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1994

The Symposia of Concordia Theological Seminary (January 1995)

THE TENTH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM ON EXEGETICAL THEOLOGY

"Biblical Studies: Today and Tomorrow"

Tuesday, January 17, 1995

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| 9:00 a.m. | Various professors of theology of Concordia Uni- |
| and | versity (of any synodical campus) offering papers on |
| 10:45 a.m. | topics to be announced |
| 10:00 a.m. | Chapel Service |
| 10:30 a.m. | Coffee Break |
| 12:00 p.m. | Luncheon |
| 1:00 p.m. | Welcome and Introduction: Dr. David G. Schmiel,
President of Concordia Theological Seminary |
| 1:15 p.m. | "Biblical Studies: Today and Tomorrow." Dr.
David Noel Freedman, University of Michigan, Ann
Arbor, Michigan, and University of California, San
Diego, California |
| 2:15 p.m. | "Contemporary Interpretations of Prophecy in 1
Corinthians." Dr. Gregory J. Lockwood, Associate
Professor of Exegetical Theology (New Testament
Exegesis), Concordia Theological Seminary |
| 3:00 p.m. | Afternoon Tea |
| 3:30 p.m. | "Singing a New Song: Psalm 98 and Contemporary
Liturgics." Dr. Douglas McC. L. Judisch, Professor
of Exegetical Theology (Old Testament Exegesis),
Concordia Theological Seminary |
| 4:15 p.m. | "Rhetorical Analysis in Biblical Study: The Good,
the Bad, the Ugly." Prof. Lane A. Burgland, Assis-
tant Professor of Exegetical Theology (New Testa-
ment Exegesis), Concordia Theological Seminary |

Wednesday, January 18, 1995

- 8:30 a.m. "Canonical Criticism: Promise or Problem for the Future." Dr. Dean O. Wenthe, Chairman of the Department of Exegetical Theology, Professor of Exegetical Theology (Old Testament Exegesis), Concordia Theological Seminary
- 9:15 a.m. "The Ultimate Connection between Justification and Sanctification according to Romans 6:1-14." Dr. Walter A. Maier II, Vice President, Professor of Exegetical Theology (New Testament Exegesis), Concordia Theological Seminary
- 10:00 a.m. Choral Matins: Seminary Schola Cantorum
- 11:00 a.m. "Approaches—Past and Present—to Old Testament Mission Themes." Dr. Walter A. Maier III, Associate Professor of Exegetical Theology (Old Testament Exegesis), Concordia Theological Seminary

THE EIGHTH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM ON THE LUTHERAN LITURGY AND HYMNODY

Wednesday, January 18, 1995

- 1:00 p.m. Welcome and Introduction
- 1:05 p.m. "Modern Insights into the Liturgy from the Anthropologies of Ritual Behavior." Dr. Victor E. Gebauer, Professor of Music, Concordia College, St. Paul, Minnesota
- 2:15 p.m. "Liturgics and Theology." Dr. Aidan J. Kavanagh, Professor of Liturgics and formerly Dean of the Faculty, Yale Divinity School, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut
- 3:20 p.m. Coffee Break
- 3:40 p.m. "Liturgics: Do the Lutherans Have a Confessional Stake in the Current Debate?" Dr. Ronald R. Feuerhahn, Assistant Professor of Historical Theology, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri

-
- 4:45 p.m. Organ Recital: Michael Hollman
5:30 p.m. Dinner
7:30 p.m. Alumni Reunions and Receptions

THE EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM
ON THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS

*"Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum: Reformation
Perspectives on the Holy Spirit"*

Thursday, January 19, 1995

- 8:00 a.m. "The Holy Spirit in the Theology of Paul Tillich: A Lutheran Critique." Dr. Alan W. Borcherting, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary
- 9:00 a.m. "The Holy Spirit in the Augsburg Confession." Prof. Kurt E. Marquart, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary
- 10:00 a.m. Choral Matins: Seminary Kantorei
- 10:30 a.m. Coffee Break
- 11:00 a.m. "The *Filioque*: What Is at Stake?" Dr. Avery Dulles, Laurence J. McGinley Professor, Fordham University, Bronx, New York
- 12:15 p.m. Luncheon
- 1:15 p.m. "*Cum Patre et Filio Adoratur*: The Spirit Understood Christologically." Dr. David P. Scaer, Professor of Systematic Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary
- 2:15 p.m. "The Holy Spirit in the Augsburg Confession: A Reformed Definition." Dr. Richard A. Muller, P. J. Zondervan Professor of Historical Theology, Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan
- 3:15 p.m. Coffee Break

- 3:45 p.m. "Response: A Lutheran Professor Educated at 'Westminster' Looks for Similarities and Dissimilarities." Prof. Richard E. Muller, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary
- 6:30 p.m. Symposium Banquet: Dr. Roger Pittelko, President of the English District of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Detroit, Michigan

Friday, January 20, 1995

- 8:45 a.m. "*Fanatici*: Is the Judgment of the Lutheran Confessions Still Useful?" Dr. Carter Lindberg, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts
- 10:00 a.m. Chapel Service
- 10:30 a.m. Coffee Break
- 11:00 a.m. Panel Discussion
- 12:15 p.m. Adjournment and Luncheon

Information on registration fees, accommodations, and meals with respect to one or more of the symposia described above may be obtained from Miss Trudy Behning, Concordia Theological Seminary, 6600 North Clinton Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46825, or by telephone at 219-481-2143.

The Biblical View of Worship

John W. Kleinig

By way of introduction to a discussion of worship, one may profitably imagine a television-set which has never been used. There it sits in the living room of a house, sheltered from the sun and rain. Since it occupies such a prominent place in the living room, it has developed rather inflated notions about its own importance. It has met all the visitors that have come to the house; it has eavesdropped on all the conversations in the room; it has watched everything that has happened in the house. But it has never been used. It has never been plugged into the electrical circuitry. No one has ever turned on its speaker, so that it could sing and speak properly. No one has ever adjusted its vision, so that it could display a clearly coloured image. And so it has sat there undisturbed and has never functioned as a television set. It has lived all its life in that room and has never discovered what goes on elsewhere outside its immediate range. It has never caught a vision of the world outside and has never brought it back into its home. It has never become a receiver and so could never become a transmitter of words and visions. It is nothing but a useless piece of furniture.

Of a like nature are people who never worship God. They do not fulfill the purpose for which they were created. They never become receivers and transmitters of God's heavenly transmission to us in this world. They lead lives which are spiritually frustrated and unfulfilled.

I. Tuning In

There is only one activity which we do here on earth which will also be done in heaven. Whatever else we do lasts only for a while or, at best, for as long as we live here on earth. But this activity lasts forever and will occupy us through all eternity. In fact, we rehearse it for as long as we live and even then we never do it completely correctly. This activity is *worship*, which is the beginning of a heavenly life here on earth and a preparation for our life with God in heaven. Our worship here is practice for the real thing, like learning to play a musical instrument or like attending school to prepare for a vocation. It is a heavenly activity which is done perfectly only in heaven.

Worship, then, is something supernatural, and it is supernatural in three ways. In the first place, it does not come naturally to us human beings. If we were left to our own devices, we would never worship God properly, since it goes against our grain. We would rather worship ourselves or some homemade idols than the living God. So God Himself has to teach us how to worship. In fact, He does more than show us how it is done; He actually does it together with us, so that we learn it from Him. It is, then, a divine activity, and we join in with it like a horseman who rides a racing-horse.

Secondly, worship is supernatural because it has to do with what is out of this world. It has to do with God and what connects us with God, just as an umbilical cord joins the baby to its mother and nourishes the life of the baby from its mother. Worship is the divine lifeline of the church, which is what makes it so important. Now this situation is something that those who are not Christians cannot understand. The ordinary secular person is utterly mystified by worship. It is unlike anything else we do. It is not useful for anything else. It seems a waste of time and energy. It is rather boring since nothing much seems to happen in it. In short, it makes no earthly sense to anybody who is merely an earthling. Thus, since they cannot appreciate the great importance of worship for the Christian, atheists sometimes commit monumental blunders. For example, the Russian Communists banned all Christian activities except worship without ever realizing that they thereby helped the church survive and even thrive in Communist Russia.

Thirdly, worship is supernatural because it is at core a divine activity. The chief celebrant is Jesus, our great high priest in the heavenly sanctuary. He leads us in our worship by representing us before the Father in intercession and thanksgiving (Hebrews 7:25; 9:25) and by representing God the Father to us in proclamation and praise (Hebrews 2:12). By means of His service in the heavenly sanctuary Jesus leads us, together with the angels and the whole communion of saints, in the performance of the heavenly liturgy (Hebrews 2:11; 8:2; 12:22-24; 13:15).

Since it is supernatural, Christian worship is a matter of mystery. Now a mystery differs from a secret in that it remains inexplicable, even when one knows a good deal about it. St. Paul sums it up in

Colossians 1:24 as "Christ in [or among] you, the hope of glory." It has, then, to do with the hidden presence of Christ who is with us and among us. We are in Him and He is in us. He comes to us and does things for us when we gather together in His name. He brings the Holy Spirit with Him and ushers us into the presence of His Heavenly Father. In worship, then, we come into contact with the Holy Trinity. We come into the presence of the Triune God and share in the ministry of Jesus.

Worship, however, also has to do with our hope of glory, that is, with our life as sons and daughters of God in heaven. This life is not yet apparent to us. It is "hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3). The wonder of it is that in worship heaven comes down to earth in Jesus, and we earthlings are taken up together with Him into heaven. We join in with the angels and saints in heaven as they gather round God's throne and sing: "Holy! Holy! Holy!" By faith, then, we have a foretaste of heaven; we anticipate the glory we shall share as children of our Heavenly Father and members of God's royal family. Wilhelm Loehe said this about the mystery of worship:

In its worship the congregation feels closest to its Lord.
There as close to the Bridegroom as it can get, it leads an
heavenly life on earth, an earthly life in heaven.

Worship, then, is a mysterious tuning into heaven here on earth. By it we human beings become receivers and transmitters of heavenly life together with other Christians.

When we worship, we begin to do the thing for which we were created. We fulfill God's ultimate purpose for us and His whole creation. We become fulfilled with the fullness of God. It is, therefore, the chief thing that we ever learn in this life. It is for this reason that the first three of the ten commandments cover various aspects of it. Apart from worship our Christian faith remains notional, theoretical, and ultimately unreal.

The early Christians spoke much about "orthodoxy." We normally define "orthodoxy" as correct teaching about the Triune God, but it also means "correct worship" or "right praise." Both ideas belong together. Correct doctrine is teaching the right worship of the living

God. All doctrine achieves nothing, no matter how good and correct and inspiring, unless it comes from worship and leads back to worship of the Triune God. For when we worship properly, we let God be our God and have His way with us. In orthodox worship we join with Jesus in His ministry as the great high priest in the heavenly sanctuary.

II. Receiving

We call worship "divine service" but usually put back to front when we do so. We, naturally enough, dwell on what we have to do when we come to church or hold our devotions, which is not really the essence of worship. It is more a matter of receiving than doing; it is first and foremost what God does for us, not what we do for God. The activity of God lies at the heart of Christian worship. Human activity is secondary and dependent on God's initiative with us in it.

This relationship appears quite clearly in Luke 22:24-27. The context here is important for the understanding of this passage. The story is set on the Thursday night before the crucifixion of Jesus. Jesus has just instituted His holy supper and has just announced His impending betrayal by one of the twelve. What happens then is noteworthy:

A dispute arose among them, which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. For which is the greater, one who sits at the table, or one who serves? Is it not the one who sits at the table? But I am among you as one who serves."

In the last sentence the present tense of the verb is to be noted. It indicates continuous activity. The service of His disciples is based on their ongoing service by Jesus. In holy communion Jesus is present as the servant of His disciples. Even though He is their host and they sit as guests at His table, He waits on them and serves

them. He attends to them; He sees to their needs; He fulfills their wishes; He nourishes them; He puts Himself at their disposal—and not just then. As our risen Lord He continues to serve us whenever we visit Him as guests in His house. Yes, Jesus serves us in worship. He works for us; He ministers to us. Unless one sees this trust, he will make no sense of the architecture of our churches, our orders of worship, and the whole business of worship itself. Here the Lord Jesus rolls up His sleeves, lends a helping hand, and puts Himself to work for us.

What, then, does He do for us? There are two simple ways of looking at God's service to us in worship. First, our order of worship is designed to show what God does for us there. Secondly, the gospel-stories tell us how Jesus ministers to us in worship as He once ministered to the people in Palestine.

The common order of worship as a whole bears witness to the mysterious presence and activity of the Triune God with us. It begins with the invocation which announces the presence of the Triune God. The main accent then falls on what God does. He makes us His children in baptism, forgives our sins in the absolution, and receives us as beggars of favours from Him in the introit and the Kyrie Eleison. In the salutation we acknowledge our Lord Jesus as the chief celebrant and liturgist in our worship. Then our Heavenly Father speaks powerfully to us in the Scripture readings and sermon, listens to our requests for His help in the general prayer, gives us the body and blood of Jesus for the healing of our souls in holy communion, and dismisses us with the blessing of His Spirit. Thus, worship is always first and foremost God's gracious doing. He does, to be sure, judge us, but only in order to give us more of Himself and His blessings. Here the gospel strengthens us as we receive a portion of God's measureless grace. Here we are encouraged and invigorated, healed and helped, revitalized and enriched by God. God is the doer and we are the objects of His activity; God is the giver, and we are the receivers of His spiritual gifts to us.

The gospel-stories, in particular, tell us how Jesus serves us in worship. It was for this reason that they were remembered, retold, and included in the New Testament, which reports only a small fraction of all that Jesus said and did. They do more than tell us

what Jesus did for people some two thousand years ago; they inform us about what He continues to do even now in His church through the operation of His holy word and sacraments. His ministry did not end with His death, resurrection, and ascension. These events are merely the inauguration of it. St. Luke makes this point quite clear in his two-volumed history of the early church. In his gospel Luke has shown how Jesus served people by *teaching* the gospel and *healing* the sick in body and soul. When he begins Acts, the second part of this history, Luke refers to what he has written in the gospel in this way: "In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus *began to do and teach*, until the day when He was taken up, after He had given commandment through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom He had chosen." In other words, Jesus continues His ministry through the means of grace in the church. He continues to teach the gospel of God's grace and heal broken people in His hospital, the church. Thus, each gospel-story has its obvious point of application in worship, for we believe that the same Jesus is now physically present and active in worship as He was then in Palestine (Matthew 18:20).

With Christ's service of us in our worship comes a most remarkable reversal of roles. In the Old Testament God had commanded David to institute the Levitical choir to sing His praises as the burnt offering was presented on the altar in the temple. The choir announced His presence, proclaimed His acceptance of His people, and rejoiced in His grace. This order is reversed in the worship of the new age. According to Zephaniah 3:17, God delights in His people and rejoices over them with singing. The prophecies of Isaiah come true wherever the Gospel is proclaimed. God rejoices over new Jerusalem as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride (Isaiah 62:5; 65:19). Whenever we meet for worship God is overjoyed to have us with Him. He rejoices in us and expresses His approval of us. He voices His delight in us and enjoys our company. And His enjoyment of us doubles our enjoyment of Him, so that our joy is full. He has instituted divine worship, so that He can rejoice in us as His dear children.

Worship is God's service of us. It is what the Triune God does for us and gives to us who have confidence in Him. In worship He

gives us as much of Himself as we can receive this side of heaven, so as to prepare us for eternal intimacy with Him in heaven. It is the place where He communicates His wonderful grace to human beings.

