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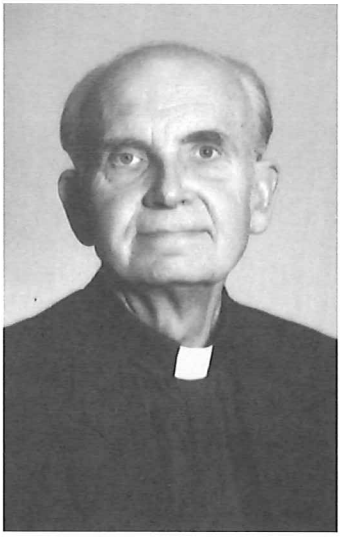

†Heino O. Kadai †
(1931-1999)

The Rev. Dr. Heino O. Kadai, long-time professor of historical theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, died June 3, 1999. He served the seminary from 1960 to the time of his death.

Heino Olavi Kadai was born in Tartu, Estonia on August 20, 1931 to Friedrich and Elisabeth (nee Neubaum) Kadai. He was reborn into the kingdom of God through the sacrament of holy baptism on December 26, 1931 at St. Peter Church, Tartu Estonia. The family fled to Ölsnitz, Saxony, Germany in 1944, and then to Augsburg, Bavaria, Germany in 1945. While in Augsburg he was confirmed November 13, 1948 at St. Ulrich Church.

Dr. Kadai's academic work was rich and varied. After the family had immigrated to New Jersey, Dr. Kadai attended Farleigh Dickinson University, receiving the A.A. degree in 1951. Baccalaureate work followed at Columbia University, from which he received the B.A. in June, 1953. He then entered Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois, from which he graduated in 1958. Dr. Kadai began graduate studies at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis in 1958, where he majored in historical theology and systematic theology, earning the B.D. and S.T.M. degrees in June 1960. His thesis titles were, respectively, "The Reformation Movement in Estonia," and "H. Emil Brunner–1914-1928: The Critical Period of His Theological Development and Writings." Dr. Kadai pursued the Doctor of Theology degree at the St. Louis seminary, majoring in the history of dogma of the Reformation and the modern period. He received the Th.D. degree in 1969, having successfully defended his thesis "A Comparative Study of the Prolegomena in Karl Barth's *Christliche Dogmatik* of 1927 and the *Kirchliche Dogmatik* of 1932-1938."

Following a call to teach historical theology at the Springfield seminary, Dr. Kadai was ordained into the Office of the Holy Ministry on September 11, 1960. He regularly taught courses in his two specialty areas: Modern European Protestantism and Luther. In 1971 he was awarded a post-doctorate fellowship from the American Association of Theological Schools to study at Stanford University.

Dr. Kadai edited *Accents in Luther's Theology* (Concordia Publishing House, 1967) and contributed "Luther's Theology of the Cross" to that volume. In 1967 he worked with Lewis Spitz Jr. to produce *Guide to Reformation Literature: Study Projects in Commemoration of the 450th Anniversary of the Reformation, 1517-1967* (General Committee for the 450th Reformation Anniversary, Inter-Lutheran Consultation, 1967). In 1966 his service as general editor resulted in the publication of *Bibliographical Guide to Luther Studies*. His "Professor D. Hermann Sasse: Congratulations for a Septuagenarian" appeared in the *Springfielder* in the Summer of 1965. He was acting editor of the *Springfielder* in 1963 and editor of *Concordia Theological Quarterly* from October 1994 to the present.

Dr. Kadai is survived by his wife, Lois (nee Haglund). Colleagues will remember his wry wit and probing questions. His younger colleagues especially will miss his encouragement to pursue graduate degrees and of his personal interest in each individual "becoming his own man." His students will recall a challenging yet compassionate professor. All of his colleagues will remember his love for God's first article gifts, especially music, as his trips to the Lyric Opera and Chicago Symphony were consistent topics of conversation. Now may his voice join with the crowd thronging around the God's throne saying "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion for ever and ever" (Revelation 5:13).

From Death to Life—The Christological Crossing: A Homily for Heino O. Kadai

Dean O. Wenthe

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

The text is the lesson from the Gospel of John read previously, especially chapter five, verse twenty-four: "I tell you the truth, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."

Members of the seminary family, fellow clergy, friends and family of Dr. Heino Kadai, and especially you, Lois.

Our seminary, in ways never experienced by large universities, is defined by its professors. The sheer size of an Indiana University or a Purdue University means that the departure or death of a professor is recognized by only a small portion of the community. It is not so with us.

A Lutheran seminary, in ways unique to its mission, is defined by its faculty. Our faculty is called to do more than simply lecture or impart information, more than construct syllabi and revise curriculum. We are called to form, to shape, to nurture in casual as well as confidential exchanges. Our professors are called to talk as well as to teach, to care as well as to conjugate, to confess as well as communicate.

So when a professor retires, or when one dies, we must pause and reflect. The very character of our community is affected at its center. Reflect for a moment on our recent losses—Dr. Robert Preus, Dr. Harold Buls, Dr. Donald Deffner, Dr. G. Waldemar Degner, Dr. Howard Tepker—and now Dr. Heino Kadai. How can we absorb such losses and continue with confidence unshaken?

Surely the answer is in what marked these men and still marks their heroic wives. It is what distinguishes them and us.

The Rev. Dr. Dean O. Wenthe is President of Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, Indiana, and Professor of Exegetical Theology.

It is what sets us off and makes us radical voices in our epoch. The story of these men, and specifically of Heino Kadai, is their participation in a radical reversal of what every fallen culture rehearses and recites.

Look about in our day. The plot and the paradigm are transparently evident—from the elderly to the unborn, from the grade school to the grad school. You can feel the fear, you can see the flight—the rush to play; the need to purchase; the push to squeeze the most from every moment and never to mention the end, the finale. For we live in a time that is robbed of richness and wholeness and holiness, all because it embraces and assumes that life is followed by death. Dark, deep, and forever—death swallows up all hope in a culture where the intellect is clouded and people are reduced to mere moments before endless silence.

Not so with us! Not so with Dr. Heino Kadai! His life and vocation were a celebration of the great reversal! Death will be followed by life.

Dr. Kadai experienced and entered that life when he was joined to Christ in the sacrament of holy baptism on December 26, 1931, at St. Peter Lutheran Church, Tartu, Estonia. At that moment, as St. John states, Dr. Kadai "passed from death to life." It was a *Christological crossing*, for there is life in only one locus: not in an idea, not in a philosophy, not in a technology. Real life, the passage from death to life, occurs only in the person of Jesus Christ. The holy water of baptism seals the reversal. In this man, Dr. Heino Kadai, life will follow death; a full, free, innocent, and glorious life in Christ will be lived before the heavenly Father.

This life in Christ was affirmed and confessed by Dr. Kadai after his family had fled to Ölsnitz, Saxony, Germany, in 1944 and then to Augsburg in 1945. There, in Augsburg, on November 13, 1948, Dr. Kadai publicly participated in the Lord's Supper in conjunction with his confirmation at St. Ulrich Church. The life of Christ to which he was joined in holy baptism was now confirmed and nurtured and nourished by his

participation in the very body and blood of Christ at the Lord's altar.

And for us the confession that Dr. Kadai was in Christ and had passed from death to life was again heard in his ordination and installation on September 11, 1960, at our seminary when it was in Springfield, Illinois. Just prior to the ordination and installation of Dr. Kadai, these hymn stanzas were sung:

> Jesus, Jesus, only Jesus,
> Can my heartfelt longing still.
> Lo, I pledge myself to Jesus
> What He wills alone to will.
> For my heart, which He hath filled,
> Ever cries, Lord, as Thou wilt.
>
> One there is for whom I'm living,
> Whom I love most tenderly;
> Unto Jesus I am giving
> What in love He gave to me.
> Jesus' blood hides all my guilt;
> Lord, oh, lead me as Thou wilt.

Lois and family, that is glorious comfort even in the heartbreak of sudden loss. In Christ death is followed by life—a life that was already enjoyed in font and altar and hearing the living voice of Jesus through His apostles and prophets.

We rejoice that the Lord led Heino to us and that for four decades he enriched our community by living the truth that death is swallowed up in the life of Jesus and that in the holy waters of baptism, in the holy eucharist, and in the holy word there is even now life that follows every dying moment and death itself.

As I reviewed Heino's ordination and installation service, I could not help but note the other faculty and staff who were newly appointed at the same service: Dr. Gerhard Aho, Dr. George Dolak, Dr. Eugene Klug, Dr. Allen Nauss, Dr. Raymond Surburg. Dr. Kadai has now joined Drs. Aho and Dolak, but

what binds us to them and forever unites us is the fact that we have been joined to Christ.

As our text so succinctly says it and the Lord so beautifully bestows: "I tell you the truth, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be condemned; for he has crossed over from death to life." This is the great Christological crossing.

Luther's Theology of the Cross

Heino O. Kadai

As a young man, before the Reformation in Germany, Martin Luther advised his friend George Spenlein: "My dear Friar, learn Christ and him crucified. Learn to praise him and, despairing of yourself, say, 'Lord Jesus, you are my righteousness, just as I am your sin.'"[1] Years later, in heated literary battle with the illustrious humanist Erasmus, Dr. Luther, by then well known himself, held true to this advice. Again he said, "We teach nothing save Christ crucified."[2] This remained the heart of Luther's theology throughout life. Once at a disputation in Heidelberg he called it *theologia crucis*.[3] In his swan-song lecture series on the first book of the Pentateuch that took a decade to deliver he called it the "theology of the Gospel."[4] The label does not matter. The important point is that Luther's theology centers uniquely around the crucified Jesus. As *doctor biblicus* and professor of exegetical theology at the University of Wittenberg, his calling was to expound the word of God, and in his considered judgment Jesus Christ was the central message of the Holy Scriptures. "Take Christ from the Scriptures—and what more will you find in them?" he asked.[5]

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[1]"Letter to George Spenlein, April 8, 1516," *Luther's Works,* American Edition, 55 volumes, edited by J. Pelikan and H. T. Lehmann (St. Louis: Concordia and Philadelphia: Fortress, 1955-1986), 48:12. Subsequent references to volumes in this series will be abbreviated *LW*.

[2]Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will,* edited by J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1957), 107.

[3]"Theses for the Heidelberg Disputation," *LW* 31:40.

[4]"Lectures on Genesis," *LW* 8:30.

[5]*Bondage of the Will,* 71.

The Rev. Dr. Heino O. Kadai was Chairman and Professor of the Department of Historical Theology and Editor of the* Concordia Theological Quarterly *at Concordia Theological Seminary at the time of his death in June 1999. This essay was originally printed in* Accents in Luther's Theology: Essays in Commemoration of the 450th Anniversary of the Reformation, *edited by Heino O. Kadai (St. Louis and London: Concordia Publishing House, 1967). Reprinted by permission.

Luther did not attempt to penetrate the mysteries of God not revealed in the word. He realized that "there is a great deal hid in God of which we know nothing."[6] God must be sought where He has revealed Himself, that is, in Jesus. To find God, Luther turned to this humble Jew of Nazareth, who long ago had told Thomas: "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father but by Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; henceforth you know Him and have seen Him."[7] Of all places, the glory of God was to be sought on the cross of Golgotha. Luther agreed profoundly with St. Paul's words to the Galatian Christians: "Far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."[8] The central figure in Luther's theology is the crucified Christ. It is fitting that his theology be known as *theologia crucis.*

I. The Cross as the Common Christian Heritage

The cross is the catholic heritage of all Christendom. Although there are indications that its religious significance extended beyond the pale of Christendom—pre-Christian crosses were used symbolically in Assyria, Persia, India, and northern Scandinavia—the cross has come to be identified with Christianity.[9] There is good reason for this. The heart of the Christian faith is summed up in the cross of Jesus Christ. Leon Morris has demonstrated just how extensively the cross motif penetrates the marrow of New Testament theology.[10]

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[6]*Bondage of the Will,* 71.

[7]John 14:6-7.

[8]Galatians 6:14.

[9]Daniel J. Fleming, "Religious Symbols Crossing Cultural Boundaries," *Religious Symbolism,* edited by F. Ernest Johnson (New York: The Institute for Religious and Social Studies and Harper & Brothers, 1955), 84.

[10]Leon Morris, *The Cross in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), especially pages 364 and following.

Cross and the Early Church

While making use of the symbol of the cross, early Christian writers seldom saturated theological treatises with allusions to it, especially as the instrument of torture on which Christ died.[11] Early Christian artists also seemed reluctant to use it, preferring the indirection of the symbol: the anchor, mast, and crossbeams of the ship and the Greek letter X, the initial of Christ. In fact the cross as a graphic symbol was probably overshadowed by the fish, *ichthus* (ἰχθύς), the individual letters of which spell out the initials of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior.[12] The sign of the cross, however, gained popularity early and by the end of the second century was an established custom in Christian piety.

Crucifixion as such does not appear in early Christian art.[13] Probably the earliest remaining pictorial presentation of the crucifixion of Christ was drawn during the second century by hostile hands. On the wall of the Domus Celotiana in Rome, a building used as a school for imperial pages, one sees a drawing of a crucified ass with the Greek inscription "*Alexamenos* (adores) God."[14] Not until the fourth century did Christians begin to represent in art form the narrative of the death of Christ. Why did the Passion narrative appear so relatively late in Christian art? Several reasons come to mind. Perhaps there is some truth to the conjecture that since the cross remained a sign of foolishness and a stumbling block to the Graeco-Roman

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[11]Here note an interesting study by G. Q. Reijners, *The Terminology of the Holy Cross in Early Christian Literature* (Nijmegen: Dekker Van de Vegt N. V., 1965). He demonstrates that the usual name for the cross in patristic texts and earliest apocryphal writings was an instrument of torture. This usage agrees with the vocabulary of the evangelists in the Passion narratives and with usage in contemporary profane literature. It is remarkable, however, that the word never occurs in the Septuagint. See page 215.

[12]Eric Newton and William Neil, *2000 Years of Christian Art* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 31.

[13]Crucifixion as a subject of art does not appear before the fifth century in the West. See Gilbert Cope, *Symbolism in the Bible and the Church* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959), 41.

[14]For a reproduction of the drawing see Jean Daniélou and Henri Marrou, *The First Six Hundred Years*, volume I of *The Christian Centuries* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), plate 10.

world, believers found it more advantageous to stress the resurrection of their Lord rather than draw attention to His ignominious death.[15] A sounder reason is to be found in the theology of the period. As Jean Daniélou has indicated, early Christian theology saw in the symbolism of the cross the expression of Christ's irresistible power and divine efficacy.[16] The lowly, suffering Jesus of the Passion story simply did not fit into the scheme of patristic Christology. The Greek Fathers were more impressed by the doctrine of the Incarnation than the Vicarious Atonement. This is well illustrated by Irenaeus, the brilliant second-century Greek-speaking Father from Lyons, in whose hands the Incarnation becomes *the* event of man's salvation: "The Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. . . through His transcendent love, became what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself."[17] Hermann Sasse is right when he states that here the doctrine of the cross is contained in the doctrine of Incarnation, but it has lost its independent status. For the ancient church as well as the later Eastern church the reality of the cross tended to become hidden in the glory of Christmas and Easter. The cross was outshone by the divine glory of Christ incarnate and the risen Lord.[18]

Cross and Byzantine Christianity

As the patristic era progressed into the so-called Middle Ages, the cross became a common symbol in artistic representation. In early Byzantine art it played a major role, becoming a favorite architectural design. The little cruciform building in Ravenna known as the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia may have the distinction of being the earliest major example of Christian art

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[15]Cope, 41.

