look ahead in joyous anticipation.

A. It is joyous because it is sure.

1. God promised; He does not lie (v 5; 2 Cor 1:20; 2 Pe 3:13).
2. The "proof" is our Immanuel, Jesus.

B. It is joyous because the vision sustains us.

1. The axiom is this: You can endure nearly anything for a while (e.g. Job, 1 Pe 1:7-9).
2. Revelation was written to encourage the church of Jesus to live and witness confidently under fire.
3. Your joyous anticipation will sustain you as your faith is questioned, your Christian life challenged, and your trust in the Lord tested.

Conclusion: Like the early Christians, God has placed us on planet earth—in the midst of trouble, heartache, and persecution—for a while. But you belong to the risen, living Christ. Do not be discouraged, dismayed, or derailed. Look ahead to what is coming—a new order, an inseparable relationship with Christ Himself. Live and work in joyous anticipation of it!

Lloyd Strelow
Tustin, California

THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23

May 4, 1986

Our people are increasingly exposed to a strong dose of "fundamentalistic" theology, especially regarding the end times. While this text insists that the preacher correct false notions, he must do it with love and care, lest he merely "blast the opposition" and fail to edify the hearer. The text is full of important, figurative language describing the "church triumphant." It is the great climax, where God's children by faith in the Lamb will reach the goal for which He came—eternal bliss with Him as their pride, joy and glory. What a fitting theme as we anticipate His ascension!

Introduction: Every religious body has its "sacred sites," its "holy places." One site considered sacred to several religions is Jerusalem. In our text we are instructed about Jerusalem in a way that may surprise, but will edify you. Our text presents

The Holy City—The Church in Heaven

I. Its origin.

- A. The church is from heaven. God is its creator (v 10b; v 2; Is 65:17-18; He 11:10).
- B. The church is built of spiritual relationships.
 1. It stands in contrast to the kingdoms of the world shown to Jesus (Mt 4:8; cf. v 10).

2. Scripture affirms its spiritual nature (as the bride, the Lamb's wife, v 9; 22:17; Ga 4:26; He 12:22-23).
- C. This truth destroys all expectations of the erection of a citadel or city in Israel.
- II. Its content.
- A. The New Jerusalem is big enough to hold all believers (note the wall, v 12; Re 7:9).
- B. The holy city is for believers (note the gates and the twelve tribes, vv12-13; Re 7:4; cf. also Ro 2:28-29; Ro 11:26; He 11:16; Re 22:14).
- C. The New Jerusalem is built on the foundation of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (v 14). They lived with the Lamb, saw Him sacrificed for sin, and staked their lives on Him.
- III. Its focus.
- A. Its focus is not a physical building.
1. The temple in Jerusalem was the focal point of contact between God and His people in the Old Testament (cf. Ex 23:7; Dt 12:5).
 2. The temple was desecrated (Lk 19:45-47) by God's people and destroyed in 70 AD.
- B. Its focus is God.
1. The Almighty Father, loving Lord of all, who gave us His Son (Ro 8:32; v 22a).
 2. The Lamb Himself, glorified, enthroned with the Father (v 22b).
- B. Its focus is the event of the ages.
1. It is better than any Hollywood extravaganza or presidential inaugural.
 2. The glory of God upon whom the heavenly church focuses is so bright that it eliminates any need for such earthly illumination as sun and moon (v 23). Note the glory of the city described in verses 18-21.

Conclusion: This holy city, this New Jerusalem, is our future, eternal home. By God's grace in Christ, the church on earth is ushered into God's presence to become His church in heaven. Therefore, do not become entrapped by those who twist Scripture and get their followers all excited about the political resurgence of a nation, the "mass conversion" of the Jews, and the physical rebuilding of a temple in Jerusalem on earth. Rather rejoice that in His great love, Christ is building His church in heaven of ancients and moderns, Jews and Gentiles, Palestinians and Americans—of all who look to the Lamb for pardon and long to be with Him in the holy city, the New Jerusalem, the church in heaven.

Lloyd Strelow

THE SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Revelation 22:12-17, 20

May 11, 1986

John in exile on the island of Patmos concludes his letter to the seven churches with a promise that Jesus is coming again soon. The believers, torn by false teachers and temptations from within and increasing persecution from without, welcome the coming of Jesus with courage for the present and hope for an eternal dwelling in the city of God.

Introduction: Thursday we celebrated the Ascension of our Lord. As the disciples gazed into the heavens, the two men in white explained: "This same Jesus who was

taken up into heaven will come in the same way that you have seen Him go into heaven." We still live in the time between Ascension Day and the Second Coming of Christ. As we prepare to celebrate Pentecost next week and face the daily pressures of living in a secular world, St. John in the Book of Revelation directs us to

The Coming Again of Our Ascended Lord

- I. His announcement (vv 12-16, 20a).
 - A. Death to unbelievers (v 13).
 1. Jesus strongly asserts His coming again as bringing recompense. To the "dogs" and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters, His coming means life forever outside the gates of the city of God. They continue in sin and reject the announcement.
 2. Jesus likewise speaks judgment to our sinful, secular world. To the extent that we succumb to false teachers and immorality, we stand in danger of rejecting His announcement. We confess our blindness.
 - B. Life to believers (vv 14, 16, 17b).
 1. Jesus graciously offers robes washed in His blood and water without price (Is 55). The persecuted believers are preserved for eternal life in the city of God by Christ, the bright morning star, the root and offspring of David.
 2. Jesus graciously offers us His cleansing forgiveness as the Son of David, crucified and risen. We can be preserved from this sinful, secular world as we look to Him.
- II. Our invitation (vv 17, 20b).
 - A. The Spirit, the bride, and the believer invite Jesus to come and supply courage now.
 1. The persecuted invite Jesus to come and in the process receive living water to strengthen them for faithful ministry.
 2. We likewise stand strong as we invite His early return; we are refreshed.
 - B. The church invites Jesus to come and supply hope for the future.

