CONCORDIA
THEOLOGICAL
QUARTERLY

CTQ

Volume 54: Numbers 2-3

APRIL-JULY 1990

CONCORDIA
THEOLOGICAL
QUARTERLY

CTQ

ISSN 0038-8610

Issued Quarterly by the Faculty of
Concordia Theological Seminary

The *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, a continuation of the *The Springfielder*, is a theological journal of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, published for its ministerium by the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

The CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY is indexed in *Religion Index One: Periodicals* and abstracted in *Old Testament Abstracts* and *New Testament Abstracts.*

The CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY is published in January, April, July, and October. All changes of address (including Missouri Synod clergymen), subscription payments, and other correspondence concerning business matters should be sent to Concordia Theological Quarterly, Concordia Theological Seminary, 6600 North Clinton Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46825. The annual subscription rate is $5.00.

The Christian Family in Today's Society Viewed in a Biblical Perspective

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For Martin Luther the church, the government, and the family were life's basic units. Though the Small Catechism had for its first purpose the education of the clergy, its instructions were intended for the family head, who was entrusted with its religious welfare. Luther in his Letter to the Bohemian Brethren suggested that, in the absence of regular clergy, the father as the head of the family as a religious community could preach, baptize, and marry, but not celebrate the Holy Communion. In the absence of a regularly established church, the family becomes its own church. Luther did not see the family as a competing church, but as a nucleus of like-minded believers carrying out their calling as confessing Christians within a regulated structure.

I. *The Current Situation*

In a recent issue of the *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* David Zerzen calls attention to C.F.W. Walther's aversion to conventicles or private prayer groups. This aversion came from his own personal participation in them as a university student. The worshipping family cannot and should not be seen as "another type of church" or indeed the true church in the sense in which Pietism understood the conventicles. The family cannot be seen as coterminous with the church, but it is the place where the church meets the world. The battle between the kingdoms of light and darkness are more likely to find its battlefields in the family. The ideal worshipping family may be just that, an ideal, which in its perfect form is out of anyone's reach.

The contemporary family structures, as we know them now, have not evolved over the twenty centuries since Christ or the five centuries since Luther. It is not a difference between a nineteenth-century Victorian family and one at the end of the twentieth century. The revolution has come about in the last twenty-five years. The family in 1990 is already quite different from what it was in as late as 1965. We can note that the family structure, which was regarded as sacrosanct not only to the church, but also to American society, has been fundamentally altered in a comparatively short time. Today's family is more

likely to be characterized by marriages at a later age, serious marital disharmony to the point of divorce, fewer children, children with step-parents, whether or not they are living with them, and serious conflict between siblings and their parents. With both parents more likely to be working, children are more likely to be raised outside of the home in child-care centers. In the nineteenth-century extended rural family a child was raised not only by his parents but also by his grandparents with aunts and uncles, while in the modern family the child does not even have the advantage of having one parent at home. In addition, 40% of all births are out of wedlock. *U.S. News and World Report* adds the information that births out of wedlock are down 15% among blacks and up 67% among whites (July 13, 1989, page 29). We are not dealing with an ethnic or racial phenomenon. Rather middle class persons are making rational decisions to live life styles which are fundamentally different from that of a generation ago. The big question for the pastor is determining when the family structure has been so changed that it must become an object of his preaching. There are various reasons for children being raised outside of the home: (1) a mother who never wanted to be one; (2) economic necessity; (3) improvement or maintenance of the economic situation. When does the church offer a prophetic word?

The family structure has been so altered that one wonders if the word "family" is apropos. Within this century we have gone from the extended family to the nuclear family and finally to a network of families related through not only brothers and sisters, but also step-mothers and step-fathers, half-brothers and half-sisters, step-brothers and step-sisters. This network of families either is without a recognized center or has several centers. Even if there are no ethical dimensions to the situation, there are certainly social implications. At weddings pastors need to have Solomon's wisdom to determine who sits where and with whom. In a certain sense the church will have to transcend these changes without demanding that these structures be altered as a prerequisite for the preaching of the gospel. Still the church will have to address certain changes where there are moral implications for those who are already members of the church. The man living with his father's wife could not remain a church member, according to Paul's judgment. A time comes for the church to offer a word of law.

Some pastors, if they do not feel inadequate in tackling the problems associated with new family situations, are nevertheless swamped in resolving these difficulties in their own parishes. Pastors are just as likely to experience family crises as are the general public. Call and ordination are no magic solutions. The parsonage comes with no built-in immunity to problems. The church might or even should demonstrate that it is fundamentally different from the world, since we simply cannot endorse and baptize the world's standards without becoming part of it. The clergy can offer assistance on a limited basis from case to case, but they are not going to alter current structures. Adjusting these structures is not a primary purpose of the ministry.

In a certain sense the apostolic words that it is not fitting that we should wait on tables must apply to the clergyman, so swamped by family problems within the parish, that he finds it difficult to carry out his calling as the community's spiritual head, preaching the gospel and administering the sacraments. My goal here is to lay down in broad outlines *a* (not *the*) biblical view of the family and perhaps make it easier to live with new, changing family situations, without feeling the burden of having to change each one. It may be easier to accept our own situations. Luther's picture of the father as the religious head of the family seems like a scene taken out of "never-never land." If Paul's requirement that the clergy rule their own houses well were pushed to the limits, we might all be defrocked. Parsonages and the homes of parishioners are not so distinct. If our own stables are clean, we certainly can find problems among our nieces and nephews. Sin and its foul results are not dogmatic abstractions, but living, personal realities with which each pastor has first-hand experience. Unnecessarily the clergy are likely to be overburdened with guilt about their family situations. Where once a pastor's worth was measured by the number of sons he had in the ministry, today it is measured by how many of his children are still church members and participating in congregational work of any kind. Pastors are caught in the tension between what they understand as the Lutheran tradition and their own family situations. Rare is the pastor who has not seen one of his children leave the church, and increasingly rare is the pastor who sees one of his own sons enter the ministry. What this means is that the pastor is more likely to have a son or

daughter leave the church than he is to have a son enter the ministry. Families with roots sunk deep in Lutheran tradition are undergoing fundamental changes which will have a decisive effect on the kind of church we are. In the first century of the Missouri Synod, a plurality or majority of pastors were raised in parsonages. Now many a seminary graduate is a convert to Lutheranism, frequently through the good offices of his spouse. The Lutheran ethos was nurtured in a stable, traditional setting. This ethos, I am convinced, can and must survive, even where the traditional family boundaries have shifted. Others with good intentions believe—and wrongly so—that we need a different ethos, worship, and cultus for a changing and changed America. The church especially in her worship and preaching must remain the haven of stability in a changing world. If we copy the Evangelical style, we will adopt Reformed theology!

The Lutheran home is no longer automatically the seed-bed of the next generation of Christians. At the Wichita Convention of 1989 *Today's Business* reported the number of children baptized in 1960 was nearly 86,000 compared to 55,200 in 1988. Juniors confirmed dropped from a high of 58,490 in 1970 to 32,025 in 1988. The first concern is not from where future pastors will come, but from where will the Christians come. No statistical expertise is needed to conclude that the readjustment in family structures is having an adverse affect on the church. We are simply going to be a smaller church. From one wise pastor I heard that the stork is our best missionary. Today's storks are nesting much later, hatching fewer eggs, and are being sent to pasture before delivering their precious cargo. With abortion it is now open season on the stork. The command of Jesus that the children should be brought to Him is supported by the statistics which confirm that it is infinitely easier to bring a child into the church and keep it than it is to convert an adult. This is only an attempt to put in perspective the tension with which we pastors live as we proclaim our message. It is the irreconcilable conflict between the world which we experience and the world which God proclaims in the gospel. Statistics can tell us that we have problems which might become worse before they get better, but they cannot inform our preaching or give us a theology of the Christian family. Having set forth this foreboding introduction, I should like to survey the biblical data.

II. *Covenant Theology and the Family: The Reformed Heritage*

Reformed theology makes a virtual one-for-one equation between the church and the family, a fundamental concept of its covenant theology. According to the Reformed understanding of the Old Testament, the family is the basic unit of salvation, a view which is so widespread in our country that it can almost be called an American ideal. People say, "The family which prays together stays together." As attractive as that statement is, it says nothing about true and false religions. All it says is that religion, whatever its content, is valuable for family harmony. This does not approximate Luther's injunction that the family recite the commandments, the creed, and the Lord's Prayer.

The Reformed tradition of the family, which has been adopted as the American ideal, should not be simply taken over by Lutherans. The family for the Reformed gives certain religious privileges to the children which virtually negate the reality of original sin. In Reformed theology the family serves as the basis for the practice of infant baptism, which serves as the confirmation or seal of the covenant relationship which the child has with God through the family. As valuable as the family is in Lutheran theology, it is never *the* reason for baptizing children or including them in the kingdom of God. Baptism in Lutheran theology is not the confirmation of an already existing state or relationship between the children and the parents, but a bestowal of the grace needed for salvation. The advantage that children have within a Christian family is the accessibility of the word of God and its influence. This is Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 7:14 about children being sanctified. Covenant theology is taken one step further by the Church of the Latter Day Saints, otherwise known as Mormons, which understands the concept of church only within the dimensions of the family. If the traditional adage is that *non salus est extra ecclesia* ("there is no salvation outside of the church"), then the Mormon adage would be *non salus est extra familia* ("outside of the family there is no salvation"). Marriage is the ultimate sacrament and children are the necessary good works. Deceased ancestors can be assured the bliss of heaven posthumously by vicarious baptism. Such an emphasis on the family tries to prove that

"flesh and blood can inherit the kingdom of God." Mormonism is an extreme aberration of the Reformed understanding of the Scriptures, especially the Old Testament, about the place of the family which does not even deserve to be called Christian. It does, however, serve as a good example of what happens when church and family are equated, as is still the case with the conservative Reformed. *Reader's Digest*, which the Mormons have used for advertisements, promotes a glowing picture of the American family as Christian. This ideal family is painted in such radiant colors that many might be led to believe that there are on earth people who are really as happy as the articles picture.

For the Reformed it is the child's relationship with the parents and not faith which is the saving factor. Such covenant theology, fundamental to American Reformed Christianity, is more likely to derive support from the Old Testament than from the New. On that account the Old Testament should briefly be surveyed. Is it really true that the Old Testament gives the rules for a happy family?

III. *Survey of the Old Testament*

Genesis is an ancient version of the story of "One Man's Family." This is not only the story of Adam's family, but the stories of Noah's, Abraham's, Isaac's, and Jacob's families. Genealogies (Hebrew: *toledoth*) provide the structure for the history of salvation. Church and family were to a large extent coterminous. Those acquainted with Luther's Genesis commentary know that the Reformer pictured Adam enthroned as a high priest when his son preached and "men began to call upon the name of the Lord." The Old Testament demonstrates that God does not work haphazardly in history, because He attaches Himself to certain persons and family groups, establishing a relationship to Israel. Israel is not simply a conglomeration of people, but an extended family in which all can worship the God of their fathers, who identifies Himself to Moses as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God remembers His promises to Israel and has mercy on them. Within this extended family the descendants of Aaron are charged with the care of the temple and those of David are entrusted with the Messianic promises. The family provides the structure of salvation in the Old Testament.

But having said this, it must be said that the family provides no guarantee of salvation. Cain is forever the symbol of those who apostasize. The prayer of Abraham that Ishmael would live before God is disregarded. "Jacob I loved and Esau I hated" shows how God's grace worked within particular families, but not with such predictability that God deprived Himself of His own free will. Judah is picked over the older Reuben and the younger and the more favored Joseph and Benjamin. David's love for Absalom could not save that beloved son from becoming a treacherous traitor. If the Old Testament tells us how God worked through families for the world's salvation, it also tells us that the "Christian" family in the sense we may rightly or wrongly picture it is elusive even for God's chosen saints. Adam's preaching and beseeching could not save Cain. The miracle of salvation from the flood did not prevent Noah from being ridiculed by his youngest son. The brothers Esau and Jacob became enemies. The sons of Jacob and the fathers of the twelve tribes were incestuous, adulterous, and murderous. The sons of Eli, Samuel, David, and Solomon were hardly examples of good "Christian" upbringing. Even in the Old Testament, the so-called traditional Christian family was an ideal, rarely realized. The Old Testament teaches that God endorses the family as the basic unit in society by making it the place for His saving activities, but inclusion in the family is never the permanent, nonerasable mark of salvation.

IV. *The Gospels*

A. *Mary, Joseph, and Jesus: Detachment*

Any topic dealing with the Christian family should pay serious attention to the relationship which Jesus had with His family. Matthew traces the lineage of Jesus back through Joseph to Abraham. Luke also traces the lineage of Jesus, not through Joseph, but through Heli, the father of Mary, to Adam. For Matthew, Jesus must be seen as belonging to the family of David in particular and the family of Abraham in general. For Luke, Jesus is a member of the universal family of humanity with its origins in Adam, the universal father. All can claim Jesus as his or her brother. Both Matthew and Luke are aware of the importance of family as a unit of salvation in the Old Testament and both see Jesus as the conclusion and fulfillment of everything which God had originally intended

to do. The promised son of Eve has come, and Adam and all his offspring have been vindicated. Matthew's Gospel begins with Joseph's contemplating how his relationship to Mary can be broken through divorce and then adopting her child as his own. Luke provides a picture of an extended family. The cousins Elizabeth and Mary are the Holy Spirit's instruments, with sons destined to do great things for God. Family connections do matter.

As a family Joseph, Mary, and Jesus fulfill the religious obligations attached to the birth of all the first-born in Israel (Luke) and as refugees they escape to Egypt (Matthew). Jesus, like Joseph, is known as a carpenter and at the age of twelve attends His first passover in Jerusalem (Luke). In what sense this family was ideal is debatable, at least in the sense in which Roman Catholics view it. Roman Catholics are more likely to see a salvific relationship between the child and His parents and refer to it as the Holy Family. For them it was a family whose chief and most notable characteristic was celibacy. Though traditionally Joseph was seen as a widower with children from a previous marriage, popular Roman thought is gradually seeing him as ever-virgin in the sense that his spouse was. Either alternative, his widowhood or voluntary celibacy, would make digestible fodder for the modern marriage counselor. Just what kind of family was this? With the traditional view that the widower Joseph brought four sons and at least two daughters into the marriage, Mary would have the honor of being the mother of Jesus and also the less distinctive honor of her being step-mother of four step-sons and at least two step-daughters. The other alternative would be that Joseph like Mary never experienced normal marital relationships, relationships which were given as command and promise to Adam and Eve. Mary and Joseph would have been exempt from the command to be fruitful and multiply. This command, Mormons believe, was fulfilled and is even now being fulfilled by Jesus. Here are two clearly opposing views of the family. For Roman Catholics celibacy is the ideal and for Mormons sexual relationships are, even for Jesus! For Lutheran theology, the family may be the occasion for the church but does not in itself have any salvific significance. This, I believe, fits the biblical data best. Our canonical gospels do not provide us with the biographical data about the childhood and youth of Jesus from which a family picture

might be reconstructed. If His was "the holy family," to borrow a term from Roman Catholic piety, then the relationships of that family would be worthy of emulation. The apocryphal gospels attempted to fill in the gaps, but their picture of Jesus is so bizarre as to render them virtually useless for purposes of historical reconstruction. Perharps by God's providential grace, authentic accounts of that family are limited, so that we are not tempted to live exactly as Jesus did. His life within the family was not all that different from any other youth in the same kind of situation.

Detachment perhaps best describes His relationship to His family. This would be true of Him in the temple, as it would be of His refusal to let His immediate family have an audience with Him. Whereas the Old Testament saint lived his life and made his accomplishments within the family structure, Jesus did not. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and his twelve sons are called patriarchs precisely because they were the heads of families. The life of Jesus is remarkably different. His real home is not Nazareth with Mary and Joseph, but in the Jerusalem temple with God as His Father. The evangelists agree in seeing that Joseph is not the father of Jesus, though Joseph provides Jesus with His claim to Davidic descent. Apart from its being the locale of the incarnation, nothing very positive is said of Nazareth. Joseph and Mary resemble more guardians than parents, almost in the manner of the law in Galatians 3:24. His baptism by John the Baptist is really the "birth" day of Jesus, because by being baptized He publicly states His commitment to God as His Father. God correspondingly acknowledges Jesus as His Son: "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." One of the significant contributions in the slightly altered church year of *Lutheran Worship* is the inclusion of the baptism of Jesus as a festival during Epiphany. At that time He reaches maturity, as it were, and it becomes evident in His preaching that He is the real Son of God and not merely the son of an obscure married couple in Nazareth. One could argue that His baptism by John surpasses or is at least equal to His conception and birth in importance. Just as our birth from God is not our physical birth but our baptism, so Jesus' birth from God is His baptism. Life in the family of Mary and Joseph was custodial care until that time when Jesus by His life and death would demonstrate that not they but God was His real parent. Jesus has flesh and blood, but He comes from

and is of another world. His real family is not that of Mary and Joseph, but a heavenly family in the presence of the Father and the Spirit. His mission is so broad that it cannot be embraced by any earthly family, including the one in which He was brought up. It cannot even be contained by the Jews, His own people.

This detachment from His family can be noted at several times. At Cana Jesus speaks to Mary as if she were not His mother, a moment which was anticipated by the mysterious words of the boy Jesus telling Mary that His Father was in Jerusalem and not in Nazareth. Jesus expected the same attitude of His followers. When a candidate for discipleship offers the excuse that he must first bury his father, Jesus responds that the dead should bury their own dead. Regardless of the precise meaning of this hard saying, family relationships not only do not further the kingdom, but in certain cases are obstacles. The one who loves mother or father more than he or she loves Jesus is not worthy of Him. Regardless of the full meaning of the Johannine word from the cross, that the Beloved Disciple and the mother of Jesus should regard themselves as son and mother, the underlying significance is that Jesus, in the new reality which He accomplished by the atonement, no longer looks at the woman who gave Him birth as His mother, though the church must. The coming of the kingdom will create strife in families to the point that the unbelieving members will turn over the believing ones to death. Within the context of such sharp words, the attitude of Jesus to His family is understandable. Jesus practices what He preaches. He does not wait to bury His mother before He begins to preach the kingdom. The words "let the dead bury their own dead" He applies to Himself, as He does to anyone considering discipleship. When a hearer of the words of Jesus cries out that the mother of Jesus is blessed because she gave Him birth, He responds: "Blessed rather are they who hear the word of God and keep it." In refusing His immediate family an audience with Him when it is requested, Jesus points to His disciples as His brothers, sisters, and mother. It is not that Jesus is repudiating family relationships, but He is redefining them. Jesus does not say the He has no mother, no sisters, no brothers, but rather that the new family will be defined by those hearing the word of God, that is, the believers, the

church. The New Testament is not totally devoid of information of the relationship which Jesus had with His family, even in His adult years.

The biblical evidence, so far as I see it, shows Jesus as the oldest of five brothers and at least two sisters. The names of the sisters are not given us, but his four brothers' names, according to the synoptics, are James, Joseph, Simon, and Jude. While not listed prominently in the gospels, they are not, on the other hand, non-persons. Comparing these names with the genealogy in Matthew, it seems safe to conclude that James was named for the father of Joseph, that is, his grandfather, and that Joseph is named for his father. Considering the urging of the kinfolk of Zachariah and Elizabeth that the son of their old age by named for the father and not John, this suggestion seems plausible. The family of Jesus may have been among those who rejected Him in the synagogue at Nazareth, but this is unlikely since their lack of comprehension is not depicted as downright unbelief and rejection. His words, "a prophet is never without honor except in his own fatherland," may suggest that His claim to messiahship fell on deaf ears among those of His own flesh and blood, but this idea is not supported by other accounts. His family was as much a missionary enterprise as is any Christian family.

B. *The Family of Jesus and His Ministry*

His family is placed by the evangelists at a number of significant junctures in His ministry. The first, the changing of water into wine at a wedding in Cana, is described almost as if it were a family occasion. The mother and brothers of Jesus were there, apparently from the beginning of the festivities. He arrives on the third day. It is possible and perhaps not improbable that Jesus' family was there to celebrate His sister's marriage, as the synoptic gospels describe Jesus as having brothers and sisters. Cana was one of the closest, if not the closest, village to Nazareth, lying to its north on the route to Capernaum, the center of His Galilean ministry. The mother of Jesus played a prominent role, indicating a close relationship to the married couple. At the conclusion of the wedding, Jesus leaves Cana for Capernaum with His disciples, mother, and brothers. On one canvas, as it were, John places the old and new families of Jesus. Present

for His first miracle are those who are His brothers by natural birth and those who will become His brothers by faith.

The synoptic evangelists each contain the episode of the mother, the brothers, and presumably the sisters of Jesus asking for an opportunity to speak to Him. Matthew places the episode (12:46-50) right before the chapter with the parables. At the conclusion of His preaching the hearers refuse to see Jesus as anyone else than the son of Joseph and Mary (13:53-58). Mark has a similar arrangement and places the request of His family for an audience before the parable of the sower (3:31-35) and places Jesus' rejection of the view that He is only the son of Joseph and Mary after the raising of Jairus' daughter (6:1-6). Luke places the request for a family audience after the parable of the sower and the discourse of the light under the bushel and before the calming of the storm (8:19-21). Historical reconstruction of the gospel data is in every case fraught with danger, but our curiosity compels us to ask when Jesus repudiated His family.

The family of Jesus is not placed with those who are opposed to His mission; rather they are among those who earnestly desire to participate in His ministry. John's suggestion that the family of Jesus went with Him from Cana to Capernaum shortly after His first miracle may possibly parallel Mark 3. Thus it may not be inappropriate to place the rejection of Jesus in Nazareth and then His subsequent rejection of His family some time in the first year of His ministry in Capernaum. In some sense His family had an appreciation of both His messianic self-understanding and His rejection by the Nazareth synagogue. They did identify with Him in His ostracism. They shared in His flight from Nazareth to Capernaum, which, however, did not entitle them to a special place in His ministry. One thing is clear: His rejection of His family comes at a time when they still feel a close relationship to Him because of this kinship, entitling them, they believe, to a place in His ministry. In both Matthew and Mark His repudiation of His family comes after the choice of the twelve. Mark is more picturesque. His family sends word to Jesus that they are outside and desire an audience with Him. "Jesus looked around Him at those who were seated in a circle and said, 'Behold my mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of God, that one is my brother and sister and mother'"

(3:34-35). Matthew informs the reader that Jesus was specifically speaking about His disciples: "He stretched out His hands on [or over] His disciples." The true family member is the one who does the will, not of "God," as Mark has it, but of "My Father in the heavens" (13:49-50), as Matthew has it. Luke places the same event after and not before the parable of the sower, as Matthew and Mark do. Those who are His mother and brothers are not those who do the will of God, as Matthew and Mark have, but those who hear the word of God and keep it.

Each of the evangelists present this episode in a slightly different way, but they see the same significance in it. The family relationships, which were so vital in keeping God's Old Testament people together in the past, will be replaced. The church is the new family of God in which Christians are to find their closest and most intimate relationships. Matthew sees the disciples of Jesus as His new family; however, He goes on to expand the dimensions of this family by saying that whoever does the will of His Father belongs to His family. Mark does not put the disciples in any type of special relationship to Jesus, but includes anyone who does God's will. Luke also has no interest in the disciples as the new family of Jesus. He also makes no mention of doing the Father's will. The one who belongs to the family of Jesus is the one who hears and keeps the word of God. If Luke knew Matthew—and I am convinced that he did—then he has provided a notable service to the church in telling us what the will of God is. Luke has no reference here or in his version of the Lord's Prayer to doing God's will. His reference to hearing and keeping the word of God is parallel, I believe, to Matthew's "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." While not minimizing faith as essential and necessary for inclusion in the family of God, continued hearing and adherence to all the words of Jesus are necessary for those who see themselves as members of the family of Jesus. Is not Luke by referring to hearing and keeping the word of God giving us a picture of the worshipping congregation who has heard the word of God in the preached and read gospel and is intent on believing it? While we are accustomed to thinking of St. Paul as the originator of the concept of the church as the household of God, the concept itself originates in the preaching of Jesus.

While it is popular to see the family of Jesus as unbelievers, that is, people not fully convinced of His special relationship to God, perhaps just the opposite is true. They are no less or no more understanding of His mission than His disciples, those whom He has designated, at least according to Matthew, to take the place of His natural family. If it is said that the members of His family were not fully cognizant of His ministry, the same could be said of His disciples. Strikingly His family is among those who see the resurrected Jesus, observe His ascension, and are gathered as His church even before Pentecost (Acts 1:14).

The crucifixion is not without meaning, since the mother of Jesus rather than the disciples maintained the death vigil with Him. Whereas John tells us that the mother of Jesus is at the cross, Matthew and Mark are probably referring to the same woman with the reference to Mary the mother of James and Joseph, who are probably the brothers of Jesus. Thus three evangelists support the view that Mary was at the cross of Jesus. While her devotion to her Son was a motivating factor in her being there, her belief in Him as Messiah should not be automatically ruled out. The record in the Fourth Gospel of the new relationship established between Mary and the Beloved Disciple needs its own consideration: "Behold, your Son"—"Behold, your mother." But the synoptic evidence alone suggests that the church and the family are not as inimical as might be suggested by some of the harsher words of Jesus about forsaking the family for His sake. Jesus does not really forsake His family in the sense of abandonment, but rather He receives them back to Him within the new relationship of the church. The harsh words of Jesus that the dead should bury their own dead, spoken to the man who wished to bury his father before following Jesus, are mitigated by His words to the Beloved Disciple that he should care for His mother. The relationship of blood so prominent in the Old Testament for God's messianic purposes has been superseded by a new relationship characterized by doing the will of God, which is hearing the word of God and keeping it. While relationship through blood is no longer the guarantee of inclusion within God's saving purposes, neither does it mean automatic exclusion. The New Testament demonstrates this fact. James, the oldest of the four brothers of Jesus, is mentioned in Matthew, Mark, Luke, Galatians, 1 Corinthians, the epistle

with his name, and the Epistle of Jude. He succeeds Peter as the leader of the Jerusalem church, authenticates the apostleship of Paul, writes what is probably the earliest of the New Testament writings, and, according to Josephus, dies a martyr's death around 62. Paul in Galatians gives him a title of honor by calling him "James, the brother of the Lord." His inclusion in 1 Corinthians 15 before the phrase "the other apostles" and his inclusion with Peter and John in Galatians as a pillar of the church can lead only to the conclusion that he was elevated to the rank of an apostle some time after the resurrection. The same is also probably true of Jude, who is mentioned also in Matthew and Mark and is the author of the New Testament epistle with his name. At this point we can make an observation which, I think, not only characterizes the Lutheran understanding, but also fits the biblical evidence which has been presented in a preliminary way. This observation is that, while we cannot with the Reformed see the family relationship as bestowing a special grace, the family can and does become the place where the church of God is realized. Perhaps Mary is blessed among women because she is the mother of the Lord, but a higher blessedness is hers because she is among those who hear the word of God and keep it. The response of Jesus to the woman who cried out, "Blessed is the womb that bore you and the paps which gave you suck," namely, "Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it," was not intended to repudiate His relationship with His mother. Rather it is an invitation to all who have faith to come into the closest possible relationship with each other. Jesus' rejection of His family should not be isolated from the context of the New Testament. It is really only part of the greater theme of the rejection of the Jews in favor of the Gentiles. This rejection should not be stated too harshly. Like the Jews, His original family members are received back into a relationship with Him firmer than any which they had previously experienced.

The Gospel of John presents its own challenges. While the other evangelists specifically identify the mother of Jesus as Mary, John surprisingly never does. Mary is simply referred to as "His mother." The great incarnation passage about the word becoming flesh makes no mention of her by name. While 6:41 refers to Joseph as His father by name, it refers to His mother without using her name. The mystery is even further

compounded when, at the foot of the cross, she is called literally "the mother," "His" not being included in the text (John 19:25-27). Although undoubtedly presupposed, still the absence of "His" must be noted.

The view that Jesus did not have any brothers and sisters and thus the care of His mother had to be entrusted to another person is simply without foundation. Her presence in the post-ascension church with the brothers of Jesus (Acts 1:14) should put to death that view once and for all. Rather we have here the reality of the promise of Jesus that they who do the will of God are His mother, sisters, and brothers. The Beloved Disciple is to receive the mother of Jesus as His mother, and she in turn is to receive Him as her son. The promise of Jesus that the church is the new family of God has been realized in an amalgamation of His natural family and His disciples. The sharp division between church and family, faith and blood has been overcome. Jesus may have had to repudiate His mother to make clear the difference between the church and the family, but this hardly gives the church the right to adopt the same attitude. On the contrary, she loses the identity which was naturally hers as the mother of Jesus to become the mother first of the Beloved Disciple and then of all who place themselves alongside of him. He becomes her guardian, as a son provides for his mother, and she in turn is to regard him as a son even though there is no relationship through blood.

IV. *An Unnecessary but Personal Addendum*

I have fond memories of my father distributing roses to all the women in the church on Mother's Day back in Trinity Church in Flatbush. At the seminary I was taught that such liturgical infractions as celebrating Mother's Day were unforgivable either in this age or the age to come. Jaroslav Pelikan then pontificated that in a modern age Mother's Day had become liturgically appropriate. My father was not the liturgical felon I had supposed him to be. Many pastors fear Mother's Day. Should they suspend the liturgical calendar for something as modern and recent as Mother's Day, especially in the way in which my father celebrated it by making no distinction between those who were mothers and those who had no children, some of whom, indeed, had never been married? The unmarried women in that congregation in Brooklyn, New York, were women upon whom spinsterhood

had been forced because of the care of parents and not women who made a rational choice between family and career. In distributing flowers to all the women on Mother's Day, my father was acting in accord with the teaching of the gospels that the church brought a new reality in which our relationships as mothers, sons, daughters, sisters, and brothers really have little or nothing to do with our original family relationships. In the church all women who have heard the word of God and kept it are mothers and sisters of Christ. Mother's Day could be a celebration of that new reality.

This essay has examined the evidence in the gospels relating to the Christian family today. Space does not allow an examination of Acts and the epistles. The concept of the church as a family replacing and in some cases including the ordinary relationships of our earthly families receives further support there.

Confessional Lutheranism in Today's World

Robert D. Preus

The situation in American Lutheranism today, and to varying degrees within our synods, is not unlike the situation of the Lutheran Church at the time of the Leipzig Interim. We blatantly quarrel over ethical issues (not be confused with the subject of "good works" or the meaning of the Ten Commandments), moral principles and their application, social ethics, church polity (i.e., politics), the vagaries and casuistries of pastoral practice—matters which most of us might not call doctrine *per se*, but which nevertheless affect Christian doctrine, impinge upon it, and in certain cases attack it. We need only consult journals and magazines like the provocative *Religion and Society Report*, formerly edited by Lutheran Richard Neuhaus, and note the scores of books written about the above topics to see how society has imposed an "interim," so to speak, upon our Lutheran Church today, as confusing and oppressive as the Romanist Interim after the death of Luther. And these issues which are debated in our church as much as in secular society are having as much impact upon our doctrine and church life as did the Leipzig Interim in the sixteenth century. Furthermore, the discussions of such issues are uncovering deep-seated doctrinal differences within and between church bodies, differences on the third use of the law, the relationship between law and gospel, creation and the orders of creation, hermeneutics, church and ministry, and many other points of doctrine.

Can we classify in some helpful way these issues—world hunger, ecology, Marxism and other economic theories, feminism, planned parenthood and abortion, gun control, discrimination, genetic engineering, church polity, and so on? If so, how? Can we classify these issues under the philosophical category of ethics—or in a kind of interimist way under the heading of adiaphoria? Can we classify them as aspects of Christian life, or "good works," or application of "the evangelical imperative"? Probably none of these attempts at classification will gain a great deal of acceptance among us. Our culture has caused chaos. It has influenced our doctrine as well as our church life and liturgy and practice, so that in all these areas we are at sea. On this point I suspect that there would be little debate among Lutherans today.

In the light of this situation I address myself to the question, "Can we remain confessional Lutherans in today's world?" Of course, the answer in principle is "Yes." One could give much sage advice on how to go about the present and continuing struggle by remaining faithful to the *sola scriptura*, the *sola fide*, and the *sola gratia*, fundamental principles we all know well, and end the discussion there. But one can deal, I think, with the question before us in a more helpful and relevant fashion by centering our attention briefly on a cluster of issues, spawned and cultivated in our culture, issues revolving around two closely related and hotly debated articles of faith, namely, church and ministry. The issues are (1) church (pulpit and altar) fellowship, (2) open communion, (3) the office of the ministry and "lay ministry," and (4) women pastors.

But first I feel compelled to address myself in a prefatory way to a very common, unclear, and bothersome theological distinction which has tended to obfuscate fruitful discussion on the aforementioned issues, the distinction between doctrine, or faith (*fides quae creditur*), and practice.[1] Where did the distinction originate? It is not found in the Lutheran Confessions and is only adumbrated in Luther's writings.[2] It originates in the seventeenth century when Lutherans debated Romanists and Reformed on the question whether theology was a theoretical discipline or a practical activity and aptitude (*habitus practicus*). The term "practice" in a different sense came into vogue at about the same time as programs and courses in universities were offered in pastoral theology, or pastoral practice, and books on the subject were written (Dannhauer).

Our confessions use the word "practice," or rather words which can be translated by "practice" (*üben, treiben, leben, tun*), not to distinguish something from doctrine, but in the generic sense in which the New Testament occasionally uses the terms *praxis* and *prasso*. The word "practice" is linked to doctrine, worship, the sacraments, prayer, good works, confession (SA II, II, 1; Tr. 27), the Ten Commandments (LC I, 319), and the Lord's day (by using God's word; LC I, 90). The Large Catechism (90) joins preaching and practice (*predigen* and *üben*) and teaching and life (*lehren* and *leben*; *doctrina* and *vita*), thus hinting at our modern distinction. Later on the Large Catechism (333) extols the Ten

Commandments above all other commandments and works which we can teach and practice (*lehrt und treibt; docere consueverunt*). At times the term is used merely for a daily practice (*Übung*) or reading and practicing God's word (*zu lesen und zu üben*) (SD II, 16). Often what we would call practice today is called doctrine or considered a matter of doctrine in our confessions. For instance, the "doctrine [*Teil, doctrina*] of penance is taught and practiced [*gehandelt sie*]" by the Lutherans (AC XXV, 6). Now penance is obviously a practice, or activity, like baptism and the Lord's Supper, as well as doctrine. In fact, penance, like baptism and the Lord's Supper, does not exist *extra usum.*

The condemnations of our confessions indiscriminately reject false doctrine and false practice (AC VIII, 3; IX, 3), and at times the formulation "our churches teach" introduces matters of practice rather than doctrine (AC XXI, 1; XXV, 7; XXVII, 1; XXVIII, 34). The veneration of relics and invocation of saints are articles which conflict with the chief article of salvation (SA II, II, 22, 25), and in the case of the Anabaptists not only their doctrine is hereticized, but their refusal to serve their government and even appeal to the government for justice and help when they have been wronged by wicked people (SD XII, 9, 10). When the Formula of Concord condemns the Leipzig Interim in Article X, it condemns not merely the doctrine of the interim but also the application and false liturgical practices of the provisions of the interim, as well as submission to it by many Lutherans (Epit. X, 8-12).