[16]Daniélou and Marrou, 78-79.

[17]Irenaeus "Against Heresies" (Preface to Book V), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers,* edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), 1:526. Also consult the excellent work by Gustaf Wingren, *Man and the Incarnation: A Study in the Biblical Theology of Irenaeus* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959).

[18]Hermann Sasse, "Theologia crucis," *Briefe an lutherische Pastoren,* Nr. 18 (April 15, 1951), 3.

in Italy. Its opulent Oriental decor includes the mosaic panels of Martyr St. Lawrence and the beardless Good Shepherd, both prominently incorporating the cross into the design. But the work is so heavily laden with brilliance, mystery, and decorative magnificence that the stark reality of the pain of the cross is largely lost. To be sure, it is there, but it does not dominate.[19] The story is much the same with the mosaic in the apse of Santa Pudenziana in Rome where Christ is depicted as teacher of the apostles in the heavenly Jerusalem (401-417). Again the cross is prominent, but its golden majesty hardly suggests suffering. Rather, it stands as a token of Christ's victory.[20]

The Greek and the Byzantine artists took the cue from their theologians, who tended toward an idealistic conception of man with a leaning toward what came to be known as Pelagianism. The lack of a truly biblical understanding of the serious nature of sin helped prevent the early and the Byzantine churches from reaching the full significance of the cross. Thus they remained short of a true *theologia crucis.*

Cross and the Medieval West

Sasse convincingly contends that *theologia crucis* belongs to the Western church.[21] It was in the West that Constantine, the first Roman ruler really friendly toward the Christians, conquered under the sign of the cross. It was he who had the Church of the Holy Sepulchre built in the holy city of Jerusalem to house the alleged relic of the Holy Cross. The act was a definite boost for the veneration of the cross throughout all Christendom. But the real home of cross-centered piety was the "Holy Cross in Jerusalem" Church in Rome.

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[19]For reproductions of the mosaics in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia (d. 450) see Wolfgang Fritz Volbach, *Early Christian Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1961), plates 146 and 147. For a discussion of the subject see Newton and Neil, 41.

[20]For a reproduction see Volbach, plate 130.

[21]"Theologia crucis," 4.

Western veneration of the cross had its liturgical aspects. Important hymns were produced. The Latin poet Venantius Fortunatus (circa 530-circa 600) composed two, *Pange lingua gloriosi* and *Vexilla Regis.* Both were directly addressed to the cross and became part of the Roman liturgical heritage for Good Friday worship. There is no doubt that this type of liturgical piety was sincere and cross-oriented. In fact it was a kind of theology of the cross. While not yet the theology of Bernard of Clairvaux's *Salve caput cruentatum*[22] or the popular, tender *Stabat mater dolorosa/juxta crucem lachrymosa,* it pointed the way toward such theology.[23]

As in the early church, so also in early medieval piety the cross remained a symbol of divine victory and power. Christian emperors carried it on the battlefield and were confident that they conquered and killed under its blessings. The church militant looked and learned from the secular environment and battled demons and devils by its power. The cross became an almost magical weapon, at the disposal of the visible church to repel its enemies.

The discovery of the naked reality of the suffering and dying Savior by medieval monks and churchmen was of monumental significance to the life and theology of the church. The great Pantocrator Christ, for example, in the magnificent Norman-built twelfth-century cathedral at Cefalù in Sicily[24] gave way to Benedetto Antelami's modest conception of "The Deposition"

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[22]Paul Gerhardt's hymn (1656) *O Haupt von Blut und Wunden* is based on Bernard's *Salve caput cruentatum.* Gerhardt's hymn is in *The Lutheran Hymnal* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), Hymn 172.

[23]The hymn is of unknown origin. Suggested authors are Innocent III (d. 1216), St. Bonaventura (d. 1274) and Jacopone da Todi (d. 1306). The hymn came into liturgical use in the late Middle Ages and found its way into the Roman Missal in the eighteenth century. See F. L. Cross, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), 1285. See also Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church,* volume 5, *The Middle Ages* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1960), 859-868.

[24]For illustration see Newton and Neil, 81.

(1178) in Parma[25] or to the humble Passion narrative on the tympanum of the central portal of the Gothic Cathedral of Strasbourg (thirteenth century).[26] The Man of Sorrows replaced the image of the victorious Christ. Christ's humility, suffering, pain, and death continued to interest both the medieval theologian and the artist. This piety perhaps is climaxed in the work of Grünewald, a German painter and contemporary of Luther. Grünewald's artistic representation of the crucifixion forms the central panel of the Isenheim Altarpiece (about 1509-1515) and is one of the most moving ever produced. According to Eric Newton, the noted art critic, "it strains the possibilities of the tragic, the static, the mystical and the macabre to a point never reached before or since in Christian art. Perhaps it is the one great series of paintings that dwells, almost hysterically, on horror and yet never loses the spirit of reverence for suffering."[27]

Changing moods in the fine arts were symptoms of change in theological attitudes. Discovery of the suffering and death of Christ as a bitter reality went hand in hand with realization of the serious nature of sin and guilt, and medieval theologians began to take the plight of sin far more seriously. Unfortunately, the answers they proposed to the problems of sin and grace were often unbiblical. The penitential system, developed as cure for men's souls, turned out to harbor serious contradictions to the gospel. However, medieval man, both cleric and layman, was impressed by the magnitude of his sin and his dire need of absolution. It was this type of theological climate that formed the context for Luther's quest for the gracious God and in 1505 helped him decide for the monastic way among the Augustinian Eremites. The quest for the meaning of the cross had already moved the Latin church for a thousand years before it became a crucial problem for the German Reformation.

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[25]For illustration see Newton and Neil, 99.

[26]For illustration see Marcel Aubert and Simone Goubet, *Gothic Cathedrals of France and Their Treasures* (London: Nicholas Kaye Limited, 1959), plate 273.

[27]Newton and Neil, 157. For a good reproduction see plate IX.

One of the fruits of medieval reflection on the doctrine of sin and salvation was Anselm's profound book *Cur Deus homo.* This work was a product of the age of Scholasticism and therefore understandably suffers some of the weaknesses inherent in the attempted synthesis of faith and reason. In some respects, however, Anselm of Canterbury transcended the weaknesses of his theological milieu.[28] Students of the history of Christian thought note with interest that Anselm was the first to raise the *satisjactio vicaria* to its rightful place in theology. According to Sasse:

> it is a remarkable fact that the doctrine according to which the death of Christ is the satisfaction for the sins of the world is the only doctrine of the Middle Ages which eventually found general assent. The medieval doctrines of sin and grace have remained in dispute. The dogma of transubstantiation has been limited to the Roman Church. All doctrines developed in the 16th century are limited to certain sections of Christendom. But the doctrine of the *satisfactio vicaria* has been dogmatized by the Lutheran, the Reformed, the Anglican, and the Roman Churches independently in their respective confessions.[29]

Thus Anselm made a lasting contribution to the theology of the cross.[30]

It is evident that the cross was no stranger to the Christian tradition before Luther. It had already appeared in many shapes: the Greek cross, the Latin cross, the Egyptian cross, the Maltese cross, the Papal cross, and the cross of Lorraine. Iconographers have identified more than fifty varieties, all of

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[28]An interpretation of Anselm's theological significance and scope that deserves praise is Karl Barth's *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum* (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1960).

[29]"Theologia crucis," 5.

[30]For a convenient English text of Anselm's *Cur Deus homo* see *A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham,* edited by Eugene R. Fairweather (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956), 100-183.

which have figured in Christian symbolism.[31] It appeared in and on reliquaries, graced church buildings, formed the ground plan for some of the houses of worship, rode in processions, was embroidered on the silk and satin of ecclesiastical vestments, and appeared as a perennial sign on the fingertips of cleric and layman alike. It was ever on the lips of the whole of medieval Christendom. Yet the real depth of the theology of the cross also eluded the Middle Ages. Only in the sixteenth century did *theologia crucis* come to full biblical dimensions in the theology of Martin Luther.

II. Luther's *theologia crucis*

Luther did not need to discover that Jesus Christ had died on the cross for the sins of the world. The church had known that for a long time. In fact, his Catholic superior Staupitz and his father confessor at the monastery both directed him to the forgiveness available in the cross of Christ when he was waging a desperate struggle for righteousness and salvation. In a measure the theology he was taught was that of the cross. It was not, however, all that Luther's own *theologia crucis* came to mean.

In some respects the *theologia crucis* was a radical reversal of the medieval theology of the cross, which Luther later came to call *theologia gloriae,* theology of glory. As Luther came to recognize the full sweetness of God's love in the cross, he realized that the cross also had an epistemological dimension. It offered clues to understanding the mysteries of divine revelation. This formed the backbone of the *theologia crucis.* Luther realized that the love of God toward the sinner that the dying Savior symbolized and manifested as He atoned was, although important, only one aspect of the theology of the cross. An equally important aspect of *theologia crucis,* the cross event, was that it revealed the mystery of God's revelation and afforded insight into the secrets of God's dealings with men. Luther made this discovery rather early in his career. By the

[31]See *The Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church,* edited by Julius Bodensieck (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1965), 1:640-641.

time the Ninety-five Theses shook the foundations of Western Christendom he had already given concise definition to his ideas on *theologia crucis.* His early lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews (1517) clearly show that he had already grasped its full dimensions.[32] The lectures were interrupted midstream when Luther received a summons to appear before the regular triennial meeting of the German Congregation of the Augustinian Eremites in Heidelberg (1518).[33] During these meetings Vicar General Johann von Staupitz offered him the opportunity (April 26, 1518) to preside over a debate covering 28 theological and 12 philosophical theses that Luther had prepared beforehand.[34] The theses demonstrated the growing maturity of his evangelical thought and are of particular interest to those who seek to grasp his *theologia crucis.* Never did Luther express his theology of the cross more succinctly.

Heidelberg Theses on theologia crucis

The most relevant of the Heidelberg Theses are 18 through 21:

18. It is certain that man must utterly despair of his own ability before he is prepared to receive the grace of Christ.

19. That person does not deserve to be called a theologian who looks upon the invisible things of God as though they were clearly perceptible in those things which have actually happened.

20. He deserves to be called a theologian, however, who comprehends the visible and manifest things of God seen through suffering and the cross.

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[32]*Luther: Early Theological Works,* edited and translated by James Atkinson, volume 16 of *Library of Christian Classics* (London: SCM Press, 1962). See particularly page 82, note 1.

[33]*Luther: Early Theological Works,* 21.

[34]Actually Leonhard Beier debated the theses, with Luther presiding. *LW* 31:38.

21. A theologian of glory calls evil good and good evil. A theology of the cross calls the thing what it actually is.[35]

A number of theological insights emerge.

Paradox of the Knowledge of God

How do Christians know and recognize God? Luther faced this epistemological question. First, there is a contrast between man's attempt to know God on his own and the knowledge and encounter that God makes available. Using his reasoning power man may seek to know God by way of philosophical reflection or contemplation of created reality. In such cases the goal is the knowledge of God as He is in His naked majesty. Luther knew that such a quest was doomed to failure. Man simply cannot bear exposure to the glory of divine majesty. God had told Moses: "You cannot see My face; for man shall not see Me and live. . . . Behold, there is a place by Me where you shall stand upon the rock; and while My glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with My hand until I have passed by; then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen."[36]

Prior to eternity God does not encounter man in naked majesty but adjusts Himself to the human situation, that is, He covers Himself with a mask, revealing Himself in concretized, humanized, and incarnate form. Any attempt to push the mask aside or glance behind it results in tragedy. Man must learn to find God in the masks He has chosen to clothe Himself. The most important of the masks is the Incarnation. God took upon Himself humanity and revealed Himself in Jesus of Nazareth. Luther well knew that God had given Himself to be known in Jesus and that outside of Him God was not to be found. Whoever seeks God outside of Christ, said Luther, actually ends up by finding the devil. Thus the knowledge of God can come only on God's own initiative and terms. But He has chosen the way of masks and veils in order to accommodate human frailty. A paradox obtains: God in His revelation conceals Himself

[35]*LW* 31:40.
[36]Exodus 33:20-23.

behind masks. This is the way of God even today. Paul Althaus writes: "The Holy Spirit comes to us through the external, physical, sensible means of the word, of the human voice, and of the sacraments. All these words and sacraments are his veils and clothing, masks and disguises with which he covers himself so that we may bear and comprehend him."[37]

In Thesis 19 Luther speaks primarily to scholastic theologians when he warns that true theologians should know better than to try to speculate about God on the basis of the created world and historical data. The "invisible things of God," His eternal power and deity, cannot be properly derived from a knowledge of things.[38] Luther clearly rejects the Thomistic type of natural theology. But he does not reject a "natural" knowledge of God.[39] As far as Luther is concerned, to move from below to above, from creation to the Creator via *analogia entis*, is not sound theology.

According to Luther, a theologian worthy of the name "comprehends the visible and manifest things of God seen through suffering and the cross" (Thesis 20). Here a contrast is established between the invisible nature of God and His majestic attributes (see Romans 1:20) on the one hand, and His visible back side of humanity, weakness, and foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:25) on the other. Further contrast emerges between knowledge of God from His works and from His suffering. A true theologian seeks God where God Himself has

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[37]Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, translated by Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 22.

[38]Romans 1:20.

[39]Philip S. Watson's work *Let God Be God* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1947) is more helpful than most treatments of the subject. Watson writes (78, 79): "For Luther, God is not to be sought behind His creation by inference from it, but is rather to be apprehended in and through it. . . . In a certain sense, therefore, the Creator is concealed by His works. Yet the *larvae* Dei have another and more positive significance than that of mere concealment. Rightly understood, they are media of Divine revelation." See also "Lectures on Genesis," *LW* 1:11: "God also does not manifest Himself except through His works and the Word, because the meaning of these is understood in some measure."

hidden His revelation: in the foolishness, humility, and shame of the cross.[40] A theology of glory seeks God only in the manifestation of His power. But in His blinding glory and power God is beyond man. He wants to and must be known in His suffering and death. This is the essence of Luther's *theologia crucis.* Accordingly, a theologian who seeks God must stop at the foot of the cross of Golgotha. In the crucified Savior God meets man as his gracious and merciful Father. The real reality is not accessible to man as man but must be revealed to him.

Radical Revelation of Reality

In Thesis 21 Luther complained that the theology of glory did not have a true understanding of reality. While having a taste for pomp and ceremony, majesty, might, and power, *theologia gloriae* was embarrassed by the suffering Savior figure, as well as by the suffering God placed on the shoulders of the followers of Christ. Man had decided to use his own standards in evaluating God's reality. To be sure, by human standards the cross, suffering, and weakness were to be avoided as unworthy of a mighty and benevolent God. It was not so at all in God's sight. He had chosen to offer His grace in a form that was foolishness to the Greeks and a stumbling block to the Jews, an offense to man's good common sense. Think of the bystander at the scene of the crucifixion. What he saw was the dying Jesus of Nazareth, the final defeat for a religious enthusiast. In reality, as God's revelation testifies, it was *the* event of history. God's Son was conquering the forces of evil and making the salvation of mankind possible. Once Luther told Erasmus, "Your thoughts of God are too human."[41] He implied the same when he reprimanded the theologians of glory at Heidelberg.

