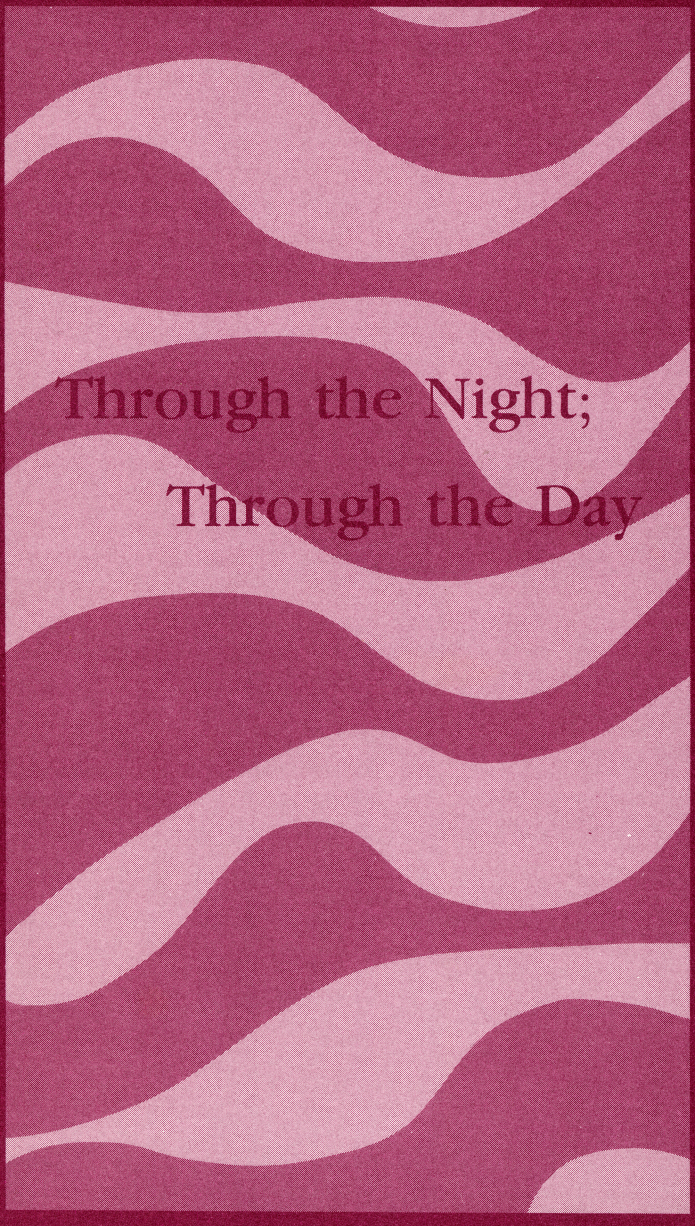
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Editor: **Ralph W. Klein**
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

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Contents

Through the Night; Through the Day 82
Ralph W. Klein

A New Song 85
Klaus Nürnberger

"Creatio ex Nihilo": Promise of the Gift 89
Reinhard Hütter

Toward Sacramental Giving 98
David E. Krause

The Water and the Wine of Unity: Mental Illness and the Sacraments 102
Paula V. Mehmel

Points of Tension: Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria 108
Robert Conrad

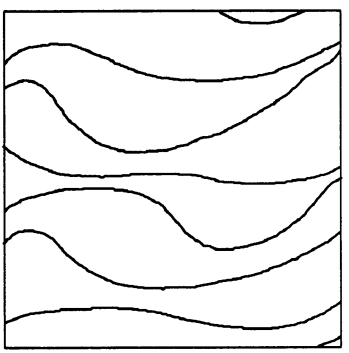
Pastoral Counseling: Under the Cross 114
Jon M. Temme

The Sacrament of Unity 120
Raymond A. Petrea

The Confession of "Jesus" in the Lutheran Confessions 124
Theodore R. Jungkuntz

Book Reviews 128

Ready to Serve— But Where and How?
Roger Fjeld
Inside back cover



Preaching Helps 146
Series C
The Day of Pentecost—Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Through the Night; Through the Day

Last Tuesday I attended a memorial service for an archaeologist who had been murdered on the West Bank. There were strong words of faith from the pastor, the deceased's brothers, and especially his sons, but no words were more powerful than those of a magnificent children's choir:

"Guard us waking, guard us sleeping,
And when we die,
May we in your mighty keeping
All peaceful lie."

As we all sang the last stanza of *LBW* 281 ("Holy Father, throned in heaven..."), the choir soared high above organ and congregation in an amazing descant that filled the whole church. The beams and lintels trembled at their cry, and our "worthier strains" of adoration had already begun.

That funeral for me was simultaneously night and day, darkness and light, an incredible sign of God's diurnal watching and keeping. Memories of that lustrous night readied me for many tough days ahead.

Klaus Nürnberger told stories of tragic deaths in South Africa in his farewell sermon at LSTC. As a rule we don't print sermons, but sermons like his require breaking of the rules. Faith, he writes, is an act of courage in the midst of desperation, a giant nevertheless. It is not death that should surprise us but life. We worship the Creator, who makes our lives possible and livable and who goes with us through life towards death, but we also worship the Redeemer, who goes with us through death to life.

Reinhard Hütter demonstrates that the Christian doctrine of creation reminds us of God's promise for and claim upon our life. While creation *ex nihilo* maintains the radical difference between God and creation, it also testifies to God's presence in creation. Respect and care for all of God's creatures is the primary means of doxological acknowledgment of God the creator in creation. While science attempts to understand reality rationally in the light of that reality, a theology of creation attempts to understand reality rationally in the light of God's self-manifestation in the story of Israel and in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

For **David E. Krause** sacramental giving flows from trust in the promises of Christ and from obedience to Christ. Such giving witnesses to givers themselves what it means to live out the priority of seeking first the kingdom of God. Sacramental giving is great spiritual exercise for people who struggle to trust the promises of Christ and to be faithful in the management of all God has given them.

Paula V. Mehmel contends that the church should be the place where the mentally ill are embraced and accepted in the same way Jesus accepted the outcast of his time. While mental illness can be used as a way of marginalizing people and moving them one step further from the main stream of society, Jesus opened up a world where all people have value as children of God. When we recognize the mentally ill as children of God, and when we use the sacraments as a visible means of including them in the fellowship of the congregation, we can move beyond the need to cure and toward an attitude of love and acceptance.

Robert Conrad spent a recent sabbatical in Africa, learning about their systems of Christian education. He also discussed with sisters and brothers in Nigeria the conflicting ideas of government and religious freedom of Muslims and Christians. Christians want the government to live up to the freedom of religion guaranteed in the Nigerian constitution; Muslims feel threatened by the kind of open, democratic state that Christians espouse. He urges education, respect for the religion of others, the application of faith to daily living, and a Christian effort to convince Muslims that they, too, believe that all creation and all government are God's.

Jon Temme contrasts various types of counseling. Counseling under the caduceus buys into medical ideology and substitutes therapeutic interventions for faith conversations. Counseling for glory will not settle for anything but a cure. Here pastors become pharmacists of biblical pills. In counseling under the cross, problems can be seen as works of God. The ultimate source of wholeness is the grace of God in Christ crucified.

Raymond A. Petrea stresses the unifying power of the Lord's Supper. We come together for worship because we want desperately to believe that our coming together reenacts that heavenly, eternal feast, to which all the world will come in peace and harmony. The church symbolizes the future, divine, unified kingdom that Jesus came to proclaim.

Theodore R. Jungkuntz finds infrequent use of the name of Jesus in the Lutheran Confessions authored by Melanchthon. No one knows the reason for this silence, but it may contribute to our tendency to intellectualize the faith and abstract it from the person of Jesus.

On Christmas Day, God called into his nearer presence Meta Smith, wife of Robert, the editor of "Preaching Helps." This wonderful and vivacious woman was beset for many years by a series of medical problems, including cancer, but she died unexpectedly of cardiac arrest. I remember lovingly the wonderful evenings in their home, her courage, faith, and joy in life.

> *O Lord, support us all the day long of this troubled life, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes and the busy world is hushed, the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then, Lord, in your mercy, grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last.*

Through Jesus Christ our Lord!

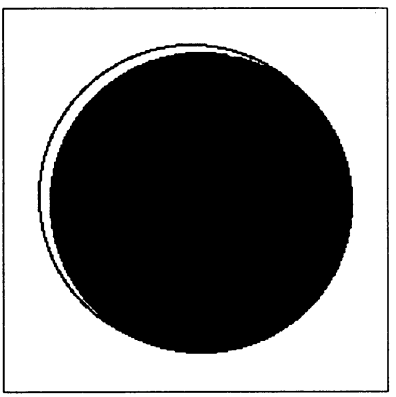
Ralph W. Klein
Editor

A New Song

Klaus Nürnberger
Pietermaritzburg, South Africa

Sermon delivered at LSTC
May 29, 1991

I am grateful for the opportunity to preach this morning. Having received so much from you, not least in this chapel, I have had a strong desire to share with you something of my own, something of the community back home in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, hoping that this will weave a few invisible chords across the Atlantic.



In the late 1970s, when my wife Maxi and I were lecturers at Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mapumulo, we sat in our home one night after graduation. The most promising of our graduating students, Gert Olifant, and his lovely young wife had tea with us just before they set off on their long trip through the night back to their parish about 500 miles away. They had served this parish for a few months

already. With great enthusiasm they shared with us their attempts to put into practice what my wife had taught them about Christian education—offering a most welcome critique. It was one of those times in life when one feels blessed with the assurance that one has not labored in vain. Early the next morning the telephone rang: Gert Olifant and his wife were dead. Gert had been overpowered by fatigue and run into a truck.

I could hardly hold the receiver. If this promising young pastor was not allowed to live, why should I? Why, God, did you take him and not me? Or was there a God in the first place—and not just an unpredictable fate which can pounce on me and you any time without prior warning? What am I doing in my systematic theology classes—fooling myself, deceiving young people into accepting assumptions which just do not tally with reality? Hundreds of thousands of people perish miserably and meaninglessly. But that does not seem to move us much. Death must be given a face—the face of a person you love. Once death has acquired a face, you realize that death has no face. Longing for the response of living eyes, you stare through the hollow cavities into an empty skull. Fate has no face. And so God has no face—if there is a God.

In my state of devastation the telephone rang again: the principal of the school wanted me to preach at the commemoration service for the young couple. I was ruthlessly, and mercifully, pulled out of my despair. There was a college community in need—in need of precisely the word of faith which I could no longer make sense of just a few minutes previously.

Struggling for the word on that occasion I realized what we are doing when we say that we believe. Faith is not an intellectual feat. You do not learn it from your lecturers. It is an act of courage in the midst

Faith cannot be taken for granted—least of all the faith of theological students.

of desperation, a defiant protest against experience, an obstinate refusal to succumb to a meaningless fate. It posits a giant "nevertheless" against the empty sky, the mechanisms of guilt, and the inevitability of death. Such a protest is not based on a hypothesis or a theory; it is based on conviction. And such a conviction cannot be of our own making. It is a gift—the gift of God's Spirit.

I had encountered what Luther called the "hidden God." In life, Luther maintained, we experience the power and the glory of God, the Source of reality, but God's purposes remain hidden. God's redemptive intentions are revealed only in the catastrophe of the cross, where again God's power and glory are hidden. That is the first dialectic found in the doctrine of the Trinity—the dialectic between the inscrutable mystery of God, the Source of reality, and the self-disclosure of God, the Redeemer, in Christ. And it is the Spirit who empowers us to perceive God's redemptive purposes in a catastrophe—whether the catastrophe of the death of Jesus on the cross or the catastrophe of the death of Gert Olifant and his wife on the road.

There is a second dialectic. Roughly a decade later, at the beginning of last year, Maxi and I were camping one night in the Drakensberg mountains when an urgent

message reached us: Gert Landmann, the chaplain of our Lutheran students' residence in Pietermaritzburg, was dead. The community of which Gert was a chaplain is composed of black and white Lutheran students of theology who live together in the same residence and try to work out, in a structured form, what it means to be the body of Christ in our tension-ridden society. You cannot imagine what this means in South Africa. You have got your racial problem here, but it is dwarfed by ours! With great patience and pastoral guidance Gert Landmann had forged this community together. There was a spirit of responsibility and maturity which I had not experienced before anywhere among theological students. The one thing happened here that could heal our bleeding land: the tenacious and honest attempt to sort out our differences under the cross of Christ. Constantly exhausted, Gert was on his way to a retreat to renew his spiritual resources for the coming semester, when he picked up a hitchhiker who shot dead this kind-hearted and pastoral man in cold blood.

I remember going out with Maxi into the dark night dumbfounded, looking at the sparkling sky above us. I became aware that I was gazing into outer space—that vast expanse of void, structured only by a myriad globes of lifeless matter and energy. I was overwhelmed by the sense that our earth is but a particle of dust in the unfathomable universe and that a life such as that of Gert Landmann or my own was of no consequence at all. But at the same time I also knew that, although I had already taken over seven additional periods per week from an older colleague who had gone on pension, I had to take over the chaplaincy of the residence. There was nobody else around who could do it, and the community was too precious to be orphaned in this way. They had already been traumatized by the death of a fellow student in a road accident several weeks before. There were new students who had to be integrated into the community.

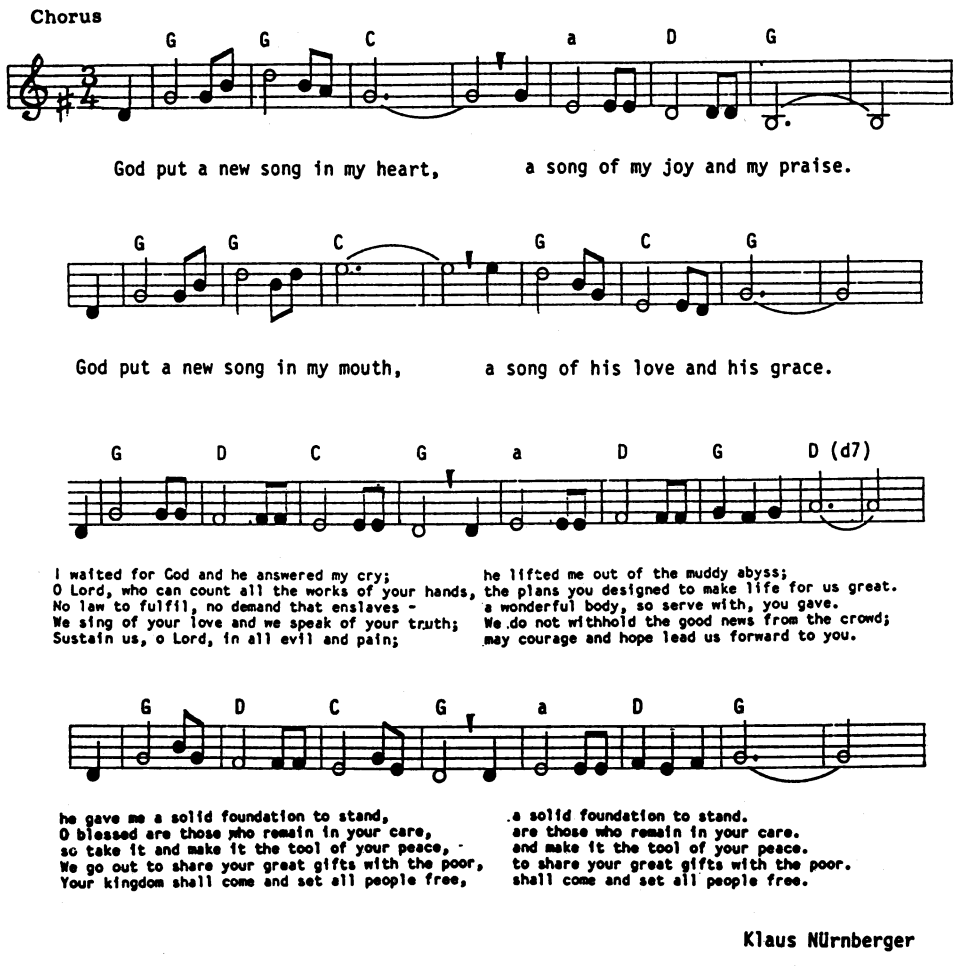
Faith cannot be taken for granted—least of all the faith of theological students. Faith is like a fortress constantly assailed and eroded by the surrounding sea of chaos. It must be rebuilt all the time by exposure to the Word of God, otherwise it may collapse. We conducted a series of retreats, culminating in Good Friday and Easter. What else could we do but expose ourselves to the message of the Bible in silent meditation?

It was in this atmosphere that Psalm 40 helped me understand something I had never fully appreciated before: it is not death that should surprise us but life. The absence of life is normal in the universe; it is life that is the miracle. The odd thing is not that organisms are vulnerable, nor that they all perish sooner or later, but that they have come to life in the first place, and that they are still alive in spite of their vulnerability. Since that day I wake up every morning with the prayer on my lips: thank you, dear God, for allowing me to live, for my healthy body, for my beloved ones, for my work, my shoes and my good neighbors, as Luther put it. Thank you for every day that I may see your sun and praise your name.

Similarly, given the vulnerability of life, the odd thing is not that people should engage in the war of all against all and the survival of the fittest. That is normal in this world. The miracle is that there is a sense of justice, of compassion, of love in this world. In his redemptive love Christ dies with us and for us. And here we have the second dialectic in the Trinity: the dialectic between the Creator, who makes our lives possible and livable, who goes with us through life towards death, and the Redeemer, who moves into solidarity with us in our suffering, who goes with us through

death to life. Like life, love is a gift. And like life and love, faith in the Giver of life and the Giver of love is a gift—the gift of the Spirit. It was this insight which made me able to live with the death of Gert Landmann and to take over the task he had left behind cheerfully and rigorously. "God gave a new song in my heart"—quite literally—the song we sang a few moments ago. And it is this song that I wanted to leave with you when I go back to my own task and my own community.

PSALM 40



Klaus NÜrnberger

"Creatio ex Nihilo": Promise of the Gift

Remembering the Christian Doctrine of Creation in Troubled Times

Reinhard Hütter
Assistant Professor of Christian Ethics
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

In honor of Robert W. Bertram's seventieth birthday[1]

I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From where does my help come?
My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.
(Psalm 121:1-2 NRSV)

Lex orandi est lex credendi et agendi.[2]

Because of the ecological crisis, a renewed focus on a "theology of creation" seems to be timely and urgent. Our very existence is grounded in the givenness of the world and is dependent upon it. Could not a "theology of creation" be the common ground on which all religions could meet for the sake of human survival?

This conventional wisdom is followed by many theologians these days. Yet I would like to suggest that just the opposite is the case, since the present ecological crisis makes it more difficult to appropriate the genuine perspective of the Christian doctrine of creation. The result of theological reflection on the ecological crisis is all too often a reactive, bandwagon theology:

[1]An earlier version of this article was presented as a paper at a workshop on "A Theology of Creation" of the Institute for Theological Encounter with Science and Technology (ITEST) in St. Louis, March 15-17, 1991. Robert W. Bertram, Christ Seminary-Seminex Professor Emeritus for Historical and Systematic Theology at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, is one of the founders of ITEST and has been its vice-director for many years.

[2]*The rule of prayer is the rule of belief and of action.* A maxim usually attributed to Pope Celestine I (C.E. 422-432).

after environmentalists, scientists, politicians, and philosophers have convincingly made the case for the ecological crisis, theologians finally—always being the last—also join the choir in order to offer an all too obvious "theology" "for" or "of" the ecological crisis.

Fifteen years ago when I started working as an environmental activist, my friends and I did not need a "theology of creation" in order to guide our activity, since the problems were obvious. At that time the more progressive theologians were concerned with a "theology of revolution," and it took them another decade to "discover" the ecological crisis. In the meantime, publications on "creation" and "nature" are legion without yet showing the kind of impact we all hoped they would have.

What could further theological reflection under the rubric of a "theology of creation" accomplish in this context? What could its task be in the face of the clear language we already find written on every page of recent publications concerning the state of the natural world and spoken by wounded nature itself: polluted oceans, dying forests, vanishing species, and the increasing overpopulation of the human species? For many, such language speaks more clearly of apocalypsis than of creation!

In this situation, which calls for a profound *metanoia* of humankind, especially in the northern hemisphere of our planet, Christian theology is called to a profound *metanoia* away from recent theological praxis: a "theology of creation" is neither a solution-deliverance system for the ecological crisis, nor is it a "via gloriosa" toward the synthesis of "religion & science."

Rather, the Christian doctrine of creation makes a very specific point: it reminds us—*in* the context of the ecological crisis—of both God's *promise* for our life and God's *claim* upon our life. Indeed, the world is the creation of a gracious God who has not abandoned it but rather is present in it. Even more, this God is deeply involved in the story of God's people with the promise of a definite future for all humankind and all of creation. In other words, the primary concern of a "theology of creation" is not the creature but the *Creator*, since in God's activity alone are rooted the promise and the claim inherent in "creation."

> The Christian doctrine of creation... reminds us of both God's *promise* for our life and God's *claim* upon our life.

The decisive point of the Christian doctrine of creation is creation out of nothing, "creatio ex nihilo." Especially from a Lutheran perspective this claim is crucial: it points out God's love and freedom and the fact that God encounters us in a hidden way in creation and addresses us graciously in and through our co-creatures.[3]

Thus, the following thoughts do not intend to undermine the urgency of addressing the present ecological crisis or of being in conversation with science and philosophy about "nature" and "cosmology."

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[3]For this Lutheran perspective I draw upon David Löfgren's excellent study, *Die Theologie der Schöpfung bei Luther* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960).

Rather, they intend to put both activism and dialogue into the proper *theological* perspective. The specific competency of theology is to show how being creatures of a gracious God, who encounters us in creation, informs human life in a way which lies beyond the shallow alternative between survival and ruin.

The Christian doctrine of creation "ex nihilo" is a piece of genuine theology in the Lutheran sense, since it is both radical consolation and liberation at the same time: consolation, because we encounter God's grace already in creation; liberation, because as creatures we are set free for the encounter of our co-creaturely "other" as a gift. Following the logic of the doctrine of creation "ex nihilo" means proceeding in a threefold pattern: theology, doxology, ethics.

"Creation"[4] is a *theological* term, and intelligible only as part and parcel of an encompassing theology. Strictly put, the very term "theology of creation" is, if not a pleonasm, at least a tautology. "Creation" is only intelligible as "doctrine" when it is part and parcel of the proclamation of the gospel, the redemptive story of God with Israel and in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. The functional location of the doctrine is the theological, doxological, and ethical life of that community which is created and preserved by the One whom this community confesses to be the Creator of heaven and earth. Taking the doctrine out of this context means rendering it unintelligible.

In order to understand the categorical difference between the statements of a "theology of creation" and those of metaphysical reflection about "nature" or those of scientific reflection about the universe, it is necessary to approach "creation" from God's story with Israel and with/in Jesus of Nazareth. Thus, only if we approach God the Creator through God the Redeemer and Sanctifier do we avoid the pitfalls of both "*deism*" (the creator as the postulated first cause that is irrelevant for the ongoing history of the world) and "*theism*" (the creator as creative principle within creation).

The decisive elements of a Christian "theology of creation" have to be analytical statements, derived from God's story with Israel and with/in Jesus Christ. The God who created Israel, who raised Jesus of Nazareth from the dead, and who creates us daily anew through the promise of the gospel is the one who creates "ex nihilo" (Rom 4:17). The radicality and universality of God's redemptive activity implies that God is the Creator of all.

"God the Creator" is not a metaphorical construction of an understanding of God fitting our predicament. Rather, a theology of creation is the unfolding of a particular story and its inherent reality claims. Yet these claims are eschatological by their very nature. They can neither be verified nor falsified, only testified. God will have to vindicate them. In no way does that mean that they are irrational. Rather, they are informed by premises which are not yet universally shared. Thus the statements of a theology of creation deal with the same reality with which science deals, yet they do not focus on the "nature" of this reality and its qualities, but on the One who has brought this reality into being and is present in this reality as creative agent.

The word "creation" has a twofold theological meaning. Either it denotes God's act, or the result of this act, which is differ-

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[4]For a fuller account of the doctrine of creation cf. Philip J. Hefner, "The Creation," in C. E. Braaten & R. W. Jenson , eds., *Christian Dogmatics* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 1:265-357.

Creation is the overflow of God's abundant love as reflected in the inner life of the triune God.

ent from God and God's act. This distinction is often forgotten, especially the point that the "doctrine of creation" is more concerned with the first than the second meaning of "creation."

