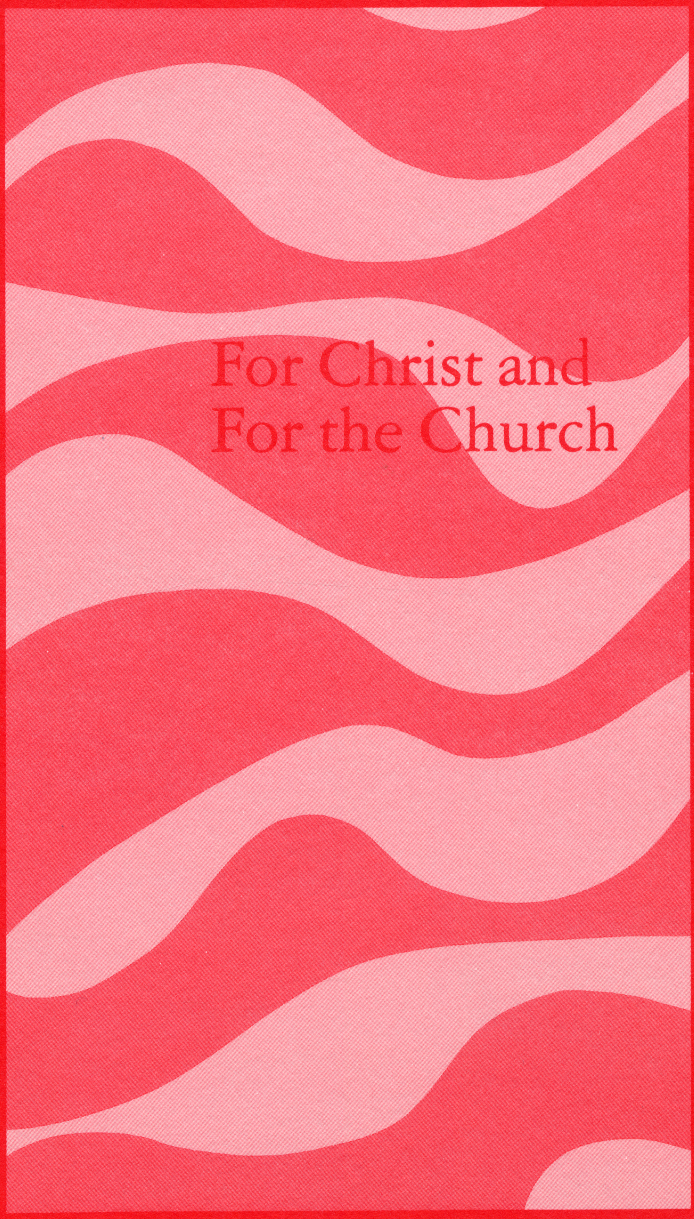
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Editor: **Ralph W. Klein**
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Editor of Book Reviews: **Jay C. Rochelle**
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Editor of Preaching Helps: **Robert H. Smith**
Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary

Associate Editor: **Norma Cook Everist**
Wartburg Theological Seminary

Assistant Editor/Circulation Manager: **Peggy B. Eldredge**

Editorial Board: **Karen Battle, Carol Rausch Gorski, Robert Klonowski, Stephen Krueger, Dennis Laskey, Richard Ramirez, Robert Trendel, Mary Vance-Welsh.**

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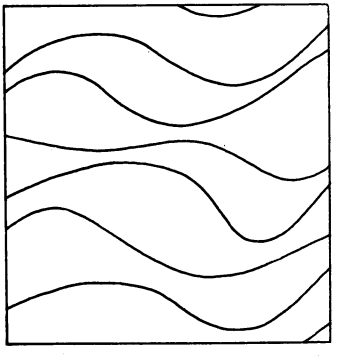
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For Christ and for the Church

Robert H. Fischer turned 70 this year. Of course, such chronology is really not so important to a church historian like Bob, who embodies the belief that history is more than dates and "one thing after another." To him history often provides the opportune time for the church to be re-formed or the church to be re-united or the church to be loved. No one ever had a better colleague than we had in Robert Fischer; he always counted others better than himself.

When Richard Dishno and Dennis Laskey proposed this special issue in honor of Bob Fischer, they were doing much more than honoring their esteemed teacher. They wanted to bear witness to you and to the world of the greatness they had experienced in him. Bob himself, I suspect, would deflect such praise to where his heart is, to the dear Christ and to the church, whose history Bob retold by teaching, and whose present he shaped and still shapes.

Carl Braaten maintains that the church is the assembly of people who continue to believe and practice the claim that the Messiah is Jesus, and who know that the arrival of his kingdom is bound up with the mystery of the cross. God works through the church in two ways: pressing for the historical liberation of human beings in penultimate ways while at the same time bringing the hope of eternal salvation in the ultimate future. The Christian expectation of the kingdom of God calls for a critical participation in every situation in which the church finds itself. The doctrine of the two kingdoms is ecumenically relevant and a useful resource for drawing the right kind of distinctions between power and love.

Richard W. Dishno carries on the work of his famous teacher by retelling the story of Henry Warren Roth (1838-1919), onetime president of Thiel College, who was sent by the General Council to do mission work in Chicago. Roth ministered to a cosmopolitan church that was a forerunner of today's urban congregation. He managed the business affairs of the institution that was to become Passavant Hospital, and he had personal contact with the evangelist Dwight Moody. LSTC alumni and Cub fans will remember that he bought the land for the first Lutheran Seminary in Chicago, at Clark and Addison, the present site of Wrigley Field. Back then the land cost $101.57. The correspondence of Roth shows him as an advocate of a fully American church. He laid the foundation for Chicago to become a major center of Lutheranism. It really isn't that far from Wrigley Field to Higgins Road.

How should we understand the human condition in light of evolutionary development? What are the continuities between those evolutionary processes and Jesus Christ? **Philip Hefner** proposes that the entire nonhuman pre-history is God's way of introducing freedom into the cosmos and getting ready for the introduction of humans as created co-creators. We can think of the Christ event as an act of God to which we should adapt; our adaptation itself has an impact on the future of evolution. God's eschatological purpose is to perfect all that constitutes the creation, human beings included. We are all being drawn toward a shared destiny, which will determine what it means to be a true human being.

Kurt Hendel reports on the church orders of Johannes Bugenhagen (1485-1558), which led to liturgical reforms, the revitalization of education, and the establishment of a relief system for the poor. Faith-active-in-love is the theological basis for the care of the poor in Bugenhagen's theology; his establishment of "poor chests" met local needs. He insisted that the whole community must be concerned about the needy in its midst. Poor relief was to be a cooperative effort of the church and of secular government. Bugenhagen, Luther's own pastor, was an important voice of social consciousness during the 16th century.

Robert J. Marshall calls attention to the chief duties of episcopal ministries: advising and supporting congregations in their life of worship,

witness, and service. But the bishops' involvement in mission is often only second-hand: planning and soliciting support for mission outreach in the church and in the world. Bishops also implement mission by ordaining pastors, authorizing others to ordain, and serving pastors as a pastor. They provide a focus for unity in life and witness within areas comprising several eucharistic communities. Bishops have the difficult task of showing that the church has a transcendent nature and message and yet is significantly relevant to earthly life, including social reform. Lutheran bishops do not ordinarily make proclamations about issues in social justice, but they articulate the church's stance which has been achieved through commissions and legislative bodies made up of both lay and ordained participants.

Martin E. Marty observes that Christian congregations make civil life something more than obedience to civil law. Congregations are voluntary associations that serve their own people and promote the various ideas that shape mental habits in the civil society around them. Few other community agencies have anything like their ambition, resourcefulness, and scope. Congregations gather people of many minds and divided loyalties into arenas of open encounter. How they differ from single-issue associations! In history the most important things do not get written up because they are too close to us, too taken for granted. Such an underestimated contributor to civil life is the Sunday School, which has quietly gathered up the traditions, transmitted them from generation to generation, and helped to preserve the continuity which constitutes civilization.

David T. Priestley, himself an Anabaptist, argues that any construction of Luther and Lutheranism which is unsympathetic to Pietism ignores Pietism's rootage in Lutheran sources. Pietism's appeal to Lutheran parentage is in fact legitimate, while it is illegitimate to place Lutheranism and Pietism into a grace versus works polarization. This article reviews Luther's understanding of good works in the life of the justified sinner and shows what Pietism saw in him to support its own stands.

James A. Scherer recalls the erratic and vacillating behavior of Lutherans in ecumenical matters. An authentically Lutheran approach to ecumenical practice can do no better than to take the sufficiency of the

gospel as its guiding principle. As bilateral conversations came to be the major focus of inter-church activity for Lutherans, the ecumenical leadership of the World Council of Churches lost much momentum. Today's slogan is "unity in reconciled diversity." Reconciliation between heretofore hostile confessional groups can lead to deeper unity in Christ than would be possible by any other ecumenical methodology. Lutherans, and the ELCA in particular, need to demonstrate that reconciled diversity is a program that lends itself to implementation locally, regionally, and globally.

Franklin Sherman draws on the Lutheran concept of evangelical catholicism to discuss Christian ethics. A firm conviction of one's justification by grace alone, through faith, is a most useful platform for dealing with the vexed questions of the modern world. Lutheranism provides a middle way between Roman Catholic natural law and the Calvinistic drive toward world mastery. In every discussion of Christian ethics, however, we must acknowledge both a situational and a trans-situational element. Heed this dialectical advice: remember the commandments; consider your situation. We need to hear God's law that rebukes our excesses and God's grace that is sufficient to cover all our sins.

Frederick Wentz contrasts Philip Schaff and Samuel Simon Schmucker, two ecumenical pioneers of the 19th century. Schaff valued positively both medieval Roman Catholicism and the Reformation. Schmucker viewed Roman Catholicism negatively, but advocated a kind of reduced confessionalism that gave the impression of a scissors and paste mentality. Schmucker was a forerunner of the twentieth century federative movement. They both wanted a world evangelized to Christ and united in a fellowship that cordially embraces all Christians.

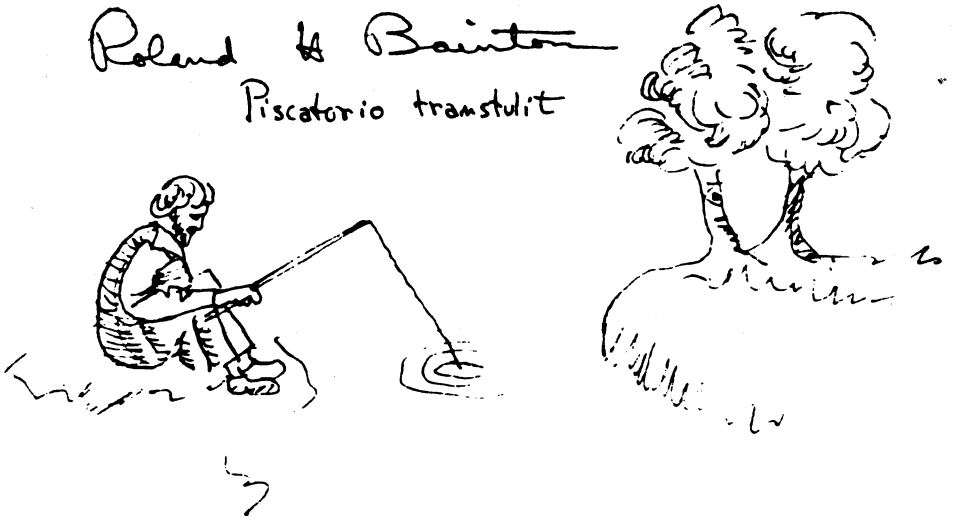
Jared Wicks, S. J., presents important information about a reform proposal of 1522, apparently written by Cajetan, the well-known opponent of Luther and founding father of modern Catholic systematic theology. Cajetan urged the new pope, Adrian VI, to force bishops to live in their dioceses so that they could carry out their supervision more effectively. He also wanted the bishops, who should be chosen by a college of electors from their diocese, to foster the further education of clergy. Finally, he

hoped for reform of the religious orders where discipline and study were at a low level. These were wise counsels for the church in any age, though they failed at that time since Adrian VI died only a year after coming to Rome.

Robert Fischer scarcely wanted anything less or anything more than "a world evangelized to Christ and united in a fellowship that cordially embraces all Christians." No wonder his colleagues, friends, and students cheerfully contributed to this jubilee issue in his honor! May God give him many more productive years.

Ralph W. Klein
Editor

P. S. The drawings of Robert Fischer in this issue were done by his own eminent teacher Roland Bainton.



A Dedication to Professor Robert H. Fischer

Richard Dishno
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

A truly memorable experience for generations of students at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and its predecessor, Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary at Maywood, was the return of a paper submitted to Professor of Church History Robert H. Fischer. Not only would the student receive a full running commentary in red markings on the margins, but he or she would also get a supplementary bibliography with suggestions for further research into the topic. Bob Fischer regarded such student papers as progress reports full of possibilities for future work. Each citation would be checked for accuracy. Students would often joke that the professor worked harder than they had in research projects. Such comments reflect on an academic career that can be characterized as a quest for excellence in service to the church.

Robert Fischer was born in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, on April 26, 1918, the last of the four children of the Rev. M. Hadwin and Alice Gortner Fischer. In 1925, Robert's father, a native of Ethel, Ontario, became the first Professor of Religious Education and English Bible at Gettysburg Seminary. The young Robert was very active in a wide variety of activities. Not only did he always excel in his studies, in debating, and in music, but he lettered in basketball and football at Gettysburg High School. Summers were spent at Camp Nawakwa in Pennsylvania where his father was director. It was while he was there that he made the decision to prepare for the Lutheran ministry.

Bob's years at Gettysburg College were marked by active participation in music, drama, fraternity, and Student Christian Association while he majored in philosophy. He graduated *summa cum laude* in 1939 and was class valedictorian. At Gettysburg Seminary, he found his interests turning to systematic theology and history of Christian doctrine. His mentors at Gettysburg were A. R. Wentz, Jacob M. Myers, Raymond T.

Stamm, and Harry F. Baughman. In his senior year, Bob found time to direct the seminary choir.

Upon graduation from seminary in 1942, Bob entered graduate studies at Yale University where he studied under Robert L. Calhoun, H. Richard Niebuhr, and Roland H. Bainton. At the time, Bainton, his *Doktorvater,* was busy writing his Luther biography, *Here I Stand,* and Bob remembers well graduate seminar students being invited to offer criticism. Bob formed a close relationship with his mentor. Bainton would often write notes to him in German or Latin. He took to calling Bob "Cardinalis Piscatorius" after the English bishop and cardinal John Fisher, opponent of Luther and martyr under Henry VIII. Bob responded that in order to acknowledge his mentor's preeminence, he would have to call Dr. Bainton "Papa" (pope) or "Sanctitas" (your holiness)! In 1947, Bob earned his Ph.D. from Yale with a dissertation entitled "*Propter Christum* in Luther's Early Theology."

On September 5, 1942, Bob married his high school sweetheart, Edna Mae Black of Gettysburg. While Bob was at Yale, Edna Mae worked as secretary to Dean Luther Weigle's committee preparing the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. The Fischers have one daughter, Susan Kathleen. She is a graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design and is married to James L. Wade III, an oncologist practicing in Decatur, Illinois. They have two children, Amanda Kathleen and James Robert.

While in New Haven, Bob accepted an invitation to minister at a small community church in Hartland, Vermont. In spite of wartime gasoline rationing, Bob enthusiastically picked up rural children and built the largest vacation church school in Vermont that year. When summer was over and he was about to leave Hartland, seventeen adults and children, influenced by his ministry,



asked to be baptized. After his graduation from Yale, Bob was advised by his father to seek further parish experience before teaching. He accepted a call as assistant pastor of Zion Lutheran Church, Sunbury, Pennsylvania. He was ordained by the Central Pennsylvania Synod of the United Lutheran Church in America on May 18, 1948.

In 1949, the chair of Church History at the Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary at Maywood became vacant, and President Armin G. Weng approached Bob. He accepted the call and began teaching in the Fall of 1949. Bob consulted several senior scholars for advice on developing his academic career. He especially took to heart the advice of Leonard J. Trinterud of McCormick Seminary: "No historian can master every area of church history. I have tried to make original contributions in three areas: John Calvin, English Puritanism, and American Presbyterianism. For the rest, I just try to keep reasonably informed of the best modern scholarship." Bob, as a young professor

of church history, chose Luther and the Reformation, American Lutheranism, and Ecumenics as his areas of specialty.

As he began to be recognized internationally as a Luther scholar, Bob offered his students at least one elective on the Reformer each year. He was especially concerned that students understand well the underlying structure of Luther's writings. His students would leave the seminary with structural outlines that would help them apply the insights of Luther's thought in their parish ministries. Bob's many and varied contributions to research on Martin Luther reflect this concern that the message of Luther has great relevance for God's people today.

Bob's interest in American Lutheran history was especially important in 1962 when the Maywood seminary merged with three other seminaries (eventually joined by two others) to produce the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. He enthusiastically supported efforts to expand the ecumenical contacts and scholarly resources through relationships with sister seminaries and the University of Chicago Divinity School. He also worked on the graduate program of LSTC and was chairman of the faculty committee that designed the School of Missions at the seminary.

While these activities broadened the scope of Bob Fischer's already wide range of ecumenical and international contacts, he also stimulated students to explore the many strands of tradition out of which American Lutheranism and the seminary emerged. He worked with the library and church archives to preserve important books and documents from the last century. He always had a special interest in the work of William Passavant, founder of Maywood and catalyst for numerous benevolent ministries of the church.