Luther's explanation of Thesis 21 indicates that he was unconvinced that his opponents really knew the full revelation of God in Christ. "He who does not know Christ does not know God hidden in suffering," he said.[42] Such a man "prefers works

[40]See an excellent discussion of the matter by Althaus, 26.
[41]*Bondage of the Will,* 87.
[42]*LW* 31:53.

to suffering, glory to the cross, strength to weakness, wisdom to folly, and, in general, good to evil."[43] Luther was convinced that God could be found only in suffering and the cross.[44] Friends of the cross would therefore call suffering good. Friends of *theologia gloriae* would prefer humanly devised good works to suffering. They would want to attain God's favor by works that they by themselves had decided should please God. Luther had no sympathy with such opinions. He believed that "through the cross works are dethroned and the old Adam, who is especially edified by works, is crucified."[45]

There was little room left for man's pride, but Luther was not upset. If man is to receive God's grace, he must "utterly despair of his own ability" (Thesis 18). The divine law must do its work of leading him into hell and showing him that he is a sinner in all his works. Only after man has learned to accept the fact that it is utterly presumptuous of him to strive for grace on the basis of his own strength is he ready for God's grace in Christ.[46] "It is impossible," said Luther, "for a person not to be puffed up by his good works unless he has first been deflated and destroyed by suffering and evil until he knows that he is worthless and that his works are not his but God's."[47]

The radical reevaluation of reality is possible by faith alone. The new insight into reality appeals neither to reason nor to common sense. It is the foolishness of God which is wiser than men.[48] In this light Luther's *theologia crucis* might also be called a theology of faith. The very nature of faith, Luther once told his students, is "to see what cannot be seen and not see what can be seen."[49]

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[43]*LW* 31:53.

[44]*LW* 31:53.

[45]*LW* 31:53.

[46]*LW* 31:51-52.

[47]*LW* 31:53.

[48]On wisdom and foolishness in divine economy as it relates to Luther's theology of the Heidelberg Disputation see the perceptive essay by Edmund Schlink, "Weisheit und Torheit," *Kerygma und Dogma* 1 (1955): 1-22.

[49]*Luther: Early Theological Works*, 222.

III. Luther Remains True to His *theologia crucis*

Any serious student of Luther knows that the Reformer's theology evolved over a period of many years. While his tower experience, the discovery of the biblical meaning of the "righteousness of God," may have occurred abruptly, his theology as a whole matured slowly.[50] Therefore it is not altogether misleading to speak of the "young Luther" or the "mature Luther" when evaluating his work. Understandably, Luther needed time to extricate himself from the theological patterns of thought in which he was trained and nurtured. Once the "Copernican revolution" in theology had begun, thinking through its implications required time. Luther sometimes found that his early theological views needed modification. To cite examples, consider his changing attitude toward the papacy, purgatory, and indulgences. His *theologia crucis* does not belong in this group. To contend that theology of the cross merely belongs to the young or Catholic Luther is to err.[51] It characterized his whole theological effort. Walther von Loewenich, the best-known interpreter of Luther's *theologia crucis*, heartily agrees that "*theologia crucis* is a principle of Luther's whole theology, it may not be limited to any particular period."[52] No less a Luther interpreter than Gerhard Ebeling supports this view, pointing out that although Luther in his later work did not use the phrase *theologia crucis* frequently — quite

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[50]This writer finds it difficult to see real merit in perennial discussion on the date of Luther's famous discovery. The early date of 1513 or 1514, held by E. G. Schwiebert (*Luther and His Times* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950], 282 and following) and Gordon Rupp (*The Righteousness of God: Luther Studies* [New York: Philosophical Library, 1953]), considering all factors, seems much more satisfying than the late date proposed by Ernst Bizer (*Fides ex auditu* [Neukirchner Verlag, 1961]) and Uuras Saarnivaara (*Luther Discovers the Gospel* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951]).

[51]Otto Ritschl called it "monk's theology" and assigned it to Luther's prereformatory period. See his *Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus,* volume 2 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichsche Buchhandlung, 1912), especially pages 40-84.

[52]*Luthers Theologia Crucis,* 4. Auflage (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1954), 7; Walter von Loewenich, *Luther's Theology of the Cross,* translated by Herbert J.A. Bouman (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1976), 12-13.

the opposite is true—the label nevertheless well describes all his theology.[53] This writer is convinced. A spot check of Luther's work dispels all doubt.

The Commentary on the Magnificat and theologia crucis *(1521)*

Luther's commentary on the Magnificat is a devotional tract composed in the stormy days of the spring and summer of 1521. The work was addressed to Prince John Frederick of Saxony, the elector's nephew, who was later destined to become the benevolent evangelical ruler of Electoral Saxony (1532-1547). The writing of the commentary was interrupted by Luther's call to the Diet of Worms and was completed during the relative quiet of the Wartburg confinement. By June 10, 1521, the work was ready for the printer.[54]

The commentary is a delightful pamphlet of considerable spiritual depth. In it Luther offered remarkably candid advice to the young nobleman: "Unless a lord and ruler loves his subjects and has for his chief concern not how to live at ease but how to uplift and improve his people, his case is hopeless; he rules only for his soul's perdition."[55] As Luther saw it, a good ruler was a true Christian and took "the fear of God for his defense and rampart," and it was his duty as a Christian theologian, citizen, and subject to offer "wholesome instruction and admonition" to his future prince and lord.[56]

The burden of the message of the Magnificat was Christian humility, and he developed this theme in such a manner that it becomes quite clear that his *theologia crucis* underlay the whole exposition.[57]

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[53]*Luther: Einführung in sein Denken* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1964), 259; See also chapter 14: "Verborgener und offenbarter Gott," 259-279.

[54]"Letter to George Spenlein, June 10, 1521," *LW* 48:254. For a discussion of the composition of the commentary see *LW* 21:xvii and following.

[55]*LW* 21:357.

[56]*LW* 21:357, 356.

[57]*LW* 21:300, 306, 315-316, 343. Luther calls it the highest of virtues, 313.

In the introductory paragraphs Luther established that God's and man's evaluation of reality did not coincide. He wrote:

> Even now and to the end of the world, all His works are such that out of that which is nothing, worthless, despised, wretched, and dead, He makes that which is something, precious, honorable, blessed, and living. On the other hand, whatever is something, precious, honorable, blessed, and living, He makes to be nothing, worthless, despised, wretched, and dying. In this manner no creature can work.[58]

He was convinced that God humbled the proud and gave grace to the humble.[59] Where the experience prevails that God "looks into the depths and helps only the poor, despised, afflicted, miserable, forsaken, and those who are nothing, there a hearty love for Him is born."[60]

Luther believed that Mary, whom he often called the Mother of God, taught how to know, love, and praise God by word and example.[61]

Knowing God

There is a false way and a true way to the knowledge of God. Of the false, the way of speculation and reason, Luther said:

> There are many who praise God with a loud voice, preach about Him with high-sounding words, speak much of Him, dispute and write about Him, and paint His image; whose thoughts dwell often upon Him and who reach out after Him and speculate about Him with their reason; there are also many who exalt Him with false devotion and a false will.[62]

Speculation and philosophical reflection do not lead to a true knowledge of God because God dwells in the darkness of

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[58]*LW* 21:299; see also 356.
[59]Luther is thinking here of 1 Peter 5:5.
[60]*LW* 21:300.
[61]*LW* 21:301.
[62]*LW* 21:307.

faith.[63] The true reality of God cannot be seen; man must comprehend by faith, which Luther defines as "firm confidence in the unseen grace of God that is promised us."[64] Since God's works are in secret, without semblance of power, and men judge by appearances, men often err.[65] God operates by a standard unfamiliar to man's conception of the deity. His wisdom and power are not those most highly esteemed by men.[66] In fact, He chose what is foolish in the world in order to shame the wise.[67] If man really wants to know the truth, his eyes need to be changed. He must realize that God's value judgments are tipped in favor of the lowly and the despised.[68] God has power, but that power is seen through faith; moreover to understand God's works requires faith. By faith the real nature, will, and mind of God become known.[69] Even God's greatest work, the Incarnation, seems a humble historical event to the natural eye,[70] but without this event the whole world would still be in sin and accursed, and this in spite of man's doing and knowing.[71] One must view the whole Christ event with faith. To the human eye Christ looked powerless on the cross, yet it was there that He performed His mightiest work. So sense and reason must close their eyes and faith must take over.[72] As man comprehends God's gracious regard to him, a sinner, God gives Himself to man and lets Himself be known as the gracious Father. One might wonder about proof. Hardly! God's word and work do not demand proof of reason; man must know in free and pure faith alone.[73] Luther was convinced that to know God was to

[63] *LW* 21:304.
[64] *LW* 21:305.
[65] *LW* 21:339.
[66] *LW* 21:314.
[67] *LW* 21:313.
[68] *LW* 21:317.
[69] *LW* 21:331.
[70] *LW* 21:350.
[71] *LW* 21:352.
[72] *LW* 21:340-341.
[73] *LW* 21:353.

believe that He was good even if His goodness escaped man's sense experience.[74]

The Magnificat taught Luther that a Christian does not place his trust in God's gifts; he trusts in His grace, in God Himself.[75] Perverted lovers of God, the parasites, hirelings, and slaves, love salvation but not their Savior.[76] They "seek their own advantage in God, neither love nor praise His bare goodness, but have an eye to themselves and consider only how good God is to them."[77] When He hides His face and withdraws the rays of goodness, love cools promptly. They seem to be unable to love the bare, unfelt goodness hidden in God. Contrary to this spirit the Christians, the truly lowly, naked, hungry, and God-fearing—like the Virgin Mary—love God Himself, not only the good things of God.[78] The hirelings, thinks Luther, would let God's good things go unloved and unpraised if heaven and hell did not exist.[79] Such men are actually trying to make a lackey out of God. They surely will not obtain a reward; God is not their Savior; they have fabricated a savior for themselves.[80]

Praising God

A Christian is to lay claim to nothing as far as his own ability is concerned.[81] God alone is to be exalted and praised.[82] However, praise of the Lord with gladness is not a man-fabricated work, rather it is joyful suffering.[83] Self-chosen works neither afford salvation nor render praise. Faith alone makes men pious, united, peaceable; human works tend to breed discrimination, sin, and discord.[84] One must remember that God

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[74]Luther comments that it is a practical impossibility that a Christian would never experience God's goodness. See *LW* 21:310.

[75]*LW* 21:325.

[76]*LW* 21:309, 312.

[77]*LW* 21:309.

[78]*LW* 21:311.

[79]*LW* 21:312.

[80]*LW* 21:312.

[81]*LW* 21:308.

[82]*LW* 21:328.

[83]*LW* 21:302.

[84]*LW* 21:304-305.

looks at the heart and not at works.[85] True worship and service of God is to let God be God and let Him perform His works in the believer. Luther was definitely unhappy with what people tended to associate with "service of God."

> Alas, the word 'service of God' has nowadays taken on so strange a meaning and usage that whoever hears it thinks not of these works of God, but rather of the ringing of bells, the wood and stone of churches, the incense pot, the flicker of candles, the mumbling in the churches, the gold, silver, and precious stones in the vestments of choirboys and celebrants, of chalices and monstrances, of organs and images, processions and churchgoing, and, most of all, the babbling of lips and the rattling of rosaries. This, alas, is what the service of God means now. Of such service God knows nothing at all.[86]

He was likewise critical of the worship service. He complained: "There is today in the churches a great ringing of bells, blowing of trumpets, singing, shouting, and intoning, yet I fear precious little worship of God, who wants to be worshiped in spirit and truth, as He says in John 4:24."[87]

According to Luther the real praise is God's own work which He performs in the believer; it is joyful suffering.[88] Of course this does not agree with those who are ready to praise God only when He does well to them.[89] Ironically, God's good gifts often have an undesirable effect; they tend to feed man's pride and self-confidence, producing complacent hearts.[90] Therefore God often allows Christians to remain poor and hapless.[91] He places the cross of Christ on them in order to help them maintain their

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[85]*LW* 21:318.
[86]*LW* 21:350.
[87]*LW* 21:325.
[88]*LW* 21:302.
[89]*LW* 21:307.
[90]*LW* 21:308.
[91]*LW* 21:309.

humble spirit.[92] Humility, said Luther, is a truly Christian virtue. God cannot condone the proud, powerful, and smart-alecky. Of such a man he writes:

> Especially when he finds he ought to give way or confess himself in the wrong, he becomes so insolent and is so utterly devoid of the fear of God that he dares to boast of being infallible, declares God is on his side and the others on the devil's side, and has the effrontery to appeal to the judgment of God. If such a man possesses the necessary power, he rushes on headlong, persecuting, condemning, slandering, slaying, banishing, and destroying all who differ with him, saying afterward he did it all to the honor and glory of God.[93]

A Christian must remain humble, truly humble. He should be the last person to recognize his own humility, let alone boast about it.[94]

But even a humble Christian must accept the cross of suffering. Luther has some definite opinions on this. God may use the opportunity to test faith and in the process actually strengthen man's trust.[95] Knowing this may be the case, a Christian surrenders patiently that which God sees fit to deprive him of.[96] He will suffer lack with equanimity. There is no question about demanding "rights" because in God's sight man has no rights.[97] He will patiently suffer wrong if necessary, endure shame if that is his lot. All this he will do for Christ's sake and in so doing will cling to Him alone.[98] Sometimes a Christian may even be called upon to suffer for the sake of the community in which he lives.[99] If this happens, he will do so

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[92]See *LW* 21:301.

[93]*LW* 21:333. Luther may have in mind particularly the ecclesiastical leaders of his day.

[94]*LW* 21:313. Luther has some sharp words for those who cover their pride with the garb of humility, 316.

[95]One may see *LW* 21:334.

[96]*LW* 21:335.

[97]*LW* 21:337.

[98]*LW* 21:336-337.

[99]*LW* 21:337.

gladly. But what he will not do is compromise on his confession of the love and mercy of God in Christ. If that entails suffering, he will gladly suffer, but he will remain steadfast.[100]

Luther obviously enjoyed writing the commentary on the Magnificat and felt personally quite committed about its content. While he did not once use *theologia crucis* in this devotional exposition, the entire commentary is based on his theology of the cross.

Lectures on Genesis 45 and theologia crucis *(1545)*

Like Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics,* Luther's lectures on Genesis were momentous. They extended over a full decade, frequently interrupted by illness or urgent business away from Wittenberg, and were finally concluded late in 1545. Just three months later Luther closed his eyes for the last time in Eisleben, where he had been born some sixty-two years before. The lectures on Genesis are lengthy. They fill eight volumes of the American Edition of his works. Their very length indicates the seriousness with which the author viewed them. Since these were Luther's mature years, it is interesting to know whether he remained true to his *theologia crucis.* If he did, then it is reasonable to conclude that *theologia crucis* also penetrated his entire theological harvest. An analysis of the entire Genesis commentary exceeds the scope of this essay. To reduce the task to manageable proportions, we selected Genesis 45, the beautiful Joseph-meets-his-brothers story that Luther approached in January 1545.[101]

Early in chapter 45 of his commentary Luther showed that he had detected a certain parallel between Joseph's revelation of his identity to his brothers and God's dealings with men. Luther himself must be heard here.

> Accordingly, this is a very beautiful example of how God deals with us. For when He afflicts the godly and conceals

[100]*LW* 21:334.
[101]*LW* 8:ix.