The concept of creation "ex nihilo" as such is hardly biblical, despite the fact that a few passages refer to creation out of nothing (2 Macc 7:28; Rom 4:17; Heb 11:3). The term and the concept were the result of a complex development of Christian theological reflection, especially in its wrestling with the challenges of gnosticism. In the second century C.E. Theophilus of Antioch formulated the core points of what we know from then on as the doctrine of "creatio ex nihilo."[5]

Creation "ex nihilo" has to be understood as a graceful, contingent and finite gift of a God who was not in need of the world. There is no lack or insufficiency in God that needs the creating of the world to overcome it. Creation is the overflow of God's abundant love as reflected in the inner life of the triune God. "Ex nihilo" is a strictly theological predication of God. It secures God's transcendence over against the world.

The doctrine of creation "ex nihilo" prohibits us in at least three ways from reconciling God and world in an encompassing formula: God as the ontological "ground" safeguarding the world's being; God as the "first cause" making all the following causal sequences intelligible; and God as the master-builder of the universe out of given matter. These models represent three ways of putting God and world in a conceptual framework which encompasses both.

"Ex nihilo" safeguards God's freedom over against the world. God holds "being" in being without ever becoming bound to this being by anything except God's own promise. While God's transcendence over the world is maintained, at the same time creation "ex nihilo" also maintains God's immanence in the world through God's constant actual creative activity. Tradition differentiated therefore between original creation and continuing creation, *creatio originans* and *creatio continua.*

Creation "ex nihilo" claims an original creation for the following reason. If there is a difference between God as "creator" and "creation," the predicate "eternal" cannot be attributed to both, but only to God. The world was created along with time, not in time.[6] Both time and space are part of creation. Yet it is important to understand that these theological statements are categorically different from scientific statements about the finite or infinite nature of

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[5]For the rather complex history of the genesis of the doctrine of "creatio ex nihilo" cf. Gerhard May, *Schöpfung aus dem Nichts. Die Entstehung der Lehre von der Creatio ex nihilo* (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1978).

[6]For a highly influential and still relevant theological reflection on this issue, see St. Augustine, *The City of God,* Book XI, Chapter 6.

the universe;[7] they do not favor one cosmological theory over another. Rather, "in the beginning" is a statement about God as agent. It claims a discontinuity in God's agency, the freedom of God to become Creator. Were God by necessity Creator and were creativity an innate principle of God, God would be creating from eternity to eternity. Yet Christian tradition understands God not as Creator by *nature* but by *choice*. Thus, the logic of agency and the story character of creation imply a legitimate use of the metaphor of "beginning," which points to that discontinuity which is given with God's very act of creation itself.

By grounding God's sovereignty not in the philosophical idea of a supreme being, but in the biblical witness to God as creative agent, Martin Luther continues in the traditional understanding of creation "ex nihilo": "Our God is in the heavens; he does whatever he pleases" (Ps 115:3 NRSV). Creating does not only mean bringing forth, but also commanding, forming, and giving life. Thus the relationship of creation to its Creator is not the relationship of an effect to its cause. Between God as "cause" and creation as "effect" there is always a "nothing" which excludes any normal relationship of causality. For Luther creation stands in relationship to God the Creator who, "ex nihilo," gives form, order and life to all creatures. The doctrine of creation "ex nihilo" also claims the very ongoingness of God's creative relationship with the world!

Luther, however, emphasizes one aspect in a unique way: *the doctrine of creation as radical comfort, good news,* the invitation to understand the world in its contingency and givenness as God's gift, as a gracious act of love. While this aspect is by no means foreign to the patristic understanding of the doctrine of creation, Luther radicalizes it by focusing on the "ex nihilo." For Luther both creation and sanctification are creation "ex nihilo"! "Nothing" is not a negative antidote to God but stands for God's freedom and sovereignty; God alone brings about creation and salvation.[8]

With this emphasis Luther "contextualizes" creation; it is not just a remote occurrence "at the beginning," but God the Creator continues creating and at the same time encounters us in creation in a radically new way. The light falls from God the Redeemer—whom we encounter in Israel

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[7]Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I q.46 a.2 resp. (English translation of the Blackfriars' edition): *"That the world has not always existed cannot be demonstratively proved but held by faith alone.* We make the same stand here as with regard to the mystery of the Trinity.

The reason is this: the world considered in itself offers no grounds for demonstrating that it was once all new. For the principle for demonstrating an object is its definition. Now the specific nature of each and every object abstracts from the here and now, which is why universals are described as being *everywhere and always.* Hence it cannot be demonstrated that man [sic!] or the heavens or stone did not always exist.

Nor is demonstration open to us through the efficient cause. Here this is a voluntary agent. God's will is unsearchable, except as regards what he cannot but will, and his willing about creatures is not necessarily bound up with that as we have seen. His will, however, can be manifested to man [sic!] through Revelation, the ground of faith. *That the world had a beginning, therefore, is credible, but not scientifically demonstrable."*

Then St. Thomas expresses a warning which can well be directed to today's creationists: "And it is well to take warning here, to forestall rash attempts at demonstration by arguments that are not cogent, and so provide unbelievers with the occasion for laughing at us and thinking that these are our reasons for believing the things of faith."

[8]Cf. Löfgren, *Die Theologie der Schöpfung bei Luther*, 26.

and in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ—onto God the Creator: God always creates out of nothing! "Ex nihilo" already means *sola gratia*! Inasmuch as our becoming righteous rests completely in God's act—we become God's "new creation" ex nihilo—insomuch are we creatures already gratefully created "ex nihilo."

This peculiar theological understanding[9] of creation "ex nihilo" finds its classical expression in Luther's explanation of the first article of the Apostles' Creed in his *Small Catechism*:

> "I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth." What does this mean? Answer: I believe that God has created me and all that exists; that he has given me and still sustains my body and soul, all my limbs and senses, my reason and all the faculties of my mind, together with food and clothing, house and home, family and property; that he provides me daily and abundantly with all the necessities of life, protects me from all danger, and preserves me from all evil. All this he does out of his pure, fatherly, and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness on my part. For all of this I am bound to thank, praise, serve, and obey him. This is most certainly true.[10]

"Creation" is both the process and product of God's free, unmerited giving. Creation "ex nihilo" receives thereby a decisively soteriological twist; it is not primarily a metaphysical claim about the contingency of creation, but a theological claim about the nature of the giver of creation and about creation itself: instead of its sheer givenness, we learn about its radical gift-ness! This is the grace of "ex nihilo"! The precise theological explication of creation "ex nihilo" is this: "all this out of pure, fatherly, and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit and worthiness on my part." The doctrine of creation "ex nihilo" is to be understood as an invitation to live trustfully in the promise not only that God encounters us daily as Creator through the mask of all the co-creatures around us, but also that we as creatures are a gift to each other.

Thus, for Luther, creation "ex nihilo" is both original and continuing creation. It is the *proton* and the *eschaton* present in God's imminent creative activity in this world. Every single moment creation is upheld "ex nihilo" by God's creative act.

> God the Father initiated and executed the creation of all things through the Word; and now He continues to preserve His creation through the Word, and that forever and ever. He remains with His handiwork until He sees fit to terminate it.... For just as we were created by Him without our own aid and agency, so we cannot maintain ourselves with our own might.[11]

At this point, Luther reminds us of a crucially important caveat inherent in the doctrine of creation: even our legitimate and extremely necessary care for the earth can imply the conceited presumption that we actually could destroy God's creation. In this regard, the doctrine of creation points out our limitations as creatures: we can spoil the earth and torture our co-creatures, and finally destroy them and ourselves, but we cannot destroy God's *creation*, because it is rooted in God's creative act itself. Thereby we are reminded of our own crea-

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[9]This insight I owe to Oswald Bayer's very insightful study, *Schöpfung als Anrede* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1986), esp. 80ff.

[10]*The Book of Concord*, trans. and ed. by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), 344f.

[11]*Luther's Works* 22 (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1957), Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, 26.

turely and limited location, which undermines all our modern fantasies of omnipotence.

While creation "ex nihilo" maintains the radical difference between God and creation, it also claims God's utter presence in creation. Luther could call creation God's mask. In this way we encounter God in and through the result of God's creative activity. God's agency brings about the "others" who are us and all our co-creatures.

It is this mystery of the "other" to which the doctrine of creation "ex nihilo" alludes in the last regard. How is it that there is something other than God, which is not an emanation of God nor a co-eternal other "god"—as eternal matter would be—but an "other," whose existence rests completely in God? Creation "ex nihilo" not only unfolds the nature of the world as the "other," but already prefigures that boundless mercy which in God's further story with creation peaks in the very self-giving of God for this "other" for the sake of the redemption and consummation of creation in God's own reign. In Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection God encounters God's self in creation as the "other": God gives God's self as an utter gift to creation and thereby makes us free to receive our createdness as an utter gift of grace.

This gift also claims us in a radical way, as Luther puts it in a short formulation: "For all of this I am bound to thank, praise, serve, and obey him." Creation "ex nihilo" must be verified through our life in a twofold way, through doxology and praxis. It is a self-involving claim, which by being professed changes us, our world, and our agency.[12]

The statements of a "theology of creation" are not just metaphysical claims. Rather, their *Sitz im Leben* is the proclamation of the gospel, its coherent theological formulation, and the responsive doxological and ethical praxis of the church. Thus, "theology of creation" *is* per se "ethics of creation," or it is never rightly understood!

Creation "ex nihilo" must be verified through our life in a twofold way, through doxology and praxis.

The praxis of *doxology* introduces us into praising the "Other" to whom we owe our being. In turn, the doxological praise of the Creator liberates us to acknowledge our own creaturely "otherness" as gift and grace. Thereby we learn to realize the wholesome difference between God and world and also God's presence in the world. This difference prevents us from turning the correct understanding of God's creative presence in the world (God's creative activity is evolution or world process) around into the wrong formula: evolution or world process =God! Doxological praise maintains the practical distinction between God and the effects of God's creative activity.

Even more, doxological praise begins to "draw the world into God's story"[13]

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[12]For the philosophical implications cf. Donald Evans, *The Logic of Self-Involvement* (London: SCM Press, 1963).

[13]Cf. for this whole concept George Lindbeck's landmark study, *The Nature of Doctrine. Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984).

claiming thereby all of the world as the realm in which God's creative activity is present. There is no "secular" realm in the strict sense, no segment of the world remote from God the Creator. Rather the "secular" in nature, culture, and society still shows traces of the presence of God's creative activity in creation.

Thus, doxological praise of the Creator helps us to occupy and acknowledge our proper place as co-creatures with all the rest of God's creation. We are neither gods nor animals, neither omnipotent nor powerless. Doxology of the Creator genuinely humanizes us; it teaches us how to accept the "others," our co-creatures, as gift and grace.

This has, of course, deep ethical implications. The praiseful acknowledgment that God has created us and all other creatures makes us realize our otherness in the mirror of these other creatures. The "others" are other to us inasmuch as we are other to them. Respect of and care for all of God's creatures is the primary means of doxological acknowledgment of God the Creator in creation. The very plurality of cultures, traditions, languages, and species is to be welcomed as the wealth of created otherness. Creation "ex nihilo" undercuts uniform secularity, in which consumer subjects and objects are exploited and from which God is utterly absent.

Embodying creation "ex nihilo" as a life-long practice means honoring and fearing the Maker of Heaven and Earth by revering God's gift—creation. It was often argued that only God is to be *revered* and creation is to be *respected*, since thereby we uphold the difference between Creator and creation and do not idolize creation. While this crucial point needs to be kept in mind, it would be wrong to understand God as master-maker, whose artifice we have to respect in the sense that we have to respect the property of some proprietor. Creation "ex nihilo" much more radically claims the actual presence of the Creator "in, with and under" the creaturely effects of God's creative activity. Since the Triune One as Creator transcends the world and is immanent in the world, it is mandatory to encounter our co-creatures in due reverence, since in them we encounter nothing less than the effects of the presence of God's creative activity.[14] Reverence for creation, which is rooted in the praise of God the Creator, neither *deifies* nor *reifies* creation—the wrong alternatives of pantheism and atheism. Rather, it teaches us the way of creaturely companionship with all our co-creatures. In short, it teaches us ecology.[15]

Finally, creation "ex nihilo" liberates us for a constructive dialogue with one significant "other": science.

Understanding "creation" in the strictly theological way I have tried to develop gives us the freedom to engage in a dialogue with science. We will learn from science ways to understand "nature" and what it means to think of *this* very nature as "creation." A theology of creation "ex nihilo" will question the philosophical implications of scientific reflection upon nature. It will raise questions about the very possibility of "nature" being understood as "creatio" and point out the epistemological and ethical limitations of science as a human endeavor.

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[14]For a recent account of the necessity to claim both God's world-transcendence and world-immanence cf. Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1991), esp. 14f.

[15]Yet in the most shocking and convincing way a book like Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* (New York: Avon Books [rev. ed.], 1990), points out the sharp contradiction between claims like the one I made and the way animals are constantly tortured in our industrialized and mechanized utilization and disposal of them.

The statements of a "theology of creation" refer to the same "world" to which scientific statements refer, yet in a categorically different way. While science attempts to understand "reality" rationally in the light of that reality, a "theology of creation" attempts to understand "reality" rationally in the light of God's self-manifestation in the story of Israel and in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Thus, a "theology of creation" unfolds an understanding of the same reality by unfolding the claim inherent in the promise that this scientifically construed reality is part and parcel of the presence of God's creative activity. Theology and science will recognize each other as "other," yet rooted in the same reality. They will acknowledge the mutual enrichment they experience in their encounter.

As a concrete historical endeavor science grew out of a culture in which the doctrine of creation was broadly accepted. This resulted in the rather unique understanding of the world being both rational and contingent, a combination not at all to be taken for granted, yet crucial for the genesis of science as the dominant feature of modern culture and society.[16]

Theology in turn will rejoice in the presence of science as *one* significant "other," neither god nor demon, but a co-creaturely phenomenon. Knowing about science's focus on the material world and its methodological presuppositions, theologians will not expect to learn directly from science about the Creator, even though they will indeed learn more about the sheer mystery and unimaginable sophistication of the effects of God's creative activity "ex nihilo."[17] While we learn more and more about the wonders of God's mask, we acknowledge that it remains scientifically what it amounts to for most scientists: a mask in all its radicality. Nevertheless, it is ours to point out that only a face wears a mask! And even more, that we are invited to encounter this face in the life, death, and resurrection of a Jew, who came from Galilee and was called Jesus of Nazareth. Through him we might find an answer to the questioning wonder of the psalmist:

When I look at your heavens, the
work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you
have established;

what are human beings that you
are mindful of them
mortals that you care for them?
—(Ps 8:3-4 NRSV)

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[16]Lesslie Newbigin made this point very lucidly in *Foolishness to the Greeks. The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 71-72.

[17]I find Ted Peters' concept of a "hypothetical consonance" between theology and science a very convincing way to describe this relationship. Cf. Ted Peters, ed., *Cosmos as Creation. Theology and Science in Consonance* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989), 13ff. The whole volume represents a very helpful and sound introduction into the dialogue between theology and natural science.

Toward Sacramental Giving

David E. Krause
Vice President and Chief Operating Officer
Baylor University Medical Center Foundation
Dallas, Texas

My pastor, Kevin Kanouse, tells the story about a conversation between a $1 bill and a $10 bill. The $1 bill asks the $10, "Where have you been?"

"Oh, I have been to many fancy restaurants, to nightclubs, to football games, even to Europe a couple of times," says the $10 bill. "Where have you been?"

The $1 bill sighs, "All I do is go to church, go to church, go to church...."

According to *Giving USA*, Americans gave away $122.57 billion in 1990 (the latest year for which statistics are available), 53.7% of which went to religious organizations. Individuals gave an average of 2.5% of their income to charitable causes. Americans have always been known as a generous people. Yet what Lutheran congregation, synod, or national churchbody wallows in excess contributions?

Is there a money shortage? Not at all. Perhaps there is a shortage of spiritual exercise. Theologians call spiritual exercise "good works." Just as people need to work up a sweat to maintain healthy bodies, so they need to work up a spiritual sweat to maintain spiritual health. Good works are the Christian's aerobic work out.

Good works have gotten something of a bad press in the Lutheran tradition, but good works are necessary to keep God's people focused on the promises of the gospel. The Lutheran Confessions state:

> We need external signs of this exceeding great promise, since a terrified conscience needs manifold consolations. Baptism and the Lord's Supper, for example, are signs that constantly admonish, cheer and confirm terrified minds to believe more firmly that their sins are forgiven. This same promise is written and pictured in good works, which thus urge us to believe more firmly.... (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article IV)

The writer goes on to state that Christians "exercise themselves" in the sacraments and in good works.

How about the exercise of giving? The good work of giving exercises the muscles

most closely attached to the heart. Giving helps keep priorities straight in life—if it is *sacramental.*

Sacramental giving is first rate spiritual exercise, particularly helpful for Christians who live in an affluent society—perhaps the greatest exercise an American Christian can do. It is good for the giver and good for those supported by the gifts.

Does the church need the Sacrament of Holy Giving? Not as badly as individual Christians need to practice it! The Lutheran Confessions allow that a sacrament is a rite commanded by God, to which a promise is attached. How many sacraments are there? Traditionally, Lutherans recognize two: Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper (although the Confessions also consider Absolution—the forgiveness of sins—to be a sacrament). As the Confessions state, however, "If we should list as sacraments all the things that have God's command and promise added to them, then why not prayer... *alms*... afflictions" (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XIII). Giving—a sacrament? Herein is no attempt to contribute to sacramental inflation, but rather to emphasize the holiness of the good work of giving.

After a careful reading of applicable passages from both Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, I boldly make the case for the Sacrament of Holy Giving. Sacramental giving:

1. flows from trust in the promises of Christ
2. flows from obedience to Christ
3. is first-fruits giving, a witness—particularly to the giver—as to what it means to live one's priorities
4. is regular, systematic, and proportionate to one's financial means
5. is not limited to one's congregation or to "religious organizations"

1. Sacramental giving flows from trust in the promises of Christ. One cannot be a sacramental giver unless one trusts the promises of God in Jesus Christ. Jesus said that his people should seek first the kingdom of God, "and all these things shall be yours as well" (Mt 6:33). The "things" are the stuff of material security: food, clothing, shelter.

Do you trust this word of Christ? If you do not, you cannot be a sacramental giver. A person's use of material things, or *mammon*, is the testing ground for faithfulness, says Jesus: "If you have not been faithful in the unrighteous *mammon*, who will entrust to you the true riches?" (Lk 16:11). If God and the righteousness of God take first place in life, all the rest will come, too. One cannot "let go" of his or her stuff without believing that.

Obviously, the promises of Christ embrace much more than material things. Sacramental givers think this way: "If God has given me forgiveness, life, and salvation, can I not find trust in my heart for the bread also promised to me? And to make it even simpler, sacramental givers know that the bread doesn't belong to them anyway.

2. Sacramental giving flows from obedience to Christ. Jesus only gave one commandment: "Love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 15:12). Some like to translate that command, "Be terminally nice." Not too close to the original, or is it closer than we think? Christ's love for people was terminal—to the death! That is expensive loving.

There is great dread in the phrase "terminal illness," and yet sooner or later all people figure out that they are terminal. What Christ commands is that his people be terminal for the sake of each other. Learn to die "up front," he seems to be saying to his people, commanding them to lay down their lives for others.

If hearing the gospel is the inhaling, then giving is the exhaling.

In many ways one's money is one's life, as it represents the talents, strengths, and intellect that went into earning it. As God's people give away their money, they really are laying down their lives. Sacramental giving is being terminal on purpose in faithfulness to Christ's command.

3. Sacramental giving is "seek-first" giving, a witness—particularly to the giver—as to what it means to live one's priorities. What does it signify when a person puts his or her paycheck into the bank and goes directly to the checkbook to write a check to church? What does that show a person about himself or herself? It mirrors his or her priorities. What does it signify if the same person were to deposit that check and first thing write a check to the grocery store, or to the mortgage company, or to the auto loan company? That signifies something, too.

Sacramental giving is first-fruits giving. Better stated, it is "seek-first" giving, as in "Seek first God's kingdom." It comes "off the top;" it is not the leftovers, the anemic God-ward tip. Sacramental givers affirm God's ownership of all their resources, and their seek-first giving shows them that their faith works.

Since human beings are finite individuals with finite resources, they know they cannot do and have everything. Therefore, it becomes clear that life is the exercise of priorities. How blessed are they when their priorities are right!

In their seek-first giving, God's people are witnesses to themselves of priority living, and that witness strengthens them in their Christian commitment.

4. Sacramental giving is regular, systematic, and proportionate to one's financial circumstances. Sacramental givers are not occasional tippers. There is a method to their giving. St. Paul urged the Christians at Corinth to set aside something each week as God had prospered them (1 Cor 16:2). Sacramental givers are just as deliberate and disciplined about their giving as most folks are about the payment of their home mortgages.

Sacramental givers see their giving as part of their weekly worship, indeed their response to the gospel they hear proclaimed each week. If hearing the gospel is the inhaling, then giving is the exhaling. The two acts are one holy (sacramental!) action.

And sacramental giving is proportionate to one's financial circumstances. What percentage is appropriate? Must Christians tithe? Is tithing enough? Is a strong tithing emphasis too legalistic for Lutherans? I am personally convinced that sacramental giving begins with tithing. Though not commanded in the New Testament, the tithe has long been a tradition of the faithful. Look at it another way: how much giving exercise do Christians need? Enough to keep them focused on the grace of God, enough to keep their priorities straight, enough to sustain worthy ministries. I need to tithe—at least!

5. Sacramental giving is not limited to one's congregation, or even to religious organizations. Sacramental giving is always related to trust in God and is always a response to the gospel, but it need not al-

ways be directed to a congregation or church agency. To assume or demand that would be the height of ecclesiastical blind pride. Does God's grace reach beyond ecclesiastical institutions? Of course it does! And so can the Christian's giving. By giving to causes or organizations beyond narrow ecclesiastical borders, Christians celebrate the expanse of God's gracious giving through Christ. Certainly the local congregation deserves and needs a significant share of one's tithe. I personally give about 80% of my tithe to my home congregation. That is the place from which I draw much of my spiritual sustenance. But I like to reach beyond congregation, synod, churchbody. And since my money has been entrusted to me by God (not to my pastor or bishop or congregation), it is my decision to make as to how I should give.

There are thousands of causes and organizations which address human need, and with which Christians may wish to deal directly—causes such as Bread for the World, the United Way, or any one of a number of agencies combating specific diseases. The sacramental giver is studied in his or her giving—both in giving to church-related organizations and in giving to those not related organizationally to a churchbody.

The sacramental giver celebrates a joyous freedom in the expanse of his or her giving. But all giving is centered in trust of Christ and in obedience to Christ's command to love as he has loved.

Sacramental giving is great exercise. Given the relative wealth of American Christians, it is a form of exercise for which most are *materially* equipped (actually, *all* are materially equipped if the story of the widow is any indication—Mk 12:41-44). How does one become *spiritually* equipped?

St. Paul writes that giving is one of the gifts of the spirit (Rom 12:8). The ability to give is a spiritual gift which God bestows through Word and Sacrament.

As the Lutheran Confessions state, Christians exercise themselves in the sacraments and in good works. The more exercise one gets, the more he or she is able to exercise. The more one gives, the better he or she becomes at giving.

Just as the out-of-shape person cannot immediately jump off the couch and run a marathon, so an out-of-shape Christian cannot jump off the padded pew into a life of sacramental giving without constant immersion in Word and Sacrament and more and more exercise. But, as the popular shoe commercial indicates, you have to start somewhere—"just do it!"

Sacramental giving is not primarily the Christian's response to the needs of the church's budget—nor should it be. The church's budget is hardly an issue at all. Christians who give sacramentally give because they know they need to! For their own good. Sacramental giving is great exercise for people who struggle to trust the promises of Christ and to be faithful in the management of all God has given them.

Vedanayagam Azariah, the first Anglican bishop of India, speaking not out of the American experience, but out of much poorer circumstances, writes:

> Christian giving is a spiritual matter. When it is on a low level, the cause must always be sought in a poor and shallow Christian life. When Christians live in close fellowship with God in Christ, their love for him and their joy in their salvation which he has given them through Christ show themselves in their gifts of love; and this generous giving is itself a source of new spiritual power.

The Water and the Wine of Unity: Mental Illness and the Sacraments

Paula V. Mehmel
Porter, Minnesota

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus begins his public ministry by announcing that he has been sent "to preach good news to the poor... to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed" (Lk 4:18 RSV). People often refer to this verse when they want to remind the church, as the people of God, of its obligation to reach out to the downtrodden and to share God's liberating love with everyone, especially with those people who have been rejected by the world. However, the church's willingness to respond to this call has been uneven: Christians tend to embrace some outcasts more eagerly than others. There are few places where this unevenness has been more apparent than in the church's response to the mentally ill.

Mental illness is becoming more and more difficult to ignore. Because of recent advances in treatment, cutbacks in funding to mental health service agencies, and the movement toward deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill, all but the most seriously impaired individuals live in our communities and worship among us in our congregations. It is past time for the church to develop a caring and effective response to these individuals who too often have been, at best, tolerated and at worst, rejected by the church. Yet the church is the very place where the mentally ill should be embraced and accepted in the same way Jesus embraced and accepted the outcast of his time.