III. Transmission

A television-set does not remain inert as it receives its transmission. The same electricity which transmitted the vision helps it receive and reflect the transmitted vision. We, too, cannot remain passive and inert in worship. We are affected by it. We are, in fact, bound to react and respond either negatively or positively to God's dealing with us. This case is rather obvious, even though the priority of divine activity does not always receive enough emphasis in our understanding of worship. We tend to emphasize the human side of worship too much to the detriment of the divine side, which should, however, always receive most weight. What we do in worship stems from what God does and corresponds with it. We take no initiative, but merely go along with Jesus; we follow His lead. He is our leader in worship, our chief celebrant. What is more, we cannot worship by ourselves without the help of the Holy Spirit, any more than the television-set creates its vision by itself without the help of the electricity which can alone enable it to receive and transmit its vision. Our service of God in worship depends on His service of us. It is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Our order of worship makes these facts quite clear to us. In it we first react to God's invitation by gathering in His presence. Then we react to the offer of forgiveness by confessing our sins. We react to God's acceptance of us by singing the Gloria in Excelsis and other hymns of praise. We react to God's speaking by listening faithfully to Him and confessing our faith. We react to God's generosity by offering ourselves and some of our money to Him. We react to God's offer of help by asking Him for help in prayer. We react to our entry into the presence of our Heavenly Father by joining together with the heavenly hosts in singing the Sanctus. We react to the gift of Christ's healing body and cleansing blood by gratefully receiving these gifts and surrendering our lives to Him in the *Nunc Dimittis*. We react to God's blessing by going out into the world

and serving Him in our daily lives. So our order of worship not only tells us how to respond but also helps us to respond appropriately to God's presence and grace.

We are not left to our own devices in all these things. We join in with our fellow Christians and are led by the Holy Spirit, who prompts us and empowers us in our worship of the Father through the Son. The Holy Spirit helps us react appropriately and respond properly. He directs our worship, so that it lets God be God and is rightly attuned to the ongoing ministry of Jesus. What is more, He turns our whole life into a single act of worship, a continual song of praise about our gracious Heavenly Father for the whole world to hear. Thus, by helping us receive God's heavenly transmission, the Holy Spirit makes us into living transmitters of that transmission.

There are many people who participate faithfully in worship but complain that they obtain nothing out of it. Probably we have had such feelings at times. What we forget is that the work of God is invisible to us. We do not see it, but only know about it because He Himself tells us about it in His word. We may sense the results of it, as we sense the results of breathing and eating, but we do not see it happening. It is just as silly to complain about how boring, useless, and unpleasant the worship of the church is as to complain about how boring good food is, or how useless sleep is, or how unpleasant medicine is. Like good food, proper worship is not meant to entertain but to nourish us, and we can often be best nourished by what we most dislike (broccoli or whatever). Like sleep, worship may seem dull and its benefits often escape our attention; they can be physical as well as mental or emotional. (After all, God instituted the Sabbath in the Old Testament for physical as well as spiritual rest, refreshment, and fellowship). Like medicine, worship is at times unpleasant and uncomfortable just because it attacks, destroys, and heals the evil in us. God does not necessarily give us what we want but what we need in worship. Thus, although one may always be grateful if he feels some tangible blessing from worship, there is no reason to be disturbed by the lack of such feelings. The benefits of worship are a matter of faith and not of sight.

Our worship of God here on earth is unfortunately always rather

clumsy and inadequate. Our reception is poor and our transmission is poorer. Our worship is more like learning to play a musical instrument than playing a symphony. But that does not matter. The validity of it does not depend on our ability and performance but on Christ's expertise and skill. What matters is that He gets it right for us. We shall be unable to get it all right this side of eternity. Our whole life then is a matter of learning, bit by bit, how to appreciate, enjoy, and worship God. None of us is an expert in worship; we are all beginners. At best we can support and encourage each other as we learn to worship by worshipping together.

Conclusion

Three stories which illustrate the purpose, nature, and importance of worship may suitably conclude this discussion of the topic. The first story concerns the purpose of worship. The story is told about Prince Vladimir of Kiev in Russia. Around the year 1,000 A.D. he decided that the ancestral religion of his people was no longer good enough. He sent forth ambassadors, therefore, into the surrounding lands to assess the claims of the several great religions. First they went to Mecca where they observed the worship of Islam; they found it too severe, drab, and gloomy for their liking. Then they went to Rome where they found Roman Catholicism to be better than Islam but still lacking. Finally they went to Constantinople where they experienced worship in the great Cathedral of Holy Wisdom. They came back from there with excitement and reported to their king:

We did not know whether we were in heaven or on earth, for surely there is no such splendor or beauty anywhere upon earth. We cannot describe it to you. Only this we know, that God dwells there among men and their service surpasses the worship of all other places.

Thus, Orthodox Christianity became the religion of Kiev and so of Russia. This legend reminds us of what worship is—the mystery of God's heavenly presence with us on earth.

The second story comes from St. Luke 24:13-35. It is the story of the appearance of Jesus to two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

Jesus joined them as they travelled from Jerusalem and discussed the events of Good Friday and Easter morning. They did not at first recognize Him. Even when He showed them from the Old Testament that the Christ had to suffer and die before His coronation as the heavenly King of the world, they still did not see fully. They only recognized Him when He took over the meal in their home, as if He were their host, taking the bread and blessing it, breaking and giving it to them. Then their eyes were opened and He disappeared from their sight. In a way we are in the same boat as those two men that Easter Eve. Like them we have heard about the resurrection of Jesus but are unaware of His presence with us until He teaches us about Himself and reveals Himself to us. Thus, every time Christians meet together in the name of Jesus, their risen Lord comes to them and makes Himself known to them. Every act of worship is a celebration of Easter where we meet with our Lord and come to know Him as He sets our hearts aflame by His speaking and opens our eyes to His presence with us. Every Sunday the risen Lord comes to us as He did to them.

A final story illustrates the importance of worship and the folly of its neglect. Some time ago the author's wife met up with an old friend whom she had not seen for years. In the course of their conversation the friend revealed that she was living with her two children in Adelaide, while her husband lived more or less permanently in Canberra. They saw each other occasionally but they lived apart most of the time. In relation to God, in fact, many Christians are just like a husband or wife who lives apart from his or her spouse and so lacks the common life of marriage. These Christians are baptized and confirmed but seldom engage in worship because they regard it as unnecessary business and a burdensome obligation rather than a marvelous privilege and the highlight of Christian life. Worship is ultimately nothing but our enjoyment of God. The Westminster Catechism begins with the question: "What is the chief end of man?" The answer is apt: "The chief end of man is to worship God and enjoy Him forever." In the final count they amount to the one and the same thing.

The Rev. Dr. John Kleinig serves as professor of theology in Luther Seminary of Adelaide, Australia.

The Contribution of the Reformation to Preaching

Carl C. Fickenscher II

Without question the period of the Reformation brought the Christian pulpit into the modern age. There had indeed been significant developments in the centuries immediately before, and the contributions which Wycliffe, Tauler, and others made to preaching were by no means abandoned, but it was the preaching of Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, and the other great men of their age by which preaching finally stepped out of the medieval shadows.

Elmer Kiessling summarized the impact of the Reformation on preaching as follows:

The details of the art of sermonizing are all very well for ordinary men. That is why after Luther's time the solid body of homiletical wisdom, developed in part and transmitted by the pre-Reformation preachers, was appropriated and added to by those that followed after. But for a time the rules were in abeyance while the giants of the Reformation occupied the pulpits. Indeed, not the least of their achievements was the creation of new rules to supplement the old. Preaching was never the same again . . .¹

Kiessling makes two salient points which will form the basis of this paper. First, because of the brilliant individuals involved, the Reformation was indeed an era of great preaching. Secondly, however, such gifted men were not for the most part concerned about the rules and science of homiletics. Therefore, while the Reformation certainly did change preaching forever, the changes were primarily in the understanding of the preaching event and in the theological content of the sermon rather than in sermon form.

The first section of this paper will very briefly survey some of those giants of the Reformation pulpit to whom Kiessling refers. The remainder will then consider four specific developments which came to Christian preaching as a result of their work: (1.) a renewed emphasis on preaching, (2.) Scripture becoming the source and authority for preaching, (3.) the gospel pervading preaching, and (4.) a new relationship of the preacher to his people. As suggested, these developments most significantly shape the content and the role of preaching. However, attention will also be given to the impact each of these developments had on the form of the sermon.

I. Great Preachers of the Reformation

Any survey of the great proclaimers of the sixteenth century must certainly begin with the man who in the popular sense began the Reformation, Martin Luther (1483-1546). Kiessling writes of Luther's contribution to the art in this way:

The sermons he thus evolved were as different from those of the later medieval preachers as the plays of Shakespeare are different from those of his predecessors. Quite fascinating is the range of his genius, the combination in it of the simple and child-like with the heroic, of brusque and earthy straightforwardness with fine religious sensitivity, of mystical depth with ethical practicality. He had taken over from the pre-Reformation preachers a sermonic instrument that had been developed through centuries of practice. But he disdained their artifices. What need had he of scholastic distinctions, of quotations from the fathers, of mechanically accumulated and arranged encyclopedias of illustrations, or of the tricks of amplification listed in homiletic manuals? His heart was filled to bursting with a great new idea that had remade his own life and was remaking the lives of many of his countrymen and contemporaries. . . . Preaching was never the same again even when rules once more asserted their sway over the second generation. And the new era began in that historic hour in which Luther with a heavy heart accepted the duty which Staupitz placed upon him, publicly to preach the Word of God.²

Remarkably, it was with fear and trepidation that Luther began his preaching career. In the *Tischreden* Luther describes the day in 1511 or 1512 on which his Augustinian superior, John Staupitz, himself a noted preacher, prevailed upon him to preach. Standing under a pear tree in the courtyard of the Wittenberg cloister, the young monk advanced argument after argument against his ever preaching. Finally in desperation, he pleaded that Dr. Staupitz was as good as taking his life. "In God's name!" Staupitz responded. "Our Lord God has many things to do: He is in need of wise people in heaven, too."³

Once in the pulpit, Luther was seldom out of it. More than twenty-three hundred of his sermons are extant, perhaps only a third of those he actually preached.⁴ He began his preaching by addressing his fellow Augustinians. Apparently he was well received, because he was given opportunity to speak at gatherings of the order well beyond his own region. Soon he began also to preach to the worshipers at St. Mary's Church in Wittenberg, the congregation that would hear the large majority of his messages. As the Reformation spread, Luther was invited to preach widely. He even composed several volumes of "postils," sermons to be used as aids or read by others, which circulated his "preaching" all over Germany and beyond.⁵ Nevertheless, his preaching always remained close to home; for extended periods he delivered sermon series on Sunday evenings in his own house.⁶

Though Luther never compiled his thoughts on preaching into anything like a homiletics text, he seemed fond of summarizing them in short, pithy lists. A preacher should, Luther said, "be a logician and rhetorician—that is, he must be able to teach and admonish. When he preaches on any article, he must first distinguish it, then define, describe, and show what it is; thirdly, he must produce sentences from the Scripture to prove and strengthen it; fourthly, he must explain it by examples; fifthly, he must adorn it with similitudes; and, lastly, he must admonish and arouse the indolent, correct the disobedient, and reprove false doctrine."⁷

More briefly yet, Luther summed up the task thus: "First, you must learn to go up to the pulpit. Second, you must know that you should stay there for a time. Third, you must learn to get down again."⁸ In other words, a man should first have a call, secondly have the pure doctrine, and thirdly keep the message under an hour. Even a one-sentence summary of Luther's preaching was possible—as it was of his sermons themselves: "In my preaching I take pains to treat a verse [of the Scriptures], to stick to it, and so to instruct the people that they can say, 'That's what the sermon was about.'"⁹

Luther seldom wrote out his sermons.¹⁰ He preached instead using an outline, or *Konzept*. While his delivery was therefore free and lively,¹¹ he admitted having many a bad dream of finding

himself in the pulpit without notes.¹² Much more of Luther's homiletical thinking, as well as examples of his sermons, will be offered throughout the final sections of this paper.

By no means was Luther the only man to shape the preaching of the Reformation in Germany. Perhaps the second greatest of the German preachers of the Reformation, interestingly, shared Luther's Wittenberg pulpit. More properly, Luther shared his, because after 1522 Johann Bugenhagen (1485-1558) was in fact Luther's pastor there.

Often known by Luther and others as Pomeranus or Dr. Pommer because of the German province of his birth, Bugenhagen was above all gifted as an organizer. He was chiefly responsible for organizing Lutheran churches in Brunswick, Hamburg, Copenhagen, his native Pomerania, and elsewhere. Ironically, his preaching Luther described as "whatever comes to mind," much like a maidservant chatting with another at the market.¹³ Despite his long-windedness, however, Luther called him "full and solid," a "very good preacher," because "he gives me many commonplaces on which my thoughts may roam."¹⁴

Philip Melancthon (1497-1560), Luther's closest partner, never preached. His place among Reformation preachers is nevertheless secured by his writings. His most significant academic work was a textbook on rhetoric published in 1519.¹⁵ In 1528, after visiting the Saxon churches, he offered pastors help with the content of evangelical preaching in *Unterricht der Visitatoren*.¹⁶ Melancthon even authored two homiletics texts, one of which has been called "justly celebrated."¹⁷

That Melancthon would have been an excellent preacher is demonstrated by his eulogy for Luther. In it Melancthon demonstrates both a command of classical rhetoric and a deep love of the gospel, comparing Luther to great leaders like Solon, Scipio, and Augustus, but finding him to be far greater because of the work God accomplished by Luther through His Word.¹⁸

The most original work of the period on homiletics, however, belonged to Andreas Hyperius (1511-1564). *On the Making of Sacred Discourses* may be seen as the first "scientific" treatise on

preaching theory. While Melancthon and others had taught rhetoric with a view toward preaching, Hyperius' book taught preaching and drew upon rhetoric only as its servant.¹⁹

As in Germany, the Reformation was advanced in Switzerland largely by the words of dynamic preachers. Unfortunately, little remains of the preaching of the first great Swiss reformer, Huldreich Zwingli (1484-1531). More than as a preacher, Zwingli is remembered as the man who brought social reform to Zurich, who, influenced greatly by Luther's writings, spread evangelical doctrine among the Swiss, who established a virtual theocracy, who parted company with Luther at Marburg over the Lord's Supper, and who died fighting for the Protestant cause.

Yet Zwingli thought of himself first of all as "a simple and plain preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ."²⁰ His preaching did indeed create a stir, especially his decision to preach consecutively through the Book of Matthew rather than on the appointed pericopes for the Sundays.²¹ Doubtless his preaching was also largely responsible for bringing about the social reforms he felt to be so important. These seem to have been a major theme in his messages. Deeply concerned that the practice of mercenary warfare was devastating Switzerland, he frequently preached against it.²² Not to be overlooked, however, was his emphasis that the saving "work and honour of Christ would be more clearly recognized" by the "sheep of his flock."²³

Like Luther, Jean Calvin (1509-1564) was driven toward a lucrative law career, somewhat unwillingly, by his father. Unlike Luther, Calvin did not shy away from the opportunity to preach. Without having been ordained and while still a law student at Bourges, he began preaching to small country congregations.²⁴ The turning point in his preaching career, however, came in a sermon which he did not deliver. Having abandoned law and moved to Paris after the death of his father, he was implicated in the authorship of a friend's speech which advocated Lutheran doctrine. Both men were forced to flee.

Not long thereafter Calvin set out for Strasbourg where he hoped to remain in quiet study. En route he stopped for one night in

Geneva. Except for a brief exile, he never left. William Farel, the leader of the Reformation there, persuaded Calvin that he must serve the evangelical cause in the city or place himself in very opposition to God. The rest is more history than can be related in this brief space.