> the fact that He is our God and Father and rather conducts Himself as a tyrant and judge who wants to torture and destroy us, He says at last in His own time and at a suitable hour: 'I am the Lord your God. Hitherto I have treated you just as if I wanted to cast you off and hurl you into hell. But this is a game I am wont to play with My saints; for if I had not wished you well from My heart, I would never have played with you in this manner.'[102]

The Paradox of the Knowledge of God

To Luther knowledge of God was the chief and highest knowledge.[103] In his commentary on Genesis 45 Luther once more pointed out that philosophers argue and speculate about the existence of God and arrive at some sort of knowledge of Him. This, however, is limited to what Luther called objective knowledge.[104] It falls short of the true knowledge of God, which entails comprehension of His nature and will. The latter knowledge implies a trust that God cares, that He has the will, wisdom, and power to help, and that He wants to help. It implies that God wants to be a personal Lord and merciful Father.[105] This is beyond metaphysical knowledge. A philosopher like Plato, according to Luther's colorful imagery, remains like a cow who looks at a new door, refusing to enter.[106] The real knowledge of God, unlike metaphysical speculation, one must gain in a "practical" manner.[107] To know God, one must learn to understand His ways, His masks, His gospel, His cross.

God and His Masks

Luther closed his commentary on Genesis 45 with quotes from Exodus 33:23 and 33:20: "You shall see My back, not My face;

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[102]*LW* 8:4-5.
[103]*LW* 8:28.
[104]*LW* 8:17.
[105]*LW* 8:17.
[106]*LW* 8:17.
[107]*LW* 8:28.

for man shall not see Me and live."[108] As the regions of heaven and earth differ, so do the ways of God and man.[109] In dealing with men God often conceals Himself. He acts as a tyrant, who in Joseph's story deserts the father and hurls the son into slavery.[110] Behind a mask "He offers Himself to us as the God of wrath, death, and hell."[111] Frequently it seems that only groanings, tears, troubles, and oppression for the poor prevail. Rather than seeing God's face, man gazes at the devil's behind.[112] Worse yet, there seems to be no easy way out of this dilemma. Says Luther: "I cannot escape or draw away that horrible mask which hides the face of God, but I must stay in darkness and in exceedingly dark mist until a new light shines forth."[113] This must be so; how else would there be room for faith?[114] Instead of being scandalized by the masks, man must learn to understand what God really means with His unfamiliar and strange forms.[115] He must learn to trust that behind the masks is the true face of God, according to which He is the God of life, glory, salvation, joy, and peace.[116] That this is so, God has revealed in His word.[117] According to biblical revelation, the God who kills also brings to life; the God who terrifies man with frightening faces provides salvation. This a Christian can and must know, but only by God's grace, and in faith.[118] So a Christian dutifully bears burdens, endures ill and pain, and lets God act as He pleases.[119] Luther's advice is clear enough: believe, hope, pray, listen to the word of God, and cling to it.[120]

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[108]*LW* 8:74.
[109]*LW* 8:29.
[110]*LW* 8:31.
[111]*LW* 8:31.
[112]*LW* 8:47.
[113]*LW* 8:33.
[114]*LW* 8:37.
[115]*LW* 8:31.
[116]*LW* 8:31.
[117]*LW* 8:17.
[118]See *LW* 8:20; 8:35; see also 8:10, 8:20.
[119]*LW* 8:30.
[120]*LW* 8:47.

God and the Gospel

No matter how angry God seems, men should believe that He is their personal Savior and Father.[121] On one occasion Luther called this the doctrine of the Christians, on another, the theology of promise.[122] He knew that neither the philosophers nor the jurists would understand and teach it. For the human mind the death of Christ on the cross naturally seemed to be utmost confusion and wretchedness, not the glorious salvation event it really was.[123] But a Christian knows better in spite of tears, sorrow, pain, and death. Luther confessed boldly: "I believe in Christ, Him I confess and invoke. Let the world laugh or be angry, who cares?"[124] In the face of adversity and the cross a Christian will grab hold of God's sure promises and will stand his ground. In the lectures Luther reminds his students repeatedly on what Christian hope is based. He would say: "I have been baptized, I believe in God the Father. I believe in Jesus Christ!"[125] "I have been baptized; I have been called through the Word; I believe in the Son of God, who suffered for me."[126] 'The Lord lives. I have been baptized. *I* have the Word."[127]

There is no doubt in Luther's mind that God frees, defends, and governs. His grace is sufficient at all times, also in adversity. In faith there is no difference between life and death, wealth and poverty, disgrace and fame. This makes a Christian powerful in battle and enables him to stand above the horrors of death, hell, and all adversity.[128] He knows that, through the gospel of forgiveness, hell is closed, heaven opened, faith bolstered, and consolation made to sound sweeter than ever.[129] This is as far as a Christian can go in this life. In eternity God

[121]*LW* 8:9.
[122]*LW* 8:30; see also 8:11.
[123]*LW* 8:35.
[124]*LW* 8:36.
[125]*LW* 8:8.
[126]*LW* 8:8-9.
[127]*LW* 8:32.
[128]*LW* 8:10.
[129]*LW* 8:27, 58-59.

will pour Himself out completely on His children. But meanwhile only a glimpse of His real face is visible in His promises.[130] This to Luther was the theology of the gospel.[131]

God and the Cross

The God of the gospel made wonderful promises, but sparing the Christian of his cross was not one of them. Luther is reminded of what the saints, Matthew and Paul, wrote: "He who does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me" (Matthew 10:38) and: "All of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death" (Romans 6:3). To be sure, grief, torment, and pain will continue.[132] Spiritual trials, struggles of conscience, sorrow, and anguish must also occur.[133] The heart must be smitten by terror; the old man must be destroyed.[134] Struggles with unbelief, indignation against God, even despair plague the Christian because he often cannot see the will of God and His counsel in time of suffering.[135]

Luther's advice is clear: Be still; let God rule.[136] Thank God that He has given you the word and the promise. Luther, thinking of 2 Peter 1:19, urges the Christian to fix his eyes and keenness of mind on the word alone, on baptism, on the Lord's Supper, and on absolution. Everything else may be regarded as darkness.[137]

Why must afflictions and the cross be borne by the Christian? In his Genesis commentary Luther suggested several reasons. Since man is proud, he needs to be humbled. Afflictions often help man to know himself better and come to a starker

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[130]*LW* 8:12, 30.

[131]*LW* 8:30.

[132]*LW* 8:6, 9.

[133]*LW* 8:7.

[134]*LW* 8:27, 29.

[135]*LW* 8:8. It is interesting to note that in Luther's opinion "God does not reckon those complaints and that murmuring as sin."

[136]*LW* 8:33, 36.

[137]*LW* 8:33.

understanding of the plight of his original sin.[138] Above all, he must be purged of sin.[139] Then again, afflictions could serve as punishment for sin or as chastisement for the benefit of others who see and hear about it.[140] Only God knows the details. But there is something that afflictions are definitely not. They are not an opportunity to render satisfaction to God. "It is the merit of His [Christ's] suffering that our humbling, mortification, rejection, and damnation are pleasing to God."[141] Of course reason does not understand all this; it despairs.[142] However, faith comes to rescue. Therefore Luther's advice is: "Let us keep on believing, teaching, suffering, and dying."[143]

We now face the question whether Luther held to *theologia crucis* in the Genesis commentary. We believe that the above discussion fully supports the thesis that all the salient features of *theologia crucis* are present, many developed in depth, perhaps even beyond his earlier work. Certainly neither the epistemological nor the soteriological aspects of the theology of the cross have been altered in basic structure. It is true that one notices nuances in the more mature Luther that are not quite the same as in the earlier years. There seems to be greater emphasis on eschatology.[144] The written word and the sacraments as means of God's revelation of Himself, His real nature, seem more prominent than, for example, in the Heidelberg Disputation.[145] Although *theologia crucis* – law and gospel, too, for that matter – are never used as labels in his commentary on Genesis 45, Luther's text is never far from the ideas they express. As indicated earlier, in 1545 Luther called his doctrine the theology of the gospel. This certainly is apt. Theology of the

[138] *LW* 8:5.

[139] *LW* 8:5 and following; one may also see 8:27. Without purging we get spiritually lazy and sluggish in the flesh, thinks Luther. "God pricks and drives the stupid, and lazy ass, our flesh, which oppresses us with its huge bulk" (15).

[140] *LW* 8:73.

[141] *LW* 8:6.

[142] *LW* 8:8.

[143] *LW* 8:36.

[144] *LW* 8:20, 26, 35, 46, 54.

[145] *LW* 8:17, 42, 47, 54, 60.

gospel and *theologia crucis,* however, are not mutually exclusive. Rather they are more like the two sides of the same coin. It seems quite safe to conclude that Luther remained true to his theology of the cross throughout his life.

IV. Luther's *theologia crucis* and Late-Medieval Theology

This is not the place for an in-depth discussion of the relationship between Luther's *theologia crucis* and late-medieval theology. More groundwork still needs to be done. But the question whether Luther borrowed his *theologia crucis* from medieval mystics simply cannot be ignored in any treatment of *theologia crucis.* Only the more obvious observations can be sketched here.

Certain Similarities

The late-medieval piety that may have exerted significant influence on the development of Luther's *theologia crucis* has many facets. The theology of the German Dominican mystic Johann Tauler (circa 1300-1361) appealed to Luther, who especially appreciated his sermons.[146] The theology of an anonymous work probably written by a member of the Teutonic Knights of Sachsenhausen near Frankfurt in the latter half of the fourteenth century impressed Luther so deeply that he edited the work for publication in 1516 and again in 1518, the second time under the title *A German Theology.*[147] In the preface to the later edition Luther said: "No book except the Bible and St. Augustine has come to my attention from which I have learned more about God, Christ, man, and all things."[148] There was also the fatherly interest and influence of Johann von Staupitz (1460-1524), the vicar general of the Augustinian Eremites in Saxony and the first dean of the theological faculty of Wittenberg. In personal correspondence Luther gratefully acknowledged the

[146]"Letter to John Lang, February 8, 1517," *LW* 48:36.

[147]*Late Medieval Mysticism,* edited by Ray C. Petry, volume 13 of the *Library of Christian Classics* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press and London: SCM Press, 1957) 321 and following; *LW* 31:73-74.

[148]*LW* 31:75.

help his superior had given him in his struggles for the biblical meaning of penitence.[149] Staupitz' theology perhaps can be described as biblically oriented practical mysticism, somewhat akin to the *Devotio moderna* piety.[150]

There seems to be no question about the influence of German mysticism on Luther. The question remains, however, to what extent, if any, was his *theologia crucis* derived from this source. One cannot deny surface similarities. Like Luther, mystics speak of the life of a Christian in terms of accepting the cross, humility, resignation, and conformity to Christ and His suffering.[151] In *The German Theology* one finds the statement:

> No one can become perfect in a day. A man must first wholly deny himself, and willingly forsake all things for God's sake, and must give up his own will, and all his natural inclinations, and purge and cleanse himself thoroughly from all sins and evil ways. After this let him humbly take up the cross and follow Christ.[152]

It is true that in his early days, especially in his lectures on Romans, Luther sometimes spoke the language of the mystics.[153] But even when he is close to the letter of the mystics, he is far from their spirit.

Radical Differences

Both mysticism and faith are independent religious orientations proposing different ways of comprehending God. All mysticism is basically being oriented. It conceives of God as the *summum esse* and brackets Him together with creation in the category of being. Personalism simply has no room here. The religious goal of the mystic is not communion, but the establishment of oneness and unity with the Divine. Contrary to

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[149]"Letter to John von Staupitz, May 30, 1518," *LW* 48:65.

[150]See Loewenich, 163 and following.

[151]Loewenich, 148.

[152]*Late Medieval Mysticism*, 335.

[153]*Luther: Lectures on Romans*, edited by Wilhelm Pauck, volume 15 of the *Library of Christian Classics* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press and London: SCM Press, 1961), xxxiv and following; Loewenich, 154.

the mystic way, faith-oriented religion rejects the dissolution of the pious soul in God. Faith regards God as the covenant partner in an I-and-Thou relationship. It never abrogates the difference between the creature and the Creator. As one would expect, mysticism and faith-oriented religion differ sharply concerning the doctrine of sin. For the mystic, sin is creatureliness that must ultimately be overcome. For a faith-centered theologian like Luther sin is unbelief, disobedience to God's will. Systematically speaking, Luther was no mystic; in fact his theology was in many respects sharply opposed to mysticism.[154]

In the light of this it is not at all strange that Luther's *theologia crucis* differs substantially from mystic theology. Examples bear this out clearly. Tauler's theology, for instance, essentially proclaimed the birth of God in the human soul and looked in the direction of ultimate submergence of man in God. From Luther's point of view Tauler's theology is more a *theologia gloriae* than *crucis*. To Tauler, suffering was an important yet temporary aspect in the process of salvation. To Luther, God Himself brought the cross into the life of the Christian in order to do His strange work *(opus alienum)*, which served the purpose of His proper work *(opus proprium)*. Furthermore, Tauler's concept of suffering was based on speculative Neoplatonism, whereas Luther's similar-sounding expressions were ethically oriented.[155]

Much the same could be said about *The German Theology*. However, a difference that may complicate the matter emerges. The Frankfurter, as some call the author, seemed to hold to both, religioethically and Neoplatonically oriented concepts of sin.[156] Luther definitely did not adopt the speculative bases of *The German Theology*.

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[154]See Loewenich, 149 and following.

[155]This is substantially what Loewenich contends, 159.

[156]Loewenich, 162.

Staupitz is closer to Luther's *theologia crucis* than other mystics. For both theologians Christian humility and self-accusation *(accusatio sui)* play a significant role. Unfortunately it becomes evident after some probing that Staupitz' theology did not escape basic medieval work-righteousness.[157] This emerges when one looks at the function of suffering. For Staupitz the plight of the cross afforded opportunities for pleasing works. Luther saw in the cross an encounter with the reality of God, who through His strange work was seeking the sinner.[158]

One may conclude then that Luther's faith-oriented *theologia crucis* was not simply the product of late-medieval piety. In spite of some similarities, they differed radically. However, the similarities—an emphasis on the cross, suffering, and practical piety—are also important. To be sure, Luther had learned something from the German mystics, as he readily admitted. One might even go so far as to say that Luther's *theologia crucis* might have been impossible without the author's monastic experience.[159] However, all this does not challenge the conclusion.

V. Some Implications of Luther's *theologia crucis*

Many implications come to mind. For the sake of convenience they may be looked at in terms of theological, pastoral, and ecumenical concerns.