The question remains, however, how best to deal with the mentally ill. It is altogether too easy to take on more than we can handle and to try to become too directly involved with the "cure" instead of addressing the issue of care. By examining the divisions that mental illness can cause and then exploring the unity that Christ brought and which is most vividly apparent to us

today in the sacraments, I will suggest a Christian response to the mentally ill in our congregations.

Mental illness: a dividing label

A society often uses mental illness as a label to divide so called "normal" people from "abnormal" people and to exclude individuals who are not considered acceptable by its standards. The perpetuation of this division and the discrimination that results from it are problems that the church must address. In order for Christians to address this problem, however, we must begin to see how discriminatory these labels can be.

One of the problems with calling the mentally ill "abnormal" is that such labeling downplays both the number of people who are actually subject to mental illness in their lifetime and the long-term effect mental illness has on them. Recent studies by the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services estimated that more than three million Americans suffer from severe mental illness annually. Of those affected, approximately 75% become moderately to severely disabled, with over half becoming chronically mentally ill.[1] Other studies estimate that at least 15% of the U.S. population is affected by some type of mental disorder every year.[2] These statistics do not include the family members and friends who are affected by the mental illness of loved ones. Mental illness touches more than a small percentage of the people in our congregations.

Another problem that results from this division is the denial of the relativity of normality. What is considered normal and acceptable behavior in one setting can be considered completely "crazy" and abnormal in another setting. A recent example of this relativity can be seen in some Vietnam veterans. While serving in Southeast Asia these men were taught not only to kill the enemy, but also to suspect every Asian. Throughout their tour of duty they were constantly fearful, alert, and ready to attack. When they returned to the United States the aggressive behavior that was "normal" in Vietnam was suddenly considered unacceptable, "abnormal" behavior. Many veterans became marginalized and were written off by society as "crazy," because no one understood the reasons behind their actions.

In addition, the incidence of mental illness has become a class issue. According to some mental health care professionals, clinical mental disorder is

> inversely related to class position. That is to say, the lower down the scale of social class a person is, the more likely that person is to suffer from mental illness of a severity requiring treatment. Speed of recovery, quality and type of treatment facility, length of hospital stay and long term prognosis are also inversely and negatively linked with social class position.[3]

Other mental health professionals deny that mental illness occurs more often in lower classes; they claim that lower class cases are just reported more frequently. In other

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[1]"Toward a National Plan for the Chronically Mentally Ill," U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1980), 2-1.

[2]D. A. Regier, I. D. Goldberg, C. A. Taube, "The Defacto U.S. Mental Health Services System: A Public Health Prospect," *Archives of General Psychiatry*, Vol. 35 (1978): 685.

[3]Cohen Pattison, "Mentally Ill People: A Challenge to the Churches," *Modern Churchmen* 26:1 (1986), 31.

words, someone from a lower class is more likely to be diagnosed as suffering from a mental illness, whereas a person from a wealthier family may have the same problem described without any allusion to a specific mental illness or to its accompanying negative label. Whether or not this is the case, the fact remains that mental illness can be used as a way of further marginalizing the poor, moving them one step further from the mainstream of society.

By marginalizing the mentally ill, by labeling them, and by downplaying the extent of mental illness, society separates the mentally ill from so-called "normal" people. In the past, psychiatrists were called "alienists,"[4] people who dealt with individuals who were not considered part of our society, who were alien to us. Although that phrase is no longer in vogue today, the myth that grew from its use still exists. As a church we are called to look beyond such myths and to view all people as children of God.

Christ and the mentally ill

Through his ministry, Jesus reached out to the most marginalized of people—the leper, the prostitute, the tax collector, and even the demon possessed, who some scholars say were the mentally ill individuals of Jesus' day. Jesus' refusal to go along with the standards of his society and his willingness to be seen with and even to touch the unclean created controversy among the religious leaders of his time. In spite of this controversy, Jesus continued ministering to the marginalized, the poor, and the unclean.

As a model for all people, Jesus shows us the importance of inclusivity. The mentally ill belong to the marginalized people Jesus calls us to serve. However, they are a group we often neglect and ignore because we mistakenly think that they are in part responsible for their condition and that if they really made an effort they could be "normal" just like us.

Yet Jesus was more than a model; he was the Christ. His death and resurrection freed each one of us from our bondage, whatever that bondage might be. The mentally ill individual is no less a saint—and no more a sinner—than anyone else, and the redemption that is found in Christ is just as readily available to the mentally ill person as it is to anyone else. Intellectually most of us know this. But the barriers that the world constructs to separate the mentally ill from "normal" people sometimes make it harder to see. Jesus Christ broke down the barriers between people and opened up a world where all people have value as children of God.

Unity through the sacraments

As members of the Body of Christ we have been called to recognize that every person has value as a child of God. Every member needs to be seen as a brother or sister in Christ. It should make no difference to us whether someone is tall or short, rich or poor, or whether a person has some type of disease, including mental illness. We are all united into one body through our Baptism, and we are all fed by one Body in the Eucharist. Membership in the congregation and acceptance within the community should not be subject to the vicissitudes of society's judgment of a person's "normality." Instead, we need to go back to the source of our unity in Christ.

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[4] *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: The World Publishing Company, 1976), 35.

In baptism the disunity of this world is broken down and the unity of God joins us together as one as we are adopted into God's family. We become intrinsically bound, one unto another, as a result of this rebirth in Christ. The water that washes over the child who grows up to be a psychologist and the water that washes over the child who grows up to be a patient are one and the same. The only difference between each of us is the point where we most need ministry and healing and acceptance. One person may need the ministry that soothes the wound caused by a bad marriage. Another may need healing because of a violent assault. Yet another person may need healing and acceptance because of a problem discerning what reality is. God meets each of us at the point of our greatest need and ministers to us there. Through baptism we are claimed as children of God and given an identity that transcends all of our differences. As brothers and sisters in Christ, we have been called not to see the points of division that the world establishes, but rather to see the unity Christ came to bring.

The Lord's Supper is the visible point where we celebrate this unity established in our baptism, and it is also where we can begin to experience God's love and healing.

The sacraments unite us with those who are "not like us." When dealing with the mentally ill, it is easy to want to exclude them from our fellowship because their behavior or manner of dress may not be what society deems "appropriate." We need to be reminded that by denying fellowship to the mentally ill we also are denying them the cup, for it is there that we celebrate our unity. It is in Communion that we become community. Even the division caused by mental illness fades away when we share Christ's body and blood.

The sacraments should be our point of departure as we move to accept the mentally ill into our congregations. When a congregation reaches out to a woman with Hodgkins Disease or to a man who has had a heart attack, its members treat these individuals as fellow members who are hurting and who need prayers and love. Cancer patients and heart attack victims are not looked down upon because of their medical problems, and they aren't excluded from the community or its communion because of their illnesses. Nor should we look down upon or exclude the mentally ill because they suffer from a different kind of disease.

> The mentally ill belong to the marginalized people Jesus calls us to serve.

Care and not cure

In practice, however, it is often hard to establish community with mentally ill people in a congregation. As a congregation tries to incorporate all people into its community, the most important thing it can do is to reinforce the unity that is found in the sacraments, the unity that is a result of Baptism and that is lived out through the Eucharist. This reinforcement must begin in the pulpit as pastors proclaim the message of unity, and it must continue in classrooms, in youth programs, in Bible studies, at committee meetings, and in church programs. The divisions created by mental illness need to be named as people are encouraged to treat

everyone with respect and dignity, no matter how "different" they are.

One of the major pitfalls that a church faces when it reaches out to the mentally ill is believing that a church can "cure" a person of mental illness. Consider the story of Roger, a mentally ill individual who joined Grace Lutheran Church. Initially the people at Grace willingly reached out to Roger in the spirit of love and compassion. Roger joined the choir, became involved in a Bible study, and was actively involved in the worship life of the congregation. The people at Grace were aware that Roger had a history of mental illness, but in the spirit of acceptance they overlooked his "problem," believing that as a result of their acceptance Roger would be "cured" of his problem. The people of Grace assumed that if he associated with "normal" people he would learn how to behave.

> We should not expect the mentally ill person to be cured in order to remain in our fellowship. Cure is not always possible. However, love is possible.

Time passed, and Roger did not change. His behavior, which the members of Grace were willing to overlook at first, became harder and harder to tolerate because it was a constant reminder of their failure to "normalize" him. These members began to back away from Roger and exclude him from their activities, labeling him a hopeless case. Everyone wanted Roger to leave the congregation. After all, they had accepted him at first, and their acceptance hadn't helped him at all. The people of Grace decided that since Roger really couldn't be helped by them he should move on. Roger felt shunned as he was rejected by the people in his congregation. No longer finding any fellowship at Grace, Roger sadly wandered away from the church. The congregation breathed a sigh of relief.

The members of Grace mistakenly thought that they could cure Roger. When he failed to respond to their "treatment" they rejected him. The congregation would have been more Christ-like if they had accepted Roger where he stood—as a person with an illness, but even more importantly as a fellow child of God, as someone who was united with them in Baptism and who was bound to them through the fellowship of the Eucharist.

Christ calls us to care for our brothers and sisters who are sick, not to cure them. A person who is mentally ill should be accepted into fellowship in the same way we freely accept people with other diseases. As in the case of someone who has a communicable disease necessitating quarantine, it is sometimes necessary to exclude someone from fellowship because that person has become a dangerous and disruptive presence in the congregation, perpetuating antagonistic behavior. A violent schizophrenic, for example, may need to be excluded from fellowship on the grounds of safety. However, most mentally ill people that we encounter in our congregations are just "different," not dangerous.

Just as we don't expect the cancer victim to be cured in order to remain in fellow-

ship, we should not expect the mentally ill person to be cured in order to remain in our fellowship. Cure is not always possible. However, love is possible. The aim of the congregation needs to be a recognition of its covenant to be a community of care and a fellowship of acceptance to all of its brothers and sisters.

One of the traps into which people often fall when dealing with mental illness is believing that they can help a mentally ill individual by counseling them. Most pastors are woefully ill-equipped to handle the problems that surround mental illness and can quickly find themselves enmeshed in the delusions of the mentally ill member.

As soon as it becomes apparent that a member is exhibiting inappropriate behavior that is associated with mental illness, the pastor is best served by referring that individual to a competent mental health professional. If the member refuses to seek mental health care, the pastor should remain firm and refuse to counsel the member, cutting off any phone calls or visits from the mentally ill member. Pastors need to make it clear that they will see the member only if other appropriate care is sought.

The results of "solo" attempts to counsel can all too often end with a very frustrated congregation, an exhausted pastor who has been trying to play psychologist, and the alienation of the affected individual. Refusing to counsel and remaining firm with the person may be difficult, and one may even end up losing the member, but the affected person is better served by a refusal to play psychologist than by a feeble attempt at it.

It is true that mentally ill individuals in a congregation can sometimes become so disruptive or neurotic that it can be destructive to the community. That is one reason why it is so vital to be involved in addressing the problems in partnership with a mental health agency, like a community mental health center. The congregation can play a vital role in the mental health network by providing an accepting community for the mentally ill. It may even be helpful to set up support groups within the context of the congregation for people who are struggling with mental illness and for their families.

By encouraging mentally ill individuals to seek help, remaining firm in a refusal to "cure," and providing a supportive environment of love for those struggling with mental illness, the whole community is able to deal with mental illness in a more constructive manner.

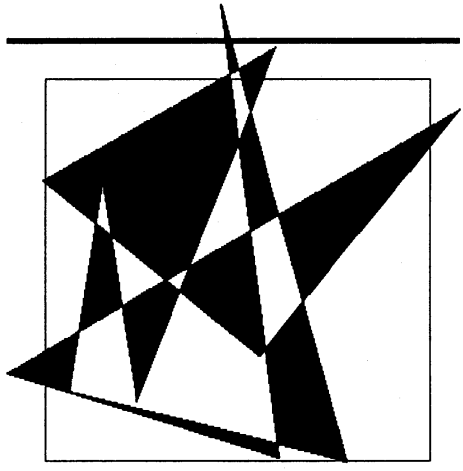
The mentally ill are not going to go away. Like the poor, they too will always be with us. When we recognize them as children of the same God, and when we use the sacraments as a visible means of fully including them in the fellowship of our congregations, we can develop and foster an attitude of love and acceptance. When this approach is reinforced by a teaching and preaching ministry stressing the unity found in the sacraments, and the mental health community is included as part of the ministry process, it is possible to have an effective ministry to the mentally ill.

This ministry is a challenge, because it often defies our expectations and tries our patience. But then, Christianity is also a challenge, and a God on a cross defies our expectations. What draws everything together is the knowledge that God, though Christ, accepts all of us; that God, through the sacraments, is available to us and unites us; and that God has promised to be with us always.

(Editor's note—The ELCA's Division for Church in Society can provide information about resources for congregations who need help in their ministry to the mentally ill. Call Dr. Dennis Busse at 1-800-638-3522, ext. 2692.)

Points of Tension: Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria

Robert Conrad
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago



There is a great deal of tension between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria. The North of Nigeria is predominantly Muslim while the South is Christian. The Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria, with headquarters in Numan, Gongola State, is oriented toward the North.

Bishop David Windibiziri of the LCCN asked me to address this tension during the time of a study leave in Nigeria in October 1990. The content of this article was presented and discussed at two seminaries in Nigeria and at a rally of the Christian Association of Nigeria. The perspective is obviously one of an American Christian looking at the Nigerian situation and offering an analysis and some possible solutions. The solutions are applicable to Christian-Muslim relations in the United States as well.

There should be no points of tension between Christians and Muslims in a country whose constitution reads:

> Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and in public or in private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.[1]

Yet there are tensions between Christians and Muslims. They arise out of the differing understandings of the relationship between church and state.

[1]Danjuma Byang, *Sharia in Nigeria: A Christian Perspective* (Jos, Nigeria: Challenge Publications, 1988), 5.

The Islamic concept of the relation between church and state

The Islamic concept of the relation between church and state is one in which all of life is governed by Islamic regulations as embodied in the Sharia, the "way" or the "right path."[2] The Islamic community preserves its unity by obedience to Sharia. The primary sources of Sharia are the Qur'an and the Sunna. Any law directly derived from the Qur'an is considered to be the direct commandment of Allah. The Sunna, which supplements the Qur'an, embodies the teachings, examples, and practices of Muhammad. The codification of the Sharia from these and other sources took place during the first three centuries after the death of the prophet.

The content of Sharia is all-embracing. The first section, Belief, deals with the oneness of Allah, the revealed books of Allah of which the Qur'an is the last and final, the prophets of Allah of whom Muhammad is the greatest, and the seal of prophethood, angels and evil spirits, judgment day, and life after death. The second section advocates the inculcation of moral virtues such as sincerity, humility, and love. The third section lists the five pillars of Islam: the Creed (There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet), Worship (the saying of prescribed prayers five times a day), Almsgiving and voluntary offerings, Fasting during the month of Ramadan, and Pilgrimage to Mecca. The fourth section of the Sharia discusses Transactions, especially those pertaining to interpersonal relationships in marriage. The fifth section contains the criminal code of Islamic law. It lists lawful and unlawful actions.

Muslims prefer a government controlled by Muslims and governed by Sharia. The best possible state of existence for them is Dar al-Islam, the House of Islam. In such a nation certain people are given the status of Dar al-Dhimma, the House of the Protected. This includes people of the Book such as Jews and Christians. While protected from dangers to life, property, religion, and business, they must pay specified taxes and not seek to convert Muslims, rule Muslims, war against Muslims, or join the enemies of Muslims. A third state of existence is Dar al-Harb, the House of War, which consists of those persons not yet subdued to Islam.[3] Under the pressures of the modern world, a fourth state of existence for Muslims has been identified. It is Dar al-Sulh, the House of Peace. This is a place where Muslims live as a minority but they are at peace and can practice their religion freely.[4]

The Christian concept of the relation between church and state

Unlike Islam, Christianity does not have a consistent concept of the relation between church and state. Christianity did not begin as a religion to replace the Roman empire, but as a movement to change people's lives within the empire. Jesus said to Pilate that his kingdom was not of this world (Jn 18:36). He also told his hearers that they were to render to Caesar what was Caesar's and to

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[2]Byron L. Haines and Frank L. Cooley, *Christians and Muslims Together* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), 22.

[3]*The Sharia: Implications for Christians.* (Ibadan, Nigeria: National YOUTHCAN, n.d.) 7-11.

[4]Haines and Cooley, *Christians and Muslims Together*, 56.

God what was God's (Mk 12:17). Paul emphasized the role of government and the responsibility of Christians to it in Rom 13:1-4.

> Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore, whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval; for it is God's servant for your good.

There is one exception in the Christian tradition to blind obedience to authority. When required to do something contrary to God's will, Christians repeat the words of Peter in Acts 5:29, "We must obey God rather than any human authority." This tradition of being apart from, yet critically obedient to the government, is one that the churches in many nations have adopted.

The other tradition in Christianity is the wedding of church and state. That tradition goes back to the Emperor Constantine. When he became Christian the state also became Christian. Over a period of time this gave rise to the Holy Roman Empire in which church and state were the same. One of the results was the persecution of persons who were not Christian. Only a few nations today have such a church-state alliance.

Luther understood the danger of wedding church and state and experienced it in his own day. The emperor enforced the dictates of the church. Disobedience meant excommunication and death. Yet Luther could also see the danger of complete separation of the church from the world. Luther believed that God operated in two kingdoms—the kingdoms of the left hand and of the right hand. God's right-hand kingdom is where God functions with the gospel and forgiveness. It is the kingdom where Christians live in the grace and love of God. God's left-hand kingdom is where God rules creation through law. God commands people to live in justice and peace through the structures of family and nation. Christians live in God's grace, but they also live in the world of God's creation where they recognize God's hand behind it all. So Christians work for the good of their neighbors and hold government accountable for the peace and justice that God demands. They do not insist that government be Christian, but they do insist that it be just.

It is not correct to say that Christians want a secular state if that implies the state does not belong to God or is not responsible to God. If the secularity of government is understood to mean its neutrality in matters of religion, then it is appropriate to say that government ought to be secular.

Points of tension between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria

Many Christians in the North of Nigeria claim that state governments do not act according to the constitution. Danjuma Byang says:

> In virtually every state of the north, state governments have used public money to build purely Islamic/Arabic institutions. The same treatment has not only been denied the Christians but government has forcibly taken over institutions belonging to the Christians, which they built with their church money, and without commensurate compensations paid to them. Apart from the purely Islamic institutions, in other institutions like secondary schools, teachers col-

> leges and institutions of higher learning, government utilizes public funds to build mosques, while the Christian students and staff in such schools have to either use classrooms or go to the nearest churches outside the premises of the institutions to worship.[5]

The Rev. Wilson Sabiya, a pastor of the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria, was arrested in February 1989 for protesting the building of a mosque at the governor's office with public funds. Rev. Sabiya insisted that the governor should give 75% (his estimate of the percentage of Christians in Gongola state) of the cost of the mosque to Christians to build a chapel. Sabiya was released when a large group of Christians picketed the governor's office and vowed not to leave until Sabiya was released. The mosque still stands near the governor's office.

There are many instances in which Christian churches have been burned and the arsonists not sentenced for their crime. The Maitatsine uprisings in five states of the north between 1980 and 1984 resulted in many deaths and much property damage. The Maitatsine are Muslim extremists whose leader was eventually killed. However, the Maitatsine were not always held responsible for their deeds. The government in Kano arrested some of the Maitatsine ringleaders in 1980, but President Shehu Shagari set them free.[6] A student-led Muslim riot against Christians in 1987 led to the decree that no open-air preaching should be allowed in Gongola State. This "temporary" restriction, still in force years later, is supposedly for the protection of Christians. The tension between Muslims and Christians resulted in renewed violence in Bauchi in April 1991. An argument between a Christian butcher and a Muslim customer escalated into a major riot. Muslims burned most of the Christian churches in Bauchi. When Christians took refuge in the military barracks the Muslims came after them. The military government gave orders to fire on the rioters, and about 20 were killed. Now there is resentment on both sides.

Christians feel threatened by these unjust actions. They feel they are a minority whose rights are not recognized.[7] They feel that their status is threatened by the infusion of petro-dollars from other Arab countries and that petro-dollars are used for the spread of Islam. Christians in the North want the state governments to live up to the constitution of Nigeria. However, Christians should remember that Muslim minorities in other countries have not always been treated justly by Christians. One instance is the teaching of Religious Knowledge in the public schools of Zimbabwe. Every syllabus in Religious Knowledge is Christian, and non-Christians have no choice but to study Christian doctrine. Zimbabweans, recognizing the injustice, are working on a multi-faith approach to Religious Knowledge.

On the other hand, the Muslims in Nigeria feel threatened by the kind of open, democratic state that Christians espouse.

> In such a state, they perceive the loss of their identity as Muslims, an erosion of their cultural tradition, and an endorsement of the moral degradation now prevalent under secular governments. These perceptions are related by many

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[5]Byang, *Sharia in Nigeria*, 59.

[6]Byang, *Sharia in Nigeria*, 63.

[7]There is a great deal of dispute about the percentage of Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. The last acceptable census was in 1963. It showed the Muslims at 47.2% of the population and Christians at 34.5%. Census attempts since then have resulted in inflated numbers. Another attempt was to be made in 1991.

> Muslims to the desire to gain the power and control in government and business that Christians exercised in the colonial period and in the early days of independence. Muslims seek a more equitable balance of power to redress the discrimination they have endured in the past.[8]

Muslims feel threatened by outside Western influences. One Nigerian Muslim scholar has said that the greatest threat to Islam is not Christianity but the materialism, modernity, and capitalism that come in Western robes.[9]

It will help ease tensions if Christians can convince the Muslims that they, too, believe that all creation and all government are God's.

Easing the tension in Nigeria

The first method for easing the tension in Nigeria would be an educational and judicial stress on the freedom of religious belief as set forth in the Nigerian constitution. Freedom of religion is not only embodied in Nigeria's constitution but it is also stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to which Nigeria is a subscriber. The declaration, produced by the United Nations, states in Article 18:

> Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion: this right includes the freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or in private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

It may be more difficult for Muslims than for Christians to accept the principle of freedom of religion, but it is possible for Muslims to live in the House of Peace (Dar el-Sulh). The Qur'an does not espouse an Islamic state. However, radicals, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, want to establish an Islamic state in every nation where Muslims are present in significant numbers.

Secondly, it will help ease tensions between Christians and Muslims if Christians can convince the Muslims that they, too, believe that all creation and all government are God's. Christians do not believe in a secular state in the sense that society and government are apart from God. God functions differently in the kingdom of the left hand than in the kingdom of the right, but he functions in both kingdoms. In the left God functions by law and holds governments responsible for justice and peace. In the right God functions with gospel and grace and forgiveness. Christians are not removed from the world but are in the midst of it to proclaim grace and live in justice.

A third strategy for easing the tensions in Nigeria is respect for the religion of others. This does not mean that Christians cease to believe and give witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ. But the witness of

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[8]Haines and Cooley, *Christians and Muslims Together*, 73.

[9]Ali Mazrui, "Islamic Revivalism and Expansion," *Africa Events*, February, 1990, 26-29.

Christians is not to be done by tearing down the religion of Islam. A story is told about the stoning of a missionary preacher by Muslims in the bazaar of Peshawar, Pakistan, during the days of British rule. The missionary was not stoned because he was preaching the gospel but because he was demeaning Islam before Muslims.[10] A far better strategy is to begin with the things that Muslims can agree with, such as the Qur'an's statements concerning Moses and the Torah, David and the Psalms, and Jesus and the gospel. Then one can go on to speak of those things where Muslims and Christians differ.[11]

Christians and Muslims in Nigeria need to get together in conversation about their similarities and differences. There are many peace-loving Muslims who may be willing to enter into such conversations. The Christians of Gongola State tried such a dialogue a few years ago, but it fell apart. They are ready to try again.

A final approach to easing the tensions in Nigeria involves the teaching of the Christian faith for daily living. One observer of the Nigerian educational scene wrote in 1985:

> The traditional tendency of the Christian Religious Education teacher is to teach Bible knowledge only. Teaching Bible is a good start but if it ends there, it is not enough. It is too narrow by far.... It cannot adequately prepare the Christian for moral and religious development which will enable the individual to be a person of good character and a good citizen. It does not prepare him for dialogue with other religions nor does it equip him to confront emergency life situations.[12]

The Christian faith is not just an academic subject, but it is something that affects the lives of its adherents in their work as students, parents, citizens and nation-builders.

If Christians and Muslims together can agree to carry out the provisions of the Nigerian constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; if Christians can convince Muslims that they, too, believe all the world is God's; if Christians can witness to the gospel without demeaning Islam; and if Christians can live their faith as responsible citizens, there may be greater peace, justice, and stability in Nigeria. It is the will of God that the people God has created live together in a peaceful and just society whether in Nigeria or the United States.