Conclusion: What a joyful announcement from Jesus! What an eager invitation from our lips—power for living from the coming again of our ascended Lord!

Stephen J. Carter

PENTECOST

Acts 2:37-47

May 18, 1986

After the Lord's final instructions to the disciples to be witnesses, His promise of power from the Holy Spirit, and His ascension into heaven, the disciples wait prayerfully in Jerusalem. On Pentecost the Spirit fills the house where they are gathered. Jews from many nations hear the Gospel message. Peter preaches a powerful Law and Gospel sermon which culminates in the words of the text. The Jerusalem fellowship of believers in Jesus Christ is initiated with the baptism of three thousand. The fellowship grows in both quantity and quality.

Introduction: Pentecost is an annual feast in the Christian church year and provides important emphasis on the Holy Spirit, described by one author as the "half-known God." But, more significantly, Pentecost is an opportunity for you to move

back in time and stand in that notable assembly of Jews from around the world where, spellbound by Peter, the big fisherman, you experience

The Powerful Effects of a Pentecost Message

- I. The Pentecost message cuts to the heart (v 37).
 - A. The Jewish hearers recognized their own guilt in Peter's account of the rejection of Jesus Christ. They cried out, "What shall we do?"
 - B. We recognize our own guilt as our hearts are sometimes hardened to the weekly message of Jesus Christ.
- II. The Pentecost message brings forgiveness of sins through baptism (vv 38-41).
 - A. The Jewish hearers were transformed by Peter's description of the crucified and risen Christ and were baptized.
 - B. We hear again the message of the crucified and risen Christ and apply the power of our baptism to daily living (the gift of the Holy Spirit promised to us who are far off, vv 38-39).
- III. The Pentecost message creates a dynamic fellowship of believers (vv 42-47).
 - A. The early believers joined in regular worship and study of the Word (vv 42, 46, 47). Despite our times of indifference to the Word, the Pentecost message creates in us a desire for regular reception of Word and sacraments through worship and Bible study.
 - B. The early believers joined in meeting physical and spiritual needs (vv 43-45). They formed a common treasury and shared bread in their homes. Despite our selfishness and individualism, the Pentecost message creates in us a desire to reach out to others to meet their physical and spiritual needs.
 - C. The early believers joined in word-and-deed witness through which the Lord added to their number (v 47b). Despite our self-absorption and timidity, the Pentecost message creates in us the desire and the ability to witness in word and deed so that the Lord may add to our fellowship those who are being saved.

Conclusion: Because we have been present at Pentecost to hear Peter, the Holy Spirit cuts us to our hearts, brings assurance of Christ's forgiveness through baptism, and gives us the privilege to participate in a dynamic fellowship of believers—worshipping, meeting needs, and witnessing to others. . . These are the powerful effects of a Pentecost message!

Stephen J. Carter

Book Reviews

PASTORAL CARE WITH CHILDREN IN CRISIS. By Andrew D. Lester. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1985. \$9.95. 143 pages.

This small volume fills a need in a long neglected area. It appears that the thesis with which the author operates is this: "The Christian pastor has always been expected to be present as God's representative in times of stress, with the anticipation that in this role he can help people make spiritual sense out of the chaos of crisis. Children have a right to this same act of ministry" (p. 50). Assuming that for the most part children are seldom recipients of pastoral care at times of crisis, the author lists reasons for this neglect: ignorance, lack of training, thoughtlessness. He then points out the great opportunity and importance of the pastor's ministering to children in crisis. Lester points up the "incarnational" aspect or the "representative" aspect of the pastoral office and indicates the remarkable opportunity that the pastor has: "One of the exciting opportunities with children is that, because their perception of what you symbolize is not yet poured in concrete (as it is with many adults), your pastoral care of them can correct perceptions of pastors and all that pastors represent. How you relate to children may well affect how they view the church and God throughout the rest of their lives" (p. 45).

The text also deals with techniques and aids that can help the pastor to minister to children on their own terms and on their "turf." There is a little something here for everyone. If the book does nothing else but to awaken in the pastorate a concern for children in the congregation, especially those in crisis, it is well worth the price.

Norbert H. Mueller

THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT IN THE AUGUSTANA CHURCH. By George F. Hall. Augustana Historical Society, Rock Island, Illinois, 1984. 166 pages.

Dr. George F. Hall, one-time missionary, parish pastor, professor of missions, and member of the board for missions, who has served in a variety of posts, is well qualified to sketch this broad overview of Augustana missions, during the hundred years that Augustana maintained its separate identity until merging into the Lutheran Church in America in 1962. This publication, Number 32 of the Augustana Historical Society, is a valuable mini-encyclopedia describing the contributions of about four hundred people to Augustana's mission efforts. The reader will appreciate the helpful index of persons and the masterful manner in which Hall weaves the names into the twenty-five topics and the histories of mission stations, ranging over India, China, Puerto Rico, the Sudan, Tanganyika, South America, Borneo, Malaya, and other places, including accounts of cooperation in missions with other church organizations and the preparation of candidates for missionary posts.