Theological Concerns

To spell out the manner in which Luther's theology radiates from the core of *theologia crucis* would be a welcome task but one definitely beyond the scope of this piece. Not much imagination is required to see how several aspects of the German Reformer's theology ultimately converged on the cross. His conception of God, Christology, anthropology, soteriology, doctrine of the word, sacraments, the church, ministry, and

[157]Loewenich, 165 and following.
[158]Loewenich, 166.
[159]Loewenich, 166.

ethics all stand in the context of the cross. Not to recognize the implications of *theologia crucis* in the several aspects of his theology is to a large extent to miss what makes Luther's theology Lutheran. Luther scholar Heinrich Bornkamm tends to agree. He contends that Luther's theology "receives its inner unity and its distinctiveness from the other churches" from the theology of the cross.[160]

Many contemporary theological difficulties stem from lack of clarity on *theologia crucis* and *theologia gloriae.* For example, the so-called death-of-God theologians—radical theologians, as they prefer to be known—insist on seeing God as He is. Disappointed in the results of metaphysical reflection, they tend to abandon the God of the Christian faith altogether and turn for religious stimulus to oriental mystics and nineteenth-century philosophical malcontents.[161]

Luther's theology is—and Lutherans would do well to heed this—Christocentric. Man's relationship to God depends on the saving event of the cross of Christ. Without Incarnation and Atonement he would be in sin and thus alienated from God. Luther's theology is also revelation oriented. God meets man in the cross of Jesus Christ. Now His gracious revelation continues in the word, the Holy Scriptures. God also offers His gracious forgiveness in the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist. Again Luther's theology is faith-centered. It does not seek support in reason, philosophy, or metaphysical speculation. One apprehends salvation, healing, and new life through faith alone. The affairs of the world may often confound the Christian, but he can—and this in spite of what he may see or hear—believe by grace in God's gracious presence.

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[160]Heinrich Bornkamm, *The Heart of Reformation Faith: The Fundamental Axioms of Evangelical Belief,* translated by John W. Doberstein (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 54.

[161]Thomas J. J. Altizer, *The Gospel of Christian Atheism* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), and Thomas J. J. Altizer and William Hamilton, *Radical Theology and the Death of Cod* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1966).

Luther's *theologia crucis* is also relevant in the realm of Christian ethics. As noted above, his theology demands a radical reevaluation of all values.[162] The *theologia crucis* suggests a mysterious identity of man's and Christ's suffering. But disposing of the matter in terms of *imitatio Christi* is too simple.[163] God calls on Christians to accept the cross in hope and faith. This may have implications for contemporary social concerns. It may even suggest guiding principles in charting out the Christian quest of ameliorating social injustices. Further, it speaks to Luther's understanding of the concept of vocation and the honorable place of work in God's perspective.

This writer has a special interest in historical theology and therefore in the Christian interpretation of history. Here too, it seems, Luther's *theologia crucis* is relevant. In fact it may go a long way in helping historians toward a truly Christian understanding of history. Much has been written on Christian interpretation of history.[164] Unfortunately, however, one often encounters confusion. Especially in the past many able historians, including church historians, have insisted on a *theologia gloriae* oriented interpretation. They have interpreted events as if God's acts were plainly visible and not hidden behind His masks. According to *theologia crucis,* the meaning of history is not what it appears to be in man's mind. Nor is man capable of figuring out God's ways step by step. A Christian interpreter of history must realize that he too must live by faith alone. God does not need man for His counselor, even the historian. In history God shows His "back side" and acts like a "tyrant." Only by faith can one conclude that God performs His "strange work" in order to accomplish His "proper work." Only

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[162]Regin Prenter, "Luther's Theology of the Cross," *Lutheran World* 6 (December 1959): 222.

[163]Prenter, 223-224.

[164]This writer has been impressed by Alan Richardson's *History Sacred and Profane* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), and Eric C. Rust's *Towards a Theological Understanding of History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963). One may also consult the very useful study by John M. Headley, *Luther's View of Church History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963).

thus can it be, as it was on Golgotha, that what seems defeat is God's victory. On the other hand some empirical victory of the Christian church may actually be an embarrassment to God's kingdom. A Christian historian must simply accept the fact that he is unqualified to write the definitive biography of God and His deeds. He has no special insight into interpreting reality. He too must live by faith alone, holding on to the sure promises of the word and the sacraments.

Pastoral Concerns

Luther's work, like that of other truly great theologians, was deeply immersed in pastoral concerns. This is particularly evident from the many sermons, table talks, and the more than 3,000 letters that survive.[165] As a spiritual counselor Luther was called on to address the sick, the dying, and the epidemic-stricken. Sometimes he was called on to deal with those who suffered from a variety of spiritual temptations and trials. On many occasions he addressed words of comfort to the mourners.

His pastoral counsel was almost always a practical application of *theologia crucis.* For example, in 1531 Luther wrote to his own dying mother:

> First, dear mother, you are now well-informed about God's grace and know that this sickness of yours is his gracious, fatherly chastisement. It is quite a slight thing in comparison with what he inflicts upon the godless, and sometimes even upon his own dear children. One person is beheaded, another burned, a third drowned, and so on. And all of us must say, "For thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter." Therefore, this sickness should not distress or depress you. On the contrary, you should accept it with thankfulness as a token of God's grace, recognizing how slight a suffering it is (even if it be a sickness unto death) compared with the

[165] *Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel,* edited by Theodore G. Tappert, volume 18 of the *Library of Christian Classics* (Philadelphia: Westminster and London: SCM, 1955) 22.

> sufferings of his own dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who did not suffer for himself, as we do, but for us and for our sins.[166]

To a friend of long standing, John Reineck, Luther wrote on the occasion of the death of Reineck's wife:

> How should we conduct ourselves in such a situation? God has so ordered and limited our life here that we may learn and exercise the knowledge of his very good will so that we may test and discover whether we love and esteem his will more than ourselves and everything that he has given us to have and love on earth. And although the inscrutable goodness of the divine will is hidden (as is God Himself) from the old Adam as something so great and profound that man finds no pleasure in it, but only grief and lamentation, we nevertheless have his holy and sure Word which reveals to us this hidden will of his and gladdens the heart of the believer.[167]

Basic human relationships have not changed since the sixteenth century. Illness, personal tragedy, death, and doubt still plague modern man. There are no more profound answers to the perennial "Why did this have to happen to me?" than those based on *theologia crucis.*

Much the same holds true of the preaching ministry. What is a pastor to preach in this complicated and often frightened space age? Luther's answer is as vital as ever: "*Unum praedica: sapientiam crucis!*" The wisdom of the cross is relevant for any age. The cross is relevant also for today.[168]

Ecumenical Significance

"The cross of Christ binds together the whole of Christendom; it stands on the altars of all confessions" observes Professor Bornkamm of Heidelberg.[169] It is, however, equally true that on

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[166]*Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel,* 33-34.
[167]*Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel,* 69.
[168]One may see "Theologia crucis," 2.
[169]*Heart of Reformation Faith,* 45.

closer examination differences emerge in the common heritage. Honesty demands that neither aspect of *theologia crucis* be brushed aside lightly. *Theologia crucis* both binds and separates. To see only one side of the matter is to indulge in harmful oversimplification. As much as all Christians need and want to rejoice in the unity of the cross of Christ, they cannot afford to overlook the distinctive characteristics, theological and practical, that the symbol has assumed in Christian church bodies. St. Thomas Aquinas, the leading spirit of Roman Catholicism, knew that man is a sinner and that Jesus Christ the Crucified is his Savior. But it is unlikely that anyone would seriously contend that he and Luther shared the same *theologia crucis*. God can and may answer the fervent prayers of most Christians for a true and speedy unity. The unity, however, dare not be created by violent hands or for wrong reasons—for *theologia gloriae*. The biblical insights of Luther's *theologia crucis* are too precious to be lost. On the theology of the cross stand the four great *solas* of the Reformation heritage: *sola Scriptura, sola gratia, sola fide,* and *solus Christus*.[170]

[170]*Heart of Reformation Faith*, 15.

A Response to an "Overture to Establish an Ordained Diaconate"

A Consultation on Ministries and Ministers has recently proposed the creation of an "ordained diaconate" in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. A proposal of such significance requires, of course, careful consideration. The ensuing response assumes the pivotal truth of the following assertions:

"The pastoral office is unique in that all the functions of the church's ministry belong to it."[1]

"The church should take her ordination seriously in this regard, that it practices ordination as it is meant to be practiced, namely as a first-time and original calling to the office, certainly also with the conferring of all functions."[2]

I. Affirmations and Questions

A. Basic Affirmations

The following points of the "Overture to Establish an Ordained Diaconate" are to be acknowledged and, indeed, affirmed:

(1.) The challenges of today posed by rural and urban congregations, as well as by immigrant groups, are to be

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[1]The Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature* (St. Louis: CTCR, September 1981), 19.

[2]Wolfgang Trillhaas, *Dienst der Kirche am Menschen: Pastoraltheologie* (München, 1950), 41 (translated anew).

This "Response to an 'Overture to Establish an Ordained Diaconate'" was endorsed by the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary in its meeting of March 22, 1999. The "Overture to Establish an Ordained Diaconate" appeared in 1998 in the "Report" of the "Consultation on Ministries and Ministers" (a "draft" of five pages dated March 16, 1998). The "overture" itself requested that the faculties of the seminaries of the Synod be consulted in the undertaking proposed (page 5). The original form of the response printed here was composed by Dr. Detlev Schulz and adopted by the Department of Systematic Theology in October of 1998. It was presented to the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary and discussed in its meeting of December 8, 1998. This response was then revised on the basis of the oral and written comments of various members of the faculty. Douglas McC.L. Judisch, Secretary of the Faculty.

met through the ministry of word and sacrament (pages 1 and 2).

(2.) Such a ministry of word and sacrament involves the rite of ordination (page 2).

(3.) This office of the ministry can be expressed by human regulation, *de iure humano* (page 2), in terms of various levels and functions (in accord with Article XXVIII of the Augsburg Confession [as in sections 9 and 29]), even as it exists today in the form of presidents, bishops, assistant pastors, missionaries, and professors. Also to be included here is the bivocational ministry conceived by the "overture" (page 1) in which incumbents perform the ministry of word and sacrament while finding support through a parallel profession, just as the Apostle Paul remained a tent-maker and St. Luke a medical doctor.

(4.) The "*rite vocatus*" of Augustana XIV demands an appropriate education, but the standards and requirements of such an education may be reviewed (page 4).[3]

B. Basic Questions

The problem at hand, however, is whether the concept of an ordained diaconate is a theologically acceptable and viable option whereby the challenges of today may be addressed. In view of the most salient points of the "Overture to Establish an Ordained Diaconate" the response here is guided by the following questions:

(1.) Do the proposal and understanding of an ordained diaconate find support in Holy Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, or elsewhere in the history of the Christian church? This question will be answered in the diachronic overview below.

[3]All references from the Lutheran Confessions will be from *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, translated and edited by Theodore Tappert, Jaroslav Pelikan, Robert H. Fischer, and Arthur C. Piepkorn (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), unless otherwise noted.

(2.) Can the functions or components of the office of the church (which is to say the ministry of word and sacrament) be legitimately broken down or divided from each other as the "overture" proposes to do, whereby some are applied to the diaconate and others not? In view of his being an ordained servant of the church and called to provide "basic pastoral care," can the proposed deacon be so easily barred from making "pastoral decisions" (page 3) and assuming "responsibility" (page 2), and can the distinction between "practitioner" and "theologian" (page 4) be accepted or should it be avoided? These questions will be answered in the theological overview below.

(3.) Is the proposed application of the term "ordination" to a diaconate desirable or misleading when, within the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and, indeed, within Lutheran circles in general, ordination to an office of the church is still unmistakably understood as the ecclesial act of conferring all the functions and components of the office of the church on the called servant of the word and sacrament? Should or should not alternative terms to "ordination" be found for an office involving something less than all such functions and components? These questions, like those raised in point 2, will be answered in the theological overview below.

II. Diachronic Overview

A. The New Testament

References made to *diakonia* in Holy Scripture seem to express a plurality of services. Broadly speaking, however, this seemingly bewildering plurality can be divided into three main groups:

(1.) There is the generic or broad meaning of *diakonia* which refers to various "works of service" of any kind performed by all Christians (as, for instance, in Matthew 8:15 and 2 Corinthians 9:1 and following).

(2.) The word *diakonia* often depicts the office of word and sacrament, or the stewardship of the mysteries of God by the apostles (1 Corinthians 3: 5, noting also such passages as Acts 20:24 and 21:19; Romans 11:13; 2 Corinthians 4:1 and 6:3; and Ephesians 4:12 and 6:21).

(3.) Mention is also made, finally, of a particular diaconal office. In Acts 6, where such a diaconate is commonly believed to have its origins, the "seven" were initially assigned philanthropic duties in Jerusalem. This work is perpetuated in Lutheran churches today through, in particular, the services of deaconesses (in line with Romans 16:1). Such was the case in Acts 6 even if, later on, incumbents of this apostolic diaconal office, such as Philip, also performed spiritual tasks of teaching and baptizing (Acts 8:5 and following). Elsewhere, in 1 Timothy 3 (comparing Philippians 1:1 and Titus 1), the office of deacon is paired with that of bishop. Although there is no clear indication of the nature of its duties, it seems probable that this specific diaconal office had a spiritual function, yet secondary and supportive to that of the bishop.

Here the Lutheran hermeneutic must serve as a final and normative guide. Unlike the Reformed, the Lutheran tradition has absorbed all the biblical references to the apostolic ministry, to that of bishop-elders, and to the spiritual functions of deacons into the one office of the church. For the Lutheran Confessions "the term *ministerium* goes back to the New Testament word *diakonia*, and it points both to the office itself and to the activities for which this special office was designed."[4] Thus the Greek *diakonia*, as a service to the word, was translated in the Lutheran Confessions with the Latin *ministerium (verbi)* and the German *Predigtamt* (as in Article V of the Augsburg Confession). In all these cases the full "ministry of teaching the gospel and

[4]Holsten Fagerberg, *A New Look at the Lutheran Confessions, 1529-1537*, translated by Gene J. Lund (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1972), 228.

administering the sacraments" (Augustana V *Latina*) is understood and not the vague or general "ministry" to which reference is made above (in point II.A.1). This narrow and specific association of "service" with the preaching office was also perpetuated by later theologians such as C. F. W. Walther (as noted below).

B. The History of the Church

In the early church and the middle ages, as the monarchical episcopate consolidated itself in the ecclesiastical structure, the diaconate became increasingly an office of sub-clergy with limited spiritual and liturgical functions. Already in the first century, the deacon is described as "the bishop's ear, mouth, and soul." Being at the bishop's disposal, he was called to perform numerous subaltern duties which varied to some degree, depending on the locality and tradition. From an examination of the *Didascalia Apostolorum* (Didache), Hippolytus, Justin, Tertullian, and Cyprian, it appears that the office of deacon included the following tasks:

(1.) reading the gospel and preaching the word of God in accordance with the express wish of the bishop;

(2.) announcing prayers and praying himself;

(3.) administering baptism;

(4.) bringing the consecrated elements to the sick confined in their homes;

(5.) distributing the consecrated wine in the eucharist;

(6.) serving the whole people of God and taking care of the sick and the poor.

In all his duties the deacon never functioned independently of the instruction and oversight of the bishop. Only upon authorization by the bishop was the deacon allowed to preach, baptize, or distribute (but not consecrate) the sacramental elements. For the induction of the deacon into office, the church performed a special rite of consecration. Since the fifth century a tradition arose (in Rome particularly) of dividing the

diaconate into subdeacons, deacons, and archdeacons. Each deacon became the overseer of a region with the archdeacon over a number of regions. Today the office of the deacon in the Roman Catholic Church serves as a stepping-stone to the higher levels of the hierarchy. In exercising the office of the deacon the incumbent can test himself, show the merit of his work, and prepare himself for receiving the dignity of the priesthood. Although the deacon enters the clerical state through ordination, his consecration does not confer on him the *habitus* of officiating at the mass.[5]

The Reformation broke with the tradition of preserving the office of deacon in its sub-clerical form. Although the term "deacon" continued to be used during the Reformation, it was used to denominate men who had formerly held a consecrated office under the papacy but were now placed in congregations and given the pastoral office. In larger congregations the titles of archdeacon and subdeacon were also employed (Treatise 62, "On the Power and Primacy of the Pope"), but they were gradually replaced with titles such as "first," "second," and even "third" pastor. In Wittenberg on May 14, 1525, Martin Luther himself publicly inducted George Roerer into the office of deacon with prayer and the laying on of hands. The rite performed, however, was none other than ordination, which is to say the public confirmation of Roerer's call into the preaching office with all its functions. Other German terms used during the Reformation and afterwards such as *Hauptpastor, Kompastor, Praedikant, Kaplan,* and *geistliche Kirchenraete* were also designations of the one office of the church, namely the ministry of word and sacrament.