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[10] Haines and Cooley, *Christians and Muslims Together*, 118.

[11] This approach is espoused by the book, *Taking the Good News to Muslims* (Nairobi, Kenya: Evangel Publishing House, P.O. Box 28963).

[12] H.S. Nwanko, quoted in "Religious Education in Africa," *Exchange* 50 (September 1988), 71.

Pastoral Counseling: Under the Cross

Jon M. Temme
Pastor, Ascension Lutheran Church
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

The Yellow Pages provide an interesting commentary upon the richness, indeed excess, of North American culture. Even under the somewhat esoteric heading "Counseling" one finds a gardenpatch abundance of offerings. Choices may be made from nearly A to Z: Broken Relationship Counseling, Career Counseling, Crisis, Family, Group, Individual, New Age, Psychic, Psychoanalytic, Pregnancy, Stress, and more. Within this supermarket of styles the description Pastoral Counseling also appears.

Pastoral counseling, in keeping with our diversified and specialized age, also has its fair share of qualifiers. My phone book tells of "Christian" pastoral counseling, "Evangelical," "Bible-based," and denominational pastoral counseling, such as Baptist Counseling Services and Catholic or Lutheran Social Services. The list goes on. Do these varieties of pastoral counseling spring forth from the same competitive marketplace which fuels the majority of other advertisements? Likely not. Rather they arise from the differing theological, ideological, and methodological emphases which undergird them.

Is there any structure by which these diverse pastoral counseling approaches may be grouped, analyzed, and evaluated? And if so, under what characteristics, qualities, and parameters would pastoral counseling arising from an evangelical theology be known?

Here I will suggest that current approaches to pastoral counseling may be gathered under the framework of three broad categories: (1) counseling under the caduceus (technocratic/medical ideology), (2) counseling for glory (fundamentalist/triumphalist theology), and (3) counseling under the cross (the *theologia crucis* of evangelical catholicism). It is under the last of these that I seek to ground a Lutheran understanding of counseling which strives to be truly pastoral both in doctrine and methodology.

Counseling under the caduceus

As we near the 21st century, picking up speed as we go, we are coming under the ever-increasing dominance of a technocratic ideology. Although this is evident in many spheres—political, economic, agricultural, recreational—it is especially manifest in

technological innovations and interventions in mental and physical health care. Medical technology now far outstrips available health care resources and related ethical concerns. Thus, it is not surprising that matters spiritual are also susceptible to "takeover" by a technocratic ideology. The discipline of psychiatry alone, for instance, with its attendant medical and pharmaceutical interventions and therapies, has led many to believe that all dis-ease and dis-stress can be treated from within the model of medical-technological therapy.

A mere fifty years ago it would have been quite unusual to connect the practices and strategies of psychiatry and medicine together in any functional, working relationship. Now most hospitals of 100 beds or more will dedicate space to a psychiatric unit, staffed by people specialized in psychiatric treatment, nursing, therapy, and pharmacy. Note for instance the presence of bio-feedback "technicians" as a part of the care-giving team on many a hospital's psychiatric unit. I do not categorically lament such developments. But a caveat must be issued against the supporting ideology which brings a technological/medical model to a dimension of wellness and care-giving which but a few decades ago would have been declared off-limits for medicine, much less technology.

Can pastoral counseling and care find its locus in this ideology? Yes, but at the excessive cost of buying into technocratic values and strategies. This is the case in many institutionalized models of pastoral counseling especially in health-care settings. Perhaps that is best symbolized and most fully realized in the rapid and often uncritical way in which the Clinical Pastoral Education (C.P.E.) model has been embraced by many a denominational seminary in North America. Employing measurable methods and goals, the C.P.E. program has come to be a required part of pastoral preparation and theological education. Its great popularity within seminary education derives in part, I believe, from the ease with which the more "nebulous" spiritual elements of pastoral counseling can be measured and administered under the rubrics of C.P.E. learning contracts, verbatim seminars, role-play seminars, peer group evaluations, and the like. One seminary student I recently spoke with, completing his seminary-required C.P.E. unit at an active treatment hospital, told me of the rebuke he received from his C.P.E. supervisor for reading Scripture with the patients he visited with. It was judged to be "inappropriate" for the modern hospital setting, frowned upon by medical staff.

There are far more subtle and dangerous ways in which the C.P.E. model buys into technocratic ideology and its values. Many a seminarian has felt the alluring security of throwing on a white lab coat and "making rounds" in a hospital setting, indistinguishable from doctors, nurses, respiratory therapists, and other technical practitioners who have a clearly defined role within the institution. In such settings where physical health becomes the final measure of one's well-being, chaplains (one would not likely think to call them pastors) substitute "therapeutic interventions" for faith conversations and the administration of the sacraments. They apply "instruments" of pastoral counseling. They chart their actions and results right alongside doctors and nurses on a patient's medical chart.

I do not wish to paint an opaque "X" over the whole of the C.P.E. enterprise. Yet it is emblematic of one direction in which pastoral counseling and care may be headed with increasing support. Grave concern arises if such a direction persists unchallenged, for it would be easy for pastoral counseling to become the handmaid of a

technocratic ideology's norms, fragmenting the human being into areas of personality which are treated with measurable therapeutic interventions. When pastoral counseling takes place solely under the caduceus, lost is the wonder and mystery of humanity as *nephesh*—a physically and *spiritually* living being. Lost too is the ability of the caregiver to pastorally counsel a *human* being, not just a biological being.

Counseling for cheapened glory

Paradoxically, the flip-side of pastoral counseling under a technocratic/medical ideology is counseling which proceeds from a fundamentalist/triumphalist *theology*. What a paradox indeed! It would seem that theological fundamentalism and medical technocracy would make the strangest of bedfellows. Fundamentalism should stay far afield from the technocratic ideology which liberal Protestantism in particular has so fondly embraced. And a triumphalistic theology might well steer clear of hospitals, psychiatric institutions, and other blemishes upon faith-induced happiness and success. Nevertheless, this apparently conflicting theology and ideology produce similar "blind spots" in pastoral counseling.

Those who preach and practice counseling from a quest for immediate and earthly glory—triumphalism—are taking the normal, i.e., rational approach to religion, much as those counseling under the caduceus are taking the normal, i.e., rational approach to medicine and science. The "natural" human being turns to medicine or science or religion to earn tangible and immediate benefit from it or its practitioners. Health, prosperity, success, visible glory, and the triumph over worldly weaknesses and troubles are the indicators that one has done well and earned favor with God and the modern world.

When pastoral counseling and care proceed from such a triumphalistic theology (what Luther condemned as *theologia gloriae*), it becomes difficult for its adherents and practitioners to discern any benefit whatsoever in anything short of a cure to the presenting problem or a conversion away from the offending sin. Much as the goal of counseling under the caduceus is to effect a "cure" through medical/technological means, so the goal of one counseling for glory is similarly to effect a cure, albeit using means which are divinely apprehended and controlled. Under a *theologia gloriae* the justification and measure of effectiveness in pastoral counseling is resolution of the presenting problem to the verifiable satisfaction of the counselee and counselor. Only then is the power and the presence of God seen to be at hand.

Based upon this theology, pastoral counseling proceeds from a goal-measured model much as does counseling from a therapeutic ideology. Again human identity is sacrificed upon the altar of "results" as an individual becomes fragmented from *nephesh* into body and soul. What differs from the technocratic ideology is simply the nature of the fragments which one seeks to "cure" by counseling. Under a triumphalist theology the offending particle is usually not labeled as illness but sin. Ready made, time-tested "cures" for the sin-illness may then be meted out in the form of handy biblical prescriptions.

"Take a dose of Phil 4:6 if you're feeling anxious. Swallow a teaspoonful of Jn 3:16 three times a day if you're depressed. Pray together as a family if your son has gotten into drugs, or it your wife is alcoholic." Counseling under the caduceus may turn the pastor into a technologist; counseling for cheapened glory turns the

pastor into a pharmacist of biblical pills. Sad to say, they are placebos at best. Neither technocratic ideology nor fundamentalism's triumphalistic theology support what is essentially pastoral in counseling.

Counseling under the cross

Contrast the intent and approach of the first two types of pastoral counseling with the following statements related to pastoral consolation which arise from the *theologia crucis* of evangelical catholicism.

> For where God's Word is preached, accepted or believed and bears fruit, there the blessed holy cross will not be far away. Let nobody think that he will have peace; he must sacrifice all he has on earth—possessions, honor, house and home, wife and children, body and life. Now, this grieves our flesh and the Old Adam, for it means that we must remain steadfast, suffer patiently whatever befalls us, and let go whatever is taken from us.[1]

There's barely a call for intervention or a suggestion of instant resolution to this world's struggles in that admonition to pastoral and personal care. Or again, even stronger:

> Therefore troubles are not always penalties for certain past deeds, but works of God, intended for our profit, that the power of God might be made more manifest in our weakness. Thus Paul says, "The power of God is made perfect in weakness." It is the will of God that our bodies should be sacrifices, to show our obedience but not to pay for eternal death; for this God has another price, the death of his Son."[2]

It would be most difficult for a counselor under the caduceus or one counseling for glory to say that presenting problems are "works of God." It would be even more difficult to affirm them as "intended for our profit." Clearly these words from the Lutheran Confessions point pastoral counseling in a fundamentally different direction.

Neither technocratic ideology nor fundamentalism's triumphalistic theology support what is essentially pastoral in counseling.

In a sense, Luther lifted up the *theologia crucis* in response to both triumphalist theology and the rudimentary beginnings of a technocratic ideology. As such the *theologia crucis* provides a means to develop pastoral counseling over against a model of the priest as "penance-technocrat" (e.g., "Pray fifty 'Our Father's' for your confessed venial sins), or the priest as glory-giver by whose self-righteousness prosperity is afforded many others in the parish.

Luther argued from the beginnings of his evangelical reform that God has revealed himself and is still present to us not only in moments of immediate, earthly glory

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[1] *Large Catechism*, "Lord's Prayer," in the *Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1957), 429.

[2] *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, Art. XII, in the *Book of Concord*, 207ff.

or readily visible power (what our society would label success or science). Rather, God's presence and power are hidden in moments of human weakness, suffering, even defeat, even as God's glory and grace were hidden in the shame of Christ's cross. Already in 1518 at the Heidelberg Disputation Luther pointed pastoral consolation away from being the means for us to self-administer healing or happiness and towards the process by which we are driven to the ultimate healing of the cross. Argued Luther, "It is certain that man must utterly despair of his own ability before he is prepared to receive the grace of Christ.... He deserves to be called a theologian, however, who comprehends the visible and manifest things of God seen through suffering and the cross. A theologian of glory calls evil good and good evil. A theologian of the cross calls the thing what it actually is."[3]

Explains Douglas Hall, "[In Luther's sense of the *theologia crucis*] the true *Christian life* is not a life of *securitas*, lived out in the midst of a world in which the triumph of the good is assured. On the contrary, to enter upon such a life is to be denied every form of security. For Luther sees man, too, under the form of the Crucified (*sub specie Christ*)."[4]

Proceeding from the *theologia crucis* of evangelical catholicism pastoral counseling is enabled to become truly pastoral in definition and methodology. Counseling under the cross does not look exclusively toward results or earthly glory as the ends of all means. Rather, Word and Sacrament ministry in the midst of a broken world is the means by which pastoral counseling and care are effected. Elimination of the presenting problem or crisis is not needed to experience God's presence in the midst of life's troubles. Indeed God may well be present to us and with us most vitally and vibrantly in the very moment of crisis.

This is not to suggest that counseling under the cross is callous toward human suffering. Nor is it opposed to the insights of the medical and social sciences as they relate to mental and physical well-being. It proclaims, however, that the ultimate source of wholeness is the grace of God in Christ crucified. The ultimate source of comfort in the face of earthly sorrow and confusion is the proclamation of this *evangelion* in Word and Sacrament. The end result is not unimportant, but when counseling under the cross it is clearly not *the* most important element of pastoral consolation. The process of working toward resolution in which the *evangelion* is proclaimed and administered, and not the end result itself, is a testimony to the presence of the Spirit of the living God. When pastoral counseling finds its locus under the cross one recognizes that illness, pain, anxiety, and other "dis-eases and distresses" are valuable and formative if used constructively. In moments of suffering, even anguish, people are met by a God who emptied himself of glory to share sorrow with them and for them (Phil 2:5-11).

The thorn in the flesh—a case study

The long-debated circumstance of the Apostle Paul's thorn in the flesh (2 Corinthians 12) provides a fascinating, albeit hypothetical, case study. What might have happened had Paul sought counseling concerning this problem from a counselor oper-

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[3] "Heidelberg Disputation (1518)," trans. Harold Grim, in *Luther's Works* XXXI, 40.

[4] Douglas John Hall, *Lighten our Darkness: Toward an Indigenous Theology of the Cross* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 119.

ating under the caduceus, one counseling for glory, or a pastoral counselor ministering Word and Sacrament under the cross?

In the first instance we could imagine a hospital chaplain, perhaps a second-year seminary student completing the required quarter of C.P.E., appropriately attired in a white lab coat with a security badge clipped on the front pocket. She might approach Paul seeking to identify the right "therapy" with which to intervene in his distress. Choosing from many possible alternatives—Rogerian, Freudian, Jungian, Neo-Adlerian, Gestalt, Transactional Analysis, Reality Therapy, Behavioral modification—this pastoral counselor might seek to help Paul identify the area of his dis-ease through various instruments and interventions. Inter-disciplinary conferences with the consulting physician and psychiatrist would lead to selection of a therapeutic approach to be carefully charted and monitored. Paul's highly checkered past and seemingly unstable personality would, quite likely, hold the key to successful treatment. A full medical exam with a lab work-up would rule out chemical or metabolical imbalance as contributing factors.

The pastoral counselor operating out of a triumphalist theology might likely identify the thorn as something that reflected deliberate and unconfessed sin on Paul's part. Clearly Paul had done something that merited this tit-for-tat punishment from a righteous God. After all, Paul did believe in a righteous God whom he had violently persecuted for quite a time before the glorious Damascus Road conversion. Were Paul to experience a closer relationship to God, a more successful apostolic career, and a happier life on earth, he would need to identify the nature of the sin and through prayer and Scripture passages begin to conquer it. One can imagine that after a few sessions the pastoral counselor might well give up on Paul, feeling frustrated and defeated at the stubbornness of the thorn which would not go away. Even when a sincere and devout Paul prayed about it three times it proved ineffective (2 Cor 12:8).

A pastoral counselor rooted in the *theologia crucis* and committed to Word and Sacrament ministry as the foundation of pastoral counseling might begin by acknowledging the possible long-term course of this most stubborn and fleshy thorn. She would counsel with Paul to discern through pastoral conversation and prayer in what ways that stubborn thorn might enable Paul to grow in grace and in relationship with God and others. Although the counselor would not rule out the possibility of the thorn being removed, she would see many other alternatives in dealing with this situation than that result alone.

Interestingly, we are given a broad hint at what sort of pastoral counselor Paul was when he declared: "Three times I besought the Lord about this, that it would leave; but he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor 12:8-9).

That blessed assurance is good news offered to us all in the crucified Christ. Counseling which is truly pastoral ministers that *evangelion* in Word and Sacrament. It does so amid further words of pastoral conversation and mutual upbuilding. To offer such pastoral counseling is to offer care and peace *sub specie Christi* which the world cannot give no matter how many sub-headings one finds in the Yellow Pages under "Counseling."

The Sacrament of Unity

Raymond A. Petrea
Liberty, North Carolina

The dimension of unity in the Sacrament of the Altar often escapes attention because of the Lutheran preoccupation with sin and forgiveness. While concern for the consequences of sin and the assurance of forgiveness is commendable, there is also clearly evident in the *LBW* rite an emphasis on unity, family, and corporate life.

This dimension of unity was brought particularly to my attention by a young man who wanted to know more about Lutherans and the Lutheran church. Partly because of his familiarity with homemade spirits (called "moonshine" in the hills of his origin in North Carolina), I had at least some mixed feelings. We began to review Lutheran teachings and ways as expressed in its public worship. After talking about baptism as the way to join God's family, we began to look at communion as the family meal. I mentioned some of the parables Jesus told about meals—the prodigal son's father ordering a banquet when he returned, the man whose first invitations were refused telling his servants to compel others to come in, and how life in the church was meant to suggest the great heavenly feast in eternity.

Something in him clicked. "I guess that's what it means in one of those things we sing at communion when it talks about the foretaste of the feast to come." Suddenly I regretted all my elitist and exclusive feelings about who it is that may or may not be expected to grasp the genius of Lutheran worship. Everybody understands symbols and symbolism. The deepest reason that any of us comes to worship lies in the hope that for a moment in this life we will be caught up in something which is even so poorly a symbolic foretaste of the feast which is to come.

Certainly, forgiveness is part of this hope. But there is a great deal more to the precursive concept than what we see as only through a glass, darkly. A certain Epiphany service was instructive regarding this concept of tasting now what we shall feast upon later, because the service was held in a week when Palestinians and Israelis were at a particularly high point in their assaults on each other. We used Psalm 72 with its hope in the 16th verse that there may be an abundance of grain on the earth, growing thick even on the hilltops. "May its fruit flourish like Lebanon!" In the current era, however, in the lands of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, little flourishes except violence. But as long as Christians gather for wor-

ship, even the violence of the mid-East can be put inside the framework of God's reign and ultimate power.

While the rocks and taunts of the Palestinians were being answered by the rifles and tear-gas of the Israelis, and then while the coalition made war on Saddam, halfway round the world the people of God in Lutheran, Episcopal, Orthodox, Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, and other parishes gathered together in a worshipping community whose eyes kept looking at one thing and seeing another.

We come together for worship because we want desperately to believe that in the midst of a troubled world, our coming together is an idealistic enactment of that heavenly eternal feast to which all the world will come in peace and harmony.

It is from that idealistic vision of the final end, from our certainty that God will ultimately have a great banquet in heaven, that we can find the power to live through one struggle after another, be it world turmoil or personal disaster. When we gather for worship, regardless of whether we celebrate the Holy Communion at that particular hour, it is under the warrant of that sacrament that we do gather, and therefore every gathering of the people of God is a foretaste of the feast to come.

Even if we come not through rocks and tear gas on our own village street, many of us do come with lost hopes and crushed hearts, squinting to see a vision of another world. We see the heavenly feast to come, even while we look at the communing congregation—usually an unusual assemblage, if truth be told.

We all have on our costumes. Just look over the typical congregation any Sunday morning or other worship time. Nearly everyone has given particular attention to his or her appearance. Not all the men are in coat and tie, and not all the women have on their best; but nearly everyone has a different appearance than on a work day. As part of that difference, people who don't know each other personally and who might not speak to each other in the mall or in the post office or drug store (because we don't often speak to strangers anymore) will nod and greet each other here. We greet others in the pew with us; we don't do that in the movies or at ball games. In fact, we feel so strongly about being together that we ceremonialize the greeting so as to exclude no one from this ritualistic exchange of mutual concern: *The peace of the Lord be with you.*

In church, unless we are like the Corinthians, we don't push and shove going in and out; we agree to sing the same hymns together, to be quiet while the choir sings, to stand or sit at the same time. We come to worship in our Sunday manner to sing, pray, listen, eat and drink in God's presence, and then we leave to go in peace and serve the Lord with a life of thanks for his inviting us to the really great feast, the banquet of the kingdom of heaven.

We have idealized in that little while what we would like to be true all the while, that everybody has on his or her best face and best manners—Sunday costumes, if you will—and we all manifest concern for the corporate activity of the fellowship. We even leave money behind to be used according to the will of the majority, a powerful expression of our belief in unity!

Worship is at least a little closer to heaven than the workaday world. It isn't perfect by any means, but it's ahead of whatever is in second place. The church is a symbolic community in that we are pointed toward a greater reality than we can bring about by our own efforts. It is a symbolic community in that we say we are the people of God even while we are a long way from acting like it. When Paul warned against

unworthy communion in 1 Cor 11:27, he was not concerned with the moral condition of individuals or whether the brief order for confession and absolution had been read by the congregation and the pastor prior to eating and drinking bread and wine. He was concerned with a lack of appreciation for the communal implication in the sacrament. His question was, "Do you discern the Body of Christ in this crowd of sinners and misfits?"[1]

The confession of sin and the words of absolution are not conditions or requirements for participation. Rather, we ought to be far more concerned with the social obligations that follow upon our eating and drinking together as the people of God called and redeemed. Since we eat with the Lord and each other, and say we do this because it is the best enactment we know of God's kingdom, then we ought to go forth from that table ready to enact the social implications and obligations of the people of God.

For instance, we should be determined to live among God's faithful people, to hear the Word and share in the Supper, to proclaim the good news of God through word and deed, to serve all people following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth. That list of social obligations is nothing less than the promises made at the Affirmation of Baptism. We do not promise upon confirmation or adult baptism to become immersed in penitential piety or to feel guilty every day. Nor do we promise to become converted all over again every seventh day under an attack of fire and brimstone from a pulpit that deals chiefly in moralism, or that makes meditation on guilt and sin the basic and permanent condition for communion with God.

In coming together as the community of Christ, we are not only concerned with the sacrament as a visible and touchable assurance to the individual of his or her forgiveness. Rather, we are also concerned with the life and meaning of this community created by the devotion and obedience of Jesus Christ in giving himself to the world. In worship we receive and renew our membership in a community which stretches from the dawn of faith to the opening of heaven's doors. Jesus was sent not for the private benefit of each individual, but he was sent to save the world.

An overbearing concern for individual salvation is a distortion of Christ's preaching about the kingdom as the family of God. Our major concern when we commune together should be that the present structures of social and political life do not adequately portray the common destiny of the human race, that end-time when God's rule replaces all human rule. In the liturgy of the church, there is symbolically present what all the social and political struggles of this world are all about without their definite achievement.[2]

Once again, we come together to eat bread and drink wine not so much to be reassured of our private participation in the salvation acquired by Jesus Christ, but to proclaim our unity with each other through him. The church symbolizes the future of the divine kingdom that Jesus came to proclaim. His great message is that we should look forward to God's complete reign, the kingdom that is already come, but which will completely come in the future. Since worship symbolizes that final coming, worship is the central fact of church life.

The first goal of church membership, then, is to participate in worship. The

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[1] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Christian Spirituality* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 41.

[2] Pannenberg, *Christian Spirituality*, 46.

indispensable portion of worship life is the coming together of a fellowship committed to the faith in order to pray and break bread together, as described in Acts 2:42. "They continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread, and in prayers." Whatever other services in which the bread is not broken—however helpful or inspiring they may be—the warrant under which those services are held and the authorization that makes them authentic and realistic is the fact that the fellowship *does* gather for sharing the story of our faith, for the breaking of bread and the prayers, all of which constitutes our service of Holy Communion.

If, then, we have a sustaining vision of the promised land which keeps us empowered in this life, more joy than is sometimes evident would be appropriate. Should we not try to overcome at least some of the somberness? Usually, it hangs so heavy at the altar rail that we might wonder whether God frowns when he looks down. Is the Lord served better if we look worried? No matter how desperate our personal or the world circumstances are, God is in charge; God's kingdom will someday triumph.

In the movie *Places in the Heart*, Sally Field overcame great difficulties until a successful cotton crop insured her survival. A year earlier, she was the sheriff's wife when a drunken black youth killed him. In swift punishment, the youth was lynched by whites. There followed misery all around. She hung on, partly by taking in as friends a black man and a blind man. In the last scene of the movie, after overcoming all that hardship, she is in church, the congregation including the Ku Klux Klan members who had beat up the black man for helping her save the farm. The choir is singing, and suddenly, while the congregation is passing the bread and wine (not being Lutheran, they didn't go to the altar) she is surrounded not only by the living congregation, but her murdered husband is beside her, passing the bread and wine. Beside him is his killer, also having bread and wine. On the next pew is the no longer beat up black man who really left town after being visited by the Klan members. The scene conveys exactly what Jacob said when he saw God at Bethel: "This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

> In the liturgy... there is symbolically present what all the social and political struggles of this world are all about without their definite achievement.

When we come to worship, somewhere up in the rafters are still ringing the voices of all those members of the family of faith who have gone before us. As our voices blend, they are mingled with the voices of relatives, friends, ancestors, even our enemies, and together our voices are heard by the Almighty. Earth is far from perfect, but there are moments when even the terrible differences of enemies are set aside for this foretaste of the feast to come. Then, all differences will be put permanently aside in favor of eternal praise before God's throne. Until then, in the moment of worship, the united family of God has a glimpse of glory, the heavenly banquet which is to come.