None of Calvin's early sermons remain, but from 1549 on some twenty-three hundred (virtually the same number as for Luther) were carefully recorded.²⁵ They reveal the marks of classical rhetoric placed in service to the word of God. For example, Calvin cites Quintilian favorably, but at the same time warns against pretentious grandiloquence. Exposition of the word is paramount.²⁶

Calvin was not without opposition in Geneva. Banished from 1538 to 1541, he was also censured three times by the council of the city in 1548. Not coincidentally Calvin's preaching was charged with ethical demands and discipline. The great reformer was not at the height of popularity when he died, but his work, especially his preaching, transformed Geneva into a city of noted piety for generations to follow.²⁷

Two other men of the Swiss reform movement deserve brief mention here as preachers. Johannes Oecolampadius (1482-1531) of Basel has left to the present a significant number of sermons. His greater contribution to preaching, however, was in translating many sermons of the great preachers of the early Greek church, Gregory of Nazianzus and John Chrysostom. Their styles shaped his own and influenced other preachers as well.²⁸

Johann Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575) succeeded Zwingli as pastor of the cathedral in Zurich. He was an ardent proponent of Zwingli's doctrines, especially on the Lord's Supper. It was he who presented the Zurich position on the eucharist when the *Consensus Tigurinus* was reached with Calvin.²⁹

Bullinger's sermons were also highly influential in England. Fifty of his sermons were translated and distributed there during the reign of Elizabeth. These were proposed as expositions of Calvinist theology and suggested for use either as models or for actual reading in worship.³⁰

Sermons prepared by one man and read by another were actually the rule of the day in England. In fact, for brief times, they were very literally the rule. In the early years of the English Reformation competent preachers were in woefully short supply. Thus Archbishop Cranmer turned to the few outstanding churchmen of the realm to provide homilies which could simply be read from all the pulpits. In 1548, under Edward VI, and then again in 1576, under Elizabeth, free preaching was prohibited except by the few licensed preachers; only the homilies were to be used.³¹ Fortunately, both limitations were only temporary.

The homilies were composed by men who were more than able to deliver their own work. Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556), who as Archbishop of Canterbury organized the effort, is credited with authorship of three of the twelve sermons in the first series. One of these, on salvation, is decidedly evangelical in its affirmation of justification by faith.³²

Probably the greatest of the English preachers of the Reformation era, and also a contributor to the homilies, was Hugh Latimer (1485-1555). Fearless and pointed in his criticism, he spoke his mind and the word of God as he understood it before both Henry VIII and his son Edward. He once preached to the latter that the common people "are equal with you. . . . The poorest ploughman is in Christ equal with the greatest prince that is. Let them therefore have sufficient to maintain them."³³ Latimer was a most open advocate of gospel-centered doctrine—and from very early in English terms. As might have been expected, he paid for his Protestantism, along with Cranmer and others, at the stake under Queen Mary's reactionary regime.

One other Englishman will be noted. William Perkins (1558-1602) concludes the present survey of Reformation preachers by leaving the era's one celebrated English text on homiletics. *Art of Prophesying* calls sermonizing a "sacred science" and addresses topics from theological ("Of the Word of God") to practical ("Of Memorie in Preaching").³⁴

II. Renewed Emphasis on Preaching

There is remarkable agreement among historians of homiletics as to the specific developments which the Reformation brought to preaching. In Luther's preaching Kiessling sees four: (1.) an enhanced position of Christ in the sermon, (2.) the sermon becoming scriptural in a sense as never before, (3.) deepened ethical content, and (4.) an enhanced position of the sermon in the worship service and in the life of the people.³⁵

In the reformers as a whole John Broadus likewise observes four major developments: (1.) a revival of preaching, (2.) a revival of biblical preaching, (3.) a revival of controversial preaching, and (4.) a revival of preaching the doctrine of grace.³⁶ Close examination will show these two assessments to be virtually identical. Similarly, E. C. Dargan calls the principles of *sola scriptura* and justification by faith in Christ, both established by the preaching of the Reformation, "the most weighty components" of modern preaching.³⁷ He, too, adds as a legacy of the Reformation the new prominence given to the sermon in worship.³⁸

The present research has found the analysis of these scholars to be helpful frames of reference. This paper will, therefore, also discuss four major developments in preaching which arose from the period of the Reformation. In each case special attention will be given to its shaping of the form of the sermon.

The first very significant contribution of the Reformation to preaching was simply to reemphasize the importance of the sermon. The Reformers brought back to preaching a prominence it has held in the church to this day. The renewed emphasis is seen both in the frequency of preaching and in a high view of the sermon as a means of grace.

A common myth decries the silence of preaching in Europe during the Middle Ages. While it is true that precious little was being done in England,³⁹ on the Continent in the later medieval period there was a din of preaching. In fact, it can be argued that at no time in German history was there more preaching than immediately before the Reformation.⁴⁰

Nevertheless, it is certain that sermonizing became more universal during the Reformation, and in some areas became common for the first time. The number of sermons the leaders preached is astounding. A typical week in Wittenberg would offer sermons on Sunday at five o'clock in the morning on the epistle for the day, at ten on the gospel, again in the afternoon on the Old Testament lesson, and then Monday through Saturday daily on the catechism and other selected books of the Bible.⁴¹ For Luther and his contemporaries to preach four times a day was not uncommon.⁴²

The increases in preaching were perhaps most notable where previously there had been the greatest dearth. In England sermons were now to be preached at least once a quarter.⁴³ It was a start. Even Roman Catholic preaching became more frequent.⁴⁴ With the renewed frequency of preaching came also the more competent clergy and more dedicated sermon preparation which it demanded. Luther, Calvin, and their cohorts all understood the difficulty of the task and expected those who ascended the pulpit to be adequate to it.⁴⁵

The increased frequency of preaching was due to the Reformers' understanding of the word of God as a means of grace. The popular understanding of preaching had been as only a preparation for the sacraments. "As Dante has to change guides when he enters heaven, so the sermon has to stop at the gates of the baptismal font, the penitential, and the altar."⁴⁶

By contrast, Calvin was unabashed in calling the sermon itself sacramental.⁴⁷ That is, it was an actual means by which God came to His people. In a sermon on John 4:9-10 Luther asserted:

To be sure, I do hear the sermon; however, I am wont to ask: "Who is speaking?" The pastor? By no means! You do not hear the pastor. Of course, the voice is his, but the words he employs are really spoken by my God.⁴⁸

The preaching of the Reformation thus proclaimed in itself the *certitudo salutis*, the certainty of salvation, because the real speaker was the very giver of salvation.⁴⁹ As Latimer summarized, "Take away preaching, take away salvation."⁵⁰

The renewed emphasis on preaching had a profound effect on the form of the sermon. The sermon became the central element in the Protestant worship service.⁵¹ Thus it would become permanently placed in a liturgical context. Parameters of time (though varying widely from one tradition and era to another) would be set. According to the thinking of the Reformation the sermon would never be a perfunctory interlude, but a lively and focused moment.

In Lutheran services the sermon enjoyed a new relationship with the sacraments. Without replacing Holy Communion as the highest moment, the sermon is exalted in that it properly explicates the sacrament. The importance of the sermon along *with* the Lord's Supper is clearly seen in Luther's *Formula Missae*, his Latin order of service (1523).

The order begins with an entrance psalm and liturgical hymns and continues with a collect (appointed prayer), epistle, gospel, and the Nicene Creed. Luther then writes:

We do not think that it matters whether the sermon in the vernacular comes after the creed or before the introit [that is, entrance psalm] of the mass; although it might be argued that since the gospel is the voice crying in the wilderness and calling unbelievers to faith, it seems particularly fitting to preach before mass. For properly speaking, the mass consists in using the gospel and communing at the table of the Lord.⁵²

The service then concludes with a full liturgy of Holy Communion, purged of the corruptions of the papistic mass. In Luther's thinking, therefore, the sermon indeed stands alongside the sacrament as the twin foci of the service, two grand moments in which the Lord comes to His people.

Luther's *Deutsche Messe* (1526), his mass in the vernacular, reflects the same understanding.⁵³ His suggestions for weekday services, during which the Lord's Supper was not celebrated, also emphasize the sermon. He points out that, according to ancient custom, such services included the *homilia*, exposition of the word, a practice which medieval usage had omitted.⁵⁴ Whenever God's people came together, then, preaching was to be restored to its

historic place.

III. Scripture as the Source and Authority for Preaching

In order for preaching to merit such an exalted position in the life of the church, it was implicit in the minds of the reformers that the preaching be based solely on the word of God, the Holy Scriptures. A second modern myth of medieval preaching is that it was devoid of Scripture. Actually the preachers of the pre-Reformation era were well-versed in their Bibles and quoted from them often.⁵⁵

However, along with the biblical sources, a wide variety of fanciful alternatives were used. Legends called *exempla*, some pious, some obscene, held high homiletical standing, having been collected by the likes of Gregory the Great. The saints, as one might guess, appeared prominently. Nature-stories and pseudo-scientific observations were also popular sermon materials.⁵⁶

For preachers of reform, Scripture would not share the pulpit with such imaginative wanderings. Everywhere *sola scriptura* was a battle-cry of the Reformation. Zwingli was committed to it.⁵⁷ Swiss cities and the English crown legislated it.⁵⁸ Luther simply preached it:

This is the sum of the matter: Let everything be done so that the Word may have free course instead of the prattling and rattling that has been the rule up to now. We can spare everything except the Word. Again, we profit by nothing as much as the Word . . . "One thing is needful."⁵⁹

The reformers believed that the word of God must be preached to be fully effective.⁶⁰ The church was not to be "a pen-house but always a mouth-house," Luther said.⁶¹

The generous use of legends alongside Holy Writ was not the only flaw in the medieval preacher's use of the Bible. Perhaps even more damaging—and even more fanciful—was the interpretive hermeneutic which prevailed. Allegory, long ago inherited from Origen, still dominated preaching.⁶² During his early years even Luther was not above allegorizing his texts.⁶³

One of the greatest contributions of the Reformation to preaching,

however, was recapturing the literal sense of the Scriptures. Luther expressed his repentance in this way:

At that time I dealt with allegories, tropologies, and analogies and did nothing but clever tricks with them. If somebody had them today they'd be looked upon as rare relics. I know they're nothing but rubbish. Now I've let them go. . . . The literal sense does it—in it there's life, comfort, power, instruction, and skill.⁶⁴

Bullinger's sermon, "Of the Word of God," may well express the understanding of the entire reform-movement in its five principles of correctly interpreting the text. The expositor should be guided by (1.) the rule of faith (consistency with the clear biblical doctrines), (2.) love of God and neighbor, (3.) the historical occasion of the text, (4.) Scripture interpreting Scripture, and (5.) prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁵

Luther must receive credit for rediscovering how to form the sermon around the mighty principle of *sola scriptura*.⁶⁶ The changes are visible in two different styles of preaching, both his. Of one style are his pericopal sermons. On Sunday mornings and festivals, Luther generally preached on one of the pericopes of the day appointed in the historic lectionary, either the epistle or the gospel. Since these consisted of determined cuttings of verses, usually a paragraph in length, Luther would develop from them a deductive outline. For example, on the Nineteenth Sunday after the Feast of the Trinity (October 3, 1529), he preached on Matthew 9:1-8 according to the following outline:

The Righteousness of the World and the
Christian—Heavenly Righteousness

or

Jesus Cures the Palsied Man,
and the Power on the Earth to Forgive Sins

- I. Of the Worldly Righteousness and Piety
- II. Of the Christian and Heavenly Righteousness
 - A. This righteousness in itself and its right use
 - B. The fountain and foundation of this righteousness

C. The means by which to become partakers of this righteousness⁶⁷

The inheritance from scholastic preaching is obvious. The theme and divisions are clear and logical. Unlike those of the scholastics, however, the sermon does not become mired in minutiae of subdivisions. The outline develops only the main ideas of the text and then expounds them freely. The text determines structure. Such preaching remains a staple to the present.

For services other than Sunday mornings and festivals, Luther most often preached in series proceeding consecutively through various books of the Bible. Others, of course, had done the same thing. The practice became, in fact, common among the reformers. Calvin and Zwingli, for example, also preached in this way.⁶⁸

Many interpreters nevertheless call Luther's style a totally new sermon form: *die schriftauslegende Predigt* ("the sermon laying out Scripture," usually translated "expository"). While Luther's method is often called "homily," it is really to be distinguished from the running, verse-by-verse "oral exegesis" usually signified by that term. What sets Luther's form apart is his unmistakable development around the *Sinnmitte*, or *Kern*, or *Herzpunkt*, the heart or kernel of the text. The sermon follows the text from first to last, but it continually drives home the one main point which Luther believes that God is making.⁶⁹ This form of preaching, too, is flourishing even today. Clearly, then, as Broadus assessed, the Reformation was a great—and lasting—revival of *biblical* preaching.

IV. The Gospel as the Content of Preaching

The proper use and interpretation of Scripture led to the other great *solas* of the Reformation: *sola gratia* and *sola fide*. These *solas* displayed themselves in the third great development in preaching in the Reformation. It was now the gospel which predominated in the contents of the sermon.

A transgression of medieval preaching less obvious than those to which allusion was made earlier was perhaps just as deadly. Unquestionably the goal of most preaching before the Reformation, including that which was "biblical," was a moral response, that is,

certain behavior to be undertaken by the hearer. Often the goals were hollow and outward—taking monastic vows, going on pilgrimages, purchasing indulgences. Often the value of such goals was proven by the example of the saints.⁷⁰ But even when they were laudable, and even when Christ's name was attached, the goals were empty.

They were empty because they lacked that motivation and power which lies outside of man in the gospel. Christ was often summoned to demonstrate Christian conduct, but usually in the form of *imitatio Christi*: "He did it; you can, too." What Christ had already done in man's stead—especially for his salvation—was seldom emphasized.⁷¹

The Reformation brought Christ's vicarious work to the fore of preaching. Luther above all loved to preach Christ's passion and resurrection. "The theme—the human Jesus Christ, one of us, bearing our sin and its guilt, alienating power, and corrupting effects to the cross and into death for us—breathes in every sermon."⁷²

Thence, of course, comes the hallmark doctrine of the Reformation, justification by grace through faith. This was the essence of Luther's preaching. Underlying virtually every sermon was this message which he proclaimed so explicitly on Pentecost on the basis of John 3:16-21:

. . . we have forgiveness of sins and eternal life, without merit or worthiness on our part, out of pure grace (*gratis*), and alone for the sake of His beloved Son, in whom God so loved us that this love has taken away and blotted out all our sins and the sins of the whole world.⁷³

The same sermon asks this question:

In what manner may we lay hold of such a treasure and gift, or what is the purse or safe in which it may be kept? It is faith alone, as Christ here says, "that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish," etc. Faith holds out its hands and opens the sack, and allows itself to be presented with good things. As God, the Giver, in love bestows this gift, so we are the recipients by faith, which faith does nothing

more than receive the gift. For it is not our doing, and it cannot be merited through our work. It has already been bestowed and presented. All you need to do is open your mouth, or rather your heart, hold still, and allow it to be entirely filled (Psalm 81:10). This can be done in no other way than by believing these words; for you observe that He here requires faith, and faith fully and perfectly appropriates this treasure.⁷⁴

Here is a revolutionary break with the earlier preaching of the age. One need not have been an accomplished theologian to recognize that the contents of the sermon had been radically changed.

Keeping this rich teaching pure demanded another new distinction in preaching, that between law and gospel. Luther recognized that all of Scripture could be summarized in these two doctrines, both God's word but quite opposite in purpose. In a sermon on New Year's Day in 1532, with Galatians 3:23-24 as the text, Luther explained the difference:

We should understand "Law" to mean nothing else than God's word and command, in which He directs us what to do and what not to do, and demands from us our obedience or "work." . . .

On the other hand, the Gospel or the faith is a doctrine or word of God that does not require our works. It does not command us to do anything. On the contrary, it bids us merely to accept the offered grace and forgiveness of sins and eternal life and let it be given to us.⁷⁵

In other words, the law lays down what is demanded of man; the gospel tells him that Christ has fulfilled those demands for him. The law makes man aware of his need for a Savior by showing him his sin, as in a mirror; the gospel announces that he has that Savior in Christ Jesus.

Thus, preventing a confusion of law and gospel is critical, as Luther made clear in the same sermon on Galatians:

Distinguishing between the Law and the Gospel is the highest art in Christendom, one that every person who

values the name Christian ought to recognize, know and possess. . . .