Luther introduces his Large Catechism as a doctrinal summary of the entire Scripture and urges all Christians and pastors to exercise themselves daily (*sich wohl üben*) and always practice (*treiben*) the same. In the Augsburg Confession both articles of faith (I-XXI) and articles on abuses (XXIII-XXVIII) are called *praecipui articuli.* The list includes not only the doctrines of God, sin, and justification, but also indulgences, pilgrimages, abuses of excommunication, and the like, thus showing the inextricable connection between doctrine and what we call practice. They involve each other like two sides of a coin.

Another term used often in our confessions which bears on the idea of practice is "good order" or "ecclesiastical order" (*ordo, Kirchenregiment*). Clearly practice is a wider concept

than church order. But church order is practiced and it bridges upon doctrine.[3] It is clear that in the Lutheran Confessions doctrine and practice according to our modern distinction are so intertwined and intermingled in their discussions as to be virtually indistinguishable.[4]

The same might be said for the relation between doctrine and worship (*cultus, Gottesdienst*) in the confessions. The two are linked in our confessions, but integrally so that they involve and entail each other (Tr. 44, 45, 72; SA II, IV, 9), so that they are neither separated from each other nor confused, but in a kind of Chalcedonian pattern joined inextricably together like the two natures in the personal union of Christ. By worship our confessions do not usually have in mind the ordinary church service with or without communion, but the continual service of God in prayer, confession of the gospel, formal worship, partaking of the sacrament, and the entire Christian life, all *practiced* in *faith* which receives the gospel and the forgiveness of sins and is therefore the highest form of all worship (Ap. IV, 154, 228, 309).

In recent generations there has arisen a queer dichotomy and divorce, alien to the Lutheran Confessions, between doctrine on the one hand and practice and worship on the other. Since the Enlightenment worship and practice (life, experience, etc.) have been extolled at the expense of doctrine. Such a view obscures the marks of the church (AC VII) and the very gospel itself (Ap. IV). This indifference toward pure doctrine has been the course of classical liberalism, modernism, and at times even pietism. And, of course, neither practice nor worship is God-pleasing without the confession of pure doctrine. On the other hand, those who wish to be touted confessional Lutherans have mouthed the pure doctrine of the confessions, but sometimes abandoned or rejected a practice or worship which conforms with the pure Lutheran doctrine. Pastors, conferences, conventions, and even church bodies fall into this quasi-docetic self-delusion when they give lip-service to the creeds, *pro forma* subscription to the confessions, and reaffirmation of orthodox doctrinal statements, while their practice and worship lapse into Reformed or sectarian or generic forms, disconnected from their high doctrinal assertions. Formal confession (*Bekenntnis*) obtains, but confessing (*bekennen*) the faith wanes.

Years ago an old lady in northern Minnesota, who had little education and had probably never heard of the Book of Concord, said, "*Laere er liv.*" Doctrine is life! The Danish hymnwriter, Thomas Kingo, writing during the age of orthodoxy, spoke in the same vein and put it this way:

'Tis all in vain that you profess
The doctrines of the church, unless
You live according to your creed,
And show your faith by word and deed. . .

The lady was right and so was Kingo. Doctrine without life (i.e., practice and worship) is a theory, nothing more. Our confessions are as concerned for orthopraxis and pure worship as they are for pure doctrine. For the three are a trinity—doctrine, practice, and worship—which ought not be confused or divided. With this understanding we can now proceed to the four instances where bad and unsound practice today is threatening to undermine the pure doctrine and practice of confessional Lutheranism, also in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

I. *Church Fellowship*

In the Lutheran Confessions the term "fellowship" is used in a variety of ways. First and foremost, the church itself is called and is a fellowship. When not employing the creedal *communio sanctorum*, or other descriptions, the confessions call the church itself a fellowship (*Gemeinschaft, societas*) of believers. According to the well-known passage in the Apology (VII, 5), the church is outwardly a fellowship (*Gesellschaft, societas*) of external signs, or marks of the church, the pure teaching of the gospel and the pure administration of the sacraments according to the gospel. In this outward fellowship hypocrites are mingled with the church, as well as evil pastors whose ministry of the means of grace is nevertheless efficacious. But, strictly speaking, the church is the spiritual fellowship (*Gemeinschaft, societas*) "of faith and of the Holy Spirit in the hearts." This is a definition of the church corresponding to others in the Lutheran Confessions (*communio sanctorum:* AC VII, 1; LC II, 49-52; SA III, XII, 2).

A second way in which the term "fellowship" is used in our confessions is for the divine service or Holy Communion. For

instance, Luther (SA II, II, 9) speaks of fellowship (*communio, Gemeinschaft*) as the congregation's service of the Lord's Supper (LC V, 87). And elsewhere he speaks of such fellowship as identical with the divine service without the Lord's Supper.[5]

By far the most common usage of the term "fellowship" derives from the first two meanings. We refer to the outward fellowship which exists on the basis of a common agreement (*concordia, consensus*) in doctrine and practice and worship. I shall delineate the position of our confessions on this issue which arose out of controversy and was most pressing. Melanchthon (AC, Preface, 4) teaches that living in doctrinal concord and unity (*concordia, unitas*) involves fellowship. He warns (Tr. 41) that we must beware and not participate (Romans 16:17) with those who adhere to godless doctrine and not have fellowship (*Gemeinschaft, societas*) with them (Matthew 7:15; Galatians 1:8; Titus 1:10; 2 Corinthians 6:14). He is referring to the papacy and to the avoidance of such *practices* as the papistic practice of confession, masses, penance, indulgences, celibacy, and the invocation of the saints which obscure the glory of Christ and the gospel (Tr. 44ff.). He goes on to point out that the papacy will not allow religious matters (*Religionssachen*) to be judged in the proper way (*rite, ordentlicheweise*), thus frustrating attempts to arrive at God-pleasing consensus. For errors must be rejected and true doctrine embraced (Tr. 52) "for the glory of God and the salvation of souls." By "error" Melanchthon refers to "godless dogmas" and "godless services" (Tr. 51, 59); and those who agree with such false doctrine and worship pollute themselves, detract from the glory of God, and hinder the welfare of the church (Tr. 59).

Luther in his confessional writings takes the same position as Melanchthon. Warning against the papacy, he says (SA II, IV, 9) that the church is best governed when all are "diligently joined in unity of doctrine, faith, sacraments, prayer, and works of love." Again, speaking of the papacy he says (LC I, 84) we must avoid (*meiden*) open sinners and testify openly against them and reprove them. He is more vociferous against Zwingli and the Sacramentarians (SD VII, 33): "I rate as one concoction, namely, as Sacramentarians and fanatics, which they also are, all who will not believe that the Lord's bread in the Supper is His true natural body, which the godless or Judas

received with the mouth, as well as did St. Peter and all saints; he who will not believe this should let me alone, and hope for no fellowship [*Gemeinschaft; amicitiam aut familiaritatem*] with me. This is final."

The writers of the Formula of Concord, struggling under the many controversies which ensued after Luther's death and were aggravated by the interim, spoke often about the subject of external church fellowship, the basis for it, and the importance of having no fellowship with papists, Calvinists, or other sectarians and errorists. The basis for fellowship is agreement (*consensus, concordia, Einigkeit*) in the doctrine and all its articles (SD X, 31). Without this unity fellowship is broken, idolatry is confirmed, and believers are grieved, offended, and weakened in their faith (SD X, 16). For the sake of the gospel and dear Christians, therefore, false doctrine, injurious to the faith, must be avoided with all diligence (SD IV, 39) for their very soul's welfare and salvation (SD X, 16). Furthermore, there can be no fellowship (*communio, Gemeinschaft*) with errorists or their followers since there is no way to come to agreement (*vergleichen, conciliari*) with them. Furthermore, Christians are "to reject and condemn" whatever is contrary to the true doctrine (SD XI, 93) and are to have neither part nor fellowship (*wider Teil noch Gemeinschaft*) with errorists and their errors, be they great or small, but to reject and condemn them one and all as against Scripture and the Augsburg Confession and ask godly Christians to "beware" (*hüten*) of them (SD XII, 8).

It is clear from the citations above that external church fellowship involves mutual consensus and confession of the doctrine and all its articles, agreement in practice, and full and uninhibited participation in all worship. It also involves the condemnation of error. Where these factors do not obtain, external fellowship is a capitulation and mockery which obscures the gospel and imperils faith. The refusal to enter into fellowship with false teachers and those who follow them springs from a concern for purity of doctrine and the glory of Christ and the eschatological concern for the salvation of souls.

It seems to me that the pressure of our pluralistic society, of contemporary doctrinal indifferentism, of the welter of religions in our country, and the confusion within American

Lutheranism concerning the doctrine and practice of church fellowship make it very difficult for us who wish to remain confessional Lutherans today to retain our identity. In the LCMS the discussions concerning pulpit and altar fellowship, prayer fellowship, unionism, levels of fellowship (relationship), and interminable casuistic questions have now gone on *ad nauseam*, so that, wearied by all discussion of the issues, each does what is right in his own eyes, a fact which, if true, indicates the imminent breakdown of our confessional position on this point. This leads me to my second point, intimately related to the doctrine and practice of church fellowship.

II. *Open Communion*

Within the Lutheran Church in America there have been three positions taken by congregations, groups, and synods relative to open and closed communion. The first is that of the old General Synod, which recognized Christians in both Lutheran and Calvinistic and Reformed communions and offered the Sacrament of the Altar to those from both groups who desired it (open communion). The second was the position of other American synods in the nineteenth century, the General Council, and later those synods belonging to the American Lutheran Conference in our country. This position recognized that there are dear Christians in Reformed congregations but ordinarily refused them communion because they were identified with a different "religion," with a church body which had a different and false doctrinal position. Those who held this position also at times refused to give communion to those Christians who were members of congregations of the synods belonging to the General Council, and while recognizing, more or less, the so-called Galesburg Rule of 1875, eventually communed indiscriminately all who called themselves Lutherans. The third position was that of C. F. W. Walther and the Synodical Conference: communion was, like much of worship, a confessional act, and should not be offered to those, although sincere Christians, who belonged to Reformed and Roman Catholic communions or who belonged to Lutheran congregations holding membership in un-Lutheran and therefore heterodox church bodies. This position is set forth definitively by Walther in his 1870 essay to the Western District Convention entitled "Communion Fellowship with Those Who Believe Differently."[6] He bases his

position on Scripture, the confessions, and citations from Luther and other post-Reformation theologians. It is obvious that he is setting forth a position which repristinates Reformation practice, but was not the practice of his day among Lutherans in his fatherland.

His starting point in defense of the correct Lutheran practice is specifically the doctrine of ecclesiology, namely, that there is a true visible church or fellowship which preaches, according to Augustana VII, the Word of God purely and administers the sacraments according to the gospel, and is thus distinguished by its marks. Those who will not identify with the true confessing church are, after due admonition, to be avoided,[7] and if they remain in a false "fellowship" are not be communed. Rather their errors are to be condemned. Walther then goes on to argue as follows: "The main purpose of the holy sacraments is to be a tool and means through which the promises of grace are offered, communicated, and appropriated, as a seal, guarantee, and pledge through which these promises are confirmed. However, within this major purpose, as a secondary goal, the sacrament is to be a distinguishing sign of confession and a bond of fellowship and worship. Therefore fellowship in the Lord's Supper is church fellowship."[8] Walther then asserts that the sacrament is a mark of pure confession. And if anyone comes to our altar, we must ask him, "Do you believe and confess what we Lutherans believe and confess?"; and if he should answer equivocally, Walther concludes, "It should be known that he is either an unworthy hypocrite or an Epicurean skeptic. We for our part know that we Lutherans alone have the correctly administered communion."

Walther's position, as unpopular today as then, is certainly in accord with our confessional doctrine of fellowship, including Holy Communion, but also with the confessional position in regard to confessing the truth and condemning falsehood and with the concern for the salvation of souls. Never did Luther commune Zwinglians or Sacramentarians, but condemned them. The Formula of Concord concurs with Luther (SD VII, 29-31), quotes him, and with heart and mouth condemns and refuses fellowship to those Romanists, Calvinists, Zwinglians, and *Schwaermer* who do not teach the correct doctrine of the Lord's Supper *and the other articles of faith* (Ep. VII, 21-42; X, 8-12).

Historically the LCMS from its inception has held with the Confessions and Walther on the doctrine of church fellowship and on the issue of open communion. Our pastors and congregations have not communed members of Lutheran congregations belonging to heterodox synods, that is, synods not adhering faithfully to the Lutheran Confessions (e.g., the Anti-Missourian Brotherhood, the General Synod, the ULC, the Augustana Synod, the NLCA, et al.). This was the practice of pastors and congregations belonging to other synods of the Synodical Conference as well. In our circles the practice was adhered to until about World War II. The Galesburg Rule was more or less operative in those synods belonging to the Old American Lutheran Conference, but it was never acceptable to Missouri or the Synodical Conference, inasmuch as it allowed for indiscriminate communing of anyone who called himself a Lutheran.

Today a large number of pastors in the LCMS, ignoring Formula VII and X and Walther's admonitions, have gradually drifted from the position of our confessions to the middle ground of the American Lutheran Conference with its Galesburg Rule. This poses a very vexing problem for our synod, which is itself a fellowship, as congregations, pastors, and officials oppose those pastors who insist on observing confessional Lutheran practice and their God-given right as called pastors to admit or not communicants to the Lord's table. Meanwhile, the synods making up ELCA have officially shifted to the interimist ground and syncretism of the old General Synod, further confusing the fellowship issue among Lutherans.[9]

III. *The Office of the Ministry and "Lay Ministry"*

The article of the office of the ministry is considered by Melanchthon in Augustana V where he discusses the work of the Holy Spirit to engender faith through the means of grace. He discusses the call into the public ministry in Augustana XIV. He sets forth the doctrine of the office of minister in the Treatise. I shall describe briefly his discussion there.

A. The public office of the minister (*Predigtamt*) "proceeds from the general call of the apostles," not from any other source, not another apostle (Peter), certainly not the laity (Tr. 10, German text).

B. All ministers (*ministri*; only those who have the *Predigtamt* are called ministers in the confessions) are equal and the church is more than (*supra ministros, mehr sei denn*) the ministers (Tr. 11).

C. Thus, in the church no one rules; only the word rules and has authority (Tr. 11).

D. The keys belong (*pertineant*) to the church, not to some individuals (Matthew 18:18). They have been given and belong (*habet*) immediately (*ohne Mittel*) to the whole church, to all who desire and receive the promises of the gospel (Tr. 24).

E. Final jurisdiction (*Gericht*) is given the church (Matthew 18:17). The pastors "teach" and "rule" with the word (Tr. 30).

F. The office of the ministry (*minister, der Diener des Amts*) is restricted to the public "confession" (*Bekenntnis*; Tr. 25), namely, "teaching the gospel and administering the sacraments" (AC V, 1; Tr. 31), but also including excommunication and absolution. For all this there is a divine *mandatum* (Tr. 60).

G. Pastors, elders, and bishops are equated and hold the same office of minister (Tr. 61ff.).

H. The church as the authority (*jus, jure divino*, Tr. 65, 67) to call, elect, and ordain ministers (SA III, X, 3), since it alone has the "priesthood" (Tr. 69). No human power (*autoritas*) can snatch this authority from the church (SA III, X, 3). According to Ephesians 4:8 ministers are a gift from Christ to the church.

I. The "people" in the early church elected "pastors and bishops." Then a "bishop" confirmed such a call by the laying on of hands. Ordination is "nothing else than such a ratification" (Tr. 70).

J. The *public* preaching of the word and administration of the sacraments is carried out by the "ministers and pastors" (*pii pastores; Pfarrherren*). They also carry out public absolution and excommunication; but the latter only according to due process (*ordine judiciali*).

The data reviewed above merits some comment. It is clear that Melanchthon does not recognize the chasm between clergy (priests, bishops, pastors) and laity which obtained in the Roman Catholic Church. His use of the terms "priest" and "clergy" occurs almost always in the context

of false Roman understandings—that priests should not be married, that priests alone should receive Christ's blood in the Lord's Supper, and the like; and Melanchthon believed there should be no difference between clergy and laity in such matters. Only once, according to my findings, does Melanchthon call Lutheran pastors "priests" (Ap. XXIV, 48). On the other hand, Melanchthon's writings and the other confessions hardly ever use the word "laity," except in the aforementioned polemical context. Rather he and Luther use the term "people" (*populus, vulgus, simplex, der Gemeine Mann, das Volk*). The concept of the "universal priesthood of all believers," emphasized in our day in contrast to the clergy, or pastors, is unknown in our confessions.[10]

One clear conclusion immerges from the confessional discussion of the pastoral office: it is a unique office, conferred upon some men by Christ. The term "minister" is applied only to pastors with a divine call (*Pfarrherr, Prediger*). According to the theology of our confessions, the idea of a "lay-minister" is an inconceivable oxymoron, like sheep being shepherds.

This pattern of church order, or practice, has been that of the LCMS until very recently. Just a couple of years ago the *Lutheran Annual* designated as ministers—"commissioned" ministers, whatever that means!—all kinds of people who are not ministers at all in either the biblical or confessional understanding, people such as school-teachers, directors of Christian education, and those in other categories of full-time church work outside the holy ministry. Such a development is confusing, to say the least. At the Wichita Convention a more serious error compounded this confusion.[11] Laymen were permitted publicly and on a regular basis to preach the gospel and publicly to administer the Sacrament of the Altar, something never before condoned in the LCMS. This was to be done in emergency situations, it was said, a practice never approved or even suggested in our confessions.[12] However, emergencies, in the nature of the case, cannot be regularized. Wichita also decided for the congregations of our synod that such a contradiction of Augustana XIV was justified because the lay preachers were to receive supervision. But there is nothing whatever in our confessions about supervision of this kind. If a layman of any age or background desires the office of minister, he should do what he has always done, study

theology and then be rightly called. The Treatise and Augustana XIV make it abundantly clear that only ministers are to be called and ministers are always to be called.[13]

IV. *Women Pastors*

The question of women clergy was an unthinkable notion in the sixteenth century just as in the first century for St. Paul or our Lord. There are two reasons for this, the same reasons we bring against the calling and ordination of women into the pastoral ministry today. First, the very idea conflicts with God's order of creation, or the natural order. Luther (SA III, XI) bases his polemics opposing the anti-Christian prohibition of the marriage of priests (pastors) upon the divine ordination of the two sexes, male and female. He argues that such a prohibition is like making a man into a woman or a woman into a man. The same argument would hold, I think, against women ministers.

The second reason why the confessors did not even envisage women ministers was their doctrine of the ministry, which we have just outlined. The ministry is an office which derives from the call and mandate to the apostles and from Christ, who is not only true man, but true God, begotten of the Father. So, although the confessions do not speak explicitly against the false doctrine and practice of calling and ordaining female ministers—just as it does not condemn abortion and other contemporary social aberrations—their entire theology is a malediction against feminist theology and the modern feminist movement.

At this point I might mention that the notion of "equal rights" for women is not some new idea which was first propounded and observed in our enlightened age and country. I cite the words of Jacob Burckhardt,[14] written in 1860 concerning the most enlightened, and also pagan, country in Christian Europe before and at the time of the Reformation, namely, Italy: "To understand the higher forms of social intercourse at this period, we must keep before our minds the fact that women stood on a footing of perfect equality with men." Later he says, "There was no question of 'women's rights' or female emancipation, simply because the thing itself was a matter of course." And then Burckhardt supplies copious illustrations of women excelling in all the works and arts of men, including not only literature and politics, but at times

even warfare, using the eminent Vittoria Colonna as his prime example. But, though she was living in the most nepotistic of all ages and hers was a noble and influential family, neither she nor any other competent woman became a priest or pastor.

Feminism as we know it today did not exist in the open society of Renaissance Italy or in the more closed and primitive culture of northern Europe whence Lutheranism sprang. But today in our Western culture it represents the most powerful and baneful influence of modern society upon the Lutheran Church in America—and also our Missouri Synod. It is a result of pluralism and reflects an ideologically fractured society. This ideology as it enters the thinking and life of our church automatically threatens its confessional character. With its pressure to change the very text of Scripture and our liturgy so as to speak only in inclusive, "non-sexist" language, it attacks not only the *sola scriptura* principle, not only the confessional Lutheran understanding of the doctrine of the ministry and of ecclesiastical order, but also the very doctrine of God as articulated in the creeds.[15]

V. *Conclusion*

This then is my humble description and analysis of four controversial issues having to do with the doctrine of church and ministry, issues which immerge from practice and spill over into doctrine, issues which, if they are not faced boldly by those in the LCMS who wish to retain their confessional Lutheran identity, threaten to overwhelm us, like a great flood, and reduce confessional Lutheranism in our midst to a few little islands peeping out in a great ocean and at the same time reduce the LCMS, like ELCA, to a nondescript mainline church body.

How do we respond to this cultural interim of our day, this onslaught which has engulfed entire denominations? We must respond as our confessions responded to the Leipzig Interim, not by closing our eyes to facts, not by *pro forma* reaffirmations of old and neglected synodical resolutions which may or may not speak to the issues, but by confession and teaching the whole counsel of God and, like the confessors, bearing in mind always that the gospel and the salvation of souls are at stake. And we must respond, like our confessions, by rejecting error at every point, whether it be false practices of fellowship,

open communion, lay ministry, or the ordination of women pastors. All this requires wisdom, courage, and much humility.

I shall conclude with a little story. When my wife and I were traveling in Scotland shortly after World War II, we found ourselves on a train bound for Edinburgh which took a wrong turn and we wound up stopping at a bombed-out bridge. There was only one way to get back on track: back up! Backing up involves admitting that we took a wrong turn in the first place. I pray that God in His infinite mercy may graciously give to us all the wisdom and courage and humility to back up, to return in repentance to the"old paths, where is the good way [the way of the Lutheran Confessions]; and walk therein, and find rest for our souls" (Jeremiah 16:16).

ENDNOTES

1. The 1938 Sandusky Declaration speaks of the Scriptures being the source, rule, and norm for "faith and life." See *Documents of Lutheran Unity in America*, ed. by Richard C. Wolf (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 395. The constitution of the ULC of 1918 has "faith and practice" (*ibid.*, p. 273). See also the Minneapolis Theses of 1925 (*ibid.*, p. 340). The Chicago Theses of 1925-1928 has "doctrine and faith." The United Testimony of Faith and Life (1952) speaks of "doctrine and life" (*ibid.*, p. 501). Obviously there is no uniform terminology in respect to this distinction. Pieper uses the term "Doctrine and Practice." See *Unsere Stelling in Lehre und Praxis* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1896). Under practice Pieper mentions church discipline, church fellowship, stewardship within the church, lodgery, and the actual public preaching of the Gospel.

2. This seems to be the case. Note what Luther says in his Galatians commentary (*WA*, 40 II, p. 51): "For this reason, as I often advise, doctrine must be carefully distinguished from life. Doctrine is heaven; life is earth. In life there is sin, error, impurity, and misery—with vinegar, as men are wont to say. There love should close an eye, should tolerate, should be deceived, believe, hope, and bear everything; there the forgiveness of sins should mean most, if only sin and error are not defended. But in doctrine there is no error, and hence no need for any forgiveness of sins. Therefore there is no similarity at all between doctrine and life. One point of doctrine is worth more than heaven and earth. This is why we cannot bear to have it

violated in the least." In this passage Luther by the term "life" does not mean practice as the term was later understood, but the Christian's life of love and good works. In antithesis to Luther's position is the modernistic aphorism of a few years ago, "Not creeds, but deeds."

3. AC XIV, 1: "Of ecclesiastical order they teach (*docent*)," just as they do concerning doctrine and the articles of faith.

4. In his pastoral epistle St. Paul at times includes both doctrine and practice as he uses the term *didaskalia* (Titus 2:1,7,10; 1 Timothy 1:10; 4:1,6; 6:1).

5. The Formula of Concord (SD VII, 57) speaks of *Gemeinschaft* or *communicatio* with Christ through eating His body and drinking His blood, obviously in Holy Communion.

6. Translation by Laurence L. White, 1980.

7. Walther cites Luther (*LW*, 38, p. 304): "Because so many of God's warnings and admonitions have simply had no effect upon them [the Sacramentarians, etc.]. . .therefore I must leave them to their devices and avoid them as *autokatakritoi* (self-condemned), Titus 3:11, who knowingly and intentionally want to be condemned. I must not have any kind of fellowship with them, neither by letters, writings, and words, nor in works, as the Lord commands in Matthew 18, whether he be called Stenkefeld, Zwingli, or whatever he is called. I regard them all as being cut from the same piece of cloth, as indeed they are. For they do not want to believe that the Lord's bread in the Supper is His true natural body which the godless person or Judas receives orally just as well at St. Peter and all the saints. Whoever does not want to believe that, let him not trouble me with letters, writings, or words and let him not expect to have fellowship with me. This is final." Compare the Preface to the Book of Concord, Tappert, p. 23.

8. Again Walther quotes Luther (*LW*, 41, p. 152): "Now we shall speak of the proper manner of communicating the people. . . .Here one should follow the same usage as with baptism, namely, that the bishop be informed of those who want to commune. They should request in person to receive the Lord's Supper so that he may be able to know both their names and their manner of life. And let him not admit the applicants unless they can give a reason for their faith, and can answer questions about what the Lord's Supper is, what its benefits are, and what they expect to derive from it. . .Those, therefore, who are not able to answer in the manner described above should be excluded and banished from the communion of the Supper since they are

without the wedding garment (Matthew 22:11-12). . .For participation in the Supper is part of the confession by which they confess before God, angels, and men that they are Christians. Care must therefore be taken lest any as it were take the Supper on the sly and disappear in the crowd. . ."

9. See *Lutheran Perspective*, September 8, 1986, p. 12. Also James E. Andrews and Joseph A. Burgess, eds., *An Invitation to the Lutheran-Reformed Dialogue, Series II, 1981-1983.* Because of this action of the ALC, now accepted by ELCA, Concordia Theological Seminary at two synodical conventions has tried to clarify the issue and our own synodical stance vis-a-vis ELCA and open communion, but to no avail. (See *Convention Workbook*, 1989, Memorials 3-33 and 3-50.)

10. The one exception may be Tractatus 69 cited above, but it cannot be a conclusive reference to the priesthood of all believers in any technical sense.

11. See Resolution 3-05B, *Convention Proceedings*, pp. 111ff.

12. An emergency situation (*casus necessitatis*) is mentioned only once in our confessions as an example to justify the *necessary* right of the church to call pastors. Augustine is cited as narrating the story of two Christians in a ship, one of whom baptized the catechumen, who after baptism absolved the baptizer (Tr. 67). Notice that this casuistic example cited by Melanchthon speaks neither of the public preaching of the word or the public administration of the sacrament.

13. Much of the confusion on this issue springs from the crisis in the spring of 1974 when graduates and candidates approved by Christ Seminary-Seminex were prevented from entering the LCMS ministry because they were not, according to the LCMS *Handbook*, qualified by one of the LCMS seminaries. Subsequently four district presidents, duly elected by their districts in convention, were deposed for allowing these candidates to be called and ordained contrary to the *Handbook* of the synod. Ironically Wichita Resolution 3-05B allows for district presidents again to send into the ministry men who are not approved by either of the two seminaries (against the synodical *Handbook*) but, more seriously, who have no call and are not ratified by ordination. The majority of delegates at Wichita seemed to think it proper that, if a leading theologian stated qualifiedly that a resolution allowing lay ministers was not *per se* false doctrine, the resolution could be adopted, even if it flew in the face of the doctrine, practice, and church order of the Lutheran Confessions. Thus, by one grand, highly-motivated step, the

LCMS changed its practice and church order and became in this issue Methodist, although stubbornly resisting in principle such a practice for over a hundred and fifty years.

14. *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. by S. G. C. Middlemore (London: Phaidon Press, 1950), p. 240.

15. For further discussion on this point and some of the others considered above, see the Opinion of the Faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary (February 11, 1987) rendered to questions from the Alexandria (Minnesota) Circuit Pastors' Conference, which concludes on the subject of women ministers as follows: "At its last convention the LCMS once more reaffirmed 'its conviction that the Scriptures prohibit women from holding the pastoral office or carrying out the distinctive functions of this office (1 Corinthians 11:11; 1 Corinthians 14; 1 Timothy 2)' (1986 *Proceedings*, Resolution 3-10, p. 144). Since the attempt to place women into the public ministry of the Gospel and Sacraments is contrary to the express Word of God, all such attempts should be regarded as null and void, and of no effect. Such women are not pastors. Their public 'ministerial' acts are in fact the acts of private persons, although, of course, the means of grace are in and of themselves valid even when administered improperly."

The Primary Mission of the Church and Its Detractors

Erwin J. Kolb

Herman Gockel, well known Missouri Synod lecturer and author, used to tell the story of the pastor who prepared his confirmation class for their public examination with memorized responses. One of the questions he asked each year, in German, was this: "Warum sind wir Menschen denn hier auf Erden?" ("Why are we here on earth?") The robot-like response was this: "um in den Himmel zu kommen" ("in order to go to heaven").

If that be true, why are we still here? God ought to take us to heaven as soon as we are baptized or come to faith. Then we should be sure to get there. But God does not do that. He leaves us on earth because He has something for us to do here for Him.

I do not know how apocryphal that story is but, assuming that some Missouri Synod Lutherans were trained in that type of thinking, it is no wonder that we find a pervasive "maintenance mentality" in our church body. A young pastor said to me recently after working several years to lead his congregation into some outreach activities, including a preschool to serve his community, "I did not realize how deeply rooted the maintenance mentality is in our older Lutherans."

People ask me, "What will it take for the Missouri Synod to again become a growing church?" I simply say, "We must focus on our primary mission." That involves two things, first to understand what the primary mission is and secondly to organize our activities with the intention of accomplishing it.

That may sound very simple. In reality it is a very difficult thing for us. The primary mission is often confused by what I call detractors from our primary mission. The purpose of this presentation is to look at the primary mission and then to look at the detractors. By "detractors" I mean the things that take our attention, our energy, and our resources away from the primary mission.

I. *The Primary Mission Is to Save the Lost*

We are accustomed in recent years to hear that the primary mission of the church is to make disciples of all nations, according to the Great Commission. But that statement is often diluted as we shall see later. I choose to start talking

about the mission with the simple statement of Jesus, which is very difficult to dilute or confuse, "I am come to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10).

A. *God Sent His Son to Save the Lost*

Several years ago, NAME developed a document entitled "A Theological Statement" which suggested, "The purpose of God's missionary activity is expressed in John 3:16-17." It pointed to the sharp contrast between "perish" and "condemn" and "save" and "eternal life":

> For God so loved the world that He *gave* His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not *perish* but have *eternal life.* For God did not send His Son into the world to *condemn* the world, but to *save* the world through Him.

In addition to describing His mission with the words "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10), Jesus said "I have come not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:32). The Apostle Paul says, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15).

B. *Jesus Sent His Disciples to Carry on His Mission*

The mission of followers of Jesus, or His church, is the same as His. He said, "As the father has sent Me, I am sending you" (John 20:21), and He stated in His prayer to the Father for the church, "As Thou didst sent Me into the world, I have sent them into the world" (John 17:18). The Great Commission formalizes that mission in the most complete way we have in the Scripture (Matthew 28:18-20):

> All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

To commission someone is to "entrust them with a task and give them the authority to act in one's stead." There are four verbs in the Great Commission. The imperative is "make disciples" and the supporting participles are "go, baptize, teach." Jesus was emphasizing that the purpose for which He came and which He extends to His followers is to "make disciples" or "save the lost."

C. *God Sent the Spirit to Enable the Mission*

Not only did God send His Son to bring an estranged world back to Himself by removing the sin which separated it and then sending His church to tell the world that is was reconciled, but He also sent His Spirit to enable that mission. The Spirit, who is sent from both the Father and the Son, was sent to fill those who were to tell the message in order to "teach" all things (John 14:26), "to remind" the apostles of "everything Jesus said," to "testify about" Jesus (John 15:26), and to give power and boldness to them (Acts 1:8; 4:31).

The Spirit works not only in the heart of the witness, however. He works also in the heart of the prospective believer to prepare that heart and then to create faith (1 Corinthians 12:13). Without the Spirit the mission could never be accomplished, but with the Spirit it can and will be done!

II. *Some of Our Language Dilutes the Mission*

There has been some objection to the use of the term "primary mission," even though we have used it often. "A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles" of 1972 speaks thus Article II:

> We believe, teach, and confess that the *primary mission* of the church is to make disciples of every nation by bearing witness to Jesus Christ through the teaching of the Gospel and administration of the sacraments.

The CTCR document entitled "Evangelism and Church Growth" uses a different word—objective: "According to the Scriptures, the Christian church has *one objective* in all of its mission efforts—to make disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ" (page 8).

In addition to the word "objective," other statements use these words: "goal," "task," "activity," "function," and "purpose." Confusion sets in by a careless or imprecise use of these terms. An example is a paper on the unity of the church which makes this statement:

> Believing, teaching and confessing the Gospel according to the Holy Scripture becomes *the one essential task* of the church and *the one God-given means* for seeking and finding true Christian unity. In other words, *the primary mission* of the church can be described as the faithful use

> of the means of grace. External unity in the church is not an end in itself, but serves *the primary task* of the church.

This statement makes *the primary mission* of the church the use of the means of grace and equates the terms "essential task" and "primary task" with the "primary mission." In a document reviewing the "Mission Affirmations" this statement is made:

> In accord with Christ's commission, we affirm that our church must hold before the eyes of its people the never changing fact that *the primary goal and function* of the church is to bring men to faith and obedience to His will.

Here the terms "goal" and "function" are equated. To avoid confusion our terms must be clear. I understand and use terms in this way:

> "Mission" means being sent to accomplish a work for someone else.
>
> "Objective," closely related to mission or goal, points to what is to be accomplished.
>
> "Goal" is similar to objective but focuses more on immediate results to be accomplished.
>
> "Purpose" is close to both mission and objective.
>
> "Task" is what needs to be done to accomplish the mission, objective, goal, or purpose.
>
> "Function" is the normal, proper activity of the church.