The Confession of "Jesus" in the Lutheran Confessions

Theodore R. Jungkuntz
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Since the confession that Jesus Christ is Lord is central to the New Testament (Phil 2:10-11 et passim), one would expect that same centrality to be evident in Lutheranism's great confessional tradition. While teaching courses in the Lutheran Confessions at Valparaiso University (Indiana) between 1966 and 1983, I gradually realized something I had never read in any commentary on the Confessions, namely, that the name of "Jesus" came very close to being altogether omitted in those Confessions authored by Philip Melanchthon.[1] However, it was not until the recent publication of *Concordance to the Book of Concord* (Larson/Schoech) that I could be absolutely certain that my own personally kept tabulation was accurate.

In the following it is my intention to summarize the data found in *CTTBOC* on the use of the name of Jesus in each of the confessional documents included in *The Book of Concord* and then briefly to suggest how this data might help to explain a negative consequence Lutherans are still struggling to overcome. Our challenge here is not directed against the *theology* of any of Lutheranism's confessional documents but rather at the *practical consequences* of neglecting to follow what the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord itself, quoting 2 Tim 1:13, calls "the pattern of sound words."[2] To neglect using the name of Jesus according to the biblical pattern in a confessional document can have negative practical consequences.

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[1] Melanchthon's usual designation for Jesus is simply "Christ" or occasionally "Lord Christ." He, of course, meant thereby to refer to Jesus, but the near omission of the name of Jesus is nevertheless significant. The Messiah is *Jesus*, and *Jesus* is the Lord!

[2] See FC SD IV, 36; also IV, 2 and 24.

The data on the use of the name of Jesus in the Lutheran Confessions

Document	*Total*[3]	*Quotations*[4]
Preface to the Book of Concord (1580)	2	0
Augsburg Confession (German) (1530)	5	3
Augsburg Confession (Latin) (1530)	2	2
Apology (1531)	18	18
Treatise... Pope (1537)	1	1
Small Catechism (1529)	13	3
Large Catechism (1529)	9	7
Smalcald Articles (1537)	9	2
Formula of Concord—Epitome (1577)	7	2
Formula of Concord—Solid Declaration (1577)	46	10

Let it not for a moment be thought that the Lutheran Confessions are unsure or hesitant about confessing the lordship of [Jesus] Christ. That confession comes through loudly and clearly throughout *The Book of Concord*. What does not ring through so loudly and clearly, however, is the simple use of the name of "Jesus" in that connection or in any other, and it is particularly Melanchthon who, for whatever reason, is remiss in doing so. In the Latin version of the Augsburg Confession the name of Jesus is used only twice in the entire document, and both times it is found in a quotation from Holy Scripture. In the German version he does manage to use it twice in his own words. In the Apology (188 pages in the Tappert Edition) the name of Jesus occurs only 18 times in all, and each time it is found in a quotation (14 times from Scripture and four times from the Fathers). This means that in the entire Apology Melanchthon never once uses the name of Jesus when speaking for himself. Would we honestly be able to say that in this regard Melanchthon himself was following "the pattern of sound words" attested in Holy Scripture?

In spite of the brevity of Luther's Small Catechism the name of Jesus is found with relative frequency therein, and in 10 of the 13 instances Luther is not quoting another source but is simply confessing Jesus in his own words. I was surprised, however, to note that in spite of the sermonic character of the Large Catechism only two of the nine instances of the use of the name of Jesus are simply Luther's own words. Overall, however, Luther clearly does better than Melanchthon in following "the pattern of sound words."

In contrast to Melanchthon the authors of the Formula of Concord (three of whom could be considered disciples of Melanchthon) seemed to be more free in their ability to speak confessionally of "Jesus" from

[3] Includes every use of the name "Jesus."

[4] Indicates how many of the total uses of the name "Jesus" are actually found in quotations taken from Scripture or the Fathers.

Has Melanchthon's failure to freely use the name of Jesus contributed to Lutheranism's tendency to intellectualize the faith?

their own hearts and with their own words. For whatever reason the almost fifty years which separated the Formula of Concord from the Augsburg Confession enabled the later Lutheran confessors more faithfully to follow "the pattern of sound words" found in Holy Scripture when making confession of their own faith.

Negative practical consequences

Personally I have no bone to pick with the Christology of the Lutheran Confessions. Glib talk about Jesus is certainly no substitute for the sound Christology of our Confessions. However, the Formula of Concord's admonition is well taken, namely, that in the making of doctrinal formulations "it is safest to follow the advice of St. Paul to maintain the pattern of sound words as well as the true doctrine itself (2 Tim 1:13)."[5] When I first stumbled onto the reticence of Melanchthon to employ the name of Jesus in the Confessions credited to his authorship, I thought that perhaps he was indeed following biblical precedence and that it was in fact the authors of the Epistles found in the New Testament who were departing from the pattern set in the Gospel traditions. But a quick look into a biblical concordance set the record straight: Paul and Peter and James and John (except for the Third Letter) and even Jude are replete with references to Jesus by name, as are also Acts and Revelation. Without my trying to explain *why* Melanchthon had such difficulty in following the pattern of sound words established by the New Testament's use of the name of Jesus (I'll gladly leave that to others),[6] let me speculate a bit about what appears to me to be some negative practical consequences.

As the author of the Augsburg Confession, Melanchthon has significantly shaped our theological tradition. For the most part we can be thankful for that. But for his failure to freely use the name of Jesus in presenting the Christian gospel, we cannot be thankful. Has this failure not contributed to much of Lutheranism's tendency to intellectualize the faith, to attempt to capture it in orthodox, verbal formulas and to unin-

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[5] FC SD IV, 36—Tappert, 557.

[6] Curious about Melanchthon's use of the name of "Jesus" in his *Loci Communes* (1521), I did a random check with these results (C. L. Hill, tr.; Boston: Meador, 1944):

Dedicatory Epistle (63-66):
Christ—0, Jesus—0
Theological Outlines (66-69):
Christ—11, Jesus—0
On the Gospel (143-154):
Christ—25, Jesus—1 (Scripture)
Summation: Law, Gospel, Faith (215-218):
Christ—16, Jesus—0

Summary: In over twenty pages of material Melanchthon uses the title "Christ" a total of 52 times and the personal name "Jesus" only one time, and that is found in a quotation from Scripture.

tentionally abstract it all from the person of Jesus (Lk 24:27), the incarnate Logos of God, tied to a specific history (e.g., "born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate")? Do doctrinal formulations abstracted from "Jesus" (even though not from "Christ") encourage the *personal intimacy* which finally expresses itself in prayer communication which goes beyond merely repeating liturgical formulations? Doesn't naming the name of Jesus in intimate prayer (Acts 7:59) help us come out of the self-protective and self-assertive postures we tend to maintain in the midst of our orthodox doctrinal and liturgical formulations? Why do some teachers of theology feel so uncomfortable with talking about a personal faith-relationship with "Jesus" (Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 16:22-24; Phil 3:8-11; Rev 1:9, 3:20)? Isn't the lordship of such a Jesus far from being personally acknowledged when we merely contain him in our well-beloved theological and liturgical formulations (Mt 10:32-33, 7:21-23)? Wouldn't the "I believe that *Jesus* Christ... is *my* Lord" of Luther's Catechism have been better confessed and God's people better served had Melanchthon not failed to follow "the pattern of sound words" determined by Holy Scripture and followed by Luther in the Small Catechism?

How could a confession following "the pattern of sound words" fail to echo these powerful and resounding words of Holy Scripture:

> Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of *Jesus* every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that *Jesus* Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil 2:9-11, emphasis added.)

Book Reviews

Interpretation and Obedience: From Faithful Reading to Faithful Living. By Walter Brueggemann. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991. x and 325 pages. Paper. $14.95.

The time is right for a book like this. The Search Institute report on effective Christian education shows that congregations that help people ask and struggle with the tough faith-life questions are stronger for it. But the same study confirms that only about a third of our members are confident both in their relationship with God and the way they live out their faith in family, work, and community.

B.'s thesis is that we will vitalize the faith and ministry of our communities when we keep interpretation and obedience together in our use of the Bible.

Some merely obey God. They are like children with domineering parents, who never develop a sense of self. Retreating into "memories" or uninterpreted ancient text, they insist on unequivocal truth and dogma in their reading of the Bible and refuse to learn from cries of pain coming from others' and their own hearts. They live an a "realistic" world where they must be saved by being competent and being right.

Others decide that all or part of the ancient text is too embarrassing and that they can do better by leaving home. They become autonomous and no longer obedient in their use of the Bible, deciding that their own pain and experience is really the only thing they can trust. They live in an "autistic" world where salvation comes from a God-in-their-own-image who endorses their self-absorption and satisfies their needs.

Keeping interpretation and obedience together requires that we allow our imagination to be challenged, called, and led by God. We pay attention to pain, to the oppressed, to the poets and prophets. We yearn for and even begin to live toward a promised world that comes alive in our imaginations when we recount the ongoing biblical stories of exile and homecoming, crucifixion and resurrection.

Unleashing his own imagination, B. helps us find the contours of God's promised alternative world in fresh and sweeping treatments of Job, 2 Isaiah, the Elijah/Elisha cycles, the Decalogue, and numerous other texts. Bridging, as he always does, the worlds of biblical scholarship and contemporary concerns, B. helps us learn from canon critics and liberation theologians while avoiding their excesses. In the process we gain insights into faithful citizenship, stewardship of creation, and hospitality to strangers.

If you are a lay or ordained church leader interested in blowing off the dust from Bibles and seeing the fireworks of lively interpretation begin, this is the book for you.

John R. Seraphine
Interim pastor, Mayfair Lutheran Church
Chicago, Illinois

Resources in Sacred Dance. Edited by Kay Troxell. Peterborough, NH: Sacred Dance Guild, 1991. 56 pages. $12.50.

The age-old discipline of worship through dance (liturgical dance) has been enjoying renewed popularity in recent years. One finds, however, that it has as many faces as the music we use in our worship; there is no easy answer to the question, "How does one dance in worship?" There is a great deal of history and theology surrounding dance, as well as many different variations for practice. While the Spirit's inspiration is primary in any form of worship, some background study and preparation is extremely helpful.

Resources in Sacred Dance is a comprehensive resource book for those who wish to perform, lead, teach, or have any encounter with dance in Christian or Jewish worship. Containing 300 annotated citations, it lists all resources available (as of January 1991) in the forms of

books, pamphlets, articles, films, serial publications, audio and video tapes. It provides information which will guide readers to publications meeting a wide variety of needs. One can find information on such narrow topics as the details of Jewish wedding dances, Shaker dances, Australian folk dances, and dances for specific seasons, as well as general listings about the history, theology, and contemporary practice of dance. Some entries treat the relationship of dance to "the arts," embodiment, sexuality, and gender. Practical resources are listed to help lead workshops, teach specific age groups or the physically or mentally challenged, or set up and finance a sacred dance choir at one's own church! This bibliography touches upon related disciplines such as mime, yoga, and the wider uses for dance such as healing and relief of stress. There are even some odd (and interesting) items, covering such topics as the relationship of dance to military drill and fencing. Annotations are clearly written and helpful. Purchase prices for many of the materials are included.

Whatever your interest in dance as a part of Judeo-Christian spiritual expression, this book is a valuable tool.

Deena Sherman Borchers
St. Paul Lutheran Church
Sandusky, Ohio

From Bad Faith to Good News: Reflections on Good Friday and Easter. By Alistair Kee. London/Philadelphia: SCM Press and Trinity Press International, 1991. xii and 147 pages. Paper. $15.95.

This book is adapted from a series of Good Friday meditations the author presented in Edinburgh in 1990. In the first half of the book Kee discusses the crucifixion as a political event, as atonement, the role of the women at the crucifixion, and the mystery of Good News being found in the cry of a dying man. The second half of the book is an "historical meditation" upon Pentecost, the appearances of Jesus, the empty tomb, and the resurrection.

Kee's meditations on Good Friday squarely face the brutal political savagery of the crucifixion. He movingly relates Jesus' death to the sufferings and plight of modern prisoners of conscience. Complex theories of atonement are effectively skewered by Kee's absolute focus on the bloody, historical, political fact of Jesus' death on a cross.

The latter half of the book reads, at least to me, like tired twentieth century liberal theology. Since the resurrection cannot have occurred historically, we reinterpret it for our own needs and times. What is this reinterpretation? Jesus' Spirit (Kee's capitalization) lives on among us, allowing us to be transformed. The resurrection is unimportant (unless it is redefined in modern terms), but Pentecost was and is important because it empowers us for redeeming work in the world.

Kee uses exegesis in the service of his resurrection message. He easily isolates Pentecost as the definitive historical event while attributing the empty tomb and the resurrection to both Jewish sectarianism retained by early Christianity and to the accretion of legendary materials. However, he never mentions (or conveniently forgets) that the Pentecost account occurs in Acts, a highly problematic historical source. You can't have it both ways. You can't dismiss one set of exegetical data as being legendary and historically impossible while retaining another set of data which suffers from both the accretion of legendary materials and a pronounced theological *Tendenz*.

Kee's most telling comment comes in the first half of the book while discussing the redemptive significance of the cross where he cites Fidel Castro, "[Che Guevara's] blood was shed... for the redemption of the exploited and the oppressed." Good Friday, and its significance, is collapsed into the martyrdom of a contemporary revolutionary Marxist.

If you like your Easter meditations of devotional materials to be soothing, calming, and quietly nurturing this is not the book to read. If you want to be angered, prodded by a contemplative gadfly, or to just be engaged in a stimulating conversation about the meaning of Good Friday and Easter, then read this book.

Lynn Allan Kauppi
Tempe, Arizona

Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation. By Marc H. Ellis. New York: Orbis, 1987. xii and 147 pages. Paper. $9.95

Ellis, a Jew who teaches at Maryknoll School of Theology where he directs the "Institute for Justice and Peace," urges the Jewish community to recover its prophetic voice by lending a friendly ear to the teachings of contemporary Christian liberation theologians. According to Ellis, the Jewish community, burdened by the extremity of its recent history, has been reluctant to claim and utilize its own Exodus traditions of liberation, Jews have lost their faith in the God of history at a time when, paradoxically, Christian theologians in Africa, Asia, and Latin America have found in the Hebrew Scriptures a language with which to voice their activist faith.

As he describes it, subjective Jewish experience—the necessary ground for any Jewish theology—vacillates between traumatized memories of Holocaust helplessness and a weighty sense of responsibility for the new "empowerment" represented by the State of Israel. Accordingly he begins by surveying the thought of key Jewish "Holocaust theologians" Elie Wiesel, Richard Rubenstein, Emil Fackenheim, Irving Greenberg, all of whom assert the radical, disruptive uniqueness of Holocaust in Jewish history. Then he describes the new Jewish ethics of power which call for a conscious muffling of the prophetic critique in order to allow the community to relearn the art of governing.

After surveying Jewish movements for renewal, which he finds fragmented and weak, he considers various Christian theologies of liberation which deserve attention. Ellis discerns a basis for a future Jewish Theology of Liberation in Martin Buber's writings on Arabs and Jews (which historian Paul Medes Flohr gathered into a single volume, *A Land of Two Peoples*, 1983) and in the recently published diaries of Etty Hillesum, a Dutch Jew who died in Auschwitz in 1942 at the age of 29 (*An Interrupted Life*, 1983).

Because Ellis assumes that Rabbinic Judaism is incapable of absorbing and responding to Holocaust and the rebirth of a Jewish State, he ignores theologians like Michael Wyschogrod (*The Body of Faith*, 1983) and David Hartman (*Living Covenant*, 1985), who base their thinking on the continuity of traditional categories, discounts the creative theo-political work of Arthur Waskow, and overlooks the fiery prophetic writing of Israeli Orthodox thinker Yeshaya Leibowitz.

It is understandable but regrettable that Ellis looks for Jewish prophetic voices among the peripheralized dead rather than among living exemplars of traditional Judaism. Jewish prophets who can speak authentically of solidarity with the suffering of humanity must, however, share intellectually and physically the contextual constraints of their people today. Otherwise they simply will not be heard.

Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation is a good book for classroom teaching, especially for Jewish-Christian study groups, because Ellis recognizes and exposes the fears, foibles, and hopes of Christian liberationists as well as Jewish conservationists.

James E. Ponet
Jewish Chaplain, Yale University

Thomas Aquinas: An Evangelical Appraisal. By Norman L. Geisler. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991. 195 pages. Paper. $12.95.

This is a book with a mission. Geisler not only wants to show the relevance of Aquinas to contemporary theology, but passionately wants to overcome the "almost universal disdain for the Angelic Doctor" among evangelical theologians. After an opening chapter listing and responding to some of the more common objections to Aquinas by evangelical Protestants, Geisler devotes the rest of the book to exploring major components of Aquinas's thought: his understanding of Scripture, his analysis of the relationship between faith and reason, his doctrine of God, his treatise on evil, his teaching on morality and law, and more.

Geisler's purpose is worthy, but he falls short of achieving it. First, he is so determined to provide a defense of Aquinas for evangelicals that he never captures the overall vision and spirit of his thought; in fact, at times Geisler makes Aquinas sound more like an evangelical than a medieval monk. Aquinas is compelling

not when he is claimed as a foil for contemporary theologians and a friend for traditionalists, but when the overall strategy of his theology is illumined: he wants to show how we who have come from God are to return to God through love. The book misses this not by misinterpreting Aquinas but by failing to grasp that each element of his theology must be seen as part of a whole whose principal aim is to work in us the transformation necessary to enjoy friendship and intimacy with God.

There is also a problem with the book's style. Geisler wants to make Aquinas intelligible and appealing; however, he works against this aim by employing the dense, terse style of scholastic philosophy, the very thing which can make Aquinas seem so remote and irrelevant today. Too, often citations from Aquinas are used without sufficient explication to make them understandable for anyone not long familiar with his thought.

Geisler's appreciation for Aquinas is convincing and his knowledge of his writings impressive; however, this is a book for the already converted, not those needing to be convinced. There is much in Aquinas from which evangelicals, as well as everyone else, can profit, but this book fails to capture it.

Paul J. Wadell
Catholic Theological Union
Chicago, Illinois

II Corinthians. By Frederick W. Danker. Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989. 221 pages. Paper. $14.95.

Frederick Danker gives us a fascinating commentary on the most obscure Pauline book in the canon. It is, in one respect, very conservative. Danker has little sympathy with theories of multiple letters combined by a later editor into our present text, though he does not rule them out (cf. p. 19!). Of 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 he writes: "Thus chaps. 8-9 are conceived as integral parts of the document by the early editors of 2 Corinthians." D. justifies 6:14–7:1 as an integral part of the letter (against most contemporary scholars) by citing Plutarch's *On Inoffensive Self-Praise* 544d. Two problems occasion the letter: There is an open attack on Paul by an individual; 2 Cor 2:5-11 suggests the problem was resolved. Outsiders "with impressive credential" criticized Paul for his pastoral style, his travel plans, and incompetence. D. holds that Paul got additional evidence before writing chapters 10-13 (a view for which there is no textual evidence); he regards that as preferable to the view that chapters 10-13 are a fragment of the "sorrowful letter" mentioned in 2:4.

D. has both interesting and significant things to say in this commentary. He stakes out a clear position that he defends throughout the commentary: 2 Corinthians uses language that reflects the appreciation of excellence (ἀρετή) characteristic of the ancient world. The "reciprocity system" demands public acknowledgement of such excellence. The commentary is an extended argument for the relevance of this conceptual world to the Corinthians and Paul's letter to them. Paul writes a defense of his ministry in these categories.

D. frequently refers to key ancient texts to validate his interpretation: inscriptions (especially *IGR* 3.739, Opramoas of Rhodiapolis; Priene 105 = *OGIS* 458, Calendar Inscription re Augustus' birthday; *OGIS* 383 = Michel 735, Cult of Antiochus I of Commagene; *IGR* 3.159, the Monumentum Ancyranum, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, Caesar Augustus' (self-glorifying) account of his imperatorship), Demosthenes, *Or.* 18 (*On the Crown*, especially relevant because it is his personal defense against the attacks of his political rival, Aeschines), and Plutarch's short essay *On Inoffensive Self-Praise* (*Mor.* 539-547). D. cites other ancient texts; almost every page cites Homer, Greek tragedy, philosophers, etc.

D. lays out a rich repast for the diligent reader. The collection of parallels and their interpretation will command the attention of subsequent commentators on this letter. I have one criticism: D. published a valuable collection and interpretation of 52 ancient (and one modern) texts in his work *Benefactor* (St. Louis: Clayton, 1982). D. often cites those texts without giving the edition of the original text in one of the great collections; he should have given

references to the standard handbooks which print the original texts—as he does for other inscriptions.

There are some problems. Once in a while D. seems to read the mind of Paul ("He intends thereby to arouse...," p. 31); unless Paul expressly states his intention, D. cannot really know it. On p. 32, does D. mean to put down the content of the honorific inscriptions by the use of the adjective "fulsome," or does he use it as an incorrect synonym for "very full" or "complete"? Danker is wrong in suggesting that χόρος is derived from χορηγέω (p. 141), when the reverse is true. Finally, Danker implies that there was no change in this reciprocity system's realization throughout antiquity. He cites authors who span a millennium and more in time or origin. Readers who do not know the ancient world may assume that they are all citizens of the early Roman empire.

Readers less informed than Danker may have difficulty understanding some of what he says or even draw wrong impressions. Was Krantor really "the most esteemed consoler in the Greco-Roman world"? (p. 33). Diogenes Laertius (4.27) says his treatise *On Grief* was his most highly esteemed work, and Cicero (*Academics* 1.135) says no more than that. Some references are almost certain to puzzle the reader. D. does not give the title of Pseudo-Demetrius' treatise *On Style* (p. 204), while the index implies that it is an authentic work of Demetrius. The editor did not catch that D. referred to the scholiast to Aristophanes, not Aristophanes himself on p. 191 (see index). Danker must himself be responsible for the summation of Apuleius *Metamorphoses* 23 (Why the Latin title when almost all others are in English translation?) in the words "reflects a broadly held view concerning the importance of ritual piety"—without letting the reader know what that view is (pp. 99-100)! The reference to Teles *Peristaseis* (89) is not precise; most readers will not know where to find it (Fr. 6, Hense or O'Neil). How many readers will identify Empedocles 111 (p. 60) as a reference to Fragment 111 in Diels-Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokaritiker*?

The editing is inconsistent. Ancient works should either be cited in their conventional Latin titles or in English translation of the titles. The commentary is highly inconsistent here. We read of Aeschylus' *Seven*, but Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazousai*, not *Women Legislators* (p. 205; see also pp. 33, 51). Why *Oedipus Tyrannus* on p. 63, but *Oedipus Tyrannos* on p. 98? Is it *Or.* 25 or 35 of Dio Chrysostom that D. refers to on p. 162? The publisher should have added an appendix identifying the sources cited, dating them, and giving some idea of their literary genre for the reader who needs such help. (I am assuming that the volume is intended for the general reader, as are others in this series.)

Danker walks his own scholarly path, not asking what is the current view or joining any school. That makes his work original, constructive, and instructive. Readers need to read Danker word for word, since he writes crisply. They will often want to read the ancient texts in context to ask, "Yea, hath Plutarch really said?" If they do, they will be enriched in understanding the relation of Paul's thought to the world in which he lived, no small gain. And they will better understand a most challenging Pauline letter.

Edgar Krentz

The Trouble with Kings: The Composition of the Book of Kings in the Deuteronomistic History. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 42. By Steven L. McKenzie. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991. xii and 183 pages. Cloth. $51.58.

Back in 1943 Martin Noth proposed that the books of Deuteronomy–2 Kings were a unified history of Israel written by a single exilic author. While this study of the Deuteronomistic History (Dtr) has become a classic, many scholars have uncovered a positive message in this history that Noth missed and have moved away from his idea that a single individual wrote it all.

McKenzie reviews this half century of reactions and returns more or less to Noth's position. He finds no evidence for a running prophetic history that preceded Dtr and believes that the history, at least on the evidence of Kings, was written by one person, but during the reign of Josiah. In the course of his discussion he identifies the Elijah and Elisha stories and 1 Kings

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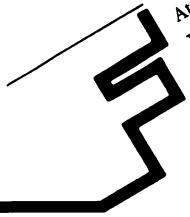
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13, 20, and 22 as later additions to Dtr. Also secondary in his opinion are two additions by a single redactor: 2 Kgs 23:26–2 Kgs 25:27-30, which brought the history up to date to about 560 B.C.E., and 2 Kgs 21:8-15, which blames the exile on the sin of Manasseh. He admits that all dates for the original Dtr are iffy, but favors a pre-exilic date because of the promise of an unending dynasty of David in 1 Kgs 11:36 and because the theme of Manasseh's sinfulness seems to be "tacked on." Despite the Josianic date, he does not consider Dtr to be propaganda for him. Rather, Dtr rendered an account to Israel of its national traditions, perhaps motivated by a contemporary search for national identity after the fall of the Northern kingdom.

This brief summary does not begin to indicate the significance of this book. McKenzie fairly summarizes all of contemporary scholarship on Dtr and shows where it is strong and where it is defective. His own modest and cautious proposals undercut much of the significance of a supposed second edition of the history.