That is why St. Paul strongly insists that among Christians these two doctrines, the Law and the Gospel, are to be well and truly separated from one another. Both of them are the Word of God: the Law (or the Ten Commandments) and the Gospel. Both were given by God: the Gospel originally in Paradise, the Law on Mt. Sinai. That is why it is so important to distinguish the two words properly and not mingle them together. Otherwise you will not be able to have or hold on to a correct understanding of either of them. Instead, just when you think you have them both, you will have neither.⁷⁶

Just as the gospel of justification became the controlling content of preaching, so with Luther the dynamic of law and gospel came to shape the form of the sermon. For Lutheran preaching this remains true. Law and gospel changed the form of the sermon in two ways.

In the first place, every Lutheran sermon came to have, implicitly, two parts. This development is not, to be sure, necessarily reflected in an outline of two major divisions. Rather, two forces are always at work, always in opposition, with one—the gospel—holding general predominance.⁷⁷ Sin opposes grace, helplessness is opposed by power, faith is set against works.

Often, however, the struggle will be quite transparent in the structure of the sermon. Many of Luther's pericopal sermons identify law and gospel in the major divisions. The outline of a sermon for the Eighteenth Sunday after the Feast of the Trinity, based on Matthew 22:34-46, illustrates the point:

Of the Law and the Gospel

or

The Two Greatest Commandments and How
Christ Is David's Son and David's Lord

I. Of the Law

II. Of the Gospel

The sermon does not teach *about* the law and gospel. It proclaims

them. After expounding the demands to love God and our neighbor throughout the first part of the sermon, Luther then turns about-face:

But what shall we do to get rid of our bad conscience? We have now heard what the law is, and how through the law we come to the knowledge of sin; but this is not enough; another has a work to do here, whose name is Christ Jesus.⁷⁸

The second way in which the law-gospel dynamic shapes the sermon is in becoming the criterion for evaluating every form. Since preaching both the law and the gospel is considered essential in every Lutheran sermon, the form must serve this function. Kurt Aland writes that, for Luther, it is the proper relation of law and gospel "in which everything is included and out of which come the answers to all questions."⁷⁹

Again, this criterion does not itself constitute form. Instead, of every option in form it asks whether this form allows the preacher to present and distinguish law and gospel clearly? Does a verse-by-verse homily of a particular text, for example, allow a proper balance? Does the narrative form too easily suggest only a moralizing of the law (i.e., "Go and do thou likewise")? In preaching of Luther's legacy, whatever form is used for a text must favor the proper distinction of law and gospel. The end in mind is that great development in preaching which took place in the Reformation, the proclamation of the saving work of Christ.

V. The Relationship of the Preacher to the People

The fourth and last development in preaching which is to be considered here is the relationship which grew up between the preacher and his hearers. More than before the Reformation, it was one of pastor to flock. In critical ways many preachers of the late Middle Ages were detached from their hearers. Sermons prepared according to the method of the scholastics often were impersonal and beyond the comprehension of the congregation.⁸⁰ Even worse, so much of the preaching of the time was delivered by itinerants. The preaching orders, the Dominicans, Franciscans, and Augustinians, had papal authorization to preach anywhere.⁸¹ On the other hand,

parish priests were often negligent in that duty.⁸² In England absentee rectors lived at some distance from even their parishes.⁸³ The English solution of homilies prepared by able but unknown men could at best be a stop-gap.

Very much by contrast, the leading reformers were men of the people. Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin will always be closely associated with Wittenberg, Zurich, and Geneva, and each was well known by the local people. The idea of wandering preachers troubled Luther. He was emphatic that a man have a formal call from a congregation in order to preach. "Otherwise no one should let them in or listen to them, even if they were to preach the pure gospel, nay, even if they were angels from heaven and all Gabriels at that!"⁸⁴ Luther, in fact, coined the German word, *Beruf*, or "calling."⁸⁵

On the other side of the pulpit, Luther's doctrine of the priesthood of all believers immeasurably elevated the dignity of the laity. Luther preached on 1 Peter 2:9 in 1523:

We are all priests before God if we are Christians. For since we have been laid on the Stone who is the Chief Priest before God, we also have everything He has. It would please me very much if this word "priest" were used as commonly as the term Christian is applied to us.⁸⁶

The result was a true pastoral concern on the part of preachers for their people. The functions of prophet and shepherd would no more be separated. Conversely, henceforth parish pastors were expected to preach regularly. And as greater dedication was required, the moral lives of pastors, so decadent prior to the Reformation, rose to the level of their new responsibilities.

The healthy relationship between preacher and people was reflected in the pulpit. Luther especially could empathize with the personal struggles of his people,⁸⁷ and he was thus in a position to honestly—and sometimes sharply—chide them.⁸⁸ The close relationship of Luther to his hearers is evidenced in one more of Luther's lists, his "Ten Commandments for Preachers":

- 1) Be able to teach so people can follow you; 2) Have a

good sense of humor; 3) Be able to speak well; 4) Have a good voice; 5) Have a good memory; 6) Know when to stop; 7) Be sure of . . . doctrine; 8) Be ready to venture body and blood, wealth and honor, for the word of God; 9) Suffer oneself to be mocked and jeered at by all; 10) Be ready to accept patiently the fact that nothing is seen more quickly in preachers than . . . faults.⁸⁹

Both common forms of medieval preaching, the scholastic and the popular mendicant, were significantly modified by the preaching of the Reformation. The scholastic sermon was often more like a lecture. Luther's concern for his flock led him to understand the need for a difference:

We preach publicly for the sake of plain people. Christ could have taught in a profound way but He wished to deliver His message with the utmost simplicity in order that the common people might understand. Good God, there are sixteen-year-old girls, women, old men, and farmers in church, and they don't understand lofty matters. . . . When it comes to academic disputations watch me in the university; there I'll make it sharp enough for anybody.⁹⁰

Complicated thoughts and issues we should discuss in private with the eggheads [*Kluglinge*]. I don't think of Dr. Pomeranus, Jonas, or Philip in my sermon. They know more about it than I do. So I don't preach to them. I just preach to Hansie or Betsy [*Elslein*].⁹¹

A survey of Luther's writings does show a marked difference in style between his commentaries and lectures, on the one hand, and his sermons on the other.⁹²

The giants of the Reformation were clear and simple in their pulpit presentations. Relevant applications abound. Contact with the hearer is apparent even in their manuscripts. Luther loved to use dialogue.⁹³ Calvin frequently employed interrogation to engage his listeners.⁹⁴ The aloof detachment of the scholastic method had been removed from the sermon of the reform.

At the pole opposite the scholastics, the friars had gone to

extremes to popularize their preaching. Illustrations could be vivid to the point of grotesque. This approach, too, the Reformation preachers changed.

The leading Protestants were eloquent but not sensational in their use of language. Their purpose was to elucidate the Scriptures rather than titillate the emotions. Early in his career, Zwingli had illustrated using the standard collections, but he gave them up for primarily biblical examples.⁹⁵ Calvin did not illustrate as such, but used vivid metaphors and even drama in his sermons.⁹⁶

Luther, too, would have spurned the idea of showmanship in the pulpit. He was, however, an excellent illustrator. His premise was that contemporary life was a participation in divine drama. While he seldom told stories in his sermons, they nevertheless had a narrative quality. Common people in the daily pursuits were often pictured.⁹⁷ And when he did tell a story, it was always one that came from life:

Nobody took pity on this young woman who was about to give birth for the first time; nobody took to heart the heaviness of her body; nobody cared that she was in strange surroundings and did not have any of the things which a woman in childbirth needs. Rather she was there without anything ready, without light, without fire, in the middle of the night, alone in the darkness.⁹⁸

Richard Lischer sees in Luther's use of narrative an understanding of God at work in human life which is lacking in contemporary preaching.⁹⁹ If such a concept is indeed lacking today, then it must have been misplaced over the last five centuries. For contemporary preaching was willed its understanding of God touching man—and his relationship to the preacher of God—by the preaching of the Reformation.

Conclusion

Dargan calls the sixteenth century one of the four great eras of Christian preaching.¹⁰⁰ The men who proclaimed God's word in a way unheard for a millennium certainly made it such a time, and their eloquence and fervor have perhaps been unmatched since. But

they also left to preachers of future centuries a legacy beyond the range of their own voices. Since the Reformation, the pulpit has continued to hold a place of high esteem. Scripture continues to be preached. The message of the gospel of justification by grace through faith continues to be heard. And the preacher's role is still defined by his relationship of pastor to people. In a significant sense, these contributions of the Reformation have shaped modern preaching.

Endnotes

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The Origin of the Gospels

William R. Bragstad

When the author attended college some years ago, he was taught a theory of the formulation of the writings of the New Testament which may be summarized as follows: St. Paul's writings were doubtless the earliest of Christian documents, as he does not mention the gospels or even hint of their existence. Thus, Paul must have learned of the life and ministry of Christ from the preaching of Jesus' followers, and not from the written word. Instead, the gospels were formed like any folk tradition, having crystallized in the Christian community over a period of decades into pre-gospel and gospel-forms.

The reason for this lengthy period of story-telling (in some cases, thirty years or more) was twofold: (1.) Since the end of the age, the *parousia*, was expected to come soon, there seemed little point in making permanent records of the words and actions of Jesus. (2.) In those times, few people could read or write. Thus, the most effective method of preserving the recollection of Christ in the early church was by "word of mouth."¹ For decades this theory or a later refinement has been given something close to biblical authority. Volume after volume has been published, schools of criticism have developed, and the New Testament has been scrutinized, dated, and understood—all on the foundation of this underlying assumption.²

In recent years, however, the author has come to question this theory, for several reasons. First of all, it seems unlikely that the tradition surrounding the life, ministry, and person of Jesus could have "crystallized like any folk tradition." Such a process may certainly have been the case if Christianity had, in some way, idealized the past through its preaching. But if the core of the Christian message was really the reflection of God's unique revelation in history, that is to say, if something really happened outside the normal flow of human events (Mark 2:12b), then it stands to reason that the gospels did not arise in this leisurely manner, by virtue of the profound excitement at what had occurred.

Secondly, while the end of the age was expected to come soon, the ancient church would have felt called to greater evangelical activity instead of less. As Jesus states in Matthew 24:14, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." Or as St.

Paul states in Colossians 1:23, ". . . the gospel which you heard . . . *has been preached* to every creature under heaven . . ." Such an enormous undertaking must have relied on the written word, as did the Jewish synagogue.

Thus, the theory of an "oral stage" lasting for several decades is clearly inadequate. In the years following the resurrection the church must have been busy with its major task of evangelizing the world prior to the coming of the new age or, for that matter, prior to the personal death of anyone who could be saved through the gospel. Documents must have been necessary for this work, not only for letters and epistles, but for preaching as well, as will be explained below.

Thirdly, the notion that few people could read or write in this period of the history of the church is doubtful. The lands bordering the Mediterranean Sea—with Rome, Athens, Jerusalem, and Alexandria—represented the quintessence of the civilized world. For many centuries writing had been used not only in academic work and documentation, but also in the conducting of daily business (as appears from the archaeological discoveries at Oxyrhynchus).³ In the Old Testament writing is mentioned from the time of Moses, pen and ink from the time of Jeremiah.

In addition, for the Hebrew community, God's revelation through the law meant that, from the time of Moses on, reading and writing would attain an important place in the life of the religious community. The New Testament also bears witness to the abundance of letters being written and the number of people, even common people, who possessed the ability to read and write. Examples include Peter, once employed as a fisherman (2 Peter 3:1), and Jesus, who was once a carpenter (Luke 4:16; John 8:6, 8). When Zechariah asks for a "writing tablet," he receives one without much ado (Luke 1:63).

Thus, it is unnecessary to assume that the "oral stage" in the formulation of the early Christian writings existed to the *degree* that it is described by modern theories. It is likely, to be sure, that the early church spread its message by "word of mouth," but in many cases this word of mouth was probably words read from documents,

especially gospels and letters. There is a largely overlooked body of internal evidence in the New Testament suggesting another origin of the gospels, one quite different from the theory of an "oral stage" and documents of late date. The alternative may be described as follows: Prior to, during, and after the missionary journeys of St. Paul, other apostles and evangelists were also busy disseminating the various versions of the same good news of Jesus Christ throughout the known world. The journeys of St. Paul may have been more the rule than the exception. Writing and reading from documents also played a significant role in the evangelistic work of the early church. Such a scenario would imply that some gospels, at the very least, existed in their earliest forms *prior* to the letters of Paul and that the gospels were more the basis of preaching than the result.

In Paul's Epistle to the Galatians we find an interesting datum as to the method of evangelism that Paul used. He writes, ". . . you know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first; and though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus" (Galatians 4:13-14). One question which comes to mind is this: why did Paul "preach the gospel . . . at first" in the trying way to which he refers? Could it be that his optical condition made it impossible to preach the gospel as he was accustomed to doing, from a manuscript? This deduction would appear to be confirmed by what follows; Paul continues: "For I bear witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me" (Galatians 4:15b).

It was said of Paul after all: "his letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account" (1 Corinthians 10:10). Paul, therefore, may have read his gospel from a manuscript, at least when he had the choice. While such an interpretation may be open to debate, it remains a curiosity as to why this incident should be mentioned at all. Obviously Paul's eyesight must have been necessary for the task that he was performing. And the demand on one's eyes most appropriate to such a context would be the task of reading. Since Paul was not a good extemporaneous preacher—and was even called a "babbler" (Acts 17:18)—the idea of Paul reading from a manuscript can hardly be

discounted. Paul, like others at this time, evidently carried parchments and, indeed, books with him (2 Timothy 4:13) from place to place and may have read from them as presentations to all who would listen, just as preachers and those on the lecture circuit follow manuscripts today. In the same way, presumably, Matthew would have read his gospel, Luke his, and John his. And the associates and followers of these men would also be sent out with these same gospels. The fact that others were active at the same time spreading the word is apparent from many references in Paul's letters (for example, Romans 15:20, 23; 16:7; 1 Corinthians 9:14; Galatians 6:7 and following; Colossians 1:5b-7a, 23), not to mention the Book of Acts.

The basic question concerns the gospels themselves. When were the four gospels written? Many scholars are of the opinion that it was several decades or more before the products of the "oral stage" crystallized into final documents. These scholars cite references in the gospels to the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and reason that the gospels must have followed this event. It is apparently assumed that, as many times as Jerusalem and the temple had been plundered and destroyed in the past, Jesus could not have predicted such a thing happening again. Thus, references to such an event could only be included in the document after the fact.

If Christianity is based upon God's revelation in history, however, it does not follow that the disciples merely sat around the campfire and reminisced for thirty years or more before someone had the idea of writing things down. Rather, it can be argued that the gospels were among the earliest documents in the New Testament. The purpose of writing them was that of evangelism (as can be seen from John 20:30-31), to tell the whole world the good news of the "things accomplished among us" (Luke 1:1). Thus, as the word spread, converts added, and new churches established, the manuscripts would have been copied and copies left with the new churches to insure an on-going believing community and consistently sound doctrine.

In this way, after all, Christianity would have followed the pattern of most historical movements. Everyone from Moses to the Mormons to Marx has begun with documentation and proceeded to

implementation. Forcing Christianity to go through the reverse of this process is a highly questionable enterprise. If, however, the gospels were written at an early point in the life of the church, how can the New Testament (as we now call it) be silent on something so important? Surely the New Testament writers would have left some hint as to which writings came first. Perhaps they did, and perhaps we do not recognize what is plainly before us because of the "interpretative glasses" we are wearing.

Paul's letters presuppose a thorough knowledge of the life and teaching of Jesus now found in the gospels. Paul's theology, indeed, builds upon such material. Hence, it is not surprising to find in the *Oxford Annotated Bible* over forty references in the Pauline epistles to the themes present in the four gospels. Other Bibles list more. Such references may reflect more than similarities in thought; they may reflect origins as well.

In Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians we find several points worthy of note. In the first place there is the passage often quoted in the eucharistic liturgy (1 Corinthians 11:23-25):

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you: that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of Me." After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, "This cup is the new testament in My blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me."