While the memories of these faithful Augustana missionaries may “fly forgotten as a dream dies at the opening day,” Hall’s account will serve the purpose, not of creating a *theologia gloriae*, but of providing a thankful remembrance of what the Lord has achieved through them, blessing His church despite human frailties and shortcomings. This is a good time to draw the record together, as the Lutheran Church in America makes plans for another merger in 1988 and as Augustana stands to lose its separate identity even more.

The accounts of the various mission projects are in themselves thought-provoking. The author interlaces with them just enough human interest notes to hold the reader’s attention. For one whose roots are not in Augustana, the story painted here in broad strokes is inviting despite and because of the hundreds of names packed into the accounts. It is enlightening, even surprising and humbling, to note the accomplishments within this relatively small church body. Much detail has of necessity been omitted. Questions arise. How might Christianity have been more successful in Rajahmundry, China, or Malaya? To what extent did Augustana, as well as other churches, change direction and the concept of missions as the thrust of the 1932 Hocking Report gained acceptance or as the Augustana seminary changed its sights rather dramatically in that decade? More frustrating is the question of how can results ever be measured with any objectivity or validity when the evidence today of earlier work in China, Iran, or even India cautions against judging on the basis of recorded numbers and the visibility of an organized church. Hall has whetted our appetite. This is a very basic, much-needed piece in the broad area of the history of Lutheran missions.

Wilbert Rosin

HISTORY OF THE FIRST DAKOTA DISTRICT OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD OF IOWA AND OTHER STATES. By C. G. Eisenberg. Translated by Anton H. Richter. University Press of America, Washington, D. C. 1982. 258 pages.

Next to firsthand experience, the best is to read or sample accounts such as this of conditions that gave people “goose pimples when they heard the word *Dakota*.” The author, C.G. Eisenberg, came to Minnesota from Germany in 1885 and after fourteen years began a thirty-year period of service in the Dakota District of the Iowa Synod, all but the last few in North Dakota. This history covers the period from 1879 to 1920. The Iowa Synod, founded in 1854 with the encouragement and support of Wilhelm Loehe of Neuendettelsau, began work in Dakota in 1879 and established the Dakota District in 1889 embracing southern Minnesota, northern Iowa, and the Dakotas. Neuendettelsau continued to support this mission effort even after Loehe’s death in 1872. In 1918 the district was further divided and became part of the American Lutheran Church in 1930.

Anton H. Richter, professor of foreign languages at South Dakota State University, has produced an excellent translation of Eisenberg’s fascinating history, a significant contribution to this period of American Lutheranism. One illustration after

another corroborates accounts of life in this part of the country as described in such classics as Webb's *The Great Plains*. While the author apologizes that his account has too many gaps to be a complete history, the cumulative impression is nevertheless a full picture. An index, especially of names, would be helpful. Eisenberg opens with a description of the Red River Valley and of the twin towns, Breckenridge, Minnesota, and Wahpeton, North Dakota, of particular interest to this writer who remembers his parents, when he was four years old, going to those "big" towns for special shopping.

The objective was a *Sammlungkirche*, a gathering in of Lutherans who had emigrated, usually not for religious reasons, and who therefore made the task of the missionary unpleasant with such remarks such as: "We managed to get along without a church... My horses eat the oats I cut on Sunday same as the oats I cut on Monday"—anticipating current American attitudes within a different context of concreteness. Readers will recall similar experiences of older relatives, much as this writer is reminded of his father's stories of his ministry as a traveling missionary in the vast Canadian expanse just north of the Dakotas and Minnesota, or stories of his father-in-law's ministry to the *Russlander* in Nebraska, not unlike that of Eisenberg in the Dakotas.

This is a delightful montage of experiences and information about late nineteenth century mid-America Lutherans -- the "furnace" of the German-Russians, the lift pastors got from attending conferences, the handicap of those who spoke only the German language, the hardships, the low salaries, the loneliness, the significance of Gottfried Fritschel as a leader and model, the debate over expanding to the west coast or investing the resources in the nearby established stations, the concern that failure to provide pastors would result in congregations going over to other synods, the overly defensive rationalization for having taken time to see the Wind Cave at Hot Springs, to note only a few interesting insights. Eisenberg's account is divided into these categories: "The Early History, 1879-1891" (replete with general stories); "Our Missionary Work in the Dakotas"; "History of Individual Parishes or Congregations" (later listed with page references on pages 257-258); "Our Institution in Eureka" (a Christian college in Eureka, South Dakota); and "A Synodal Sermon."

Wilbert Rosin

JOHANNINE CHRISTIANITY: ESSAYS ON ITS SETTING, SOURCES, AND THEOLOGY. By D. Moody Smith. University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, South Carolina, 1984. Cloth. 233 pages.