Throughout his teaching career, Bob creatively pursued new ways of approaching the age-old problem of Christian unity. Together with Father Jared Wicks of the Jesuit School of Theology in Chicago, he initiated Reformation courses that explored confessional issues from Roman Catholic, Calvinist, and Lutheran viewpoints. Students in those seminars in the mid-1970s remember listening with rapt attention as the two Reformation scholars worked with the primary documents and reached points of convergence. Bob took part in two bilateral dialogues: the Lutheran–Conservative Evangelical dialogue, 1980-81, and the Lutheran–Reformed dialogue, Series III, 1981-83. The latter dialogue produced the controversial "Invitation to Action" recommending mutual recognition of ministries and sharing of the Lord's Supper between Lutheran bodies and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Reformed Church in America. Bob strongly defended the work of the Lutheran–Reformed discussions and appeared before many church gatherings to argue that the time has come to heal the historic breach between the churches of the Reformation.

Throughout his teaching career, Bob creatively pursued new ways of approaching the age-old problem of Christian unity.

Several sabbatical years also contributed to the ecumenical scope of Bob's ministry at the seminary. In 1957-58, on assign-

ment from the Lutheran World Federation and the Lutheran Council of Great Britain, he established the Lutheran Tutorship at Oxford University. He was welcomed to the faculty of Mansfield College, the Congregational theological school at Oxford, by Principal John Marsh, a leading ecumenist. His task as Lutheran tutor was to train young pastors in England to serve exile congregations. In 1980, Bob's sabbatical took him to the Japan Lutheran Church seminary at Tokyo-Mitaka where he lectured on the Lutheran confessions. The Japanese church historian, Yoshikazu Tokuzen, translated the lectures orally for the students. He also lectured in Seoul and Hong Kong.

Bob's sabbatical in 1964-65 took him to Tübingen University, where he studied with the eminent historian, Hans Rückert. Bob worked on the papers of Luther's fellow Augustinian, Johann von Paltz, and on those of Luther's adversary, the Louvain professor Jacobus Latomus. For three months during this trip, Bob and Edna Mae went to Berlin where he served as interim pastor for the Lutheran American congregation. In 1972-73, Bob returned to Berlin to teach a course in American church history at the Kirchliche Hochschule.

Bob Fischer has been a participant in all seven of the International Congresses for Luther Research. A highlight of his work occurred in 1983, Luther's 500th year, when he read a paper in the restored Augustinian monastery at Erfurt where Luther was consecrated as a monk.

Besides his academic work, Bob and Edna Mae have taken an active part in community activities over the years. They were members of Emanuel Lutheran Church in Maywood from 1949 to 1967 and are presently members of Grace Lutheran Church, LaGrange, where he serves on the church council. Bob has always been interested in music. He founded and directed the Maywood Seminary Choir and arranged several compositions for it. From 1949 to 1985 he served as accompanist, associate director, and arranger for the Suburban Veterans Chorus, a still flourishing not-for-profit men's ensemble which entertains in the five military and Veterans' Administration hospitals in the Chicago area. Out of proceeds from concerts the ensemble provides recreational equipment for the ex-service people in those hospitals. These gifts have now exceeded $100,000 in value. When he retired from the chorus, he was presented with a plaque bearing the following inscription:

TO DOCTOR BOB

Gentleman, scholar and
Musician extraordinary who can do it all—

Accompany discreetly,
Solo brilliantly;
Perform adroitly in the original key
Or any other on demand!

Create stellar choral arrangements
And sensitive piano backgrounds;

Able at the chorus's need
To drill us, exhort us, correct us, conduct us,
All with boundless patience and humor;

Above all able to listen and support us
Not simply from the fingers
... But from the heart.

Gentleman, scholar and musician extraordinary who can do it all—

His gentle and quiet ways reflected the strength of his faith in Jesus Christ.

Bob retired from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago in 1986. Since then, he and Edna Mae have lived alternately in Western Springs and at their winter home in Marco Island, Florida. While Bob has taken time to enjoy his family and improve his golf game, he has been only technically retired. Recently he has learned to use a computer and has continued to write. Scholars on both sides of the Atlantic eagerly await his critical edition of an important early Roman Catholic book against Martin Luther, *Articulorum Doctrinae Fratris Martini Lutheri per Theologos Lovanienses damnatorum Ratio* (1520) by Jacobus Latomus, which Bob is preparing for the German series, *Corpus Catholicorum.*

Robert H. Fischer has been an extraordinary teacher in the church. His students will remember him not only for the excellence of his scholarship and the exacting standards which he always expected of them, but also for the quality of his character. Bob was not only a teacher to his students but also a pastor and friend. His gentle and quiet ways reflected the strength of his faith in Jesus Christ, a faith that was shared with his students. Bob always began each class with a prayer that students and professor would receive God's gifts and blessing through their work together. Generations of students know that this prayer has been answered as people throughout the church have benefitted from the ministry of this man who has had such an impact on the future pastors of the church.

Truly then, it is appropriate that we pay tribute in love to a rare servant of God in his seventieth year. Bob's faculty colleagues, his many friends, and former students join his wife, Edna Mae; his daughter, Susan, and her family; his sister, Marian Hammer; and his brothers, Alan and H. Keith Fischer, in thanking God for his ministry and life with us. In grateful appreciation, we dedicate this special issue of *Currents in Theology and Mission* to the Reverend Dr. Robert Harley Fischer.

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The Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms Re-Examined

Carl E. Braaten
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

During the last half century, from the 1930s to the 1980s, we have been witnesses to the making of a new doctrine: the doctrine of the two kingdoms. When I first studied the history of doctrine, I was surprised to learn from Adolf Harnack's *History of Dogma* how the classic doctrines of the church, the Trinitarian, Christological, and Sacramental doctrines, are not to be found in the Bible as such, but are products of later developments in Hellenistic Christianity. Theologians have argued about that hypothesis ever since. Similarly, when I was taught Lutheran theology, I learned about the doctrine of the two kingdoms, assuming it could be traced right back to Luther and the Lutheran Confessions. It was a good time later that I was informed that the doctrine was the product of a late development within Lutheranism that goes back only to the 1930s.

The two-kingdoms doctrine, like Trinity and Christology, was born and raised in controversy, and there is still no consensus within world Lutheranism on its right interpretation, or on how to apply it in a given situation, say, in a decision for capitalism or socialism. Of course, to give a balanced picture we can argue that just as the seeds of the Trinitarian and Christological dogmas are to be found in the Scriptures, so also reams of documents have been written to prove that the seeds of the doctrine of the two kingdoms are to be found in Luther. But we are still faced with the paradox, that although Lutherans agree that the doctrine of the two kingdoms is one of their fundamental principles—by which they would distinguish themselves from Calvinists and Roman Catholics, not to mention other majorities or minorities to the left or the right—still every school of Lutheran theology quotes Luther in support of its own brand of political and social ethics.

Lutheran churches all over the world are deeply engaged in the question of the church and its social responsibility. A large share of every convention is given to debates on issues that deal with the secular realm, issues

of peace and justice. This is something virtually new in Lutheranism, that the church gets together in solemn assembly and talks not only about its intramural affairs, but about politics and economics and family issues, all of which have traditionally been placed in the left hand of God. It's happening all over the world, as if Lutherans are trying to make up for lost time, in Ethiopia, Namibia, South Africa, and both parts of Germany. Perhaps it's the boomerang effect of the misuse of the doctrine of the two kingdoms by the Lutheran "heretics" in Germany who used the doctrine to justify Hitler and National Socialism in the 1930s. It was Karl Barth who slapped the label of the "two kingdoms" on Lutheran theology. It was no doubt the justifiable sting of its attack that drove Lutherans more deeply into their sources and into a conscientious posture of self-criticism. Lutherans are not proud of the role their doctrine permitted them to play in the support of Hitler's regime. There can't be anything so great about a doctrine that can ideologically legitimate the support of Christians for racism and fascism, for the denial of human rights and the treatment of Jews as non-persons. You would think with such a bad conscience Lutherans would run from the two kingdoms doctrine as a plague on their house, but that's not been the case. There has been in fact a great inflation of interest in the doctrine of the two kingdoms. Many people are amazed to find that Lutherans are more committed than ever to a fresh revision of the doctrine, after the fall of the Nazi regime, even as case upon case of its vicious abuse on the part of Lutheran churches comes clearly to light.

The twentieth century misuse of the doctrine of the two kingdoms was prepared in 19th century Germany.

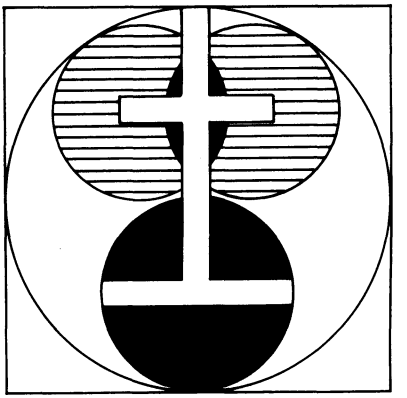
The twentieth century misuse of the doctrine of the two kingdoms was prepared in nineteenth century Germany. It was this 19th century model that came to America on the boats bringing the Lutheran immigrants. This is the dualistic model that developed within Lutheranism. It was the dominant model among the rank and file of Lutheran bishops, pastors, and lay people during the Vietnam war. One Lutheran bishop wrote in his episcopal letter: "Don't preach anything controversial," while a few Lutherans were in jail and in the streets protesting the criminal actions of their government and the military in a war that most Americans now agree was unjust and unwise. According to this dualistic model, which is a Lutheran heresy, there are two separate spheres, one having to do with this earthly life, politics and all, the other with eternal life, such as the salvation of souls. The champion of this dualistic model was the Lutheran dogmatician Christian Luthardt, who wrote a manual of dogmatics which every Lutheran pastor virtually memorized. In a dogmatic proposition he wrote: "The Gospel has absolutely nothing to do with outward existence but only with eternal life.... It is not the vocation of Jesus Christ or of the Gospel to change the orders of secular life and establish them anew.... Christianity wants to change a person's heart, not his external situation." In the same vein, a Lutheran jurist wrote that the issues of public life "should remain un-

touched by the proclamation of the Gospel, completely untouched." This is the dualistic scheme that prepared the way for the neo-Lutheran support of National Socialism. It accounts for the characteristically Lutheran habit of thinking in two realms, putting the Word and Sacraments into one, public life in all its political, economic, and social aspects into the other.

In the 1930s, Lutheran champions of the two kingdoms doctrine advanced the thesis, just after Hitler's rise to power, that "there is no contradiction between an unconditional allegiance to the gospel, on the one hand, and a similarly unconditional allegiance to the German Nazi state, on the other." Karl Barth objected in a counter-thesis that anyone who can speak in such a fashion of two unconditional allegiances has placed himself outside the evangelical church, and has indeed become a heretic. Karl Barth was absolutely right in spotting this Lutheran heresy of defining the church's business in churchly terms—as preaching the gospel, administering the sacraments, and caring for souls—while in a separate realm the government is in charge of the nation's life, foreign policy, and civil rights.

Recently it has been curious to see that not only Lutherans are afflicted with this heresy. In the debate over the pastoral letter of the Catholic Bishops on nuclear freeze, Catholic lay persons like William Buckley and Phyllis Schlafly protested that bishops have no moral authority beyond their spiritual competence... a fine display of a dualistic mentality of which Lutherans have no monopoly. Anyway, it is clear that this dualistic model has no power to motivate Christians to the front line in the struggles for peace and justice.

For a long time I've been convinced of the limitations of the hermeneutical approach that tries to solve twentieth century problems by dipping mainly into a Lutheran



barrel of resources going back to the sixteenth century. For one thing, the appeals to Luther and the Lutheran tradition, by themselves, have no compelling ecumenical significance. Why should Calvinists, Catholics, Orthodox, and others bend their knees to the authority of the Lutheran tradition? We must go deeper into the biblical tradition, to the documents of our common Christian heritage, and learn what the two kingdoms doctrine is all about.

Some Lutherans are saying, "Let's scrap the doctrine." Like the Trinity, you can't find it in the Bible, and besides, a doctrine that has been so frequently misused in support of unChristian and inhumane practices has been totally disqualified from an ecumenical point of view. A doctrine that seems to have worked subconsciously as an ideology for sanctioning the interests of the privileged and the powerful, and accounts for that quietistic and pietistic resignation to the powers-that-be should be thrown into the trash heap of useless tradition. I agree that's what Lutherans ought to do, *if* they cannot do better than they've done to explain its meaning in an ecumenical way, in a way that is deeply grounded in the gospel binding on all Christians, and that is no mere flag-waving symbol of the Lutheran tradition. For the

essence of the doctrine is ecumenical, that is, universally Christian, or it is not even Lutheran. Theodore Tappert, the editor of our current English Language edition of the *Book of Concord*, often stated: "Any Lutheran who wants to be only Lutheran is no Lutheran at all." And that is nowhere more applicable than in this case of the two kingdoms doctrine.

I do not believe we should junk it. I believe that this doctrine has to do "with the fine art of drawing a distinction," as Trutz Rendtorff, a Lutheran ethicist at the University of Munich, has put it. This fine art is essential to be able to distinguish between what is specifically Christian and what is generically human. For there is a duality, a double wittedness, at the heart of the Christian vision that cannot be ironed out into a flat monism, a one-dimensional view of things.

This doctrine of the two kingdoms marks out the identity of the church within the global horizon of the politics of God and the divine governance of this world. This doctrine draws a distinction between two ways of God's working in the world, two strategies that God uses to deal with the powers of evil and the reality of sin, two approaches to human beings, to mobilize them for active cooperation in two distinctly different kinds of institutions. One is created as an instrument of governance seeking justice through the administration of law and the preservation of order, and the other as an instrument of the gospel and its ritual sacraments announcing and mediating an ultimate and everlasting salvation which only Christ can give in an act of unconditional love and personal sacrifice.

This is not something that only Lutherans know about. This distinction belongs to the Christian faith as such, one that does not stand or fall with the use of a particular slogan or doctrinal formula such as "the two kingdoms." We do not need to use that language at all, if we do not want to. After all, kings and kingdoms are out of fashion in the modern world, leaving us with a lot of translating to do.

Did not Jesus' expectation of the coming kingdom end as a miscarriage in the ongoing course of world events?

But it all began with Jesus of Nazareth, with Jesus' preaching of the kingdom of God. Actually, it began even further back; it began with Yahweh and the election of the Jews as a covenant people with a mission of blessing for all the nations, through the coming of a Messiah and the establishment of the rule of God. Jesus was a "good Jew" in relating the coming of the kingdom to the world, as the power of God to overthrow the dominion of Satan and to create a new world of lasting righteousness and blessedness. Jesus expected God to establish the power and glory of his Reign in the immediate future. But the whole world knows what happened. *We* call it the "good news," but from a more realistic point of view, it's just plain "bad news." The world has gone on, in spite of Jesus and his preaching of the kingdom; the world has gone on for the last two thousand years without any real visible empirical historical and human fulfillment. Where is the righteousness and where is the blessedness? Tell it to the dead people at Auschwitz. Tell it to the boat people floating

around in the South China Sea. Tell it to the dissidents rotting in the jails of oppressive governments... East and West and North and South. Did not Jesus' expectation of the coming kingdom end as a miscarriage in the ongoing course of world events? For when God comes in the power of his rule, the world must change. Things cannot remain as they are. God's coming Reign is the power to destroy all resistance to his rule and freely to grant his gracious love to those in desperate need of a new beginning—poor people, tax collectors, and whores. Poor people will become happy, when the kingdom comes. The hungry will be fed, when the kingdom comes, and those who weep will turn to laughter. There will be a turn-about of all things, a revolution to end all revolutions, when the kingdom comes. And this is all God's doing, not a result of human beings becoming more religious and doing good works, and not by military violence and political compromise.

Whatever the scholarly debates about the historical Jesus and the kingdom of God, it seems clear that the promise of Jesus' message that God was coming soon to put an end to misery was shattered by the power struggles that got Jesus nailed to the cross. So where was the fulfillment of Jesus' keen expectation of the coming of God and his kingdom, to make things right and people righteous? It was all shattered on the cross. The fulfillment did not come to pass as expected.

But after the crucifixion of this man we find a few friends of Jesus projecting upon the world an interpretation of his cross, in an absolutely paradoxical way, as the shape of the coming kingdom under the conditions of just this sick and suffering world. And this interpretation was clinched by the resurrection, and so the message *of* Jesus became fused with the apostolic message *about* Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection from the dead. That is the gist of the good news.

Alfred Loisy, the French Catholic modernist, said: "Jesus preached the kingdom of God, but what came was the church." Anyone who has lived in and with the church as long as we have knows that the church is a poor substitute for the expected kingdom. Many people cannot believe that Jesus could have founded the church, because he had greater expectations than that. But the only church we've got is the church we know, and the church, strictly speaking, is the assembly of the people who continue to believe and preach and practice the claim of the apostolic kerygma that the Messiah is Jesus, and the arrival of his kingdom is bound up with the mystery of his cross and resurrection. A corollary of this apostolic claim is that faith is the only mode of access to the salvation which the coming of God with his kingdom has established in the person of the crucified and risen Jesus.

Paul called this both a scandal to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. Sometimes we Christians have taken these as words of blame and accusation against Jews and Gentiles. I prefer to see these as words that place the burden on us who believe these paradoxical things. For where is the evidence that the Messiah has already arrived with his kingdom, if the world seems unchanged by the great news of its arrival? What sense does it make to say that the war has been fought and the victory is in the bag, while people are still getting killed and we are all perishing?

This claim of this message is what scandalizes the Jews, and it doesn't make any sense to the Greeks, to say that the Messiah has come but you can't see the kingdom. How is an invisible kingdom different from no kingdom at all, for people who have to live in a visible world, with visible bodies that have visible needs, and that long for

something more than an invisible salvation for invisible souls? Where is the evidence that the Messiah has already come with his kingdom? Did not Jesus himself promise that when the kingdom comes, there would be an end to suffering, oppression, poverty, hunger, and death? But world history shows that these bitter realities still continue; they have not been diminished in the slightest degree either by Christ or by his church.

What is the community of the endtime to do in the meantime?