We may think of an analogy. When Jessica McClure was stuck in the well, thousands of people tried to rescue her. What was their mission: save the life of Jessica McClure. Their objective or goal was to bring her up out of that hole. The task or activities were to dig, to get air down to her, to fasten something to her to bring her up.

The mission on which Jesus sent His church is to seek and save the lost. The goal or objective is to see people come to faith in Jesus Christ, to be made disciples. The task or activity is to use the means by which a person is saved, the gospel, to baptize and then to teach. The functions are the normal activities of Christians as they do the above, such as worship, nurture, witness, service, and fellowship.

III. *Some Detractors Weaken the Priority*

I see three "detractors," as I call them, which weaken the priority given to the primary mission, to seek and save the lost. They could also be called sidetracks, dilutors, or confusers. According to my dictionary a "detractor" "takes away," a "sidetrack" "moves away from the main track," a "dilutor" "makes weaker," and a "confuser" "renders indistinct." My point is that they can move our attention, our energy, and our resources away from the primary mission.

A. *Confusing a Function of the Church with the Primary Mission*

All of the functions of the church—worship, nurture, witness, service, fellowship, or however many one may list—are the normal, proper way in which Christians, who make up the body of Christ, exist and live together. Just as the human body exists by the functions of eating, walking, talking, and the like, so the body of Christ exists by these functions. And all of them have both an inreach purpose, which serves and supports the body, and an outreach dimension which relates directly to the carrying out of the Great Commission. We may look at each one briefly.

1. *Worship*

It is normal and natural for Christians to praise God as Creator, Savior, and Lord, to partcipate in the sacraments and hear the gospel preached. This nurtures and builds up the body of Christ. The outreach dimension is that the believers are motivated and equipped to reach out to unbelievers that they might be baptized and join in the praise of God. The formal worship of the church must assist the primary mission, not merely serve the body itself as an end in itself.

2. *Nurture-Education*

Despite the reasons for doing it, the King James Version of the Bible did a great disservice to the church when it translated the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19) as "teach all nations," because this allowed the church to make education the primary mission. Some congregations still today see the mission as maintaining a school or educating the children.

Teaching is a part of the Great Commission, but that follows after a person becomes a disciple. The first goal is to make a

person a disciple by baptism. When this has been accomplished, then Jesus adds (verse 20) "teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." The primary mission is to give birth to the baby. Nurturing it follows.

3. *Witness*

Witness as a funtion is what Christians do. They talk about their faith, about what the Lord is doing in their lives. The confessions call it "the mutual conversation of Christians" which God uses to help build the body and strengthen it. The outreach dimension is to speak that Gospel to the lost that they might be saved.

4. *Fellowship*

On a flight back from Oakland (California) to St. Louis (Missouri) this spring, I met a Chinese lady who was an architect going to a conference on building prisons. I discovered that she was brought up in the Roman Catholic Church and was sending her children to a Roman Catholic school. When I asked whether she ever considered going back to church, she said that she was angry with the church for putting the mass into the vernacular and taking away the traditional Latin. Her reason was that, when it was in Latin, all the nationalities could become one. The burden of my witness to her was that it is in Jesus Christ that we are one, neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, but all one in Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:28).

The church is one in Jesus Christ and it expresses that oneness in different ways, as an inreach dimension. But there is also an outreach dimension. Jesus prayed, "May they be brought into complete unity to *let the world know* that Thou didst send Me and hast loved them even as Thou hast loved Me" (John 17:28).

In summarizing the general teachings of the Church Growth Movement the CTCR document mentioned above equates all of these functions with "the means by which the goal (or the primary objective) is reached." It then explains (italics added):

> Sacred acts such as worship on Sundays, studying God's Word, social action, Christian fellowship, nurture in Christian living, and even verbal witnessing, important and God-pleasing as these are, must not become ends in

> themselves. . .these are *not the church's primary objective.*

Since these functions are not the primary mission, they should not become ends in themselves or be allowed to focus so much energy or attention on themselves that they detract from accomplishing the primary mission.

5. *Service*

Service is also one of the functions of the church. It is part of the life of good works for which God created it (Ephesians 2:10). Jesus gave to the church what has been known as the Great Commandment: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength". . ."love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:30-31). But the Great Commandment should not be equated with the Great Commission or detract from it. The "Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles" puts it like this:

> Other necessary activities of the church, such as ministering to men's physical needs, are to serve the church's *primary mission and its goal* that men will believe and confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Evangelism and social responsibility must go together as partners. Jesus demonstrated that in His ministry as He preached the gospel, fed the hungry, and healed the sick. His words explained His works and His works authenticated His words.

Service, like the other functions of the church, also has both an inreach and an outreach dimension. The church taking care of its own is the inreach dimension. The outreach in that it reaches out to the needs of all people in the world. The directions and the examples of the Scripture demonstrate this pattern. The members of the church after the experience of Pentecost immediately sold all of their possessions in order to care for fellow-members (Acts 2:44-45). Scripture does not say that they immediately went out and fed all of the hungry beggars in the city, although they did some of that.

In the great judgement scene in Matthew 25 where all people are gathered before the throne of Jesus and are divided into the sheep and the goats, Jesus says, "inasmuch as you did it to the least of these *my brothers*. . ." Who are the brothers of Jesus? The Scripture clearly tells us that whoever does the will

of the Father is the brother of Jesus. The word "brother" can be used in a broad sense to include all people, for we are all human beings, we are all made by one Creator and have one Lord, but the Scriptures focus on the "brother" who is a fellow-believer, one who has been adopted into the family of God (Galatians 4). Paul emphasizes that we should "do good to all people," but he adds, "especially to those who are of the family of believers" (Galatians 6:10).

Service in terms of caring for the needs of people in the church and in the world is a legitimate and valid function of the church. But it must not detract from the primary mission, to save the souls of people for eternal life, not to care for their bodies on earth. The CTCR document entitled "Evangelism and Church Growth" suggests that efforts to expand the church's mission to "include social and political aims" "must be rejected as contrary to the central Biblical mandate." While it agrees that "the church should be involved in the social, economic and political struggles of the underprivileged and oppressed in their efforts to seek justice and equal rights," it says that "the church's mission efforts must always be to proclaim the Gospel which alone can make lost sinners wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ" (page 9).

B. *Making the Means the Primary Mission*

The Lutheran Church has always emphasized that faith is the sole work of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3). "Faith comes from hearing the message" (Romans 15:10). I have read many convention resolutions which begin, "Whereas the *primary mission* of the church is to preach the Gospel to all nations. . ." or "Whereas the Great Commission tells us to preach the Gospel to all people everywhere. . ." These kinds of statements reflect an underlying tendency in our church to make the means the mission. We emphasize so strongly the place of the means of grace, word and sacraments, which Walther calls the "infallible marks" of the church, that we elevate them to the primary mission when they are the *means* by which we accomplish the *primary mission.*

One other way this detractor is expressed is to say, "My mission is to preach the gospel. The rest is up to God." That is at best inaccurate and deceptive. God uses people not only to sow the seed but to reap the harvest. They are His instruments. It is as if the farmer were to say, "I will sow the

seed and let God bring in the harvest." The farmer's goal in sowing the seed is to have a harvest. He cannot cause the seed to grow but he works his soil, cultivates it, cuts out or sprays out the weeds, prays for rain or irrigates it with water and, when it is just right, he brings it in. This is the attitude that St. Paul reflects when he says, "My heart's desire and prayer to God is that they be saved" (Romans 10:1).

Sometimes the Scriptures focus on the preaching of the gospel, which is the means, and at other times the harvest, which is the goal. In Acts 20:24, where St. Paul talks to the elders of the church at Ephesus when he meets them at the seacoast town of Miletus, he says, "I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the *race* and complete the *task* the Lord Jesus has given me. . .*testifying to the gospel* of God's grace"(v. 24). The "race" might be thought of as "the mission," as the TEV translates, and "task" focuses on the means, for which the TEV uses "work." In this verse Paul emphasizes the means, "testifying to the gospel," and he adds "preaching the kingdom" (v. 25).

In 1 Corinthians 9:19-22 Paul stresses very strongly not the *means* but the *mission*—to save souls. Four times Paul says that he seeks to relate to the people around him in order to "win" them. Then he says, "I become all things to all men" in order that "I might save some." He equates "win" with "save." God does the saving but Paul also says "I...save." God and Paul are partners. They have the same mission, to save the lost. God gives the seed of the Gospel, Paul sows it, God makes it grow, Paul brings in the harvest. Paul is the instrument which serves God. The sowing, however, is never an end in itself; it serves the mission and cannot be separated from it.

Another confusion of means and mission is to say that spiritual growth or the personal study of the word is our primary mission. Surely the study of the word and spiritual growth are necessary to make the body strong, just as taking nourishing food and exercise is necessary to make the human body strong, but that is not an end in itself. The purpose of becoming strong is to use the body for the purpose for which it was created. In the case of the church, that purpose is to seek and save the lost. The CTCR document puts it thus (page 29):

> Even the preaching of the Gospel, the administration of the sacraments, and Bible study are not *the ultimate goals* of the church. The church's *ultimate mission* is to bring lost children back to the Father's house.

In George Bernard Shaw's play *Saint Joan*, Joan, a teenage French peasant girl, comes into the presence of young Prince Charles in order to encourage him to take up arms to drive the English out of France. Prince Charles is living in luxury and Joan is dressed in armor. The prince sees her as an intrusion into a life in which he is satisfied and content and says brusquely, "Why don't you go away and mind your own business and let me mind mine." Joan pulls herself erect in her armor and says, "And what is your business—petting lap dogs and sucking sugar sticks? I'll tell you what your business is. Your business is to do God's business. That's why you're here."

What is God's business? God's will is that "everyone come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9), that all nations "become disciples," that all the sheep be brought into the fold, that all the lost be saved. Everything the church does, all of its functions, all the means God gave to accomplish His purpose must be used with that purpose and goal in the center. Richard Schultz put it thus (*The Christian's Mission*, p. 13):

> The church is not a corral into which God herds His people after He has extracted them from the world. The church is more like a school. People come into it to prepare to go out into the world where the real work is. The task for which God sends His people is *not* to build the church but to win the world. The church is an instrument that does not exist for itself but for the mission of God.

The Missouri Synod does not have a clear statement of its mission. The CTCR was directed by the 1986 convention to develop a mission statement which, it appears, will be a longer theology of mission. Sometimes we have thought of the "Objectives of the Synod" in our constitution as a statement of mission, but they are intended to be objectives of what we agree to do together. They do not define the "mission."

Even looking at these "objects," as they were called before the 1981 revision, in comparison with the "objectives," as they are called in the present version of our constitution, we see the tendency to equate the mission with the means. In the original

"Objects of the Synod" Number 2 was "the joint extension of the Kingdom of God," which is close to a mission statement. But when Number 2 was rewritten, it was made to emphasize function and means rather than mission: "strengthen congregations and their members in giving bold witness by word and deed to the love of and work of God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and extend that Gospel witness into all the world" (*Handbook*, page 9).

The Texas District memorialized the 1989 synodical convention to adopt the following as our understanding of the primary mission of the church: "God sends the church, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to bring all people to a faith-filled discipleship in Christ through the witness of the Gospel." This statement clearly distinguishes between means and mission.

C. *Making the Preservation of Pure Doctrine the Primary Mission*

In a convention essay prepared for the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod entitled "Recounting the Mercies," Dr. August Suelflow says that there has been in our history a tension between what he calls "twin focal points" of two "p's"—preserve the gospel and proclaim the gospel. At times, he says, we emphasized one over the other in the understanding of what our purpose or mission was. I suppose that there will always be a "tension" between the two "p's" and that may be healthy. But in our church body today, we can see some who tend to move away from a balance between the two to either end of a continuum, those who see the primary mission as "preserving pure doctrine" and those who understand the primary mission as "proclaiming the gospel to save the lost." Here the point is that an overemphasis on "preserving" can detract from the "proclaiming." They are both necessary and important but, when all our energies are spent on preserving, the primary mission is hindered.

In spite of the danger that someone will wrongly accuse me of condoning false teaching, I shall still say that God has always worked through churches and organizations which include some false teaching in their proclamations of the gospel in order to win the lost. Those who are familiar with organizations like the Navigators and Campus Crusade for

Christ know that God has used them and their materials to bring thousands upon thousands to faith in Jesus Christ, including some who are now Lutherans, even though these materials clearly contain synergistic teaching.

It has always been that way throughout history. God used, and still uses, churches and individuals which teach ordinances instead of sacraments, synergism together with monotheism, works more than grace. We praise God for that and we God praise that, although even in our own beloved church body many pastors and lay people, as they talk about their faith and share it with others, say many things which a doctrinal reviewer would say is not "in complete harmony with the Scripture and the confessions," yet God uses their witness to the gospel to win people.

God does not use false teaching, but He uses the truth of the gospel that is there even though it is diluted with false teaching. The situation might be compared to eating food that is nutritious and food with little nutritional value or even ingredients harmful to the body. The body benefits from the nutritional contents of whatever food it ingests, but the benefit is reduced by the presence of worthless or harmful ingredients. Our goal is to eat the most nutritious food possible. Our goal in mission is to preach the purest gospel possible. The point is, not that we agree with faulty teaching or not try to correct it, but that we are aware of the danger of letting "preserve" absorb so much of our energy, time, and resources that "proclaim" suffers. That would be like spending all our time purifying food and never eating it.

In 2 Corinthians 5 Paul gives us direction when he says that God reconciled the world to Himself through His Son Jesus Christ and then "committed" that message to us. (The "us" in 2 Corinthians were "God's fellow-workers" [2 Corinthians 6:1] in the first century. We apply the "us" in an extended sense to "us" today.) Some translations use the word "entrusted" for "committed"; the new translation, *God's Word to the Nations* (GWN), has "put into our hands." After God accomplished the reconciliation of the world, He made us the "ambassadors for Christ" to share that message with the world. He "put it into our hands." He entrusted it to us, knowing we should do something with it, both preserve it and proclaim it. The GWN

translates verse 18 as "gave us the responsibility of distributing this reconciliation."

The Lutheran Church has done a marvelous task of preserving the message. Bill Hogue, former Director of Evangelism for the Southern Baptist Church, said to the Washington Roundtable on Evangelism that Lutherans have the clearest understanding of the gospel. Methodists are plagued with moralism; Baptists are shot through with legalism; Presbyterians do not know where they are. But Lutherans know what the gospel is. We have it. God entrusted it to us. Now we need to "distribute" it, to pass it on, to share it. It is the means to accomplish our mission.

Conclusion

Sent by Jesus, just as He was sent by the Father, to seek and save the lost is the primary mission. We must beware of detractors. The more our attention is diluted by detractors, the more the mission is hindered. Dr. Ralph Bohlmann, in his opening remarks to a synodical planning conference on March 7 of this year, beautifully summarized that concern in his devotion entitled "Preparing Our Nets" based on Matthew 4:21-22. James and John were in their boats "preparing their nets" when Jesus came to them. Other translations use words like "mending their nets" or "getting their nets ready." The nets they used would get torn and had to be mended or the fish would escape, and they had to be folded just right and put back into the boats so they would not get tangled when they were thrown out.

James and John were getting ready for their "fishing mission." We are all fishers of men and need to prepare our nets constantly. Preparing the nets is not the mission. The nets are only instruments or the means for catching fish, not ends in themselves. The material of the nets is the gospel. An analogy can be pressed to hard, but the main point is beautifully illustrated. The mission is to catch fish. The nets, the task of mending them, the boats, and the acts of going out into the deep and throwing out the nets all have one goal—to catch fish. All the activities and functions of the church serve one ultimate purpose—to catch fish. Our primary mission is to save the lost.

Church Growth and Confessional Integrity

Carter Lindberg

Had I not been invited to participate in the 1988 Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, I should still be blissfully unaware of the church growth movement. But the symposium in Fort Wayne—which I then thought would be only a momentary distraction from my interest in Reformation social welfare—awakened me from my historical slumbers and made it clear that Melanchthon's dreaded *rabies theologorum* is still virulent. The symposium in Fort Wayne further complicated my hitherto peaceful life in a number of ways. Above all, the *Concordia Theological Quarterly* published my paper, "Pietism and the Church Growth Movement in a Confessional Lutheran Perspective."[1] This article has had the effect of somehow making me an instant expert on the subject. I shall begin by summarizing my previous critique of the church growth movement. After this summary I plan to look at the church growth movement from the perspective of the article on which the church stands or falls—justification by grace alone.

Summary of Previous Work

In preparation for this study, I have been able to use some writings of which I was unaware when I made my first effort to evaluate the church growth movement. In particular, I want to mention some of the writings of the LCMS pastor, Kent R. Hunter, President of the International Lutheran Society for Church Growth and Director of the Church Growth Center in Corunna, Indiana; the report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the LCMS entitled "Evangelism and Church Growth with Special Reference to the Church Growth Movement"; the review of this report by LCMS pastor Steve Scheiderer as well as his master's thesis, "The Church Growth Movement: A Lutheran Analysis";[2] the excellent paper by Pastor Robert Schaibley entitled "Biblical Basis and Current Practices Regarding 'Spiritual Gifts'";[3] and the recent LWF statement, "Together in God's Mission: An LWF Contribution to the Understanding of Mission."[4] I mention these writings because I think they confirm my original criticisms of the church growth movement.

Thus I continue to perceive the church growth movement as sharing many of the theological deficits manifested by other post-Reformation renewal movements including the Radical Reformation, Pietism, and the charismatic movements. These deficits include the following: (1.) A triumphalism or theology of glory tends to equate numerical growth not only with faith but with the mind of God. Thus Kent Hunter states that "Jesus' ministry was church growth-oriented."[5]

(2.) A confusion of law and gospel (a) tends to baptize a self-consciously sociological and pragmatic approach to ecclesiology and theology and thus (b) tilts to a works-righteousness of behavioralism and achievement. Donald McGavran, the pioneer of the Church Growth Movement, protests this evaluation. But his very protest sharpens the issue of whether ecclesiology is simply correct sociology plus the doctrine of one's choice. In the revised edition of his influential book, *Understanding Church Growth*, he wrote: "As you set forth church growth theory and theology for your congregations and your denomination use your own creedal statements, your own system. . .Do not attack church growth as theologically inadequate. Make it adequate according to the doctrines emphasized by your Branch of the Church. The test as to whether you have done this or not is whether your congregations are stimulated to vibrant grateful growth such as the New Testament churches exemplified."[6] One problem with this perspective is that success becomes the criterion for the truth of doctrine. Conversely, lack of success means, again in Hunter's words, that "we are doing something to hinder God's desires."[7] Another problem is that the doctrine of justification by grace alone is demoted to one doctrine among many.

(3.) The Church Growth Movement calls into question the "satis set" of Augustana VII by suggesting that the gospel and the sacraments are not sufficient for the church. There is here the perennial pious desire of all renewal movements to add to the marks of the church. In this case discipleship and numerical growth are elevated to signs of the church's "real presence."

(4.) The ecclesiology that develops from this addition to Article VII displaces Luther's tension-filled dynamic of the theology of the cross and its social anthropology (of both the Christian and the Christian community being *simul iustus*

et peccator) with the church growth motifs of progress and perfection. "For McGavran the whole gospel for all mankind means little, unless it is *preceded* [my emphasis] by stupendous church-planting. There can be little hope of sustained signs of the Kingdom in the world without the influence of a sufficient number of sons and daughters of the Kingdom."[8] Need we be reminded that the initial conversation between Luther and Pope Leo X's theologian, Prierias, was about whether the gospel creates the church or whether the church creates the gospel? One commentator on the church growth movement goes so far as to say that, on the basis of a narrow evangelical hermeneutic and theology, the church growth movement "deduces that everywhere and in all circumstances the numerical increase of the church is the one goal for which everything else may be sacrificed."[9]

(5.) The church growth movement is a bedfellow if not an advocate of culture religion. It is ironic that McGavran and others in the movement have criticized the WCC for adopting the world's agenda, while the movement itself advocates sociological methods for church growth and posits that the church is a business like any other. The place where this orientation is most obvious and also most corrosive of theology and ethics is the well-known homogeneous unit principle: "Men [sic!] like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers."[10] The LWF statement mentioned above emphasizes that a missionary congregation "is an open and inclusive community which does not draw a distinction between people of 'our kind' and others, and which accepts 'outsiders' with love and draws them into its fellowship."[11]

Justification by Faith Alone: The Lutheran Critique of the Church Growth Movement

Most Lutheran churches have, with more or less confessional integrity, striven to retain Luther's central proposal of continuing reform of the church on the basis of the article of justification.[12] Indeed, from the beginning of Luther's reform movement, this article of justification has been understood to be non-negotiable because it is the article on which the church stands or falls.[13] Everything else, including the papacy itself, is open for discussion.[14]

From the perspective of Luther and the Lutheran Confessions, the fundamental criticism of the church growth

movement is that it has displaced the article of justification by grace alone through faith alone with the mandate of the "Great Commission." Kent Hunter himself makes this clear when he writes: "While it is essential to solid growth for the church to articulate and demonstrate a theology that is true to the Scriptures and our Confessions, there is an added dimension that is gaining priority, especially among the churches of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. We are moving from the age of reaction (which could be called perhaps the era of the Reformation) to the age of action (which would be properly called the age of mission or the age of church growth)."[15] In other words, the church growth movement has displaced the gospel with the law. Thus, Kent Hunter defines church growth as "a theological conviction about what God wants his people to do in this world. It is not just an academic exercise or a confession of doctrine. It is a way of ministry, a way of life, and it all begins with a personal recommitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ." Hunter goes on to say, "There is hard work ahead for a congregation that seriously attempts to carry out the New Testament commission to make disciples of the whole world. It costs money. It takes effort."[16] At best, the church growth movement reduces the article of justification to merely one doctrine among others.

Luther was quite self-conscious that the article of justification is what distinguished his reform movement from the renewal movements associated with Wyclif and Hus. Their concern was for moral renewal whereas his concern was for that article on which the church stands or falls: justification by faith alone. In other words, the issue is doctrine:

> Doctrine and life are to be distinguished. Life is as bad among us as among the papists. Hence we do not fight and damn them because of their bad lives. Wyclif and Hus, who fought over the moral quality of life, failed to understand this. I do not consider myself to be pious. But when it comes to whether one teaches correctly about the Word of God, here I take my stand and fight. That is my calling. To contest doctrine has never happened until now. Others have fought over life; but to take on the doctrine—that is to grab the goose by the neck!. . .When the Word of God remains pure, even if the quality of life fails us, life is placed in a position to become what it ought

> to be. That is why everything hinges on the purity of the Word. I have succeeded only if I have taught correctly.[17]

The perennial Lutheran obsession with doctrine, especially the article of justification, has its roots in Luther himself who never tired of emphasizing that doctrine stands above life. Doctrine "directs us and shows us the way to heaven. . .We can be saved without love. . .but not without pure doctrine and faith." To Luther doctrine and life are not at all on the same level. If doctrine gives way to love, then the gospel may be denied. That is why the devil "attacks us so cleverly with this specious argument about not offending against love and the harmony among the churches."[18]

Since Luther was so adamant regarding this distinction between doctrine and life, faith and love, we who are his heirs should also take it seriously. Critical Lutheran theological reflection upon the church growth movement is in order before we accept C. Peter Wagner's judgment that "Luther's sound theology was not sound missiology."[19]

Luther's emphasis may be misunderstood, especially in our culture which so prizes religious toleration on the one hand and moral activism on the other. So it must be mentioned that Luther's penetrating emphasis on distinguishing doctrine and life was made precisely for the sake of life. Without such a distinction the twin consequences of placing life over doctrine are cheap grace and works-righteousness.[20] The function of doctrine is the proclaiming of the forgiveness of sins as unconditional promise. That is why the church stands or falls on the basis of its relation to the doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith alone.

This means that *the* mark of the church is the gospel. The church therefore is also an article of faith, not sight. The certain signs of the existence of the church in the world are not particular persons, not even large numbers of particular persons, but rather events such as the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. In contrast, "The Church Growth Movement has always stressed pragmatism. . .If some sort of ministry in the church is not reaching intended goals, consecrated pragmatism says there is something wrong which needs to be corrected."[21]

The Lutheran Confessions reiterate justification as the chief article of Christian doctrine which may not be surrendered.[22]

Contemporary Lutheran theologians follow suit with the forceful clarification that the article of justification is "not just one doctrine among others, but. . .'the article on which the church stands and falls' (*articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*)."[23] This is aptly expressed in the explication of Lutheranism by Eric Gritsch and Robert Jenson as an "ecumenical proposal of dogma":

> The gospel tolerates no conditions. It is itself unconditional promise. And when it is rightly spoken, it takes the conditions we put on our life as the very occasions of this promise. This is the first and fundamental Lutheran proposal of dogma. When it is practiced consistently, the Lutheran Reformation has succeeded, whatever else may happen. When it is not practiced, other departures from medieval Christianity represent only sloth and lack of seriousness.[24]

Luther's own account of his struggle with medieval scholastic theology and piety that led to his exegetical insight that the righteousness of God is the gift of God rather than the demand of God is sufficiently well known that we need not review it here.[25] Luther's point is that justification by faith alone throws the burden of proof for human righteousness before God (*coram Deo*) back upon God. We shall look at this "Copernican revolution" in theology and piety in terms of the human quest for security and human efforts to control life. The oppositional headings "Security versus Certainty" and "Covenant versus Testament" will facilitate this discussion and also relate it to its historical-theological context.

Insecurity versus Certainty

In all respects Luther's historical context was characterized by great insecurity.[26] Medieval theology and piety in its various forms of scholasticism, mysticism, and pastoral care was a coherent effort to create security in an insecure, indeed crisis-laden, time. The pervasive ecclesial and pastoral exhortations to people to "try harder" to attain salvation have led scholars to characterize pre-Reformation piety as a "piety of achievement" that was preoccupied with the "mathematics of salvation."[27] The parallels between this medieval peity of achievement and the American values of success and numerical increase promoted by the church growth movement need not be belabored.

The theological resource for the medieval behavior-oriented piety included both the Aristotelian teaching about self-improvement through practice (*habitus*) and the Augustinian theology of love which speaks of faith formed by love (*fides caritate formata*). Such a love-oriented ascent to God is not without grace, for God gratuitously infuses grace to initiate our pilgrimage toward the heavenly city. Nevertheless, on the basis of this imitating grace the burden of proof is upon us to actualize it, that is to do what is in us (*facere quod in se est*). In popular parlance, medieval theology exhorted people to do their very best. If one did his very best, then God would reward one with the grace to try even harder. The doctrine that God does not withhold grace from those who do their very best (*facientibus quod in se est Deus non denegat gratiam*) developed in a pastoral climate the intention of which was to provide assurance and security for the anxious sinner. It also developed in an Aristotelian philosophical climate of the continuity of being.

According to Aristotle reality precedes possibility. Thus possibilities are present only on the basis of existing realities. Here, of course, practice makes perfect and that goes for the preactice of infused grace as well. As commonsensical as this Aristotelian perspective may be with regard to the development of various human attributes, it created difficulty when applied to the relationship with God. The difficulty was precisely in the assumption of continuity between the old and the new, between the sinner and the righteous person before God.[28] Such continuity which marks all theologies of progress and development throws the person back upon his or her own resources. In spite of the promise that God gives so much for so little, how do I know the little I do is enough? How do I know if I have done my very best? How do I know if my church is growing fast enough and large enough? The absolute demand of God is relativized to correlate with human ability, but in this process the sinner is thrown back upon him or herself. No matter how much you do and how well you do it, the tormenting question remains: Is this my very best? Thus Luther recalled that as a monk his conscience could never achieve certainty but was always in doubt. Luther's discovery that righteousness before God is totally discontinuous with the past is expressed in his conviction that God actually puts the old

Adam to death and creates the new justified person out of nothing.[29]

Medieval insecurity and uncertainty about salvation was the result of making salvation contingent upon an inner change in the person.[30] It seems to me that Kent Hunter approximates this medieval orientation when he speaks about "a New Testament mood of positivism" in his booklet, "Twenty Reasons Why the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is the Church to Watch for Growth."[31] Hunter uses the example of runner Roger Bannister breaking the four-minute mile to illustrate how achievement depends upon one's attitude; once Bannister had achieved this record, many others followed suit. "The four-minute mile was broken because people knew it could be done. In many cases, the bold growth of God's kingdom is a matter of *our deciding* [my emphasis] that we can be used by God to do it. It is our understanding that God can do anything and that He wants His church to grow. *Our attitude is most important* [my emphasis]."

But justification contingent upon an inner change in the sinner, no matter how stimulated by the grace of God, is bad news because it throws the burden of proof for salvation back upon the person. The good news, Luther discovered, is that justification occurs outside us (*extra nos*). Justification by faith alone means that it is not the sinner who is changed but rather the sinner's situation before God.[32] "In short, the term 'to be justified' means that a man is considered righteous."[33]

In other words, only when the burden of proof for justification rests on God, is it possible to have any certainty of salvation. Our righteousness before God is not contingent upon our theological expertise, our ethical rigorism, our religious experience, our development of spiritual gifts, nor our church's numerical increase, but rather solely upon God's action in Jesus Christ. There are no human prerequisites to righteousness before God, execpt, of course, sin, and that is a condition we all fulfill.

When we examine our lives, we can only be plagued by insecurity and uncertainty; but if we look to God in Christ, we have certainty of salvation. This is what Luther meant when he emphasized doctrine, over life. What was at stake for Luther and is still at stake for his heirs is the certainty of salvation. When life (discipleship and fulfilling the Great Commission)

is placed over doctrine, the ultimate result is what Luther called the "monster of uncertainty":

> It is obvious that the enemies of Christ teach what is uncertain, because they command consciences to be in doubt. . .Let us thank God, therefore, that we have been delivered from this monster of uncertainty. . .The Gospel commands us to look, not at our own good deeds or perfection, but at God Himself as He promises, and at Christ Himself, the Mediator. . .And this is the reason why our theology is certain: it snatches us away from ourselves and places us outside ourselves, so that we do not depend on our own strength, conscience, experience, person, or works but depend on that which is outside ourselves, that is, on the promise and truth of God, which cannot deceive.[34]

Covenant versus Testament

Luther's emphasis on testament over covenant is closely linked to his emphasis on certainty over security. Here, too, his forensic understanding of justification is underlined. A recovery of Luther's testamentary theology would be a salutary contribution to the contemporary Protestant fascination with covenantal theology.

But if life and salvation are contingent—and Luther wholeheartedly agreed that they are—then to place the burden of proof for salvation on the person by the command to do his or her very best in covenant with God is unworkable. Introspection and activity as means to security lead only to the twin possibilities of pride and despair. What matters "is not whether the sinner has an impression of what is good and a longing for what is better, but whether he can realize in action the object of his longing. And for Luther the answer to this question is clearly no."[35] Hope cannot come from within us but only from outside, *extra nos*, in the certainty that God does not lie. Paradoxically, as we have said above, the precondition for certainty of salvation is real sin. "God offers his grace to real sinners. He will not be turned aside by the unpromising character of the objects of his generosity."[36] In the words of Gerhard Forde, "We can be candidates for such righteousness only if we are completely sinners."[37] This means that all bilateral bets are off and our salvation is contingent on the unilateral action of God.

This is clear in Luther's use of the concepts of covenant and testament. In his extensive research on Luther's use of the terms "testament," "covenant," and cognates to 1525, Kenneth Hagen comes to this conclusion:

> Luther's understanding and experience of covenants, historical and contemporary, seem to be consistently negative because they circumscribe freedom—theologically, the freedom of God. . .'If'-type soteriologies are the way of the law. The freedom of the Christian man depends on the sovereign freedom of God to give the promise of the New Testament.[38]

This conclusion is vividly expressed by Luther's discussion of inheritance rights and the certainty that a will provides the heir. Luther interpreted Hebrews 9:17 as the new testament—that is, the new will—in Christ already given us as "the forgiveness of sins and eternal life."[39] The following two quotations from Luther sum up, once again, his conviction that justification by faith alone is an event *extra nos* which changes our situation before God:

> A testament, as everyone knows, is a promise made by one about to die, in which he designates his bequest and appoints his heirs. A testament, therefore, involves, first, the death of the testator and, second, the promise of an inheritance and the naming of the heir. Thus Paul discusses at length the nature of a testament in Romans 4, Galatians 3 and 4, and Hebrews 9. We see the same thing clearly also in these words of Christ. Christ testifies concerning his death when he says, "This is my body, which is given; this is my blood, which is poured out" (Luke 22:19-20). He names and designates the heirs when he says, "for you" (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:24) and "for many" (Matthew 26:28, Mark 14:24), that is, for those who accept and believe the promise of the testator. For here is faith that makes men heirs, as we shall see.[40]

> Everything depends, therefore, as I have said, upon the words of this sacrament. These are the words of Christ. . .Let someone else pray, fast, go to confession, prepare himself for mass and the sacrament as he chooses. You do the same, but remember that this is all foolishness and self-deception if you do not set before you the words of the testament and arouse yourself to believe

> and desire them. You would have to spend a long time polishing your shoes, preening and primping to attain an inheritance, if you had no letter and seal with which you could prove your right to it. But if you have a letter and seal, and believe, desire, and seek it, it must be given to you, even though you were scaly, scabby, and most filthy.[41]

It is precisely this Lutheran awareness of the conditionality of all covenantal language and the unconditionality of testamentary language which is developed in *Lutheranism* by Gritsch and Jenson. The structure of convenants is always "if. . .then"; it is a language of conditions to be filled "in order to" receive whatever is promised on the basis of these conditions. In other words, covenantal language is always the language of law. Testamentary language is, however, always the language of gospel, of unconditional promise. Its structure is that of "because. . .therefore":

> The gospel, rightly spoken, involves no ifs, ands, buts, or maybes of any sort. It does not say, "If you do your best to live a good life, God will fulfill that life," or, "If you fight on the right side of the great issues of your time. . .," or, "If you repent. . .," or, "If you believe. . ." It does not even say, "If you *want* to do good/repent/believe. . ," or, "If you are sorry for not wanting to do good/repent/believe. . ." The gospel says, "Because the Crucified lives as Lord, your destiny is good." The Reformation's first and last assertion was that any talk of Jesus and God and human life that does not transcend all conditions is a perversion of the gospel and will be at best irrelevant in the lives of hearers and at worst destructive.[42]

Again, justification by faith alone is not one doctrine among others or a particular content of the church's proclamation among other contents. Rather, justification by faith alone is "a metalinguistic stipulation of what *kind of talking*—about whatever contents—can properly be proclamation and word of the church."[43]

The Corollaries of Justification by Faith Alone

The new wine of the gospel cannot be obtained in the old wineskins. So justification by faith alone radically altered every aspect of late medieval theology. If the gospel is

unconditional promise, it shatters all continuity and creates out of nothing. Once grasped by justification by faith alone Luther had to rewrite every aspect of theology. His theological anthropology radicalized the human predicament before God. The old Augustinian understanding of sin as a turning away from God toward lesser goods (*curvatus ad terra, curvatus ad inferior*) was displaced by knowing sin as that egocentricity which feeds upon itself (*incurvatus in se*). Consequently the old Augustinian theology of progress or growth in righteousness (*partim justus, partim peccator*) was displaced by an understanding of the pilgrim as wholly righteous and wholly sinner at the same time (*simul justus et peccator*). The medieval (and modern) notions of correlating human progress with the will of God were rejected as theologies of glory in opposition to the theology of the cross. And, perhaps most importantly, the theological method was developed for correctly making these and other distinctions as well as maintaining the unconditionality of justification by faith, namely, the dialectical distinction between law and gospel.