Smith, professor of New Testament at The Divinity School of Duke University, has brought together under one cover essays written between 1976 and 1981 which appeared in journals such as *New Testament Studies*, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, *Biblica*, and *Interpretation*. Bultmann opened a new dimension in Johannine studies in applying the same type of form critical procedures used in the synoptic gospels to the Fourth Gospel and attempting to identify the sources used by John. Smith enters into critical discussion with the various options which have arisen since then. The problems, however, are more complex with John since, for the synoptic Gospels, Mark is a known and accessible source and Q can be somewhat accurately hypothesized.

ed from material common to Matthew and Mark. Bultmann attempted to locate a *semeia* (signs) source and anticipated redaction critical procedures before later scholars brought that discipline into vogue. Fortna actually constructed a document which he published under the title *The Gospel of Signs* (1970).

The perennial discussion of the relation of John to the Synoptics is taken up by Smith with a scholarly vengeance. At the beginning of the century Benjamin Bacon concluded that John used Mark as a basis, practically ignored Matthew, and supplemented his gospel with Lucan material. In more recent times this approach was taken up by M. de Solages, somewhat convincingly in my opinion, and by Neiryck, who adds Matthew and Luke to Mark as sources for the Fourth Gospel. The most complex theory is now offered by Boismard, who places synoptic influence on John only after the gospel has emerged through several stages of redaction: John I comes from Palestine around 50; a first redaction came in 60, also in Palestine (John II-A); and thirty years later a second redaction occurred in Ephesus (John II-B). At this point synoptic influence played a part. A final redactor (John III) put the final touches on the gospel. The complexity of the theory of Boismard may be its biggest drawback.

Smith is careful to play his own cards only with great caution. He places the Fourth Gospel within Christian circles which are independent of the synoptics, but nevertheless knew them. The Christian exodus from the synagogue provided the impetus for its writing. Originally a heretical document, outside of the mainstream catholicism of the synoptics, John's Gospel was domesticated by being placed alongside of them in the canon.

Smith would probably be the last one to state that he has come upon the absolutely final answer to the complex question of the origin and sources of John's gospel. But he has, however, provided a detailed, critical survey of the current options. He cannot ignore the similarity between the Marcan and Johannine outlines, but is hesitant to affirm a dependency. This would suggest to this reviewer, however, that a gospel canon consisting of Matthew-Luke-Mark was already in place when John wrote and that John's similarity to (dependence on) Mark would place Mark not as the first gospel but as the third. Smith calls constant attention to the language dissimilarities between John and Mark, in spite of the acknowledged similarity of outline. But are language dissimilarities all that significant in disproving dependence? The book jacket claims that Smith has an extraordinary gift in presenting complicated material in a readable style. It is hard to disagree with this assessment.

David P. Scaer

THE ROOTS OF ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE AGE OF RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION. By Heiko Oberman. Translated by James I. Porter. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1984. 163 pages. Cloth.

The occasion for this study was the five hundredth anniversary of Luther's birth. The historical issue of anti-Semitism developed from two crosscurrents: the holocaust which almost succeeded in its purpose of eliminating the Jewish people in Germany

and the Reformation which rooted itself in the same country. To what extent was the Reformation in general and Luther in particular responsible for the mid-twentieth century racism which was so determined that it brought millions of Jews to their death? Luther's guilt, at least as an accomplice, was so accepted that many of those who bore his name felt an obligation to disassociate themselves from him with apologies.

Oberman, one of the world's foremost Luther scholars, has painstakingly examined the evidence to determine whether the judgment against Luther should stand - or at least be adjusted. This examination goes beyond the common approach of pitting one Luther citation against another only to show that the young tolerant reformer with his *Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew* (1532) had become arteriosclerotic with his *On the Jews and Their Lies* (1543).

First, Oberman lists nineteen leading figures of the sixteenth century, including Erasmus, Eck, and Zwingli. Then he sketches the prevailing civil posture towards the Jews. Rulers at that time were caught in the dilemma of expelling the Jews or permitting them residence because they were taxed at a higher rate and added to the government revenues. The Jewish Fuggers were imperial bankers. Forced baptisms were the order of the day, but even an enlightened man like Erasmus regarded a baptized Jew as still a Jew. Luther did not. On the other hand, such Luther associates as Osiander and Jonas defended the Jews against the crude charges leveled at them. Lutherans at times were considered in league with the Jews because even the reformer himself was using the Old Testament in Hebrew for his lectures. Though Erasmus and Eck were clearly anti-Semitic in a racist sense, Luther, who never mimicked their coarse charges, has had to carry the burden of guilt, brought for example, by William Shirer in *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*. Oberman's study is a must, especially for those who are convinced that Luther was anti-Semitic.

At first, Luther was convinced that the Roman Church with its discriminatory attitude to the Jews was an obstacle to their conversion. He soon became disillusioned about their conversion, but Luther was more dismayed about the fate of the Reformation. Convinced that he was living in the end times, Luther directed his wrath against the pope, the Turks (Mohammedans), the unconverted Jews, and pseudo-Christians. He was no more against the Jews as a race than he was against the Turks, who were Mohammedans. He operated with no theory of race or racial superiority, since he was equally, indeed, even more severe against his own Germans.

Religious tolerance was an eighteenth century Enlightenment development, but the Renaissance forerunners of the Enlightenment were more likely to be anti-Semitic in a racist sense. Erasmus praised France for ridding itself of Jews. Luther was religiously motivated, and his attitude is more precisely called anti-Judaic. Oberman is fully conscious of this sensitive issue and offers no excuses. Included, both in translation and German, is the highly anti-Semitic tract *An Incredible Event*, which is an account of the oft-repeated charge against the Jews that they blasphemously desecrated the host and thus were guilty of a direct sin against God. Luther never made this charge.