I still favor an exilic date for the original Dtr, which requires less surgery and which concludes that Dtr at once provided justification for the exile and offered hope to the exiles based on the continuing promise to David (2 Kgs 25:27-30) and on Israel's repentance (Deut 4:29-30; cf. 2 Kgs 25:25).

Ralph W. Klein

Reforming the Church Today: Keeping Hope Alive. By Hans Küng. New York: Crossroad, 1990. 198 pages. Cloth. $18.95.

The dizzying change occurring in Germany through the democratization of formerly communist countries with the corresponding lack of change in the Roman Catholic Church and its German expression has prompted Küng to send a message of hope to those "disappointed and resigned." The message comes in the form of a replication of a series of articles whose content is best understood in the light of Küng's previous work, *The Church*. Although the articles represent Küng's personal odyssey to bring about change, he hopes that his issues become recognized as "their issues." The series of articles represent a variety of such issues, each punctuated with a note of optimism.

The issues include the vitality of the institutional church and more specifically the Roman Catholic Church. Küng identifies the vitality of the church, challenged by the shortage of priests, in the "critical loyalty" of its members. This critical loyalty is the hope based on the faith that the cause of Jesus Christ is stronger than all the misconduct in the church. Thus Küng remains in the Church because he is, above all, a Christian. Küng remains a Catholic because he eschews an "ecclesial homelessness" and narrow provincialism of some Christians and of some churches. The Catholic "whole," spanning the twin dimensions of space and time, critiques the extremes of Protestant "radicalism" and "particularism" and gives the criteria for true Catholicity.

Küng asserts that the Catholic Church rests on both an "end" and an "alone." The "and" favors pluralism in the church, but the "alone" rejects "promiscuity." In other words, there is a difference between an indifferent pluralism and a community of believers. This community of believers is achieved not by repression "from above" but by cooperating with the church "from below." Küng believes that this was the intention of Vatican II, but it needed the succession of a "John XXIV" for continuity. Instead, the church has been under the leadership of a "Pius XIII" who continues to undermine the ecclesial reforms of Vatican II. Thus, God is still identified as male and celibate, giving rise to a pastoral shortage crisis which could be solved by the ordination of women and married priests.

No "Pius XII," however, can ignore the "Congress from Below," Berlin Conference of 1980, which created in Germany what Küng calls "basic Christian groups." Inspired by the base communities of Latin America, these "basic Christian groups" have created in Germany a "church from below" which remains the true hope for the vitality and continuity of the Roman Catholic Church until "John XXIV" arrives.

In *Reforming the Church Today*, Küng reminds us through his personal journey of challenge and affirmation of his Catholic identity, that the church is always "ecclesia semper reformanda" as well as "ecclesia semper eadem."

No doubt many Catholics, as well as many Protestants, will find encouragement in Küng's dogged resistance to give up hope in light of much adversity.

It is not clear , however, that this series of articles accomplishes the task for the majority of Christians. As much as Küng's courage is to be admired, the particularity of the German church is but part of the wider drama occurring in the world today. The demographic center of Christianity has recently crossed the equator. The transition of the church from north to south is bringing fundamental and long-lasting changes to all Christendom. The struggle for justice for Christians and non-Christians in the wider church is bringing about many of Küng's longings for ecclesial justice. As such, the witness of the wider church is that the struggle for the soul of ecclesial identity is part of a wider struggle involving Christians and non-Christians.

Nonetheless, Küng's book has valuable insights for all the world's Christians. Its value, perhaps, is not so much as a theological treatise but as a spiritual reading of the intellectual and emotional struggle of a courageous and sincere Christian.

Alejandro García-Rivera
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Remembering Reinhold Niebuhr. Letters of Reinhold Niebuhr and Ursula M. Niebuhr. Edited by Ursula M. Niebuhr. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991. xv and 423 pages. Cloth. $29.95.

Ursula M. Niebuhr, professor of religion at Barnard College and spouse of the famous ethicist Reinhold Niebuhr, has edited a very interesting collection of letters. They are throwing a light on his character, activities, and life with his spouse, family, and friends which no biography can accomplish the same way.

The volume includes a biographical chronology of Reinhold and Ursula, a section including letters and memoirs of both the Niebuhrs from 1931 through 1939, a selection of letters from Reinhold to Ursula mirroring his manifold activities during and after the Second World War, and a selection of letters from friends directed to Reinhold and/or Ursula. W. H. Auden, Felix Frankfurter, Lewis Mumford, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., John Stachey, and Hans Christoph von Hase, Bonhoeffer's cousin, can be found in this section. Very moving is the very last part, "Letters to a Dear but Departed Spouse."

For those who continue to read and be challenged by Neibuhr's works and value the witness of both Ursula's and his life, this volume represents a very valuable and personal companion to the numerous Niebuhr biographies.

Reinhard Hütter
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

The Thessalonian Correspondence. Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety. By Robert Jewett. Foundations and Facets. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986. xvi and 240 pages. Cloth. $24.95.

I found this book both informative and challenging. Jewett shows his able scholarship and his immense familiarity with the literature on the Thessalonian correspondence. The book combines different disciplines of approaching ancient literature and causes the reader to think through the problems of these two foundational epistles. There is much with which I can agree. E.g., Chapter 3 effectively refutes various theories of displacement and rearrangement. The description of the Cabiric cult is fascinating and new for many readers.

However, on the whole I must say that the book leaves me unsatisfied and unconvinced. Part of this may be due to my presuppositions. Ever since hearing Willi Marxsen lecture on 1 and 2 Thessalonians many years ago (Münster, 1963) I have been convinced that 2 Thessalonians cannot have been written by Paul, and various treatments of the problem of authenticity, including Jewett's, have not convinced me otherwise. 2 Thess 2:5 is a great obstacle to authenticity. 2 Thess 3:17 would make sense only if the Thessalonians had had other Pauline letters to compare with it (Paul had not at that time written many letters). The dynamics of Pauline thinking

are missing to a great extent in 2 Thessalonians. However, this is not intended to be a full argumentation for inauthenticity.

The rhetorical analysis also leaves me unconvinced. For one, the rhetorical analyses of experts in the field are not in agreement. While slight differences are to be expected, here the differences are considerable. When not all parts of a rhetorical discourse are present, the value of using rhetorical analysis at all must be questioned. Furthermore, in Jewett's analysis, is 1 Thess 4:1–5:22 really well classified as *probatio*? What does it prove?

On the models of the Thessalonian congregation, Jewett (rightly) accuses others of carrying modern experiences into their description of the Thessalonian congregation, but does he not do the same thing in his description of the Millenarian Model (163, 167f.)?

It is Jewett's thesis "that Paul was faced with a situation of millenarian radicalism in Thessalonica, presenting a unique profile not matched elsewhere in early Christianity" (xiii). I must confess that the logic of the last paragraph on p. xiii escapes me. According to Jewett, there was millenarian radicalism in Thessalonica which arose out of a wrong construal of Paul's apocalyptic gospel. These radicals "behaved as if the new age were already in effect for them." The crisis was that this millenarian faith was deflated because of persecution and the death of congregational members. This brought about Paul's first letter. But this "letter produced the opposite of its intended effect. To his amazement and irritation the millenarian excitement radicalized even further after the arrival of 1 Thessalonians." What was Paul's intention in the first letter? Is this argument logical?

I have great difficulty in understanding how a Millenarian model could have originated at such an early time in Thessalonica, despite the fine description of the situation of the community in Jewett's book. Jewett believes that the Thessalonians misunderstood Paul's first letter which necessitated Paul's writing again. He lists some passages susceptible to misunderstanding. His own conclusion is less than convinced and convincing: "None of them, in my opinion, is sufficiently plausible that a theory of misunderstanding could be based on evidence within 1 Thessalonians alone." Should this not cause him to be more cautious with his theology?

Despite all these cautionary comments, I want to repeat my recommendation: read the book, you will learn much from it.

One final comment to the publisher: the book deserves better proofreading; without looking for them, I found more than 15 misprints.

Wilhelm C. Linss
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

The Son of Man Tradition. By Douglas R. A. Hare. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990. xiv and 316 pages. Cloth. $24.95.

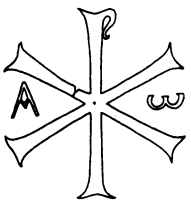
One hardly expects new approaches to or novel conclusions about the title "Son of Man" in the Gospels. Yet Douglas Hare, Prof. of New Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, surprises us with both.

He adopts R. Leivestad's thesis that "Son of Man" was not the title "of a mythical [apocalyptic] figure but Jesus' self-designation." He uses what he calls a "backward method," that is, he proceeds inductively through every passage using the phrase in Luke-Acts, John, Matthew, and Mark (in that order), in the Greek and Aramaic pre-Gospel tradition, and by Jesus. He concludes that [the historical] Jesus actually used the phrase as a modest form of self-reference, without, however, giving it any theological content (close to Geza Vermes). He rejects the history of religions approach as a starting point, challenges the theoretical basis of the reconstruction by Bultmann and Tödt, questions the standard interpretation of the relevant apocalyptic texts (Daniel 7, 4 Ezra 13, 1 Enoch 37-71), sets aside the linguistic argument about the Aramaic *Vorlage* for the phrase, and argues that no early Christian writers use the phrase kerygmatically.

A fascinating book that will certainly cause discussion about an old topic in a new way.

Edgar Krentz

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Letters in the Pauline Tradition: Ephesians, Colossians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus. By Carol L. Stockhausen. Message of Biblical Spirituality 13. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1989. 208 pages. Paper. $8.95.

This series uses insights of modern Roman Catholic exegetes to understand the message of the ancient text for the church today. Stockhausen fulfills this intent by summarizing, in clear nontechnical language, modern exegesis of these texts attributed to Paul. She considers Ephesians and Colossians individually and the Pastorals as a group. She concludes each discussion of the ancient meaning of the text by attempting to apply the texts to the modern church. This contemporary application is general and pastoral. She includes the individual Christian, the church, and society as a whole within this contemporary application.

The exegesis appears to draw upon the consensus of modern scholarship. The conclusions are neither very radical nor very conservative. This is a strength of the book, because the modern application does not become subject to a particularly skewed ideology or exegetical position. The lay reader is not confused by in-house scholarly controversy.

My only negative criticism is that the book lacks a bibliography.

Lynn Allan Kauppi

The Sermons of St. Maximus of Turin. Translated and annotated by Boniface Ramsey, O.P. Vol. 50 in Ancient Christian Writers. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1989. 388 pages. Cloth. $22.95.

Maximus, Bishop of Turin between 390 and 408/423, demonstrates familiarity with his congregation through exhortations for them to engage in fasting, almsgiving, acts of hospitality toward the bishop and other Christians, and finally, to turn away from and avoid pagan customs and Arianism. His strength as a preacher lies in his directness and use of imagery. In sermon 28, Maximus expresses his working definition of preaching: "For we speak blessedness to believers, but we bring judgment to the wicked." Maximus' task is to encourage believers in their belief and virtue and present before them their rewards. For the wicked, Maximus places before them the deprivation and punishment of their wickedness as an exhortation for them to turn from their folly and future damnation.

The significance of Maximus is not in his uniqueness as a preacher, but rather that "his sermons are models of a good popular homiletical style that must have been widespread...." (6). As a product of his age, Maximus, along with his contemporaries, applies exegetical principles not used by present day preachers. For example, Maximus tends to break Scriptures into isolated fragments, since each fragment is equally inspired and important. Second, in his pursuit of imagery and to prove that Christ was prefigured in the Old Testament, Maximus allegorizes Old Testament texts. Sermon 10 provides an illustration of Maximus' creative ability to allegorize. Maximus interprets the grapes brought forth from Canaan by Joshua and Caleb as really being Christ: "Plainly He [Christ] is the grape cluster that those two spies, Joshua... and Caleb... carried back on a pole on their shoulders to the Sons of Israel. Indeed, even then this prefigured the coming of the Lord, the Savior. For the grape cluster hanging on the pole is an image of Christ hanging on the cross." (29)

Ramsey uses Almut Mutzenbecher's critical text published in Vol 23 of *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* as the primary text for his translation. There are a total of 119 sermons in this collection; 106 are considered authentic, while the remaining 13 are debatable. Ramsey's translation of the text is smooth and accessible. His introduction provides a brief history of the scholarship surrounding Maximus and alerts the reader to the central themes of his sermons. The end notes, general index, index of authors and sources, and Scripture index increase the value and accessibility of the book.

I recommend this book for anyone who desires a taste of the popular preaching and exegesis of the early church.

Jeff Zell
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

The Triumph of God: The Essence of Paul's Thought. By J. Christiaan Beker. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990. xvi and 152 pages. Paper. $8.95.

This book is the English translation of Beker's *Der Sieg Gottes,* which in turn is the German translation and abridgment of *Paul the Apostle* (Fortress, 1980). Beker has, in this volume, revised and corrected what he believes were his own errors or misconceptions in the original book.

Beker emphasizes what he terms the *coherence* and *contingency* of Paul's thought and roots Paul's thought in apocalyptic. By coherence he understands Paul as having a normative center to his theology. But this normative center is adapted to individual situations, in each epistle, through the contingent nature of Paul's theology. In understanding Paul in this light Beker especially counters the Lutheran elevation of justification to primacy of place in Paul. He also counters thinkers who make Paul's situationally contingent writings into systematic theology (Melanchthon), those who find Paul utterly inconsistent (Räisänen), those who perceive mysticism in Paul (Schweizer), and psychological or developmental analyses of Paul's thought (Theissen and Dodd).

Beker makes his case well. However, there are weaknesses. He emphasizes Paul's roots in Jewish apocalyptic and how Paul has significantly altered apocalyptic for use in his theology. Unfortunately, he fails to adequately define exactly what he understands Pauline apocalyptic to be. The reader has a general notion of what this understanding is after completing the book. But there never appears to be a short summary statement of Beker's understanding of the definition of Pauline apocalyptic. Secondly, he fails to relate or ground apocalyptic in Jewish backgrounds sufficiently. Beker relies upon eleven Old Testament texts from four prophets and two citations of intertestamental literature for his argument. 1 Enoch, Zechariah, and similar literature is ignored. It is insufficient to base Paul in Jewish apocalyptic without defining Jewish apocalyptic contemporaneous with Paul.

Beker launches a vigorous attack against the Lutheran understanding of the centrality of justification in Paul's thought. He is to be commended for the collegial spirit in which this critique is made. But just as Käsemann and most other Lutheran exegetes betray their Lutheranism through this interpretation of Paul, so too Beker betrays his Reformed position. Within his apocalyptic methodology, Beker finds that Paul does not emphasize Christ so much as he emphasizes the glorification of God. In presenting this argument Beker seems to verge upon making the Christ event, and thus Jesus, a mere footnote or "historical shadow" which *only* serves the interest of the glorification of God (as distinct from Christ). Beker analyzes the major motifs of Phil 3:4-11 but ignores Phil 2:5-11 which emphasizes Christ's exaltation, by God, through his obedience and humiliation.

Lutherans, at the "gut" level, seem to be almost masochistic about the Pauline "theology of the cross." Beker provides a profound corrective to such thinking. He rightly demonstrates that the cross is a dialectic of both negative and positive in Paul's thought. The positive pole points to the final triumph of God and consequently our own triumph in the future resurrection of the cosmos *after* this earthly cruciform existence.

This slim book is complex and provocative. It is a significant contribution to the fray of Pauline studies. Every pastor and Pauline specialist should have it on their bookshelf to stimulate their own understanding of Paul. I also recommend it for seminary and graduate classroom use. This is an important but controversial book.

Lynn Allan Kauppi

The Vanished Library. By Luciano Canfora, translated by Martin Ryle. Hellenistic Culture and Society VII. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989. ix and 205 pages. Cloth. $19.95.

The destruction of the great library at Alexandria was a cultural disaster that still affects scholarship today. Luciano Canfora's book is a gracefully written history of that library's foundation, growth, scholarly use, and destruction based on a close reading of the ancient sources.

Part 1 is narrative history, a series of historical vignettes that run from the foundation of the library by Ptolemy I Soter to its (probable) destruction on the order of the Caliph Omar. One comes to the library with the exile Demetrius of Phaleron, witnesses Theophrastus' will leaving his and Aristotle's books to Neleus, watches the learned Callimachus catalog the collection, studies in the library with Diodorus and Strabo, and grieves with John Philoponus over the lost works of literature and learning. This is narrative history at its best, evoking not only the data about the library, but also the cultural and literary context within which it served. References are given to the ancient texts on which the narrative is based.

Part 2 describes and evaluates these ancient sources and the problems they raise, scholarship in its most pleasing form. One marvels at Canfora's clarity of vision, mastery of detail, and synthetic abilities. A marvelous complement to the standard scholarly history (Edward A. Parson, *The Alexandrian Library* [London: Cleaver-Hume, 1952]), it does honor to the series in which it appears. Anyone with an interest in antiquity will appreciate this book, which reads like a mystery. Give it as a gift, either to yourself or a dear friend.

Edgar Krentz

Briefly Noted

Feminism is not monolithic, but variegated, like Joseph's coat. In **The Pleasure of Her Text: Feminist Readings of Biblical and Historical Texts** (Trinity Press International, $12.95) Alice Bach prints seven items originally published in the Union Seminary Quarterly Review. They range from a song, "Did Jesus Have a Baby Sister?" by Dory Previn, through studies of Abigail's role in 1 Samuel 25 (Alice Bach), Jephthah's Daughter and Michal (J. Cheryl Exum), and the significance of goddesses in the ancient near east (Carol R. Fontaine) to Mary Ann Tolbert's description of Protestant feminist biblical hermeneutics, the feminist interpretation of the image of God (Ellen M. Ross), and the feminist significance of the witch hunts from 1450 to 1750. Readers will note the variety in the contributions, which all seek to interpret old texts in a way that has special meaning for feminists. The editor points out in her introduction that "there are major risks in focusing on gender, splitting the world of reader into two.... It is the desire to remain fluid, not fixed, to encourage spontaneity instead of linear argumentation, that inspired this volume." The variety in these essays are signposts of that fluidity. Bach rejects "a language of universal gynocentrism" while calling for women to preserve "the particularity of their own language." *Edgar Krentz*

In **Historical Criticism of the Bible: Methodology or Ideology?** (Baker, $9.95) Eta Linnemann delivers a broadside attack on critical biblical study. She received her doctorate in New Testament, studying under R. Bultmann, G. Ebeling, E. Fuchs, and F. Gogarten. After

becoming a university lecturer, she was profoundly disillusioned by the results of critical scholarship. Evangelical Christianity provided a way out of her personal faith crisis and led to her disowning of biblical criticism as a destructive, agnostic method. This book, divided into two sections, is the fervent testimony to her new found joy in evangelical faith. She first describes the essentially anti-Christian character of the modern [German] university, then evaluates historical critical theology in the light of her evangelical convictions. Written with the fervor of a new convert, Linnemann presents the reader with a radical either/or: either evangelical faith (based on an inspired, errorless Bible) or atheistic historical critical theology. Her book will reinforce the convictions of those who share her basic evangelical convictions and seem like a parody of modern biblical scholarship to those who do not. There is a *via media*; but Linnemann leaves no room for it. Ultimately a profoundly disappointing book. *Edgar Krentz*

F. C. Bauer and the Tübingen School caused major theological controversy from 1835 to 1860. They posed historical questions that still dominate much research in early Christian history today, though many of their answers are not accepted. The reprinting of Horton Harris, **The Tübingen School: A Historical and Theological Investigation of the School of F. C. Bauer** (Baker Book House, $17.95), with a new Foreword by E. Earle Ellis and Harris' preface to the reprint, is doubly welcome. It is both history and critical evaluation of Bauer and his students (Zeller, Schwegler, Ritschl, Hilgenfeld, and Volkmar among others). Harris concludes that the school was a-theistic—i.e. did not allow for any supernatural factors in history—as R. A. Lipsius (1859) correctly observed. (Peter C. Hodgson's *The Formation of Historical Theology* [New York, 1966], the other major work on Bauer in English, interprets Bauer as a pious, though heterodox, believer.) Bauer introduced the "purely historical interpretation" of the New Testament; Christian scholarship has struggled ever since, unable to do without the method, yet striving for an adequate formulation of its principles and presuppositions. In his "Foreword," Ellis argues for the authenticity of all New Testament writings, which originate in Jewish Christianity before C.E. 70. The preface to this new edition defends Harris against the criticisms of the last fifteen years. Except for minor emendations, the reprint is unchanged. Harris did not correct the mis-spelling of H. Diels' name in the footnote on p. 65 and the bibliography on p. 277. This gracefully written book is enhanced by excellent plates of the members of the school, by an outstanding bibliography, and by liberal citation of unpublished sources in translation. *Edgar Krentz*

The Eucharist in the New Testament. By Jerome Kodell (Michael Glazier, $7.95). This book is a determined effort to retroject relatively traditional Roman Catholic eucharistic theology into the entirety of the New Testament. Kodell cites only those authors who agree with his position. Any discussion with opposing viewpoints is ignored; Willi Marxsen's important research on the Eucharist is never even mentioned. Ancient non-biblical evidence is lightly skimmed over. The *Didache* is cited in support of the author's position without considering whether or not there is a Eucharist in the *Didache*. Remarkably, Kodell addresses the issue of the historical Jesus and the "historical Eucharist" in his Afterword. He exhibits a commendable critical attitude towards reconstructing Jesus' Last Supper. However, he quickly affirms the church's right to interpret this event as is needed. The hidden agenda is Rome's right to pronounce the exact nature of the Eucharist *despite* the biblical materials. Not recommended. *Lynn Allan Kauppi*

Exodus. By Terence E. Fretheim (Westminster/John Knox, $21.95). As part of the Interpretation commentary series, this volume is an attempt to merge into a single story the experience of the people in the text and the contemporary experience of the people of God. The text is relevant, and the commentator's task is to enable that relevance to be seen. Example: The sixth commandment has a double standard on the roles of men and women. Any contemporary use

of the commandment would be compelled to treat men and women in the same terms. Fretheim is a professor at Luther Northwestern, and his commentary now becomes the volume of choice for those who want to use Exodus in the life of the church. The writing style is lively and accessible. Exegesis of chapters 1-24 averages about 10 pages a chapter; exegesis of chapters 25-40, in which the tabernacle is erected in excruciating detail, averages about 3 pages a chapter.

While F. is fully aware of the pre-history of the text, he focuses on its last redactional stage during the exile—a hearing of the text as we now have it. He gives special attention to irony and to prefiguring (e.g. 4:24-26 prefigures the Passover). F. insists that the whole book is shaped by creation theology. What God does in redemption is in the service of his endangered goals in and for the creation, and the deliverance of Israel is ultimately for the sake of all creation. God's work in redemption constitutes God's efforts at re-creation and is cosmic in scope.