The corollaries of justification by faith alone are the fundamental motifs of Lutheran systematic theology. A brief presentation such as this does not allow elaboration of all these motifs.[14] But it may be helpful to say a few words about them in order once again to emphasize that the centrality of justification by faith alone is so critical to Lutheran theology that no particular theological motif or doctrine or church growth technique may be seen in isolation from it. The following comments will be organized with reference to justification and to the motif of law and gospel. The former is the Lutheran proposal of dogma and the latter is the Lutheran proposal of theological method to the church catholic.[15]

Law and Gospel: The Methodological Proposal

Luther never tired of asserting that the dialectical distinction between law and gospel is the essential nerve of theological thinking; it is that which makes a theologian a theologian: "Nearly the entire Scripture and the knowledge of all theology depends upon the correct understanding of law and gospel."[16] "The person who knows how to distinguish correctly the gospel from the law may thank God and know that he is a theologian."[17] In fact, justification by faith is itself only understood in its true significance in the light of this "decisive standard of theological judgment."[18]

It is important to realize that the distinction of law and gospel is neither any kind of dualism nor an "either-or" relation. Neither can replace nor exclude the other. Nor are they complementary—the gospel needing the addition of the law for fulfillment or vice versa. The law is not the gospel and the gospel is not a new law.

The centrality of this distinction for theology, the reason that it is constitutive for being a theologian, is because it is not a theoretical distinction but a practical one. The distinction between law and gospel is not a process of logic but rather involvement and commitment in proclaiming the Word of God. What is critical here is not so much content but use.[49] Correctly distinguishing law and gospel is proclamation. Preaching is not instruction concerning correct theological procedure but the proclamation, the enactment of salvation (*fides ex auditu*). Thus the distinction between law and gospel is not incidental but central to the event of preaching. "Their confusion is not a small misfortune, a regrettable failure but rather in the strict sense against salvation itself."[50] Confusion of law and gospel is not merely preaching a partial gospel or preaching the gospel without sufficient clarity; it is rather the loss of the gospel itself and the preaching of law:

> Therefore we always repeat, urge and inculcate this doctrine of faith or Christian righteousness, so that it may be observed by continuous use and may be precisely distinguished from the active righteousness of the law. (For *by this doctrine alone and through it alone is the church built, and in this it consists* [my emphasis]). Otherwise we shall not be able to observe true theology but shall immediately become lawyers, ceremonialists, legalists and papists. Christ will be so darkened that no one in the church will be correctly taught or comforted. Therefore if we want to be preachers and teachers of others, we must take great care in these issues and hold to this distinction between the righteousness of the law and that of Christ. This distinction is easy to speak of; but in experience and practice it is most difficult of all, even if you exercise and practice it diligently. For in the hour of death or in other conflicts or conscience these two kinds of righteousness come together more closely than you would wish or ask.[51]

This brings us back to our earlier comments on justification. The distinction between law and gospel is the distinction between two fundamental kinds of speech. The law is the communication of demands and conditions; it imposes an "if. . .then" structure on life. It is the language of covenants. It is the language of the Deuteronomic historian. In its inverted form it is the language which blames the victim. All law communication presents a future contingent upon the person's works. The gospel, however, is the language of promise; its structural pattern is "because. . .therfore."[52] It is the language of testament. It is a promise which is unconditional because it is made by Christ who has already satisfied all conditions including death. It is this understanding of the dialectic of law and gospel that is behind talk about justification as "a metalinguistic stipulation of what *kind* of talking — about whatever contents — can properly be proclamation and word of the church."[53]

Of course, there is content as well as use in the law and gospel. The gospel is univocal; its only use is the proclamation of unconditional promise. Its content is the cross of Jesus which communicates in the theology of the cross that God always confronts us under His opposite. In his famous "Heidelberg Disputation," Luther labeled all theologies which strive to ascend to God theologies of glory. Again, against Aristotelian theology, Luther asserted that like is not known by like but by unlike. Justification by faith alone is not our ascent to God but God's descent to us; it is a theology of the cross:

> That person does not deserve to be called a theologian who looks upon the invisible things of God as though they were clearly perceptible in those things which have actually happened (Romans 1:20).
> He deserves to be called a theologian, however, who comprehends the visible and manifest things of God seen through suffering and the cross. . .
> A theology of glory calls evil good and good evil. A theology of the cross calls the thing what it actually is. . .
> . . .wisdom is not itself evil, nor is the law to be evaded; but without the theology of the cross man misuses the best in the worst manner.[54]

The theology of the cross stands against the great vice of what is passed off as Christianity then and now—false security or otherworldliness or both. The theology of the cross opposes all efforts to ascend to God whether they be speculative, ethical, sociological, or experiential. God deals with sinners on the basis of their sin, not on the basis of their achievements. The theology of glory (cheap grace) fails to comprehend that God is hidden under the cross and that faith is not based on empirical verification or signs and wonders. "God's gifts and benefits are so hidden under the cross that the godless can neither see nor recognize them but rather consider them to be only trouble and disaster. . ."[55] The theology of the cross reveals God in His concealment in Jesus and the cross whereas the theology of glory conceals God in His revelation.

The realism of the theology of the cross is manifest in its rejection both of all flight from the world through speculation and religiosity and of triumphalist programs to establish the kingdom of God by works. The criticism of the theology of glory with its self-chosen crosses of religious works is that it makes human aspirations appear significant in direct proportion to their personal and social irrelevance. The theology of the cross, however, propels personal engagement where God wills to be found rather than where persons desire to find Him; this cruciform shape of life precludes all spectator stances in relation to the world.[56]

In the perspective of Luther and Lutheran theology, justification by faith alone does not make the Christian intrinsically righteous. The Christian "should not be so smug, as though he were pure of all sins. . .He is righteous and holy by an alien or foreign holiness." Sin is forgiven but it still remains.[57] The Christian, that is, the forgiven sinner, is therefore simultaneously righteous and sinner. Sin here is basically unbelief and being curved in upon the self; it is the desire to be God and the concommitant refusal to let God be God.[58] Sin, therefore, is so radical that only God's gracious imputation of Christ's righteousness can overcome it. The sinner's acceptance of God's judgment enables him or her to live as righteous in spite of sin.

By letting God be God the sinner is allowed to be what he or she was intended to be—human.[59] The sinner is not called

to deny his or her humanity and seek "likeness" (*similitudo*) with God. Rather, the forgiveness of sin occurs in the midst of human life. The Christian before God "is at the same time both a sinner and a righteous man; a sinner in fact, but a righteous man by the sure imputation and promise of God that he will continue to deliver him from sin until he has completely cured him. And thus he is entirely healthy in hope, but in fact he is still a sinner. . ."[60]

In the light of this brief excursus into the *simul justus et peccator* motif we may return to an equally brief summary of the content of the law as understood by Luther and Lutheran theology. It is of interest that the traditional way of speaking of the law in Lutheran theology is in terms of its uses. The civil use of the law is to build up society through the encouragement of good and the discouragement of evil. The content of this use of the law is known through reason, which comes to the conclusion that life is better when we act toward others as we wish them to act toward us. In this sense Luther remarks that the Ten Commandments are the Jewish version of Saxon Common Law, in short, a kind of human survival kit.[61] However, this civil use of the law instituted by God for public peace and preservation does not make one righteous before God.[62]

In its theological use the law reveals and multiples sin. Thus the law poses the question for which the gospel of justification by faith alone is the only proper answer. Without the question the answer appears to be a trivial *non sequitur*. Without the answer the question creates presumption or despair. The dialetic of law and gospel runs through Lutheran theology because it is the form by which the gospel is proclaimed. The distinction of law and gospel is not a theoretical abstraction but the dynamic proclamation of the gospel by which the presumptuous are terrified and the terrified comforted.

Article VII of the Augsburg Confession is elegant in its simple definition of the church as "the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel." Thus Luther can liken the church to a "mouth house" because faith comes by hearing the gospel. The marks of the church are not the like-mindedness, the homogeneity, the giftedness, or the size of the community, but rather the proclamation of the

gospel of the unconditional promise of God embodied in word and sacraments. "The human structures of the church, of course, exhibit the same life as the church's members—a life under the cross which is simultaneously sin and righteousness. Thus the church, like its members, also lives by the continuous encounter with the Word of God which is why it needs constant reform. This is another way of saying that the church is not specified by the character of its members but rather by the character of the assembly—the preaching of the gospel. This is the basis upon which the church stands or falls."[63] The church is not recognized by its growth but by the "possession of the holy word of God." In Luther's words, "Now, wherever you hear or see this word preached, believed, professed, and lived, do not doubt that the true *ecclesia sancta catholica*, 'a Christian holy people,' must be there, even though their number is small. . .And even if there were no other sign than this alone, it would still suffice to prove that a Christian holy people must exist there, for God's word cannot be without God's people and, conversely, God's people cannot be without God's word."[64]

ENDNOTES

1. *CTQ*, 52:2-3, pp. 129-147. Versions of the present article were presented to the "Free Lutheran Theological Conference of the Peninsula," San Mateo, California, 2-3 February, 1989, and the Northeast LCMS Pastors Conference, Cape Cod, Massachusetts, 31 October, 1989. I am grateful for these invitations that provided the opportunities to pursue reflections upon the church growth movement and Lutheran theology.
2. This thesis of 1985 is available in typescript from the bookstore of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne.
3. This paper is to appear in the *Lutheran Quarterly*.
4. *LWF Documentation*, No. 26 (November 1988).
5. Kent R. Hunter, *Your Church Has Personality* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), p. 64.
6. Donald McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, Revised Edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 8.

7. *Your Church Has Personality*, op. cit., p. 81: "God expects growth. It is normal for God's church to grow. If it is not growing, it is because we are doing something to hinder God's desires."

8. Eddie Gibbs, *I Believe in Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), p. 19.

9. Charles Tabor, "Contextualization," in Wilbert Schenck, ed., *Exploring Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), p. 119.

10. McGavran, op. cit., p. 223.

11. LWF, op. cit., p. 21.

12. "No, the point is not whether we are Lutherans, but whether we are Christians—whether we confess the Lord. What counts is the content of our inheritance, something which imposes on us an obligation." Klaus Schwarzwäller, "The Lutheran Tradition and Its Obligation," *Lutheran Quarterly*, N.S. 1:2 (1987), pp. 172-173. "If the *raison d'être* of Lutheranism is not oriented to the ongoing reform of the *una sancta catholica et apostolica ecclesia* in terms of the article of justification by faith alone apart from the law, then Lutheranism has defaulted on the promise of its reforming mission. Then in establishing itself as an independent church alongside other churches, each left to its self-indulging ways, Lutheranism has indeed exchanged the true marks of the church for those of a sect." Carl E. Braaten, *Principles of Lutheran Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), p. 35. *Mutatis mutandis* the same can be argued for the Reformed churches; cf. James Andrews and Joseph Burgess, eds., *An Invitation to Action: The Lutheran-Reformed Dialogue. Series III. 1981-1983* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), pp. 9-13: "Joint Statement on Justification."

13. See, for example, Scott H. Hendrix, *Luther and the Papacy: Stages in a Reformation Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), p. 149.

14. "I am willing to kiss your feet, pope, and to acknowledge you as the supreme pontiff, if you adore my Christ and grant that we have the forgiveness of sins and eternal life through His death and resurrection and not through the observance of your traditions." "Lectures on Galatians," 1525. *WA*, 40, p. 356; *LW*, 26, p. 224.

15. Kent Hunter, *Twenty Reasons Why the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Is the Church to Watch for Growth* (Corunna, Indiana: Church Growth Center, 1986), p. 44.

16 Kent R. Hunter, *Your Church Has Personality*, op. cit., p. 109.

17. *WA, TR* 1, p. 295; cited by Steven Ozment, "Humanism, Scholasticism, and the Intellectual Origins of the Reformation," in F. Forrester Church and Timothy George, eds., *Continuity and Discontinuity in Church History* (Leiden: Brill, 1979), p. 148; and by Eberhard Jüngel, "Gottes Umstrittene Gerechtigkeit: Eine reformatorische Besinnung zum Paulinischen Begriff 'dikaiosune theou,'" in his *Unterwegs zur Sache* (Munich: Kaiser, 1972), p. 62.

18. "Lectures on Galatians," 1535. *WA*, 40 II, pp. 51-52; *LW*, 27, pp. 41-42. It is of interest that in this passage Luther is responding to the Enthusiasts and Sacramentarians with the same argument that he made against the papists. Luther regarded the Enthusiasts and the papists as two sides of the same coin of works-righteousness. See, for example, "Lectures on Galatians" (1535), *WA*, 40, p. 603; *LW*, 26, p. 396; and the Smalcald Articles (1537) in Theodore Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 312.

19. C. Peter Wagner, *Leading Your Church to Growth* (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1984), p. 154.

20. See Gerhard Ebeling's excellent chapter, "Faith and Love," in his *Luther: An Introduction to His Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), especially pp. 172-173; and Jüngel, op. cit., pp. 62-66. For a recent Lutheran discussion of this distinction in relation to liberation theology, cf. *Word and World*, 7:1 (1987), which includes some of the papers of the "Justice and Justification" Consultation held in Mexico City in 1985 under the auspices of the ALC.

21. Wagner, *Leading Your Church to Growth*, op. cit., p. 201. For an analysis of this orientation to "the end justifies the means" and to pragmatism, cf. Steve Scheiderer, "The Church Growth Movement: A Lutheran Analysis," op. cit., pp. 40ff., 192ff.

22. See the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article 4 ("Justification"), and the Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article 3 ("Righteousness"), in Tappert, pp. 107, 540; Robert Jenson, "On Recognizing the Augsburg Confession," in Joseph A. Burgess, ed., *The Role of the Augsburg Confession: Catholic and Lutheran Views* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), pp. 151-166; John F. Johnson, "Justification According to the Apology of the Augsburg Confession and the Formula of Concord," in H. George Anderson, T. Austin Murphy, Joseph A. Burgess, eds., *Justification by Faith: Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue VII* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985), pp. 185-199.

23. Eric W. Gritsch, "The Origins of the Lutheran Teaching on Justification," in Anderson, Murphy, and Burgess, op. cit., p. 163 and note 3 on p. 351; cf. also Gerhard Müller and Vinzenz Pfnür, "Justification—Faith—Works," in George W. Forell and James F. McCue, eds., *Confessing One Faith: A Joint Commentary on the Augsburg Confession by Lutheran and Catholic Theologians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1982), p. 188. This position is so widely held that it is not necessary to provide extensive references at this point. It is the leitmotif of the Lutheran contributions in the volume mentioned above as well as in the recent major analysis of ecumenical dialogues by André Birmelé, *Le Salut en Jésus Christ dans les Dialogues Oecuméniques* (Paris: Cerf, 1986). On the famous phrase itself, cf. Alister McGrath, *Iustitia Dei. A History of the Doctrine of Justification*, II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 193, note 3. McGrath mentions not only its rootage in Luther (e.g., *WA*, 40 III, p. 352,3) but also its seventeenth-century Reformed use.

24. Eric W. Gritsch and Robert W. Jenson, *Lutheranism: The Theological Movement and Its Confessional Writings* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), p. 44; cf. also Gerhard Forde, "Radical Lutheranism," *Lutheran Quarterly*, NS, 1:1 (1987), pp. 5-18.

25. Luther recounts his struggle over the righteousness of God in his 1545 preface to the edition of his Latin writings: *LW*, 34, pp. 325-338, esp. 336-337. For clear discussions of Luther's medieval religious context see Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform: 1250-1550* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980), pp. 233-244, and David Steinmetz, *Luther in Context* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 1-11. A recent study on Luther's conversion experience is by Marilyn J. Harran, *Luther on Conversion: The Early Years* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1983).

26. For an overview of this assessment and references to relevant literature see my "Luther and the Crises of the Late Medieval Era, An Historical Interpretation," *Africa Theological Journal* 13:2 (1984), pp. 92-104.

27. Jacques Chiffoleau, *La Comptabilité de l'au-delà. Les Hommes, la Mort et la Religion dans la Région d'Avignon à la Fin du Moyen Age (vers 1320-vers 1480)* (Rome: École Francaise de Rome, 1980).

28. "The doctrine of justification by faith alone implies that human reality is not a substance given prior to all community. Rather, humanity happens *in* the event of communication, in the

speaking and hearing of the word. . .What I am is not defined in advance by some set of timelessly possessed attributes; it is being defined in the history of address and response in and by which you and I live together." Gritsch and Jenson, op. cit., p. 68. This incompatibility of justification by faith alone and any process of becoming righteous is discussed by Gerhard Forde in this essay, "Forensic Justification and Law in Lutheran Theology," in Anderson, Murphy, and Burgess, op. cit., pp. 278-303.

29. "Second Disputation against the Antinomians," 1538. *WA*, 39 I, p. 470, 7-8.

30. There is widespread scholarly agreement on this prevalent lack of certainty about salvation in the Middle Ages. The focal point of this uncertainty was in the sacrament of penance. Thomas Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 347, 362, points out the self-conscious promotion of insecurity by the medieval penitential system; and Ozment, op. cit., p. 216, makes a similar observation. Dietrich Kolde, author of the most widely used catechism of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, confesses his own uncertainty at the end of his catechism when he says: "There are three things I know to be true that frequently make my heart heavy. The first troubles my spirit, because I will have to die. The second troubles my heart more, because I do not know when. The third troubles me above all. I do not know where I will go." Denis Janz, ed., *Three Reformation Catechisms: Catholic, Anabaptist, Lutheran* (New York and Toronto: Mellon Press, 1982), p. 127.

31. Corunna, Indiana: Church Growth Center, 1986, pp. 44-45.

32. For a concise discussion of this point cf. Gerhard Ebeling, op. cit., pp. 154-158.

33. "Disputation Concerning Justification," 1536. *LW*, 34, p. 167; *WA*, 39 I, p. 98, 13-14.

34. Ibid., *LW*, 26, pp. 386-387; *WA*, 40 I, p. 589. In the essay "Justification—Faith—Works" by Müller and Pfnür cited earlier, it is argued that this question of certainty of salvation was one of the major issues in the late Middle Ages but that it is "a presupposition which no longer exists today"; op. cit., p. 119. I strongly disagree with this latter judgment. It is precisely the question of certainty of salvation that is behind so much of contemporary media evangelism and the charismatic movements. I have discussed this at length in my *The Third Reformation? Charismatic Movements and the Lutheran*

Tradition (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1983); *Charismatic Renewal and the Lutheran Tradition* (Geneva: LWF, 1985); and "Justice and Injustice in Luther's Judgment of 'Holiness Movements,'" in Peter Manns and Harding Meyer with C. Lindberg and Harry McSorley, eds., *Luther's Ecumenical Significance* (New York and Philadelphia: Paulist Press and Fortress Press, 1984), pp. 161-181. The Roman Catholic scholar, Carl Maxcy, makes a similar judgment when he writes: "In my opinion, the twisted spirituality which has plagued Roman Catholics in the twentieth century is also partially the result of the post-Freudian obsession with self-analysis. The tendency is quite 'ecumenical,' because it afflicts Christians of every denomination. Our culture has told us that introspection is the proper *modus operandi* in life. As a result contemporary spirituality has turned increasingly to navel-gazing and has made us unable to get outside ourselves. . .A healthy person is one who looks outside for truth and meaning. . ." "Catholic Spirituality, Catholic Ethics and Martin Luther," *Ecumenical Trends*, 10:4 (1981), p. 57.

35. David Steinmetz, *Luther and Staupitz: An Essay in the Intellectual Origins of the Protestant Reformation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1980), p. 114.

36. Ibid., p. 88.

37. "Forensic Justification," op. cit., p. 281.

38. Kenneth Hagen, "The Testament of a Worm: Luther on Testament to 1525," *Consensus* 8:1 (1982), pp. 16-17.

39. See Kenneth Hagen, *A Theology of Testament in the Young Luther: The Lectures on Hebrews* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), p. 82.

40. "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," 1520. *LW*, 36, p. 38; *WA*, 6, pp. 513, 22-514, 10.

41. "A Treatise on the New Testament," 1520; *LW*, 35, p. 88; *WA*, 6, p. 361, 3-7; cf. also "Lectures on Galatians," 1519; *LW*, 27, p. 268.

42. Gritsch and Jenson, op. cit., p. 42.

43. Ibid., pp. 42-43. This may, so to speak, provide a "theological umbrella" for the various biblical themes expressing the gospel and thereby speak to the tensions between biblical and systematic theologians with regard to the uniqueness of justification as an expression of the gospel; cf., for example, Birmelé, op. cit., pp. 30, 106-111, and John Reumann, *"Righteousness" in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press,

1982). I agree with William Rusch's comment that the "meta-linguistic" stipulation does not require the specific language of justification; cf. Rusch, "How the Eastern Fathers Understood What the Western Church Meant by Justification," in Anderson, Murphy, Burgess, op. cit., p. 133.

44. For Luther's own overview of his theological motifs see his "Preface to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans," 1546 (1522). *LW*, 35, pp. 365-380.

45. "If justification by faith is the proposal of dogma which the Lutheran Reformation made to the church catholic, then the proper distinction between law and gospel is its major methodological proposal. It is a distinction that is to be applied to all doctrines and their use in the church." Forde, "Forensic Justification," op. cit., p. 293.

46. *WA*, 7, p. 502, 34-35.

47. "Lectures on Galatians," 1535. *WA*, 40 I, p. 207, 17-18.

48. Ebeling, op. cit., p. 113.

49. See Forde, "Forensic Justification," op. cit., pp. 293ff. For an illuminating discussion of the difference between Luther's law-gospel dialectic and all letter-spirit typologies cf. 296ff. and also Forde's "When the Old Gods Fail: Martin Luther's Critique of Mysticism," in C. Lindberg, ed., *Piety, Politics, and Ethics: Reformation Studies in Honor of George Wolfgang Forell* (Kirksville, Missouri: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1984), pp. 15-26.

50. Ebeling, op. cit., p. 117 (my translation from the German, *Luther*, Tübingen: Mohr, 1965, p. 129).

51. "Lectures on Galatians," 1535. *LW*, 26, p. 10; *WA*, 40 I, p. 49. This entire introductory section to the lectures treats the distinction of law and gospel.

52. For Luther's discussion of these language patterns see, for example, his "The Bondage of the Will," 1525. *LW*, 33, pp. 132ff., 158.

53. Gritsch and Jenson, op. cit., pp. 42-43. Ebeling begins his Luther study with what he calls "Luther's Linguistic Innovation" (or "Language-Event" [*Sprachereignis*]). A recent effort to apply this insight to doctrine is George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine, Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984).

54. Theses 19-21, 24. *LW*, 31, p. 53; *WA*, 1, p. 362, 28-29.

55. "Psalm 118," 1529-1530. *WA*, 31 I, p. 51, 21-24.

56. Walther von Loewenich, *Luther's Theology of the Cross* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1976), pp. 112-113. Jerome King del Pino, *Luther's Theology of the Cross as Reflected in Selected Historical Contexts of Social Change from 1512-1525* (Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1980), pp. 130-131.

57. "Commentary of Psalm 51," 1538. *LW*, 12, p. 328; *WA*, 40 II, p. 352, 33-34.

58. "Lectures on Romans," 1516. *LW*, 25, p. 291; *WA*, 56, p. 304, 25ff. The human inability to let God be God is from thesis 17 of the "Disputation against Scholastic Theology" of 1517: "Man is by nature unable to want God to be God. Indeed, he himself wants to be God, and does not want God to be God." *LW*, 31, p. 10; *WA*, 1, p. 225.

59. "Commentary of Psalm 51," *LW*, 12, pp. 342-343; *WA*, 40 II, p. 373, 25-35.

60. "Lectures on Romans," *LW*, 25, p. 260; *WA*, 56, p. 272, 16-20; cf. also *WA*, 57, p. 165, 12-13; 2, p. 497, 13.

61. "Lectures on Galatians," 1535. *LW*, 26, pp. 274-275; *WA*, 40 I, pp. 429-430.

62. Ibid., *LW*, 26, p. 309; *WA*, 40 I, pp. 479-481.

63. Lindberg, *The Third Reformation?* op. cit., p. 51.

64. "On the Councils and the Church," 1539. *LW*, 41, p. 150.

Luther in Newman's "Lectures on Justification"

Scott Murray

John Henry Newman (1801-1890), the leading figure of English theological life in the nineteenth century, underwent a profound spiritual transformation in his lifetime. He began his life in the Evangelical camp of the Church of England. Then finding himself in sympathy with the High Church party, he became one of the leading lights of the Oxford Movement of the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Newman concluded his life in the Church of Rome, eventually elevated to the rank of cardinal in that communion.

The work with which we will occupy ourselves in this essay, Newman's *Lectures on Justification*,[1] was occasioned by the publication of a book entitled *Remains* by Alexander Knox,[2] edited by Newman. The *Remains* included an essay "On Justification" in which Knox argued that the Church of England no longer held justification as an *usus forensis* but rather as a moral renovation. This article apparently stirred to a blaze a simmering controversy between the High Churchmen and the Evangelicals in the Church of England.

According to Alister McGrath, in *Justitia Dei* there was a tendency toward accepting "the positive role of inherent righteousness in justification, with faith being understood as a human work" in post-Restoration English theology.[3] This tendency was exposed by Knox's work. In response to Knox, G.S. Faber produced his *Primitive Doctrine of Justification Investigated*, in which he attempted to disprove Knox's contention that the early church fathers had held a doctrine of justification which tended toward moral renovation rather than an imputed righteousness.[4] Newman's lectures were a defense and expansion of Knox's work.

Via Media

Newman's spiritual odyssey which ended in Rome was occasioned by the conclusions at which Newman arrived while preparing his history of Christian dogma, *An Essay on the Development of Doctrine.* However, Newman's road back to Rome was one which he traveled progressively and gradually. It was in part made necessary by the conclusions he reached while preparing his *Lectures on Justification* delivered at Oxford in the year 1838, notwithstanding that he intended to

set forth a *via media* between the Roman doctrine of justification by renewal and the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith.

Newman claimed to be charting a *via media* by which he sought to merge the doctrine of justification by faith with the doctrine of justification by works. "These separate doctrines, justification by faith and justification by obedience, thus simply stated, are not at all inconsistent with one another."[5] In fact, for Newman, they were merely two different ways of stating the same truth: "Then what seemed at first but two modes of stating the same truth will be found, the one to be the symbol of what goes by the name of Romanism, the other of what is commonly called Protestantism."[6] In reality Newman charted no such course between an imaginary Scylla of Romanism and Charybdis of Protestantism. Having misunderstood Protestantism generally and Luther particularly, he grounded the ship of his theology on the shoals of the Roman Church and, upon finding himself a son of Rome in doctrine, he moved into her communion in confession and in reality in 1845.

In the advertisement to the 1874 third edition of the *Lectures* Newman, now firmly in the Church of Rome, said, "Unless the Author held in substance in 1874 what he published in 1838, he would not at this time be reprinting what he wrote as an Anglican. . ."[7] In substance, then, Newman's *via media* was really the position of Rome. Alister McGrath in his assessment of Newman's doctrine of justification wrote: ". . . Newman tends to direct his invective chiefly against the Protestant, rather than the Roman Catholic. . ." doctrine of justification.[8] Newman himself in his *Apologia pro Vita Sua* observed that "the essay on Justification [was] aimed at the Lutheran dictum that justification by faith only was the cardinal doctrine of Christianity."[9] Newman was taking aim primarily at the Lutheran position; thus he was not in a position of genuine mediation.

That Newman was not taking a legitimately mediating position was also the conclusion drawn by contemporary Evangelical opinion. One Evangelical critic was James Bennett, who wrote *Justification as Revealed in Scripture, in Opposition to the Council of Trent and Mr. Newman's Lectures.* Bennett saw Newman squarely in the doctrine of

Trent although with verbal variations: "If he differs (from Trent), it is merely in the mode of statement. . ."[10] Bennett indicated that there was in the English Evangelical party a concern that Newman's perceived drift to Rome was symptomatic of a greater movement toward Rome in the Church of England. Bennett wrote: "The shadowy difference between Mr. Newman and the Council of Trent serve at once to conceal and to promote what some have at heart, reunion with Rome."[11] Newman's doctrine was not received by contemporary Evangelicals as a true *via media.* Even if Newman was not positively Tridentine, his *via media* was nothing less than slanted toward the Roman position.

That these lectures should contribute to Newman's inclination toward the Church of Rome was indeed appropriate, as he had laid hold of that doctrine which was at the very heart of the issue between Rome and Protestantism, even at the very heart of Western Christianity itself. Twentieth-century theology has happily proclaimed that this is no longer an issue worthy of deep theological concern, for the biblical record has been found devoid of an overarching concern with the article of justification. But the doctrinal article of justification is far more significant than a mere word study on the *dikaios* word group or even a purely exegetical treatment of Romans might reveal. Such a process ignores the importance of the biblical concept of justification as revealed in a plethora of rich biblical testimony, including many salvation themes. In the preface to Thomas Sheridan's book, *Newman on Justification*, Louis Bouyer astutely pointed out the importance of this study on justification for an understanding of Newman:

> To be sure, a Protestant exegete like Albert Schweitzer could claim that justification was not the central point of St. Paul's theology — much less did it assume the all-embracing proportions that Protestant theology has come to attribute to it. But, if we grasp the fact that the word "justification" is merely an abstract formula to designate the answer to the rich young man in the Gospel: "What must I do to be saved?", then it must be admitted that the person for whom this question no longer has meaning is by that very fact incapable of any further understanding of the Gospel. That is why the question of justification occupies such an important place in the work

> of Newman. In fact, his *Lectures on Justification* are scarcely less important a milestone in his career than the *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine.*[12]

Such was the case for Luther; it was the turning point in his life and catalyst to his reforming bent when he discovered the gospel. Doctrinally and practically this article of justification was at the hub of Luther's system of thought and his practice of life. For Luther the article of justification was the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae.*

McGrath correctly divined the issue, contending that Newman had not properly understood either Rome or Luther. Thus the course charted by Newman, navigating as he was between these two beacons, was charted between two chimeras. Newman had navigated into a sea of theological discourse led by his own mistaken suppositions about the issues at hand. McGrath pointed out that Newman's attempt at mediation failed because he did not correctly understand the competing theologies. Newman had studied the major representatives of the opposing religious camps. He subjected to historical analysis the theology of Luther and the Lutherans Melanchthon and Gerhard, the Roman Catholic theologians Bellarmine and Vasquez, and also the Caroline Divines Barlow, Taylor, and Barrow.[13] In his attempt to chart a mediating course among these tendencies it was imperative for Newman to understand correctly the position of each. Newman failed to do that, failing most miserably in his attempt to understand and analyze correctly the doctrine of Luther and the Lutherans. McGrath concluded: "In other words, Newman's construction of a *via media* appears to rest on a fallacious interpretation of both the extremes to which he was opposed . . ."[14] Newman himself seemed to have had at least an inkling of self-doubt about the validity of his treatise, saying that, towards the end, the *Lectures* were a "tentative inquiry."[15] That he did not reveal a genuine *via media* in this inquiry there is no doubt, but why did Newman fail to appreciate Luther properly?

Sources

Newman was almost certainly not using primary sources in his study of Luther. The only works of Luther from which Newman quoted in the printed edition of his *Lectures* were Luther's 1535 commentary on Galatians and his *Tractatus de*

Libertate Christiana of 1520. While these were indeed representative of Luther's doctrine, they did not treat the subject of justification in an exhaustively systematic way.

Newman probably did not have access to a high-quality edition of Luther's works, simply because of their dearth in the early nineteenth century. The Erlangen edition of Luther's works, the first of the nineteenth-century editions, was not completed until 1857. This edition was inspired by a revival in Luther studies around the three-hundredth anniversary of the Lutheran reformation in 1817. The three previous editions, the Altenberg (1661-1702), the Leipzig (1729—1740), and the Halle (1740-1753), had all the Latin works translated into German. Newman quoted exclusively from Latin sources. Of course, there were some monograph editions of Luther's most important works printed apart from the collected editions. It is likely that the commentary on Galatians from 1535 and the *Tractatus de Libertate Christiana* would be among such publications. However, it seems most likely that Newman did not have Luther's writings at his fingertips but used secondary sources, most likely of a polemical nature.