A more favorable attitude to the Jews developed when Protestants associated with Calvin were themselves exiled and began to identify with the Jews in their homelessness and persecution. For Oberman this common persecution provides the basis for a rapprochement between Jews and Christians. For this reviewer the real

basis is that all, Jews and Christians, are equally sinners before God and are included in the salvation wrought by the Jew, Jesus Christ. An almost impossible wish is that those who have been glib about Luther's anti-Semitism would carefully study Oberman's well-documented research.

David Scaer

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH. By Hannsdieter Wohlfarth. Translated by Albert Blackwell. Fortress Press, Philadelphia; and Lutterworth Press, Cambridge. Cloth. 121 pages.

This picture biography of the great Lutheran composer is a fitting tribute to his memory on the occasion of the tricentennial celebration of his birth. Excerpts are taken from *The Bach Reader* (1966). A fine volume, it can be recommended for both our pastors and their people.

IST DAS NICHT JOSEPHS SOHN? JESUS IM HEUTIGEN JUDENTUM. By Pinchas Lapide. Calwer Verlag, Stuttgart, 1983. 167 pages. Paper.

Perhaps this book has already appeared in English translation. If it has not, it should have. Lapide gained attention recently when his book in defense of the resurrection of Jesus appeared in English translation from Augsburg Publishing House. Such a defense is not an amazing feat in itself, but it is an exceptional one when one realizes that Lapide is Jewish. Formerly a professor in Jerusalem, he now works as a free-lance writer in Germany. The title "Is Not This Joseph's Son?" (a citation from John) is appropriate for the contents. Those who did not accept Jesus as God's Son could advance no further than acknowledging his alleged human father, Joseph. The Israelis (Jews) have come no further.

The need for this kind of research only became necessary when the nation of Israel had to provide for its own school children an explanatory biography about their land's most famous son. At first Jesus could be ignored but, with the influx of Christian tourists, the luxury of ignorance was no longer affordable. In most cases the strong anti-Christian polemic no longer exists, and a genuine appreciation for the person of Jesus can be found. To be sure, this is no Christology, at least in the traditional sense. Much of what is said about Jesus is fabricated, i.e., it has no support from the gospels, but it is not necessarily negative. For those engaged in missions among the Jews, this book should be made available. The person of Jesus has to be the starting point for any meaningful discussion with the Jews. Lapide has extended his hand to the Christian community.

David P. Scaer

JESUS THE PHARISEE: A NEW LOOK AT THE JEWISHNESS OF JESUS. By Harvey Falk. Paulist Press, New York. Paper. 175 pages.

The current thaw in Jewish-Christian relations has awakened in each group an appreciation of the other. Pinchas Lapide, a Jewish scholar, has gone so far as to defend the resurrection of Jesus and to trace his importance for the modern state of Israel. The present work by Rabbi Harvey Falk belongs to the same awakening. Rabbi Falk's major thesis is that Jesus was a Pharisee, belonging to the School of Hillel, and that his strong anti-Pharisaical polemic was targeted against the Pharisees in the School of Shammai. Thus the teachings of Jesus were not especially unique but were rather a distillation of what was rather commonplace teaching at his time. After the fall of Jerusalem, the School of Hillel assumed the prominent position, and this ascendancy accounts for the basic unity between Christianity and Judaism.

Rabbi Falk's approach is attractive and should be welcomed in Christian circles. The church must approach the Jewish community on a different ground than it approaches the Gentiles, simply because both the church and the Jewish community claim to worship Abraham's God and to be his rightful heirs. In his incarnation Jesus not only participated in the human condition but also in the particular culture of first-century Palestine. In that culture the party of the Pharisees was influential, particularly among the common people to whom the parents of Jesus undoubtedly belonged. Certainly a common piety, articulated and defended by the Pharisees, may have provided the religious environment in the home of Jesus. If this were the extent of Rabbi Falk's argument, it might be more convincing. But it is not.

Rabbi Falk has spent a great deal of time, effort, and research in tracking down the parallels between the rabbinic sources and the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels. Such parallelism might imply that Jesus had received a formal, even extensive, rabbinic training. However, the New Testament documents contain not the slightest hint that he did. The allegation in John that Jesus and His disciples were illiterate probably means that they were not formally trained by the Jerusalem rabbis, not that they could not read. These remarks do not devalue the work of Rabbi Falk. Rather, this book is a look into a brilliant Jewish mind which, not unlike Jacob, is struggling with the man whom the Christian community identifies as Jacob's Lord.

Rabbi Falk relies in several places on the Noachic covenant as the basis of God's dealings with the Gentiles, and within this context the Christian mission to them can be accepted. Falk's concern to appreciate the church's mission to the Gentiles overlooks the fact that in his personal ministry, as reported in the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus is reluctant to deal with the Gentiles. He certainly does not initiate any ministry to them. Trinitarianism is found by the Tosafists acceptable in Gentiles, but not among Jews. Of course, Falk is quick to point out that many Christians are not committed to the divinity of Jesus and claims that only in two places in the Gospel of John does Jesus require such belief. (He is probably right in the former claim, but hardly in the latter.) Such major themes as incarnation, atonement, and resurrection are missing. Since Rabbi Falk has limited the themes he addresses, he may be successful in showing that Jesus shared some common views with some of his contemporaries. This is certainly true in regard to the general resurrection, which is omitted in the study. Christians have a commitment to speak to Jews. Falk's work will make this easier.