I am trying to get down to the roots of the matter of the two kingdoms doctrine in the soil of its primitive Christian beginnings. The answer we have is something of an embarrassment. Our only answer in face of the facts is the apostolic one: The kingdom is "hiddenly" present in the person of the Messiah Jesus, and the Word of this event can only be received through faith in the power of the Spirit. All efforts to doctor up this bald proposition are cosmetic in nature. We can't prove it by the growth of the church, we can't prove it by the progress of civilization, and we can't prove it by the piety and morality of believers. Nevertheless, the early church did acknowledge that in the end the kingdom will also transform and transfigure the world in a magnificent future. But that is obviously not yet the case. If it were, we wouldn't need anything like the two kingdoms doctrine.

The root of the two kingdoms doctrine lies in the answer of the early church to this question: What is the community of the endtime to do in the meantime? What are we Christians to do in this field of great tension between the already-now of the kingdom in the coming of the Messiah Jesus and the not-yet of the kingdom? The arrival of the final kingdom is still outstanding with regard to the world itself. But we have the pledge of its promise in Jesus Christ in a preliminary, provisional, and proleptic way—really present for the eyes of faith. The imminent end, still outstanding for the world, has already become in its very transcendence a form of immanence within the world in the personal presence of Jesus and the spiritual power of the gospel, through the Word and the Sacraments that give birth to faith and the church.

So again, what is this community of the endtime to do in the meantime? In the early heat of this tension, some radical Christians answered, "Nothing, nothing at all." The world be damned. The kingdom is coming soon to put an end to everything. Don't get involved. You don't invest money in a house soon to be demolished. The rapture will sweep us up into a cloud of other-worldly bliss. This approach turns the church into an eschatological sect, unable to mesh gears with world history. This was the way of early Christian apocalypticism. A little later, the tension was collapsed in the opposite direction, not complete separation from this literally God-forsaken world, but rather identification with its superior wisdom and science. This was the way of Christian Gnosticism, where Christ becomes only another name for what the sophisticated intelligentsia of this world can know through their own philosophy. The secularized, world-conforming Christianity is the modern equivalent of this Gnostic type.

The mainline of Christian orthodoxy moved forward neither by way of apocalyp-

tic separation nor by way of gnostic identification; it dubbed them both as heresies. But then it made a grave mistake of its own; it tended to identify the reality of the *basileia* with itself, and produced exaggerated claims about the realization of the kingdom in its own dominically founded magisterium and ministerium, in its inspired and infallible canon and creed and cult and offices. And the result was the triumphalistic imperial Christianity of East and West, a bondage from which our churches are still suffering to a large degree, and from which the Reformation only produced a half-way deliverance, or we would not have all these State-church models of strangulated Lutheranism.

What we need to learn again as churches and theologians is the fine art of drawing distinctions—and that's what the two kingdoms doctrine is all about. Rejecting the easy extremes of dualistic separation or monistic identification, we must learn to draw the right distinction between our Christian identity and our worldly involvements. We must still learn in modern terms the fine art of drawing a distinction between law and gospel, between justice and justification, and that means between the works of the left and the right hands of God. The Christian message in its totality must speak of the two ways that God is working in the world, pressing for the historical liberation of human beings in penultimate ways, while bringing the hope of eternal salvation in the ultimate future.

Particularly today we must learn to draw the right distinction between liberation and salvation. I frequently hear liberation theologians say that liberation and salvation are two words for the same thing. This leads to the old heresy of identification. The best government in the world cannot preach the gospel. A perfect social system could not mediate the love and acceptance a single human being needs to live a single day. There are many people fighting valiantly on the frontlines of legitimate liberation movements; some of them do it without reference to the name of Christ and his gospel. The hope for liberation is burning in the hearts of millions of little people of all religions and ideologies struggling to liberate themselves from conditions of grinding poverty and brutal tyranny. Once they win this freedom, they have gained something valid and valuable, and that is a generic human right, but this simply cannot and absolutely must not be *identified* with that one thing needful—the freedom of the gospel for which Christ has set us free (Gal. 5:1).

In Germany several years ago a debate was published on the theme: "Must a Christian be a Socialist?" Gollwitzer and his friends said "Yes," while Pannenberg and Jüngel said "No." They were in fact debating this business of the fine art of drawing the right distinctions. Which side is right, the Christians for socialism or the Christians for capitalism? When we are faced with such concrete choices, we may learn once again the permanent wisdom of the two kingdoms doctrine, which tries to teach the fine art of drawing distinctions. To those who would identify Christianity with socialism or with capitalism, we would have to say "No." It ain't necessarily so. And to those who would

The way of critical participation is a way of the Christian conscience cleansed by the gospel.

separate the church from critical participation in the systems and structures that affect our common life, we will likewise have to say "No." The proper way is neither that of identification nor separation, but critical participation, watch-dog politics, sometimes saying "Yes" to the institutions of society, giving them support and legitimation, and sometimes saying "No," even when that means the church must suffer for the sake of peace and justice. The way of critical participation is a way of the Christian conscience cleansed by the gospel.

In the case of democratic capitalism, we can surely be grateful as beneficiaries of its many gifts of liberty, democracy, opportunity, equality under law, etc. But at the same time we must sensitize our conscience to be suspicious of the moral rhetoric that sanctions the system as a whole which functions in the self-interest of privileged classes and powerful groups.

Would not our critical participation as Christians cause us to challenge the system of capitalism that makes supreme the virtue of competition rather than sharing, that defines freedom as the right to maximize profits rather than serving people, that places the trust of society in the natural laws of economics to create universal harmony, as though nature has an invisible hand guiding the market mechanism?

Although we live and breathe within a capitalist setting, and most of us profit a great deal from it, would not our critical participation prevent us from baptizing its chief constitutive elements: competition, private ownership of the major industries on which the well-being of the whole society and all its members depend, the license to do absolutely anything in the market place short of breaking the laws, even though this releases the natural drives of greed and allows the amassing of enormous private and corporate wealth that buys political influence so as to make of our democracy a shadow of the real thing?

The same kind of critical participation would make us see the flaws of socialism. Christians may indeed share a vision of a society built on the principles of equality and justice, a society in which no group or class is dominated and oppressed by others. But the tragedy of the socialist way is that the freedom of individuals is sacrificed for some long range goals that seem to be indefinitely postponed. Wherever the socialist (Marxist) revolution has been successful, this has led to some of the most enslaving political conditions known to humankind. So many socialist revolutions have started with a glorious dream, and ended in a nightmare of totalitarian domination.

My point is not to recommend a choice between capitalism or socialism, but to hold that the Christian expectation of the kingdom of God calls for a critical participation in every system in which the church finds itself, and generates a healthy suspicion of every system that promises the true realization of human being, whether to the right or the left or in the middle. I believe the Christian community that learns the fine art of drawing a proper distinction between the two kingdoms should be like a swimmer with head out of water and eyes on the shore, *in* the world but not *of* the world, in a posture of critical participation, and not getting pulled under by the currents that clamor for absolute justification, that promise liberation and then call it salvation. When all others are swimming around with their heads under water, the moral insights of the Christian community are badly needed by all. Along these lines I believe we can make a compelling case that what the two kingdoms doctrine is all about is ecumenically relevant and a useful resource for drawing the right distinctions for Christian existence in the world today.

Chicago Ministry in the 1890s: The Journal of Henry Warren Roth

Richard W. Dishno
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

While Robert Harley Fischer has been most recognized for his work in Reformation studies, he also has made significant contributions to the field of American church history. Especially important has been his interest in preserving valuable primary sources from 19th century Lutheranism. In mid-career, Fischer found a rich cache of letters, papers, and journals in the attic of the home of Marietta Gertrude ("Mettie") Roth of Greenville, Pennsylvania. She was the adopted daughter of the Rev. Dr. Henry Warren Roth, eminent leader of General Council Lutheranism, confidante of and coworker with William A. Passavant, Thiel College president and a founder of the Chicago Lutheran Seminary.[1]

Roth corresponded widely with recognized leaders in all the synods of Lutheranism and saved all his letters. Within the collection of his papers are not only confidential evaluations of church leaders but also receipts from the smallest of business transactions. For years, Dr. Fischer has painstakingly transcribed and catalogued the materials and has exposed his students to the new insights that emerge from careful study of them.[2]

Henry Warren Roth was a descendant of Johann Rothe, a pioneer Moravian Indian missionary who came to Pennsylvania in

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[1]"Mettie" was actually Roth's niece, but was adopted by H. W. and Elizabeth Roth when her mother, Roth's sister, died shortly after she was born. Dr. Fischer wrote of his work with the Roth papers in a paper presented to the Lutheran Historical Conference in October, 1966, "New Light on Passavant and His Era," *Essays and Reports*, vol. 2 (St. Louis: Lutheran Historical Conference, 1968), 22-23.

[2]This article grows out of a project to put the Roth corpus on computer disks, a task shared by several doctoral students at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

1756 from Saarmund, Brandenburg-Prussia.[3] The family has included numerous Lutheran ministers and lay people who have made many and various contributions to church life.[4] Henry Warren (1838-1918) and his brothers, D. Luther, a missionary pastor in Nova Scotia, and Theophilus B., a pastor in Utica, New York, were especially significant in General Council work. H. W. (known as "Warren" to his friends) served as the first secretary of the General Council and was business manager for many of the institutions founded by W. A. Passavant. A colorful characterization of him was presented by J. C. Jensson:

> In any assembly of the church where Henry Warren Roth sits, he is sure to be a conspicuous figure, both for the large head, crowned with a profusion of hair, and for the forceful remarks accompanied with the flashing of the lustrous eye and the entire action of the whole body.[5]

A Parish Ministry in Chicago

After serving as president of Thiel College from 1875 to 1887, Henry Warren Roth was sent by the Pittsburgh Synod of the General Council to be pastor of Wicker Park Lutheran Church in Chicago. The Wicker Park Church had been founded in 1879 as a western outpost for the far-flung English-speaking enterprises of the "Missionary Synod." While the membership rolls of the many German and Scandinavian language Lutheran congregations in the city had flourished through the arrival of immigrants, English Lutheranism had experienced many difficulties in Chicago. Both the General Synod and the General Council had tried several times to establish English-speaking parishes before achieving success. It was only due to the unceasing efforts of Passavant that English-speaking Lutherans established a firm beachhead.

The Wicker Park neighborhood was a part of the Northwest Side of the city where upwardly mobile sons and daughters of immigrants gathered to erect fine homes reflective of their new status. The leadership of the congregation was in the hands of men who had been successful in various professional and business enterprises in the city. Among the most active were F. W. Belz, general manager of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and Dr. Niles T. Quales, a prominent Norwegian physician. Roth faithfully recorded meetings with these prominent people on an almost weekly basis.

Roth's journals for 1890 through 1892 present a picture of a congregation that was quite different from that of the struggling immigrant churches in metropolitan Chicago. In many ways it was a forerunner of the urban Lutheranism that would emerge in the twentieth century. Wicker Park Lutheran Church had a multi-ethnic membership that reflected its neighborhood. Roth recorded the names of members in various

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[3]The biography of this colonial minister was written by David Luther Roth, *Johann Roth: Missionary* (Greenville, PA: by the author, 1922). H. W. Roth assisted his brother in researching this book. Several of his letters are included in it, and he referred to a visit to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in his journal entries for June 1892.

[4]Most recently, a Roth family member, Mrs. Amalie Roth Shannon of Tempe, Arizona, was nominated as a candidate for Vice President of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

[5]J. C. Jensson, *American Lutheran Biographies* (Milwaukee: A. Houtkamp and Son, 1890), 628. Roth's personal copy of Jensson's work, in which he made numerous corrections and additions, is in the Library of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

Roth's journal entries reflect a ministry tailored to this Americanized congregation.

places in the journal, and it is striking that no single group emerges as dominant. Transplanted Pennsylvanians worked alongside Scandinavians and Germans in the congregation. Roth was careful at many points to emphasize the "English" character of his work. Tucked in the journal for April 1892 is an article on the church that appeared in the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* on April 11 entitled "German Lutherans." Roth scratched out the word "German" and penciled in "English." Indeed, Norwegian names appear most frequently in the parish records. In a recent book, Odd S. Lovell has noted the Norwegian element in the neighborhood:

> Mansions and elegant houses in massive stone conspicuously displayed the wealth of the immigrant elite. Norwegians called this district "Homansbyen," after an exclusive section of Oslo. All of this... suggests the attitude and behavior of a parvenu social group eager to establish its position.[6]

The members of Wicker Park Church were thoroughly at home in America. A number of them had Americanized their names, and there is little in the journals to indicate interest in preserving ethnic origins in church life.

Roth's journal entries reflect a ministry tailored to this Americanized congregation. Printed bulletins, colorful Easter cards, youth meeting announcements, souvenirs from Ladies Aid Society meetings, and printed stewardship letters are tucked into the pages. On July 15, 1891, he recorded that 500 people attended the annual Sunday School picnic at Morton Grove. Tipped into the journal is a ticket for the special chartered train and a flyer advertising:

> Same lovely place we had last year. Big Trees. Cool Shade. Green Grass. Old Friends and a Day Off. Picnic Dinner. Merry Games and Good Company. Lots of Prizes, Sport and Fun.

The impression is that of an affluent congregation which provided much activity for its members.

The activities of the congregation were often better attended than the worship services. Roth dutifully recorded the estimated attendance at each service. It averaged about 100 people at each Sunday service. The highest attendance recorded was 415 on Easter Sunday of 1892. Communion was celebrated four times a year. In 1890, an average of 50 people communed at each service. Roth used the 1890 figures in a sermon delivered on January 11, 1891, to challenge the people to reach further into the neighborhood with the gospel of salvation.

In spite of the affluence of the congregation, Roth was not tempted to preach the so-called "Gospel of Wealth" that was so prominent among Protestants in the 1890s. On Sunday, July 5, 1891, he preached on Matthew 6:19-21 and took up the question of

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[6]Odd S. Lovell, *A Century of Urban Life: The Norwegians in Chicago before 1930* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press for the Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1988), 172.

earthly treasures. He told his congregation that earthly treasures are perishable and precarious. He spoke of presidents and cashiers who break banks and quoted New York Central Railroad president Chauncey Depew to the effect that eight-tenths of all wealthy men lose their fortunes during their lifetimes.[7] He then went on, paraphrasing Luther, "A man's treasure is his God. He has it with him in sleep; carries it with him awake; thinks of it always, loves it. He makes it his God." He then urged the people to lay up treasures in heaven through faith in Jesus Christ. Roth returned to the same theme in a sermon preached on July 17, 1892, in Prospect, Pennsylvania.[8] In it he stated that rich men's fortunes are only objects "for heirs to fight over—names soon forgotten." It is interesting to note that this sermon was preached in Western Pennsylvania only 18 days after the beginning of the famous Carnegie Steel strike in Homestead, but Roth made no reference to that event.

Indeed, the Roth journals contain very few references to the political and social issues of the early 1890s.[9] In a sermon preached on September 27, 1891, he spoke of marriages being destroyed "by State laws contrary to God's law." He noted in particular the easy divorces available in the Dakotas, Montana, and Florida. In 1892, Roth took slight notice of Democratic convention crowds in Chicago, but he withheld further comment until election day, when he expressed surprise about the size of the vote in Grover Cleveland's defeat of Benjamin Harrison. Roth's attitude toward church involvement in politics is perhaps best summed up in a sermon preached on January 11, 1891:

> Salvation is what the soul longs for, deliverance from sin. That is what the Pastor is to preach: not politics, or civil governments, or economic questions—get the soul right, conscious of sin & freed from sin by Jesus, & the individual will in all things try to do right as his enlightened mind, his quickened conscience & his judgment will indicate. Salvation from sin through Jesus, the need of such salvation, the Pastor is to press upon the people.

On only one occasion did Roth directly involve himself with political action. In September, 1892, a saloon was scheduled to open across from Wicker Park Church. Roth held a congregational meeting for the purpose of protesting the liquor license. He then went to City Hall with a delegation to see the mayor. Mayor Hempstead Washburne and the chief of police assured Roth that they would prevent the opening if it was possible within the limits of state law.

Roth evidently preached from his journal. Each sermon is carefully outlined and numbered alongside the text citation. The sermons are carefully constructed and are rich with biblical allusions. While he used few contemporary illustrations, the sermons are peppered with examples from history, both ecclesiastical and secular. The theol-

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[7]The Depew quotation came from Roth's Sunday paper, the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* for July 5, 1891. The small clipping is tipped into the journal. Roth wrote on the article that it was from a "speech at Woodstock, Conn." Depew was later a New York senator.

[8]A penciled notation indicates that this sermon was also preached at Wicker Park on July 2, 1893.

[9]Some glimpses into contemporary events can be had by looking at the many newspaper clippings in the journal. On the back of the article on the seminary founding in the August 18, 1891 *Chicago Tribune* is a piece in which the Republicans of the North Side complain of Democratic votes on the South Side being held back during the count. (Some things do not change in Chicago!)

ogy, while not particularly imaginative, is sound confessional Lutheranism. Roth had been involved in the earlier American Lutheranism controversy and had no sympathy with those who would prescribe "new measures" revivals for the church. Little if any of the sentimentality so common in middle-class urban Protestant churches of the time appears in the sermons. At the same time, Roth did not refer at all to the questions of biblical criticism or modern science that were being aired in the 1890s. The sermons are literate creations, well-suited for the educated, upwardly-mobile Lutherans of Wicker Park.