Luther desired the reintroduction of the apostolic diaconate described in Acts 6. In a sermon on St. Stephen's Day he advised the congregation that the diaconate was originally designed

[5]James J. Megivern, *Worship and Liturgy: Official Catholic Teachings* (Wilmington, North Carolina: McGrath, 1978), 412-418.

> not as a service of reading the gospel or epistle, as it is customary today, but to distribute the church's goods to the poor. . . , for it was with this intention, as we read in Acts 6, that deacons were instituted. . . . After the preaching office there is no higher office in the church than this administration of managing the goods of the church correctly and honestly, so that poor Christians, who are unable to obtain and win their own support, may be helped and not suffer.[6]

The Anglican Church has preserved the diaconate from the pre-Reformation era and continues to find its scriptural support in a combination of Acts 6 and 1 Timothy 3. Within the ecclesial hierarchy the office of deacon remains the lowest in rank and serves as an auxiliary office to that of the priest. The deacon assists the priest in the liturgy and in the distribution of the elements in holy communion. He may conduct worship services without the sacrament of the altar, undertake catechetical instruction, and, with the permission of the bishop, also baptize and preach.

In various Lutheran churches where the diaconate is found today its incumbents are charged with the proclamation of the word of God, instruction, counseling, youth work, and taking care of charitable endeavors. Although these functions also coincide with those of the pastor, the deacon acts only as an assistant under the supervision of the pastor. To signify the distinction between pastor and deacon the rites of "consecration" (*Einsegnung* in German) and "installation" (*Installierung* in German) are applied to those called for service as deacons in the church. This tradition prevails in the Lutheran Church of Brazil (ELCB), the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (LCSA), the Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische

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[6]Martin Luther, "Am Tage Stephani," *Dr. Martin Luthers Haus-Postille, nach Veit Dietrich* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1904), *Dr. Martin Luthers Sämmtliche Schriften*, edited by Johann Georg Walch, revised edition ("St. Louis Edition"), XIIIA, columns 1061-1062 (translated anew).

Kirche (SELK) in Germany, and the Lutheran Church—Canada (LCC).[7]

C. General Observations

The "Overture to Establish an Ordained Diaconate" makes the following claim concerning the historicity of its proposal: "The Christian and Lutheran Church has throughout history recognized the validity of establishing pastoral assistants who are properly authorized to provide limited word and sacrament ministry under the supervision of a parish pastor" (page 2). This claim is tenuous, however, because the proposed ordained diaconate, as a "limited" ministry of "word and sacrament," is unprecedented in the history of the church. Those biblical texts that seemingly speak of an office of deacon, such as 1 Timothy 3 and Philippians 1:1, have, in the first place, been referred to the one office of the church in the Lutheran tradition. Where, however, a distinctive office of deacon has existed, in the early church and throughout history to this day, it emerges as sub-clerical assistance along the lines of Acts 6 and of 1 Timothy 3, understood of as a non-eucharistic office. The diaconate has thus been restricted in its capacities to such a degree that the combination of word and sacrament (which the "overture" proposes) has never been granted, even when it has at times embraced the activity of supervised preaching along with its ordinary subaltern duties. The reluctance of the church to provide a limited ministry of both word and sacrament is not merely coincidental but actually rests on important theological premises which will be now considered briefly.

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[7]This response to the "Overture to Establish an Ordained Diaconate" must be confined to the issue at hand. The "Report of the Task Force to Study Diaconal Ministry" of the Lutheran Church—Canada is a helpful source of additional information on the work of deacons.

III. Theological Overview

A. The Office of the Church and the Unity of All Its Functions

The office of the church is known as the ministry of word and sacrament, as in Article V of the Augsburg Confession. The ensuing definition lists under the service of the word the following God-given functions (*munera pascendi*) and components: "According to divine right, therefore, it is the office of the bishop to preach the Gospel, forgive sins, judge doctrine and condemn doctrine that is contrary to the Gospel, and exclude from the Christian community the ungodly whose wicked conduct is manifest" (Augustana XXVIII, 21-22), as well as to "administer the sacraments" (Augustana XXVIII, 12; and Treatise 60).

Preaching the gospel, absolving from sins, consecrating the elements and distributing them, discerning doctrine, and excommunicating the wicked are functions of the one office of the church. The Augsburg Confession, as a result, emphasizes that, if a man is to be admitted to ordination, this admission implies that the requirements of all functions of the office have to be met: "It is taught among us that nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call" (Augustana XIV). Through all these functions the word of God is ministered to the world. They are, in fact, all parts of the one word of God. Therefore, instead of breaking them apart, one should rather conceive them as being inseparable from one another. This truth can be seen from the following examples of theological reasoning in the Lutheran Confessions:

> (1.) The unity of word and sacrament is pivotal. The sacraments are the visible word of God (*verbum visibile*). There is nothing like half the gospel resulting from a division of the word from the sacraments. This unity of word and sacrament also points to the office of the church. Since it administers the whole word, it must include all functions. Ordination thus becomes the act of

placing a man into the whole office charged with the whole word of God.

(2.) The ability to discern doctrine is associated not only with teaching but just as much also with preaching. In the broader senses of the words "preaching" can mean "teaching" and vice versa. This is implied in Article V of the Augsburg Confession where the "office of preaching" in the German (*Predigtamt*) corresponds to the "ministry of teaching" (*ministerium docendi evangelii*) in the Latin.

(3.) The power of the keys of retaining and absolving sins is not confined to confession and absolution but actually embraces all functions and, therefore, becomes synonymous with the one office of the church as this statement clarifies: "This power of the keys or of bishops is used and exercised only by teaching and preaching the Word of God and by administering the sacraments" (Augustana XXVIII, 8). The keys, then, as retaining and absolving sin, necessarily relate to preaching as well (so that the old Saxon agenda had confession and absolution spoken from the pulpit); and they likewise relate, certainly, to holy communion, where they are applied in the act of admitting or not admitting to communion, as well as in the offering of the body and blood of Christ to the communicants.

It is important to understand this unity and the interrelatedness of the functions of the office of the church. When creating a sub-clerical office one should not proceed eclectically without prior theological evaluation: "The pastoral duties of the office of the shepherd, which the Lutheran Confessions customarily refer to as word and sacrament, are in principle indivisible. When one ordains to the office (*ministerium ecclesiasticum*), then also the indivisible unity of the '*munera*

ministerii ' must be maintained; they may not be torn apart."[8] This organic unity of the office was defended in *Lehre und Wehre*, the official organ of the Missouri Synod, in a series of theses published in 1874: "To whom the office of the Word is given, to him are thereby granted all offices which are exercised in the church through the Word" (Thesis 2), and "When the congregation confers an essential part of the ministry, then it *virtualiter* [in effect] confers the whole of the same" (Thesis 6).[9] Also the report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations on the ministry (September 1981) affirms the same truth with the following statement: "The pastoral office is unique in that all the functions of the church's ministry belong to it."[10]

B. The Connection of the Administration of the Sacrament with the Power of the Keys and Pastoral Decision-Making

In view of what has been said above, even the incumbent of such a "limited" ministry of word and sacrament as the proposed diaconate could scarcely, because he would be administering the sacraments, withdraw himself from making major pastoral decisions as they pertain to the power of the keys and other duties. Citations may easily be produced to support this assertion:

> (1.) Someone who administers holy communion may only administer the body of Christ to those who have been previously examined and absolved (Augustana XXV, 1).
>
> (2.) Someone who administers holy communion may not admit those who do not know what they seek in holy communion (Large Catechism V, 2) nor those who live shameless and wicked lives (Apology XI, 4).

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[8]Joachim Heubach, *Die Ordination zum Amt der Kirche* (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1956), page 153 (translated anew).

[9]*Lehre und Wehre,* 20 (numbers 9, 11, and 12), pages 257-268; 331-339; and 363-369 (translated anew).

[10]CTCR, *The Ministry*, 19.

> (3.) Someone who administers holy communion may not commune those who refuse to receive or accept the instructions of the Small Catechism (Preface 11).

By administering the sacrament of the altar the ordained deacon would be forced to make major pastoral decisions by virtue of the fact that the power of the keys is his thereby. Administering the sacrament must include the ability to discern between those who give evidence of being ready for forgiveness and those who do not. On the basis of this judgment members are either admitted to the sacrament of the altar or else refused. No supervisor can relieve the administrator of the sacrament of these duties. The statement, therefore, in the "Overture to Establish an Ordained Diaconate" that "the deacon is not authorized to make pastoral decisions" (page 3) is totally misleading. For it is precisely in administering the sacrament of the altar that he will have to make important decisions of a pastoral nature.

In the light of these facts it also remains unclear why the ordained deacon should offer neither (private) confession and absolution nor formal counseling (page 3). Also confusing is the description of the ordained deacon as a "practitioner" and "not a theologian" (page 4). This distinction could create the misconception that no theological study is required for this office, whereas such laxity is surely not the intention of the proposal to establish an ordained diaconate (page 5).

C. Holy Communion for the Whole Church

The idea of an ordained deacon who "communes only the members" of his congregation (page 3) is a related concern. The phrase "only the members" in the "Overture to Establish an Ordained Diaconate" seems to say that members of other churches of the Missouri Synod would be unable to commune as guests at the sacrament of the altar when administered by an ordained deacon. Such a restriction would, however, threaten the important premise that the sacrament of the altar is a public act of the church (*res publica*) in the sense that it was divinely

instituted for the entire church of Christ (*tota ecclesia*) and not for a local church only (Apology XXII, 4).

D. Ordination as a Timeless and Public Act of the Whole Church

The "Overture to Establish an Ordained Diaconate" proposes to ordain a deacon only to a local setting and then envisages a time-frame for his ministry. Such restrictions, however, do not comport with the nature of ordination as a "transparochial" and public statement of the entire church and not of the calling congregation alone.[11] It is for this reason that only presidents or bishops or pastors are asked to ordain. Ordination to a certain locality would imply that, if the deacon were to be installed in another congregation, he would have to be ordained again. The Lutheran understanding of ordination, however, cannot be reconciled with such a practice. Installation or induction are not the same as ordination. No pastor is ordained again when taking another call. A deacon, then, who had been ordained could be restricted to the same area for a limited period of time, but by virtue of his ordination he would still be "eligible to be called by other segments of the church" once he had served the agreed time in the initial congregation.[12]

These points raise the question whether the term "ordination" should be applied to such an office as the "Overture to Establish an Ordained Diaconate" proposes. For, if he be ordained, how can the deacon be barred from providing absolution or "formal pastoral counseling" and restricted to only "such Christian advice and comfort as might be given by any layperson" (page 3)? Since the Lutheran doctrine explains ordination in its narrow sense as a confirmation of the call into the office of the church with all its functions, a term other than "ordination" should be found. Here again the report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations on the ministry (September 1981) provides important counsel: "Tradition, common expectations, and the uniqueness of the pastoral office speak against using the

[11]CTCR, *The Ministry*, 30.
[12]CTCR, *The Ministry*, 30.

term 'ordination' for other than the office of the public ministry."[13] Since the call with ordination is the act of the church by which the pastoral office and all its functions are conferred, the licensing system still in common practice must be rejected as the same abomination against which C. F. W. Walther already took a clear stand: "What an unbiblical, unscrupulous, and soul-destroying act . . . the so-called system of licensing is with which one gives only a so-called license to those whom one is reluctant to ordain to the office because of their inexperience and lack of competence to hold it."[14]

E. An Eclectic Understanding of Needs

In view of the manifold needs of Christian believers a total office with all the *munera pascendi* must be affirmed. The "Overture to Establish an Ordained Diaconate" proposes "basic pastoral care" or "primary pastoral care" to address the basic needs of believers (page 3). The yardstick, however, used to evaluate such basic needs remains questionable. On what basis does the sacrament of the altar qualify as a Christian need, while weekly or daily confession and absolution does not? The overture seems to single out the sacrament of the altar and promote it as a missionary sacrament to validate the need of the ordained diaconate which it describes. A limited access, however, to the office of the church, such as the "overture" proposes, restricts the total and full claim of the word and sacraments. God instituted the office of the ministry for the precise purpose that He might provide all His gifts to address and correct every need. A man, if ordained, can only be given the whole office of the gospel. Certain terms and phrases, therefore, which the "Overture to Establish an Ordained Diaconate" pairs with "ordination" – such as inability "to make pastoral decisions" (page 3) and "a practitioner" but "not a theologian" (page 4) – are, in reality, theologically incompatible with ordination.

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[13]CTCR, *The Ministry*, 22.

[14]C. F. W. Walther, *Americanisch-Lutherische Pastoraltheologie* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1906), 64 (translated anew).

F. Strategy Versus Theology

It remains to be asked, finally, whether outreach to immigrant groups or congregations in need could not be addressed in meaningful ways other than the one proposed by the "Overture to Establish an Ordained Diaconate." The term "diaconate" could be utilized, to be sure, to describe an office of helping a pastor, combined with catechetical duties and welfare (even though differing from the sense in which "deacon" was employed in the Reformation for such a man as George Roerer). More importantly, however, an alternative means to alleviate the desperate situation of immigrants would be to call an ordained pastor for a particular group from the Lutheran Church (if one exists) in the country of origin of the immigrants. The "overture" offers little explanation as to why additional missionaries or pastors could not to be called by the Synod to already existing congregations through which surrounding pockets of people might be reached (in line with the concept of Wilhelm Löhe). The church needs to address the ambivalent relationship between theology and mission-strategy. The mission-strategy of the Synod must be realigned and modified to agree with the overriding theological principles of the Synod (as exemplified by the report already cited of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations on the ministry).

IV. Conclusion

On the basis, therefore, of all the points which have now been enunciated, the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary requests that the proposal to create an "ordained diaconate" be reconsidered. The claim for the historical validity of such an office is, in reality, inconsistent with the historical evidence provided. Unfortunately, too, the "Overture to Establish an Ordained Diaconate" is riddled with perplexities of a theological nature. The attempt to break apart the office of word and sacrament and its functions seems to be done at random without the provision of any explanation for doing so. The underlying impetus of the response here has been the Evangelical Lutheran spirit embodied in a full ordination to the whole office with all its functions to convey the whole word of

God to the whole church. The terms "call" and "ordination" are complementary and have always described actions by which the full pastoral duties have been conferred on a man with a view to shepherding a congregation. As Luther declares, "To ordain should mean and be, to call [*berufen*] and commission [*befehlen*] to the pastoral office."[15]

[15]*Die Bekenntnisschriften der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche*, 10. Auflage (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1986), page 458, footnote 2 (translated anew).