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF VIRTUE. By Gilbert Meilaender. University of Notre Dame Press, South Bend, 1984. 191 pages.

As the reader can tell, this book is about ethics. Unlike many books written about ethics today, this one does not focus on bioethical or socio-ethical problems. But rather it revolves around the traditional conception of ethics, focusing on philosophical and theological ethics in the abstract sense, more or less. Meilaender, a graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, shows his indebtedness throughout the book to Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, and Luther. One of the enjoyable aspects of the book is the creative manner in which the author weaves together the important insights of these thinkers, who all were concerned about the practice of virtue. He also evaluates these insights in the light of the Biblical view of virtue. Here the author shows his Lutheran orientation, especially as he leans on Luther's understanding as to what makes for virtue on the part of a human being, namely, that virtuous acts do not make one a good person, but a good person — one who understands God's love and grace — produces virtuous acts.

Given the book's accent on virtue, it notes that ethics ought not be seen as dealing with difficult moral dilemmas and how people might excuse their actions, but that ethics is pursuing a set of virtues. Says the author: "What we need is not a theory to justify any decision but a set of moral habits, a way of life" (pp. 75-76). This observation is well taken, but not easily accomplished in real life. The question quickly arises: "What set of moral habits or values should be adopted?" To answer, as some do, that one must adopt the moral habits taught in the Bible quite often is simplistic. Many ethical problems, especially those in the biological and sociological context, have no moral precedent in the Scriptures. Thus to develop a set of moral habits - a virtuous way of life - is a constant struggle for the Christian, to whom Meilaender's book is largely directed, even if it nowhere says so explicitly. The grace from which the person in pursuit of virtue draws is not cheap, but free, says the author.

If I interpret the author correctly, and I think I do, He is saying that the virtuous way of life is not so much following a moral code as being motivated by God's love in Christ to act in a God-pleasing way, even when that is difficult to discern. The book is edifying and one from which a parish pastor would profit, especially as he tries to educate his parishioners to respond ethically to today's many ethical and moral problems.

Alvin J. Schmidt

THE MAIN ISSUES IN BIOETHICS. By Andrew C. Varga. Revised edition. Paulist Press, New York, 1985. 348 pages. \$10.95.

The modern-day mall, a collection of diversified merchants under a single roof, has provided customers with a concentrated and convenient shopping experience. Andrew Varga, professor of philosophy at Fordham University, has achieved a similar feat. He has collected a diversified range of bioethical issues (including population growth, genetic engineering, and sex preselection) into a single volume. He pro-

vides the serious-minded as well as the curious a concentrated and convenient reading experience.

In his first chapter Varga introduces the reader to some of the fundamental moral principles that are applied in the study of life science issues, principles such as moral positivism and utilitarianism. His critical survey of these and various other methodologies is helpful for it introduces the reader to several of the competitive voices that can be heard within the discipline of bioethics. *The Main Issues in Bioethics* does not specifically incorporate Biblical principles. The author's format does not include supporting passages or direct references from the Scriptures for purposes of teaching and application. Varga operates with the principle of a natural-law ethic, which he defines as "an ethic that aims at bringing man closer to his goal or fulfillment." He is consistent with this approach. The positions which he takes on the fourteen major life issues addressed in this volume are derived from a natural-law ethic.

Abortion is obviously one of the issues in bioethics today. While Varga considers the question of when human life begins to be "primarily a philosophical and not a scientific one," his overall treatment of the subject can best be described as a pro-life position. A representative statement would be the following:

Abortion as a birth control method, whether outside or within marriage, cannot be justified. The killing of unwanted innocent human beings is here compared with the social and economic problems their birth causes. We have to conclude that killing innocent human beings is a greater evil than the very real social and economic ills of unwed motherhood or unwanted parenthood.

And at the other end of the life spectrum, when considering the ethics of euthanasia, Varga concludes: "No solid argument can be offered to prove the position that an innocent person may be killed."

The book is carefully structured. Each chapter is arranged with detailed sub-topics, and issues within the issues are presented. Alternative positions are outlined and this gives a balanced flavor to the book. A wealth of factual information from well-documented sources precedes the ethical analysis of each major issue. Helpful illustrations and charts supplement the written text and each chapter concludes with questions for discussion and reflection. Whether one agrees or disagrees with Varga, there is much to be learned from what he has written.

We would be critical of Varga's understanding of the nature of man when he writes early on "that we are not born morally good or bad but grow up to be good or bad persons by performing good or bad acts." But this weakness does not invalidate the meaningful contribution which this volume offers to the study of bioethics. A complex and at times perplexing subject has been skillfully addressed. Varga's work does afford a concentrated and convenient reading experience.

Randall W. Shields

HOW TO DEVELOP A TEAM MINISTRY AND MAKE IT WORK. By Ervin F. Henkelmann and Stephen J. Carter. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis. 117 pages.

This practical manual undergirds administrative principles with a strong theological basis. It invites and challenges church leaders to focus on their church's mission and ministry at all times. Developing a team ministry requires knowledge, attitude, and skill which begins with individual leaders and extends to their relationship with other leaders and members. Sample job descriptions, questionnaires, and checklists are given to help individuals in their analysis of themselves and to assist the leadership group as it studies and moves toward a more effective team ministry.