The Missionary Spirit in Chicago

Henry Warren Roth's ministry was not limited to the confines of Wicker Park Church while he was in Chicago. As Passavant's co-worker, he shared the vision so well described by Robert Fischer:

> He wanted his beloved Lutheran Church in America to become self-conscious and aggressive.... He wanted his church not only pure in faith but holy in life, and beyond that, crowning everything, active in service. What we need, he declared, is not only a worshipping and witnessing but also a working church.[10]

Roth's journal records his numerous activities in the Passavant enterprises. He managed the business affairs for what would become the Passavant Hospital in Chicago.[11] He journeyed to Milwaukee to oversee the English Lutheran mission and the Deaconess Hospital. He supervised the work of the hospital at Jacksonville, Illinois. The journal records much journalistic activity as Roth corresponded with Passavant's *Workman* and the *Young Lutheran.*

The Passavant vision included outreach to those who were not of a familiar Lutheran background. Roth was particularly interested in Jewish missions in Chicago. In September, 1891, he visited the Chicago Hebrew Mission. On the back of a Yiddish language bulletin inserted in the journal he made a somewhat garbled note about a certain rabbi who was trying to frighten the people away. On three separate occasions, Roth recorded the conversion of Jews who joined Wicker Park Church.[12] On June 11, 1891, Roth noted that he attended the dedication of Kehilath Anshe Mayriv Synagogue on the South Side.[13]

Roth's concern for Lutheran unity led to many contacts with immigrant congregations and pastors. Many of his members came from these congregations, and he seldom missed an opportunity to bring greetings at special services. On several occasions immigrants sought his help in beginning congregations. For example, in June, 1892, three Finnish Lutherans came to him with the news that fourteen families were meeting together with the aim of starting a church.

The Wicker Park pastor was quite careful to cultivate good relationships with the

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[10]Robert H. Fischer, "New Light on Passavant and His Era," 19.

[11]This is now part of Northwestern Hospital in Chicago. On November 20, 1891, Roth recorded that Passavant offended a lawyer by refusing to accept a money contribution from a charity ball. This is ironic since the Passavant Cotillion now stands at the very pinnacle of the Chicago society scene.

[12]One of Roth's Jewish converts, A. Schapp, became one of the first four students at Chicago Lutheran Seminary along with two Icelanders and a Norwegian.

[13]This well-known building is now Pilgrim Baptist Church at 33rd Street and Indiana Avenue.

Swedes of the Augustana Synod, a member of the General Council. In May, 1891, he went to Rock Island, Illinois, where he was the Commencement speaker for Augustana College and Theological Seminary.

Occasionally Roth's work with other Lutherans led to even wider ecumenical contacts. In an anecdote recorded on March 4, 1891, he remembered his meeting Dwight L. Moody:

> Went to Norwegian ch. Cor. Erie & Ontario, where in Oct. 1864, I preached & met the now famous Mr. Moody. He asked me to address his North Star Mission in P.M. What shall I talk about? "Talk Jesus, talk Jesus," said he. "Make it short."
>
> I began my remarks to a large school & tapered to a close when it seemed to me that I had talked long enough. He noticed that I was closing & as he sat behind me, plucked my coat skirts, saying "Go ahead, go ahead."

Since the 1850s, William Passavant had envisioned Chicago as a theological center for the Lutheran Church. Roth later reflected on the strategic planning for the seminary:

> Chicago seemed to be the geographical and logical center for the location of such a seminary. Here would be brought together the Swede, the Norwegian, the Dane, the German, the English, all nationalities. They would learn to know and understand each other. Thus in the end the great Lutheran Church would be conserved and its unity happily advanced.[14]

The journal makes clear the critical role played by H. W. Roth in the founding of the school. Passavant had an option to buy undeveloped property at the corner of Addison and Clark in the newly annexed Lake View section of the city.[15] On April 10, 1891, Roth wrote that he closed the deal by paying $101.57 in back taxes. A week later, he was at the property measuring for improvements. Many of his days in the spring and summer of 1891 were spent meeting with architects and supervising construction. A decision was made to open the seminary in the fall. On May 30, Roth would write:

> The Rubicon is crossed—the die cast. Other onward steps must be taken. Lord grant faith & wisdom that right steps be taken & plans developed for the successful establishment of the Evangelical Lutheran Seminary at Chicago. The work is for the good of Thy Church—provide Thou as Thou alone canst for the full supply of every need. Bless & guide each step.

By October 1, the seminary was ready to open. After opening ceremonies, the board of the school elected Roth Professor of Practical Theology and Ecclesiastical History. Later in the week, Wicker Park Church would grant him three days a week to devote to teaching and his other work in the Passavant ministries. His colleague on the faculty was Dr. Revere Franklin Weidner, Professor of Dogmatic Theology and of Hebrew and Greek Exegesis. Weidner had been a professor at Augustana College and had close contacts with Swedish Lutherans. From the journal it is apparent that he and Roth found a close personal friendship as well as a congenial working relationship. Roth recorded that they often dined together and spent long hours planning for future expansion of the seminary. The exacting academic standards of Weidner and the practical attention to

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[14]"Address by the Rev. H. W. Roth, D.D., LL.D.," *The Chicago Lutheran Seminary Record* 21:4 (January 1917): 73-74.

[15]On this site now stands Wrigley Field, the home of the Chicago Cubs.

details of Roth helped ensure success for the seminary in its infant stage.

A good measure of the progress of the seminary in reaching for Passavant's vision of a broad inclusive Lutheran Church is found in Roth's comments of April 29, 1892:

> [Dr. Weidner and I] had dinner at the Sherman House. Revs. Abrahamson and Evald of the Augustana & Koerner of Indiana Synod were present. We had short talks and recitations from our students in Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish, Dutch (Hollandic), French, Hebrew, Pa. Dutch, Hoch-Deutsch & English.

Henry Warren Roth laid a solid foundation for the development of Chicago as a major center of the Lutheran Church.

In the spring of 1892, Roth and others began to make plans for a very visible Lutheran presence during the Columbian Exposition, the great world's fair of Chicago. They were convinced that it could be of great benefit to vigorous Lutheran ministry in the city and could bring sound financial backing for the seminary. The seminarians were released from classes in order to attend the first week's activities at the fair. On October 21, 1892, Roth recorded that he went downtown to hear John Ireland, Roman Catholic Archbishop of St. Paul, explain the purpose of the World Parliament of Religions. In 1893 this part of Roth's ever-expanding ministry would culminate in his speech about Lutheran growth at the great gathering in Chicago.[16]

In commenting on G. H. Gerberding's biography of W. A. Passavant,[17] Robert Fischer stated:

> The Roth corpus has already yielded light on some colorful subjects which Gerberding had treated in brief and deadpan fashion. Perhaps most tantalizing of all is Gerberding's studied neglect of the importance of Henry Warren Roth.... The neglect of Roth can only be deliberate.[18]

The journals left by Roth confirm this view of the importance of Roth in the development of American Lutheranism. His years in Chicago were critical ones for the development of the Lutheran Church in this country. The time of isolation as an immigrant church was beginning to give way to that of a visible fully American church. Passavant had the vision for the expanded place of Lutheranism within American society, and Roth provided a model for what its ministry would look like in the new century. By his hard work both as a parish pastor and as Passavant's chief lieutenant, Henry Warren Roth laid a solid foundation for the development of Chicago as a major center of the Lutheran Church. His legacy merits continued attention from students of American Lutheran history.

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[16]Walter R. Houghton, *Neely's History of the Parliament of Religion and Religious Congresses at the World's Columbian Exposition* (Chicago: F. Tennyson Neely, Publisher, 1894), 875.

[17]G. H. Gerberding, *Life and Letters of W. A. Passavant, D.D.* (Greenville, PA: The Young Lutheran Co., 1906).

[18]Fischer, "New Light," 28-29.

The Evolution of the Created Co-Creator

Philip Hefner
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Is the cosmos essentially friend or foe? We ask this question from the human point of view, of course. Given the billions of geological aeons and light years of astronomical distances which constitute the cosmos in which we wake up and find ourselves, do we find ourselves essentially at home or in a hostile environment? Are the elements out to destroy us or to edify us? The answer the Christian theologian gives is this: the cosmos is a creation; therefore, ultimately it is friend.

Our task in this essay[1] will be to examine the ways in which the theory of evolution is potentially important to Christian theology. In particular, we will focus on the Christian doctrine of the human being within the wider *locus* of creation. Just how should we understand the human condition in light of evolutionary development and in light of the Christian belief that the cosmos is a creation? Toward this end we will first cite the problem: the long evolutionary history of the non-human cosmos seems to swallow up any significance for the human race; therefore, it seems that the cosmos is not a creation. Yet we want to affirm divine purpose in the evolutionary processes. Following this formulation of the concern, we will identify three different approaches to relating evolutionary concepts to theology: the reforming, the historical, and the apologetic. We will then examine the apologetic approach and identify a number of issues to which Christian theologians should give attention. Turning finally to the reforming approach, we will define the human being as a "created co-creator" and draw out its implications within an evolutionary-conscious understanding of the doctrine of creation. All along we will work with the methodological assumption that theological theories should be commensurate—though not necessarily identical—with scientific theories about the world.

It will be my material contention that the evolving cosmos is an ongoing creation. The complex interaction in the coevolution of genetic and cultural information, mediated by the human brain and selected by the system of forces that selects all things, can be said to be the means God has chosen to

[1]The author acknowledges the inestimable contribution of Prof. Ted Peters in shaping this article.

unfold the divine intention and to bring all of nature to a new stage of fulfillment. This entails a corollary understanding: the human being is God's created co-creator, whose purpose is the modifying and enabling of existing systems of nature so that they can participate in God's purposes in the mode of freedom.

Creation and the Theory of Evolution

The concept of evolution has been a difficult one for Christian theologians to handle. Since Charles Darwin formulated it in 1859, many church leaders have rejected it because it seems to leave out any divine role in the ongoing creative process. Numerous theologians have accepted the concept, but even these acceptors have done relatively little toward reformulating Christian doctrine to make it both commensurate with evolutionary theory yet faithful to the biblical tradition. The task of reformulating is one which needs to appear on the theological agenda in the near future.

One subitem which must appear on this agenda is the enormous time scale needed for evolutionary development and the question regarding the significance of the human species which this raises. To put it in perspective, we note that the universe most likely came into existence with the Big Bang about 18 billion years ago; the earth's crust congealed about 4 billion years ago; dinosaurs flourished from 180 million to 63 million years ago; our important ancestor, *homo erectus*, flourished 600,000 to 350,000 years ago. If we were to plot this sequence of events on a calendar with one day equaling 14 million years and one hour equaling a half million years, our natural history would look like this: on January 1 the earth's crust congealed; dinosaurs appeared on December 21; Neanderthal man arrives only at 11:50 p. m. on New Year's eve. Relative to the overall history of the natural cosmos, the role of the human species is staggering in its minuteness.

Yet we Christians think of ourselves as having been created in the image of God and of our history as the arena of divine providence. So we need to ask in light of evolutionary theory: does the fact that we have been reduced to such a tiny portion of nature's history detract from the marvel that we attach to human existence? Or does it simply add a dimension of mystery and complexity without fundamentally changing our view? We need to ask further: why was *Homo sapiens* created in this manner? What is the significance of the aeons of nonhuman history? Why did God do it this way? In short, what does evolutionary theory do to Christian anthropology?

Evolutionary Interpretations of Christianity

The above list of questions aimed at reformulating our anthropology represents one way in which evolutionary theory may have an impact on Christian thinking. At the heart of this approach is the task of adapting doctrinal teachings to the evolutionary vision. We will call this the *reforming* approach, because it aims at a reform of Christian theology. Much of the work of Teilhard de Chardin[2] and, more recently, Arthur Peacocke,[3] is of this type.

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[2]Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (New York and San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1959).

[3]Arthur Peacocke, *Creation and the World of Science* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979) and *God and the New Biology* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986).

A second and quite different approach, the *historical* approach, tries to show that the Christian faith itself has evolved in the context of its successive environments. This type of historical study has been extensive, and its significance is widely recognized. The great nineteenth century theologians brought this approach to a high point.

The third approach seeks to identify just what significance Christian faith itself *has for* the evolutionary process. I call this the *apologetic* approach, because it aims at articulating a proposal that is of interest to Christians and non-Christians alike. Ralph W. Burhoe and Gerd Theissen follow the apologetic track. This approach deserves our special attention, because it gives direction to doctrinal reformulation.

An example in the current discussion of the apologetic approach is Gerd Theissen's brilliant book of 1984, *Biblical Faith: An Evolutionary Approach*. There are six key arguments in this work.

Theissen's first argument is that the evolving world process (as a whole and in its parts) is caught up in a process of relating to a central reality which our religious traditions call "God."[4]

The second argument is that this process of relating to the central reality is termed today *evolution*, which is fundamentally a process of "finding increasingly more adequate structures for adapting" to this ultimate or central reality.[5]

Third, the process of evolution is both biological and cultural. We note that Theissen does not mention the pre-biological. He follows the now familiar insight that the phases of the process of evolution all take the course of producing a multitude of variations, of which one or a few are selected and integrated within systems that are adaptive to the environment. The most important environment for Theissen is the central reality, God.

Fourth, Theissen views the human being as a complex creature who is characterized most importantly as a biological animal that has become a cultural being, and whose most critical challenge is the ongoing task of properly integrating these two "natures," the biological and the cultural. A better way to put it is to say that the human being is a biologically evolved creature who is culturally ambient, and who must continually struggle if it is to remain a genuinely *human* creature. This struggle consists in modulating its biological equipment and the rationale of that equipment in a way that is consistent with and appropriate to the possibilities of its present and future cultural ambience. Or we could say that *the human being is always struggling to integrate its biological equipment into the cultural configuration which the human has become.* We must attend carefully to the danger that exists because we bring stone age biological drives into a contemporary technological milieu to which our biological equipment is but poorly adapted. Anthony Stevens points to this same issue when he subtitles one of his books "a natural history of the self."[6] Victor Turner devoted his famed article, "Body, Brain, and Culture," to the same insight.[7] Theissen seems to understand the argument.

Fifth, the key to understanding biblical faith, says Theissen, is to perceive its significance as a phenomenon within the evolutionary process, specifically as it affects human persons in social or cultural evolu-

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[4]Gerd Theissen, *Biblical Faith: An Evolutionary Approach* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 23.

[5]Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 25.

[6]Anthony Stevens, *Archetypes: A Natural History of the Self* (New York: Morrow, 1982).

[7]Victor Turner, "Body, Brain and Culture," *Zygon* 18:3 (September 1983): 221-45.

tion. We remember, of course, that these human persons have entered the evolutionary process as creatures who have also evolved biologically, This leads us to the sixth argument: the biblical faith contains a proposal for what is possible within cultural evolution by human creatures who are also biologically evolved. This proposal has both a scientific and a theological rendition:

Scientific

1. Evolution of the cosmos is adapting to a central reality.

2. Altruism beyond the kin group is a universal value for humanity.

3. The premier possibility opened up for human cultural evolution is that we can diminish "selection." Such diminishment allows the biological components of the human being to be transcended, so that we can be the cultural creatures that we have it in us to be. Behaviors and social forms that inhibit us from becoming such cultural creatures are inadequate.

Theological

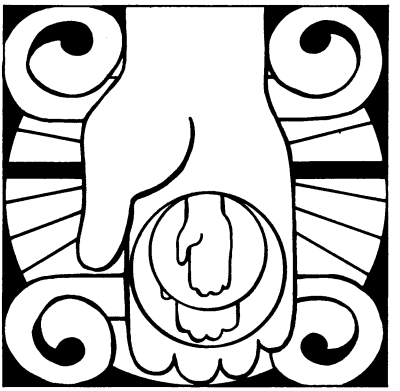
1. Evolution of the cosmos transpires within the hand of God and adapts to God.

2. The core of biblical faith is the revelation of the love-principle.

3. This love-principle is a significant option within human cultural evolution; it is the command of God. Behaviors and social forms that oppose or restrict the practice of universal love for neighbor are contrary to the will of God. God will enable us to practice it. This is the content of the "image of God."

In short, the argument is this: the evolving world process is actually a process of responding and adapting to God. God has created a process that is woven on the loom of adapting to its creator. This adapting is what constitutes the basic character of the world process.

The purpose of outlining Theissen's thought is to use it as a way of unearthing basic issues for the larger attempt to interpret Christian faith in evolutionary modes of thought. With this in mind, let me raise a number of issues and suggest possible directions for theological reflection if not reform.



Issue 1: Which Aspects of Evolution are to be Considered?

Should we consider biological evolution and cultural evolution together? In the past very few have attempted to deal seriously with the interface between biological and cultural evolution. For some it has been unacceptable even to bring culture within the evolutionary conceptuality, while for others the interface has been dealt with only simplistically. There is no question, however, in light of current research in the neurosciences, anthropology, psychiatry, experimental and developmental psychology, ethology, and related fields, that we have now reached the point where biogenetic and cultural processes must be examined in their interrelatedness if we are to understand cultural phenomena adequately. Perhaps no single text makes this point more clearly than the aforementioned article by Victor Turner, "Body, Brain, and Culture," even though dozens of other scholars have argued for this as well.

The imperative to interrelate cultural with biological evolution does not stem from any reductionistic impulse. Rather, it is a response to the fact that culture has emerged within the realm of biological development. Consequently, the meaning and coherence of the cultural dimension must be consistent and continuous with that of the biological dimension. Just what this consistency and continuity are, precisely, is a matter of dispute—ranging from those sociobiologists who claim that culture is on a rather short genetic leash, to cultural anthropologists and humanities scholars who deny even a very long leash between the two. One thing is clear: any future attempts to interpret Christian faith in evolutionary perspective must take account of this relationship between biology and culture, and it must further attempt to sort out the results of the researchers in the field. Among those thinkers, besides Turner, who have made attempts in this area are Ralph W. Burhoe, Donald Campbell, Solomon Katz, and Karl Peters.[8]

Although Theissen's work makes a contribution for its broad treatment of the concept of evolution, I believe it can still be faulted for not being broad enough. What is missing is the cosmic and physical. My point is not that Theissen should account for a greater quantity of data. Rather, what he and we need to recognize is that the biocultural continuum is itself a development within the cosmic processes that were unleashed in the singularity which gave birth to the Big Bang. Culture and biology are chapters in the physical story of the cosmos.