The Twilight Of Lutheranism

Leonard Klein

There was supposed to be a question mark at the end of the title of this address. I assume that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's proposals to enter full communion with three Reformed churches and with the Episcopal Church raise the question whether the twilight of Lutheranism is upon us. Though we publicly opposed both agreements, the editorial board of *Lutheran Forum* was consistently clear that the former arrangement would definitely portend the twilight of Lutheranism in the ELCA, while the Concordat with the Episcopalians would actually cause some new possibilities to dawn. I will say more about both these questions later.

But now, before going any further, I want to take some time to play with the title—particularly with two words twilight and Lutheranism. The title plainly worries about the sun setting on something called Lutheranism. This is an appropriate concern, but it needs definition.

First, "twilight." Twilight is nice. I remember an old New Yorker cartoon of two aging monks looking at the sunset as one says to the other, "after all these years it still seems like cocktail hour to me." It is a pleasant time of day. Many are not morning people. Everybody gets drowsy after lunch, but there are few who do not love the sunset. The Jews were not wrong to begin the day then. At the completion of the day's work there comes rest, relaxation, and re-creation toward a new day. The church anticipates her feasts at sundown and sings with tired confidence "Joyous light of glory."

If we were talking about twilight in this sense, this could be a very upbeat lecture. If the twilight of Lutheranism marked the completion of the vocation of the Wittenberg reformers and if the basic proposal prevailed that in the church all things should be done with care not to obscure grace nor to imply that the benefits of Christ come to us through our works rather than

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through faith, that would be occasion for a true Sabbath rest. It would be the end of a hard day and the beginning of a new one. If the twilight of Lutheranism meant an end to the schism of the sixteenth century, at least of that part for which we bear responsibility, Lutheranism would have fulfilled its vocation and earned a good rest in a restored communion with the rest of the Catholic West and its patriarch.

But there is another connotation to the term twilight. This is the connotation implied in the title. With or without a question mark it is far more discouraging. This would be the twilight of a bad day's work, the dissipation and waste of a cause, of labor, of genius. And the ecumenical directions of the ELCA force me to think in terms of that kind of twilight, even before I have defined the second term, Lutheranism.

You see, what Lutheranism is is by no means self-evident. Let me sketch just four common spins and the implications each would put on, for instance, the ELCA-Reformed Formula of Agreement.

One—Protestant. If Lutheranism is just another kind of Protestantism, the oldest to be sure, distinguished by some conservative liturgical habits, interesting ethnic and musical features, and an odd doctrine of the eucharist, then the ELCA's entry into full communion with three Reformed churches would, for instance, be a fulfillment of its destiny. Our call would be to be the Protestant anchor. Such a view is widespread in world Lutheranism and is often the view of us that Protestants hold. You can even find it in the Missouri Synod. If Lutheranism is just one Protestant family among others, indeed the grand daddy of them all, then the more we get together the happier we'll be, so long as no one at the party is in communion with the above-named Patriarch of the West. The ELCA basically lives by this definition.

Two—Waltherian. If, to quote Walther quite precisely, the Evangelical Lutheran Church is the true visible church on earth and unionism, not unity, is all that can be achieved short of full

agreement in the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, then the partial success of the ELCA's ecumenical agenda is simply the end of the ELCA as a meaningful part of that Evangelical Lutheran Church—any success of such an ecumenical agenda would be.

Three—Neo. If Lutheranism is what it is widely understood to be by twentieth century, post-Luther-Renaissance scholars and theologians, a church or movement or school of thought established by Luther's putative rediscovery of the gospel and characterized by the liberation arising from the in breaking of the gospel word into the law-distorted life, then virtually any ecumenical arrangement that does not challenge that way of thinking is acceptable. So one former Seminex professor declared on e-mail that fellowship with the United Church of Christ (UCC) was fine with him, since he was ready and willing to take the clear separation of law from gospel anywhere. More notoriously, the radical Lutheran confessionalists of Luther Seminary in St. Paul mounted a vehement resistance to the Concordat of Agreement with the Episcopalians but raised virtually no objection to the Formula of Agreement with the Reformed. The reason was simple and explicit: the Concordat required adding something to their sole critical Lutheran position, the doctrine of justification. The Reformed, on the other hand, easily met the critical test: they agreed that you don't gotta do nothin' to get into heaven. This position, whether you call it radical Lutheranism, neo-Lutheranism or neo-confessionalism, is extremely similar to the standard Protestant reading of Lutheranism, although it is more thoughtful and more true to genuine Reformation themes. Ecclesiologically, however, it is even more minimalist than the standard Protestant view of Lutheranism. It has proved vulnerable, not surprisingly, to various gnosticisms, to antinomianism, and to existentialism. It has difficulty with questions of authority and dogma. It is impossible on questions of moral theology. Increasingly it just fades into general Protestant modernism, although holding on to rather more substance and protesting vigorously that it is different from Liberalism.

Four—Evangelical Catholic (for lack of a better term.) If Lutheranism is a reforming movement in the church catholic and a church only because it failed in its first go at reforming the Western church, then the image of a twilight becomes rather more complex. A twilight of the sort I first suggested would be good news. That is, a twilight of ecclesiastical Lutheranism for the sake of ecclesial Lutheranism, would be good news.

This last view comes close to my own and would bear, I think, some affinities to the understanding of many Missourians. So the question, which I have taken so long to phrase, would then be whether, in the understanding of Lutheranism with which I work, the ELCA's ecumenical actions of August 1997 represent a twilight and, if so, in what sense. I will quickly answer my own question by repeating the positions I have taken in *Lutheran Forum*, sometimes in concert with the rest of the editorial board.

The adoption of the Formula of Agreement with three Reformed churches is a twilight in the worst sense. In Waltherian terms it is crude unionism. In more evangelical catholic terms, it involved jettisoning Lutheranism's catholic commitment as to the eucharist. The problem is not the UCC's extreme liberalism, congregationalism, and non-confessionalism, as many critics of the Formula tended to think or as many of its advocates worried. The problem is that the theological and liturgical commitments of Reformed Christianity are as little consistent with the catholic continuity of Lutheranism as they ever were. Only under the most rare circumstances can one imagine a eucharistic celebration with Reformed communities that would satisfy the most minimal Lutheran commitments. I believe that the Formula passed primarily because most ELCA pastors are in fact Calvinists on the question of the Lord's Supper—believing basically that it spiritually mediates the benefits of a really absent Christ.

Acceptance of the Joint Declaration on Justification with the Roman Catholics was the right thing to do. We did not imagine at Augsburg that the disagreement with the papal party over Article IV was necessarily church dividing. If they now grant

the same point that we assumed then, when we claimed that our doctrine was consistent with that of "the universal Christian church" and "even of the Roman church (in so far as the latter's teaching is reflected in the writings of the Fathers)," we can agree to the conclusion of the Joint Declaration that it is not the doctrine of justification any longer that keeps us from full communion. In this the ELCA moved toward that twilight of Lutheranism that would be a fulfillment of its mission. Alas, little else—most notably the arrangement with the Reformed—carries the ELCA in that direction.

Concerning the Episcopal Church, we can, in the truest tradition of broad church Anglicanism, split the difference. Acceptance of episcopal orders and the three-fold office of ministry does not deny any substantive Lutheran commitment. To the contrary, we are confessionally obliged to do so for the sake of the unity of the church. The key confessional text is Article XIV of the Apology: "On this matter we have given frequent testimony in the assembly to our deep desire to maintain the church polity and various ranks of ecclesiastical hierarchy, although they were created by human authority."

Neither, however, did any Lutheran commitment demand acceptance of the Concordat of Agreement, as some supporters seemed virtually to think. American Episcopalianism was not the hierarchy the confessions had in mind, nor was this necessarily the best way to solve our problems with ministry and order, even though Anglican eucharistic and liturgical practice certainly make communion possible.

Those of you who read *Lutheran Forum* will remember that our opposition had nothing to do with objections to episcopacy. It had to do with the unsettled condition of faith and morals in both bodies. It seemed to us that while full communion should in principle be possible between Lutherans and Episcopalians, full communion between two bodies in such shaky communion within themselves, each so fundamentally troubled in matters of faith and morals, that is, in *twilight*, was a parody of the true unity of the church and therefore an ecumenical misstep.

The true unity of the church is constituted by growth toward greater catholic fullness in doctrine, order, worship, and morals. But the most critical questions in these areas were consistently suppressed by both parties to the negotiations with other Protestants. Glaring issues related to doctrinal discipline, liturgical coherence, aberrations on questions of sexuality and the sanctity of life were never even raised. The dialogues proceeded as if the denominational communities were what existed on the paper of their confessions and history rather than what they actually embody in the present, as if they were paper churches rather than real ones. (Lutheran confessionalism is very vulnerable to this error. If the paperwork agrees, we see grounds for unity. If it does not, we cannot imagine the next step.)

In the kind of ecumenism the ELCA carried out in these cases, all act as if they can pretty much do whatever they want without sundering the unity of the Body of Christ. Then we shake hands and agree that we are each fully the church in spite of our contradictions and aberrations. A Lutheranism that operates by these liberal Protestant assumptions is in twilight, and I have no excuses to make for the ELCA.

I am not arguing that Lutheranism cannot compromise or reevaluate. I am deeply convinced that we need to and that there are matters pertaining to the unity of the church where change is in order. But this cannot be done facing away from Rome and Orthodoxy (or the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod) and toward American mainline Protestantism. So having said what I think is wrong with the path the ELCA has taken, I want to set up a hypothetical situation to suggest what path Lutheranism might take. In doing this I am certain to challenge also the ecumenical and ecclesiological path of the LCMS.

Early on I suggested that a twilight of Lutheranism that involved a completion of its vocation of reform within the Western Catholic tradition would be a sunset that would lead joyfully to the light of a new day. So let us then envision for a while what might have happened if at Augsburg or at

Regensburg eleven years later, when they actually got dangerously close to agreement, the Wittenberg reformers and the papal party had not plunged toward schism. If it is indeed the case that Article IV did not require schism and that the reforms of the second section of the Augsburg Confession were consistent and catholic, what might have happened in the "Lutheran" territories of northern Europe even as they remained in full communion with the pope? I will start by proceeding backwards through the "matters in dispute, in which an account is given of the abuses which have been corrected," as the superscription of the latter portion of the Augsburg Confession has it.

1. If the bishops had "allowed the gospel," the old Catholic sees would have continued to be occupied, and the threefold order would have been maintained. The issue over divine versus human right would have faded, and the more interesting question would have come to the fore: whether anything that is for the good of the church could come from elsewhere than the Holy Spirit. The suspension of the Augsburg Confession by both of our church bodies to permit lay presidency at the eucharist would, for instance, never have happened. The capitulation to ersatz democracy in church government would never have happened.

2. Monasticism would have been reformed and a more modest status assigned to monastic vows, but the wholesale emptying of these worthy and valuable institutions might have been stanched and the monastic lifestyle and witness endured, to everyone's benefit.

3. Traditions of fasting and abstinence would have continued but without legalism or the mistaken assumption that they "earn grace or make satisfaction for sin." Lutheranism would not have come to be marked by petulant disinterest in such "outward preparations."

4. Confession would have continued in the manner in which it did in fact endure for a couple of centuries in Lutheranism.

5. The mass would have continued to this day with proper dignity, rubrical sense, vestments, ceremonial and the like. No pastor would ever find himself in hot water for proposing the weekly eucharist or following the order of service. Sober theological debate, of the sort Melanchthon offers in the Apology, on the meaning of the sacrifice of the mass would have followed. Some of the cruder medieval views might have been corrected in the broader practice of the church, but Lutheranism would not be marked by radical surgery on the eucharistic prayer and radical disobedience to Christ's command to "give thanks" with the bread and cup. We would have found a way to celebrate the eucharist as the unbloody sacrifice, as the Fathers understood it, and as the Apology approves when speaking of the liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. In any case the glorious development of Lutheran music would have gone ahead.

6. The marriage of priests might well have been accepted, though probably not the marriage of bishops. A regimen like that of Eastern Orthodoxy would have been established, staving off also the current scandal of clergy divorce and remarriage. However the debate on the ordination of women might now stand, it would not have been settled by a miscellany of Lutheran church bodies each in their own way deciding to do it. And it would not yet have happened.

7. Both kinds would have continued to be offered in the Supper. The example of the Bohemians was already in place, to say nothing of the East. Episcopal authority would have kept out the plague of individual glasses.

8. Skipping back one more item, into Article XXI of the Augustana, I would surmise that excesses in the cult of saints would have been curtailed in the Lutheran territories but that a more reasonable and lively use of the cult would have continued. The concession that they indeed pray for us would have been less grudging, and the phrase from the Roman Eucharistic Prayer III asking that we might at last receive our inheritance with all the saints "on whose constant intercession

we rely for help" would not seem so unthinkable. We grant that they pray for us. Unless prayer does no good, should we not rely on their prayers? And unless the saints in glory are confined in a localized Calvinist heaven somewhere, is it not at least imaginable that they are in full prayer fellowship with us and that we might ask their intercessions as freely as we ask for one another's?

This little backward waltz through the Augustana is just a small part of what we might see in Lutheranism, if the twilight had come after successful negotiations with Rome four hundred years ago. You will note that much of it looks a lot like classical Lutheranism and not too much like what we see in our parishes.

But there is more. Let us go to the beginning of the Augsburg Confession, those parts that enable us to say that "nothing is taught in our churches concerning articles of faith that is contrary to the Holy Scriptures or what is common to the Christian church." This has not in fact held true, but if the schism had not followed—or, if many Lutherans had not rather excessively celebrated the schism as a liberation from Catholic faith, order and morals—how might Lutheranism look different in those articles that the confessors could honestly claim were held in common?

Articles I-III. The Ancient Dogmas. Sure, individual theologians would be heretical, but it is unlikely that the development of theological liberalism in Germany could ever have developed as it did, if an international magisterium had continued its sway.

Article IV: The Reformation teaching on justification would have assumed its renewing and reforming role in the church of the Augsburg Confession and in the church in the West—including Rome—but it probably would not have ever been identified as the only important doctrine or as a mere principle of negation (of works, order, ethics, even dogma), that is, as David Yeago puts it, as the "word that lets us off." This, for instance, is how the doctrine of justification was utilized to argue for full communion with Reformed churches whose record on other doctrines is so

conspicuously shaky. It is the foundation of the Bultmannian style existentialism that is still so influential among Lutherans.

Article V (and XIV): Lutheranism would not have ever concocted the notion that the ministry derives from the priesthood of all believers.

Article VI: Hostility to Good Works—whether liturgical or charitable—would never have become a feature of our life. The radical Lutheran position that nothing can be added to justification and the resultant hostility to church order would never have appeared. We would have maintained a lively sense of the connection between justification and sanctification, as did Luther and orthodox Lutheranism.

Articles VII and VIII: Ecclesiology. The doctrine of the church would be important. We would understand that the *totus Christus* includes Christ the head with his body the church. Missouri would not still be struggling to make an emergency ecclesiological solution work. The ELCA would not confuse inclusiveness with catholicity. We would recognize that this article is not about a platonic republic but about the palpable community created on earth by the Holy Spirit.