Henkelmann and Carter speak from their own successful experiences in team ministries as educator and parish pastor. The book, of course, speaks to large congregations with two or more pastors. It also addresses itself to all congregations with Christian day schools. Its administrative principles are applicable to all congregations, large or small, young or old, rural or urban. Pastors, school principals and faculty, lay officers and leaders should read it for guidance and inspiration.

Edgar Walz

FROM NICAEA TO CHALCEDON: A GUIDE TO THE LITERATURE AND ITS BACKGROUND. By Frances Young. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1983. 416 pages. \$22.95.

Almost certainly no period has been more significant for the development of the church's doctrine and life than that 126-year period from the first ecumenical council of Nicaea (325) to the fourth council of Chalcedon (451). While the debates concerning the Trinity and Christology dominated, important developments were taking place in liturgy, monasticism, Biblical exegesis, and in the understanding of Christian history itself. Of course, this kind of prominence could not attend a period without truly major figures, and this period of church history not without reason has been called the "Golden Age" of the patristic era. It was in its own way analogous to the assembly of genius gathered at the constitutional convention of our nation's history.

In its imposing depth and variety this period is extraordinarily difficult to master, let alone to communicate. All the more laudatory therefore is this commendable book by Frances Young of the University of Birmingham. She has not only presented a balanced review of major literary figures of the fourth and fifth centuries (laymen, bishops, heretics) but has done so with an evident mastery of the literature (primary and secondary) and with a clarity that commends this book to scholar and to student.

As the subtitle indicates, this book is a guide to the writings of major Christian thinkers of the fourth and fifth centuries. Like a good guide, this book surveys all the points of interest, ensuring that special areas of significance are highlighted and fully explained. Ample treatment is given to the obvious points of interest (Athanasius, the Cappadocians, Theodoret, Cyril of Alexandria). However, figures of lesser importance receive their attention as well. Very fine essays are devoted to "second string"

fathers (Epiphanius, Nemesius of Emesa, Synesius of Cyrene), and it is good to find in a survey like this an extended attempt to explain and interpret those theological options which came to be judged heretical (Arius, Apollinarius, Nestorius). Young is very good at detecting and expressing the central motivations which gave form to the differing views of that polemical period. Uniformly her discussions are even, fair, and objective. Although she is not revolutionary in her interpretations (indeed for the most part her presentations reflect scholarly consensus), yet Young incorporates recent patristic research which provides at points updated corrective to older discussions. Comprehensive bibliographies (mostly of English titles), covering scholarship from 1960-1981, supplements the bibliographies of standard texts and makes this book a valuable reference work for the study of early Christian thought. While not intended to supplant general works like that of J.N.D. Kelly (*Early Christian Doctrines*) and the patrologies of Altaner and Quasten, this book offers extended background materials, discussion of critical questions, and in-depth interpretation which, in fact, makes obsolete the corresponding discussions of those works.

The period between Nicaea and Chalcedon was dominated by Greek fathers. At least, the major doctrinal disputes originated largely in the Greek East and were fought out there. The two councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon were essentially Greek councils. In any case, this book focuses only upon the Greek patristic output. This is certainly a defensible choice of scope. Yet, important and creative work was also being done by contemporary Latin fathers. Hopefully, someone as competent as Young, or Young herself, will provide a companion piece to this fine volume, one which takes account of Ambrose, Augustine, Hilary, and Jerome.

William C. Weinrich

CHRISTIANS AND THE MILITARY: THE EARLY EXPERIENCE. By John Helgeland, Robert J. Daly, and J. Patout Burns. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1985. 112 pages. \$5.95.

This little book openly wishes to provide a corrective to what it calls "a pacifist domination of English-speaking scholarship" on the subject of Christians and the military. The clear call of the New Testament to love one's enemies and the meagre evidence of early Christian participation in the military have often led to the conclusion that the early Christians were overwhelmingly pacifist and that the early church saw in pacifism alone a right obedience to Jesus' law of love. In eleven short chapters the authors argue that New Testament and early Christian evidence, in fact, does not substantiate the claim that early Christianity was essentially pacifist. Modern notions of pacifism were simply not operative in the early church, and the concerns about war and the destruction of war were often not the concerns of even those church fathers most often adduced as advocates of early Christian pacifism.

The first chapter surveys pagan (Cicero) and Jewish (Josephus) reflections on war and the military. Subsequent chapters discuss the New Testament, representative church fathers (Tertullian, Hippolytus, Origen, Eusebius, Ambrose, and Augustine). Other chapters provide evidence that from early on Christians were in the military

and were even used for apologetic reasons (The Thundering Legion), that there was a lively tradition that did not reflect Jesus' law of love (apocryphal gospels), and that the hagiographical tradition of the church had a good representation of military martyrs. A chapter on Roman army religion illustrates the author's claim that much of early Christian opposition to the military was due to the pervasive idolatry in military lore and ceremony, not to pacifist considerations.