What is at issue is whether or not we will treat with consistency and continuity the cosmic-physical processes and the biological-cultural developments. This issue is as intellectually demanding as any which a contemporary theologian might encounter. The difficulty is not so much one of understanding how the animate and the cultural can emerge from the inanimate and impersonal—this question is being addressed by a large number of scientific researchers—but rather the challenge is to ask this question: how can we paint a picture of the meaningfulness of human developments when the canvas for interpretation is the unfolding of cosmic processes over an enormous 18 billion year span?

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[8]Cf., "Religion's Role in the Context of Genetic and Cultural Evolution: Campbell's Hypotheses and Some Evaluative Responses," ed. by Ralph W. Burhoe in *Zygon* 11:3 (September 1976): 115-303.

Issue 2: The Status of the Christian Faith.

Nearly a century ago, the Yale natural historian and Congregationalist minister, Newman Smyth, argued that theology could be done in the context of evolution on the grounds that scientific research into the nature of evolution would lead necessarily to the God of the Christian faith. Although that is still the conviction of many a Christian adherent, virtually no one today would suggest that a presuppositionless study of evolutionary theory would lead to such a conclusion. The prevailing method today among theologians who take evolution seriously is to assume the actuality of Christian faith as a historical datum. From this assumption we may then ask without apology (a) what difference evolutionary theory makes for Christian faith and (b) what significance might the Christian faith have for the evolution of the universe.

If the givenness of the Christian datum within the evolutionary continuum is our starting point, then the theologian ought not be inhibited from interpreting the Christian faith from the point of its most particular and distinctive identity, namely, Jesus Christ. The evolutionary processes have engendered this distinctive particularity; no apology for this starting point is required. What is required, however, is the strenuous effort of articulating what the continuities are between the evolutionary processes and Jesus Christ, and what the significance of Christ within those processes is.

There is perhaps no more difficult issue for the theologian than the interpretation of why there is selection.

Issue 3: Evolutionary Processes within God's Action.

Since the time of Charles Darwin there has existed a tradition of theological interpretation which has asserted that "evolution is God's way of doing things." This basic assertion has taken on different meanings depending on the intention of the theologian.

Now not all thinkers who see evolution as God's tool focus on selection as part of that tool. Still fewer understand adaption in the selection process as itself a response to God. Evolutionary interpretations which are silent on the role of selection are less credible, in my judgment, because the concept of selection is so significant to evolutionary theory.

Be that as it may, to focus on selection within God's activity is to face very directly the issue of theodicy. Why? Because the selection processes go hand-in-hand with the failure and death of living forms, human persons, social institutions, and ideas. There is perhaps no more difficult issue for the theologian than the interpretation of why there is selection and what divine purpose it might serve. Few theologians even attempt to deal with this challenge. The issue of selection raises the same questions as those that are part of the reflection on why God should have created an evolutionary process that responds to God as the selecting environment.

In the context of thinking about theodicy, John Hick rightly raises the question of freedom in relation to the selection process. For freedom to be genuine, he argues, the creation could not be fashioned initially in a fully free state; rather, it must become free. In order to become free, the initial conditions of any individual must be at an epistemic distance from the goal that is to be attained.[9] Furthermore, the goal must be worthwhile not on extrinsic or utilitarian grounds; but rather it must have intrinsic worth, with no sure extrinsic profit. The evolutionary process makes freedom possible, provided that evil and misfortune fall haphazardly and randomly upon the world, so that no free behavior can be certain to avoid evil. The free choice must, on the contrary, be chosen for its intrinsic worth alone.

This kind of fundamental reflection is required by today's theologians if an evolutionary interpretation of the Christian faith is to be pursued adequately. The question of freedom is of particular significance, because I believe a good case ought be made for interpreting the entire physical and biological nonhuman pre-history as the instrumentality employed by God to introduce freedom into the cosmos and set up the introduction of the human being as the created co-creator.

Issue 4: The Human Being as a Two-Natured Creature.

Can we through culture transcend our genetic foundation without eroding it? This is a double challenge. On the one hand, will the genetic dimension allow itself to participate in the sort of transcendence which the cultural dimension represents? On the other hand, can culture fashion a lifeway which can actualize the possibilities that culture can attain while at the same time doing so in a way that represents the genuine destiny of the genetic processes? Or, to put it another way: can culture open up genuine possibilities that are appropriate to both the genetic and the cultural dimensions without either destroying the genetic or betraying the cultural?

It is in the cultural sphere we know as ethics and morality where the issue arises. H. Kummer, working with the definition of morality as the "absence of selfish opportunism," argues that there is no analog to morality among animals, even at the higher primate level.[10] Selfish opportunism reigns in the nonhuman animal kingdom. Kummer believes it is the evolution of human cognitive abilities—especially self-consciousness and decision-making—which makes morality both possible and necessary. The purpose of morality is to enhance cooperation, thereby reducing the dangers of species self-annihilation through competition. If Kummer is correct, then two things become significant. First, the cultural configurations of the human race make it possible to destroy itself. Second, the cultural phenomenon of morality may itself be an adaptive process belonging to the long history of evolutionary selection. In either case, the cultural production of altruistic moral codes represents a going beyond our genetic determinants.

The transcending of the biological has been a topic in several discussions in recent years. The issue is altruism: is the love-

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[9]John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, rev. ed., 1978) pp. 280ff; and "An Irenaean Theodicy" in *Encountering Evil*, ed. by Stephen Davis (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 69-100.

[10]H. Kummer, "Analogs of Morality Among Nonhuman Creatures," in *Morality as a Biological Phenomenon*, ed. by Gunter Stent (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 33-42.

Christian faith extends the principle of altruism beyond the kin-group.

principle anti-evolutionary because, as self-sacrificing, it tends toward self-elimination rather than self-selection?[11] Richard Dawkins, in his book *The Selfish Gene*, argues that culture must oppose the "selfishness" of the genes if love and other basic human values are to succeed, because the genes act in no other way than to work for their own literal survival.[12] In a similar fashion Theissen speaks of cultural evolution—and particularly the Christian faith within culture—as "anti-selection." Now this position has been criticized, on the grounds that if altruism in culture really does oppose the genes, it will be signing culture's death warrant, since genetic evolution is the host in this symbiosis. Without the biological host, culture cannot enjoy the party.

Despite the possible inadequacy of "anti-selection" rhetoric, the intention of Dawkins and Theissen is clear and significant. They are asking us to face the fact that culture enables the biological host to surmount or even alter patterns of behavior which might otherwise seem inevitable. Genetic evolution, for example, limits the range of altruism to the kin-group, whereas Christian faith enables the human creature to extend the principle of altruism beyond the kin-group. The biological component of human being faces the developmental challenge to sculpt itself in ways that surmount some of the basic drives or behaviors that are wholly undesirable in a human community.[13] It is no mean developmental task for culture to enable such surmounting without destroying the biological ladder by which it has climbed to this position.

Once again, freedom enters into the discussion. Human agency becomes a factor in evolution proper. The human agent, though certainly conditioned by its genetic and environmental host, enjoys a certain measure of freedom. This freedom is concomitant with the self-consciousness and decision-making capacities endemic to cultural life.

The appearance of ethics and morality reminds us of our biological dependence and our cultural freedom. Although we cannot go to the party unless invited by the host, once we are there we have sufficient freedom to alter the menu, determine which games are played, make it joyful or boring, and even to leave early. What theologians need to do, I think, is negotiate the complexities of the genes-culture interface and relate that interface to the physical cosmos as well.

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[11]E. O. Wilson has said altruism is the "central theoretical problem of sociobiology." *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), 46. John Maynard Smith poses the issue by defining altruism as "a trait which, in some cases, lowers the fitness of the individual displaying it, but increases the fitness of some other members of the same species," "The Evolution of Social Behavior—A Classification of Models," in *Current Problems in Sociobiology*, ed. King's College Sociobiology Group (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 43.

[12]Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).

[13]See my discussion in "Sociobiology, Ethics, and Theology," *Zygon* 19:2 (June, 1984), 185-207; and "Survival as a Human Value," *Zygon* 15:2 (June, 1980), 203-12.

Issue 5: How Should we Understand Divine Revelation?

On the basis of the above, we should be able to say that our Creator-God has mandated that we should come to know life in a two natured way: biological and cultural. Therefore, we should also be able to say the following: the task of properly integrating the two natures is God's way of sculpting the means by which we attain and exercise our humanity and also the path by which we enter into relationship with God. The divinely intended fulfillment of human destiny will include the proper integration of our biological and cultural natures.

If this is the set of conditions in which God has created us, then it should not surprise us that the good God bestows gifts that are relevant to the task that is ours by virtue of our creation. God's revelation, consequently, cannot but be a cultural evolutionary possibility for the carrying out of our humanity in ways appropriate to the two-natured creatures that we are. If the heart of our Christian revelation is that of unqualified love for all creatures as the nature and will of God, then that love-principle must be seen as a cultural evolutionary proposal for the wellbeing of the creation in general and for us humans in particular. It belongs to our process of becoming fully human. It is not helpful to think of the revelation as some initially abstract and unrelated reality that only secondarily is a possibility of cultural evolution. That could be true only if we were created initially in the abstract and only secondarily as the two-natured creatures that we have described. We were created in no other way than as such bio-cultural creatures, and God's revelation has neither reality nor force apart from its significance as a possibility for creatures such as we are.

God's revelation has neither reality nor force apart from its significance as a possibility for creatures such as we are.

Issue 6: The Significance of Christian Faith.

I contend that the Christian faith, if it is to be interpreted adequately in an evolutionary framework, must be related to the sorts of issues that have figured in the discussion to this point. It must be related to all the phases of evolution and to the processes of selection. We need to ask just what is it that the historic Christian faith contributes to the cultural evolutionary process.

More than simply placing the Christian faith in the evolutionary context is called for. We need to speak theologically to the question of God's will for the destiny of the very processes themselves. The majority of interpreters who have tackled this issue in recent decades have focused on something to do with the love-principle, with altruism, with the freedom to cross boundaries and identify with outsiders. We need to show that such things as the love-principle are not essentially anti-evolutionary but rather intrinsic to the broader evolutionary purpose. To do so means, among other things, bringing the Christian doctrine of eschatology to bear,

since we cannot speak of the destiny of the world without speaking about its future and its eventual culmination.

Teilhard de Chardin, among preciously few others, understood the cultural evolutionary significance of Christianity to be the embodiment of the love for the world that can motivate acts that would actualize human solidarity in tandem with enhanced individualization. This individualization-within-solidarity is what he termed "building the earth," and he considered it to be the current imperative required by the trajectory of evolution in which we exist.[14]

Ralph Burhoe interprets Christianity (and by extension he would apply this interpretation to other religions a well) as a body of well-winnowed wisdom (Donald Campbell's term), which has emerged within the evolutionary process precisely because it is favored by the process of natural selection. Hence, it has served the survival value of the process in which it has appeared.[15] This large packet of cultural information cannot be identified with only a single message, since its mores and rituals pertain to many aspects of life. However, Burhoe gives special attention to the love-principle, which he is inclined to speak of as "trans-kin altruism." This altruism has not only been instrumental in enabling the higher primates to become human beings, but it has also played a key role in subsequent developments. Today the love-principle is, in Burhoe's opinion, the chief imperative for the human community if it is to avoid destroying itself.

Gerd Theissen also emphasizes the love-principle as the force which enables human beings to transcend and yet fulfill the biological dimension of existence. The biological dimension manifests itself as *sarkic* (fleshly) behavior, which seems to be explicitly biological; but it also manifests itself as deadening "law" in the cultural sphere, as rigid "tradition" at the level of cognitive systems. Christ's love-principle enables persons to dare to transcend flesh, law, and tradition. At this point, Theissen brings to bear his concept of evolution as variability, selection, and adaptation. All of the variable attempts that arise in the process are essential for satisfactory adaptation, since a large number of variants is desirable so that the best options can be winnowed by the selection process. Even the abortive variations are therefore integral to the process. Further, each of the variable attempts is equidistant from the center of the process and whatever intentionality it has. Theologically, this train of thinking is equivalent to a concept of justification and grace. God requires no set pattern of successful adaptation. Rather, God requires an earnest and responsible life of attempting to adapt to the divine reality and will, from which attempts the most adequate can be selected. All such attempts are equidistant from the center of God's will and grace.

The Created Co-Creator

What we have been looking at is the broad range of issues which we must confront if we are to follow the apologetic approach, the approach which seeks to identify the significance the Christian faith has for the evolutionary process. Now let us turn back to the Christian doctrine of anthropology, thinking it through with an eye to the reforming approach and what we have learned from evolutionary concepts. Granting a degree of consonance between evolutionary science and constructive theology, what can we say about the human condition?

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[14]Teilhard, *Phenomenon of Man.*

[15]Burhoe, *Toward a Scientific Theology.*

I recommend that we think of the human being as the *created co-creator*. This term does a number of things. Because we are *created*, we are reminded that we are dependent creatures. We depend for our very existence on our cosmic and biological prehistory; we depend on the creative grace of God. Yet, we are also *creators*, using our cultural freedom and power to alter the course of historical events and perhaps even evolutionary events. We participate with God in the ongoing creative process. In addition, the term "created co-creator" connotes the fact that we have a destiny. We have a future toward which we are being drawn by God's will. Only when we understand what this destiny is will we be able to measure and evaluate the direction we take in our creative activity. To unearth the significance of this understanding of the human condition, let us look at the idea of the created co-creator in light of four classical Christian doctrines.

Doctrine 1: Creation Out of Nothing.

Fundamental to both the Jewish and Christian view of the world is the doctrine of creation out of nothing, *creatio ex nihilo*. This affirms that God is the source of all that is. The nub of *creatio ex nihilo* is this: the only relationship between the world and God that is consistent with what Christians and Jews believe about God is one in which the universe and our planet within it are totally dependent upon God for its origin and perseverance.

The doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* is not so much a material concept as it is a methodological strategy. The point of *ex nihilo* is not specifically aimed at identifying the lack of pre-existing materials from which God constructed the world. It does not assert that God created all things out of the prior reality called "nothing," "nonbeing," what the Greeks dubbed *ouk on*. The doctrine has less to do with origins than it does with dependence. Rather, as a methodological strategy, it insists that everything that is depends for its being on God the creator.

On the basis of this assertion of the total dependence of all things on the creator God, I raise as an additional axiom that there is a correlation between the nature of the world and the nature of the God who created the world.[16] As a negative correlation it affirms that if God is the creator out of nothing, then this world is totally and completely a creature. When Christian witnesses take this axiom seriously, its proclamation demands attention. What it says makes a difference. It affirms, among other things, that our cosmos is a creation.

We human beings, then, are first and foremost creatures. We are caused. We are created. We are not self-generating. This is obvious when one reads Genesis 2-3 to see that we have sprung from God and dust. It is equally obvious when one looks through evolutionary glasses and reviews the long pre-history about the emergence of life in planet earth's primordial soup. We have come from a source well beyond ourselves.

We humans, then, can claim no arrogant credit for being co-creators. We have been created *as* co-creators. Put in scientific terms, we did not evolve ourselves to this point; rather, the evolutionary process—under God's rule, I am arguing—evolved us as co-creators. We could not even choose to be created as non-creators. God chose. That we exist as created co-creators is God's decision, not ours.

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[16]See my "Fourth Locus: The Creation" in *Christian Dogmatics*, ed. by Carl E. Braaten and Robert E. Jenson (2 Volumes: Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984) I: 298, 310.

Doctrine 2: Continuing Creation.

Creation for Christian theology is by no means limited to protology. It is not limited by what happened at the beginning when time was first created. "Creation" also refers to God's ongoing sustaining of the world. Every moment of the world's existence depends on the ongoing grace of God.

This assertion of continuing creation, when coupled with the creation out of nothing concept, makes a powerful statement about the nonhuman creation as a trustworthy environment for the human. It asserts that the world about us is not antithetical to our human destiny and God's will, but rather it is a fundamentally friendly home for us. The ecosystem is benevolent and reliable. It cannot be otherwise if it has proceeded originally from God's creative intention and continues to be sustained by the will of God.[17]

> We could not even choose to be created as non-creators. God chose.

If we invoke our correlation axiom at this point, we get a positive correlation: God creates and so do we. We are active participants in the ongoing divine work. We make decisions and take actions which determine in part the course of events. Events bring new things. The human race is daily inventing new things which hitherto never existed. It is a dependent co-creation, to be sure; yet there is a genuine advance due to the contributions of human ingenuity and energy.

And, if evolutionary advance is influenced by our adaptation to God, then altruism may eventually lead to a qualitatively new reality. As co-creators with God, the dramatic possibility is opening up that the love-principle might actually introduce into bio-cultural evolution a new selection principle, a principle which goes beyond the previous gene selfishness.

Doctrine 3: The Imago Dei.

A third and important component in theology's understanding of the world's status is the teaching concerning the *imago dei*, the image of God in the human race. Although the term has a long history and is almost universally attested in the theological tradition, there is only modest agreement regarding its exact meaning. At least two distinct traditions of interpretation can be identified: the common characteristic tradition and the relationship tradition. The first tries to identify specific human characteristics which are Godlike: love, uprightness, the capacity for dominion over the animals, etc. The second, the relationship perspective, suggests that the *imago dei* refers to the basic structure of the human being that enables communication between humans and God. St. Augustine gave voice to this second strand with his oft quoted prayer: "O God,

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[17]Cf., Hefner, "Sociobiology, Ethics, and Theology," 191; cf. also "Creation Viewed by Science, Affirmed by Faith" in *Cry of the Environment*, ed. by Philip N. Joranson and Ken Butigan (Sante Fe: Bear & Co., 1984), 199ff.

Thou hast created me for Thyself, and my heart is restless until it find its rest in Thee."[18] Of these two traditions, my inclination is to side with those who hold that the *imago dei* refers to our relationship with God.