How could Paul have received this material "from the Lord"? As far as we know, Paul had no association with Jesus or the disciples prior to the resurrection. Whence, then, did he receive it? Not least among the alternatives is the possibility that he received it from a written gospel which he "delivered" to the Corinthian church. For the version of the institution of the sacrament in Luke's gospel (22:17-20) is very close to Paul's version. It stands to reason that Paul, as a companion of Luke, would have access to the latter's gospel.

In 1 Corinthians 4, secondly, Paul makes some interesting

comments. In verse 5 of that chapter Paul addresses the "wise" and judgmental Corinthians in this way: "Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God." *The Jerusalem Bible* in its cross-references to these three teachings cites respectively Matthew 7:1-2 (where Jesus commands us not to judge), Luke 12:2-3 (where Jesus states that what is concealed will be disclosed), and John 5:44 (where Jesus speaks of the true praise that comes from God). Then, in the very next verse (1 Corinthians 4:6), Paul states: "Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, 'Do not go beyond what is written.'" Now, "what is written" ordinarily refers to Scripture, and certainly to written documents. Could "what is written" here refer to the gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John? If not, it would at least be a reference to Christian scriptures in existence at the time of the writing of 1 Corinthians—that is, approximately in the mid-fifties of the first century A.D.—since it is the teaching of Jesus that is being discussed.

Of significance, too, is the passage in 1 Corinthians 9 where Paul states: "It is written in the Law of Moses, 'You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain.' . . . In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel" (verses 9, 14). Later, in 1 Timothy 5:18, Paul refers to these sayings again with these words: "The scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain,' and 'The laborer deserves his wages.'"

The first "scripture" is, of course, a passage from the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 25:4). Significantly, however, the second passage, to which Paul refers in a matter-of-fact way as "scripture," is apparently quoted directly from Luke 10:7, for the Greek wording corresponds exactly (except for the appearance of *gar* in the Lukan account). Here Paul calls "scripture"—in the same breath as a reference to the Old Testament—a verse which, according to many scholars today, could not have had such authority at this early date in the history of the church. First Timothy 5, however, and already,

indeed, 1 Corinthians 4 provide evidence to the contrary.

The implication is, then, that the earliest form of an official body of writings—in other words, a canon of the New Testament—may have emerged by the time of the writing of 1 Corinthians and definitely had emerged by the time of 1 Timothy—that is, approximately in the mid-fifties and early sixties of the first century A.D. Paul's quotation would also suggest that Luke's gospel must have been written some time prior to this date when it is given equal footing with the Old Testament.

Luke himself, it may be argued, suggests an early date, since he refers to "those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word" (Luke 1:2) as being his source. Eyewitnesses, after all, are in any research a diminishing resource, as people have a habit of forgetting, disappearing, and "falling asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:6). Conversely, the author may have to leave the area in which eyewitnesses are available. In all likelihood, then, Luke's gospel was written much earlier than the eighties of the first century A.D. which many critics currently suggest as its date of origin.

Another possible interpretation of Luke 1:2 is to take it not as a general reference to any number of people, but as a specific reference to Peter and James and John, the sons of Zebedee. These are the first disciples mentioned in Luke's gospel (5:1-11). And they were also eyewitnesses to a number of events in the ministry of Jesus, including the transfiguration (Luke 9:28-36). The transfiguration remained a major "eyewitness" event in their lives, as was later recalled by Peter (2 Peter 1:16-18). If Luke 1:2 is referring specifically to Peter, James, and John, it is noteworthy that Luke calls them not only "eyewitnesses" but also "servants of the word." Could these disciples have been entrusted by Jesus with the responsibility of record-keeping? What else would the role of "servant of the word" entail?

Also of interest here are two other passages in Paul's letters to Timothy which refer to "scripture." In 1 Timothy 4:13 we read: "Till I come, attend to the public reading of scripture, to preaching, to teaching." *The Oxford Annotated Bible* has this footnote: "The church adopted many liturgical practices of the synagogue including

the public reading of scripture, preaching, and teaching," implying that the "scripture" mentioned here was the Old Testament alone.⁴

The question arises, however, of what scripture was, in fact, read and used as the basis for preaching and teaching in the early church—the Old Testament, material now contained in the New Testament, or both. We have already found "scripture" referring to both in 1 Timothy 5:18. Admittedly, if we come to 1 Timothy 4 wearing the "interpretative glasses" of the modern theory of an "oral stage," we should have to conclude that the reference is to the Old Testament alone. If this theory is incorrect, however, the conclusion may differ.

We may find some help in 2 Timothy 3:14-15, where Paul states: "as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." Again the *Oxford Annotated Bible* interprets this verse as referring to the Old Testament. Significantly, however, the text speaks of "the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." Now the Old Testament instructs us in many things, but the Old Testament nowhere speaks of Christ as "Jesus." While the coming of the Messiah is certainly foretold in the Old Testament, He is never specifically given the name of "Jesus."

If we assume that 2 Timothy 3:14-15 embraces also scriptures of the New Testament, we should thereby place the date of some of these writings back in the early forties or late thirties of the first century A.D. by virtue of Timothy's knowledge of them from childhood. Apparently Timothy was a believer prior to Paul's first missionary journey in 46-48 A.D. (2 Timothy 3:10-11).⁵ The Christian faith had been handed down to him from his grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice (2 Timothy 1:5). The fact that Timothy was uncircumcised (Acts 16:3) would tend to support his early exposure to Christianity.

Thus, there is a body of evidence in the primary documents themselves to suggest that prior to St. Paul's writing, at least some gospels—perhaps all—were already in existence. We do well to

remember that Paul, as one "untimely born," appears late on the Christian scene—so late, in fact, that upon occasion others had already preceded him in missionary work (e.g., Romans 15:20). Likewise, also according to various current theories, Luke's gospel was not the first to be written, but followed on Matthew and Mark. We may conclude that by the time St. Paul wrote to Timothy late in his career, after the gospel had "been preached to every creature under heaven" (Colossians 1:23), what he had first received "from the Lord" had now been included in the official writings of the early church. Apparently Paul's own writings had also achieved such a status, given Peter's statement allying them with the "other scriptures" (2 Peter 3:16). These "other scriptures" may be another reference to scriptures of the New Testament, since Peter deals here with the "twisting" of the Christian message by false teachers.

The evidence in the primary documents, then, may be summarized as follows: (1.) Paul may have preached the gospel from a manuscript when he was able. (2.) Paul's letters and theology presuppose considerable knowledge of teaching, ministry, and life of Jesus. (3.) Paul mentions a body of scriptures of the New Testament in existence in the mid-fifties of the first century A.D. (4.) Paul apparently quotes from Luke's gospel and refers to it as "scripture" in the early sixties of the century. (5.) Luke's gospel itself suggests an early date with its reference to "eyewitnesses." (6.) Paul refers to the "sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus," the name "Jesus" providing *prima facie* evidence of early scriptures of the New Testament. (7.) Peter refers to Paul's various writings as "scripture." (8.) Peter's reference to "the other scriptures" may also embrace writings of his century, given the context.

In order to maintain the existence of an "oral stage" and the late date of the gospels, critics have attacked this evidence on several fronts. It has been argued, for example, that 1 Corinthians 4:6 must be a "scribal addition later incorporated into the text" and that such books as 1 Timothy and 2 Peter must have been written by "pseudonymous authors" years later than the death of the apostles. In the case of Paul's letters to Timothy, some scholars cite differences in language from Paul's other letters. Some suggest that a member of

Paul's following may have dispatched the correspondence at differing times in the fifties and early sixties of the first century A.D. (e.g., Jeremias, Kelly, Holtz, Dockx, Lestapis, Reicke, Metzger). Others see developments in ecclesiastical orders and domestic codes as suggesting a date in the second (70-100 A.D.) or third (100-130 A.D.) generation of the church (e.g., Harrison, Easton, Campenhausen, Barrett, Dibelius and Conzelmann, Hanson, Hultgren).⁶

But such scenarios remain purely speculative. With no real new evidence, such ideas remain open to conjecture. In fact, a number of considerations support the traditional belief in the Pauline authorship of these letters. Among them are the following: (1.) Unlike other writings of the New Testament to which authorship is attributed by tradition (e.g., the gospels), Paul's pastoral letters, like 2 Peter, incorporate an assertion of authorship into the body of the text itself (1 Timothy 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1), a formidable obstacle to late dating. (2.) The authenticity of Paul's authorship of 1 and 2 Timothy has been accepted in the church since the time of Irenaeus and Tertullian. Doubting Pauline authorship has become popular only in quite recent times—that is, since F. D. E. Schleiermacher (1807) and F. C. Baur (1835).⁷ (3.) Differences in language may be attributed to any number of factors and do not, of themselves, indicate pseudonymity. Indeed, this study has highlighted a significant example of similar vocabulary and thought in the pastoral epistles (1 Timothy 5:18) and one of Paul's earlier letters (1 Corinthians 9:9, 14), thereby supporting the Pauline authorship of the pastoral epistles. (4.) Developments in ecclesiastical orders and domestic codes may have occurred at different times and places in the early church; but it is certainly within the realm of reason to believe that the apostles were involved in the implementation of such changes for at least a decade prior to the writing of 1 Timothy (as appears from Acts 14:23). (5.) The letters of 1 and 2 Timothy contain material of such personal affection, concern, faith, freshness, and urgency that suggestions that they are not directly attributable to St. Paul simply fail to convince.

Given the entirety of the foregoing discussion, then, it is quite in order to conclude that certain gospels, at the every least, were

written early in the life and ministry of the church, perhaps in the earliest form thereof only a few years following the resurrection. They were followed some years later by the missionary journeys and epistles of St. Paul. A case may be made for this construction based on the witness of the New Testament alone (*sola scriptura*). Such a process would correspond to the practical development of other historical movements in which documentation precedes implementation.⁸ Indeed, it would appear that a primary canon of the New Testament had emerged in the early church by the early sixties of the first century A.D. When "scripture" is mentioned as of this date, the term may refer to the Old Testament, material now contained in the New Testament, or both.

Endnotes

1. Howard Clark Kee and Franklin W. Young, *Understanding the New Testament* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1957), p. 68.
2. During the past thirty years, the conventional wisdom on the dating of the gospels has remained consistent. Assuming the primacy of Mark's gospel with a date between 64 A.D. and 70 A.D., Matthew's gospel is placed between 70 A.D. and 90 A.D. Luke's gospel is usually dated in the eighties and John's gospel in the nineties of the first century A.D. However, scholars often add caveats allowing for greater time-frames, such as 70-110 A.D. in the case of Matthew and 70-140 A.D. in the case of Luke, with a similar range for John. One may consult, for instance, *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Abingdon, 1962); *The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary* (Abingdon, 1971); *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (Oxford University Press, 1973); *The New Jerome Bible Commentary* (Prentice-Hall, 1990); and *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (Doubleday, 1992).
3. Robert W. Funk with Mahlon H. Smith, *The Gospel of Mark: Red Letter Edition* (Sonoma, California: Polbridge Press, 1991), p. 23.
4. Herbert G. May and Bruce M. Metzger, eds., *The New*

- Oxford Annotated Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 1443.
5. M. J. Mellink, "Lystra," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, III (New York and Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 195.
 6. David Noel Freedman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, VI (New York et al, 1992), p. 568.
 7. F. L. Cross, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 1360.
 8. Such a conclusion lends qualified support to the findings of J. A. T. Robinson (*Redating the New Testament*, 1976) who held that all the writings of the New Testament originated before 70 A.D.

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Theological Observer

LUTHER ON FREEDOM

A Summary Report and Analysis of the Eighth International Congress for Luther Research

The Eighth International Congress for Luther Research convened at Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary in St. Paul (Minnesota) on August 8-14, 1993. One cannot help being impressed by the ongoing scholarly interest in Luther demonstrated by these international gatherings. More than one hundred and fifty participants from every continent of the world and twenty-five different countries were present for the eighth congress, representing various denominational ties—primarily Lutheran, no doubt, but including many Luther scholars with other connections, whether Protestant, Roman Catholic, or purely academic. All shared a common interest and expertise in Luther, manifest testimony to the continued significance of Luther, his writings, and his work more than five centuries after his birth.

The congress has met regularly since 1956, when it was initiated through the efforts of the Commission on Theology of the Lutheran World Federation. The first congress met at Aarhus in Denmark, where Regin Prenter was a leading figure. Thereafter the usually week-long meetings took place in Muenster (West Germany) in 1960, Jarvanpaa (Finland) in 1966, St. Louis (Missouri) in 1971, Lund (Sweden) in 1977, Erfurt (East Germany—at the restored Augustian monastery) in 1983, commemorating the quincentenary of Luther's birth; and Oslo (Norway) in 1988. The next congress is scheduled to meet in Heidelberg in 1997, coinciding with the five-hundredth anniversary of Melanchthon's birth.

The expenses of the Eighth International Congress, in addition to the registration of each invited guest, were partially underwritten by Luther Northwestern Seminary, Lutheran Brotherhood Insurance Company, and the Lutheran World Federation. Serving as chairman of the committee on local arrangements was Gerhard Forde. The continuation committee of the congress is chaired at present by Mark Edwards, a professor of Harvard University. The week-long program featured nine plenary presentations, at least a dozen intensive, small-group seminars devoted to individual topics (each registrant participating in the group of his choice), and a series of short presentations on sundry subjects related to the Reformation and Luther. The comments that follow herewith will be limited to a summation and evaluation of the plenary presentations, particularly the highlights as perceived by the writer. The general theme of the congress was "Liberation and Freedom: Martin Luther's Contribution"—in German, "Befreiung und Freiheit: Martin Luthers Beitrag." At least half of the plenary papers were delivered in German. Discussions

after each plenary paper were conducted in either English or German.

Dr. Gerhard Forde, a professor of Luther Northwestern Seminary itself, presented the first plenary essay of the congress, addressing the topic "Called to Freedom," thus keynoting what was to be a continuing theme through the week of sessions, Luther's contributions to freedom in both spiritual and secular realms. The papal bull of Leo X (*Exsurge Domine*) of June 15, 1520, threatening Luther's excommunication as "an especially wild boar out of the woods . . . snorting about and uprooting the vineyard," alerted the church and, to a lesser degree, the secular world as well, to an advancing storm-front threatening liberation in some sense. Forde, however, underscored early on that Luther's concentration was first and foremost theological, not social, economic, political, or even ethical. "Luther raised this whole discussion to a new level" by leading it away from the Erasmian fixation with the philosophical canon that ascribed free will to fallen man, also in matters of the spirit, pointing out how dangerous was such an idea and how impossible was such freedom. Luther instead pointed to Christ as the only force able to drive the tempter from the heart of fallen man, making Himself the end of the law to those who are in Him. Luther became, therefore, the champion of the freedom of faith, the freedom for which Christ has set us free, liberating conscience from the power of law, sin, and death (Romans 10:4; Galatians 5:1). Other sorts of freedom cannot hold a candle to this freedom and, in comparison, are but drops in a bucket. To make light of such freedom as lacking all relevance to existential reality or as being naive and subversive—promoting an antinomian and libertine way of life—is to lock oneself into deliberate bondage to sin under the tempter and the world's conception of freedom. This worldly conception repudiates the Christian gospel and so turns the so-called liberation-movements into moralistic crusades which are not only more enslaving and tyrannical than the medieval papacy ever was but also destroy the gospel which alone can make man free. If Christ does not dwell in the heart, Luther contended all his life, we are captive and not free—indeed, without hope.