The authors rigorously attempt a contextualized interpretation of the evidence; that is, they try to understand early Christian statements on war and the military in terms of the actual conditions which occasioned those statements in the first place. This approach lends credence to the book and is its strongest asset. Generally, the book accomplishes its purpose: to demonstrate that the New Testament call to non-violence does not lead to pacifism nor was it ever understood by the early church to do so. Some chapters are better than others. The chapter on Origen, the most consistent advocate of Christian non-violence, is best. Origen's call to non-violence is not predicated on an anti-military bias, but rather on the view that Christians more actively engage the demons who cause war through spiritual warfare than through military service. Christians fight on a higher level. The chapter on the New Testament is unfortunately weak. The point that New Testament calls to non-violence are understood in "the active, even aggressive, sense of missionary attitude toward enemy and persecutor" is well-taken. However, the implications for this topic of the New Testament's use of military metaphor are never spelled out, and at least a mention of Jesus' word concerning the centurion ("such great faith," Luke 7:9) seems necessary.

William C. Weinrich

COULD I BE A PASTOR? By Merilee Schmidt. Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee. \$2.95.

COULD I BE A TEACHER? By Merilee Schmidt. Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee. \$2.95.

Recruitment of grade school children to be pastors and teachers is a very vital activity for pastors, parents, and church leaders. These books fill a real need for booklets that will inform and motivate boys and girls to consider two of the most important vocations for life. Written by a LCMS pastor's wife, these books plant the seeds into the minds of children to begin considering full-time service as a pastor or a teacher. They provide an excellent description of what is involved in being and becoming a pastor or a teacher. There are excellent illustrations and a glossary of definitions of big words for little people. Both books should be in Christian day school, Sunday school, and church libraries. Children should be encouraged to enter one of these professions and ought to receive a copy of one of these books from the pastor, teacher, or parents.

Waldo J. Werning

LUKE: ARTIST AND THEOLOGIAN. By Robert J. Karris. Paulist Press. New York, Mahwah, Toronto, 1985. 130 pages. Cloth, \$7.95.

For the parish pastor preparing a sermon every week, the primary goal of his exegesis is to discover a theme for the Gospel of the day. From this theme he then commences to expound the text, hoping to enlighten the faithful with an aspect of the Gospel that will assist them in celebrating the redemption of the world in Jesus Christ. One of the things that the pastor needs in order to accomplish this is a good commentary to aid him in discovering certain themes in the gospels. But much of New Testament scholarship today focuses its attention on questions that do not aid the homiletical task, concentrating its efforts on problems that the preacher should not introduce into the pulpit.

Although it is imperative for the preacher to be conversant in these exegetical concerns as a vital part of the exegetical process, there is a crying need for books on the gospels that look at the gospels thematically. For the Gospel of Luke, Robert J. Karris has made a great contribution in his small but insightful book entitled *Luke: Artist and Theologian: Luke's Passion Account as Literature*. Karris makes it clear in his introduction that his purpose is a thematic one, and for the Gospel of Luke this is a most appropriate approach. For many have observed that Luke's Gospel is a gospel of themes and the key to understanding Luke's theological purpose is to discover those themes. Karris, therefore, embarks on an ambitious journey of tracing the themes of the faithful God, justice, and food in the Gospel of Luke.

His treatment of these themes, however, is uneven. Although we might agree with the prominence that he gives to the themes of justice and of a faithful God in Luke, we disagree with the way in which he develops them. An especially helpful section of the book is concerning the theme of food. Karris raises this eucharistic motif to new heights, and he does this exhaustively. But as is the case in every chapter, Karris is much better at finding themes than developing them. As one nears the end of the book, his tendency constantly to summarize where he is going and where he has been begins to annoy, and we realize that this short book could have been even shorter.

Nevertheless, this is an important book because it makes Luke accessible in a way that no other book of this length has been able to do. Karris is faithful to his objective, and when we reach the end of his discussion, we have been enlightened. This book is highly recommended to all those pastors who need a book that will force them to look at the big picture. And for the Gospel of Luke the big picture is worth looking at.

Arthur Just

HOLY WEEK PREACHING. By Krister Stendahl. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1985. 61 pages.

Krister Stendahl is known in the Christian community as an outspoken and controversial figure. The former Dean of Harvard Divinity School is now the Bishop of Stockholm in Sweden. His new position has given occasion to Fortress Press to reissue Stendahl's original contribution to the Proclamation Commentaries on the three-year lectionary series (*Holy Week, Series A, 1974*). The only difference be-

tween the two books is a new introduction.

The Proclamation Commentaries are higher-critical in nature, but this should not scare away the average pastor, for both exegetical and homiletical insights may be gleaned from these commentaries. The arrangement of both an exegetical and homiletical section for each of the lessons of the day is very helpful to the busy pastor. Many of the authors are surprisingly orthodox, especially in the homiletical sections.

Although there is much which to disagree in Stendahl's book, there are some interesting observations from a man with a rich background in the New Testament. Particularly enlightening are his attempts to synthesize the lessons for us into a homiletical whole. For example, his treatment of the Maundy Thursday texts (John 13:1-17, Exodus 12:1-44, and I Corinthians 11:17-31) is not only insightful but gives us many great themes that will help the preacher to launch a sermon.

Unfortunately, this book is about Holy Week preaching, and therefore the efforts for Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday are lost on most of our churches. But this book is recommended to all pastors who find themselves going dry as they make another run at the Passion story. For some, this will be a very helpful, even devotional, book. Others will become angry at parts of the book. It may put the fire back into their eyes and, after a long Lenten fast and the prospects of four sermons during Holy Week, this may be just what the preacher needs.

Arthur Just