I suggest that we identify our co-creatorhood with the image of God. We humans have certain characteristics that constitute the *imago dei* in us—we are able to make self-conscious and self-critical decisions, we are able to act on those decisions, and we are able to take responsibility for them.

Now it may appear that I am identifying with the common characteristics tradition. But the relational perspective is what I really have in mind. It is the *co* in *co-creator* which I wish to emphasize. It is because we are grounded in a prior relationship with God who is bearing us along according to his will for the destiny of the cosmos that we find our creative characteristics significant. We are participants in a much larger ongoing creative process. Without such grounding, these characteristic abilities would mean little.

Doctrine 4: Christology

Through adaptive and creative work in culture, the human being represents a proposal for the further evolution of the created world. We humans have the potential to actualize a new phase of evolution. This is one of the implications of the doctrine of the image of God in us. But something else needs to be added here, namely, in the New Testament the phrase "image of God" refers to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the New Adam, the prototype of the true *humanum*. We fulfill the image of God insofar as we participate in Christ's new nature.

In Jesus Christ we find the power which enables us to participate in the purposes of God. Jesus, the second Adam, embodies anticipatorily what the first Adam can become. Jesus is that for which the creation of the first Adam was intended. Whereas the first Adam is a symbol of the essential humanity that belongs to every member of the species, the second Adam speaks of what humanity may yet become.

Jesus Christ becomes the central event for understanding what it means for humans to be God's proposal for the future of the evolutionary process. In freedom—a freedom which has been bequeathed to our race from the aeons of previous physical and biological and cultural development—we have the option to live now according to what has been set forth by Jesus as God's ultimate purpose: the renewal and perfection of all creation.

We can think of the Christ event as an act of God to which we should adapt and of our adaptation itself as having an impact on the future of evolution. Gerd Theissen said that we encounter "the central reality," God, on all levels of evolution.[19] In his life, death, and teachings, Jesus offers us the possibilities for raising human living to a higher plane, one which will reveal new ways of adapting to the reality system of nature and of God. Jesus' proposal for the love-principle—a universal love which crosses boundaries, including the boundaries of kinship—is a new way of life which stretches and bends the requirements of adaptation in novel ways. This proposal for trans-kin altruism is scandalous to many, because it appears to be a formula for maladaptation if not extinction. Yet, theologically, we want to say that the cross and resurrection represent the divinely willed direction for future cultural evolution.

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[18]Augustine, *Confessions*, 1:1.
[19]Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 114.

Doctrine 5: The Eschatological Destiny of the Creation.

The question of ultimate destiny is central to the assessment of the world and of the human place in it, because destiny suggests that there is a basic purpose or meaning inherent in existence as creation. If this is so, then the condition of the world at any moment can be judged by comparing its trajectory with its destiny.

What is the intention of God toward the world? I believe Christian theology is clear on this point: God intends to perfect or fulfill the creation. This is based upon two elements within the revelation, God's promises and God's faithfulness. God is faithful. God is not a deceiver. And, furthermore, God makes promises. Therefore, we can expect God to keep the promises he has made. Time and again this has been asserted in the Jewish and Christian interpretation of historical events. It is equally applicable to the history of nature, to cosmic history. Indeed, with our knowledge that humans are a part of the ecosystem and its evolution and not separate from it, if God is faithful in any portion of the world, such as human affairs, then God must be faithful in the whole, since the world is a seamless robe.

What this means for cosmic evolution seems to be this: the material order carries out its career from origin to end as God's creative process. This speaks to our earlier question as to the relationship between the 18 billion year pre-history and the place the present human race has in this larger scheme. All must be conceived as somehow belonging together as part of God's grand program for the created world.

What this means for us humans seems to be this: our created status is thoroughly eschatological; that is, it is an *unleashing*, not a full-blown given that has simply to be reiterated and replicated throughout time. Human nature was not defined and fixed at some point of origin in the past. Whatever we were in the primordial past, we are not that now. Nor will we be the same in the future. Our essence is yet to be determined. Our nature is dynamic. And the dynamism comes from the eschatological future. The essential *humanum* which is emerging is being continually called by its destiny, and our ability to participate as an ordained co-creator is the result of the creative thrust of God. That thrust consists of sharing as a free, self-conscious creature in shaping the passage forward toward God's own *telos* or purpose which will appear in its fullness at the consummation, at the final perfection of the whole cosmic history of the creation.

Conclusion

Is nature friend or foe? Friend, we can say theologically. Nature in its entirety—from its original singularity 18 billion years ago, through the Big Bang, through the formation of planet earth, through the appearance of primordial soup and the flourishing of animate life, through the long genetic history of biological development, through the appearance of human culture, through the history of the Hebrew and Christian religions, and through chapters in our future story which have yet to be written—is being guided by the eschatological purpose of the one God who is the creator of all things. And this purpose is to perfect all that constitutes the creation, human beings included. More than that, we humans created in the image of God are participants and co-creators in the ongoing work of God's creative activity. We are being drawn toward a shared destiny which will ultimately determine what it means to be a true human being.

The Care of the Poor: An Evangelical Perspective

Kurt K. Hendel
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

The evangelical church orders of the sixteenth century are an important source for the study of the life and priorities of the emerging Lutheran churches in Germany and other parts of Europe. One of the most prolific and influential writers of church orders was Martin Luther's friend, colleague, and pastor, Johannes Bugenhagen (1485-1558). The Pomeranian reformer wrote or significantly influenced eight church orders through which he made an important impact on the organizational structures of the evangelical territories in northern Germany and parts of Scandinavia.[1] In the church orders Bugenhagen addresses three chief concerns of the emerging Lutheran churches: liturgical reforms, the revitalization of education, and the establishment of a poor relief system. It is this last concern which will be the focus of this discussion.

A Theology of Poor Relief

The church orders are pragmatic documents which describe institutional structures and outline ecclesiastical procedures. They are not carefully formulated theological treatises. Yet, they do include substantial theological material, especially in their liturgical sections where the evangelical understanding of the sacraments is explicated. When he focuses on the care of the poor in the church orders, Bugenhagen is primarily concerned to provide the Lutheran churches with practical, organizational guidelines. He does, however, also articulate the theological bases for his administrative proposals, especially in the Braunschweig church order, which he

[1]The church orders were ecclesiastical constitutions which provided the churches with guidelines regarding liturgical matters, educational programs, and the care of the poor. Bugenhagen wrote or edited the orders for Braunschweig (1528), Hamburg (1529), Lübeck (1531), Pomerania (1535), Denmark (1537), Schleswig-Holstein (1542), Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel (1543), and Hildesheim (1544). While the Denmark and Schleswig-Holstein orders are not included, critical editions of the other orders have been printed in Emil Sehling, ed., *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts*, 15 vols. (Leipzig: O.R. Reisland; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1902-1980). Hereafter cited as Sehling.

wrote first and which became a formative model for subsequent orders.

Bugenhagen's theology of poor relief is not very complex and echoes Luther's principle of faith active in love.[2] "If we wish to be Christians, then we must demonstrate that fact with our fruit," he reminds his readers.[3] People become Christians through God's gracious action in their lives. Their faith, through which they enjoy a positive relationship with God, must also impact their lives. The fruits of faith, however, are not human works created by the church, such as monasticism and other expressions of medieval piety, for these have not been ordained by God. Rather, Christians serve God when they manifest the works commanded by Christ and inspired by faith. Among these are the works of love which serve the neighbor, particularly the neighbor in need. Bugenhagen reminds those who had joined the evangelical movement that they had been freed from the burdens which the institutional church had placed upon them. They were now no longer asked to sacrifice their time and resources on such useless practices as indulgences, masses, and pilgrimages. Thus they have no reason to complain if they are asked to give a small portion of their possessions to God by assisting the poor who are "the true pictures of God."[4] In fact, as they give, they will in turn be blessed by God, as Christ promises. Through such fruits of faith they also prove that they "have become good trees through faith in Christ."[5]

Faith active in love is the theological basis and practical motivation for the care of the poor in Bugenhagen's theology. He approaches the problems of poverty and poor relief primarily from a theological, not a social or economic, perspective, and maintains that caring for the poor is not a matter of free choice for the Christian but a clear expectation. People of faith quite naturally manifest the fruits of faith, which are always the works of love. Hence, evangelical Christians who are empowered by the Gospel will naturally respond to those in need.

The Poor Chest

Although Dr. Pomeranus[6] emphasized that the care of the poor must begin at home and that individuals must care for their families and acquaintances,[7] he also asserted that a communal poor relief system was necessary. Private, familial poor relief was simply not sufficient to address the challenges of poverty and of the poor. There were, after all, people who did not have the resources to care for their families or who refused to do so. Many of the poor also had no relatives to care for them. Because of these practical realities and because the church orders were public documents, Bugenhagen focused his attention in the orders on the poor chest. The chest would enable the community, which is here viewed as an extension of the family, to assume and fulfill its responsibilities over against its less fortunate members.[8]

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[2]Cf. Luther's "The Freedom of the Christian," LW 31, 329-77. George Forell has provided an incisive discussion of Luther's social ethics in *Faith Active in Love* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1954).

[3]Braunschweig, Sehling VI,I, 445.

[4]Braunschweig, Sehling VI,I, 446.

[5]Braunschweig, Sehling VI,I, 447.

[6]Bugenhagen was proud of his Pomeranian heritage and often referred to himself as "Pommer" or "Pomeranus." His contemporaries, both friend and foe, also referred to him by these names.

[7]Cf., for example, Braunschweig, Sehling VI,I, 447, 452; Hamburg, Sehling V, 531-32; Lübeck, Sehling V, 336; Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, Sehling VI,I, 77; and Hildesheim, Sehling VII,II,1, 878.

[8]Braunschweig, Sehling VI,I, 447; Lübeck, Sehling V, 336.

Bugenhagen's proposals concerning the poor chest were precise and practical. He stipulated that every large parish and surely every substantial town should establish a poor chest. Smaller parishes and communities might combine their resources in one chest or relate to neighboring poor chests, but every community must find ways of helping its poor.[9] All of the resources designated by the community for the care of the poor were to be deposited in the poor chest, which was literally a container placed in the sacristy or in another part of the church building. These resources included offerings freely deposited into the chest by the pious, testaments, money contributed by the city council, memorial gifts, offerings given at weddings, and weekly collections for the poor gathered during Sunday morning worship services.[10] The evangelical poor chests were, therefore, endowed with extant ecclesiastical resources but were also assured a continuous source of income through regular collections for the poor. Every member of the community was to contribute regularly to this worthy cause, for faith was thereby bringing forth its fruits of love. Bugenhagen clearly expected that such faith-inspired giving would provide the necessary resources for the poor in the evangelical communities. While he may be accused of naivete, he was clearly working with the theological conviction that faith active in love is the most effective and surely the only appropriate motivation for all good works, including the care of the poor.

Because the poor chest was not only envisioned as a repository of poor relief resources but as a functioning institution, Bugenhagen recommended that carefully chosen personnel be designated to administer the chest. The deacons of the poor chest were assigned this responsibility. Because they were so crucial for the effective functioning of the whole poor relief system, Bugenhagen provided careful guidelines regarding their election and duties, as well as their personal character. The New Testament diaconate was the Reformer's model as he described what kind of people could serve in the evangelical poor relief diaconate. Guided by Acts 6:3 and I Timothy 3:8-13, he pointed out that deacons must be people of strong faith, of excellent reputation, honest, filled with wisdom, good managers of their households, and faithful husbands and fathers. Their marriage relationship must be exemplary, and their wives must enjoy a fine reputation. Although one should not expect the deacons to be angels, they must be exceptional members of the community who will serve with honesty and care.[11]

The number of deacons serving a poor chest varies with local circumstances.[12] The deacons are chosen from the parish and from the city council and are elected by members of the city council, by representatives of the parish, or by previous deacons. Those deacons who are chosen from the city council must, of course, be members of the parish whose poor chest they are elected to serve.[13] The deacons are asked to function at least one year, although a longer period of service is necessary for some in order to assure

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[9]Cf., for example, Hamburg, Sehling V, 532; Braunschweig, Sehling VI,I, 450 and Hildesheim, Sehling VII,II,1, 880.

[10]Braunschweig, Sehling VI,I, 450-51.

[11]Braunschweig, Sehling VI,I, 448-49.

[12]Bugenhagen recommends three deacons for the poor chests in Braunschweig (Sehling VI,I, 451), five or six deacons for those in Pomerania (Sehling IV, 337), six for Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel (Sehling VI,I, 78) and Hildesheim (Sehling, VII,II,1, 881), and twelve for Hamburg (Sehling V, 537) and Lübeck (Sehling V, 365-66).

[13]Cf., for example, Hamburg, Sehling V, 537.

Bugenhagen's proposals concerning the poor chest were precise and practical.

continuity.[14] They serve gratis, however, and are not remunerated for their work. The poor chest was, therefore, entirely a voluntary institution, both in its means of support and in its personnel. Poor relief itself, however, was not a matter of free choice. Bugenhagen persistently reminded the evangelical communities that the care of the poor was a definite responsibility for all who profess to be Christians. It was not something that they could either choose to do or simply ignore.

The deacons were the community's chief representatives in its effort to alleviate the effects of poverty in its midst. Their duties were diverse, for they were primarily responsible for the effective functioning of the poor chest. Because the actual care of the poor was their chief obligation, they identified the poor, determined their needs, and disbursed the necessary assistance, either in the form of goods or of money. The disbursements were made on a weekly basis, usually on Saturday or Sunday. Careful records were kept of all transactions. Secondly, the deacons were also responsible for the resources of the chest. They gathered all of the funds designated for the care of the poor, including the weekly collections, and kept them in the chest. If the community's support was insufficient, they alerted the pastors who, in turn, encouraged the people to be more generous. Finally, the deacons were expected to give an annual account of the poor chest's activities and their work before representatives of the city council and of the parish. The account was intended to discourage potential abuses and to assure the community that the poor were being assisted and that its resources were used effectively and efficiently.[15] It became quickly apparent that these tasks were not only challenging but also time-consuming, especially for people who were fulfilling these responsibilities as part-time volunteers. Bugenhagen therefore suggested that assistants be hired for the deacons. If possible, these individuals were to be chosen from the poor. One would serve as a messenger and another as a secretary. Because the latter had to be able to read, write, and work with numbers, that person was to be educated. Both individuals were to be paid for their services.[16]

Those members of society who were destitute or who had limited resources were the focus of the evangelical poor relief system. However, the assistance given by the poor chest was not intended to be indiscriminate. Bugenhagen insisted that the poor were to be carefully screened and that the support given to them was to be carefully determined. It is essential to point out that the poor chest was a local institution focusing on local needs. Each community, therefore, was challenged to establish a poor chest in order to care for its own. While assistance was available for anyone in cases of emergency, normally only the poor from the community which the poor chest served were

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[14]Pomerania, Sehling IV, 337.

[15]Cf., for example, Braunschweig, Sehling VI,I, 452; Hamburg, Sehling V, 539; Pomerania, Sehling IV, 337.

[16]Cf. Lübeck, Sehling V, 361.

Bugenhagen emphasized that the whole community must be concerned about the needy in its midst.

to be assisted. Others were to be cared for by their own communities.

But not even all of the local poor were candidates for support, only those who were deemed to be the worthy poor. Bugenhagen articulates specific criteria which the poor had to meet in order to receive assistance. They had to be people of faith with an honorable reputation, in addition to having obvious financial needs. Widows, orphans, young women without families, workers and artisans who simply could not earn enough to support their families, and people who became ill and could not work were counted among the honorable poor, if they met the stated criteria. The deacons and the pastors, therefore, had to acquaint themselves with the poor and evaluate them carefully. Only then could they receive support.[17]

While the resources of the poor chest were to be used primarily for the local poor, there were other categories of people who should be assisted because of their peculiar circumstances. Priests and monks who were aged or ill were to be supported for as long as necessary, and younger ones should receive temporary assistance until they found employment. The Reformer was, therefore, not oblivious to the needs of the ecclesiastics who did not join the Reformation but were, nevertheless, affected by it. Strangers should also be helped if they had an extraordinary need, such as illness. Such assistance was to be an exception, however, not the rule. Normally, each community was to care for its own.[18] Theological and ethical convictions as well as practical considerations caused Bugenhagen to limit the potential recipients of poor relief. Although he maintained that anyone must be assisted in an emergency situation, he was convinced that people had to meet certain ethical standards in order to be deemed worthy of regular support. Those standards were, of course, expected of all members of the community. The Reformer also recognized that the limited resources of the poor chest necessitated their discriminate use.

In addition to the poor chests, communities supported hospitals as means of alleviating the effects of poverty. Special sections of the hospital or even special buildings were designated for victims of the plague. Separate rooms, beds, and utensils were also recommended for people with other communicable diseases. Bugenhagen emphasized that need, not the payment of money, should be the criterion for admission. Hospitals were also used as residences for the aged, including the poor, and for long-term recipients of poor relief. The resources of the poor chest could be used for the support of hospitals, especially if the endowments of the latter were insufficient.[19] Evangelical

[17]Braunschweig, Sehling VI,I, 445; Hamburg, Sehling V, 534; Lübeck, Sehling V, 336-37, 360.

[18]Cf., for example, Hamburg, Sehling V, 534-35.

[19]Braunschweig, Sehling VI,I, 452-54; Hamburg, Sehling V, 533; Lübeck, Sehling V, 360.

poor relief, therefore, consisted not only of regular distributions of goods and money, but it also sought to provide health care and housing for those who needed such forms of assistance. Although the underlying hope seemed to be that many of those who were supported by the poor chest would eventually become self-subsistent,[20] Bugenhagen also envisioned the life-long support of others. Individual circumstances were obviously considered in responding to the needs of the poor.