McGrath opined: "It seems to us that Newman did not read Luther at first hand."[16] The evidence for this statement is based on Newman's use of Luther's statement about "believing deeds" in his commentary on Galatians 3:10:

> "It is usual with us", he says, "to view faith, sometimes apart from its work, sometimes with it. For as an artist speaks variously of his materials, and a gardener of a tree, as in bearing or not, so also the Holy Ghost speaks variously in Scripture concerning faith; at one time of what may be called abstract faith, faith as such: at another of concrete faith, faith in composition, or embodied. Faith as such, or abstract, is meant when Scripture speaks of justification, as such, or of the justified (*vid.* Rom. and Gal.). But when it speaks of rewards and works, then it speaks of faith in composition, concrete or embodied. For instance, 'Faith which worketh by love'; 'This do and thou shalt live'; 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments'; 'whoso doeth these things, shall live by them'; 'Cease to do evil, learn to do well.' In these and similar texts, which occur without number, in which mention is made of doing, believing

> doings are always meant; as, when it says, 'This do, and thou shalt live', it means, 'First, see that thou art believing, that thy reason is right and thy will good, that thou hast faith in Christ; that being secured, work'." Then he proceeds: "How is it wonderful that to that embodied faith, that is, faith working, as was Abel's, in other words, to believing works, are annexed merits and rewards? Why should not Scripture speak thus variously of faith, considering it speaks so of Christ, God and man; sometimes of His entire person, sometimes of one or other of His two natures, the divine or human? When it speaks of one or the other of these, it speaks of Christ in the abstract; when of the divine made one with the human in the one person, of Christ as if in composition and incarnate. There is a well-known rule in the schools concerning the *'communicatio idiomatum'*, when the attributes of His divinity are ascribed to His humanity, as is frequent in Scripture; for instance, in Luke ii, the Angel calls the infant born of the Virgin Mary, 'the Savior' of men, and 'the Lord' both of angels and men, and in the preceding chapter 'the Son of God'. Hence I may say with literal truth, the infant who is lying in a manger and in the Virgin's bosom created heaven and earth and is the Lord of Angels. . . As it is truly said, Jesus the Son of Mary created all things, so is justification ascribed to faith incarnate or believing deeds."[17]

At first blush, this passage from Luther buttressed Newman's position on the relationship between justification and renewal. McGrath pointed out:

> . . .the final sentence appears to state unequivocally the principle of justification by 'believing deeds' — an excellent description of the teaching of both Newman and the later Caroline Divines.[18]

This analogical argument clearly teaches that, in the same way in which divine deeds are attributed to the whole person of Christ and human deeds are attributed to the whole person of Christ, so justification may be attributed to works. "The essential point which Newman wishes us to grasp is that even Luther is obligated to concede a positive role for works in justification."[19]

Upon searching out the passage which Newman quoted, however, it is found that Newman or his source excised a most significant portion of Luther's lecture notes. The final sentence of this section is preceded by four periods which would indicate that some irrelevant or insignificant material has been left out for the sake of brevity. Newman omitted an entire section "which so qualifies the final sentence as to exclude Newman's interpretation of it."[20] According to the American Edition of *Luther's Works* this missing section reads:

> I am indeed speaking about a man here. But "man" in this proposition is obviously a new word and, as the sophists themselves say, stands for divinity; that is, this God who became man created all things. Here creation is attributed solely to the divinity, since the humanity did not create. Nevertheless, it is said correctly that "the man created," because the divinity, which alone creates, is incarnate with the humanity, and therefore the humanity participates in the attributes of both predicates. Thus it is said: "The man Jesus led Israel out of Egypt, struck down Pharaoh, and did all the things that belong to God." Here everything is being attributed to the man on account of the divinity.
>
> Therefore when Scripture says (Dan. 4:27), "Redeem your sins by showing mercy," or (Luke 10:28) "Do this, and you will live," it is necessary to see first of all what this "doing" is. For in these passages, as I have said, Scripture is speaking about faith in the concrete rather than in the abstract, in a composite sense rather than in a bare or simple sense. Therefore the meaning of the passage, "Do this and you will live," is "You will live on account of this faithful 'doing' [*propter hoc facere fidele*]; this 'doing' will give you life solely on account of faith." Thus justification belongs to faith alone, just as creation belongs to the divinity; nevertheless, just as it is true to say about Christ the man that He created all things, so justification is attributed to incarnate faith or to faithful "doing." Therefore one must not think, as the sophists and hypocrites usually do, that works justify absolutely and simply as such, and that merits and rewards are promised to moral works rather than solely to works done in faith [*quodque moralibus operibus promittantur merita et praemia, sed fidelibus*].[21]

This statement of Luther, when taken in context, provided a conclusion opposite to that presumed by Newman. McGrath pointed out that, for Luther,

> scriptural passages which indicate the necessary implication of works in salvation are to be understood primarily and fundamentally as an assertion of the necessity of *faith.* The statement, 'Jesus the Son of Mary created all things,' is a statement that God alone is creator, just as the statement, 'Justification is ascribed to. . .believing deeds,' remains a statement that faith alone justifies.[22]

Given this surgically changed quotation, we are faced with two possible explanations. First, Newman deliberately left out the essential section. This idea does not fit the evidence. It was Newman's habit to be studiously correct in the quotation of sources. Yet elsewhere Newman incorrectly quotes Luther. McGrath pointed out:

> [Newman] cites Luther's 'paradox of justification' as follows: *sola fides, non fides formata charitate, justificat: fides justificat sine et ante charitatem.*[23] The closest approximation to this we have been able to find is *sola fide, non fide formata charitate, justificat . . . haec fides sine et ante charitatem justificat.*[24]

Thus we conclude that Newman was working from flawed secondary sources. One can only wish that Newman had made the proper attributions.

Newman's familiarity with Melanchthon must also have been second-hand. In a footnote Newman recorded this quotation:

> When it is said that we are justified by faith, nothing else is meant than that we receive forgiveness of sins and we are accounted righteous. . .Therefore the proposition 'by faith we are just' is understood correlatively, that is, we are justified or accepted by grace on account of the Son of God.[25]

Three paragraphs down the page from this quotation in his *Loci Communes* Melanchthon actually called faith a virtue. "Estque fides virtus apprehendens et applicans promissiones. . ."[26] Newman could not have read this entire section of

the *Loci Communes* and passed by this statement of Melanchthon's without having quoted it and used it to support his supposition that faith is a virtue.

Newman quoted John Gerhard's *Loci Theologici* more frequently than he quoted Luther or Melanchthon and on at least one occasion quoted Luther from the *Loci*, this time with the correct attribution. Gerhard (1582-1637) was the primary Lutheran controversialist of the seventeenth century, responding primarily to the Jesuit cardinal, Robert Bellarmine. Because of his importance and because Gerhard attempted to answer Bellarmine in his *Loci*, quotations of Gerhard have been manifold in the works of Roman controversialists. Newman may have had access to these quotations through such sources. In any case, Newman betrayed a genuine lack of understanding of the position of Luther and later Lutherans, no doubt to a great degree because he had not read the primary resources.

Faith as an Inhering Quality

Newman consistently understood the New Testament terms dealing with justification, *dikaios* and its cognates, as referring to an inhering righteousness rather than as juridical terms having to do with declaratory righteousness.[27] Newman simply assumed that justification was a moral quality and therefore had to be inhering in the individual to be attributed to the individual. He treated justification and sanctification as part, property, or quality of one gift inhering in the individual, the other part or property of which was love, justification and love being symbols of each other. "Faith, which is the symbol of the one, contains in it Love or Charity, which is the symbol of the other."[28] For Newman justification could not be an attitude in God. Newman conceived of faith as a human work, the quality of which merited justification. His criticism of Luther was based on the supposition that faith was a human work like any other. McGrath writes:

> His criticism of Luther for his insistence upon the fiduciary aspects of faith, while neglecting hope, love and obedience, reflects his basic conviction that Luther singled out the *human activity of trust in God* as the defining characteristic of justifying faith.[29]

Newman cannot have been aware of the Lutheran confessional witness to the Lutheran doctrine of passivity in

justifying faith. The Formula of Concord (1577) quoted Luther's statement that faith is *pure passive* in conversion, thereby elevating it to confessional standing:

> So also when Luther says that with respect to his conversion man is *pure passive* (purely passive), that is, does nothing whatever towards it, but only suffers what God works in him, his meaning is not that conversion takes place without the preaching and hearing of God's Word; nor is this his meaning, that in conversion no new emotion whatever is awakened in us by the Holy Ghost and no spiritual operation is begun; but he means that man by himself, or from his natural powers, cannot do anything or help towards his conversion, and that conversion is not only in part, but altogether an operation, gift, and present of the Holy Ghost alone, who accomplishes and effects it by His power and might, through the Word, in the intellect, will, and heart of man, *tamquam in subjecto patiente*, that is, while man does or works nothing, but only suffers; not as a figure cut into stone or a seal impressed into wax, which knows nothing of it, neither perceives and wills this, but in the way which has been recounted and explained a short while ago.[30]

Luther took the passivity of faith correlatively to rule out all synergism in the article of justification. Gerhard had likewise defended this teaching of Luther:

> Luther did not teach that conversion is brought about without the reflection of the mind and agreement of the will, but he denied that the will concurs with these activities of its own natural powers; that is to say, he denied that in the mind and will there remained any working power which could reach out when grace was offered and for that reason co-operate with the Holy Spirit. And the analogy of the clay in the hand of the potter—which he uses—must not be pressed beyond its point of application.[31]

Despite his ignorance of the position of the Formula of Concord, Newman was aware of Luther's teaching through a letter which Luther wrote to John Brenz, quoted by Gerhard in his *Loci*:

> So as to take better hold of this teaching, I am accustomed to think of myself as if there would not be in my heart a quality, which is called faith or charity. Instead in their place I put Christ Himself. I say, 'This is my justification; that Christ Himself is, as they say, both formally and qualitatively, my justification so that I am free from the ruination of the law and works.'[32]

Newman incorrectly assumed a division between Melanchthon and Luther on the nature of the instrumentality of faith. Melanchthon described justification by faith in this way:

> When it is said that we are justified by faith nothing else is meant than that we receive forgiveness of sins and we are accounted righteous. . .Therefore the propositon 'by faith we are just' is understood correlatively, that is, we are justified or accepted by grace on account of the Son of God.[33]

But for Luther and Melanchthon this correlative relationship between faith and God's mercy was merely a way of speaking of faith and its object. Again if faith is not understood as an inhering virtue, but as *pure passive* apprehending the merit of Christ, there is no division between Luther and Melanchthon. But Newman was absolutely committed to the concept of faith being an inhering virtue, the power of which was to justify. This was a fatal misunderstanding of the doctrine of Luther and the Lutheran church. Eduard Preuss, reflecting his prodigious knowledge of Lutheran doctrine, denied that faith was a virtue in the sense of a power which merits God's mercy. "Ancient and modern errorists have concluded. . .that God regards us righteous on account of the excellent qualities of our faith."[34] It seemed that what little Newman knew of Luther's doctrine he had discerned from the Caroline Divines. Newman understood Luther as having taught that faith was an action, one work among many.

Newman assumed that, since righteousness was given as a gift, it was given as "a definite power or virtue committed to us."[35] But when Scripture speaks of justifying faith as a gift it indicates the free nature of the thing imparted, not its inhering character. A gift is freely given. A gift need not necessarily be an inhering quality. A sweater may be given as a Christmas gift and yet it is worn externally. A gift is

something given freely; it is not part of the definition of a gift that it be a definite power or virtue. McGrath speculated that, if Newman had actually studied Luther rather than a caricature, he might have been more congenial to Luther's position. This idea seems doubtful in view of Newman's insistent attacks on Luther's doctrine that Christ is the content and sole object of faith.

Faith as Trust

Newman's understanding of faith as an inhering, meritorious work led him to reject faith as trust. Newman set forth his definition of the Lutheran doctrine of faith in this way:

> Faith, an act or motion of the mind produced, indeed, by Divine Grace, but still utterly worthless, applies to the soul the merits of Him on whom it looks, gaining at the same time His sanctifying aid, and developing in good works; which works are the only evidence we can have of its being true. It justifies then, not as being lively or fruitful, though this is an inseparable property of it, but as *apprehending* Christ, which is its essence.[36]

Newman was psychologizing in the matter of justifying faith. Newman thought that the Lutherans emphasized the apprehending nature of faith as its essence, when in reality the quality of faith was always its object for the Lutherans. For Newman the *principium cognoscendi* is the *cognitum* [the thing known]. This *principium* put him at odds with the mild realism of orthodox Lutheranism and Luther, especially in the area of doctrinal verities. For Luther, the only adequate description of psychological sensations was to be found in the scriptural record of faith, no more, no less. If this was at odds with what was felt, so be it. Newman treated the nature of justifying faith psychologically. Such speculation about the inner feelings connected with justification was for Luther hardly an adequate touchstone for this Christian teaching. In fact, such a treatment was alien to the whole Lutheran dogmatic tradition. Luther's own pastoral heart motivated him to point the repentant soul away from seeking the counterfeit assurance of inner experience. Instead Luther pointed the individual outside himself to the reality of Christ's work:

> The absolved should make every effort to keep himself from doubting that his sins are remitted by God, and he should be quiet at heart. . .But he who seeks peace in a different way—for instance, through an inner experience—certainly seems to tempt God and seek peace in things (*in re*), not in faith.[37]

Here Luther was conceiving of faith in view of its justifying object, external to man, Christ. In the last analysis there could be nothing in man, whether faith, hope, or love, that could make man acceptable to the Almighty God. Only God's own Son could accomplish such a goal.

Finding himself squarely in Rome's camp, Newman accepted the Roman position that faith's form was love (*fides formata charitate*):

> He [Christ] is *spiritually* present in it [faith]; and if He is present, His merits are present in it, and are in this way conveyed to the soul which exercises it. In this sense Luther seems to speak as if Christ were the *forma fidei*, or that which makes faith what it is, justifying. . .On the other hand, his opponents, whether of the Roman or Anglican school, are accustomed to urge that the thought of Christ may be possessed by those who have not Christ, and therefore that it is in no sense the form or characteristic principle of justifying faith; rather that love, as I noticed above, is the true form. . .[38]

Newman was not really charting a course between Lutheransim and Romanism.He had his feet firmly implanted in the church of Rome. By making love the form of faith he attributes to the work of love the power of justification. He makes man's apprehension of the righteousness of Christ active and thus meritorius. This is clearly the Pelagian or semi-Pelagian position of the Roman church, not some mediating position.

Faith and Works

Newman not only presumed that Luther's teaching of justification by faith resulted in the necessary counterpart of the denial of the binding necessity of doing good works according to the moral law; he actually charged that Luther taught so. "He taught that the Moral Law is not binding on the conscience of the Christian. . ."[39] In so doing Newman absolutely misunderstood Luther, as any student of Luther's

catechism knows. Luther directly and clearly contended for the "activeness of faith." He never forbad good works and specifically enjoined the necessity of good works for Christians. Having understood him in that way, the Formula of Concord quoted Luther:

> Thus faith is a divine work in us, that changes us, and regenerates us of God, and puts to death the old Adam, makes us entirely different men in heart, spirit, mind, and all powers, and brings with it [confers] the Holy Ghost. Oh, it is a living, busy, active, powerful thing that we have in faith, so that it is impossible for it not to do good without ceasing. Nor does it ask whether good works are to be done; but before the question is asked, it has wrought them, and is always engaged in doing them. But he who does not do such works is void of faith, and gropes and looks about after faith and good works, and knows neither what faith nor what good works are, yet babbles and prates with many words concerning faith and good works. [Justifying] faith is a living bold [firm] trust in God's grace, so certain that a man would die a thousand times for it [rather than suffer this trust to be wrested from him]. And this trust and knowledge of divine grace renders joyful, fearless, and cheerful towards God and all creatures, which [joy and cheerfulness] the Holy Ghost works through faith; and on account of this, man becomes ready and cheerful, without coercion, to do good to every one, to serve every one, and to suffer everything for love and praise to God, who has conferred this grace on him, so that it is impossible to separate works from faith, yea, just as impossible as it is for heat and light to be separated from fire.[40]

As was said before, Newman's knowledge of Luther was evidently restricted to the Galatians commentary and the *Liberty of the Christian Man.* Newman's familiarity with Gerhard's *Loci* appears to have been confined to *Locus Decimus Sextus: De Justificatione per Fidem.* Obedience to the law was absolutely necessary for Gerhard and all theologians who reflected the theology of the Formula of Concord:

> We believe, teach, and confess also that all men, but those especially who are born again and renewed by the Holy Ghost, are bound to do good works. In this sense the words

> *necessary, shall,* and *must* are employed correctly and in a Christian manner also with respect to the regenerate, and in no way are contrary to the form of sound words and speech.[41]

Newman did not grasp the Lutheran distinction between good works properly speaking and mere civil righteousness; he actually contended that everyone who does good works may be understood as having faith. ". . .since no good works can be done but through the grace of God, those works are but evidence that grace is with the doer; so that to view them as sharing in our justification tends to elate us, neither more nor less than the knowledge that we are under divine influences is elating."[42] Luther had always emphasized the importance of good works. But he always strove to distinguish spiritual works from the works of hypocrites. Works alone could never identify a Christian. Newman's criticism of Luther's so-called antinomianism revealed Newman's misunderstanding of Luther and clearly showed Newman a disciple of the most radical Roman Catholic critics of Luther's teaching on the law and its spiritual character. In fact, the defense of the doctrine of good works was uppermost in the minds of the Lutheran confessors at the Diet of Augsburg (1530). In Article 20 of the Augsburg Confession the Lutherans contended that the evangelical preachers now taught properly about good works, reciting the works specifically enjoined upon evangelical Christians by the Lutheran preachers.[43] Neither Luther nor the Lutherans ever forbad good works; they diligently enjoined them on all, especially on Christians.

Imputation

Newman could not accept the doctrine of justification by imputation. This teaching seemed to him to attribute a lie to God. How could a man be considered righteous by a mere outward declaration? This declaration would be merely a pious fiction. Thus Newman contended:

> Man did not become guilty except by becoming sinful; he does not become innocent except by becoming holy. God cannot, from His very nature, look with pleasure and favour upon an unholy creature, or justify or count righteous one who is not righteous. [44]

Newman failed to take into account the biblical teaching that sin itself is, in fact, imputed in the case of original sin, a teaching asserted by both Luther and the Roman Catholics. Luther taught that, if God had in fact said (in justification) that man was to be counted righteous, it had to be so by virtue of the power of God's word. For, by virtue of His very nature, what God says is so must be so. However, Newman consistently emasculated the imputative nature of justification not only by making it an inner virtue, but also by attributing to works its concurrent cause:

> . . .[that] there has been a co-operation on our part, has proved a reason, over and above those already mentioned, why justification has been said to consist in our services, not in God's imputation; those services forming a concurrent cause of that imputation being ratified.[45]

Newman contended that the primary sense of the term "justification" included making righteous, albeit after conversion.[46] Newman said that justification could only be completely forensic in the case of past sins, but in the case of a human's present spiritual condition justification must be a making righteous. For a man must cooperate with God in his conversion and thus must have the inhering qualities of faith, which are for Newman part of justification.[47] Newman generated some sophistical juggling to support his position:

> In exact propriety of language, justification is *counting* righteous, not *making*. I would explain myself thus: to justify *means* counting righteous, but includes *under* its meaning making righteous; in other words, the sense of the *term* is counting and the sense of the *thing* denoted by it is making righteous.[48]

This definition is a contradiction. If justification is not making righteous "in exact propriety of language," how can it include making righteous "under its meaning"? Bennett, who at points had understood Luther no better than Newman, criticized Newman's imprecise definition of justification. To declare that "to justify" means "to count righteous," but also includes under its meaning "to make righteous," both contradicted the Scriptures and ultimately was self-contradictory. Bennett complained: "How any word can *include* anything *under* itself, we cannot understand, much less how it can include under itself what was admitted to be *not* its meaning. . ."[49]

Newman's understanding of justification as imputation only for the moment of conversion was at odds with the Lutheran position. The Lutheran position was ably set forth by Eduard Preuss in his *Justification of the Sinner before God.* Preuss conceived of justification as "perpetual forgiveness." He adduced Luther:

> "Therefore it is the same righteousness which is given unto men in baptism and at all times in true repentance" [St. Louis, X, 1264]. And in another place: "Since sin eternally inheres in our flesh as long as we live on this earth, and since we never cease to sin and err, we must verily also have an eternal and perpetual forgiveness" [St. Louis, V, 1094]. On this topic Martin Chemnitz wrote in his *Examination of the Council of Trent*: "For God does not only once in this life, namely when we are baptized, offer, communicate, and apply the benefit of justification to us." Again: "The papists limit justification to a single moment, when a sinner is at first made righteous. It is obvious that this opinion is in direct conflict with the Holy Scriptures; for when they teach that we become righteous by grace, for Christ's sake, without works, they are not only speaking of the first conversion. The justification which the Scriptures teach is not a justification which takes place and then is done."[50]

The Lutheran tradition of the first two centuries is monolithic on this point. For example, Gerhard states: "Just as remission of sins is renewed daily, so also is our justification, and so faith is not just at the beginning, but daily is imputed to the believer for righteousness."[51] Thus Preuss writes:

> So, then, the fact remains that justification continues throughout the believer's entire life, that the merit of Christ is at all times imputed unto him, that all sins, also those which he does not expressly know, Ps. 19, 12, are forgiven and all treasures of salvation perpetually conveyed to him, and that therefore he is perpetually prepared to die a blessed death. . .F.H.R. Frank, in his *Die Theologie der Konkordienformel,* speaks in the same strain: "The consciousness of the believer comforts itself with the knowledge that he obtained, and continuously obtains, his full and complete justification in Him who of God is made unto him Righteousness. 1 Cor. 1,30." All

> these men, and with them many others, clearly confess God's perpetual forgiveness.[52]

For the Lutherans justification was not only an imputation, but a perpetual imputation.

Baptism

Newman attributed to Luther the understanding of English Evangelicalism as to the doctrine of baptism and its relationship to faith:

> And now perhaps enough has been said in explanation of a theology familiar to all ears present, which differs from our own in these two main points among others;—in considering that Faith and not Baptism is the primary instrument of justification, and that this Faith which justifies exercises its gift without the exercise or even the presence of love.[53]

Newman had attributed to Luther the anti-sacramental attitude of the English reformation when he assumed that Luther taught that baptism was merely a sign of justification, not its cause. Newman's contemporary Evangelical critic, James Bennett, made clear the Zwinglian tendency in English Evangelicalism as touching the means of grace. Of Titus 3:5-7 he wrote: "This text is assumed to be proof of Baptismal Regeneration, and thus of Baptismal Justification too; but they alone can find baptism here, that have brought it with them to the text, which certainly does not mention baptism."[54] Bennett placed the sacramental means of grace into the category of a work, denying the necessity of the means of grace. Luther most definitely taught the justifying power of baptism as water connected with the word: "It works forgiveness of sin, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare."[55] Of course, for Luther, "forgiveness of sins" was nothing other than justification itself.

Luther himself had a high theology of the sacraments, as twentieth-century Luther studies have shown. In the Large Catechism Luther certainly taught that baptism is the cause of faith and therefore a divine instrument in the justification of the individual. In fact, he identified the doctrine which Newman attributes to him as the theology of the "would-be wise":

> But as our would-be wise, new spirits assert that faith alone saves, and that works and external things avail nothing, we answer: It is true, indeed, that nothing in us is of any avail but faith, as we shall hear still further. But these blind guides are unwilling to see this, namely, that faith must have something which it believes, that is, of which it takes hold, and upon which it rests. Thus faith clings to the water, and believes that it is Baptism, in which there is pure salvation and life; not through the water (as we have sufficiently stated), but through the fact that it is embodied in the Word and institution of God, and the name of God inheres in it. Now, if I believe this, what else is it than believing in God as in Him who has given and planted His Word into this ordinance, and proposes to us this external thing wherein we may apprehend such a treasure?[56]

For Luther baptism produces the faith it solicits.

The Indwelling of the Trinity

For Newman the primary meaning of the term justification was the presence of the Trinity within the person of the believer:

> Lastly, we now may see what the connection really is between justification and renewal. They are both included in that one great gift of God, the indwelling of Christ in the Christian soul. That indwelling is *ipso facto* our justification and sanctification, as its necessary results. It is the Divine Presence that justifies us, not faith, as say the Protestant schools, not renewal, as say the Roman. The word of justification is the substantive living Word of God, entering the soul, illuminating and cleansing it, as fire brightens and purifies material substances. He who justifies also sanctifies, because it is He. The first blessing runs into the second as its necessary limit; and the second being rejected, carries away with it the first. And the one cannot be separated from the other except in idea, unless the sun's rays can be separated from the sun, or the power of purifying from fire or water.[57]

Newman had again attributed a teaching to Protestantism which may have been current in the Reformed circles of nineteenth-century England but which was not the doctrine of

Luther or the Lutheran church. For Lutheranism the indwelling of the three persons of the Trinity was a result of justification. The Formula of Concord rejected the statement "that faith looks not only to the obedience of Christ, but to His divine nature, as it dwells and works in us, and that by this indwelling our sins are covered."[58] The Lutherans never rejected the indwelling of God, just the idea that this indwelling of God was the essential meaning and content of the article of justification:

> Likewise also the disputation concerning the indwelling in us of the essential righteousness of God must be correctly explained. For although in the elect, who are justified by Christ and reconciled with God, God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who is the eternal and essential righteousness, dwells by faith. . .yet this indwelling of God is not the righteousness of faith of which St. Paul treats and which he calls *justitiam Dei,* that is, the righteousness of God, for the sake of which we are declared righteous before God; but it follows the preceding righteousness of faith, which is nothing else than the forgiveness of sins and the gracious adoption of the poor sinner, for the sake of Christ's obedience and merit alone.[59]

Thus Newman had again misunderstood the position of the Lutheran church.

Conclusion

Given Newman's lack of primary sources, it is no wonder that his view of Luther and Lutheran theology was so flawed. However, even if Newman had had access to Luther's works, he still would not have been capable of charting a genuine *via media.* He had already conceptually placed himself in the Church of Rome, despite his seeming addition of the concept of the indwelling of the Trinity. This concept did not clearly enough distinguish his position from the mainstream of Roman Catholic doctrine. This Newman admitted later in his life. According to Newman's presuppositions, his move into the Church of Rome was a genuine move on his part; it was not a self-serving or equivocal conversion as some of Newman's opponents charged. But it did make it impossible, given the state of Luther studies in Newman's England, for him to have read Luther in a sympathetic way. Even those like Bennett,

who considered themselves the genuine heirs of Luther's reformation, did not correctly grasp the doctrine of the reformer. Newman's native theological insight caused him to struggle with the article of justification as the *crux theologorum.* He knew that it was a pivotal issue, one which presents itself to every generation.

ENDNOTES

1. John Henry Newman, *Lectures on the Doctrine of Justification,* third edition (London: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1900).
2. Alexander Knox, *Remains,* ed. John Henry Newman (London, 1836-37).
3. Alister E. McGrath, *Justitia Dei* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), II, p. 121.
4. McGrath, II, p. 233. Faber also contended that Knox's personal view of justification was Tridentine, rather than Anglican. The Lutheran treatment of this question has varied. Martin Chemnitz in his enormous works surely attempted to show an adherence of the fathers to the article of justification as conceived by Luther. More recent followers of the German reformer are far more sober in their assessment of the doctrine of the fathers; cf. Theodore Dierks, *Reconciliation and Justification* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1938).
5. *Lectures,* p. 1.
6. *Lectures,* p. 1.
7. *Lectures,* p. ix.
8. McGrath, II, p. 123.
9. John Henry Newman, *Apologia pro Vita Sua* (London, 1964), p. 86.
10. James Bennett, *Justification as Revealed in Scripture, in Opposition to the Council of Trent and Mr. Newman's Lectures* (London: Hamilton, Adams and Company, 1860).
11. Bennett, p. xii. How much of this was concern about doctrinal issues and how much was purely xenophobia is a question for another paper.
12. Louis Bouyer, quoted in the preface to Thomas Sheridan, *Newman on Justification* (New York, 1967), p. 11.

13. McGrath, II, pp. 105ff., documented the devolution of the Anglican divines' doctrine of justification in the post-Restoration period. Newman was deeply affected by the doctrine of justification represented by later divines, restricting his sample "to the 'holy living' divines, to the total exclusion of several earlier generations of Anglican divines — men such as Andrews, Beveridge, Davenant, Downham, Hooker, Jewel, Reynolds, Ussher, and Whittaker."
14. McGrath, II, p. 122.
15. *Apologia,* p. 86.
16. McGrath, II, p. 127.
17. *Lectures,* pp. 300-301.
18. McGrath, II, p. 128.
19. McGrath, II, p. 128.
20. McGrath, II, p. 128.
21. Martin Luther, *Luther's Works,* ed. J. Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), 26, pp. 265-266.
22. McGrath II, p. 129.
23. *Lectures,* p. 129.
24. Martin Luther, *Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Weimar, 1883; hereafter cited as *WA*), 40 I, p. 229, quoted in McGrath, II, p. 129.
25. Philip Melanchthon, quoted in Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici* (Frankfurt and Wittenberg, 1690) II, p. 240.
26. Melanchthon, quoted in Chemnitz, *Loci,* II, p. 241.
27. *Lectures,* p. 47. For "justification" *usu forensi,* cf. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* II, pp. 215-216 et passim.
28. *Lectures,* p. 63.
29. McGrath, II, p. 126.
30. F. Bente and W.H.C. Dau, eds., *Concordia Triglotta* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, II: 89.
31. John Gerhard, *Loci Theologici* (Berlin, 1865), locus XII, caput VI, sectio VI, par. 81, quoted in Robert D. Preus, "The Significance of Luther's Term *Pure Passive,*" *Concordia Theological Monthly,* August 1958, pp. 567-568.

32. Gerhard, *Loci*, III, p. 163, quoted in *Lectures*, p. 12.
33. Melanchthon, quoted in Gerhard, *Loci*, p. 240.
34. Eduard Preuss, *Die Lehre von der Rechtfertigung* (1868), p. 19.
35. *Lectures*, p. 140.
36. *Lectures*, p. 16.
37. *WA*, 1, p. 540.
38. *Lectures*, pp. 20-21.
39. *Lectures*, p. 24.
40. FC, SD, IV:10-12.
41. FC, Epitome, IV:8-9.
42. *Lectures*, pp. 24-25. Here Newman certainly anticipates Karl Rahner, who, contrary to what conservative Roman critics think, has drawn the most logical conclusion from Rome's Pelagianism by attributing anonymous Christianity to those who are not Christians.
43. AC, XX:1-6.
44. *Lectures*, p. 83.
45. *Lectures*, p. 92.
46. Interestingly, later in the nineteenth century all leading continental and American Protestant theologians were known to have, in fact, given up the strictly juridical doctrine of justification by faith. Johann von Doellinger had made mention of it in his lectures on the reunion of the Christian church (quoted in *Lehre und Wehre*, 1872, p. 352). Franz Pieper pointed out in his *Christliche Dogmatik* that the modern theology of his day had rejected "the *satisfactio vicaria* as too legalistic and juridical; it teaches that grace is offered not only by the Word of the Gospel, but through the appearing of the 'historical Christ'; it holds that conversion is effected through man's 'self-determination' (synergism); it maintains that faith justifies as an ethical act, or as the germ of renewal, or as the means of ingrafting into the new humanity." Pieper was firmly convinced that these accommodations were nothing but a capitulation to the doctrine of the Roman Church as most clearly represented by Ritschl's *Justification and Reconciliation.* "Thereby modern Protestant theology has taken its place in the camp of the Romanists and the 'enthusiasts' as is also evident from the fact that it repeats their slander of the Christian doctrine of justification, namely, that this doctrine, being too 'juridical' and

'intellectualistic,' interferes with sanctification." For Pieper the crux was still at the *principium cognoscendi.* "But it is a fact that modern Protestant theology, which by the denial of inspiration has surrendered the Scripture principle and develops doctrine from 'experience' and other subjective sources, has discarded the Christian doctrine of justification." Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, trans. J.T. Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), pp. 555-557.

47. *Lectures,* p. 63.
48. *Lectures*, p. 65.
49. Bennett, pp. 10-11.
50. Preuss, pp. 87-88.
51. Gerhard, *Loci*, III, p. 396.
52. Preuss, pp. 87-88.
53. *Lectures*, p. 29.
54. Bennett, p. 212.
55. SC, IV:6.
56. LC, IV:28-29.
57. *Lectures*, p. 154.
58. FC, Epitome, III:16.
59. FC, SD, III:54.

The Doctrine in the Liturgy

Donald L. Deffner

The Doctrine in the Liturgy is an adult instruction course combining biblical doctrine with Lutheran hymnals (*The Lutheran Hymnal, Lutheran Worship, Lutheran Book of Worship*). It was published by the Concordia Theological Seminary Press, Fort Wayne, Indiana, in 1988. Its forty-two pages contain a Teacher's Manual and Study Guide of which the following excerpts are reproduced here: (I.) Foreward, (II.) Introduction to the Course, (III.) Prospectus for the Course, (IV.) Sample Lesson of the Course: The God We Worship, and (V.) Assignments for the Course. Acknowledgement is herewith made to the faculty (and Dan Petzold of the library) of Concordia Theological Seminary for gracious assistance in providing some of the bibliographical material. *The Doctrine in the Liturgy* has been combined with the author's *Myths about the Lutheran Church* in a forthcoming adult instruction course entitled *Myth or Faith.*

I. FOREWORD

One of the most exciting tasks of the pastor is adult education. This is particularly challenging—and crucial—when working with adults joining the Lutheran Church through baptism or affirmation of faith. Note that the term "premembership instruction" was not used. For anyone validly baptised is a member of the Holy Christian Church already. One does not "become a member" or "join the church" at confirmation. Nor do confirmands "renew" (a misleading word) their baptismal vow. For baptism is the gracious, unilateral act of God alone, and it is not "renewable."

Adult instruction is a *crucial* task because the conception of the Lutheran faith imparted in the study course may give adults a *Gestalt*—a conceptual framework of what Christianity is—for years to come. For example, one very popular manual used in the Lutheran Church for decades spends an inordinate amount of time on the ten commandments. The impression is easily given that to be a Christian is "to keep the commandments." That is, unless the instructor valiantly puts the ten commandments and the law in proper perspective in relation to the life of sanctification.[1]

Furthermore, in the course fragmented verses of Scripture are cited, leading to a "proof-text" conception of Christianity.

Again and again, for proper understanding one is driven back to the *context* of the isolated passages quoted—where one should have started in the first place. Thirdly, Christ and His salvation are treated half-way through the course, which, unless put into proper focus, can be "just another doctrine to be believed." But we do not view the Scriptures as just "a sourcebook of doctrinal pronouncements," in which any doctrine has equal importance with any other. Luther says, "All the Scriptures show us Christ."

Furthermore, the starting point is more Calvinist than Lutheran, beginning with the Scriptures rather than God's gracious act in Christ (cf. the expansion of this point below). In sum, the whole *format* of the manual militates against a sound understanding and practice of the Christian faith. Overall, the impression is given that to become a member of the Lutheran Church the primary requisite is to assent noetically to various biblical doctrines, among which we find Christ and His work. But the primary objective should be personal surrender to Christ and His atoning work: a vital *relationship* with our blessed Lord.[2] Therefore, beyond the problems of the errata noted above, if any manual, by form or content, does not support this organizing principle, it cannot be conscientiously used. What then is our starting point for those becoming members of a local congregation (with both Christian and non-Christian background)?

(1.) I submit that our starting point is man's need and God's action, not the Scriptures. The infallible Scriptures are the only source of full knowledge about the nature of God and the way of salvation. But our starting point should be justification by grace through faith in Christ—as God's mighty act in response to the existential need and condition of a fallen humanity.

Commitment to the inspiration of Scripture and the nature of the Bible comes *after* surrender to the Lord of the Bible. For, as Luther said, the Scriptures are a creche for *Christ.* Franz Pieper notes in Volume I of his *Christian Dogmatics:*

> The question has frequently been raised how one can know whether he has the faith wrought by the Holy Spirit or only a human conviction of the divine authority of Scripture. . .