Often during the congress speakers referred to the famous aphorism which formed the theme of Luther's treatise on Christian liberty, *The Freedom of a Christian*, which he sent as an open letter to Pope Leo X—dedicated to him, in Luther's own words, "as a token of peace and good hope," containing "the whole of Christian life in a brief form" as Luther's little "gift" to Leo dated September 6, 1520. "I am a poor man," said Luther, "and have no other gift to offer" (LW 31, 343). It was there that Luther expressed the spiritual axiom which became so famous: "A

Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none; a Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all." The treatise remains one of the theological masterpieces of the Christian world, as well as being a literary gem, because of the brilliantly clear and ingenuous way in which Luther explicates the freedom—really the only genuine freedom—with which Christ endows the fallen sinner through faith in Him. Luther focuses first on the inner man underscoring the nature of "his liberty, and the source of his liberty, the righteousness of faith," which is in Christ; hence "he needs neither laws nor good works but, on the contrary, is injured by them if he believes that he is justified by them" (Ibid., 358). Immediately, however, Luther proceeds to the outer man of the Christian believer who "has no need of any work or law in order to be saved" and shows how "a Christian, like Christ his head, is filled and made rich by faith . . . [and] most freely and most willingly spends himself" in behalf of his fellowman, to "become, as it were, a Christ to the other that we may be Christs to one another and Christ may be the same in all, that is, that we may be truly Christians" (Ibid., 366-367).

Forde's essay very nicely supported Luther's great insight into the true nature of Christian freedom, showing that the second thesis is by no means contradictory to the first, but "rather the quite natural outcome of the first." Luther's aim was to show "how they fit together," indeed, how "we will never get to the second thesis unless all our moralistic pretense has been shattered by the first." Here is where human reason fails fallen man utterly, for it constantly directs and argues him back to and into the law for the hope of salvation. Man's fallen nature relentlessly urges his retreat from the freedom effected by Christ and received in faith by the believer, and as a result "one might be tempted to try the law." However, stated Forde, it was Luther's great contribution to hammer home the truth that we "will most surely not be helped thereby." What are we to do? "One can only go on preaching the gospel," as Luther resolutely repeated. He firmly believed in the regenerative power of the gospel, as did the Apostle Paul, and he lived by its promise (Romans 1:16-17).

Proceeding, then, to the second plenary essay of the congress, Dr. James D. Tracy, professor of history in the University of Minnesota, spoke on "Liberation through the *Philosophia Christi*: Erasmus as a Reformer of Doctrine, 1514-1521." Undoubtedly this study was intended to describe an approach contrasting with Luther's. Erasmus could be shown to support the cry for reform and to harbor rightful disgust for the legalistic enslavement of souls by the church of his day, decrying how the wells of the gospel had been filled with dirt of all kinds. "What would

Augustine say could he see the free Christian people" caught up in "so many laws, ceremonies, and snares," oppressed not only by the secular princes, but also by popes and cardinals and bishops, clergy and friars, "who having put on the mask of religious life serve the interests of their bellies." Erasmus' mistake, Tracy pointed out, was to think there was a congruence between the *philosophia Christi* and the inherent goodness of human nature, which merely needs to be renewed to be good as God created it. A kinder and gentler people is the goal for Erasmus, and the focus must be on how people live—not on faith and creedal forms, but on piety and the stringent moral demands of Christ. Although it was not stated by Tracy, the gulf between Luther and Erasmus, later sharply exacerbated by their debate on the human will, gave evidence early on that Erasmus never understood the nature of a sinner's salvation *sola gratia* and *sola fide*.

The essays that followed struggled in turn with the question of how Luther saw the believer's freedom of the inner man empowering the outer man in interpersonal relationships with his fellowman and the world around him. Professor Karl-Heinz zur Muehlen, a theologian of the University of Bonn, stressed the inseparability of freedom and responsibility in Luther's thought. In the dialectic between these two realities Luther emphasized the empowering force of the Christian's faith and freedom for pastoral activity in the world. Erasmus, it was pointed out, understood freedom as following "Christ as model and as the rule of reason aided by grace over the power of fleshly desire," whereas "Luther repudiated this moral-theological interpretation of Christian freedom." This judgment was reinforced by Professor Steffen Kjeldgaard-Pedersen of Copenhagen in his essay on "Freedom and Justice" in Luther. "Luther the theologian knows of no other justice (*Gerechtigkeit*) than that which is bestowed on man through faith," and this datum must be kept separate from the question of Luther's influence and contributions in the social, political, economic realm. These contributions, to be sure, were very real, as Professor Peter Blickle of Bern also stated in his essay on the same theme. The German people, he pointed out, were raising the question—even before Luther's time—whether feudal serfdom was a divinely-ordained order and were suggesting that Holy Scripture spoke in behalf of basic human rights and in support of freedom from oppression and fear. Such thinking led to the appearance of the Twelve Articles, or list of grievances, just prior to the Peasants' Revolt of 1525. With many things in these articles we know Luther agreed. (The interested reader is referred to Luther's *Admonition to Peace* of 1525, in *LW* 46, 5-43.) Yet as Blickle noted, Luther

strenuously objected to the use of force to rectify the perceived wrongs to human freedom and individual rights. As a review of the treatise will show, Luther above all rejected any claim by the peasants to be acting in God's name by virtue of the gospel-bestowed freedom of every believer. "We do not have the right to use the sword simply because someone has done us an injustice and because the law and justice are on our side" (Ibid., 30). To use one's freedom as a Christian in such a manner "absolutely contradicts the gospel" (Ibid., 39). Such was Luther's judgment then and it remained so for the rest of his life, as it also has for orthodox Christians in every period of history.

In line with the demands made by the peasants in Swabia for the expansion of reforms into areas other than the religious, the essays by Professor Mark Edwards of Harvard University and Professor Martin Brecht of Muenster portrayed the reception which Luther's reformation received elsewhere and by other activists. In the area of Strasbourg, for example, as Professor Edwards stated, in the agitation which began with the Peasants' Revolt the new-found freedom of the gospel was interpreted to mean the right to reject man-made laws conflicting with Scripture and the capacity of the human will thereby to fulfill divine law. Meanwhile, on the other flank, the Romanists pounded away at Luther's view of "Christian freedom" as subversive and responsible for the peasant uprising. In tandem, more or less, Professor Brecht looked at various strands of radical responses to the concept of freedom, showing how they regularly misinterpreted Luther's teaching concerning freedom to mean liberation from secular restraints and the establishing of sectarian enclaves that fostered their own private, often pietistic and millennial, "gospels."

In a manner of speaking, such agitation in the name of religion was anticipatory of developments in more recent years, beginning with the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and continuing down to our time in various liberation-movements. Professor Marc Lienhard of Strasbourg, first of all, addressed the question of whether subsequent convulsions involving a striving for human rights and freedom, particularly the French Revolution, were in any way related to Luther's theological impact upon the church and the world of his day—epitomized in such a dramatic manner by his heroic stand at the Diet of Worms. Lienhard minimized any direct impact on Luther's thinking on what began with the raising of the banner of freedom in the French Declaration of Rights in 1789. Opinions vary, of course, as Lienhard demonstrated by many references to interpreters of the French Revolution. Luther is as often blamed for stifling the people's aspirations to freedom as he is praised for clearly

articulating Scripture's teaching on the nature of the believer's true freedom. Lienhard raised the question of whether in Luther's mind freedom remained "an inner event that may completely coexist with external bondage" or whether "there resides in the freedom of a Christian emancipatory powers which urge the liberated Christian to bring them to bear for the well-being and freedom of others." From his own reading of Luther's writings the undersigned would answer that Luther would have no difficulty answering "yes" to both parts of the question. Definitely, however, he would insist that no individual resort to violence to achieve his quest for freedom (social, political, or economic) and, above all, that no one claim that what he does is for the sake of the gospel with God's sanction.

One further observation should be made concerning Luther's influence on the social-political strivings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: In view of the fact that this Eighth Congress was meeting in the United States, it is odd that no attention was paid to what was achieved for human rights and freedom in the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the American Constitution in 1789. The foundation of the United States, after all, was one of history's most remarkable achievements, a truly great experiment which produced a democracy, where individual rights and freedom are the treasured possession of the people. Most of the founding fathers were not only highly principled men but also deeply religious. Discerning historians have often noted connections with the Reformation and specifically Luther, by whom the seeds of the rights of the individual were first sewn. The congress, then, might very profitably have devoted some time to a critical evaluation, whether positive or negative, of Luther's impact on the "American experiment."

After all, what happened at Worms in 1521 is generally acknowledged today to be the continental divide from which reform streamed down in many directions, also in matters social, political, and economic. Some of the resulting changes are still taking place around the world. A recent book (1993) by Carter Lindberg, a professor of Boston University (and incidentally also a member of the continuation committee of the Congress for Luther Research), is a signal witness to the impact that Luther and the Reformation have had in this regard. In *Beyond Charity* Carter recognizes, first of all, as the various speakers at the Eighth Congress again and again repeated, that for Luther the freedom with which Christ has made the believer free is the imputed righteousness of Christ received by faith. He adds, however: "To dismiss Luther's contributions to social ethics in general . . . has become a deficit in the contemporary life of the church.

... Luther had the boldness to address structural sources of injustice and to advocate legislative redress of them because his social ethics was rooted in the worship and proclamation of the community (congregation)" (pp. 162-163). As is well known, indeed, there are four large volumes in the American Edition of *Luther's Works* devoted to social, political, economic issues (LW 44-47). The Table Talk of Luther (LW 54), too, records some of his extemporaneous comments on questions related to practical concerns. Yet "doctrine and life must be distinguished," Luther commented on an occasion in the autumn of 1533. He continued: "Life is bad among us, as it is among the papists, but we don't fight about life and condemn the papists on that account . . . I fight for the Word and whether our adversaries teach it in its purity . . . This is my calling . . . When the Word remains pure, then the life (even if there is something lacking in it) can be molded properly" (LW 54, 110).

The final plenary paper at the congress was presented by Professor Walter Altmann of Sao Leopoldo (in Brazil). It dealt with "The Reception of Luther's Concept of Freedom in Latin American Liberation Theology." Basically Altmann rejected the notion that there is a direct link of Luther and the Reformation with the liberation-movement going on in South America. His judgment was, in fact, that the two events are quite dissimilar. In a helpful way Altmann sketched the liberation-movement in terms of some of the primary figures in its thinking and activism, first those from the Roman Catholic side, whose names are probably the most familiar, and then two others. The following are leading lights from the Roman Catholic side: Juan Luis Segundo, who faulted the Reformation for its "Lutheran passivity" and "deprecation of human liberty"; Hugo Echegaray, who is critical of Luther for "ignoring the world" and "knowing only the freedom from sin"; Franz Hinkelammert, who scores Luther for "lacking a clear institutional perspective" and opposing the peasants with "an antimillennarian fury without limits"; Leonardo Boff, who admits that "the atmosphere of freedom runs through Luther's main texts" but says he did not recover the full potential of the gospel to liberate; Eduardo Hoornaert, who grants that Luther was "organically linked with the people at the grassroots level" and so advocates a "revision of Ernst Bloch's presuppositions" that "created an image of Luther [as] antagonistic to the people [and] committed to the powerful." Altmann also briefly depicted two other theologians involved in the liberation-movement, Jose Miguez Bonino and Elsa Tamez, both of whom recognize the key role played by Luther's article on justification by faith. Altmann's concluding summary emphasized the lack of uniformity

and accuracy of the Roman Catholic criticisms, along with a tendency on the part of these writers to deal with secondary sources, rather than the primary texts of Luther. Finally, "in relation to the concept of freedom," Altmann stated, "we observe that in liberation theology it comprises clearly social liberation, which Luther considered as a consequence of freedom, but, when elevated to the level of a religious program, as a falsification of true Christian freedom."

This summary critique, then, of the plenary papers of the Eighth Congress for Luther Research will attest to its substantive study of Luther's extraordinary contribution to the church by clarifying the believer's freedom before God through Christ and, as a fruit, the impact which the hero of Worms has had upon the world in general. For the facts are quite rightly stated by the historian Preserved Smith in his appreciation of Luther's life: "Luther's career marks the beginning of the present epoch, for it is safe to say that every man in Western Europe and in America is leading a different life today from what he would have had, and is another person altogether from what he would have been, had Martin Luther not lived." Few men have contributed more to the fundamental happiness of his fellowmen than has Luther. This is the testimony of history.

Eugene F. A. Klug

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP IN THE LWF: A CORRECTION

The accidental loss of two lines at the bottom of a page resulted in a loss of continuity between pages 130 and 131 of Volume 57 of the *Concordia Theological Quarterly* (January-April 1993). The full text there should have read as follows (omitted words in italics):

Associate membership, too, requires a basic consensus, which, given the divergent root-conceptions, does not exist. Even an unambiguous declaration of one's own understanding and a repudiation of the LWF's would not help here.

Book Reviews

BLACK CHRISTIANS: THE UNTOLD LUTHERAN STORY. By Jeff G. Johnson. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1991.

This book is of special interest to the reviewer since he worked among African-American Lutherans in Alabama two years and at Immanuel Lutheran College and Seminary in North Carolina for the next four and a half years after having served three years in Nigeria. The reviewer was well acquainted with Rosa Young, Dr. Peter Hunt, Pastor Jenkins, Dean Lynn, and many others at that time. Much of what Dr. Johnson writes in this book is quite familiar to the reviewer. The reviewer left Immanuel College and Seminary in December of 1955 for a call to St. John's College in Winfield, Kansas, only because the seminary no longer had the support of its constituency.

Dr. Johnson has done an immense service for Lutherans and non-Lutherans alike by what he has written. His research has been painstaking and has extended over many years. The detail with which he writes is simply amazing. The reviewer, via this book, has learned of things which happened immediately around him while he worked in the South from 1949 to 1955 but of which he was not aware.

In Part I Dr. Johnson writes concerning Black Lutheran work in the American Colonial North during the years 1669-1776; in the Danish West Indies beginning in 1713; in the American Colonial South between 1717 and 1781; in Surinam beginning in 1791; and in Guyana beginning in 1818—all with reference to Lutheran influence on Blacks in these various parts of North and South America. In Part II he writes of Lutheran Black work in the Southern slave states (1774-1865); Jehu Jones and the first all-Black Lutheran church (1832-1849); and the Old Lutherans in the South (1865-1891). By the "Old Lutherans" Dr. Johnson means the antecedents of ELCA, namely, the General Synod of the North and the United Synod of the South.

Part III is devoted to the rebirth of Black Lutheranism (1877-1950). Here Dr. Johnson treats the work of the Joint Synod of Ohio, the Alpha Synod, and the Synodical Conference (the LCMS, the WELS, and the ELS). It is at this point that members of the Missouri Synod will begin to feel at home, especially if they happened to work in Louisiana, Alabama, or North Carolina among Black Lutherans. Though the story is a familiar one to many, it is told afresh here and is worth reading.

Part IV is devoted to the question of where we go from here under two heads: "The Great Debates of 1930-1964" and "Integration, Inclusiveness, or What? 1947-1990." This chapter covers the period of the movement of Black Lutherans (especially during World War I and World War II) from the South to urban centers in the North, where they helped establish

congregations in Oakland, Los Angeles, Chicago, Kansas City, Detroit, Washington D.C., Baltimore, New York City, and elsewhere. This account is a glowing testimonial to the thoroughness of the Lutheran work done in the Deep South. These Black Lutherans did not join other churches when they went North; they started their own Lutheran churches.

Part V is devoted to African-Americans inside mainline Christianity. The Appendices contain worthwhile material and statistics about Black Lutheranism in the western hemisphere. But where among the other lists of pastors are the names of current Black pastors of the LCMS? They are conspicuous by their absence.

On page 196 Dr. Johnson claims that "in order to be a 'good black Lutheran,' one had to become a 'good black German.'" This statement is made with reference to the work of the Synodical Conference in the late years of the nineteenth century and the beginning of this century. What is said about requirements of German is simply inaccurate. The reviewer worked side by side with Peter Hunt, Pastor Jenkins, Rosa Young, Dean Lynn, and others in Alabama and North Carolina. No one ever told him that the learning of German was required. Nor was any vestige of German culture required. We were German-American Lutherans working among African-American Lutherans. We were all Americans and our point of contact was confessional Lutheranism, which African-Americans very much appreciated. Rosa Young said so repeatedly. Everyone spoke English and only English was used in both study and song.