Conclusion

This concise overview of Bugenhagen's poor relief system has focused on its major features and emphases. It should be noted, however, that Bugenhagen's proposals in the church orders are articulated in great detail and with the precision of an able institutional architect. While the basic format of the poor chest remained the same throughout the orders, the Reformer paid careful attention to the local circumstances in each church order and addressed those circumstances with empathy and care. Such attention to detail and to specific contexts made the church orders important resources for the reform and reorganization of the evangelical churches.

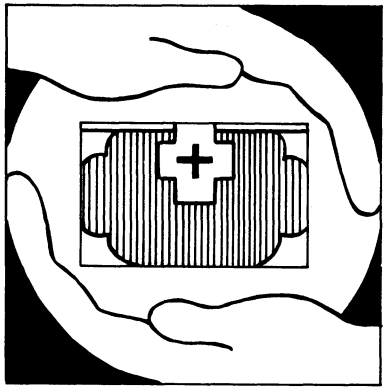
Bugenhagen was deeply concerned about the poor and about their welfare. Inspired by his understanding of faith as a dynamic gift which shapes one's relationship with God and with other human beings, he sought to stimulate a similar concern in his contemporaries. As a practical reformer of the church, therefore, he was not satisfied to theologize or theorize about poverty and its effects. Rather, he made the care of the poor one of the chief foci of his church orders and provided the evangelical churches and territories with practical proposals which could be readily implemented.[21] In doing so he also helped change his contemporary society's understanding of poverty and articulated an evangelically informed motivation for the care of the poor. In Bugenhagen's church orders poverty is not an ideal expression of the Christian life which emulates the example of Christ and the apostles. Rather, it is viewed as an economic reality which has dire effects in people's lives. For this reason, Christian individuals and a Christian community must assist those who are affected by poverty. Christian people care for the neighbor because their faith brings forth good fruits. These include the works of love which reach out to a person in need.

The church orders were ecclesiastical documents, but their stipulations had general societal implications. That fact is clearly illustrated by those sections which outline the evangelical poor relief system. In

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[20]Bugenhagen suggested, for example, that efforts be made to find husbands for the younger widows who were on poor relief (Braunschweig, Sehling VI,I, 445). Young women who were supported were also expected to marry and, of course, those who were ill would only be assisted until they regained their health.

[21]The example of the city of Braunschweig illustrates that Bugenhagen's proposals were realistic and could be implemented in a relatively short period of time if a particular community had the necessary commitment to do so. Archival records dealing with the poor chests in Braunschweig indicate that all of the main parishes in the city had functional poor chests by the end of 1528, the same year when the church order was written and officially accepted. Cf. the records of the St. Martin poor chest in the Braunschweig city archive, document number F,I,1,422, pp. 6-7. Scholars have not determined whether Bugenhagen's stipulations were implemented in all the cities and territories where he worked. More extensive archival research is necessary to draw more precise conclusions.



Bugenhagen's formulation of that system poor relief was a cooperative effort of the church and of the secular government. Thereby he both affirms specific features of medieval poor relief, which was primarily a function of the church, and anticipates the public social welfare systems which would be typical of future developments. The church, specifically the local parish, was still very much involved in the care of the poor. The poor chest was located in the church; the deacons were members of the local parish; ecclesiastical funds were used for the care of the poor; and the weekly collections were gathered during the Sunday morning services. However, the secular government also had specific responsibilities. Some of the deacons were chosen from the city council. The poor chest personnel gave an account to the council, and the council made monetary contributions to the poor chest. By making both church and government accountable for the care of the poor, Bugenhagen emphasized that the whole community must be concerned about the needy in its midst. Poor relief always began with the individual and the family in Bugenhagen's system, but the community as a whole was ultimately responsible.

The poor chest, envisioned as the community's chief means of caring for its poor, was a centralized, carefully administered, accountable system. Its focus was carefully defined. For the sake of efficiency and control, Bugenhagen expected all resources designated for the care of the poor to be deposited in and disbursed from the poor chest. Begging was strictly opposed, and private almsgiving was discouraged. The Reformer also suggested that the poor be identified and evaluated, and that only the worthy poor receive regular support. Through such centralization and careful administration, the needy would be assisted most effectively, and the resources of the community would be used most most efficaciously. The deacons were responsible to keep precise records and make an annual account in order to discourage abuses and avoid suspicion. Finally, the recipients of poor relief were carefully defined by applying specific ethical and practical criteria. Through such recommendations, Bugenhagen hoped to make the poor chest an efficient and responsible institution which not only addressed the needs of the poor but also met the expectations of the larger community.

An examination of the extensive corpus of Bugenhagen's church orders serves to illustrate that the Reformer was an important voice of social consciousness during the sixteenth century. In these formative documents he outlined the theological bases and the institutional structures for an evangelical poor relief system. While it had obvious shortcomings and surely did not eradicate the reality or effects of poverty in sixteenth-century society, the poor chest was a pragmatic effort to address one of the most pervasive challenges of the Reformation century. Johannes Bugenhagen deserves substantial credit that this effort was made in the evangelical territories of northern Germany and Denmark.

The Episcopate and the Mission of the Church

Robert J. Marshall
Senior Associate, Center for Global Mission
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

When you seek to probe the nature of mission as it relates to the episcopal office, it helps to realize that the reformers of the 16th century seem to have gotten along without the noun "mission." Their word was "ministry." When they spoke of how people obtained faith in Christ, they referred to the office of ministry, which was instituted for that purpose.[1]

A Lutheran World Federation study understood this Reformation view: "All ordained ministries in the Church, including the episcopal office of pastoral leadership and spiritual supervision (episcope), are founded in the mission of Jesus Christ."[2] Christ's mission was to reconcile the world to God and to work such salvation for all who would believe. "All ordained ministries in the Church are sent by Christ to proclaim and celebrate this Good News which is for all people."[3] The mission of the ordained ministry cannot be stated in any more fundamental manner.

Episcope and Mission, A Ministry of Word and Sacrament

The first thing to be said about a Lutheran understanding of the episcopal office is that, in the Augsburg Confession, bishops share the ministry of word and sacrament with pastors.[4] It has been common to emphasize that the ordained ministry is *one* minis-

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[1]Cf. Augsburg Confession, Article V.

[2]*Lutheran Understanding of the Episcopal Office (LUEO)*, Lutheran World Federation (Geneva, 1983), 7.

[3]*LUEO*, 7.

[4]Augsburg Confession, XXVIII, 5; also see Stephen W. Sykes, "The Ministry and the Episcopal Office: An Anglican Approach to the *Confessio Augustana*," LWF Report 6/7, *The Augsburg Confession in Ecumenical Perspective* (Geneva, 1980), 34f.

try, regardless of a variety of forms.[5] The distinctive feature of the bishop's ministry is its scope. That ministry exists "within and for a communion of local communities," whereas a pastor serves "within and for *a* local community of believers."[6]

How the ministry of word and sacrament is part of the church's mission can be seen in some of the papers from the Lutheran–Episcopal dialogs.

Robert Jenson spoke of communicating the gospel to people of another persuasion or to one's own children; and I would add, to one's own generation (in one's own culture and in one's own church) as it constantly faces new situations. For him the gospel is a message for the communication of which new understandings and language are continually generated. Yet the process is not self-sufficient, because the gospel is more than a message; it is a message about the living Christ, and still more, for Christ. In other words, Christ is the *subject* of the utterance before becoming the *object* of it. The newness of language develops in a conversation where Christ is partner.[7]

With more explicit reference to mission, Robert Bertram pointed out that mission threatens to interpose gaps, but not between "out there" in some distant mission field and "back here" at some sending base. The "mission field, whether that be across the seas or downtown or just as likely on the seminary campus, is as distant theologically as it is distant from the Commissioner." There is (1) a time gap, involving drastic historical change, and there is (2) a gap of unbelief about the *skandalon* that has existed from the beginning.

"Lutherans believe," Bertram said, "that confessional testimonies of the sixteenth century, like ecumenical creeds centuries before, faithfully crossed the horizontal gap between by-gone times of their Sender and the much later times of their own mission." The Confessions did not, however, displace Scripture which retains a prior authority, and with which we engage to deal with the historical gap in our own time.

Elaborating on the second gap, Bertram held that the credulity gap is not a matter of unbelief about events because they are unusual—after all, a scandalous crucifixion is not all that unusual—but unbelief about *our need* for those events. The Lutheran Confessions dealt with this vertical gap by championing a biblical *sola fide*.

Bertram concluded, "*Promissio* is the secret of *missio*." In other words, the promise of the gospel is the very substance of mission, as it is of ministry.[8]

Episcope and Mission in Visitation

In the LWF study on the *Lutheran Understanding of the Episcopal Office (LUEO)*, a list of duties for episcopal ministries places as the first, "advising and supporting congregations in their life of worship, witness and service, by visiting them, listening to their needs, responding to their questions, and helping to solve their problems."[9] Visitation belongs to the proper work of the episcopal office.[10] The visitation

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[5]*Report of the International Anglican-Lutheran Conversations (IALC)* (SPCK: London, 1983), section II, 76.

[6]*LUEO*, 8, par. 6.

[7]*Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue* (LED I) (Cincinnati: Forward Movement, 1973), 50f.

[8]*The Report of the Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue Second Series* (LED II) (Cincinnati: Forward Movement, 1981), 74f., 77, 82f., 87.

[9]*LUEO*, 10, par. 17.

[10]Jürgen Roloff, "The Question of the Church's Ministry in Our Generation," *Lutheran World* XI: 4 (October, 1964), 394.

The congregation needs to see itself as a gathering of ministries, not only a gathering of members and families.

of parishes gives a bishop abundant opportunity for preaching and for serving, often presiding at, the Eucharist. Thus the bishop is involved first-hand in the mission of the ministry of word and sacrament.

Much of the bishop's involvement in mission, however, might be considered second-hand. For example, the LWF study includes among episcopal duties "planning and soliciting support for mission outreach both in the church and in the world."[11] While others would be doing the actual mission work, therefore, the bishop would be participating as an implementer or enabler.

A bishop may show a congregation how it is the recipient and beneficiary of God's mission and how it is a center for engaging in God's mission.

The mission of the congregation has received a great deal of attention in recent years, under the impetus of studies in the 1960s such as *The Missionary Structure of the Congregation.* This study had a strong influence, especially among member churches of the World Council of Churches. The concept of "wider evangelism" emphasized a congregation's service in its neighborhood and struggle with social justice issues as ways to manifest Christian witness. Although growth in membership and concern for budgets were not set aside, other criteria for measuring a congregation's vitality were developed.

A bishop's work with congregations has become increasingly difficult. Decline in membership demoralizes many congregations as the post World War II baby boom generation reaches retirement and population growth levels off. Entrepreneurial, nationalistic, and/or escapist religions on television or in competing congregations and movements continue to be the main attraction for unchurched, unsettled, or dissatisfied individuals. As political freedom and economic affluence prevail, so do varieties of lifestyle, mobility, materialism, and privatism. On the other hand, the complexity of society and the depersonalization in ever bigger organizations of government, business, health, and education make personal relationships in a congregation attractive.

A bishop may need to help the congregation with its internal life, in order that it may be a fitting sign and witness for Christ. As the diversity in parish makeup grows, a bishop has to work to reconcile factions in a congregation, to establish caring relationships among different groups of members, to develop inclusive membership and leadership, as well as to inspire concern for those beyond the present membership of parish boundaries. The congregation needs to see itself as a gathering of ministries, not only a gathering of members and families. The congregation needs to see that it has a corporate mission, not only many dispersed individual responsibilities.

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[11] *LUEO*, 10, par. 17.

Episcope and Mission in Ordination

Like visitation, ordination belongs to the proper work of the episcopal office.[12] The LWF study speaks of the duty of "ordaining pastors, or authorizing others to ordain, and serving pastors as a pastor."[13] Since those who are ordained are ministers of word and sacrament, the bishop is once again involved in implementing mission.

For a bishop to serve as pastor of pastors has proved difficult, for which the common explanation is that administrative duties allow little or no time for pastoral work. Some observers maintain that a bishop's responsibility for pastoral placement makes the bishop unable to minister to a pastor with personal problems or difficulties. The argument is that pastors will be reluctant to deal confidentially with the person who can determine the future of their career. One might wish it were otherwise, that in fact knowledge of personal matters would allow for improved evaluation in placement, which would benefit the pastor as well as those served.

The needs are not likely to decline as society continues to grow more complex. Expectations of pastors become more varied, role models less clear, standards of morals and life style less definite, conflict between secular and Christian views more intense, and pressures from competing claims greater. Family problems and marital difficulties have intensified, and have multiplied among clergy to the point where they could demand a major portion of a bishop's time.

The dimension of pastoral mission was clarified by a missionary from overseas who returned and became a member of a congregation in the U.S.A. He wrote:

> Our participation in the life of this Lutheran congregation, however, proved to be one of the most difficult aspects of reentry into American society and culture. We soon discovered that many of our new friends saw their church as a bulwark of defense, a circle of safety, in the midst of the unremitting threat of change that swirled around them. This pervaded the life of the congregation. Almost intuitively, I resented this and wondered why... until I realized that their attitude called into serious question my vocation and entire ministry.
>
> For seventeen years, on behalf of the church, I—and others with me—had been introducing into the lives and social circumstances of people in Liberia radical, sometimes dramatic, life-disturbing change. As a missionary of the Lutheran Church in America, I had been inviting my African friends and neighbors to become believers in and followers of Jesus Christ, involving a change in attitude, an alternative world-view, a different relation to God and others that entailed change in their lives, communities and culture every bit as undermining of the status quo as that experienced by the members of this American congregation in the late 1960s.[14]

The quotation helps to illustrate the statement in the LWF study of ministry: "Ordained ministers stand both within the congregation and over against it. They stand *with* the whole people of God because all share in the one ministry of the Church. They stand *over against* the congregation because in God's name they proclaim the saving gospel to God's people, and therefore bear the authority of God's word—but only

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[12]Roloff, "The Question of the Church's Ministry," 394.

[13]*LUEO*, 10, par. 17

[14]Gerald E. Currens, "Empowerment for Change: A Strategy for Mission," *Trinity Seminary Review* (Columbus, Ohio, Fall, 1986), 93.

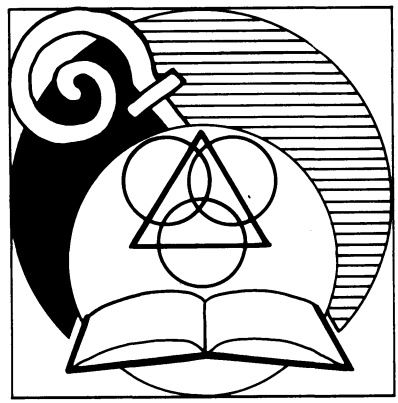
insofar as their proclamation is faithful to the Gospel."[15]

Visitation and ordination define two fundamental responsibilities through which a bishop participates in the mission of the church in a major way. Two additional areas of work have defined *episcope*: unity and teaching. These two emphases are described in Christ's prayer for the apostolic mission in John 17. The *mission* concern is clear in the purpose—"that the world may believe"—and in the strategy—as God has sent Jesus, so are the disciples sent. One way the world will know Christ is by the word of truth (verse 8), hence the importance of teaching. The other way is that the disciples are one even as God and Christ are one (verses 21 and 23), hence the importance of unity. We consider unity first.

Episcope and Mission in Unity

A connection between unity, ordination and mission is made in *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (BEM)* from the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC: "In order to fulfil its *mission*, the Church needs persons who are publicly and continually responsible for pointing to its fundamental dependence on Jesus Christ, and thereby provide, within a multiplicity of gifts, a focus on its unity. The ministry of such persons, who since very early times have been ordained, is constitutive for the life and mission of the church."[16]

For bishops, BEM assigns a specific role: "They provide a focus for unity in life and witness within areas comprising several *eucharistic communities*."[17] The truth of this statement is evident where the pastors and representatives of congregations in a regional unit of organization elect a bishop to relate to all of the congregations and pastors in their ministry and mission and to all the work which they have chosen to do together as their corporate mission. This regional bishop fulfills, then, the further statement in the document, which indicates that bishops "have responsibility for leadership in the church's mission."[18]



We have dealt with the bishop's role in facilitating local mission previously. Now let us turn our attention to the bishop's role in corporate mission needs. Traditionally, this has referred to the bishop's role in institutions and agencies of higher learning and of social service, and to the organization of new congregations and ministries.

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[15] *The Lutheran Understanding of Ministry (LUM)*, Lutheran World Federation (Geneva, 1983), 10, par. 24.

[16] *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper No. 111, World Council of Churches (Geneva, 1982), 21, II-A-8.

[17] *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, III, 21, 24; see also 25, par. 23; 26, par. 27; 29.

[18] *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, III, 27, par. 29.

A less traditional kind of unity in regional church jurisdictions, but a growing form of witness, is advocacy of policy to state government, and occasionally to institutions of the business world. While one method of advocacy would enlist church people to communicate with their elected officials or to use their influence as clients of businesses, a bishop may exercise, in person, important persuasive power.

At this point, the cause of unity often exceeds the boundary of a particular denomination in two ways. First, the *BEM* statement of the WCC had noted that bishops "relate the Christian community in the area to the wider Church, and the universal Church to their community."[19] In this way the bishop is not only a connecting link between local mission and regional mission, but also between regional mission and churchwide or global mission.

Second, the denomination may opt for interchurch cooperation. A council or conference of churches may initiate the activity, in which case, "bishop types" in several denominations may be a major influence. Or bishops may come together apart from any continuing organization.

We need to note also that much cooperation takes place without any help or hindrance from bishops. Local congregations have relied on their own combined resources to provide soup kitchens, food pantries, shelters for the homeless, and much besides.

Yet, work toward unity at regional levels has expanded. Under the press of social change and within the freedom permitted by democracy, the churches are likely to increase their cooperation, and bishops will take a leadership role in it. Declarations and actions to alleviate social ills provide a witness and service to the world that deserves to be a part of the church's mission. More attention must be given to this aspect of mission as we turn to the church's teaching.