> Likewise those lack the internal testimony of the Holy Ghost as to the divine authority of Scripture who are prompted merely by arguments of reason or by human authority—such as the authority of the pastor, the parents, or other men—to regard Scripture as the Word of God. . .
>
> Our missionaries in heathen countries, our home missionaries, and our institutional workers do not therefore begin with rational arguments for the divinity of Holy Scripture, but they preach "to one and all" ("*in den Haufen hinein*") repentance and remission of sins. And when faith in *Christum crucifixum* has once been created, there is no need to worry about securing faith in the divinity of Holy Scripture. . .[3]

The question is whether we want to be Lutheran or Calvinist in our approach. As Herman Sasse says in *Here We Stand:*

> Although both churches hold that justification by faith is a doctrine without which the church cannot exist at all as a true church, the place of this article of faith in the sum of Christian doctrine differs in such a way that Lutheran and Reformed also give it a different meaning. As we have seen above the essential character of the Lutheran Reformation consists of a rediscovery of the Gospel as the message of the sinner's justification. The gracious promise of the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake—this, and nothing but this, is the Gospel. *And the Holy Scriptures cannot be properly understood except in the light of the Gospel.* Consequently, the doctrine of justification is the key which "alone opens the door to the whole Bible." The Reformed Church repudiates this.[4]

Accordingly, study of the meaning and purpose of Scripture in an adult instruction course should come after an initial confrontation with Christ and His saving work for sinful humanity.

The natural starting point—and that is where our liturgy begins!—is with sinful humanity's condition.[5] We begin with the confession of sins—and then focus on and cling to the redemption earned for us by our blessed Lord through His death and resurrection. (Ergo, "The God We Worship" is Lesson 1 in this manual.) Implicit here again is the valid

application of law and gospel. I know what I am under God's judgment before I grasp what the gospel means for me.

(2.) The class member should ideally focus on primary, not secondary material. In other words, most time should be spent on actual study of the Bible itself—in and outside of class sessions—rather than on a secondary aid such as a manual or even the catechism. It is not a matter of mastering a systematization of doctrine, but getting into the Scripture itself and seeing the doctrines and passages *in context.*

The problem is that, if we do not give people some elementary hermeneutical and isagogical helps on how to study Scripture as we instruct them in preparation for joining a congregation, when will they learn? Some may become a vital part of Bible study groups in the parish, but many do not.

Obviously this is an idealistic objective, because the pastor just cannot do everything in one brief course. We need to keep our goals high, however (cf. point 5 below), and people in the professional world, or some university students, may well take up the challenge of intensive between-class study and exploration of the reading assignments suggested.

For those without time for in-depth study, however, a secondary aid may be necessary. And here I would highly recommend *Life with God* by Herman Theiss. Stressing the Christian's *relationship* with God, the course includes clear and succinct summaries of biblical truth plus provocative true-false statements which stimulate dialogue. As of 1988 this volume was available from Seven Hills Publications, Suite 6, 131 Thirtieth Street N.E., Auburn, Washington 98002.

(3.) Whatever format is used, the thrust of the course must not be doctrine *qua* doctrine, but doctrine related to life. Many manuals are a series of chapters systematizing scriptural doctrine well, but using no metaphors or illustrations from contemporary life, and making no application of the doctrines to the problems of the people taking the course. The result is that many people never make the transfer of doctrinal meaning to the everyday problems which beset them. These doctrines must be seen in relationship to life, that is, that of the man loading boxes for United Parcel eight hours a day.

Our besetting problem in the Lutheran Chruch has been that people have felt that to be a Christian is "to believe all the right

doctrines." "Oh, don't get me wrong, Pastor. I still remember my catechism." But this is head knowledge, not heart knowledge. We have many people who know a lot of doctrines, but it is often abstract knowledge divorced from life.

The principles of learning apply here: readiness; satisfaction or effect; exercise; belonging or association. To properly teach Christian doctrine, we must proceed "from the known to the unknown," not start in left field with some archaic biblical reference, miles from the needs and problems of the class members. People are need-meeting beings, and respond to need-fulfilment. Our Lord always addressed human need. At the same time, He told people what they "needed" to hear.

Also implicit in this objective is our concern that we avoid "systematizing doctrine into statements of truth which are then supported by Bible passages which keep the focus on the individual and neglect the place of the individual in the community of the redeemed."[6] The neophyte needs to see at once himself or herself as a vital part of the worshipping community, not as a "solo Christian."

(4.) Church doctrine must always be related to worship. It is not doctrine *qua* doctrine about which we are concerned, but doctrine coordinated with and integrated in the worship-life of the individual. This "worship-life" means a concept of worship as totality of life—all the ways in which one lives out the sacramental life. Ergo, it means a way of instruction which trains the individual in the meaning and practice of the eucharist.

The liturgical service is still the church's primary teaching opportunity, especially for those involved in little else in the congregation during the week. It must be meaningful and relevant to their daily lives in the richest and fullest sense. We need to see "the doctrine in the liturgy"—and how this worship service is the focal point and power supply for our life all during the week.

As people become new members of a local congregation, we need to instruct them fully in the worship life of that community, or some might become illiterate worshippers for some time to come. Often this is still the biggest blind spot in many a church's educational program.

(5.) One must set high goals in assignments. The more one lovingly expects of people, the more they will do, and the more they will grow. Many classes degenerate into the pastor lecturing, and people listening. This is not always a "learning situation." People learn best by doing—by creative thinking and internalization.[7] The instructor must develop the skill of inductive questioning.

(6.) The ultimate objective is that one write and keep developing one's own course, with inductive Bible study as the primary approach in instruction. Until that time comes, one must avoid using only one manual, whatever it is, time after time. The effect can be stultifying. The busy pastor, pressed for time, can (with little preparation!) walk into a class session using a text he knows "like the back of his hand"—and just lecture.[8] The pastor fails to grow—and can lose the freshness evident to class members when using creative new material. Blessed is the pastor who uses a different instruction class format every time a new adult course begins.[9]

There is no perfect course this side of heaven. The following course is offered with the hope that it may trigger ever more fruitful growth for the teacher (co-learner) and students, that Christ and His saving work may be glorified.

RESOURCES OF SINGULAR NOTE

Baptized, We Live; Lutheranism As a Way of Life. By Daniel L. Erlander. Available from Campus Pastor Daniel L. Erlander, Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Washington 98447. $2.50. Here is a refreshing and catchily illustrated 28-page study of Lutheranism as a movement within the church catholic. The treatment of the doctrine of inspiration (p. 11) bears critical analysis. The manual is rich in its sacramental-liturgical approach. Noteworthy emphases include the salient elements of the *Confessio Augustana;* Jesus' "Yes" to the theology of the cross and "No" to the theology of glory; and justification by grace through faith.

The Bible and the Liturgy. By J. Danielou. University of Notre Dame Press, 1956; out of print. Arthur Just, Jr., states: "Danielou traces the history of liturgical rites through the fathers to the scriptural antecedents, forming a sacramental theology that provides a foundation for pastoral liturgy."

Introduction to Christian Worship. By James F. White. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980. Arthur Just, Jr., states: "White gives a history of Christian worship from the New Testament to the present century by means of such subjects as time, space, the service of the word, the sacraments, and rites of passage."

Keeping the Faith: A Guide to the Christian Message. By David G. Truemper and Frederick A. Niedner, Jr. Fortress Press, 1981. $6.95. Luther G. Strasen describes the work as "a commentary on the catechism designed to help Christians tend the faith they hold, nurturing their understanding of it in our changing age. It interprets Christian doctrine as instruction on how to bear the message well, how to tell the story in such a way that Christ is glorified and sinners hear the good news."

Johann Sebastian Bach and Liturgical Life in Leipzig. By Guenther Stiller. Translated by Herbert J.A. Bouman, Daniel F. Poellot, and Hilton C. Oswald. Edited by Robin A. Leaver. Concordia Publishing House, 1984. 308 pp. $24.95. Here is a faith-strengthening work which will enhance our appreciation for our Lutheran musical and liturgical heritage. It is a treasure trove of insights into the fervent piety and theological orthodoxy of Bach. Major implications for our own day are implicit in Bach's counteraction to the sentimentalism, subjectivity, and uncontrolled liturgical experimentation which ignore sound church music in favor of the banal and trashy lyrics of "praise choruses" and the emasculated "hymns" of television evangelists devoid of any reference to sin and need of God's forgiveness.

The Liturgical Year. By Adrian Nocent. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1977. 4 volumes. $39.00. Dean O. Wenthe describes the work as "an introduction to the substance and theological rhythm of the church year. The focus is on the formation of one's spirituality in a communal and christocentric manner."

Made, Not Born; Perspectives on Christian Initiation and the Catechumenate. Notre Dame University Press, 1976. $7.95. Dean O. Wenthe describes the work as "a series of studies on how the catechetical task of the church can be carried out with fresh clarity and conviction in the face of a bland and non-sacramental cultural environment."

"The Meaning and the Task of the Sermon in the Framework of the Liturgy." By Bo Giertz. In *The Unity of the Church: A Symposium.* Commission on Theology and Liturgy. Lutheran World Federation. Augustana Press.

Prayer. By Hans Urs Balthasa. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987. The work deals with the act, object, and tensions of contemplation.

"Seven Theses on Reformation Hermeneutics." By Martin H. Franzmann. Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR). Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Reprint from *Concordia Theological Monthly,* April 1969.

A Theology to Live By: The Practical Luther for the Practicing Christian. By Herman Preus. Concordia Publishing House, 1977. $7.95. Heino Kadai states: "The book is a competent and inviting guide to the religious perspective of Luther and the Lutherans. The work can be read with profit by professional theologians, but it speaks most rewardingly to those Christians who are seeking to increase their depth of knowledge and Christian commitment. . .It is both a realistic and a joyful book about Christian faith as Luther and Lutherans see it. . .Such timely themes as God and suffering, man in his predicament and potential, word and sacrament as the food for life, and what happens after life are dealt with by Preus, a competent, confident, committed theologian."

"What the Symbolical Books Have to Say about Worship and the Sacraments." By Arthur Carl Piepkorn. Concordia Publishing House, 1952.

Worship in the Name of Jesus. By Peter Brunner. Concordia Publishing House. $14.95. Kurt Marquart describes the work as "a scholarly, in-depth discussion of the meaning of the service of word and sacrament."

Worship in Word and Sacrament. By Ernest B. Koenker. Fort Wayne, Indiana: Concordia Seminary Printshop. $2.75.

ENDNOTES

1. "The Ten Commandments, as they appear in Exodus 20, come after God has covenanted with His people in Exodus 19:5,6 and are to be the people's response to God's covenant grace." This quotation comes from an unpublished manuscript by Robert L.

Conrad, "Some Principles for the Development of Adult Premembership Materials," St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1968. See also David P. Scaer, "Sanctification in Lutheran Theology," *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, 49 (April-July 1985), p. 181. Scaer notes Luther's stress on the positive prescription rather than the negative prohibition of the decalog (p. 184).

2. Note Donald L. Griggs' helpful distinction between goals and objectives in his manual, *Teaching Teachers to Teach* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985), p. 13. An objective is specific, achievable, and measurable. A goal is beyond our reach, and never fully realized, but gives direction for the educational enterprise. Griggs' manual is a superb tool for improving teacher skills.

3. Franz Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1938), pp. 312-313.

4. Herman Sasse, *Here We Stand*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1938), pp. 111-112.

5. A man told his Lutheran friend, "You could have people filling your churches if you could just get rid of that one phrase in your service." What is that?" replied his companion. "We are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves," he replied.

6. Conrad, *op. cit.*, p. 4. Also see his "Principles for the Development of Adult Premembership Instruction," *Concordia Theological Monthly* (February, 1968), p. 67.

7. Richard Rehfeldt writes in "The Road to Educational Ministry," *the Pastor's Role in Educational Ministry*, ed. Richard Allan Olson, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), pp. 35-36. "This lecturing method, complete with a good deal of humor (which I later came to see as a device which keeps people at a distance), I used in confirmation instruction classes. . . [But] as I began to turn more and more from total lecturing to listening, I saw my role as pastor to be one of humanizing a learning situation. I began to see that Christian education is person-centered. Thus, I began to concern myself with both halves of the situation—with the person as well as with the subject. I began to see that the whole person—not just his mind—must be engaged in meaningful experiences."

8. As Griggs (*supra*) notes (p. 6), the point is to *un*cover the material, not to "cover" it—*hide* it from view.

9. See also *A Handbook for Ministry with the Adult Inquirer*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986). A resource to help incorporate adults into the life and mission of the church. Helpful both as a guide for involvement of new and old members

of a congregation. The manual is produced by the Division for Life and Mission in the Congregations of the American Lutheran Church. See also Martin E. Marty's *Invitation to Discipleship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986).

II. INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

Instruction in the teachings of the Christian faith with the Holy Communion service as context is not a new approach. Many pastors have used this method, and varied it from time to time. The following, therefore, is one more contribution to the cause which would view the totality of life as worship—wholly proclaiming the "worth-ship" of Him who created, redeemed, and sustains us. (This course was first published by the Concordia Seminary Printshop, St. Louis, Missouri, in May of 1960. The author is indebted to Richard R. Caemmerer, Arthur C. Repp, and Arthur Carl Piepkorn for their critical reading of the manuscript at that time.)

Objectives of the Course

The "so great a cloud of witnesses" of the whole Body of Christ and the personal faith of the Christian teacher are but signposts which point to our blessed Lord. Furthermore, the content of the course is *not* a series of "lessons" *among* which we find Christ and the message of His meritorious work at the cross and empty tomb. Much less is it a series of "meetings" in which we discuss a number of "doctrines" to be swallowed like so many pills, and *among* which we find the doctrine concerning the Son of God.

Rather, our concern from beginning to end is to confront the potential Lutheran Christian with the incarnate Lord Himself. As Berthold von Schenk has said:

> The greatest thing that ever happened to you was when you met Jesus and fell in love with Him.

And since to love Christ is to *worship* Him, it is essential that we understand the worship forms of the church and, in so doing, recognize the striking ways in which our blessed Lord is there declared and enfolded.

The point need not be belabored that *meaningful* worship is one of the greatest needs of the church today. The morning service is still the chief educational medium of the Christian

Church. No matter how much we try to expand our educational program, the worship service is still the only channel by which we reach many people. Therefore the highest skill and preparation must go into this hour to make it a life-giving experience for the worshipper—in the proper *liturgical* and *educational* sense.

It is in the eucharist that the church each Lord's Day retraces what T.S. Eliot calls the "greatest drama in the world"—the "re-presentation of the suffering and death of our blessed Lord for the remission of our sins." Thus Yngve Brilioth says (*Eucharistic Faith: Evangelical and Catholic*, p. 1):

> The place of the Eucharist in the life of the Church is one of the most central problems which confront Evangelical Christendom today. It is a problem for the theologian, because the sacrament is a meeting point on which all the issues of theology converge; for the liturgical reformer, whose business it is to help to provide a worthy outward expression for Christian worship; and for the pastor of souls, whose concern is with the church's actual life.

Aware of these concerns, the Christian teacher is led once again to restudy such great chapters of Scripture as 1 Corinthians 11 and Hebrews 10 and to ask, "Just what do we mean by worship in general and sacrament in particular?" Richard R. Caemmerer has described our worship together in this way:

> The adoration of God and offering up of self and others to him.
> The seeking of His grace through His Word of forgiveness.
> The sharing of His grace through the acts of mutual edification.

Accordingly, the purpose of this course is to provide an instruction class for adults in the teachings of the Christian faith in the Lutheran Church, using the church's worship service and the Christian church year as the framework and point of reference, with a "real, vital, personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior" as the goal.

Structure of the Course

The Prayer

The meeting opens with a prayer—a collect selected (from the propers) which strikes the keynote for the lesson theme.

This procedure will familiarize the novice with the use of the propers.

To emphasize the "balanced diet" of the church year and show that its festivals are not mere commemorations but "present and living realities," an attempt has been made to select a collect from some time in the Christian church year which stresses the particular doctrine to be studied. For example, the lesson on sin begins with the penitential collect of Ash Wednesday. But the nature of the collect is usually quite general. (The propers begin on page 54 in the *Lutheran Hymnal.*)

Introduction and the "Doctrine in the Liturgy"

Following the introductory remarks of the leader on the specific subject at hand, a sample introduction is suggested. The leader moves to the pertinent phrases in the worship service immediately. (Hymnals are always handy.) For example, the introduction in Lesson 3 on sin could be one of these:

In *The Lutheran Hymnal* the "Confession of Sins" is on pages 6, 15-16.

In *Lutheran Worship* the "Confession of Sins" is on pages 136-137, 158, 178.

In *Lutheran Book of Worship* the "Confession of Sins" is on pages 56, 77, 98.

The references are examined by the group.

Hymn

"Here is a typical hymn in which we affirm our faith—in which we proclaim this Bible doctrine." The group examines the hymn, hears is history, and some comments are made on the hymnology of the church.

Bible

Since confirmands frequently use secondary and tertiary source materials in instruction classes and never really get into the Bible itself. The next step in the class meeting is an actual tussle with a carefully selected portion of Scripture. Each class member has a Bible in hand (a gift from the church), and the pastor interprets a section pertinent to the lesson theme in the light of the *analogia fidei.*

It is to be noted that, if the Bible readings on the assignment sheet are fulfilled, the class member will have read the entire

New Testament and parts of the Old Testament by the end of the course. Correlated assignments in *Luther's Small Catechism* will also complete that book by the end of the course.

Lesson Content

This portion of the meeting consists of a basic doctrinal presentation by the teacher in amplification of the preceding biblical study, and dialogue together in the light of the catechetical and related assignments. The body of the lesson content is left to the ingenuity and creativity of the teacher, but a framework for discussion is suggested.

Beyond the assignment sheet given out at the beginning of the course, a duplicated outline could also be provided the class members a week before each lesson, and the teacher's presentation would then synthesize and amplify the material, providing ample opportunity for discussion questions *during* and *after* the presentation. Whatever the lesson theme, the leader must certainly give evidence of the "growing edge" of his *own* spiritual life; and class members must always consciously be lifted to a higher level than their class preparation.

Discussion Questions

Additional time should be set aside after the presentation by the teacher for questions on corollary material first of all (catechism, confessions, tracts, assigned reading) and then questions of a general nature. Of particular concern in the first session is the instructor's sensitivity to where individuals in the class "are coming from." Our Lord started with the "known" in the lives of his hearers (their real world) and then went to the "unknown," the spiritual challenge He was bringing them (the Real Word). What questions are class members bringing with them and how can they be related to the elements of the liturgy as it is examined?

Conclusion

The meeting concludes *at the agreed time* after the next week's assignment has been made, tracts and books have been distributed for corollary reading, and members have been briefed on their nature and content.

III. PROSPECTUS FOR THE COURSE

A Study of the Teachings of the Christian Faith
in the Lutheran Church,
Stressing the Worship Life of the Church

1. The God We Worship
2. The Bible We Use
3. The Sin We Confess
4. The Father Who Gives
5. The Son Who Redeems
6. The Spirit Who Sustains
7. The Church We Are
8. The Baptism We Receive
9. The Eucharist We Celebrate
10. The Ministry We Share
11. The Life We Nurture
12. The World We Serve
13. The Goal We Seek
14. The Congregation We Join

IV. SAMPLE LESSON OF THE COURSE: "The God We Worship"

Prayer

"Stir up, we beseech Thee, Thy power, O Lord, and come, that by Thy protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and saved by Thy mighty deliverance; who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end." (Collect for the First Sunday in Advent, TLH, p. 54; LW, p. 10; LBW, p. 13.)

Introduction of Class Members

Sample Course Introduction

(a section to be given to the student)

T.A. Kantonen has written as follows (*The Message of the Church to the World of Today,* p. 3):

> In ancient Greek philosophy, there was a character by the name of Cratylus. Now the master of Cratylus was Heraclitus; and he philosophized that you could not step into the same river twice; for in the process of constant flowing its substance would have changed. Now Cratylus went one step further, and said that you couldn't even step into the same river once, since by the time you had stepped into it, it would not be the same river into which you had decided to step.
>
> And if we carried this still further, we would have to conclude that you couldn't even say anything about stepping into a river, for by the time you had finished the statement, the river which you had in mind wouldn't even be there. And the final conclusion we would have to draw from such a philosophy, would be that you would simply have to scurry around as fast as possible and rapidly point to things before they had changed into something else.

The world *is* filled with change today. And the church must be aware of these changes and how to address its message to contemporary persons in their contemporary setting.

But no matter how much the world changes, our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the church, never changes. "He is the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). He is the "changeless Christ for a changing world." It is *His* person and work with which we are primarily concerned in this course.

Now we do start out with certain premises in our study. Every person has one's own point of view, one's own starting point, one's own mental construct of the facts, whether one follows the "dogmatism" of empiricism, or rationalism, or revelation.

We in the church, too, have our *a priori*—the objective work of God in Christ, and God in Christ changing *us* by His Spirit. And with this conviction it is our hope that *you* may believe that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31). And so we ask you to consider our point of view, to approach it with an open mind. Be "scientific" about it. If you are going to study in the field of chemistry, you will use a chemistry textbook, not

Shakespeare or a Russian primer. And in dealing with the "things of the Spirit of God," you will need to use its premises and its methodology. Phillips paraphrases 1 Corinthians 2:14 in this way:

> The unspiritual man simply cannot accept the matters which the Spirit deals with. They just don't make sense to him. For, after all, you must *be* spiritual, to *see* spiritual things.

And so whatever happens in this course is not a matter of the instructor "convincing" you. We believe it is the work of God the Holy Spirit alone—if you confess sin, desire the worship of the church, pray, and are led closer to Christ in faith, love, and service.

Speaking pragmatically, however, what you receive from this course *will* depend to a great extent on what you put into it in terms of study and time. Scripture reminds us: "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found; call ye upon Him while He is near" (Isaiah 55:6).

Perhaps you will never have another opportunity quite like this one to make a systematic study of the teachings of the Christian faith. So make the most of it. Ask these questions as you study in this course:

> Who made me?
> Where am I going?
> What is my purpose in life?

And strive, by the blessing of the Holy Spirit, to find *for yourself* the only answer which Holy Scripture gives: Through trust, worship, and prayer in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. During the course, the instructor will not attempt to fill you with a *false* sense of guilt. We believe in the necessity of a genuine "sense of sin." But this is a conviction which must be reached *by the individual* through one's own study, and reading, and prayer. And if you give God's Word a chance, we believe that this conviction—and the corresponding forgiveness with which Christ responds—will be yours. For our blessed Lord has said: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God or whether I speak of Myself" (John 7:17). And God "will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4).

And we believe, with the stress which is placed in this course on the necessity and meaning of *corporate worship*, that your participation in the liturgy here each week will be of immeasurable help in making *your very own* "the things. . .which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1 Corinthians 2:13).

For here we come face to face with the "stuff" of the Christian life:

1. The adoration of God and offering up of self and others to Him.

2. The seeking of His grace through His Word of forgiveness.

3. The sharing of His grace through acts of mutual edification.

And "this is most certainly true" of our worship *services* and our whole *life* as worship.

Methodology

There are three books which will be used in this course:

1. *The Holy Bible*
2. *The Lutheran Hymnal or Lutheran Worship* or *Lutheran Book of Worship*
3. *Luther's Small Catechism* (Concordia Publishing House, 1943)

(Here the teacher should comment briefly on each and describe the procedure in meetings, assignments, and preparation for classes.)

Suggested Lesson Content and Discussion

When someone mentions "church" we often think of a church's *worship service.* And yet, especially in liturgical churches, the order of worship is often not fully understood. In this opening lesson let us examine *the meaning of our liturgical worship*, keeping in mind the central truth of our faith and the heart of our worship—the Triune God—and the central scriptural doctrine of justification by faith in Him alone.

(The instructor may also wish to define pertinent liturgical and architectural terms with reference to the local congregation's services and its house of worship.)

The teacher will work through the eucharistic service with the class members, stressing what worship itself is in the company of fellow Christians.

Conclusion

The instructor makes the assignment for the next lesson. He hands out materials, including *Our Way of Worship* by Jungkuntz and Gehrke, for the student's review.

[*Editorial Note:* The course continues with thirteen more lessons. Then in the Study Guide a new bibliography for laity is provided, consisting of books which are popularly written, in print, and inexpensive.]

V. ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE COURSE

1. The God We Worship

Introduction. Orientation to the course. Analysis of the Holy Communion service. Overview of the contents of the hymnal.

HANDOUTS

Our Way of Worship. By R. Jungkuntz and R. Gehrke. Concordia Publishing House (pamphlet). The "path" we walk through the liturgy (inside cover illustration) is a most helpful teaching tool when transposed into a poster (three feet by four feet) by an artist.

Lutheran Church Worship. ALPB, 308 West Forty-Sixth Street, New York, New York 10036 (tract).

SUGGESTED READING

Symbols and Their Meaning. By Rudolph F. Norden. Concordia Publishing House, 1985. $3.50. Norden gives a devotional interpretation of 52 symbols of Christianity.

2. The Bible We Use

ASSIGNED READING

Catechism: Questions 1-17, 24 C (Introduction. Bible. Law and Gospel); pages 209-221 (Books of the Bible. Index and Dictionary).

Bible: Mark.

SUGGESTED READING

Introducing the Books of the Bible. By Rudolph F. Norden. Concordia Publishing House, 1987. $3.95. Norden gives a devotional insight into each book of the Bible.

Reading the New Testament for Understanding. By Robert G. Hoerber. Concordia Publishing House, 1986. $7.50.

Speaking of Jesus: Finding the Words for Witness. By Richard Lischer. Fortress Press, 1982. The summary of the whole Bible in ten pages (pp. 38-48) is profound in this superb text on evangelization for the laity.

A Survey of the New Testament. By Robert H. Gundry. Zondervan Publishing House, 1981. This well-illustrated text involves the student in the biblical text by continual dialogue with it.

The Word of the Lord Grows. By Martin H. Franzmann. Concordia Publishing House; out of print. This richly devotional volume is a non-technical introduction to the New Testament speaking to us "as the living voice of God now."

3. The Sin We Confess

ASSIGNED READING

Catechism: Questions 18-99 (Ten Commandments); 187-194 (Forgiveness of Sins); pages 31-35 (Christian Questions).

Bible: Romans

SUGGESTED READING

Guilt and Grace. By Paul Tournier. Harper and Row, 1983. Profound insights into the human condition in the light of the gospel by the Swiss lay theologian-physician. See also Tournier's *A Doctor's Casebook in the Light of the Bible, The Meaning of Gifts, The Meaning of Persons, The Whole Person in a Broken World,* and especially *Learn to Grow Old.*

Mere Christianity. By C.S. Lewis. Macmillan, 1964. $10.95. This lasting trilogy by one of the greatest

Christian apologists of this century is superb for the "honest agnostic" and doubting intellectual.

Sin. By J. Keith Miller. Harper and Row, 1987. Here is practical help for "vulnerable" (not "got-it-made") Christians with clay feet by the popular Episcopal lay theologian-business man who also authored *The Taste of New Wine, A Second Touch, Habitation of Dragons, The Becomers,* etc.

The Screwtape Letters. By C.S. Lewis. Macmillan, 1982. $1.95. These are mythical letters from hell to junior devil Wormwood, who is trying to destroy a new Christian.

4. The Father Who Gives

ASSIGNED READING

Catechism: Questions 24-26 (God); 100-120 (First Article); 215-216 ("Our Father").

Bible: Genesis 1-11.

SUGGESTED READING

Martin Luther Christmas Book with Celebrated Woodcuts by His Contemporaries. Translated by Roland H. Bainton. Fortress Press, 1948. $3.25.

Martin Luther Easter Book. Translated by Roland H. Bainton. Fortress Press, 1983. $3.95.

Psalms/Now. By Leslie Brandt. Concordia Publishing House, 1973. The cries and jubilation in 150 psalms are rendered in the language of today's world.

Reflections on the Psalms. By C.S. Lewis. Walker and Company, 1985. $9.95.

5. The Son Who Redeems

ASSIGNED READING

Catechism: Questions 121-159 (Second Article).

Bible: Matthew; Isaiah 53-55.

SUGGESTED READING

First Christmas. By Paul L. Maier. Harper and Row, 1971. Fresh insights on the nativity are presented in this illustrated volume.

First Easter. By Paul L. Maier. Harper and Row, 1973. New historical evidence surrounding the resurrection is presented in this illustrated volume.

Jesus and His Times. The Reader's Digest Association, 1987. This very colorfully illustrated 336-page volume blends the biblical and historical accounts of the world of Jesus. The resurrection is affirmed (p. 261). It is well worth the price of $27.25.

What Jesus Means to Me. By Herman W. Gockel. Concordia Publishing House, 1956. $4.95. This devotional classic deals with the joy of the life in Christ.

We Confess. Volume 1: *Jesus Christ.* By Hermann Sasse. Concordia Publishing House, 1984. This clear and concise treatment comes from one of the foremost students of the Lutheran Confessions in this century. $10.95.

6. The Spirit Who Sustains

ASSIGNED READING

Catechism: Questions 160-174 (Third Article).

Bible: John; Galatians.

SUGGESTED READING

The Charismatic Movement and Lutheran Theology. Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR). The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, January, 1972.

First Christians. By Paul L. Maier. Harper and Row, 1976. Pentecost and the spread of Christianity are treated in this illustrated volume.

The Holy Spirit and the Life of the Church. By Paul Opsahl. Augsburg Publishing House, 1978; out of print. Ted Peters states: "These essays by a Lutheran theologian cover the biblical, historical, and theological dimensions of the Holy Spirit with reference to the charismatic renewal."

The Holy Spirit and You. By Bernhard N. Schneider. BMH. $4.95. Dan Petzold describes this book as "a well-organized, catechism-styled text on the Holy Spirit."

Theology of the Holy Spirit. By Frederick D. Bruner. Eerdmans Publishing House, 1970. $7.95. Kurt Marquart describes this book as "a critical evaluation of the standard pentecostal-charismatic 'guided tour' of the Book of Acts."

We Confess. Volume 3: *The Church.* By Hermann Sasse. Concordia Publishing House. There is a section on the Holy Spirit.

What the Bible Teaches about the Holy Spirit. By John Peck. Tyndale House, 1979. $3.95. Dan Petzold calls this book "a clear introduction to the Holy Spirit well-supported with Scripture, setting the layman up for further study."

7. The Church We Are

ASSIGNED READING

Catechism: Questions 175-186 (Communion of Saints).

Bible: Acts, chapters 1-8; Ephesians; Luke.

SUGGESTED READING

Augsburg Confession: A Contemporary Commentary. By George W. Forell. Augsburg Publishing House, 1968. $4.50.

Augsburg for Our Day: A Study of the Augsburg Confession. By George R. Kraus. Concordia Publishing House, 1978. Study Guide, $2.95; Leader's Manual, $3.95.

Getting into the Story of Concord. By David P. Scaer. Concordia Publishing House, 1978. $3.95.

Getting into the Theology of Concord. By Robert Preus. Concordia Publishing House, 1978. $3.75.

Luther the Reformer: The Story of the Man and His Career. By James L. Kittelson. Augsburg Publishing House, 1987. $24.95. Lewis W. Spitz calls this book "the best complete biography of Luther for our times."

All These Lutherans. By Todd Nichol. Augsburg Publishing House, 1986. $6.95.

The Religious Bodies of America. By Frederic E. Mayer. Concordia Publishing House. $11.95.

We Confess. Volume 3: *The Church.* By Hermann Sasse. Concordia Publishing House. $11.95.

8. The Baptism We Receive

ASSIGNED READING

Catechism: Questions 242-266 (Baptism); page 212 (Formula).

Bible: Romans, chapter 6; Selected Psalms.

SUGGESTED READING

Baptism. By Martin E. Marty. Fortress Press, 1977. $3.50.

Baptism and Fullness; The Work of the Holy Spirit Today. By John R. Stott. Inter-Varsity Press, 1976. $2.95.

We Confess. Volume 2: *The Sacraments.* By Hermann Sasse. Concordia Publishing House, 1985. $11.95.

9. The Eucharist We Celebrate

ASSIGNED READING

Catechism: Questions 296-331 (Sacrament of the Altar); pages 31-35 (Christian Questions).

Bible: 1 and 2 Corinthians.

SUGGESTED READING

The Lord's Supper. By Martin E. Marty. Fortress Press, 1980. $3.50. Dan Petzold states: "Marty retells the story of the Lord's Supper by recreating a day in which a believer participates in the service."

10. The Ministry We Share

ASSIGNED READING

Catechism: Questions 267-295 (Office of the Keys and Confession).

Bible: Acts; 1 and 2 Timothy; Titus.

SUGGESTED READING

On the Freedom of a Christian Man. By Martin Luther. *Luther's Works.* Volume 31. Concordia Publishing House.

In Search of Faithfulness: Lessons from the Christian Community. By William E. Diehl. Fortress Press, 1987. $5.95. Practicing Christian faithfulness in the business world, in the face of the church's own barriers to faith development among its people, is the theme of this book by the former Bethlehem steel plant manager and churchman who wrote *Christianity and Real Life* ("the laity must be the agents of their own formation, apart from the clergy").

Thank God, It's Monday. By William E. Diehl. Fortress Press.

11. The Life We Nurture

ASSIGNED READING

Catechism: Questions 201-241 (Lord's Prayer); pages 22-30 (Household Prayers; Table of Duties).

Bible: Colossians; 1 and 2 Thessalonians; Philemon.

SUGGESTED READING

Christian Living

At Peace with Failure. By Duane Mehl. Augsburg Publishing House, 1984. Here is a warm, witty, and highly readable account of one person's struggle towards freedom from chemical dependency.

Bound to Be Free: The Quest for Inner Freedom. By Donald L. Deffner. Morse Press, 1981. This book discusses freedom—of life-style; to disagree; to like oneself; to "grow up"; to fail; in occupation; in politics; in a group setting; in worship; in solitude; to die; to live thankfully; from self-pity; to be joyful; to be obedient; to be patient; to forgive; to be selfless; to dare. Topics are the source of freedom and being freed to free others.

The Christian's Calling. By Donald Heiges. Fortress Press, 1984. $4.95. Heiges discusses "vocation" rather than "occupation" as seen by Luther (in contrast to Calvin and Zwingli).

The Christian Life-Style. By George Forell. Fortress Press, 1970. Especially useful are chapters 1, 2, 5, 10, 13, 16, 17, 20.

The Cost of Discipleship. By Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Macmillan, 1963. $4.95. "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die." "Cheap grace" versus "costly grace" is the theme.

The Ethics of Decision: An Introduction to Christian Ethics. By George Forell. Fortress Press, 1955. $4.50.

The Joyful Christian. By C.S. Lewis. Macmillan, 1984. $5.95. Here are 127 readings from the key writings of the great apologist.

Life Together. By Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Harper and Row, 1976. $1.95. "Now one can be a sinner and still enjoy the grace of God!"

The Newborn Christian. By J.B. Phillips. Macmillan, 1984. $5.95. Here are 114 readings from the author of the famous paraphrase of the New Testament. Sadly, reference to his *God Our Contemporary* is missing—an outstanding text stressing spiritual renewal for *Christian* humanism. "The most hopeful place in which to build a bridge between the worlds of faith and unfaith is on the common ground of human compassion."