African-American Lutherans are clearly more than ready to assume responsibility for themselves. They have the wherewithal and the determination.

Anyone interested in American church history or the history of missions in America would do well to own a copy of *Black Christians*. It is well written and reads easily.

Harold H. Buls

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT. By Charles B. Puskas. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989.

Charles Puskas is Adjunct Professor of Religious Studies at Drury College and Associate Minister of Schweitzer United Methodist Church in Springfield, Missouri. His *Introduction to the New Testament* is not an isagogics, but a presentation of what he believes are three non-negotiable essentials of New Testament study: (1.) The Backgrounds of the New

Testament; (2.) Methods for Interpreting the New Testament; and (3.) The Formation of Early Christianity. Following this scheme, his book falls into three sections of about 80-90 pages each.

The four chapters of Part I ("Backgrounds") survey the Greco-Roman context, the Jewish background (Judaism's struggle for identity is compared appropriately with modern Poland), the development of Koine Greek, and the transmission and criticism of the New Testament text. Part II ("Methods") again falls into four chapters: "Historical Methods of Criticism," "The Genres of the Gospels and Acts," "The Ancient Letter Genre," and "The Genres of the Revelation of John." A preoccupation with stylistic features and literary forms and genres is evident. Part III is a mini-history of the New Testament and early church, covering the chronology of Jesus' life, the historical Jesus and His message, a chronology of Paul's life, major phases of early Christianity, and emerging Christian orthodoxy.

The Lutheran pastor will find Puskas' book uneven in value. Part I is a succinct and reliable summary of New Testament background. Part II is dominated by historical-critical presuppositions. It lacks appreciation of the role of the Holy Spirit and the apostles in shaping Sacred Scripture; all is community formation, at a time far removed from Jesus and the Twelve. (For example, John Reumann's dating of the gospels—with the exception of Mark, all to *circa* A.D. 90 and beyond—is the pattern followed [p. 85].) The New Testament is portrayed as a diverse and difficult body of literature, the province of the trained expert.

Part III contains some valuable historical information from the first century, the early church fathers, and their heretical opponents. Puskas' treatment is influenced by the critical approaches of scholars like Kaesemann, who see conflicting theologies in the New Testament later synthesizing in the creeds and structures of "early catholicism." The book concludes with helpful appendices on "The Formation of the New Testament Canon" and "English Translations of the New Testament."

Gregory J. Lockwood

CHURCH PLANTING FOR REPRODUCTION. By Samuel D. Faircloth. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991.

Samuel D. Faircloth planted churches in Europe, especially Portugal, during the past several decades. He now teaches in Tyndale Theological Seminary of Badhoevedorp in the Netherlands. His advisor during studies

at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Arthur P. Johnston, in a preface to *Church Planting for Reproduction* derives Faircloth's patience for structural detail from his training in engineering at the University of Illinois.

Sixty-two "figures" (i.e., graphic illustrations) help the reader envisage the steps in planting a church and bringing it to the point where it "reproduces" another new mission. The author needs forty-one pages to "introduce" his subject because of the average reader's need for (1.) an introductory history of the development of the concepts and methods of modern church planting and (2.) a clarification of PERT, "a control instrument for defining the *parts* of a job and putting them together in network form so that the person responsible for each part and the man charged with overall management knows *what* is supposed to happen and *when*" (p. 27). The acronym PERT stands for "Program Evaluation and Review Technique" (p. 27, as originally defined by B. J. Hansen).

Part II of the book has two chapters covering the "Preparatory and Pioneer Periods" (pp. 43-75). These chapters treat what we normally call "church planting," namely, motivation, choice of personnel, target area demographics and site location, finding a core of members, strategizing for evangelism, initial fellowship, discipleship and baptism of new converts, and the first-stage organization of the new mission congregation. The rest of the book tells us how to lead a congregation in the "Period of Growth and Organization" (Part III) and the "Period of Reproduction" (Part IV). Faircloth used eight "methods to make evangelistic contacts" in his work: "door-to-door surveys, telephone surveys, extended-family relationships, acquaintance surveys (social contacts), film projections in public places, social assistance contacts, distribution of literature with the church address, and neighborhood Bible-study groups" (p. 88). This book can assist both seminarians and pastors in using the PERT method of planning each step during the several stages of church planting. Its weakness could be in too much clutter in its footnotes and its quotations from the author's research, which may prove frustrating to laymen who want simple and straightforward instructions in starting a mission.

Harold Zietlow

THE INTERRELATIONS OF THE GOSPELS. A Symposium Led by M. E. Boismard, W. R. Farmer, F. Neirynck. Edited by David L. Dungan. Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press; Louvain, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1990.

A symposium on the gospels was held in Jerusalem during the two weeks prior to Easter in 1984 for the express purpose of bringing together scholars with differing views on how the synoptic gospels were related. The mover behind the conference, Professor William Farmer of Southern Methodist University, is recognized as the leading contemporary proponent of the view that the order of the gospels is Matthew-Luke-Mark, now known as the Farmer-Griesbach hypothesis. For many, the various theories of origin of any of the books of the New Testament, including the gospels, may have no interest or use. Such matters become crucial only when cherished exegetical positions and theological opinions are threatened. The Jerusalem Conference on the Gospels of 1984 was Farmer's challenge to the critical orthodoxy that Matthew and Luke are dependent on Mark and "Q." The essays delivered there have now been collected into the present volume. Three views are offered here: the two-gospel hypothesis (Matthew-Luke-Mark), the two-source hypothesis (Mark and "Q"), and the multiple-stage hypothesis, which sees our present gospels evolving out of a more complex system of interdependency. Gathered for the conference was an impressive collection of international scholars: Benoit, Reicke, Orchard, Borgen, Riesner, Stuhlmacher, Gerhardsson, Tuckett, Daube, R. Fuller, Guelich, J. K. Elliott, and the names listed above. The format was that of a prolonged debate with each of the three positions being introduced on the first day and then one day devoted to each position with refutation being attempted by the other two positions. Each group made its case by comparing Mark 13:33-37 with the parallels in Luke 21:34-36 and Matthew 24:37-25:30. Interspersed among these direct encounters were fourteen essays of a related nature, such as Reicke's "History of the Synoptic Discussion," Dungan's "Synopses of the Future," and J. K. Elliott's "The Relevance of Textual Criticism to the Synoptic Problem." These essays were pulled together by David Dungan of the University of Tennessee for this publication of 1990. This monumental task of publication matched the equally enormous task which he had undertaken in arranging the conference itself. The religious seriousness of the task is evident not only in that Jerusalem and the two weeks prior to Easter were chosen for the symposium, but also in the way that each day began with morning and evening prayer and appropriate services were held on the special days of the period. Participants were aware that what was said about the gospels would have religious consequences. No conversions from one side to another were made, but the religious significance of the synoptic order is not thereby diminished.

Farmer's first purpose in this conference was to raise awareness in the

scholarly community that the documentary hypothesis is not beyond challenge. Even without mass conversions the results are evident. A group devoted to discussion of the two-gospel hypothesis is for the time on the annual schedule of the Society of Biblical Literature, and the two-gospel hypothesis is discussed in many of the most scholarly studies of the gospels, such as those of W. D. Davies (on Matthew) and D. Moody Smith (on John). Farmer's success may be reserved for the future, simply because the present generation of scholars has too much invested in Markan priority and the hypothetical "Q" document—considering the vast scholarly reservoir of books, symposia, and essays on "Q," its author(s), its development, its community, and its theology. Ridding the scholarly world of "Q" would mean mass scholarly self-annihilation. Markan priority is assumed without argument in nearly all studies on the gospels. Committing infanticide on intellectual children, in this case "Q" and Markan priority, is unnatural. Academic conversions are less likely than religious ones, since the latter are the products of the Holy Spirit and the former are not. Farmer is one who has himself gone through a conversion from the two-source hypothesis to the two-gospel hypothesis without an obvious religious motive. The critical orthodoxy of Markan priority is not completely satisfactory.

Farmer's tactic is first to cast doubt on the two-source hypothesis and thus ally himself with those who do not totally hold his views. For example, the late Bo Reicke saw the synoptics springing from a common tradition. Farmer sees the proponents of the multiple-stage hypothesis as allies. Farmer's view is not above challenge. His claim that Matthew comes after the fall of Jerusalem is questioned by C. S. Mann and Farmer's good friend, Bernard Orchard. Given the Jewish-Christian antagonism of the time, the fall of Jerusalem would have surely been mentioned in any document which was written after 70 to support the claims of Christianity. With nearly seven hundred pages of data, this recent collection of essays presents an opportunity to see all sides of the question discussed within two covers.

There are a variety of reasons for not walking into the swamp of synoptic relationships, as Farmer's group has. Pretending that the problem does not exist would be easier. Literary criticism follows just this course by examining one gospel without reference to the others. Canon criticism lumps the books together in a way not dissimilar to a more conservative stance which claims an exemption from any discussion on the basis of inspiration. Perhaps the easiest solution would be simply to accept the priority of Mark and the existence of "Q" and divorce the theological

enterprise from any opinion about the relationships among the gospels.

As long as the church sees the incarnation as the basis for her faith, however, she cannot ignore historical questions, including those involving the origin and relationship of the gospels. The incarnation involves God's participation in human history: *crucifixus sub Pontio Pilato*. Inspiration is an endorsement of the incarnation and not its denial. The creedal phrase "*apostolic church*" assumes Christ's historic institution of the apostolate and His inspiration of the Scriptures of the New Testament by means of the apostolate. Our confessions require allegiance to the "*apostolic Scriptures*." Apart from the raw exegetical data, whereby the issue must finally be resolved (*sola scriptura*), Lutherans, with their insistence that doctrine be biblical, have an ideological stake in placing Matthew first among the gospels. In critical circles Mark was placed first to support the view that Christian doctrine *evolved* from the simple teachings of Jesus to the complex doctrine of Paul. Placing Matthew first, and hence earlier than Mark, flies right in the face of any evolutionary development of doctrine (as advocated by von Harnack, Bultmann, and others). Clearly the question of the order of the gospels does have theological consequences. If it be argued that placing Matthew first is done only for ideological purposes and so is an exegetical conclusion made to fit a predetermined dogma, the same charge must be laid to those who hold on to "Q" and Markan priority. The exegetical method was tailored to fit the predetermined theological conclusion. Certainly not everyone who operates with one method or the other is aware of its ideological background, but its presence is foundational to understanding it.

Farmer's attempt at unraveling this prickly question is valuable, simply because he is not motivated by denominational loyalties or any apparent ideology. Making no claim to being a theologian, he may be only marginally aware of how influential he may be in the theological endeavor. Though the matter remains unsettled, he has made it possible to see all sides of the issue.

David P. Scaer

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ISAIAH: EXPOSITORY SERMONS ON EVERY CHAPTER OF ISAIAH. By Kenneth K. Miller. Ann Arbor: Cushing-Malloy, 1992.

Kenneth Miller has been a Lutheran pastor and preacher of the gospel for more than thirty years, but he is no ordinary preacher. He is a

preacher who has combined a knowledge of the biblical languages with a profound understanding of Old as well as New Testament theology and of the relationship between the two Testaments. The Old Testament proclaims the gospel of Christ as sweetly as the New. The Old Testament speaks about Christ, and Isaiah is the greatest gospel preacher of all the prophets. It is for this reason that Miller preaches on this book which is so unknown and unappreciated by both Jews and Christians today. The Book of Isaiah can be understood and appreciated only christologically by recognizing that, when Isaiah speaks about the glory of God or His holiness or forgiveness or the redemption of His people, he is speaking of the church of Christ. It is because Miller understands this profound truth that his book of sermons is so good and relevant. Miller understands Isaiah's basic aim. And so Miller, with his firm grasp of the New Testament and of Christ's fulfilment of everything which Isaiah said about Him, preaches Isaiah's gospel for people today.

Miller's sermons are expository; that is to say, he actually presents Isaiah's message and meaning, chapter by chapter, and applies it all to Christians today. Such exposition is a challenging task for one who preaches on New Testament texts, but more so for one who offers his hearers and readers the message of a prophet who preached and wrote seven hundred years before the birth of Christ, speaking of places and names and events which are remote and strange to us. But Miller is prepared for the task. His expository sermons, which many today consider the most difficult variety to preach to our impatient generation, are as relevant as they are textual and evangelical. In fact, the reason they are relevant is that they are textual and evangelical.

Miller's sermons are arranged chapter by chapter, rather than according to the church year, and yet Miller preaches on texts appropriate to every season of the church year and every festival (Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, Epiphany, Lent, etc.), for Isaiah prophesied concerning all those things. Although Miller's sermons were preached to members of his own congregations, they offer an excellent example and a wealth of help to pastors who wish to venture forth from the habit of preaching on chosen pericopes into preaching on one great book of the Bible for a sustained period of time. There is help here, too, for those preparing to teach a Bible class on the Book of Isaiah. Pastors may also wish to commend Miller's book of sermons to their church members for use in their private devotional life and family devotions.

Robert Preus

CONFESSING THE FAITH: REFORMERS DEFINE THE CHURCH, 1530-1580. By Robert Kolb. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1991.

In part it is Kolb's thesis to show that within Christendom Lutherans and therefore Lutheran theology are unique in that they are confessional. Other communions within Christendom also wish to be known as witnessing to the gospel, but few among them, if any, retain their commitment to their confessional documents (if they have any) in the way the Lutheran church does. Lutherans declare publicly that these formulations are standards by which they want to attest to the articles of the Christian faith and that they believe these confessions to be correct expositions of God's word (Holy Scripture) by which they are willing to be judged and which they steadfastly intend to defend. These symbols are specifically the three ecumenical creeds and the various confessions which were adopted in the sixteenth century in the course of the Reformation (the Augsburg Confession, the Apology, the Smalcald Articles and Treatise, the Small and Large Catechisms, and the Formula of Concord, both Epitome and Solid Declaration), all of which are contained in the Book of Concord.

Kolb raises the question of the need of additional confessional documents as the church faces the insinuation of new teachings that threaten biblical truths, but he expresses confidence that, if such a necessity arises in Christendom, "the Lord of His church will lead the church to determine when a new form is needed" (p. 135). That conclusion is, of course, a debatable point. How are we to know when the need has arisen and what the church is to do about it, if anything. More than ten years ago, in 1981, the late Dr. Wilhelm Oesch, longtime professor in Oberursel (Germany) published his *Plaedoyer* (entitled in the English translation of 1983 *An Unexpected Plea*) and argued for addenda to the Formula of Concord, specifically as regards the doctrine of the divine word, because of the damage done thereto during the past two hundred years by higher-critical theology, and the doctrine of the church, because of the confusion that reigns on this article as a result of misguided ecumenism and the activities of such organizations as the World Council of Churches. Dr. Oesch was uncertain in what way churches with a confessional commitment would go about this task in the twentieth century, although he felt quite deeply that such an undertaking could not emanate from some narrow precinct within Lutheranism. It had to be a world-wide concern that was urgently felt by confessional Lutherans in general, individuals (clergy and laity) and churches alike.

The primary focus of Kolb is on the Augsburg Confession, as indeed it might well be, and he has usefully delineated its background, history, and significance, then and now. This observation does not mean that the book is primarily a historical rehearsal. On the contrary, Kolb enters into the theological dimensions of the Augustana throughout his discussion, so that even those who are well acquainted with the confession can find grounds here to enhance their appreciation of it. In addition, Kolb has covered well the years between Luther's death in 1546 and the writing of the Formula of Concord in 1577, a time during which the Lutheran church was severely tested by various controversies. It was a period when one side hurried to formulate additional confessional writings, while the other side tended to water down the intent of the stalwarts who had stood before emperor and prelates at Augsburg in 1530.

There is a definite timeliness in this production in the series entitled *Concordia Scholarship Today*. The editors are concerned that the Lutheran church always remain a confessing church that is faithful to the gospel witness. They could hardly have been called upon a more qualified author to speak the desired word.

Eugene F. Klug

THE GRACE OF GOD, THE WILL OF MAN: A CASE FOR ARMINIANISM. Edited by Clark H. Pinnock. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989.