As for themes of liberation, F. reminds us that the exodus is a powerful symbol that the present situation does not define what is possible for God. Political interpretations have often ignored other dimensions of the event—God's activity is also directed against Egypt's gods. Furthermore, the Exodus was no declaration of independence. One cannot bypass Sinai on the way to the promised land. *RWK*

Archaeology of the Land of the Bible. 10,000-586 B.C.E. By Amihai Mazar (Doubleday, $30). This book is part of the Anchor Bible Reference Library and will also serve as a textbook in colleges and seminaries. It supersedes earlier surveys by Wright and Kenyon and reports the latest in archaeological findings. It begins with the first permanent settlements in Palestine and ends with the destruction of the first temple. About half the book is devoted to 1200-586 B.C.E., when correlations with biblical data can be most direct. There are hundreds of maps, diagrams, photographs, and other illustrations. In each chapter A. surveys such items as fortifications, art, architecture, housing, settlement patterns, writing, burial customs, pottery, weapons, and religious practices. Abundant footnotes refer the reader to further, more detailed discussions. Occasionally I found the correlations with the Bible somewhat unsatisfactory. A. chooses to locate the patriarchs in MB IIB-C, but his text is a rather weak rebuttal against the opposite opinion. His outline of the "conquest" hardly does justice to the startling array of theories currently being debated. In discussing Kuntillet `Ajrud, south of Kadesh-barnea, where an inscription mentioning "Yahweh of Samaria and his Asherah" has been found, he remarks: "These important texts throw light on aspects of Israelite theology in the Old Testament period, of which there are few traces in the Bible." Was this "Asherah" merely a cultic symbol? Or did some (heterodox) Israelites believe Yahweh had a consort? Despite these weaknesses, this volume is an unbelievably rich compendium of archaeological findings relevant to the Bible. *RWK*

An Introduction To Biblical Hebrew Syntax. By Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor (Eisenbrauns, $37.50). This volume, which draws on the insights of medieval Jewry and modern linguistic study, could function as a textbook for a second year course in Hebrew or, more likely, as a reference tool for those who have mastered basic Hebrew. After introductory chapters that review the history of Hebrew and the study of Hebrew and that define the concepts used in the book and what is meant by various grammatical units, the authors divide their discussion into four major sections: nouns; adjectives, numerals, and pronouns; verbal stems (Qal, Niphal, etc.); and verbal conjugations (perfect, imperfect, participle, etc.). The writers describe syntax clearly, completely, and interestingly, and always offer numerous examples. They reject the theory of time for the Hebrew "tenses," preferring instead an aspectual theory. Those who teach Hebrew will also profit immensely from this book since it goes into much greater detail about syntax than do any of the standard introductory grammars and since it provides teachers with illustrations of almost every possible syntactical variant. There are 48 pages of indexes! *RWK*

How My Mind Has Changed. Edited by James M. Wall and David Heim (Eerdmans, $8.95). These theological self-diagnoses were published in the *Christian Century* during 1990-1991. Included are essays by Hauerwas, Heyward, Mouw, Lindbeck, Achtemeier, Neuhaus, McCormick, Schüssler Fiorenza, Tracy, Berger, Bellah, Oden, Jüngel, McFague, Sobrino. *RWK*

Heilsgegenwart: Eine Theologie der Psalmen. By Hermann Spieckermann (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, DM 80). In this study of the theology of the Psalms, S. argues that the basic religious experience lying behind the Old Testament was Israel's knowledge of God's saving presence in the temple. There Yahweh's kingship was celebrated, a kingship that was constantly threatened by hostile forces. And there also Israel learned and pondered Yahweh's name and his abundant grace, that gave each person glory and honor, attributes normally associated with God himself (Ps 8:4-6; 84:11). An emphasis on God as creator and historical savior arose only in the context of the challenges of the exile. The theology of the Psalter arose not so much from the historical creeds, prophecy, or the wisdom movement, but from the practice of prayer. This fresh and creative approach to Old Testament theology deserves an English translation. *RWK*

Lamentations. By Iain Provan (Eerdmans, $14.95). This excellent commentary in the New Century Bible series is a remarkably clear and accessible statement of the interpretive issues. P. claims we do not know who wrote these poems (one cannot prove or disprove the Jeremianic hypothesis), or when or where this person—or persons—wrote. He even doubts whether the destruction of 587 is the necessary background. The language of the book is identified as metaphor and hyperbole and could fit many tragic moments in Israel's history, as its liturgical use shows. He questions whether this is a book of faith since hope and despair are often equally present, and the book is only occasionally truly hopeful. While it is true that the book ends in doubt, it is doubt expressed *to* God. I have always taken the Psalmist's "My God, why have you forsaken me?" as a profound statement of faith. He trusted God enough to tell him how he really felt. That's the way I feel about Lamentations as well. P. eschews emendation of the text, but pays attention to the progress of thought from chapter to chapter. This is truly a commentary on the *book* of Lamentations. *RWK*

Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate. By Gerhard F. Hasel (Eerdmans, $14.95). This is the fourth edition of a work first published in 1972. As in previous editions H. presents chapters on the history of the discipline, methodology, the question of history, the center of OT theology, the relationship between the testaments, and proposals for doing theology. The methodology chapter has soared from 18 pages in the first edition to 87 in the fourth! In this chapter he summarizes and criticizes how numerous scholars have approached the task of writing an OT theology. A 43-page bibliography is included. *RWK*

Friday Morning Reflections at the World Bank: Essays on Values and Development. By David Beckmann and others (Seven Locks Press, $10.95). The four authors—Hindu, Christian, humanist, and Muslim—led a series of Friday discussions that had this conclusion: spiritual values have been dangerously slighted in shaping the world's development, and consequently humanity's survival may be at risk. In 1991 B. was elected president of Bread for the World. *RWK*

Understanding the Book of Amos. By Gerhard F. Hasel (Baker, $10.95). This book surveys and reviews the rich amount of research into the book of Amos in modern times: the content of the book and major stages in its interpretation; the prophet's original vocation and hometown; his role as prophet; the oracles against the nations; his intellectual background and use of tradition; literary study of the book; social criticism and liberation theology in the light of Amos; the book's conclusion. As usual, Hasel provides a massive, 46-page bibliography. *RWK*

Psalm 119: Matrix, Form, and Setting. By Will Soll (Catholic Biblical Association, $9.00). In this revised Vanderbilt dissertation, S. discusses the acrostic character of this psalm and the fact that a Torah word occurs in each verse. Then he proposes that the psalm is an individual lament by an exiled king, perhaps Jehoiachin, which admits his own and his dynasty's failings and grounds his hope for restoration in Torah. *RWK*

Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech. By Claus Westermann (Westminster/John Knox, $18.95). In a foreword to this second edition of a classic work on form criticism, Gene M. Tucker reviews the proposals of W. of thirty years ago: the prophets understood themselves as messengers, whose most characteristic speech was the announcement of punishment with reasons for that punishment. This genre had its roots in Israelite legal practice. Tucker points out that scholars today are much less optimistic than W. was about recovering the original oral form of these prophetic speeches before they were gathered into books, and he adds a brief bibliography on other investigations of prophetic forms. *RWK*

Channels of Prophecy. By Thomas W. Overholt (Fortress, $21.95). O. uses sociological method to construct a model for the way prophets conducted intermediation between God and their audiences, including the feedback offered by the prophet to God and the audience to the prophet. He then compares his model with the activities of the biblical prophet Jeremiah and with two native American prophets, Wovoka and Handsome Lake. A similarity underlies these and all other prophets; prophetic intermediation is a cross-cultural phenomenon. A final chapter evaluates David Wilkerson and the phenomenon called "channeling" according to his eight point model. *RWK*

The English Bible from KJV to NIV. By Jack P. Lewis (Baker, $21.95). The first edition of this excellent analysis of modern Bible translations was reviewed in *Currents* 9 (1982):383. The second edition adds chapters on NKJV, REB, and NRSV. *RWK*

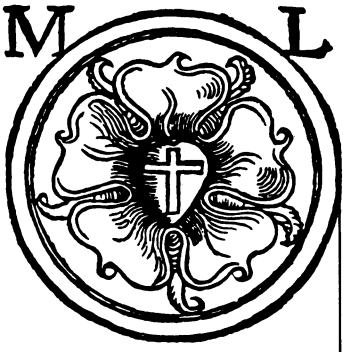
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Preaching Helps

The Day of Pentecost—Eighth Sunday after Pentecost, Series C

Pentecost Means People-Power

It's a mouthful (or a heartful), all those names of people in the Pentecost story in Acts 2: Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, and all the rest. The names seem to run from east to west, like the course of the sun in the sky, enlightening folks from horizon to horizon. Emperors liked to inscribe public monuments with records of their conquests, bragging about the sweep of their victories, naming all the nations they had subdued. God in Christ working not by lance and sword but by the might of the Spirit brings people of all kinds into a new community, uniting them under the gracious sovereignty of the monarch of the universe.

All those names. The list goes on, ticking off Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and part of Lybia and Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians. They all heard in their own language the *magnalia dei*, the mighty works of God.

The studies this month involved many names. The Rev. James Hazelwood, Pastor of Bethany Lutheran Church in Brooklyn, New York, is a family therapist in training. Mrs. Lisa Stoen Hazelwood is a Ph.D. candidate in Christian Ethics at Union Theological Seminary, focusing on the theology of the cross as a starting point for Christian ethics. Jim and

Lisa enlisted three other people to sit with them one day at the Lutheran Medical Center in Brooklyn and reflect together about the lessons.

Participating with Lisa and Jim were Mr. Rick Anderson (a member of Bethany, a single parent who works for the federal government in rehabilitation and handicapped concerns), the Rev. Jack Stouffer (Director of Congregational Initiatives at the Lutheran Medical Center), and Mrs. Laurie Olsen (homemaker and mother of three children).

Jim notes that for scheduling reasons he and Lisa worked alone on Pentecost and Holy Trinity. But for the rest of the Sundays the larger group gathered. They were not 3,000 as on the first Pentecost, but the Spirit danced on their heads and they spoke not like the babbling at the tower in Genesis 11 but more like the new song of the 144,000 of Revelation 14.

Thanks to the Judeans and Galileans and Parthians and Mesopotamians and Asians and Romans who heard the word and passed it on. Thanks to Lisa and Jim, and to Rick and Jack and Laurie.

We are One in the Spirit,

Robert H. Smith
Editor of Preaching Helps

The Day of Pentecost
June 7, 1992

Psalm 104:25-34 *or Veni, Creator Spiritus*
Genesis 11:1 - 9
Acts 2:1-21
John 15:26-27; 16:4b-11

FIRST READING

Pentecost is the transition point between the time of Jesus and the time of the church. The coming of the Holy Spirit connects the two. The biblical narrative describes the descent of the Spirit as moving the community from confusion to understanding. We note that the understanding comes both in the midst of ethnic and language diversity and a Spirit-filled experience. Could it be that Pentecost ushers in a "second coming" that is embodied in the time of the church? Aren't we again seeking understanding in the context of a time of great diversity?

COMMUNITY REFLECTIONS

Jim: The connection between Genesis and Acts constitutes a coming full circle—from the one language being scattered to the many different languages which everyone understands. I wonder about this movement from one language which is confused by God in the Genesis account to a giving back of language or understanding to the people in Acts.
Lisa: I'm not sure I understand!
Jim: Perhaps my language is confused. The tower of Babel story follows the Flood narrative. God seems interested in preventing a repeat of the same errors. So God confuses the people's language and scatters them. But then in Acts, the diversity of language remains but people—by the gift of God's Holy Spirit—are able to understand. The movement is from confusion to understanding.
Lisa: I think it's important for us to note that the movement you are talking about from the Genesis account to Acts does not deplore the diversity. In fact, the diversity of language and peoples is explained in Genesis and affirmed in Acts. Verse 8 and following points to the diversity of peoples as part of the natural order. Here the Holy Spirit becomes the uniting power, through which understanding can happen.
Jim: Kosuke Koyama asserts that the most important part of this Pentecost event is that each person hears the voice in his or her own language. That is crucial to apply in today's multi-cultural world. We hear God's Word in our own language. That's a tremendously powerful statement about the flexibility of God.
Lisa: It really speaks for a multicultural church. After all, this is the birth of the church. It says that the Holy Spirit can find many ways to express itself—in more than one language, but also in more than one cultural idiom.
Jim: Our church (the ELCA) speaks of global mission both here and abroad, and about the need to communicate with people in their own language. We can no longer sit around and think that everyone is going to be singing Bach chorales, as lovely as they might be. When you examine the history of liturgy, you find that it has always had to adapt to the culture it entered. There is a certain kind of inflexibility in those who want to keep worship one way... no matter what the context.
Lisa: Luther was driving at this when he emphasized the need for accessibility to both the Bible and liturgy in the language of the people. He translated the Scripture into German in the 16th century because the Word was confined, so to speak, in an inaccessible language.
Jim: For preaching on Pentecost, I also think we need to raise this issue of the coming of the Holy Spirit. But we must talk about it in contemporary language. Almost everybody has had experiences that have a spirit-filled quality.
Lisa: It seems to me, that if you can share such experiences *anywhere*, you should be able to share them in the church. It is a place where religious experiences can be gathered, reflected upon, and evaluated by a community of people. There is a story of a woman who tried to put her address book away, but it kept flopping open to the same page and she noticed the same name over and over again. When she finally called the person, it turned out to be a person in profound need.

Jim: And every day church-going people *have* Spirit-filled experiences, but they rarely get talked about from the pulpit. People need some way of thinking about and understanding them. Our response in the religious community is more like those in Acts 2:13 who say, "They are filled with new wine," implying that these people are drunk or crazy. Peter's response is to affirm that these people are having an experience of the Holy Spirit. Peter's words are gospel words; they acknowledge the power of God.

Lisa: Yes, then Peter connects the experience to the passage from Joel.

Jim: And in many ways that is what we need to do with these modern day experiences: namely, connect them to the tradition. Peter is connecting the Pentecost event of the Holy Spirit to the tradition so it is not seen as some isolated new fad. Rather it is part of a very old and rich tradition. I think Pentecost is a chance to tell or retell the stories that people have shared, then connect them with this Holy Spirit story and back to Joel and the whirlwind and the burning bush and so on. In that way, confusing events of life can be made understandable in the context of biblical Christianity.

The Holy Trinity
June 14, 1992

Psalm 8
Proverbs 8:22-31
Romans 5:1-5
John 16:12-15

FIRST READING

There are strong roots to our Trinitarian understandings of God formulated at the Councils of Nicea and Chalcedon. The origins are very deep in the language and lives of people trying to explain a reality "in, with, and under" our everyday experiences. We have a three-fold structure to our language—subject, verb, and object. The basic form of communication and language therefore is three-fold. Perhaps our understanding of God as dynamic and relational grows out of this model of communication.

It also strikes us that while the Trinitarian formula holds great significance for the church's doctrine, it should not be used to limit people's access to God *or God's access to people.* In our time we talk a great deal of new images of and languages for God. These lessons provide opportunities for the preacher to address such questions.

COMMUNITY REFLECTIONS

Jim: Well, these are difficult preaching texts. Whenever I preach on this particular Sunday, I use it as a time to teach about the nature of God. I remember a couple of years ago, I thought I did a rather fine job of explaining the Trinity. After worship, a woman in the congregation walked up to me and said, "Pastor, I've been listening to preachers talk about the Trinity for nearly 70 years now." Then she paused, and I thought she was going to add that I had finally made it clear for her. But she continued: "No pastor has ever been able to explain it to me. And you know what I think? I think that pastors don't understand it either."

Lisa: The Proverbs passage doesn't help much. I am a bit perplexed about its inclusion on this Sunday, especially as it seems to be a hymn about Wisdom.

Jim: It is clearly about Wisdom in a feminine form. The NRSV calls the subject of this poem "Lady Wisdom." So it seems to me that we are clearly dealing with a feminine quality here.

Lisa: I imagine that it is read as a hymn to Christ. Like the Johannine "In the beginning was the Word" prologue. As the passage is read on a Sunday morning, the hearer of the Word in the pew would think: "Oh, this must be about Christ," or "These are Christ's words."

Jim: Perhaps these Proverbs passages point to both Lady Wisdom *and* Christ. It is my belief that to preach on this Sunday of the Trinity, especially with these lessons, is a chance for the preacher to deal with the whole question of how we know God. In what form or what ways does God come to us? It is an opportunity even to deal with the whole question of the Trinitarian formula of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; to deal with some questions that lay people have. Lay people may not spend a great deal of time studying theology, but they wonder: How do we know God? Who is God? The greatest mistake the preacher can make is to assume that we all come to know God intellectually; if we provide the correct intellectual framework, then people will be able to come to know God.

Lisa: It is interesting to me to think about the ways in which God is active: God creating, God becoming human, God suffering, God being raised, God the power of the Spirit poured into our hearts, God made flesh in a spirit-filled community. Perhaps this is God as the wisdom of the universe.

Jim: I think the inclusion of this passage from Proverbs pushes the limits of the Trinity. The inclusion of the Proverbs text in the lectionary opens up possibilities for preachers to speak to the many different ways people have come to know God throughout history. But I am also saying that we need to acknowledge that at other times in history, biblical history, people used feminine language to talk about the nature of the divine. I think we need to say that, and we need to open it up again as possible language for people today.

Lisa: Of course I agree, though this is not what the bishops have said in their statement on the Trinity.

Jim: True, but they were speaking specifically of a baptismal formulation. Maybe we are not ready for a new baptismal formula; maybe Father, Son, and Holy Spirit should remain. It has a long history, it is extremely powerful language and imagery for people. But, it is obvious that language has evolved and will continue to evolve. If the preacher needs justification for speaking about God as having any feminine qualities, well, I think this Proverbs passage gives some justification and, in fact, calls for it.

Lisa: Absolutely, what is most important about this Sunday is that we open people's hearts, souls, and minds to the many, many ways they can come to know God and that God comes to know us. After all, the Trinitarian formula was really sealed in a particular time and context. It was and is vital for the church, but it is theology of a particular context. Douglas John Hall has raised the question of what the Trinitarian formula would have looked like if it had been a theology cultivated in a context of diaspora or repression, as opposed to the context of being the state/empire-approved religion.

Jim: What are the different ways in which we know God? That's the question for this Sunday. Important because in the Sundays that follow, the group will read lessons that have more to do with how is God made alive in our world. Sallie McFague has raised an important observation about the changing scheme of theology today. For much of the 20th century the question has been: "How do we know God?" But now the question is: "How do we, with God, change the world?"

Lisa: In the lessons that follow, knowing God and changing the world become two parts of the same question, in my opinion. We learn that we know God in our neighbor. We know God by picking up the necessary crosses that happen to come to us. We come to know God in the process of being people of God. And when we are the people of God we change at least some little part of the world.

Second Sunday after Pentecost
June 21, 1992

Psalm 117
1 Kings 8:(22-23, 27-30) 41-43
Galatians 1:1-10
Luke 7:1-10

FIRST READING

Our changing American culture seems to be creating more and more outsiders or marginalized persons. The excluded ones populate the urban and rural landscape. Even *inside* the church, people can feel marginalized. Luke has a theme running through his narrative, namely the inclusion of the outsiders. This particular lesson raises profound questions for the modern preacher about who is on the margins in our world today. Perhaps more important is the question: Who can have faith? The Roman soldier has two strikes against him: he is Roman, and he is a soldier. But in the eyes of Jesus his faith is acceptable. Luke puts before us his radical vision, which is our Lord's vision of a gospel for all people.

COMMUNITY REFLECTIONS

Lisa: The centurion is an outsider to the people. He is a Roman soldier. So in preparing some questions for our use, we thought about outsiders. Who are some outsiders in our context?
Rick: In our own congregation, it could be people who do not look like us... who aren't white, who aren't Scandinavian. It could also be people who are not families in the traditional sense, i.e. mother, father, children all together. I think disabled people are also thought of by some as outsiders.
Jack: The other day we were talking about the Muslims in our neighborhoods around Lutheran Medical Center and about the large numbers of ethnic groups like the Chinese and the Koreans and people from all over the world who settle near us. Brooklyn continues to be a port of call for people from all over the world—somewhat of a melting pot. As we were reading this passage from Luke, my mind also wandered to something that is currently an issue in many of our lives—abuse in our families. A nurse's aide came to me this morning to tell me that she wasn't sure she was going to be able to keep holding herself and her family together as a single parent with a very young infant whose endless crying is getting to her. She has no relief, no one to turn to.
Lisa: Would you say she is an "outsider"?
Jack: Outsider? I am not sure that is the term. I would have liked to say, as you were reading this, Lisa: "Hey, Jesus, where are you? Would you come here and just say the word and Cathy [the nurse's aide] will be well, and her whole family will be well. Her baby will no longer cry. She will be restored in her relationships that are so tenuous and distorted." It is the pain of people who live on the edge, rather than outsiders. Right now, headlines about Magic Johnson are so poignant, so painful.
Jim: The insider becomes an outsider.
Jack: Yes, this folk hero takes on, at age 32, another kind of bigger-than-life proportion because he has the HIV virus. A small group of us in the hospital express pain every time someone comes in off the streets with AIDS, but the world has learned today that Magic Johnson is HIV positive. Outsider? I don't know about that language.
Lisa: I like your language of "people on the edge" much better. It communicates a sense of being on the margins, which is what we were really after. It's not that people are outside Jesus' care. But I wonder: how are we ourselves on the margin?
Laurie: I don't know if I feel like an outsider. Our church feels like a place that welcomes outsiders. Unless you interpret being an outsider the way Jack just did. Then I guess I am on the edge.
Rick: I feel as if my own divorce has put me on the edge of the congregation, which is a new situation for me. That's very painful. What I've learned is that you can grow from being on the edge, but first you have to understand that being on the edge is not your fault. You can do something about it. For me this passage is saying that even if you *are* an outsider, if you have faith, then the Lord can work for you. But if you don't have

the faith of an outsider like this centurion, you may not really be getting what Jesus was saying. Just being an insider is not going to save you.

Jim: You know, this is really a story that brings Jesus' words to life. Just before this passage Jesus has spoken words about our attitude towards outsiders or persons on the edge. Here Luke tells a story that brings the message home. He shows that outsiders can conduct themselves in ways consistent with Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Plain.

Lisa: I remember a story I heard in a sermon once. It was about two women in a church. One was poor and taught Sunday School. She brought in her own supplies which she purchased or made. She never asked for any reimbursement. The other women was not rich, but comfortable. She was an important person in the church: sat on the council, was born and nurtured in the congregation. She bought some item for the church. It cost $7.36. She brought a receipt to the treasurer asking for reimbursement.

Jim: That's it. The unexpected person, the one on the margin or outside, is the one demonstrating the faith. The good news for the local church is that occasionally the outsiders can break in and be bearers of the gospel. We need outsiders.

Lisa: I think we need to think in our congregations about where we are supposed to be—at the center or at the margin? We must think about who we are supposed to be. And who we—like Jesus—are to identify with.

Third Sunday after Pentecost
June 28, 1992

Psalm 30
1 Kings 17:17-24
Galatians 1:11-24
Luke 7:11-17

FIRST READING

Here again we see Luke's Jesus of compassion for those "on the edge." His compassion is not to be taken lightly as some kind of superficial sympathy for another person. It is more than sympathy. Rather, it is a deep joining with another's suffering. Jesus' compassion is something we are encouraged to emulate. But in fact we cannot emulate his compassion. The compassion of Jesus is so deep and so profound that it would kill any human being. For in the lesson, Jesus gives life. Later that same life-giving compassion is exercised toward him as God raises Jesus to new life.

COMMUNITY REFLECTIONS

Lisa: What does Luke mean when he writes that Jesus had compassion on the widow?

Rick: He felt sorry for her and he decided he was going to reach out and touch her. I think what God is saying here through the gospel is that God can reach out and touch people and move them. I find it very hard to believe that her son just got up and walked away, though, because of my medical training. It is contrary to what I know is possible. I think what Luke is saying is that you have to believe that God can move mountains, that God can change your life completely and turn you around like an alcoholic who becomes sober. It's that kind of situation. God can do that, because God cares. That's what compassion is about—it's about caring.

Lisa: It's as if Jesus puts himself in the place of the woman. He seems to feel a sense of empathy to the point of really feeling with someone. Compassion! Feeling with!

Jack: Common with. Enters into, joins with, becomes "co-" with another's experiences. Jesus doesn't stand off.

Laurie: Jesus made himself a part of the woman's experience. He didn't just feel sorry for her. If he had just felt sorry for her, he would have just looked at her and said: "Oh, that's too bad." But Jesus made himself a part of it, and took on some of the responsibility for her problem and then fixed it by becoming involved. I think a lot of people stay on the fringes and act like they want to help. But they really don't involve themselves. They give their ideas and their feelings about it, but they really don't give themselves to it. They don't actually put themselves into the situation. But some situations call for that.

Rick: I think you are right. There are some lay people and ministers that don't involve themselves in the lives of others in the congregation. Some pastors just preach and tell the gospel according to what the week is, and then let people go about their lives and just play the Sunday Service game. They are not going to be involved in the "living gospel." I think the "works" part of the gospel is very important. It's our actions that have to speak, as well as our beliefs. Our faith gives us the strength to act. If we don't become involved and walk in other people's shoes, then our faith is meaningless.

Laurie: I've had situations in my life where people didn't get involved.

Lisa: This is really a story about a woman who needed help from outside herself. She didn't have the resources herself at this point. Jesus is the only one who would, in his compassion, really help her.

Jim: Unfortunately, most people in this country believe that they *can* do it on their own, independently, without outside assistance.

Rick: I think we started off in this country being very independent. But we also learned that we had to help our neighbors. As we became urbanized, and as the family institution broke up, we stopped thinking that we had to take care of our own. Then we thought: "Well, if we don't have to take care of people who are *related* to us, then why do we have to take care of people who are not? And that's when community involvement started to break down.

Jim: And that started in the industrial revolution.

Rick: Well, I think it started in the 40s and 50s. The car, the suburbs, massive cities. There are all kinds of reasons. Basically when people had to move to find jobs they lost contact with their people. What I am saying is that for a congregation to come together or for people to come together they have to feel attached or related and cared for. And people have lost that in their families, so a congregation has to function more and more as a family. Members are going to have to care for one another. Families have fights, sure, but they come together in crises—and they let people know that no matter who they are, they are cared for.

Lisa: You seem to be describing an image of what it would be like if God was working in and through a caring congregation. This verse at the end of the passage, "God has visited the people," makes me wonder what it looks like when God visits our houses—including our houses of worship!

Rick: What I've learned this last year in the process of my divorce is that we are all broken people. Even when we think we are healed, we are broken. If we are *all* broken people, then our job is to heal those around us as best we can. That's what being a Christian is all about.