The Radical Nature of Christianity. By Waldo J. Werning. Mandate Press, 1976. $5.85. This book states: "There is an apparent immediate need in the world for an intensified evangelization thrust that involves greater personal consecration and more sacrificial offerings from God's people."

Prayer

Day by Day We Magnify Thee. By Martin Luther. Steiner and Scott; Fortress Press, 1982. $10.95. This volume contains daily devotional readings from Luther's writings.

Diary of Private Prayer. By John Baillie. Scribner, 1949. $6.95. Here are vibrant, incisively personal prayers for each morning and evening of the month.

Imitation of Christ. By Thomas à Kempis. Catholic Book Publishers. $3.50. This historic classic deals with self-abnegation and becoming a "little Christ."

Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer. By C.S. Lewis. Harcourt Brace, 1973. $3.95.

You Promised Me, God! By Donald L. Deffner. Concordia Publishing House, 1981. Here are semi-poetic vignettes in which God speaks directly to the Christian, sharing some of His 8,910 promises.

12. The World We Serve

ASSIGNED READING

Bible: James; 1 and 2 Peter; 1, 2, and 3 John; Jude.

SUGGESTED READING

The Compassionate Mind: Evangelization and the Educated. By Donald L. Deffner. Fort Wayne, Indiana: Concordia Theological Seminary Printshop, 1988. Concerns include establishing a trust-relationship with the "honest agnostic," witnessing to "intellectuals," and "reading the world" theologically through its secular literature. There is an annotated bibliography.

The How to Respond Series. Concordia Publishing House. Individual booklets include the following topics: Transcendental Meditation; Latter Day Saints; Occult; Jehovah's Witnesses; Eastern Religions; New "Christian" Religions; Islam; Science Religions; Seventh Day Adventists; Cults.

Out of the Salt Shaker: Evangelism as a Way of Life. By Rebecca M. Pippert. Inter-Varsity Press, 1979. $4.95. Study Guide, $1.95. This warm, human and "vulnerable" guide to both relaxedness and authentic enthusiasm in conversational evangelism describes evangelism as a lifestyle. There are 400,000 copies in print. There is a valuable annotated bibliography: understanding the Christian faith; evangelization Bible studies; books for Christians on better witnessing; and also (for non-Christian friends) in-depth books for non-Christians on various issues.

Speaking of Jesus: Finding the Words for Witness. By Richard Lischer. Fortress Press, 1982. Here is a superb text on evangelization for the laity.

Speaking the Gospel Today. By Robert Kolb. Concordia Publishing House, 1987. This book treats basic doctrines in relation to the mission of the church.

Who Are the Unchurched? By J. Russell Hale. Glenmary, 1977. The reasons why people stay outside the church are divided into twelve interview-filled categories—with implications for mission. This very readable manual will help evangelization committees to understand the thinking of their "unchurched" neighbors—with implications for the church's approach.

A Witness Primer. By Erwin J. Kolb. Concordia Publishing House, 1986. Basic tools for personal witnessing precede a helpful bibliography.

13. The Goal We Seek

ASSIGNED READING

Catechism: Questions 151-159 (Resurrection); 195-200 (Life Everlasting).

Bible: Philippians; Hebrews; Revelation.

SUGGESTED READING

The Mystery of Pain. By Paul J. Lindell. Augsburg Publishing House, 1974; out of print. Here is a profound christological approach to the bearing of pain and facing imminent death.

A Cry of Absence: Reflections for the Winter of the Heart. By Martin E. Marty. Harper and Row, 1983. Marty addresses the inadequacy of "summery religion," the feel-goodism of the fundamentalists, and speaks to the more "wintry" disposition of those "who live on the horizon" where faith and unfaith meet—with immense assurance to those who live on that dangerous border and a great affirmation of faith.

Door Ajar: Facing Death without Fear. By Josephine M. Benton. Pilgrim Press, 1979. $4.45. Dan Petzold describes this book as "full of comforting quotes, recounted experiences and feelings, and consolation from the Bible."

A Grief Observed. By C.S. Lewis. Bantam Books, 1976. $3.50. Dean Wenthe states: "This study meets the reality of death and suffering and works through it christologically."

Living with Dying. By Glen W. Davidson. Augsburg Publishing House, 1975; out of print. Norbert H. Mueller states: "In a very understandable and readable fashion, Davidson ably shows people how to handle their emotions, understand the dying, and respond to the needs of the dying."

Understanding the Death of the Wished-for Child. By Glen W. Davidson. Springfield, Illinois: OGR Service Corporation, 1979. Norbert H. Mueller sees this book as "helping parents—particularly a woman who is susceptible to chronic disorientation as a result of the death of the wished-for child—through a miscarriage, still-birth, or death in the neo-natal period."

Understanding Mourning. By Glen W. Davidson. Augsburg Publishing House. $5.95. Norbert H. Mueller states: "Dr. Davidson presents a way in which people can live through the confusion, bizarre thoughts, emotional swings, sudden tears, and sense of defeat and depression that come about as a result of being bereaved and, through helpful guidelines, brings such people through healthy mourning and returns them to a reorganized life."

Why Me, Lord? Meaning and Comfort in Times of Trouble. By Carl W. Berner. Augsburg Publishing House, 1973. $5.95. Dan Petzold states: "This simple but complete book presents biblical truth and comfort for Christians facing problems, even death, offering personal resolutions and prayers."

14. The Congregation We Join

ASSIGNED READING

Catechism: Questions 175-186 (Church); 319-331 (Communion and Confirmation—but excoriate the word "renewal" in reference to the baptismal vow).

SUGGESTED READING

Basic Christianity. By John R. Stott. Inter-Varsity Press, 1970. $2.95. Here is a concise summary of humanity's need, God's action, and our loving response. Rebecca Manley Pippert calls this book "a great refresher for the believer and a clear presentation for the seeker.".

Damned through the Church. By John Warwick Montgomery. Bethany House, 1970. $2.95. Dan Petzold states: "This little book jolts the indifferent church-goer with the danger of a worldly, self-oriented understanding of the body of Christ and draws him into the gospel."

The Large Catechism. By Martin Luther.

My Heart, Christ's Home. By Robert Boyd Munger. Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship. This booklet is an intriguing account of how Christ possesses the totality of the "house of our life."

Keeping the Faith: A Guide to the Christian Message. By David G. Truemper and Frederick A. Niedner, Jr. Fortress Press, 1981. $6.95. Luther G. Strasen describes this book as "a commentary on the catechism designed to help Christians tend the faith they hold, nurturing their understanding of it in our changing age. It interprets Christian doctrine as instruction on how to bear the message well, how to tell the story in such a way that Christ is glorified and sinners hear the good news."

The Protestant Faith. By George W. Forell. Fortress Press, 1975. $5.95.

A Theology to Live By: The Practical Luther for the Practicing Christian. By Herman Preus. Concordia Publishing House, 1977. $7.95. Heino Kadai states: "The book is a competent and inviting guide to the religious perspective of Luther and the Lutherans. The work can be read with profit by professional theologians, but it speaks most rewardingly to those Christians who are seeking to increase their depth of knowledge and Christian commitment."

This People, This Parish. By Robert K. Hudnut. Moody Press, 1986. Dan Petzold states: "As the author subtitles his book, it is a 'love story' about a pastor and his people, conveying the powerful benefits of fellowship in the church."

Wings of Faith: The Doctrines of the Lutheran Church for Teens. Edited by Terry K. Dittmer. Concordia Publishing House, 1988. This book is written for youth, but is highly valuable for later age levels. There are excellent chapters by William Weinrich, John Johnson, David Lumpp, Dean Wenthe, Paul Raabe, and Terry Dittmer.

Theological Observer

NEO-DONATISM OR NEO-DOCETISM?

Church history is replete with well-intentioned responses to theological issues. On occasion, however, such responses appear to assume (before argument) that contemporary issues are mere reappearances of old issues and that therefore a simple repetition of old formulae suffices to answer the demands of the present. The genius of an Athanasius, an Augustine, and a Luther was that they did not evaluate the demands of their times on the basis of the menu of past history, but analyzed clearly the challenge to orthodoxy in its own terms and were able to forge fresh yet necessary elaborations to the church's confession precisely to defend and to maintain that confession. Athanasius' insistence on the *homoousios*, although held by many to be a dangerous novelty, was in time recognized to be necessary for the church's doctrine of God. Augustine's doctrine of original sin, again although held by many to be a dangerous novelty, came to be recognized as required for the church's doctrine of grace. Similarly, Luther would have proved ineffectual had he in the face of Zwingli's spiritualization of the Lord's Supper and Rome's depreciation of justifying faith merely restated the christology of Chalcedon. Rather, he appropriated scriptural truth afresh and in doing so was recipient of all sorts of nasty appellations. He was to Rome a "boar in God's vineyard"; to Zwingli he was a monophysite.

With this in mind it was disappointing to find TM ("Theological Observer," *Concordia Journal*, January 1990, pp. 2-3) raising the specter of "Neo-Donatism" in the light of incipient inquiry concerning the reality or validity of sacraments dispensed by women "pastors." TM writes that "some of the Synod's theologians" are using a "fallacious Roman Catholic argument" against the ordination of women, that argument being that the sacraments performed [sic] by a woman pastor are not valid sacraments. Now what, according to TM, is Roman Catholic about this argumentation is this, that it "makes the validity of a Sacrament or absolution depend on the administrator's status of being ordained" or that it ties validity to "the moral character of the administrator or the recipient, or to the office of the administrator." This, we are told, is Donatism, and TM directs us to a number of Luther texts which clearly reject Donatism. We might add the explicit rejection of Donatism in Augustana VIII.

Now if there are some theologians in the synod who are maintaining that the validity of sacraments depends upon the holiness of any person (even a female "pastor") or upon the ordination of any person (what TM agrees to call "cultic holiness"), then we shall certainly join him in his plea for such theologians to think again. However, among those who are beginning to inquire about the validity-reality of sacraments administered by women "pastors" we know of *no one* who, in fact, holds to such Donatistic notions. Here we must simply ask whether TM has taken the necessary effort to analyze fully the implications of the theological understandings which motivate the urge toward the ordination of women and whether TM has reflected about the implications for the doctrines of the church and the sacraments when a church body advocates and regularizes a practice which is contrary to the apostolic word. Is it really sufficient to say, as true as it is, that church bodies that have established female "pastorates" are "living in the midst of dangers involved in disobedience to God's Word and have decisions to make about testifying to the truth?"

TM adduces Luther texts which reject the Roman *ex opere operato* because it rests upon a false view of the power of priestly consecration. Yet the emphasis of TM on the "power of the Word" can also move in the direction of *ex opere operato* if that word is shorn of all ecclesial and confessional content. Does TM wish to suggest that the mere form of a rite, spoken by anyone, spoken in any context, effects a sacrament? Does the word, disembodied of time and space, effect a sacrament? Do, for instance, the Mormons have the sacrament even though they may correctly mouth the instituting words? Do we really wish to imply that church bodies, ashamed of the trinitarian names, who modalistically substitute actions (creator, redeemer, sanctifier) for the personal designations, possess valid baptisms merely because of the "power of the Word"? Is not this something more than sin? Is it not the absence of *the* faith and therefore the absence of faith? Is not to abstract the word's power and efficacy from the institutions of Christ and from the church which in creed and worship speaks of God as He has spoken to us to begin to press toward a magical understanding of the divine word? To provide an analogous point, would we wish to assert that because of the word's power two homosexuals or two lesbians in fact and truth are married before God

(what God has joined together!)? Is it not rather that homosexual or lesbian marriage is uneffected *because* the institution of God has been overthrown? Here not a mere disobedience to a divine command nor a failure rightly to testify to the truth, but an actual thwarting of God's effecting word results from the failure to hold upright the institution of God and the reality to which that institution gives voice. The mere use of the (correct) sacramental formulae does not absolutely guarantee that Christ's institution is present.

It is disappointing, then, that TM does not take some note of the repetitiveness with which Luther, within the very texts to which TM refers, speaks of the sacraments as "caused by Christ's ordinance, command, and institution" (e.g., *LW*, 38, pp. 199ff.). Hence, the sacraments belong not to us but to Christ, "for He has ordained all this and left it behind as a legacy in the church to be exercised and used to the end of the world." And then comes this statement: "however, if we alter it or improve on it, then it is invalid and Christ is no longer present, nor is His ordinance." And it is in this very context that Luther uses the hypothetical case of the devil assuming the form of a man and by stealth having himself called to the office of the ministry and then publicly preaching and administering according to the command of Christ. Are such acts valid? Yes! But they are valid because all this was done according to the command of Christ. But what if all this had not been done according to the command of Christ? What if the devil had taken the form of a woman and had baptised in the name of the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier? Would then those sacramental acts of the devil have been valid, that is, sacraments at all? We do not have on this a word of Luther to answer such a question, since he did not face the question in this form. But this is indeed the very point raised by our own contemporary ecclesiological situation. It is *not* a question of a person's holiness or of intrinsic powers of the consecrated priest. It is, however, a question of Christ's command and ordinance and, today, whether that command and ordinance implies and connotes the apostolic prohibition of female ministers. Now this question does not simply go away by raising the specter of "Neo-Donatism." To apply that bit of church history is, we suggest, simply to misread the actual question of the day and has the unfortunate effect of suppressing meaningful discussion by casting (unwarranted)

aspersions upon the doctrinal rectitude of those who are attempting to come to serious terms with our day.

But we wish also to raise the question of whether the Bible does not itself give an indication that the maleness of the officiant at the altar is to be understood as implied and connoted in the command and ordinance of Christ. Despite cultural contexts in which priestesses were a commonplace (Canaan, for example), Israel displayed exclusively a male priesthood. So too the maleness of Christ is prophetically envisioned already in the great messianic promises (from the very beginning; see Genesis 3:15): in the priest after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110), in the prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15-18), and in the son of David (2 Samuel 7). This biblical pattern was followed by Christ Himself in the choosing of the twelve apostles (and Paul) and has been faithfully followed also by the church for two millennia as men only were called into the office of bishop and pastor. Is it not required in the present situation to inquire whether this consistent practice, witnessed throughout the Scriptures, has some natural and organic connection to the thoroughgoing use of masculine names and images for God (which, of course, are themselves up "for grabs" in some circles)? Are masculine words of a wholly distinct order of representation from that of persons who publicly and on behalf of all represent God's Word, Jesus Christ, who was incarnated in, yes, male humanity? If the specific language of God's revelation and if the concrete and particular forms by which the Word of God has taken representation are regarded as merely incidental rather than central to our knowledge of who God is and what He is like for us, then there may well be a greater danger of neo-docetism than of neo-donatism.

William C. Weinrich
Dean O. Wenthe

Homiletical Studies

Epistle Series A

THE SECOND-LAST SUNDAY IN THE CHURCH YEAR

November 18, 1990

1 Thessalonians 1:3-10

The lectionary has several pericopes from the first chapter of 1 Thessalonians. For this Second-Last Sunday of the year we want to preach in the context of the Old Testament lesson with its stern warnings (Jeremiah 25:30-32) and the gospel predicting the last judgment (Matthew 25:31-46). In end times God's people need to be built up in faith, love, and hope. Faith and works are, in justification, mutually exclusive; they unite in sanctification. The commentaries discuss the difference between work and labor. A parallel occurs in Revelation 2:2.

We want to join Paul in comforting people with reassurance that they are chosen as evidenced by the Spirit's fruits. In verse 5 "power" is the same Greek word as in Romans 1:16. The gospel has both explosive and sustaining power. Not only did the gospel explode into the lives of the Thessalonians during the brief time Paul had with them before Jewish persecution drove him out of town (Acts 17:1-10), but it will continue to sustain them in the coming wrath. The gospel is the powerful tool of the Holy Spirit to do the humanly impossible, to work deep conviction.

How often have we preached on the one lost sheep? The text begs us to address the ninety-nine. What a joy for Paul to be able to commend the Thessalonians as imitators of himself and of the Lord, and as models to other believers, in the face of severe suffering. We can look for the imitation of Christ among the people we serve. They too are needled for holding to *sola scriptura* in the face of "enlightened" humanism. What other persecutions do they endure?

The word which the NIV translates as "model" in verse 7 is translated as "form" in Romans 6:17. The word means a "pattern" or "mold," being derived from the verb meaning to "strike" an image or imprint. Like Paul, we can point to examples without fostering spiritual class-consciousness.

There is strength in the ringing of verse 8—not tinkling bells, but sounding trumpets, booming thunder, reverberating echoes. When the proclamation of the gospel rings out from the pulpit, the gospel rings out in the daily lives of God's people. Our people too have plenty of idols—money, cults, man—to tempt them from the living and true

God. At year's end, in these times, we do not wait and do nothing. Rather, like the Thessalonians, we wait and serve the coming Lord.

The goal of the sermon outlined here is to encourage joyful living. The problem is that God's people suffer. The means to the stated goal is the proclamation of the gospel that God loves us.

Introduction: Christian living is joyful living. But at the end of the church year we recognize the wrath our just God must visit on sinful people when He comes again. The Holy Spirit and Saint Paul encourage the Thessalonians and us too:

SMILE! GOD LOVES YOU!

I. Smile! God gives gifts to you (v. 3).
   A. You need special gifts to face suffering (v. 6b). (One can cite particular persecutions of this congregation.)
   B. You have special gifts as evidenced by special fruits.
      1. Your faith produces work.
      2. Your love yields labor.
      3. Your hope engenders endurance.

The fruits of the Spirit in your life prove God chose you.

II. Smile! God chose you (vv. 4-5a).
   A. God loves all people (John 3:16).
      1. Love is why Jesus lived perfectly for them.
      2. Love is why Jesus died perfectly for them.
      3. Love is why Jesus rose for them.
      4. Love is why Jesus rules for them.
   B. God loves you personally (Isaiah 43:1b).
      1. Love is why Jesus lived perfectly for you.
      2. Love is why Jesus died perfectly for you.
      3. Love is why Jesus rose for you.
      4. Love is why Jesus rules for you.

Having chosen you, the Lord considers you His great pride.

III. Smile! God boasts of you (vv. 5b-9a).
   A. We are reluctant to brag about ourselves.
   B. The Lord calls you His special treasure (Exodus 19:5, Malachi 3:17;1 Peter 2:9).
   C. Jesus boasted of the Ephesians (Revelation 2:2).
   D. As your pastor, I boast of what God does through you. (One can cite accomplishments of members without naming names.)

What the Lord has started, the Lord shall complete (Philippians 1:6).

IV. Smile! God rescues you (vv. 9b-10).
   A. Christian living in these last times is a hassle.

1. Many people call our message foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:18).
2. Many people call our lives foolishness (1 Corinthians 2:14).

B. The gospel rings out in your life (v. 5; Romans 1:16).
1. The gospel is dynamite.
2. The gospel is a dynamo.

Conclusion: When we see a bumper sticker which says, "Smile! God loves you," we may think the idea superficial. But it is true! Our Lord continually plasters us with happy faces. Smile! God loves you!

Warren E. Messmann
Fort Wayne, Indiana

THE LAST SUNDAY IN THE CHURCH YEAR

November 25, 1990

2 Peter 3:3-4, 8-10a, 13

The Apostle Peter's goal in this pericope, and preferably the goal of pastors preaching thereon, is to strengthen the faith of Christians in the parousia. The problem is the innate human desire to experience immediate gratification, especially in modern America. Thus, the only way to accomplish the goal stated above is God's promise—the second coming is the necessary consequence of the first coming of Jesus Christ.

The "last parts of the days" in verse 3 ("the last days" in the KJV) refer to the New Testament era and not to any specifically late period within it. That already the apostolic period falls within the scope of this designation necessarily follows from Jude 17-19. Jude (18) clearly quotes the prophecy before us and then announces the beginning of its fulfilment, verse 19 using the present indicative of the copula with a present participle: "These are the ones who are causing divisions."

In other words, *ep' eschatōn tōn hēmerōn* corresponds precisely to the *bᵉ'ahᵃrîth-hayyāmîm* of the Old Testament, the phrase which the prophets (the "holy prophets" of verse 2) often used (with variations) to foretell the second part of human history—the Messianic era intervening between the first and second advents of Messiah—which we ordinarily call the New Testament era. In Isaiah 2:2, for example, the English versions generally render the phrase "in the latter days" or "in the last days." A literal translation of the construct phrase would be "in the latter part of the days." The use of the article prefixed to *yamim* is presumably demonstrative. (Even if a generic use were

preferred, the same interpretation would obtain in the end as via the demonstrative route.) The scope, then, of "these days" without qualification is all of human history in uninterrupted continuity with the days of the prophets (as opposed to the eternity to follow the parousia and as opposed also, of course, to the imaginary future millennium of the chiliasts). Thus, "the *latter part* of these days" represents the second of the two main parts of human history—namely, the New Testament era, following Messiah's first coming (Genesis 49:1, 10-12), as opposed to the Old Testament era. The Septuagint translates *'ahªrīth—hayyāmīm* in differing ways in different places. The rendition of this phrase in 2 Peter 3:3 (which occurs as well, in some cases, in the Septuagint) is a relatively literal translation in comparison with some others. Cognate expressions in the New Testament include "the last days" (Acts 2:16); "the ends of the ages" (1 Corinthians 10:11); "later times" (1 Timothy 3:1); "last days" (2 Timothy 3:1); "last part of these days" (Hebrews 1:2, the most literal translation in the New Testament); "end of the ages" (Hebrews 9:26); "last days" (James 5:3); "last time" (1 Peter 1:5); "last part of the times" (1 Peter 1:20); "last hour" (1 John 2:18); "last part of the time" (Jude 18, slightly paraphrasing 2 Peter 3 in the direction of explication but under Hebrew influence).

The "lusts" of the mockers in verse 3 are any desires contrary to God's will, especially the desire to live without divine interference. The *ktisis* of the following verse is not the act of creation, but simply the universe, whatever its origin may be. Thus, the characterization of verse 4 embraces also the modern mockers who use the theory of evolution to exclude divine intervention from history altogether—generally relying on the uniformitarian presuppositions of modern "science," averring "all things remain as" they were. The application of Jude 18 cited above rules out the common identification of "the fathers" with the first Christian generation since Jude himself belonged to this first generation. In addition, the mockers are scarcely speaking as Christians would and so, as unbelievers, have no fathers in the faith. The reference is, therefore, to any and all ancestors—to use the language of contemporary evolutionists, "all the way back to Lucy."

Verses 8-9 are the evangelical heart of this pericope, locating the delay of the parousia precisely in the grace of God operative in the gospel ("the promise"). The point of verse 8 is that God chooses the right time for the accomplishment of His purposes, whether it be tomorrow or in another millennium or whenever. (Completely inadmissible, therefore, is the appeal of some moderates to this verse to justify an "age-day" interpretation of Genesis 1; cf. "The Length of the Days of Creation" [*CTQ*, 52:4 (October 1988), p. 269]). The application of this principle to the parousia finds literal expression

in verse 9 and figurative in 10a. This figure (even more than the one in 1 Thessalonians 5:2) is an abbreviation of the analogy used by Jesus Himself, with which Peter's readers would have been already as familiar as we (Matthew 24:43-44; Luke 12:39-40; cf. Revelation 3:3; 16:15). Eschewing, therefore, the "signs of the end" which the chiliasts seek, we must be ready to see the parousia at any moment (cf. the discussions of Luke 17:20-30 and 24:25-36 in *CTQ*, 52 (1988):2-4, especially pages 170-171 and 302).

Despite, too, the confusion of many modern exegetes, there is no incursion of the end into history ahead of time. The parousia is a single event, exclusively in the future, which we are expecting (verses 12-13) and, indeed, awaiting eagerly (verse 12, where both the context and Scripture elsewhere require us to choose the second sense of *speudō*, "be eager or zealous," in place of "hasten"). In the meantime, we rely not on any experience of the glory to come, but purely on the word of the gospel ("His promise" in verse 13, where *epaggelma* seems to emphasize even more than the usual *epaggelia* [verses 4, 9] the divine objectivity of the promise).

Verse 13 speaks of the purified universe which will issue from the parousia. The newness of this universe will consist above all in the exclusive indwelling of righteousness. That is to say, all the inhabitants will live in complete accord with the will of God—God Himself, the holy angels, and human beings (the believers of this world) perfected in holiness. All sinners (men and devils) will be swept away to eternal perdition. Indeed, even the non-spiritual creation will be purified from all the effects of sin and so transformed into a dwelling-place befitting the righteous (Romans 8:19-22). Nothing here suggests an annihilation of the present universe and another *creatio ex nihilo*. The word which verse 13 uses twice to speak of newness ("new heavens and new earth") is *kainos*, not *neos*; the emphasis is on a qualitative, not a chronological, difference (the *paliggenesia* of Matthew 19:28).

The purification itself which, in connection with the parousia, is to produce the new universe is described in verses 7, 10, and 12, but in only a very partial way. Also these verses prophesy a transformation of the world, rather than its dissolution. A forthcoming study of the epistle appointed in Series B to the Second Sunday in Advent will expound these verses.

Introduction: Modern Americans dislike waiting. A television advertisement makes the point that a business is likely to lose customers who must wait more than a minute on the telephone to reach its number. Americans expect to walk into a shop and buy clothes or shoes immediately, without waiting to have them made.

Americans hate waiting for the meal or the bill in a restaurant. But most people even today would admit that some things are worth a wait—because they are so beautiful or so delicious or so enjoyable. The Apostle Peter speaks of the end of this world in the same way:

WELL WORTH THE WAIT

I. The end requires a wait.
   A. God sets the time on the basis of omniscience and grace.
      1. His omniscience: God knows precisely the right time.
         a. It could be in the distant future.
         b. It could be in the next second.
      2. His grace: God is showing men patience.
   B. Man reacts in several related ways:
      1. Impatience and frustration.
      2. Doubt and despair.
      3. Unbelief and ridicule.
II. The end is worth the wait.
   A. It brings the destruction of all ungodliness.
      1. Removing all unbelievers.
      2. Removing all effects of sin from earth and heaven.
   B. It brings the bliss of believers.
      1. Who will see the fulfilment of God's promise.
      2. Who will be confirmed in eternal righteousness.

Douglas MacCallum Lindsay Judisch

Book Reviews

EXPLAINING YOUR FAITH WITHOUT LOSING YOUR FRIENDS. By Alister E. McGrath. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989.

McGrath, an Oxford don, has penned a useful little book to "help you deal with some of the difficulties which people—especially students!—genuinely feel when they are considering the claims of Christianity" (p. 6). McGrath suggests a number of ways to follow C.S. Lewis' advice to create an "intellectual climate favourable to Christianity." There are chapters on "Jesus," "The Resurrection," "Salvation," and "God" with suggestions for further reading provided at the end of each chapter. McGrath provides examples of how one could discuss such topics in positive, winsome ways with those struggling to understand the major tenets of the faith.

The suggestions are good ones and the overall tone of the book is very positive; however, there are two major problems from a confessional Lutheran perspective. McGrath falls short in his attempt to explain the notion of salvation. The atonement is described as "freedom" and "victory" without a clear explanation of the death of Christ as a vicarious satisfaction for sin. Perhaps this is merely a problem of editorial constraint. And unfortunately, but predictably, no mention is made of how one goes about acquiring the forgiveness of sins. That is to say, McGrath has no theology of the means of grace. Consequently, McGrath asserts that man must "do something" to respond to the gospel and thereby appropriate personally the benefits of Christ's death. With this caution in mind the book may serve its intended purpose of assisting college students and others as they discuss the faith with their non-Christian friends.

Paul T. McCain

JESUS AND THE THEOLOGY OF ISRAEL. By John Pawlikowski. Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1989.

John Pawlikowski presents a concise summary of the present state of discussion between Jews and Christians. There are two driving forces behind such inter-faith discussion, namely, the Holocaust and Vatican Council II's declaration on Catholicism's relationship to non-Christian religions. This declaration, entitled *Nostra Aetate*, included an important statement on Judaism.

The Holocaust is said to be the pivotal event in recent history which has made Christianity's claim of universal significance and the fulfillment of ancient Jewish expectations to be untenable—an option which is never explained. That the "Christ Event" is primarily for Christians and not Jews is the fundamental assertion of this book. According to Pawlikowski, to assert anything more about Christ is to neglect the covenant made with the Jewish people, a covenant not

abrogated by Christ. What is the underlying motive behind such thinking? As Pawlikowski explains, "the extent to which we Christians can create positive theological space for the Jewish people. . .to that same extent shall we moderate, even if implicitly, all absolutist claims for the Christian faith relative to any other religious tradition" (p. 46). Conservative Christians will disagree with the major premise of the book but will find it useful as a brief summary of Jewish-Christian dialogue.

Paul T. McCain

JOSEPH AND HIS FAMILY: A LITERARY STUDY. By W. Lee Humphreys. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1988.

This volume is the second in the series "Studies on Personalities of the Old Testament." However, the book is primarily a literary study of the Joseph narrative (Genesis 37-50), rather than a study of the personality of the biblical Joseph. The work consists of two parts. The first (chapters 2-6) treats the Joseph narrative synchronically and employs the techniques of rhetorical and literary criticism. This is the part most worthwhile for the conservative reader. Humphreys diagnoses the narrative as a novella about "a family rent by strife and deceit. . .that finally gives way to reconciliation," which is intertwined with another story about "the remarkable rise from rags to riches of the young Joseph" (p. 11). Although Humphreys is weak on the historicity of the narrative (p. 20), his descriptions of dynamics of the plot, characters, rhetorical techniques, and theology facilitate the understanding of the text. Particularly the sketches of the personalities of the *dramatis personae* (chapter 4) and the theological evaluation of the narrative (chapter 6), which sees a strong gospel emphasis throughout the see-saw of events, provide stimulating material which pastors could adapt profitably for sermons and Bible studies.

If the busy parish pastor is forced to put the book down after finishing only the first half, it is just as well. In the second half (chapters 7-10) Humphreys attempts the dubious exercise of tracing the supposed diachronic development of the Joseph novella, which he admits is largely hypothetical (p. 136). The methodology is form criticism, following especially von Rad. Humphreys contends that the original kernel of the narrative is the story of Joseph's rise in Egypt (Genesis 40-41), which reflects Egyptian wisdom (chapters 7-8), though the kernel originated in late second millennium Canaan (p. 172), and the full novella was composed in the "Solomonic Enlightenment" (p. 190). The novella is the bridge between the patriarchal narratives and the exodus, and it is not amenable to JEDP source

criticism, though Humphreys is careful not to slaughter the sacred cow of the documentary hypothesis as a whole (p. 199).

The speculations comprising the second half of the book are rather useless for understanding and proclaiming the rich law and gospel message of the text, and indeed such methods of criticism denigrate the text to the point of destroying its kerygma. Nevertheless, the first half offers enough constructive insight to justify acquisition of the book by the pastor seeking a close study of the Joseph narrative for his private study for preaching and teaching.

Christopher W. Mitchell

STRANGER IN THE VALLEY OF THE KINGS. By Ahmed Osman. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987.

The thesis of this book is that a vizier named Yuya who was buried in Egypt and whose mummy now lies in the Cairo Museum is actually the patriarch Joseph. The personal agenda of the author, an Egyptian Muslim, is to provide a reconstruction of biblical history which reconciles Egypt and Israel and furnishes a common link between Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the person of Joseph (pp. 15,18,141-142). According to his reconstruction, Sarah conceived Isaac by Tuthmosis III, so that Joseph had Egyptian blood, and Ishmael was the only legitimate son of Abraham. Joseph descended to Egypt in the fifteenth century, and the Exodus occurred about 1306 B.C. (chapter 11). Joseph was responsible for the rise of monotheism in Egypt under Akhenaten (chapter 13). To support this reconstruction the author cites many parallels between Joseph, as described in the Bible, Talmud, and Koran, and what is known of Yuya, primarily from archaeology.

The chief problem with the reconstruction is that, according to Exodus 13:19 and Joshua 24:32, Joseph was taken from Egypt and buried in Shechem. Yuya may well be a Semite, but he cannot be Joseph! The burial of Joseph in the promised land is theologically significant since it is the locale where God promised to dwell and make available His grace. The author dismisses the biblical evidence by using the documentary hypothesis (JEDP).

The author's thesis also requires a drastic revision of the biblical chronology, which indicates a nineteenth-century descent of Joseph to Egypt and a fifteenth-century exodus. Most critical scholars advocate dates two centuries later than the biblical chronology. The author's challenge of the critical dates is welcome, but he then posits a descent yet another two centuries later, four centuries too late, and allows only one hundred years for the sojourn in Egypt, against the

430 years of Exodus 12:40! It is true that the whole relative chronology of Egypt and Canaan needs to be re-examined, since the critical reconstruction rests primarily on nineteenth-century (A.D.) Egyptian archaeology. However, the chronology needs to be harmonized with the biblical account instead of contradicting it.

Most of the evidence cited is fragmentary, as the author admits (p. 84), and most of the parallels to Joseph would apply equally well to any vizier. The author does not seem to know Hebrew very well (pp. 17,42-43,88,114-115, 162). On the positive side the volume does provide interesting archaeological information and photographs of ancient Egypt. If the thesis had been tenable, it would have been of great value for apologetics.

Christopher W. Mitchell

RECONCILIATION, LAW AND RIGHTEOUSNESS: ESSAYS IN BIBLICAL THEOLOGY. By Peter Stuhlmacher. Translated by Everett R.Kalin. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986.

This is a relatively slim volume but crammed and bulging with rich theological fare. The well-known Tuebingen New Testament scholar, Peter Stuhlmacher, here offers essays on the following topics:

1. Jesus as Reconciler. Reflections on the Problem of Portraying Jesus within the Framework of a Biblical Theology of the New Testament.
2. Vicariously Giving His Life for Many, Mark 10:45 (Matthew 20:28).
3. The New Righteousness in the Proclamation of Jesus.
4. Jesus' Resurrection and the View of Righteousness in the Pre-Pauline Mission Congregations.
5. The Apostle Paul's View of Righteousness.
6. Recent Exegesis on Romans 3:24-26.
7. The Law as a Topic of Biblical Theology.
8. "The End of the Law." On the Origin and Beginnings of Pauline Theology.
9. Eighteen Theses on Paul's Theology of the Cross.
10. On Pauline Christology.
11. "He is our Peace" (Ephesians 2:14). On the Exegesis and Significance of Ephesians 2:14-18.

As one checks through these topics there comes at least a twofold reaction: (1.) These themes are anything but peripheral. (2.) It is not going to be possible to react to all the subjects Stuhlmacher treats. Therefore this review will make several broad observations and then deal with only a few select specifics. In keeping with the whole concept of "biblical theology" Stuhlmacher insists on a methodology which resolutely refuses to interpret the New Testament without careful reference to the Old Testament. In fact, as outlined in his foreword to the English edition, the milieu from which Stuhlmacher draws material for his interpretations focuses on early Judaism as "the primary history-of-religions frame of reference for the New Testament."