There is little reason to argue that Arminian thinking in theology has always been the favorite to win the support of the average man of this world. After all, every one born into it comes with a strong inherent propensity to synergism, and his exposure to the gospel does not wipe out this streak in him. Pinnock, along with fourteen other apologists for the Arminian thought-pattern in this volume, attempts to show "that God is a personal being who respects the integrity of the significantly free creatures he made" and that He is not "an all-determining Power who gets glory even from the damnation of sinners" (p. x). The book in a sense becomes pinnock's own personal account of the odyssey which had led him (and he believes many other evangelicals) far away from the rigid confines of Calvinian theology and such staunchly Calvinistic thinkers as John Murray, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Cornelius Van Til, Carl Henry, James Packer, and Paul Jewett (p. 17). The sticking point for Pinnock, as apparently for the rest of his "team," of course, was Calvin's "horrible decree" that destined the majority of the human race to eternal damnation.

As a Calvinist, Pinnock had found it increasingly disquieting and uncomfortable to hold that human actions could be both free and totally determined by the sovereign God. Hence he moved to Arminian thought-forms, by which God and His actions are changeable and conditioned upon human response in freedom. Now finally he is able to view eternal election as potentially encompassing everybody rather than arbitrarily excluding anybody, and man's election is subject to his free decision of faith. Pinnock's stable of writers chime in with enthusiasm for the Arminian solution, with individual chapters supporting universal grace and universal atonement. Others attempt resolutions of the problems connected with the sovereignty of God and His unlimited foreknowledge when seen in conjunction with the free—and so sovereign—creature (man). The fact that these writers come from Methodism, Pentecostalism, the Church of Christ, Seventh Day Adventism, and like communions explains why the Arminian solution is compatible with each. The book could well have included a Roman Catholic, since Roman theology (which denies the total depravity of man, asserts the capacity of man to make a decision of faith, advocates the free will of man in spiritual matters, and thinks of eternal election as resulting from God's foreknowing who would believe) is, after all, very close to much of Protestantism today, particularly the Arminian school. A serious misunderstanding and caricature of Luther occurs in the chapter by Jerry Walls on "Divine Commands, Predestination, and Moral Intuition" when the author equates Luther's view of predestination with Calvin's arbitrary election to reprobation, dismissing as unnecessary the "need to be detained by the distinctions between them" (p. 264). Walls' view is identical with that of Packer and Johnston in their introduction to Luther's *Bondage of the Will*, although their translation of this work, aside from the stricture stated, is much to be preferred over the version by Philip Watson which is included in the American Edition of *Luther's Works* (volume 33). Luther never dissociated man's accountability to God for rejecting His grace (offered through the word) from the *voluntas consequens*, the damning will of God upon unbelief. One has to concede that Pinnock and his collaborators have produced an exemplary specimen of Arminianism in modern dress, and for the study of contemporary Arminianism it becomes an invaluable tool.

Eugene F. Klug

JOHN CALVIN'S DOCTRINE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. By John H. Leith. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster-John Knox Press, 1989.

From the time of the Reformation on, the Lutheran dogmatic tradition has been at pains to distinguish itself from both the Reformed and Roman Catholic traditions of theology. Accordingly, Lutherans have often defined their beliefs at least in part as being a repudiation of Calvinism, and Lutheran seminarians have been shown the great reformer of Geneva primarily, if not exclusively, through Lutheran lenses. Is that picture of Calvin's theology accurate, however, or does it represent a caricature of what Calvin actually taught and believed?

One way to answer the question is, of course, to read Calvin himself. Short of that undertaking, one can learn a great deal by reading treatments of Calvin prepared by those who still stand within the Reformed tradition and are admirers of one of its principal theologians. John Leith's new book provides an excellent opportunity for the latter approach.

Leith, a Presbyterian minister who has recently retired from the faculty of Union Theological Seminary (Virginia), has written a very lucid account of Calvin's theology from the perspective of the Christian life, that is, what Christianity means for the individual believer. Although this work discusses ethical themes, it is not really a treatment of Calvin's ethics *per se*, but rather a summary of Calvin's entire system from the perspective of how that system affects the individual in his faith and life. This approach Leith justified on the grounds that this connection was Calvin's real concern in doing theology in the first place; the purpose of Calvin's theology was "to glorify God, to save human souls, to transform human life and society" (p. 19) and not merely to speculate on abstract truth.

After an initial chapter in which he defines the Christian life as Calvin understood it—basically, man's "response to God's gracious activity in human life and in the world" (p. 86)—Leith proceeds to review four major themes in Calvin's theology from the standpoint of what they mean for the believer's life: justification by faith, providence and predestination, history and eschatology, and church and society. Each section is very well organized and very clearly written. Although Leith's treatment confirms the standard Lutheran criticism of Calvin in such areas as double predestination and the extension of the kingdom of God to human society, it also serves to show Calvin's great indebtedness to Luther as a champion of *sola gratia* and *sola fide*. Indeed, even with respect to predestination, some readers of this journal may be surprised to realize how emphatically

Calvin rooted his teaching in soteriological concerns rather than speculative ones, emphasizing election as the guarantee of salvation in Christ rather than as simply a manifestation of God's sovereignty.

Although Leith's book is well worth reading, there are two ways in which it is unsatisfactory. The first is its age. Although published in 1989, Leith wrote it in 1949 as his doctoral dissertation. As a result, he engages the scholarship of two or three or even more generations ago. There is nothing wrong with interaction with scholars of the past, but the absence of references to such scholars as William Bouwsma, Alexandre Gonaczy, Francois Wendel, and T. H. L. Parker is more than a little disconcerting.

Secondly, Leith insists on taking a critical stance over against Calvin in order to resolve the paradoxes that he finds in his thought. Again, there is nothing inherently wrong with such an approach, but Leith fails to offer an adequate justification of his criticisms. For example, Leith charges Calvin with failing to "give love a place of priority in the Christian community" (p. 217) on the ground that Calvin urged the magistrates of Geneva to defend and maintain the Christian faith in their city. Surely Calvin believed such actions to be quite consistent with true Christian love. Leith apparently believes Calvin's posture to be inconsistent with Christian love, but he fails to explain why. Leith, of course, is more in tune with modern sensibilities regarding the private and personal nature of religious belief than was Calvin, but do such sensibilities provide adequate grounds for criticizing Calvin? I doubt it. In spite of such criticisms of Calvin, Leith is an admirer of his thought; and in spite of my criticisms of Leith, I am an admirer of his book for offering a useful perspective on one of history's great theologians.

Cameron A. MacKenzie

MARTIN LUTHER: THE PRESERVATION OF THE CHURCH, 1532-1546. By Martin Brecht. Translated by James L. Schaff. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.

With this translation of the third and final volume in this magisterial biography of Luther the reader of English has at hand a formidable tool with which to trace the reformer's life and thought. The work consists of chapters and sections organized around particular themes in a generally chronological progression. A fifty-page subject-index to all three of Brecht's volumes in English forms an important feature of the book.

This massively researched account of Luther, for all its sober scholarship, unfolds as a mainly appreciative one. Only rarely does Brecht editorialize, but his sympathies do show themselves. For instance, he maintains (with Luther himself) that the Wittenberg Concord was no compromise on Luther's part (pp. 51, 58, 326). In his account of Philip of Hesse, Brecht points out that, for Luther, bigamy was *not* the ethically neutral thing some popular accounts suggest (pp. 213-214). He reports in detail on Luther's political opinions and involvements, but insists that, on balance, "political concerns scarcely played a role for him." "Instead," says Brecht, "his concern was to emphasize his theological standpoint" (p. 64). Likewise, "Luther's theological controversies were always a struggle over the interpretation of the Bible" (p. 336). While critical of Melancthon in the Cordatus controversy of 1536-37, Brecht offers a realistic and not uncharitable appraisal of Philip: "Melancthon thought that he understood Luther better than Luther understood himself. Thus Melancthon could let him speak without having to correct him" (p. 151).

In this work of biography Brecht does not fail to grasp Luther's theology, as evidenced by perceptive points made at key junctures. For example, "One of the most impressive claims of the antinomians was their deriving repentance from a recognition that the sin of unbelief really did injury to Christ and not to the law. As touching as that sounded, for Luther defaming Christ was only a special case of violating the First Commandment" (p. 161). Brecht, moreover, seems to be alert to paradox in Luther's theology of church and ministry. While he notes that Luther issued cautions regarding a suggestion that the Lord's Supper could be administered by laymen (p. 37), he summarizes his description of the communion service in *The Private Mass and the Consecration of Priests* (1533) in this way: "The pastor appears solely as the representative of the congregation, which is fed by Christ" (p. 77).

Only in chapter 13, "The Enemies of Christ and of His Church: Jews, Turks, and the Pope," does Brecht's previously sympathetic treatment of Luther turn more negative. He acknowledges that Jewish blasphemy in statements about Christ and the Virgin Mary moved Luther to publish *On the Jews and Their Lies* with its harsh proposals on treatment of Jews, adding that to treat blasphemy as a criminal offense was "inappropriate in the context of his theology" (p. 344; see pp. 346, 351). Interestingly, in describing earlier events in which Luther appealed to similar anti-blasphemy laws against the Anabaptists, Brecht had ventured no such criticism of Luther, although he did indicate the similarity with the reformer's later position on the Jews (p. 37). Why does he score Luther

in one case but not the other? Does this selectivity occur to avoid offending modern sensibilities?

Also in chapter 13 Brecht is equally critical of Luther's rectilinear exegesis of several messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. One example will suffice: "[Luther] tried to prove that the virgin birth had been prophesied in Isaiah 7:14, although it spoke only of a young woman, not of a virgin, and thus his proof cannot be conclusive" (p. 347). Here Brecht's contention (basically that Luther was wrong because he was wrong) stands out not only as selective, but also as decidedly modern. Here no attempt is made to set forth Luther's case on the meaning of the word *almah* (on which he offered to put his money where his mouth was), nor even to understand the man on his own terms. Instead, Brecht alleges that "Luther deliberately violated exegetical methods for the sake of what were for him higher theological principles" (p. 348). This sort of embarrassed dismissal of Luther also somewhat colors Brecht's section on Luther and the papacy in chapter 13 (see pp. 361-367, *passim*).

Errors of fact as well as judgment are bound to creep into any large work like this one. When one spot-checks the notes, in a few places the question can arise whether the sources have been fully reflected. For instance, while Brecht writes that "Luther would have preferred to keep the traditional practice" of elevating the elements in the Lord's Supper (p. 283), he cites a page reference to—but does not report on—this statement of Luther: "from the beginning I had been inclined to drop the elevation and certainly would have done so . . . if [not for] Karlstadt" (AE 38, 317; WA 54, 165). In the same paragraph Brecht says that Luther "had no objection" to communing the sick with elements remaining from the service. Luther's words in the source cited were these: "We do not think it should be done. To be sure, one must allow it for a while" (AE 54, 407; WA Tr 5, 55).

All such issues aside, the three-volume *magnum opus* by Martin Brecht (with honorable mention due to his translator, James Schaff) will provide scholars and pastors interested in Luther a mountain of valuable material for years to come. It is not too much to say that this work is destined for the status of "classic." It will remain the standard for years, possibly until the end of the next century.

Ken Schurb
Ann Arbor, Michigan

THE EARLY HISTORY OF GOD: YAHWEH AND THE OTHER DEITIES IN ANCIENT ISRAEL. By Mark S. Smith. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1990.

Mark Smith's book is in some respects an updating of William Albright's *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, which came out in 1968. Since that time there have been ongoing major publications of epigraphic and archaeological information from old finds continuing to yield data and from new sites. Examples include the ongoing publication of the Mari letters, the discoveries of inscriptions at Deir 'Alla, Kuntillet 'Ajrûd, and Khirbet el-Qôm, excavations at Carthage, and the recent publication of nonbiblical writings of the Dead Sea Scroll community. This wealth of material coming to light within the past twenty-five years, according to Smith, has helped to produce four major changes in scholarly perspective which inform his book. The most significant change involves Israel's cultural identity: a large group of scholars currently believes that Israelite culture largely overlapped with, and derived from, Canaanite culture. The second major change in perspective, writes Smith, involves the nature of the "Yahwistic cult": old Israelite religion is understood by many scholars to have been essentially Canaanite in nature (actually, this is not such a "new" development). The third shift in perspective, Smith points out, involves the role of the Israelite monarchy. In the first half of its existence, Smith and others assert, the monarchy fostered the inclusion of various deities, or their features, into the cult of Yahweh. However, during the second half of the monarchy, religious programs patronized by the Judean kings Hezekiah and Josiah contributed to the differentiation of Israelite religion from its Canaanite past. The fourth change in outlook, according to Smith, involves the tremendous interest now expressed in the possibility of goddesses in Israelite worship life. The purpose of Smith's book, then, is to utilize the recent additions of data and these "major changes" in perspective "in order to illuminate broad trends underlying the development of various features of Israelite religion" (p. xxvii).

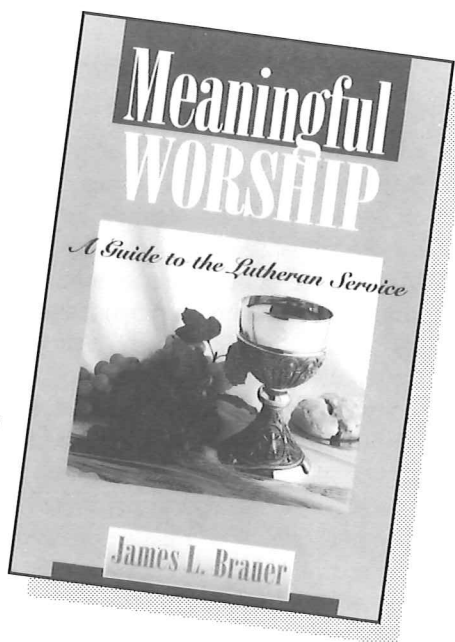
The author holds to the historical-critical method, with its theory that Israelite religion developed in a gradual evolutionary process. Specifically, Smith proposes that Israelite faith evolved from a limited polytheism, to monolatry, to monotheism (not a strikingly new proposal). Change came about, Smith affirms, due in large measure to two key developments: convergence (the coalescence of various deities or some of their features into the figure of Yahweh) and differentiation (of Israelite cult from its Canaanite heritage).

Starting with the period of the judges, Smith states that the deities of Israel were El, Yahweh, perhaps Baal, and possibly Asherah (a Canaanite goddess). However, Yahweh and El, in Smith's scenario, were regarded as the same deity (or equated) by the tenth century, and devotion to Asherah did not continue as an identifiably separate cult (her symbol, the asherah, was assimilated into Yahweh worship). Yahweh "held hegemony" over a complex religion that preserved some old Canaanite components and coexisted with Baal worship. Yahweh became the national deity during the monarchy, which was, Smith writes, equally a political and religious institution. In order to describe the powerful god (Yahweh) that brought them to prominence, the Davidic dynasts drew on older, "traditional" language used for the divine warrior Baal. Thus, the early monarchy embraced Baal's titles and imagery to describe its patron god. The second half of the monarchy, on the other hand, involved differentiation of Israelite cult from its Canaanite heritage. Numerous features of Israelite religion came to be rejected as Canaanite and non-Yahwistic. This development apparently began first, explains Smith, with the rejection of Baal worship in the ninth century and continued in the eighth to the sixth centuries with legal and prophetic condemnations of Baal worship, the asherah, solar worship, the high places, practices pertaining to the dead, and other religious features. As a result, a form of monolatry emerged during the monarchy. Smith concludes that the two major developments of convergence and differentiation eventually brought about monotheism, which Israel practiced and defined in the exile.

This book is not easy reading, both because of the subject matter and because of Smith's writing style, which at times lacks smooth connections and lucidity. Smith, however, has done thorough research, as exhibited in his ample footnotes. *The Early History of God* is a helpful summary of much modern scholarship concerning the religion of Israel.

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