Article VIII-XIII: The Sacraments. They would not be under continual attack. They would not be misunderstood as useful appendages to the word. They would not be obscured by contemporary or earlier forms of *Schwarmerei*, of which the church growth movement is only the latest, even if one of the most convincingly unfaithful. The unity of word and sacrament in life and liturgy would be self-evident. The elements of the Lord's Supper would be used in such a way as to demonstrate the belief that the eucharistic bread and wine are the body and blood of Christ. Some form of reservation for the sick at least would be preserved among us, as likely would some moderate forms of adoration. A distinction between style and substance would be unthinkable.

Article XV: Church Usages. These would be in much better shape among us. We might see a fuller observance of the calendar including the sanctoral cycle, and as has always been the case at our best, no one would be able to suggest that the mass is not celebrated with more earnestness and devotion among us than among our opponents.

Article XVI: Civil Government. Here we have never faltered, Lutheran support of the government at times reaching the level of scandal. The sober rightness of this stance would have been maintained, while an international connection might have curtailed its excesses.

Article XVII: The Return of Christ to Judgment. Neither chiliasm nor sentimental universalism would afflict us, as the semi-official positions they have sometimes become.

Articles XVIII and XIX: Free Will and the Cause of Sin. These perfectly catholic, Augustinian positions would hold, and the debate about regeneration, cooperation with the Holy Spirit after conversion, how the Spirit works in, with, and under the human will before and after conversion would continue in the church, as it inevitably must. It would keep theologians from playing in the traffic but would no longer divide the church.

Article XX: Faith and Good Works. The charge of forbidding good works really would be false, and the lively discussion about the margin between faith and good works would continue. The goal, however, might be less to get the boundary drawn cleanly and more to get on with the good works. Maybe we have not erred so much in forbidding good works as in forgetting them. Most Roman Catholics, I discover, get the point about justification by faith; they just cannot understand our hang up. Neither do I. We are justified by grace through faith, and we live in ongoing relationship with God in time and space.

Well, you may ask yourself, why has he bothered to describe what with a few disagreements along the way would seem to be a fairly reasonable description of classical Lutheranism? It looks

not unlike the old Piepkornian position, spiced up with a few additional post-dialogue concessions to Rome. But if you pause for a second the point should come into focus. Where can you find Lutheranism like this? Or the version you might draw?

Liturgically, sacramentally, and theologically some of our parishes may be striving and mostly succeeding at putting into play some such vision of Lutheranism. But all are terribly vulnerable. The lack of hierarchy and a clear doctrine of pastoral authority means that any of our efforts could be overthrown by a majority vote of a council or voters' assembly. And the same problem goes up the regional and national level. Your district could choose to go "church growth" in a big way, and you might be more or less stranded in your effort to conduct a recognizably Lutheran ministry of word and sacrament. The Missouri Synod, like the ELCA, is vulnerable to the sociological rule to which denominations fall prey: that is, to be a loose coalition of often disparate interest groups. Your reputation is quite other, but it is no secret that Missouri's monolithic character is a thing of the past. Biblical authority by itself, and surely not as shibboleth, does not make identifiable Lutheranism happen or endure. The Confessions are paid lip service, although not everywhere, but they do not much inform actual practice.

In his review of the ELCA assembly in *First Things*, Richard Neuhaus took note of Richard Koenig's observation in *The Christian Century* that the ELCA was a church that *at all costs* wanted to stay together. That actually was not true of a lot of us there, but it is a fair perception of the church wide reality. Anything can be sacrificed except the sacred unity of the ten-year-old coalition. Evangelical Catholics and other confessionalists in large numbers were prepared to pay the price of the Formula to get the Concordat. You have similar versions of the same thing. But the unity achieved by our denominations is not the unity in diversity of the one, holy catholic and apostolic church. It is the unity effected by coalition politics where there is not deep agreement as to what the church or its faith is.

I would argue, then, that the emergency arrangements of the Lutheran Reformation have self-evidently failed to preserve Lutheranism in a form that most of us could embrace. Twilight is little surprise. The wonder, the marvel of God's grace, is that a fair semblance of Lutheranism has endured as long as it has. The inertial force of the true catholicity has been in many ways astounding, and there are reasonable assessments of the situation that are far more generous than I can give. But the problems are real for anyone who is not satisfied with the status quo in world Lutheranism. Missouri has chosen an interesting option, largely to go its own way in preserving Lutheran identity as it understands it. Still, even the most ardent Missourian, convinced that Missouri has it right and is keeping its Lutheranism intact, must confront the reality that the LCMS and its sister churches are a small part of those who identify themselves as Lutheran. Thus, Missouri's very conviction and success would bear witness to an overall twilight of Lutheranism. Indeed, the LCMS's self understanding has pretty much always been premised on the assumption that the rest of Lutheranism was in fact in twilight. If Missouri is indeed an exception, thereby the rule is proved that Lutheranism is in twilight.

In any event, the marvel is that the day lasted as long as it did, given the provisional nature of Lutheran ecclesiology and office. If that day is not to be wasted and the twilight of Lutheranism is to be positive, only a recovery of catholicity will do the job. This means that we must think and act in ways that will make the ultimate reunion of the West and of the West and East possible. It will mean shaking off some bad habits, reviving the confessional practice of the sixteenth century. For me it would involve, as I suggested above, an openness to certain practices that Lutherans have tended to rule out and, perhaps more drastically, a concession that, as in its first fifteen centuries, the church can live in unity, even as a variety of theological opinions on justification and sanctification, faith and works, law, and gospel inform its life. If the pope will now "allow the gospel"—and surely that is implied in the declaration that the condemnations of the Reformation era no longer apply to us—

then we might be able to start to think about a positive twilight. Four hundred years ago a twilight in which Lutheranism retained, or returned to, full communion with the Catholic West might have been effected with relative ease. Just looking at what has changed since then on our side to make such a reunion harder is to see a twilight of a more discouraging sort. That, I am afraid, is the twilight that more likely will herald our future.

Theological Observer

Correction

A dedication to the late seminary president Dr. Robert Preus in the July 1996 issue of the *CTQ* reported that he had been honorably retired by the Board of Regents in July 1989. This dedication omitted that in 1992 the LCMS Commission on Appeals overturned this action. Dr. Preus retired from the seminary presidency in April 1993. The Editorial Committee expresses its regrets to the Preus family for this omission.

In the Interest of Accuracy

In comparison to the St. Louis seminary, Ft. Wayne has traditionally suffered from the poor step-sister syndrome. Whether this is externally or self-imposed is for the reader to decide. One illustrious academic dean urged the faculty to be the best second-rate institution it could be. Call us Avis. Good-natured badgering between colleagues in the ministry from both seminaries will always be a part of our experience as long as we have more than one seminary and that's the way it should be. Are the reports that students inclined to study at Ft. Wayne are urged by some district presidents and synodical college presidents and deans to send an application to "the seminary"—St. Louis—based in fact? While we are at it, the *Lutheran Annual* which commemorates the anniversaries of Synod's institutions on its covers somehow has managed to forget its first institution—Ft. Wayne.

Ft. Wayne has no complaints. It is equally proud of its alumni who have graduated from St. Louis as from Springfield/Ft. Wayne. The January confessional symposium shows that children of both mothers [*alma mater* means step-mother] are at home in Indiana. In the day of extended families, two step-mothers (*alma matres)* are common.

But there is the question of historical accuracy. Which seminary has the distinction of being the Synod's first—St. Louis or Ft. Wayne? *Lutheran Witness* Editor David Mahsmann answers "St. Louis." Wrong! His article, "Welcome to the Synod's Museum," in the September 1999 *Lutheran Witness* (20) featured a photo of the log cabin in St. Louis with this caption: "A replica of the Synod's first seminary." The Board for Higher Education's web site had made a similar assertion (12 May 1999), but by 23 August this claim was

reversed. Incontrovertible historical data indicates that Ft. Wayne and not St. Louis possesses the right of primogeniture. Let's look at the dates. The LCMS was founded in April 1847. On the convention agenda were requests that the Ft. Wayne and St. Louis seminaries be handed over lock, stock, and barrel. Since the St. Louis seminary was founded in Altenburg, Missouri in 1839, its claim to being Synod's oldest seminary is incontrovertible, but the Altenburg and St. Louis congregations waited to transfer the papers until 1849/50.[16] Ft. Wayne dates from 1846 and in the next year, 1847, Wilhelm Löhe proffered his seminary to the Synod.[17] The Synod accepted his gift in convention in 1848. While the St. Louis seminary was still a *congregational* seminary, Ft. Wayne had become the Synod's first seminary. If Ft. Wayne started in Löhe's living room in Neuendettelsau before 1839, then this is an entirely new ball game.

Our Synod has two seminaries, one can claim to be the *oldest* and the other the *first*, but both are the *best*.

Simon Schneeweis

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[16]Carl S. Meyer, *From Log Cabin to Luther Tower: Concordia Seminary During One Hundred and Twenty-five Years Toward a More Excellent Ministry* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), 15-19, 22]; August R. Suelflow, "The Seminary Serves the Synod," in *Light for Our World: Essays Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri*, edited by John W. Klotz (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1989), 21.

[17]Eric H. Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prohpets: The Anatomy of a Seminary 1846-1976* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989), 37-38: "Of crucial importance for the seminary in Fort Wayne, was the resolution passed on Tuesday, May 4, to ask Löhe 'whether the founders of that institution would be willing to formally transfer the same to the Synod for free disposition and still support it as heretofore.' In his reply to Walther on September 8, 1847, Löhe and his friend Wuchere graciously deeded the seminary to the synod. . . . In its second convention (St. Louis, 1848) the synod formally accepted the seminary. . ."

Book Reviews

AMERICAN ORIGINALS: HOMEMADE VARIETIES OF CHRISTIANITY. By Paul K. Conkin, Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1997. xv + 336 pages.

"An Arminian position is difficult to reconcile with omnipotence" (319), writes Paul Conkin, Distinguished Professor of History at Vanderbilt University. Perhaps Conkin's language is a bit too soft—"irreconcilable" would certainly do—yet his basic point is a good one: American religion generally, and unique American religious developments specifically, have, in effect, changed the way Americans think about God. The uniquely American conception about religion makes God essentially passive—man is the critical actor in the various schemes here presented. That certainly compromises any classical, orthodox understanding of God's omnipotence.

Conkin identifies six categories of religious expression in American Christianity: 1) restoration; 2) humanistic; 3) apocalyptic; 4)Mormon; 5) spiritual; and 6) ecstatic. Under these rubrics appear what Conkin calls "homegrown varieties" of Christianity: Disciples of Christ and the Church of Christ (*not* The United Church of Christ); Unitarians and Universalists; Seventh-Day Adventist and Jehovah's Witnesses; Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints; Christian Science and Unity; Holiness and Pentecostal denominations. He examines the European backgrounds, early expressions, critical players, theological maturation, development of practice, and contemporary expressions and demographics of the above sects.

The Lutheran reader might be troubled with Conkin's description of the groups as "Christians." He does so purposefully, noting that each of these movements originated within the broader boundaries of Protestant Christianity. Conkin, in fact, is quick to point out the sometimes "conservative" early character of some of these groups, regardless of their later expressions. A case in point are the Universalists. Conkin argues that originally Universalists were Bible-believing Christians whose source of authority was the inspired word of God. Their theological concern stemmed from their conviction that Calvinists had misread the Scriptures in formulating the notion of a limited atonement. The early Universalists' common sense reading of the Bible led them to affirm that Christ had in fact died for all, and that, therefore, all would be saved. Certainly there would be punishment for sin, but that punishment was meted out

either in this life or in a prepatory age previous to the final advent of Christ. Thus, says Conkin, what today passes for Universalism has little in common with its roots.

It is perhaps this point that Conkin fails efficiently to address. Put another way, what is it in American Christianity that allows its churches to depart so radically from their historic roots, theology, and practice (a question many in the LCMS ask about their own body)? One component of that answer is found in the ways that Americans glibly ignore their history and divest it of any formative significance. History/tradition is easily ignored/cast aside when it does not meet the pragmatic demands of the present. If nothing else, these stories serve to warn and advise us. In the ahistorical American context, the increasingly un- and even anti-Christian theological development over time in the sects here examined should encourage confessional Lutheranism to maintain its unique historical and theological narrative.

In that sense *American Originals* is a very helpful and informative volume. Though typographical errors dot a number of pages, and Conkin's assessments are at times unguarded ("[Alexander] Campbell's ambiguous doctrine of baptismal remission came closest to Luther," page 30), this is a very helpful volume for understanding the history, doctrine, and practice of several significant sects, cults, and heresies. Finally, Conkin adds a Reading Guide, which encourages further study and reflection on the part of his readers.

Lawrence R. Rast Jr.

INHERITING PARADISE: MEDITATIONS ON GARDENING. By Vigen Guroian. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999. 95 Pages. Paper. $9.00.

"Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the heights! Praise Him, all His angels; praise Him, all His hosts! Praise Him, sun and moon; praise Him, all you stars of light! Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, and you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the Lord, for He commanded and they were created" (Psalm 148:1-5). In Vigen Guroian, creation has found a golden mouth and a most fluid tongue to hymn God's glory. His thin offering, *Inherit Paradise: Meditations on Gardening*, is thick with theological and spiritual insight. Here truth is no dogmatic theory

that hangs like haze above the earth, unbreathable for most men. Rather, truth flows from these pages with a beauty, freshness, and earthiness that resonate with man's inward being.

Vigen Guroian is a theologian of the Armenian Orthodox tradition. He teaches theology and ethics at Loyola College in Baltimore, Maryland. However, surpassing his theological interests is Mr. Guroian's love of gardening. Indeed, the reader of his medications will quickly discover that his theology is a function and extension of his horticultural interests. The garden is his constant companion and teacher. In every season, the living and dying yard manifests the will of God. Today, theologians often limit creation to the realm of "natural" theology. This situation has left a chasm between the natural and the supernatural, between creation and scripture, and between church and world. No such chasm exists in the mind of Vigen Guroian. For him, heaven and earth are full of God's glory. The earth is one substance with humanity, and humanity is consubstantial with the Only-begotten Son. In this living communion, the dust of the earth and the flesh of man share a common origin and a common destiny in the will of the Father. Thus, for Mr. Guroian, gardening is not merely a theological metaphor, but a sacramental revelation of God's will to give life. What God does in the earth through the gardener, He does in the flesh of man through Jesus Christ. The reader will read an abundant harvest from these short but fruitful meditations.

Rev. James G. Bushur
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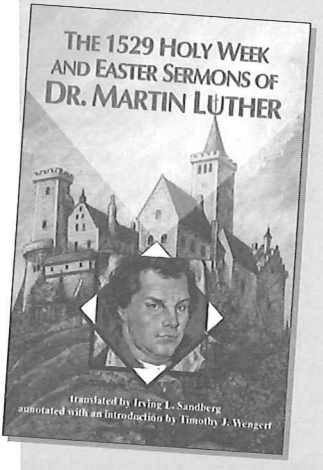

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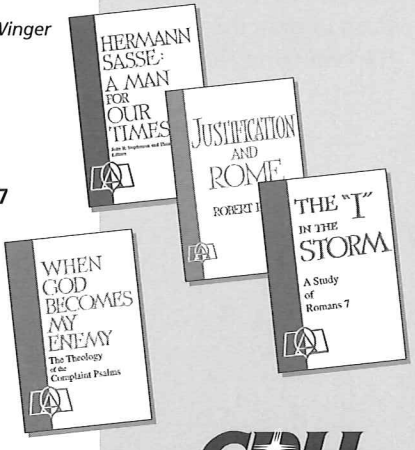

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