Jack: Sometimes we know this to be true in the midst of great pain. There is always going to be pain, there is always going to be disease, there is always going to be death. Few, if any of us, are unaware of all the pain around us. All this pain around us, and all we can do is attempt to help one little soul. We have in this hospital a Roman Catholic priest who at the age of 70 always feels as if there is more to do. At the end of the day he knows that he is finished, but that not all the work is done. He says: "I'm looking for the day when I will be with Christ." And I come in and talk to this man and remind him that always there is grace—that somehow, everything isn't worked out here. This gospel story raises enormous hopes in people's minds. Jesus touches the bier and says: "Rise." And that touches on both our skepticism and our greatest hopes.... How can I be both compassionate in situations that arise here at Lutheran Medical Center but also know that not everything is worked out here? There comes a point when I must say, "This is all I can do. God must do the rest."

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
July 5, 1992

Psalm 32
2 Samuel 11:26–12:10, 13-15
Galatians 2:11-21
Luke 7:36-50

FIRST READING

The pharisee, Simon, is the host in this story. It would have been his responsibility to welcome a guest to his home. Hospitality was expected of the host, as it is expected of hosts and hostesses today in different ways. The pharisee in this story neglects his responsibility to provide a proper welcome. The woman, who according to the pharisee was a sinner, is the one who welcomes Jesus. Again Luke does the unexpected: he now places Jesus in the home of a pharisee. Jesus does not limit his visits. Once again the most marginalized person is participating in the kingdom-making process. It is the woman who receives Jesus' blessing in the form of the words: "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

COMMUNITY REFLECTIONS

Jack: Can you imagine how this story would appear in any social structure today? Here a woman comes down to Jesus and proceeds to take his shoes off, kiss his feet, wash and cry and so on. This would be considered some sort of strange sexual behavior.

Lisa: I think there is something to that. There seems to be a certain acceptance of touching, of this kind of affection, of the erotic nature of this interaction.

Jim: For our readers' benefit, are we suggesting that this event has an erotic quality to it? That this woman is making a sexual advance toward Jesus? And is Jesus responding to this event?

Lisa: There is a difference between erotic and sexual, I think, though others may disagree. There is a power of compassion in these acts of the woman and of Jesus in this series of lessons; a compassion that has an erotic quality to it. Rita Nakashima Brock and other theologians often talk about divine power continuing in our own time to take shape in erotic power. They describe this power as the gifts of feeling with others, having compassion, touching each other, healing each other. What Brock is trying to do is to relocate divine power in the relationships of Christian community.

Jim: When I hear the word erotic, and when our readers see the word erotic, many will think "sexual." How are they different?

Lisa: Touching and relation and compassion and heart can be erotic, without a sexual connotation, I think.

Jack: But I will relate to women differently than how I relate to men. There is no way that I can change that. Even internally, what I feel for you [the women] is different than what I feel for you [the men], because somehow when I touch you it has a different quality to it. Not to say one is better than the other, it's just different.

Lisa: How about in this compassionate mode? At a patient's bedside?

Jack: There was a man who came into our clinic just a week ago. He was crying, and the nurse's aide was crying. I found my compassion is the same. And I felt overwhelming impotence to manage either person's needs, no matter which sex.

Rick: I am a counselor. When you counsel, you reach out to people. But I think you have to be very careful in the way you touch people, because there are certain boundaries. If I go to a church and see a pastor with a woman crying at his feet, I am probably going to jump to a certain conclusion. I think there is an underlying sense that this woman crossed over the sexual boundaries.

Laurie: Because she is a prostitute, I think that if she *wanted* to be enticing she would know how to do that. She is doing what she is doing out of a kind of worship of him. It is not done in a sexual way, because she would know how to act in a sexual way.

Jim: Because men and women look at this whole area of sexuality differently, do you think the pharisee, as a man, is interpreting what she is doing as a sexual advance, when in fact she, as a woman, does not intend it in that way at all?

Jack: I think so.
Laurie: I don't know if I think that. I think he is jealous.
Rick: Let's turn it around and put the woman in Jesus place. He comes in and washes her feet. What would most people think? I dare say the same interpretation we are making.
Lisa: I think this is interesting, but on the terms of the cultural context I believe it was expected that Jesus' feet would be washed by the pharisee as implied in verse 44 and following. The text suggests that someone should have washed his feet and brought ointment or herbs. I'm not sure they would have put the same sensual kind of interpretation on the whole event that we are. But I think it's o.k. for us as we attempt to read the story in our own way.
Jack: You are right, he did not play the role of a host. She comes in and does it.
Rick: Yes, in our day when someone comes to our house, we say: "Can we take your coat?" or "Can we offer you a cup of coffee?" That's being a host. But I think there is something more here.
Lisa: I see one thing. I think this is an incredible affirmation of physicalness, of bodies and the goodness of those, and the need to value and to care for our bodies.
Rick: You mean the power that your own personal touch can have in giving a person a feeling of wellness?
Lisa: That's part of it. But in a more abstract way, I see this as a real affirmation of our humanness and of Jesus' humanity.
Jack: One Maundy Thursday the pastor at our church chose to wash people's feet. He had a warm basin of water. And it was soapy. And Stan's hands are wonderfully soft. And as I put my feet into the water I am feeling the whole stress of the day vanishing. He touches my feet. And suddenly there is this feeling as if everything goes out of me—the stress, the pain. All I needed was for my feet to be touched. And in that setting it was indeed a most religious experience. It was also a very healing experience.

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost
July 12, 1992

Psalm 63:1-8
Zechariah 12:7-10
Galatians 3:23-29
Luke 9:18-24

FIRST READING

The contrast between the questions "Who do the *people* say that I am?" and "Who do *you* say that I am?" is central to this lesson. In many ways, this is often where we get confused. On the one hand we hear what the world says about Jesus. Today those include such identifications as Ethical Teacher, Good Person, or Cosmic Power. Yet, on the other hand, we hear Peter's answer, "The Christ of God." But being the Christ of God means more than Jesus' being a good, ethical teacher with divine power. It comes to mean suffering, rejection, death—and finally resurrection on the third day. Hearing Peter's confession of who Christ is marks the beginning of our journey in Luke. It is a journey to where you and I discover what it really means for *us* to answer the question, "Who do *you* say that I am?"

COMMUNITY REFLECTIONS

Laurie: I was confused by this, because Jesus tells the disciples not to tell anyone about this event. I always thought the whole purpose of the gospel was to tell everyone. So they really lost me when I read this.
Lisa: Hard to explain. I don't know if Luke gets that from Mark. Mark always has Jesus keeping his messianic secret saying: "Don't tell anyone, don't tell anyone...."
Laurie: But I thought the whole point of everything is to tell people that he was here and if you don't believe, well, that's it. They say it later on: "You people in that city are going you-know-where if you don't shape up." That's why I didn't understand this secret stuff, 'cause I thought the purpose was to tell everybody.

Jim: It's very confusing.
Laurie: In fact he sends them all out to tell everybody in the next chapter!
Jack: I think it's a personality thing. The other day I had a call from a woman whose co-worker had lost her husband. So I asked for the co-worker's telephone number, and the woman wouldn't give it to me. I thought this was strange. Well, she's my neighbor, and a few days later she approached me and said, "I don't know why I wouldn't give you the number." It's one of those things in the text, you know, I can't really explain.
Jim: Scholars who spend their lives studying this don't know the answer either. There is much debate. Let's move on from this, because I'm not sure any of us has the answer.
Lisa: So who do all of *you* say Jesus is?
Jim: People today talk about Jesus as a good person, somebody special; even New Age people might call him an enlightened figure. Some Christian groups would call him purely divine, the one who never sinned, the perfect person. There is someplace in South America where there is a 900-foot statue of Jesus. And I think Oral Roberts has a big Jesus too.
Jack: Bigger than life! (Laughter)
Jim: I don't think Jesus is bigger than life.
Jack: Many people would disagree.
Jim: Right, many people would say Jesus is bigger than life. I don't know if I think he is bigger than life.
Jack: Bill Lazareth will call him, every once in a while, the five-foot-five-inch Jew from Palestine. (Laughter)
Rick: I think we need to believe that the person we believe in is perfect. And somehow he is a greater than life figure. We do that to people. We did it to the Kennedys. He had no sin, he was perfect. It was Camelot. That's a need on our part, especially for people who think: "I'm not so good. But this other person is good. Since I want to be like this other person, they have to somehow be better than I."
Lisa: Do you think that's who Jesus is?
Rick: I think Jesus shows us that he is also a human being. There are parts in the Bible where Jesus makes mistakes. From overturning the tables in the temple, where he shows anger, to not accepting some people. But he also had that ongoing faith and love that is what I want to believe is the real Jesus.
Jack: The passage is very distinct in the sense that the first part of the passage was a private little conversation with the disciples. This part is a confession of faith by the disciples, especially Peter. Now, Jesus' words in response to Peter's confession in verse 22 have become a part of our creed. This is a very exciting announcement. And I think there is this desire on the disciples' part to announce it to everyone. And Jesus is saying, let's just hold on to this moment, this *kairos* moment, and treasure it for now. It doesn't really say this, but that's my sense of it.
Jim: I think it's important to point out that this *kairos* moment, this announcement, comes just after Jesus has fed five thousand people. He's an Elijah figure in that feeding story. Here we are finding out that Jesus is more than just another Elijah.
Jack: And immediately he goes back with Peter and says: "We are far from complete. We have a ways to go. We are going to go through hell before this is over. I'm going to be killed." Out of that confession of faith comes a glimpse of the future and what is expected if you are to be Jesus' follower. We hear: "Deny the self, take up the cross, daily follow me. And if you think you are going to protect yourself, then you're not with me."
Lisa: Follow me daily. There is no relief for us in this passage.
Laurie: I was thinking of Martin Luther King, Jr. His ideas were so totally foreign to what most people were believing at the time. He knew what he was going to have to go through. He knew most people would be against him and against the very ideas he stood for. But he just kept going and doing what he had to do anyway. And ultimately he lost his life.

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost
July 19, 1992

Psalm 16
1 Kings 19:14-21
Galatians 5:1, 13-25
Luke 9:51-62

FIRST READING

The time has come! We've had a sense of it for some time, but it is official now. He really is going to Jerusalem. There is new urgency in the mission. Jesus has little time to waste. The Samaritans naturally reject him for going to Jerusalem. In their minds he is participating in a festival that is centered in the wrong city. They would have chosen Mt. Gerizim as the sacred place. This antagonism heightens the importance of Jerusalem for the reader. The time has come, and the time is now. The days are drawing near for him to be received up. Come follow, onward to Jerusalem! Who will join? And at what cost?

COMMUNITY REFLECTIONS

Lisa: If Jesus said to you, "Follow me," what excuses would you give?
Laurie: I'd say: "Hang on a minute! I've got three kids and a husband here that I have to figure out what to do with." I don't know, I guess I probably couldn't just go and follow. Or if they were there with me, I'd say: "O.k., if I'm gonna follow then they have to come with me. It's all or nothing."
Jack: Laurie, at the moment of deepest crisis, when you are wondering what you're going to do next with those kids, what might you say? What if Jesus asked at that moment?
Laurie: What if he just said, "Come"?
Jack: Yeah, come, leave this, just go.
Laurie: I don't know, I just might go! (Laughter)
Lisa: I think I would be a bargainer. I would say, "But you see, I have to finish what I'm doing here. And then I'll be *better* able to serve you." I'd be a bargainer all the way.
Jack: Yes, like what about your doctoral dissertation?
Laurie: How about: "Lord, give me your itinerary and I'll meet you somewhere along the line?"
Rick: I think I'd worry about my kids. Jobs can come and go, but family isn't replaceable. On a more abstract level, I think what the text is saying is that Jesus is about shaking people up. We are to be ready to give up everything.
Laurie: I would be afraid of somebody who came and very literally said: "Give up everything and follow me." I would be afraid of this person, even if it was my Savior. Because I don't believe somebody who is supposed to be our Savior would say to me, "Neglect your children and family." It's part of who I am.
Lisa: Are you saying that there is a sense of irresponsibility in this text?
Jim: What Jesus is asking here is for people to *go* someplace—but some very *particular* place. He is going to Jerusalem. And Jerusalem means death, it means confrontation with the powers that be.
Rick: Getting back to irresponsibility, ministers have used this passage. TV ministers have said: "You must send me all your money so that I can do the Lord's work." I think this is irresponsible. I believe this passage is saying you must be *ready* to give up everything.
Laurie: That's why I think this lesson is talking about priorities, although it doesn't really say that here.
Rick: I know. But I think this passage was being used to shake people up. It was intended to ask us: "Well, what are your priorities?" It makes us ask about what we need to do to really follow. What chances do we have to take?
Lisa: Does the passage suggest we have to be homeless? Does it mean that Jesus was a homeless person?
Rick: No, that would be like saying that ministers shouldn't be paid.
Jim: I don't like that idea! (Laughter)
Rick: What it's saying is that you have to take responsibility for following him. If you are going to choose to follow him, you can't go part way.
Jack: This is not the first time in Scripture that Christ says: "Follow me." It's as much a warning to those who would follow as it is an invitation.

Jesus is saying, this is the way it is when you follow me: you don't bury your dead, you don't say farewell to those at home, you don't look back. These are dramatic statements. Sometimes we need that.

Lisa: I think this is indeed what Jesus is saying, and what he means. We must be more than ready; we must do it!

Jim: Yes, the preacher can pick up on the Nike commercial, "Just Do it!"

Lisa: That's not exactly what I had in mind.

Jim: I know. But we can get pretty excited about certain things in life. We cheer the Giants or the Mets or the Twins. We jump at job opportunities. There are lots of areas in life where we "just do it." I think the preacher for this Sunday can play with that idea.

Lisa: Jesus. Jerusalem. The cross. Follow him. Do it! Just do it! That's frightening.

Jim: Exactly! But it is also terribly exciting, life-threatening, and life-giving.

Lisa: Something to live for?

Jim: Yeah. Just do it!

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
July 26, 1992

Psalm 66:1-11, 14-18
Isaiah 66:10-14
Galatians 6:1-10, 14-16
Luke 10:1-12, 16 (17-20)

FIRST READING

The model for ministry presented in this text is wonderful. Jesus sends the seventy out in pairs. There is a reason for this. The message they bring will provoke strong, even violent reaction. The messengers will need each other for support, courage, strength, and wisdom. Because the intensity of Jesus' mission is increasing now with each step toward Jerusalem, there is a greater need for the missionaries to be prepared for their ministry. Jesus is providing instruction in how to handle those who reject the gospel. Who are these people who reject the gospel? If "the kingdom of God has come near to you" then surely one would respond. But some people reject the gospel. The implications of that are serious. It is rejection of the one who sent Jesus. Thank God for accepting us, in spite of our rejection of him.

COMMUNITY REFLECTIONS

Jack: This is revolutionary stuff.

Rick: (Laughing) I see this as the same thing that a parent would say to a child: "If you do this, these are the consequences of your actions." Or you could look at it this way: if you're not accepted, if you reach your hand out and you try with all your heart to make something work.... I'm talking about my marriage now. At some point in time, you have to shake your sandals off and say, "Okay, I have done everything I can do. And it is time to move on."

Laurie: I think that is very true. I think you get to a point where you can't make it all happen by yourself anymore. You can't come up with any more ways to do it. That happened in my first marriage. I think I went through it to a point where I couldn't do any more.

Lisa: We are starting on an interpersonal level. Let's move our discussion to this level of rejecting the gospel. One question Jim and I had was: What does it mean to reject God today? What are some of the ways we do that?

Laurie: Well, if you were a church-going person and you decide to stop going, that's one way.

Rick: I think you are right. But I also think that we reject God in other ways, even if we are still going to church. By not learning and growing as a Christian. Being a member of a church isn't just going every Sunday. It's also growing as a Christian.

Lisa: Can people accept the church but reject the gospel?

Jim: Oh, absolutely.

Laurie: Oh, but I know people where it is the other way around. They have accepted the gospel but rejected the church. They live a faithful life, but they will not participate in church life.

Lisa: In my experience, I've rejected God when I give up hope. When I give up on people. When

I give up hope, I am saying there is no God. And I am saying this God has no power to transform me or anybody. When I was going through that surgery a while ago, I think I didn't let God in. It was so strange. I was so stressed and worried and I just didn't know how to deal with it. I was hopeful that it would go well, but I was not hopeful in a way that connected me to a larger hope, the source of my hope. So when I say there is no hope, I am saying there is no God, there is no power, no transforming power.

Laurie: It's funny you should say that, 'cause when I read this text I thought the same thing. I feel myself losing hope a lot lately. I say: "Forget it. It's hopeless. There is nothing else that can be done. I just can't take it anymore." I'm afraid we're going to lose the apartment. Kenny is still looking for a better job. It's just one thing after another. I've been giving up hope a lot lately. But then something will happen, like when I had the baby and I almost died. But I didn't die. So I thought somebody must have been looking out for me.

Jim: That's the other side of this passage. Yes, there is our rejection of Jesus, but what of his acceptance of us? Paul Tillich preached a sermon once, titled: "You are accepted."

Lisa: But how do you reject the gospel?

Jim: By working my tail off. I spin my wheels faster and faster in an effort to do more and more. Usually I accomplish less and less. I think the fast pace of our life is a flat out rejection of God. It says, "I think I can do it better than you, Lord."

Lisa: Is there a punishment like verse 11, "Even the dust of your town we wipe off against you?" Do you experience some kind of rejection back at you?

Jim: Yes, it is called burnout. The operating assumption behind working harder and harder is a complete rejection of the life-waters that feed and nurture us. In many ways, I deserve my burnout. I've attempted to do it on my own without God's help. A year or two ago I stopped praying, I only read the Scriptures when I was preparing a sermon, I didn't take a day off. I'll come out of it when I do two things. The first is to talk about it in the community of faith—with the "seventy," I suppose. The second is to reject the idea that I can do ministry without God. I am getting there, but I've got a lot of dusting to do.

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost
August 2, 1992

Psalm 25:1-9
Deuteronomy 30:9-14
Colossians 1:1-14
Luke 10:25-37

FIRST READING

Robert Wuthnow of Princeton has found that this story of the Good Samaritan still conveys a powerful message of Christian social responsibility among both evangelicals and liberal Protestants. Indeed, the story seems to breathe new life into people. It also produces some surprising responses from lay people, as you'll read below. The most striking aspect of Luke's now famous story is the lawyer's response at the very close of the dialogue in verse 37. After Jesus has so marvelously answered the lawyer's question, he asks: "Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" The lawyer is so stunned that, even though he knows the correct answer, he cannot bring himself to call the Samaritan by name. Instead he mumbles, "The one who showed mercy." Let us remember the name of the one who continues to enable us to be merciful—Jesus, the Christ.

COMMUNITY REFLECTIONS

Laurie: This passage always makes me feel guilty.

Rick: Yeah, me too.

Jim: You're kidding! I'm stunned to hear you both say that about the story of the Good Samaritan.

Laurie: It makes me feel guilty because I think I have trouble loving God with all my heart and doing everything that I am supposed to do. But I think I'm pretty good at loving my neighbors. So it makes me feel like I should be doing more to show my feelings of love for *God* with all my strength and all my heart and all my mind. I just feel like I don't have enough strength to do that.

And yet, I feel that I do a lot for people. Like last week, we were very close to having no food at all. We had very little, except for what I took from the food pantry at the back of the church. So we made it until Friday when we got our food stamps. And on Friday night my girlfriend who has four children called me. And although she has a husband who works, he is very strange and doesn't give her enough to buy food for the family. So she called me, because she had nothing. So I gave her my last ten dollars of food stamps and some food we had. I try to do what I can do for people. But I feel guilty about how I am spiritually. Every time I read this passage, I feel as if I'm not where I should be spiritually.

Lisa: But you assume that the two are separate. You assume that loving God and loving the neighbor are different things!

Jim: This is a very strange idea we have in western culture, namely that the mind and the body are split, the spiritual and the day-to-day are split. They are not. They interact with each other. In fact, I think the two are not even two, they are all part of a living, breathing, walking-around-the-streets kind of spirituality. You choose to live out your spirituality in the flesh and blood of everyday life. That's very biblical. That's really the point of this whole passage. The lawyer *wants* a dualistic spirituality, but Jesus tells the parable with the intent of showing him that your spirit must come to life in acts of compassion. The lawyer doesn't like this. He can't even call the Samaritan by his name.

Jack: Yes, I think of the story of the widow's mite. Laurie, you are as biblical as anything I've heard! Your story is the gospel, the good news. The other story, the lawyer's, is the law.

Rick: That's what the gospel is all about. You treat people like they are your relatives, your brother or your sister.

Jim: And by the way, this is crazy stuff! This is not what the world defines as the norm.

Rick: What I keep thinking is that what the lawyer is trying to say is: "Can I pick all those other lawyers who are making $600,000 a year and are living on Park Avenue to be my neighbors? I want to be with *them,* because I want to feel good. I don't want to be a neighbor to the man on the subway who has nothing."

Lisa: It is clear that Jesus is expanding the definition of neighborliness beyond the lawyer's comfort zone. For all its popularity in the culture, the Good Samaritan story is amazingly radical in its effect on the hearer. You can't listen to this story and not feel very, very challenged. Perhaps that is a better word for what Laurie is experiencing. Not guilt, but challenge.

Jim: The good news is that Jesus supports us in that challenge as we attempt to live it out. Or shall I say, as Jesus lives it out through us. Sometimes we just need to get out of the way and let Jesus do it through us.

Lisa: Yes, that is true. But I want to be careful that we don't just sit around making up excuses for our lack of involvement. Rick is usually the one calling for actions that make our faith alive. Perhaps it's his Presbyterian background. But the point I want to make is similar. Jesus is really saying to this lawyer and to us: "Look, its impossible to live a faith that is removed from the day-to-day lives of people." Or as Rick has said, "You've got to be engaged."

Ready to Serve—But Where and How?

Roger Fjeld
Wartburg Theological Seminary

This is written the week before what is officially called the "Regional Assignment Meeting." Our graduating seniors are more apt to call it "The Great Draft." It is the time when the 300 or so 1992 graduates of ELCA seminaries are assigned, first to regions and then to specific synods within their assigned regions. Then they are ready to be interviewed and called; ready to serve.

It is a very human process, as those of you who have been "assigned" in order to be called will attest. It is also a very spiritual process, one which seeks to be a tool for the Holy Spirit and therefore a very mission-oriented process. It seeks to bring together the needs of many hundreds of parishes and begin to match those needs with the gifts and commitments of those who are approved for call and ordination as pastors or appointment and commissioning as associates in ministry.

At close range, it is a fascinating and sometimes frustrating process; the best we can devise, but still a long way from perfect. On the face of it, the goal is to match the needs of parishes with the skills and desires of the graduating students; with preferences having to do with geographic location, type of parish, vocational or educational opportunities for other members of the graduate's family, special needs, and the like. People who remember an older way, when students were summarily sent, rather than being invited to spell out their wants and needs, sometimes suggest that we have become too centered on the wants and needs of these new pastors and associates. If that is the case, it characterizes the whole calling process in the ELCA, not just the process as it relates to new graduates.

But if one backs up a bit and looks at the core concerns of these graduates, it becomes apparent that their real concerns have more to do with ministry than with geography. Our system renders them quite helpless during the time when others are making decisions about where they will be assigned and then recommended for call. It asks them where they would like to be assigned and what sort of setting they feel might be best for them, so they answer that set of questions. But when they talk about what concerns them most, their questions turn to matters having to do with vision and mission. They want to be well used, not just placed. They want to serve where gospel and mission are central to the life of the congregation, where there is a hunger for the Word, and where worship and sacramental life undergird what they do together.

Not uncommonly these graduates have sacrificed a great deal in order to become

pastors or associates. Theirs has been a complicated and expensive quest for the opportunity to serve. They have been a part of the church long enough to recognize the danger of being caught in a "maintenance ministry mentality" and want more than that, both for the congregation's sake and for their own. They try to interview the congregations which are interviewing them, hoping to be able to sense whether there is a vision of congregational mission, or at least a desire to develop such a vision together.

One of my annual tasks is to give the "Charge to the Graduating Students" at the Commencement event. As though we haven't already said enough in four years with these students, we aim one more salvo. If only we could reach beyond them and speak, instead, to the congregations that will ultimately call them. If only we could say, for these new graduates, "Please use us well. Please get beyond concerns about our age or gender or appearance or family or marital status. Please ask us about our understanding of the gospel. Please focus with us on mission. Please serve with us in community and world, rather than simply expecting us to serve you."

How can we help people on both sides of the interview table to focus on what ought to matter? How can we move away from a sterile sort of congregationalism which risks being nothing more than the gathering of the like-minded, seeking a pastor of like mind? So much is at stake, when call is being considered. Can't we all commit ourselves to elevating that process, to focusing on priorities and partnerships in mission, not on peripheral and secondary matters? We will be a much more effective church if we make these calling processes exercises in a common search for the will of God for congregation and pastor. We send our graduates out with the hope that they will be so called and so serve.

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