The parish pastor will be pleased to note the "practical" goals to which Stuhlmacher is dedicated. He calls attention to the fact that his essays occasionally go beyond descriptive research to indulge in "a biblical-theological evaluation." He defends his procedure with the contention the "exegetical research should not simply serve the pursuit of academic knowledge, but also and above all help the Church to testify to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in today's world." Would that every exegete shared this understanding of the interpreter's task!

And now for several illustrative specifics. Chapter 2 deals with the crucial logion, "to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45; Matthew 20:28). Did Jesus really say it or did he not? Is it a post-Easter creation of the Hellenistic Jewish-Christian community? The conservative, since his confidence in the accuracy of Scripture has been initiated and sustained by the *autopistia* of Holy Writ, will not get bogged down in lengthy investigations but will proceed forthwith "to a positive interpretation of the ransom saying." Does this mean that said conservative is wasting his time going through Stuhlmacher's scholarly investigation which presupposes as a viable possibility that the saying may not be authentic? Hardly—for one thing, the conservative needs to know firsthand how the critical scholar operates. Even more importantly, following Stuhlmacher's argumentation increases the reader's understanding of the depth and breadth of the saying itself. Does the logion indicate an exemplary martyrdom? What is the nature of its dependence on Isaiah 53? Does it stem from the early Christian theology of the Lord's Supper? What are the connotations of the varied formulations *anti pollon, hyper pollon, peri pollon*? Is it legitimate to try to go behind the Greek text in search of an Aramaic original? What insights may be derived from a careful consideration of the Son-of-Man tradition?

Although it is true that the conservative may not always want to take time to follow the gyrations and contortions of the critic, it is evident that he can gain positive insights by thinking through

questions such as the above. And then when Stuhlmacher comes to his positive interpretation of the ransom saying, he does not simply repeat easy cliches. For instance, he notes the correspondence of *lytron* to the Hebrew *koper* and explores the relation of Jesus' sacrifice to the role assigned the sin offering (*asom*) of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 52 and 53.

Similar challenge and stimulus are to be found in Stuhlmacher's treatment of Pauline themes. Here one reads about "the synthetic comprehensiveness of the righteousness of God" (p. 81) and "the salvation prolepsis of the gospel" (p. 50). Involved in these professorial terms is theology worth investigating. On pages 156-158 Stuhlmacher seems to be affirming traditional justification language. However, there are times when he blurs the distinction between justification and sanctification by describing justification as a process (p. 178).

And so the challenges abound. My personal testimony is that the essay on Ephesians 2:14-18 proved helpful to a graduate student in my seminar on "The Theology of Ephesians and Colossians." In teaching the seminar on "Problems in Romans" next quarter, I anticipate frequent reference to various of Stuhlmacher's essays.

An interesting sidelight was the readiness of Stuhlmacher to concede that on certain points he has changed his mind, especially as a result of interaction with other scholars (see, for instance, pp. 91, 108, 130.) The snide cynic may ask: "If he changes his mind so frequently, does he ever really know what he is talking about?" If I may add another imperative to the familiar "*tolle, lege*," it would be "*vide*." If one reads him, I believe that one will see how his changes are often not so much substantative, as efforts at greater precision in making his points. The preacher, who perforce struggles with this problem in proclaiming the message of Scripture, will be sympathetic. All in all this is a significant book by a significant scholar.

H. Armin Moellering
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THE MYSTERY OF THE CROSS. By Alister E. McGrath. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988.

Reformed British theologian A. E. McGrath offers the readers a little book in which he fulfills his intended purpose of stimulating and perhaps irritating the reader's thinking on the full relevance of the enigma of Christ's cross to individual faith and the like of the institutional church. While written in non-technical theological language, the book does address a challenge to those responsible for

Theological Observer

NEO-DONATISM OR NEO-DOCETISM?

Church history is replete with well-intentioned responses to theological issues. On occasion, however, such responses appear to assume (before argument) that contemporary issues are mere reappearances of old issues and that therefore a simple repetition of old formulae suffices to answer the demands of the present. The genius of an Athanasius, an Augustine, and a Luther was that they did not evaluate the demands of their times on the basis of the menu of past history, but analyzed clearly the challenge to orthodoxy in its own terms and were able to forge fresh yet necessary elaborations to the church's confession precisely to defend and to maintain that confession. Athanasius' insistence on the *homoousios*, although held by many to be a dangerous novelty, was in time recognized to be necessary for the church's doctrine of God. Augustine's doctrine of original sin, again although held by many to be a dangerous novelty, came to be recognized as required for the church's doctrine of grace. Similarly, Luther would have proved ineffectual had he in the face of Zwingli's spiritualization of the Lord's Supper and Rome's depreciation of justifying faith merely restated the christology of Chalcedon. Rather, he appropriated scriptural truth afresh and in doing so was recipient of all sorts of nasty appellations. He was to Rome a "boar in God's vineyard"; to Zwingli he was a monophysite.

With this in mind it was disappointing to find TM ("Theological Observer," *Concordia Journal*, January 1990, pp. 2-3) raising the specter of "Neo-Donatism" in the light of incipient inquiry concerning the reality or validity of sacraments dispensed by women "pastors." TM writes that "some of the Synod's theologians" are using a "fallacious Roman Catholic argument" against the ordination of women, that argument being that the sacraments performed [sic] by a woman pastor are not valid sacraments. Now what, according to TM, is Roman Catholic about this argumentation is this, that it "makes the validity of a Sacrament or absolution depend on the administrator's status of being ordained" or that it ties validity to "the moral character of the administrator or the recipient, or to the office of the administrator." This, we are told, is Donatism, and TM directs us to a number of Luther texts which clearly reject Donatism. We might add the explicit rejection of Donatism in Augustana VIII.

Now if there are some theologians in the synod who are maintaining that the validity of sacraments depends upon the holiness of any person (even a female "pastor") or upon the ordination of any person (what TM agrees to call "cultic holiness"), then we shall certainly join him in his plea for such theologians to think again. However, among those who are beginning to inquire about the validity-reality of sacraments administered by women "pastors" we know of *no one* who, in fact, holds to such Donatistic notions. Here we must simply ask whether TM has taken the necessary effort to analyze fully the implications of the theological understandings which motivate the urge toward the ordination of women and whether TM has reflected about the implications for the doctrines of the church and the sacraments when a church body advocates and regularizes a practice which is contrary to the apostolic word. Is it really sufficient to say, as true as it is, that church bodies that have established female "pastorates" are "living in the midst of dangers involved in disobedience to God's Word and have decisions to make about testifying to the truth?"

TM adduces Luther texts which reject the Roman *ex opere operato* because it rests upon a false view of the power of priestly consecration. Yet the emphasis of TM on the "power of the Word" can also move in the direction of *ex opere operato* if that word is shorn of all ecclesial and confessional content. Does TM wish to suggest that the mere form of a rite, spoken by anyone, spoken in any context, effects a sacrament? Does the word, disembodied of time and space, effect a sacrament? Do, for instance, the Mormons have the sacrament even though they may correctly mouth the instituting words? Do we really wish to imply that church bodies, ashamed of the trinitarian names, who modalistically substitute actions (creator, redeemer, sanctifier) for the personal designations, possess valid baptisms merely because of the "power of the Word"? Is not this something more than sin? Is it not the absence of *the* faith and therefore the absence of faith? Is not to abstract the word's power and efficacy from the institutions of Christ and from the church which in creed and worship speaks of God as He has spoken to us to begin to press toward a magical understanding of the divine word? To provide an analogous point, would we wish to assert that because of the word's power two homosexuals or two lesbians in fact and truth are married before God

(what God has joined together!)? Is it not rather that homosexual or lesbian marriage is uneffected *because* the institution of God has been overthrown? Here not a mere disobedience to a divine command nor a failure rightly to testify to the truth, but an actual thwarting of God's effecting word results from the failure to hold upright the institution of God and the reality to which that institution gives voice. The mere use of the (correct) sacramental formulae does not absolutely guarantee that Christ's institution is present.

It is disappointing, then, that TM does not take some note of the repetitiveness with which Luther, within the very texts to which TM refers, speaks of the sacraments as "caused by Christ's ordinance, command, and institution" (e.g., *LW*, 38, pp. 199ff.). Hence, the sacraments belong not to us but to Christ, "for He has ordained all this and left it behind as a legacy in the church to be exercised and used to the end of the world." And then comes this statement: "however, if we alter it or improve on it, then it is invalid and Christ is no longer present, nor is His ordinance." And it is in this very context that Luther uses the hypothetical case of the devil assuming the form of a man and by stealth having himself called to the office of the ministry and then publicly preaching and administering according to the command of Christ. Are such acts valid? Yes! But they are valid because all this was done according to the command of Christ. But what if all this had not been done according to the command of Christ? What if the devil had taken the form of a woman and had baptised in the name of the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier? Would then those sacramental acts of the devil have been valid, that is, sacraments at all? We do not have on this a word of Luther to answer such a question, since he did not face the question in this form. But this is indeed the very point raised by our own contemporary ecclesiological situation. It is *not* a question of a person's holiness or of intrinsic powers of the consecrated priest. It is, however, a question of Christ's command and ordinance and, today, whether that command and ordinance implies and connotes the apostolic prohibition of female ministers. Now this question does not simply go away by raising the specter of "Neo-Donatism." To apply that bit of church history is, we suggest, simply to misread the actual question of the day and has the unfortunate effect of suppressing meaningful discussion by casting (unwarranted)

aspersions upon the doctrinal rectitude of those who are attempting to come to serious terms with our day.

But we wish also to raise the question of whether the Bible does not itself give an indication that the maleness of the officiant at the altar is to be understood as implied and connoted in the command and ordinance of Christ. Despite cultural contexts in which priestesses were a commonplace (Canaan, for example), Israel displayed exclusively a male priesthood. So too the maleness of Christ is prophetically envisioned already in the great messianic promises (from the very beginning; see Genesis 3:15): in the priest after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110), in the prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15-18), and in the son of David (2 Samuel 7). This biblical pattern was followed by Christ Himself in the choosing of the twelve apostles (and Paul) and has been faithfully followed also by the church for two millennia as men only were called into the office of bishop and pastor. Is it not required in the present situation to inquire whether this consistent practice, witnessed throughout the Scriptures, has some natural and organic connection to the thoroughgoing use of masculine names and images for God (which, of course, are themselves up "for grabs" in some circles)? Are masculine words of a wholly distinct order of representation from that of persons who publicly and on behalf of all represent God's Word, Jesus Christ, who was incarnated in, yes, male humanity? If the specific language of God's revelation and if the concrete and particular forms by which the Word of God has taken representation are regarded as merely incidental rather than central to our knowledge of who God is and what He is like for us, then there may well be a greater danger of neo-docetism than of neo-donatism.

William C. Weinrich
Dean O. Wenthe

Homiletical Studies

Epistle Series A

THE SECOND-LAST SUNDAY IN THE CHURCH YEAR

November 18, 1990

1 Thessalonians 1:3-10

The lectionary has several pericopes from the first chapter of 1 Thessalonians. For this Second-Last Sunday of the year we want to preach in the context of the Old Testament lesson with its stern warnings (Jeremiah 25:30-32) and the gospel predicting the last judgment (Matthew 25:31-46). In end times God's people need to be built up in faith, love, and hope. Faith and works are, in justification, mutually exclusive; they unite in sanctification. The commentaries discuss the difference between work and labor. A parallel occurs in Revelation 2:2.

We want to join Paul in comforting people with reassurance that they are chosen as evidenced by the Spirit's fruits. In verse 5 "power" is the same Greek word as in Romans 1:16. The gospel has both explosive and sustaining power. Not only did the gospel explode into the lives of the Thessalonians during the brief time Paul had with them before Jewish persecution drove him out of town (Acts 17:1-10), but it will continue to sustain them in the coming wrath. The gospel is the powerful tool of the Holy Spirit to do the humanly impossible, to work deep conviction.

How often have we preached on the one lost sheep? The text begs us to address the ninety-nine. What a joy for Paul to be able to commend the Thessalonians as imitators of himself and of the Lord, and as models to other believers, in the face of severe suffering. We can look for the imitation of Christ among the people we serve. They too are needled for holding to *sola scriptura* in the face of "enlightened" humanism. What other persecutions do they endure?

The word which the NIV translates as "model" in verse 7 is translated as "form" in Romans 6:17. The word means a "pattern" or "mold," being derived from the verb meaning to "strike" an image or imprint. Like Paul, we can point to examples without fostering spiritual class-consciousness.

There is strength in the ringing of verse 8—not tinkling bells, but sounding trumpets, booming thunder, reverberating echoes. When the proclamation of the gospel rings out from the pulpit, the gospel rings out in the daily lives of God's people. Our people too have plenty of idols—money, cults, man—to tempt them from the living and true

God. At year's end, in these times, we do not wait and do nothing. Rather, like the Thessalonians, we wait and serve the coming Lord.

The goal of the sermon outlined here is to encourage joyful living. The problem is that God's people suffer. The means to the stated goal is the proclamation of the gospel that God loves us.

Introduction: Christian living is joyful living. But at the end of the church year we recognize the wrath our just God must visit on sinful people when He comes again. The Holy Spirit and Saint Paul encourage the Thessalonians and us too:

SMILE! GOD LOVES YOU!

I. Smile! God gives gifts to you (v. 3).
   A. You need special gifts to face suffering (v. 6b). (One can cite particular persecutions of this congregation.)
   B. You have special gifts as evidenced by special fruits.
      1. Your faith produces work.
      2. Your love yields labor.
      3. Your hope engenders endurance.

The fruits of the Spirit in your life prove God chose you.

II. Smile! God chose you (vv. 4-5a).
   A. God loves all people (John 3:16).
      1. Love is why Jesus lived perfectly for them.
      2. Love is why Jesus died perfectly for them.
      3. Love is why Jesus rose for them.
      4. Love is why Jesus rules for them.
   B. God loves you personally (Isaiah 43:1b).
      1. Love is why Jesus lived perfectly for you.
      2. Love is why Jesus died perfectly for you.
      3. Love is why Jesus rose for you.
      4. Love is why Jesus rules for you.

Having chosen you, the Lord considers you His great pride.

III. Smile! God boasts of you (vv. 5b-9a).
   A. We are reluctant to brag about ourselves.
   B. The Lord calls you His special treasure (Exodus 19:5, Malachi 3:17;1 Peter 2:9).
   C. Jesus boasted of the Ephesians (Revelation 2:2).
   D. As your pastor, I boast of what God does through you. (One can cite accomplishments of members without naming names.)

What the Lord has started, the Lord shall complete (Philippians 1:6).

IV. Smile! God rescues you (vv. 9b-10).
   A. Christian living in these last times is a hassle.

1. Many people call our message foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:18).
2. Many people call our lives foolishness (1 Corinthians 2:14).

B. The gospel rings out in your life (v. 5; Romans 1:16).
1. The gospel is dynamite.
2. The gospel is a dynamo.

Conclusion: When we see a bumper sticker which says, "Smile! God loves you," we may think the idea superficial. But it is true! Our Lord continually plasters us with happy faces. Smile! God loves you!

Warren E. Messmann
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THE LAST SUNDAY IN THE CHURCH YEAR

November 25, 1990

2 Peter 3:3-4, 8-10a, 13

The Apostle Peter's goal in this pericope, and preferably the goal of pastors preaching thereon, is to strengthen the faith of Christians in the parousia. The problem is the innate human desire to experience immediate gratification, especially in modern America. Thus, the only way to accomplish the goal stated above is God's promise—the second coming is the necessary consequence of the first coming of Jesus Christ.

The "last parts of the days" in verse 3 ("the last days" in the KJV) refer to the New Testament era and not to any specifically late period within it. That already the apostolic period falls within the scope of this designation necessarily follows from Jude 17-19. Jude (18) clearly quotes the prophecy before us and then announces the beginning of its fulfilment, verse 19 using the present indicative of the copula with a present participle: "These are the ones who are causing divisions."

In other words, *ep' eschatōn tōn hēmerōn* corresponds precisely to the *bᵉ'ahᵃrith-hayyāmîm* of the Old Testament, the phrase which the prophets (the "holy prophets" of verse 2) often used (with variations) to foretell the second part of human history—the Messianic era intervening between the first and second advents of Messiah—which we ordinarily call the New Testament era. In Isaiah 2:2, for example, the English versions generally render the phrase "in the latter days" or "in the last days." A literal translation of the construct phrase would be "in the latter part of the days." The use of the article prefixed to *yāmîm* is presumably demonstrative. (Even if a generic use were

preferred, the same interpretation would obtain in the end as via the demonstrative route.) The scope, then, of "these days" without qualification is all of human history in uninterrupted continuity with the days of the prophets (as opposed to the eternity to follow the parousia and as opposed also, of course, to the imaginary future millennium of the chiliasts). Thus, "the *latter part* of these days" represents the second of the two main parts of human history—namely, the New Testament era, following Messiah's first coming (Genesis 49:1, 10-12), as opposed to the Old Testament era. The Septuagint translates *'ahªrîth—hayyāmîm* in differing ways in different places. The rendition of this phrase in 2 Peter 3:3 (which occurs as well, in some cases, in the Septuagint) is a relatively literal translation in comparison with some others. Cognate expressions in the New Testament include "the last days" (Acts 2:16); "the ends of the ages" (1 Corinthians 10:11); "later times" (1 Timothy 3:1); "last days" (2 Timothy 3:1); "last part of these days" (Hebrews 1:2, the most literal translation in the New Testament); "end of the ages" (Hebrews 9:26); "last days" (James 5:3); "last time" (1 Peter 1:5); "last part of the times" (1 Peter 1:20); "last hour" (1 John 2:18); "last part of the time" (Jude 18, slightly paraphrasing 2 Peter 3 in the direction of explication but under Hebrew influence).

The "lusts" of the mockers in verse 3 are any desires contrary to God's will, especially the desire to live without divine interference. The *ktisis* of the following verse is not the act of creation, but simply the universe, whatever its origin may be. Thus, the characterization of verse 4 embraces also the modern mockers who use the theory of evolution to exclude divine intervention from history altogether—generally relying on the uniformitarian presuppositions of modern "science," averring "all things remain as" they were. The application of Jude 18 cited above rules out the common identification of "the fathers" with the first Christian generation since Jude himself belonged to this first generation. In addition, the mockers are scarcely speaking as Christians would and so, as unbelievers, have no fathers in the faith. The reference is, therefore, to any and all ancestors—to use the language of contemporary evolutionists, "all the way back to Lucy."

Verses 8-9 are the evangelical heart of this pericope, locating the delay of the parousia precisely in the grace of God operative in the gospel ("the promise"). The point of verse 8 is that God chooses the right time for the accomplishment of His purposes, whether it be tomorrow or in another millennium or whenever. (Completely inadmissible, therefore, is the appeal of some moderates to this verse to justify an "age-day" interpretation of Genesis 1; cf. "The Length of the Days of Creation" [*CTQ*, 52:4 (October 1988), p. 269]). The application of this principle to the parousia finds literal expression

in verse 9 and figurative in 10a. This figure (even more than the one in 1 Thessalonians 5:2) is an abbreviation of the analogy used by Jesus Himself, with which Peter's readers would have been already as familiar as we (Matthew 24:43-44; Luke 12:39-40; cf. Revelation 3:3; 16:15). Eschewing, therefore, the "signs of the end" which the chiliasts seek, we must be ready to see the parousia at any moment (cf. the discussions of Luke 17:20-30 and 24:25-36 in *CTQ*, 52 (1988):2-4, especially pages 170-171 and 302).

Despite, too, the confusion of many modern exegetes, there is no incursion of the end into history ahead of time. The parousia is a single event, exclusively in the future, which we are expecting (verses 12-13) and, indeed, awaiting eagerly (verse 12, where both the context and Scripture elsewhere require us to choose the second sense of *speudō*, "be eager or zealous," in place of "hasten"). In the meantime, we rely not on any experience of the glory to come, but purely on the word of the gospel ("His promise" in verse 13, where *epaggelma* seems to emphasize even more than the usual *epaggelia* [verses 4, 9] the divine objectivity of the promise).

Verse 13 speaks of the purified universe which will issue from the parousia. The newness of this universe will consist above all in the exclusive indwelling of righteousness. That is to say, all the inhabitants will live in complete accord with the will of God—God Himself, the holy angels, and human beings (the believers of this world) perfected in holiness. All sinners (men and devils) will be swept away to eternal perdition. Indeed, even the non-spiritual creation will be purified from all the effects of sin and so transformed into a dwelling-place befitting the righteous (Romans 8:19-22). Nothing here suggests an annihilation of the present universe and another *creatio ex nihilo*. The word which verse 13 uses twice to speak of newness ("new heavens and new earth") is *kainos*, not *neos*; the emphasis is on a qualitative, not a chronological, difference (the *paliggenesia* of Matthew 19:28).

The purification itself which, in connection with the parousia, is to produce the new universe is described in verses 7, 10, and 12, but in only a very partial way. Also these verses prophesy a transformation of the world, rather than its dissolution. A forthcoming study of the epistle appointed in Series B to the Second Sunday in Advent will expound these verses.

Introduction: Modern Americans dislike waiting. A television advertisement makes the point that a business is likely to lose customers who must wait more than a minute on the telephone to reach its number. Americans expect to walk into a shop and buy clothes or shoes immediately, without waiting to have them made.

Americans hate waiting for the meal or the bill in a restaurant. But most people even today would admit that some things are worth a wait—because they are so beautiful or so delicious or so enjoyable. The Apostle Peter speaks of the end of this world in the same way:

WELL WORTH THE WAIT

I. The end requires a wait.
   A. God sets the time on the basis of omniscience and grace.
      1. His omniscience: God knows precisely the right time.
         a. It could be in the distant future.
         b. It could be in the next second.
      2. His grace: God is showing men patience.
   B. Man reacts in several related ways:
      1. Impatience and frustration.
      2. Doubt and despair.
      3. Unbelief and ridicule.
II. The end is worth the wait.
   A. It brings the destruction of all ungodliness.
      1. Removing all unbelievers.
      2. Removing all effects of sin from earth and heaven.
   B. It brings the bliss of believers.
      1. Who will see the fulfilment of God's promise.
      2. Who will be confirmed in eternal righteousness.

Douglas MacCallum Lindsay Judisch

Book Reviews

EXPLAINING YOUR FAITH WITHOUT LOSING YOUR FRIENDS. By Alister E. McGrath. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989.

McGrath, an Oxford don, has penned a useful little book to "help you deal with some of the difficulties which people—especially students!—genuinely feel when they are considering the claims of Christianity" (p. 6). McGrath suggests a number of ways to follow C.S. Lewis' advice to create an "intellectual climate favourable to Christianity." There are chapters on "Jesus," "The Resurrection," "Salvation," and "God" with suggestions for further reading provided at the end of each chapter. McGrath provides examples of how one could discuss such topics in positive, winsome ways with those struggling to understand the major tenets of the faith.

The suggestions are good ones and the overall tone of the book is very positive; however, there are two major problems from a confessional Lutheran perspective. McGrath falls short in his attempt to explain the notion of salvation. The atonement is described as "freedom" and "victory" without a clear explanation of the death of Christ as a vicarious satisfaction for sin. Perhaps this is merely a problem of editorial constraint. And unfortunately, but predictably, no mention is made of how one goes about acquiring the forgiveness of sins. That is to say, McGrath has no theology of the means of grace. Consequently, McGrath asserts that man must "do something" to respond to the gospel and thereby appropriate personally the benefits of Christ's death. With this caution in mind the book may serve its intended purpose of assisting college students and others as they discuss the faith with their non-Christian friends.

Paul T. McCain

JESUS AND THE THEOLOGY OF ISRAEL. By John Pawlikowski. Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1989.

John Pawlikowski presents a concise summary of the present state of discussion between Jews and Christians. There are two driving forces behind such inter-faith discussion, namely, the Holocaust and Vatican Council II's declaration on Catholicism's relationship to non-Christian religions. This declaration, entitled *Nostra Aetate*, included an important statement on Judaism.

The Holocaust is said to be the pivotal event in recent history which has made Christianity's claim of universal significance and the fulfillment of ancient Jewish expectations to be untenable—an option which is never explained. That the "Christ Event" is primarily for Christians and not Jews is the fundamental assertion of this book. According to Pawlikowski, to assert anything more about Christ is to neglect the covenant made with the Jewish people, a covenant not

abrogated by Christ. What is the underlying motive behind such thinking? As Pawlikowski explains, "the extent to which we Christians can create positive theological space for the Jewish people. . .to that same extent shall we moderate, even if implicitly, all absolutist claims for the Christian faith relative to any other religious tradition" (p. 46). Conservative Christians will disagree with the major premise of the book but will find it useful as a brief summary of Jewish-Christian dialogue.

Paul T. McCain

JOSEPH AND HIS FAMILY: A LITERARY STUDY. By W. Lee Humphreys. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1988.

This volume is the second in the series "Studies on Personalities of the Old Testament." However, the book is primarily a literary study of the Joseph narrative (Genesis 37-50), rather than a study of the personality of the biblical Joseph. The work consists of two parts. The first (chapters 2-6) treats the Joseph narrative synchronically and employs the techniques of rhetorical and literary criticism. This is the part most worthwhile for the conservative reader. Humphreys diagnoses the narrative as a novella about "a family rent by strife and deceit. . .that finally gives way to reconciliation," which is intertwined with another story about "the remarkable rise from rags to riches of the young Joseph" (p. 11). Although Humphreys is weak on the historicity of the narrative (p. 20), his descriptions of dynamics of the plot, characters, rhetorical techniques, and theology facilitate the understanding of the text. Particularly the sketches of the personalities of the *dramatis personae* (chapter 4) and the theological evaluation of the narrative (chapter 6), which sees a strong gospel emphasis throughout the see-saw of events, provide stimulating material which pastors could adapt profitably for sermons and Bible studies.

If the busy parish pastor is forced to put the book down after finishing only the first half, it is just as well. In the second half (chapters 7-10) Humphreys attempts the dubious exercise of tracing the supposed diachronic development of the Joseph novella, which he admits is largely hypothetical (p. 136). The methodology is form criticism, following especially von Rad. Humphreys contends that the original kernel of the narrative is the story of Joseph's rise in Egypt (Genesis 40-41), which reflects Egyptian wisdom (chapters 7-8), though the kernel originated in late second millennium Canaan (p. 172), and the full novella was composed in the "Solomonic Enlightenment" (p. 190). The novella is the bridge between the patriarchal narratives and the exodus, and it is not amenable to JEDP source

criticism, though Humphreys is careful not to slaughter the sacred cow of the documentary hypothesis as a whole (p. 199).

The speculations comprising the second half of the book are rather useless for understanding and proclaiming the rich law and gospel message of the text, and indeed such methods of criticism denigrate the text to the point of destroying its kerygma. Nevertheless, the first half offers enough constructive insight to justify acquisition of the book by the pastor seeking a close study of the Joseph narrative for his private study for preaching and teaching.

Christopher W. Mitchell

STRANGER IN THE VALLEY OF THE KINGS. By Ahmed Osman. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987.

The thesis of this book is that a vizier named Yuya who was buried in Egypt and whose mummy now lies in the Cairo Museum is actually the patriarch Joseph. The personal agenda of the author, an Egyptian Muslim, is to provide a reconstruction of biblical history which reconciles Egypt and Israel and furnishes a common link between Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the person of Joseph (pp. 15,18,141-142). According to his reconstruction, Sarah conceived Isaac by Tuthmosis III, so that Joseph had Egyptian blood, and Ishmael was the only legitimate son of Abraham. Joseph descended to Egypt in the fifteenth century, and the Exodus occurred about 1306 B.C. (chapter 11). Joseph was responsible for the rise of monotheism in Egypt under Akhenaten (chapter 13). To support this reconstruction the author cites many parallels between Joseph, as described in the Bible, Talmud, and Koran, and what is known of Yuya, primarily from archaeology.

The chief problem with the reconstruction is that, according to Exodus 13:19 and Joshua 24:32, Joseph was taken from Egypt and buried in Shechem. Yuya may well be a Semite, but he cannot be Joseph! The burial of Joseph in the promised land is theologically significant since it is the locale where God promised to dwell and make available His grace. The author dismisses the biblical evidence by using the documentary hypothesis (JEDP).

The author's thesis also requires a drastic revision of the biblical chronology, which indicates a nineteenth-century descent of Joseph to Egypt and a fifteenth-century exodus. Most critical scholars advocate dates two centuries later than the biblical chronology. The author's challenge of the critical dates is welcome, but he then posits a descent yet another two centuries later, four centuries too late, and allows only one hundred years for the sojourn in Egypt, against the

430 years of Exodus 12:40! It is true that the whole relative chronology of Egypt and Canaan needs to be re-examined, since the critical reconstruction rests primarily on nineteenth-century (A.D.) Egyptian archaeology. However, the chronology needs to be harmonized with the biblical account instead of contradicting it.

Most of the evidence cited is fragmentary, as the author admits (p. 84), and most of the parallels to Joseph would apply equally well to any vizier. The author does not seem to know Hebrew very well (pp. 17,42-43,88,114-115, 162). On the positive side the volume does provide interesting archaeological information and photographs of ancient Egypt. If the thesis had been tenable, it would have been of great value for apologetics.

Christopher W. Mitchell

RECONCILIATION, LAW AND RIGHTEOUSNESS: ESSAYS IN BIBLICAL THEOLOGY. By Peter Stuhlmacher. Translated by Everett R.Kalin. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986.

This is a relatively slim volume but crammed and bulging with rich theological fare. The well-known Tuebingen New Testament scholar, Peter Stuhlmacher, here offers essays on the following topics:

1. Jesus as Reconciler. Reflections on the Problem of Portraying Jesus within the Framework of a Biblical Theology of the New Testament.
2. Vicariously Giving His Life for Many, Mark 10:45 (Matthew 20:28).
3. The New Righteousness in the Proclamation of Jesus.
4. Jesus' Resurrection and the View of Righteousness in the Pre-Pauline Mission Congregations.
5. The Apostle Paul's View of Righteousness.
6. Recent Exegesis on Romans 3:24-26.
7. The Law as a Topic of Biblical Theology.
8. "The End of the Law." On the Origin and Beginnings of Pauline Theology.
9. Eighteen Theses on Paul's Theology of the Cross.
10. On Pauline Christology.
11. "He is our Peace" (Ephesians 2:14). On the Exegesis and Significance of Ephesians 2:14-18.

As one checks through these topics there comes at least a twofold reaction: (1.) These themes are anything but peripheral. (2.) It is not going to be possible to react to all the subjects Stuhlmacher treats. Therefore this review will make several broad observations and then deal with only a few select specifics. In keeping with the whole concept of "biblical theology" Stuhlmacher insists on a methodology which resolutely refuses to interpret the New Testament without careful reference to the Old Testament. In fact, as outlined in his foreword to the English edition, the milieu from which Stuhlmacher draws material for his interpretations focuses on early Judaism as "the primary history-of-religions frame of reference for the New Testament."

The parish pastor will be pleased to note the "practical" goals to which Stuhlmacher is dedicated. He calls attention to the fact that his essays occasionally go beyond descriptive research to indulge in "a biblical-theological evaluation." He defends his procedure with the contention the "exegetical research should not simply serve the pursuit of academic knowledge, but also and above all help the Church to testify to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in today's world." Would that every exegete shared this understanding of the interpreter's task!

And now for several illustrative specifics. Chapter 2 deals with the crucial logion, "to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45; Matthew 20:28). Did Jesus really say it or did he not? Is it a post-Easter creation of the Hellenistic Jewish-Christian community? The conservative, since his confidence in the accuracy of Scripture has been initiated and sustained by the *autopistia* of Holy Writ, will not get bogged down in lengthy investigations but will proceed forthwith "to a positive interpretation of the ransom saying." Does this mean that said conservative is wasting his time going through Stuhlmacher's scholarly investigation which presupposes as a viable possibility that the saying may not be authentic? Hardly—for one thing, the conservative needs to know firsthand how the critical scholar operates. Even more importantly, following Stuhlmacher's argumentation increases the reader's understanding of the depth and breadth of the saying itself. Does the logion indicate an exemplary martyrdom? What is the nature of its dependence on Isaiah 53? Does it stem from the early Christian theology of the Lord's Supper? What are the connotations of the varied formulations *anti pollon, hyper pollon, peri pollon*? Is it legitimate to try to go behind the Greek text in search of an Aramaic original? What insights may be derived from a careful consideration of the Son-of-Man tradition?

Although it is true that the conservative may not always want to take time to follow the gyrations and contortions of the critic, it is evident that he can gain positive insights by thinking through

questions such as the above. And then when Stuhlmacher comes to his positive interpretation of the ransom saying, he does not simply repeat easy cliches. For instance, he notes the correspondence of *lytron* to the Hebrew *koper* and explores the relation of Jesus' sacrifice to the role assigned the sin offering (*asom*) of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 52 and 53.

Similar challenge and stimulus are to be found in Stuhlmacher's treatment of Pauline themes. Here one reads about "the synthetic comprehensiveness of the righteousness of God" (p. 81) and "the salvation prolepsis of the gospel" (p. 50). Involved in these professorial terms is theology worth investigating. On pages 156-158 Stuhlmacher seems to be affirming traditional justification language. However, there are times when he blurs the distinction between justification and sanctification by describing justification as a process (p. 178).

And so the challenges abound. My personal testimony is that the essay on Ephesians 2:14-18 proved helpful to a graduate student in my seminar on "The Theology of Ephesians and Colossians." In teaching the seminar on "Problems in Romans" next quarter, I anticipate frequent reference to various of Stuhlmacher's essays.

An interesting sidelight was the readiness of Stuhlmacher to concede that on certain points he has changed his mind, especially as a result of interaction with other scholars (see, for instance, pp. 91, 108, 130.) The snide cynic may ask: "If he changes his mind so frequently, does he ever really know what he is talking about?" If I may add another imperative to the familiar "*tolle, lege*," it would be "*vide*." If one reads him, I believe that one will see how his changes are often not so much substantative, as efforts at greater precision in making his points. The preacher, who perforce struggles with this problem in proclaiming the message of Scripture, will be sympathetic. All in all this is a significant book by a significant scholar.

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THE MYSTERY OF THE CROSS. By Alister E. McGrath. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988.

Reformed British theologian A. E. McGrath offers the readers a little book in which he fulfills his intended purpose of stimulating and perhaps irritating the reader's thinking on the full relevance of the enigma of Christ's cross to individual faith and the like of the institutional church. While written in non-technical theological language, the book does address a challenge to those responsible for