Episcope and Mission in Teaching

The bishop's office is a teaching office. From a Lutheran perspective this principle identifies the bishop with the pastoral office.

Theological exploration is native to the church. Any bishop ignores it at some peril. The peril has increased from the effect of several trends. When we elevate interchurch relations to new importance, some people conclude that theological specificity is out-of-date. The expansion of scientific explanations has caused some people to conclude that any and all theology is out-of-date. An emphasis on practical administration and service often relegates theology to second place.

The problem was expressed poignantly by Robert Jenson, who pointed out that "despite the Lutheran denominations'... official fervor for their dogmatic tradition, the *Book of Concord* has little if any... communal effect among them.... The Lutheran denominations live—or do not live—by the same mixture of fundamentalism, helplessness before every wind of doctrine, tag-ends of denominational tradition, and occasional saving theological miracles by which the other American denominations live."[20]

Like a parish pastor, a busy bishop in the American environment may find it difficult to keep the mission of the church clearly in view. Much of the work may appear as no more than promoting the church as an institution to attain or maintain a secure financial position, a respectable or privileged status.

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[19]*Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, III, 27, par. 29.

[20]*Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue* (LED I), 131.

Like a parish pastor, a bishop has the difficult job of showing that the church has a transcendent nature and message and yet is significantly relevant to earthly life. It is the task of clarifying how the church—and, indeed, Christian life—are "not of this world" (John 17), and yet are means by which "the kingdom of God has come near" (Lk 10:9).

Daily life becomes more public as it grows more complex and dependent on professional specializations, commercial products and services, and governmental protection and programs. Though some products allow for more privacy, such as television with home entertainment, and the automobile (as the word indicates) with self-controlled transportation, they only accommodate a need for escape from an excessively public, remotely determined, and often oppressive social environment. Some people find satisfaction by attaining positions with sufficient power of determination and control. Others enjoy sufficient affluence for material and recreational satisfaction. Still others escape into drug or alcohol abuse, or licentiousness; or take exactly the reverse route toward self improvement, social reform, or a dedication to helpful service for others.

Social reform and helpful service deserve a bishop's attention. Service activities have held a respectable place in the life of the church from the beginning, and I include them as a part of the mission of the church. "Go and do likewise" at the end of the story of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:37) stands on a par with the Great Commission (Mt 28:19, Mk 16:15).

Social reform has had a less secure place in the mission of the church. Dom Helder Camara remarked that when he cares for the poor, he is praised, but when he asks about the cause of poverty, he is criticized. Arguments and questions have been many. Should the church attempt to change society without first changing individuals through conversion to faith in Jesus Christ? Do not the orders of creation dictate that government should provide justice for people while the church teaches justification before God? Should not the laity of the church work for a good society through their daily vocations, while the clergy confine themselves to the distinctive vocation of ministry in and for the church? Does not the displacement of both theocracy and the establishment of religion, as they existed in colonial America, remove the church from influencing public policy? Affirmative answers to these questions could prevent bishops from exercising much of a role for social improvement.

Like a parish pastor, a busy bishop in the American environment may find it difficult to keep the mission of the church clearly in view.

For its policy, the church may start from its faith in one God who is sovereign over all the world and for all of life. Even if the church's concern were limited to individuals before God, that concern would stretch to the whole life of those individuals, public as well as private. Consequently, the episcopal office is concerned that means be made available to think through our vocation in the world from a Christian standpoint.

Two developments have intensified the need for the church's corporate address to public issues. One is the growth of participatory democracy, which increases individual, both lay and clergy, social responsibility as citizen, consumer, investor, manager or worker (unionized or not), teacher or student, health care provider or patient. The other development relates to the growth of large organizations and of the public domain as noted earlier. The once popular and neat separation between orders of creation has been relativized. It is less possible for the church, even if it wished to do so, to maintain isolation from so-called secular orders. The church has insistent reasons from persistent experience to take its place among other institutions in addressing social issues.

The church has insistent reasons from persistent experience to take its place among other institutions in addressing social issues.

The clergy often have fairly direct contact with social causes of individual problems and suffering. Insights from pastoral care lend credibility to interpretations of scripture and doctrine that suggest social reform. The bishop serves in this regard as any pastor might, with the sole difference of a regional base for gaining experience and for proposing structural change.

Some Lutherans have held that bishops have authority to make proclamations about social justice as Roman Catholic bishops do. The prevailing view has commended a practice whereby official church policy on social concerns grows out of study commissions and legislative bodies which include both lay and ordained participants from a variety of positions. Bishops, like other ordained ministers, have a part in determining policy. Their teaching on social issues would be conformed to church policy while they continue their fundamental responsibility for the interpretation of Scripture. They may even find it necessary, as a matter of conscience, to vary from the church's position; but they should still make clear the church's official teaching.

In spite of the intensity of debate, there is considerable agreement that the church should speak and work for human rights, for equal opportunity, for adequate availability for everyone of the necessities of human life with dignity and self-determination, for international peace, for the sustaining of creation, and more. In a church that thirty years ago rarely addressed social concerns, and then rather timidly, there is now constant staff involvement, regular statements by legislative bodies—and by bishops.

The authority is still canon, creed, and confession. The power is God's Spirit. The integrity and credibility is enhanced by compassionate worldly involvement. The means is the church, lay and clergy. The official teachers are the ordained ministers of word and sacrament, with bishops properly in the lead.

In Praise of the Civil Congregation

Martin E. Marty
The University of Chicago



Personal Introduction

Robert Fischer was my S.T.M. adviser (1954), who developed my taste for Reformation-era theology. He also saw me struggle with late-medieval German and Latin, and advised me to pursue American religious history at The University of Chicago. When the Lutheran School of Theology moved from Maywood to the University neighborhood in Chicago, we became Hyde Park colleagues, and he remained my mentor. He played a crucial role in directing my vocation, and I remain in his debt.

In the season in which this ***Festschrift*** *essay was due, I prepared a lecture to the Near West Conference of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod. Finding Dr. Fischer in the audience that day was the impetus that led me to revise the lecture into this essay. I think and hope it reflects some of the impulse of his own thought and work though, as they say, the errors and faults are not to be laid at his door. —M.E.M.*

It is hard to think of a Lutheran who adheres to a congregation because it has a civic role. One is in the congregation because the Holy Spirit "first leads us into his holy community, placing us upon the bosom of the church, where he preaches to us and brings us to Christ."[1] Yet the Christian lives

[1]Martin Luther, *The Large Catechism: Creed: The Third Article* in Theodore G. Tappert, *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1959), 415.

in two communities. In addition to this "holy community," there is the community of public order or orders. This includes chiefly the state or, as we shall refer to it in the present and local instance, the republic.

The American republic is a constitutional republic, under the rule of law. This constitution assures religious freedom and allows for the development of independent congregations or religious bodies. James Madison, chief framer of the Constitution, called these "sects" or "factions." While arguing for a great republic because it better assured liberties, he tended to see these factions, sects, and interests as potentially inimical to each other and to the public good.

Members of the republic may be "united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community."[2] No one should take away the achievement of Madison and the constitutional legalists; they provided the structure in which confessional and congregational life could develop. But theirs was unfinished work. They did not devote much attention to a subject that did concern them: the substance of republican existence. They were anxious about "public virtue," "civic virtue," whatever it took to produce a law-abiding and moral citizenry. Some made contributions to providing the means for nurturing these. Yet these contributions became a preoccupation of later generations, and concern about them is especially vivid in our own time.

Alexis de Tocqueville, in his classic *Democracy in America,* pondered the substantive question when he referred to the necessary *moeurs* or "mores," which might be called the habits of the heart, but also to the "different notions possessed by men, the various opinions current among them, and the sum of ideas that shape mental habits."[3] In addition to providing a fine book title for Robert Bellah, that phrase sets a context for discussing the ways in which habits, notions, opinions, and ideas that support the civil order come to be originated and then matured.

Tocqueville provided a rationale for voluntary "associations," and always paid closest attention to religious congregations among these. While catholic Christians who begin with the notion of the church as the Body of Christ and the congregation as an activity of the Holy Spirit will not let "voluntary association" exhaust the definition, the congregation is, civilly speaking, one of these. I argue that it is one of the better poised associations for supporting—and criticizing—the civil order.

In Pauline, Augustinian, Calvinist, and Lutheran theology, the civil order may be secondary to what I call the "salvific" or saving order. Public and republican life does not save souls, bring people to God, resolve issues of eternal destiny, or provide the most profound interpretations of existence. But the civil order is also an expression of the same God who saves, the same Lord of history who places creatures in the world and cares for them. The congregation is a local agency which at least as by-product can contribute to the context in which citizens obey laws, promote justice and peace, and serve each other.

Civilly, the congregations fit in to the several models of republican life. I will cite a favored few. For Aristotle, the *polis* is

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[2]Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison, *The Federalist, etc.* (Washington, D.C., 1976), 54. Federalist Papers No. X and LI are especially relevant here.

[3]Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1969), 287.

The traditions of a Christian congregation antedate, will outlast, and encompass more than those of a specific republic.

made up of "aggregates." Plato thought it must be a *unum,* and anarchists might think it is a collection of isolated individuals. But Aristotle saw it made up of groups. Dutch Calvinist Johannes Althusius spoke of *symbiotes,* sub-committees which lived off each other in a *communitas communitatum,* a community of subcommunities. Edmund Burke spoke of "little platoons" as inns or resting-places between the individual and the large society. For Madison they could be "factions" of the *plures,* the "many" which are always in the process of becoming "one" in a republic. Tocqueville saw them as "associations."

After that little collection, we can pause for a summary model, from U.S. Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, who contended that "the ultimate foundation of a free society is the binding tie of cohesive sentiment. Such a sentiment is fostered by all those agencies of the mind and spirit which may serve to gather up the traditions of a people, transmit them from generation to generation, and thereby create that continuity of a treasured common life which constitutes a civilization."[4]

Think of a congregation as one of these "agencies" and you begin to see its civil function. The traditions of a Christian congregation antedate, will outlast, and encompass more than those of a specific republic. They embody some different interests. They provide their own motivations for creative acts; e.g., "the love of Christ controls us" is different than "I swear to uphold the Constitution." But through preaching of law and gospel, through sacramental life and the works of love, and through education and moral encouragement, they make civil life something more than mere obedience to civil law.

In our time the congregation, frail instrument though it is, is a survivor among the agencies Frankfurter mentioned. On the Christian landscape, it has been challenged by but has outlived most of the experimental community expressions in favor as para- or contra-congregational two or three decades ago. In the imagination of most members, the congregation is more immediate, efficient, consuming, and vivid than is the confessional body, the denomination, or the ecumenical organization. While it is not chartered to do all Christian activity and runs into trouble when it is either isolationist or imperial, the congregation is an integral element in the Christian and civil economies alike.

As for civil economies, one can compare the function of congregations over against many other agencies. They rarely receive credit for all their functions. I often like to collect the Sunday church bulletins or

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[4]*Minersville v. Gobitis, 310 U.S. 586 (1940)* in Robert T. Miller and Ronald B. Flowers, *Toward Benevolent Neutrality: Church, State and the Supreme Court* (Waco, TX: Markham, 1987), 83.

the monthly newsletters of the eight or ten churches that make up a small community and enumerate all their activities of the week. Some of these are by many standards trivial—though not necessarily to the people attracted to them. But the program of education, calling, scouting, service, community participation, advocacy, and the like, suggests that few other community agencies have anything like their ambition, resourcefulness, and scope.

Such an assessment may seem romantic; is it drawn from idealized portraits of a few highly effective and lucky parishes? The demoralized lay and clerical leadership of many apparently woebegone little churches might think so, in the face of what looks like raging apathy. But before despair sets in, it may be possible to build morale by pointing: look at the alternatives.

The civil symbols evoked at the highest governmental levels attract two extremes. In moments of crisis, they can call forth loyalties, but these can border on idolatry; modern nationalism is a competitive religion. In ordinary times, these symbols are too compromised, too diffuse, to evoke much more than a momentary response during the national anthem, a cynical reaction by members of the party out of power. How do these symbols get reinforced? The public elementary and high schools have it on their agenda, but the disputes over values and value clarification, not to say about religion in those schools, shows both how low on a crowded agenda this topic is and how difficult it is to follow.

Leaders have to find intentional ways of promoting the civil function.

What other agencies can fulfill the Tocquevillean assignment? They are all needed, and each can reach different people. (Over half the American people are almost never reached by congregations of faith.) But they have their own kinds of limits. The modern university may be an admirable community of inquiry, but is not constituted to reach the habits of mind and heart and soul needed for fulfillment of republican life. Government officials in the era of mass media exposure rarely themselves serve as models. Business and industry do not see themselves chartered to carry on such work and, in any case, fail to do so on any measurable scale. Mass media are more likely to be corruptive than constructive in these areas.

Closer to home, the neighborhood disintegrates, particularly in a time of high-rise living, where people seek privacy. Friendship, of course, can make important contributions, where like finds like. But its contacts are often ad hoc, privileged. I do not want to detract from the many important secular voluntary associations; they are partners. Families themselves? They are, for one thing, too small communities: the average American family has 0.96 individuals under 18 in it. That hardly provides for discourse. Discourse in any case has declined in an era of grazing at fast food places instead of dining and conversing at home; or it has been outshouted by television, or eclipsed by outside-the-home activities. I do not want this to be a litany of sighs so much as a set of observations about the limits of forms to which envious congregants once looked.

To see the congregation surviving by default through the decline or disappearance of alternatives is not a sufficient charter, to be sure. Leaders have to find intentional ways of promoting the civil function along with the informal and accidental ways in which civil results come as by-products of other integral congregational activities.

Let me illustrate two interpretive occasions. In the 1960s the congregation was often written off as an inefficient contributor or irrelevant bystander in respect to the then-fashionable "civil religion." That religion was institutionalized outside the churches, according to common observations. It chanced that the bicentennial of the nation was celebrated on a Sunday, July 4, 1976. While the television networks scanned backyard barbecues or the tall ships on the horizon in New York's harbor, the evidence of newspaper advertising and accounts shows that in hundreds of thousands of Christian congregations that day there were reflections on civil life, on American freedom and community. Forget for the moment what all this did to Lectionary integrity. Every 200 years there might be permitted a one-day lapse. The simple point is: the congregations were the place where the Tocquevillean agenda was more likely to be encouraged. In 1987, the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, great numbers of forums on its meaning occurred in the congregations.

One asset of congregational life is its partly random character. We all know that since congregations are local and locales tend to be self-segregating groups of kind, at least economically, there are homogeneities. But every pastor also know the varieties, the ways a congregation is a public itself. People do not join a congregation in order to further divestment in respect to South Africa, or an anti-abortion cause, or a pro-sanctuary one. They find themselves in congregations where they can debate and act in respect to such issues. Their political club, their interest group, or any of a number of focused associations may achieve other things through their efficient focus. But they do not bring people of many minds and divided loyalties together in open encounter where the stakes can be high.

One asset of congregational life is its partly random character.

This essay in praise of congregations for their often overlooked functions appears in a time when the nature of congregations is receiving fresh attention. Why, one may ask, have they been overlooked, if they are prime? Here I would draw upon the great historian Jacob Burckhardt. He once remarked that in history the most important things do not get written because they are so important, so close to us, so taken for granted that we see no reason to remark upon them. For instance, I know of only two books, a short one and a dull one, on the Sunday School in American culture. Everyone went, but no one wrote about it. The School had unimaginably strong impact among the "agencies of mind and spirit," especially in respect to the young. I can think off hand of only once that the Sunday School appears in the general history books: one day in Birmingham, Alabama, some racists bombed one, killing four children. All the other days in all the other places the Sunday School carries on its work unnoticed.

So with congregations. Each has its own history, normally marked by the succession of pastors and buildings, but written so as to attract attention of the members of each only. Now, thanks to endeavors like a Lilly Endowment-based program, there are Jewish, Catholic, and multi-faith inquiries concerning the social forms and, most particularly, the history of the congregation. What stands out almost at once, according to coordinators James P. Wind and James Lewis, is their crucial location at the juncture of "private" and "public" spheres. They and their colleagues are trying to transcend provincialism, to seek the "genius" of particular congregations, to see them in the larger social ecology of the nation. There are reasons to believe that the civil functions of congregations will, thanks to such studies, stand out more than ever before.

Understanding of these civil functions will have some bearing on how ministers are trained, how congregations order themselves. It does not mean that congregations must "go into politics" or that ministers need Ph.D.s in the social sciences. They may well serve best by doing what they do best. The inculcation of civil morality on the basis of warmed-over and thinned-out Enlightenment ideas after two centuries may be much less civilly effective than is the preparation of the motivated heart following the traditions of a congregation. But such understandings do demand at least a minimal awareness of the civil potential of the congregation.

One asset of the congregation among these "agencies of mind and spirit" which helps to provide bonding in a free society is the fact that they do not rise or fall by the temporal and temporary effects of their work. Of course, they are in difficulty if, for example, their society turns totalitarian or anarchist. But in general they are liberated from the grim and desperate work of so many voluntary associations devoted to single causes. Their eschatological awareness lets them know that whatever is begun in history by humans is not to last, but their sense of responsibility says that such beginnings are of value in any case. Their members may get discouraged by the contingencies and setbacks of a moment. Yet they are also dwellers of a city with foundations, whose builder and maker is God. They may not always "order" things well, but they can save and be saved.

Congregations do not rise or fall by the temporal and temporary effects of their work.

Through congregations aware of their civil functions we may again learn that they are also God's gifts, part of the "all things" added to those who seek first the Kingdom. They are communities of the spirit that do more than take up space in the human city. They are reasonably well poised associations that serve their own people and can promote "the habits of the heart... the different notions... the various opinions... [and] the sum of ideas that shape mental habits" in the civil society around them.

Luther and Pietism

David T. Priestley
Associate Professor of Historical Theology
North American Baptist Divinity School
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Since the late seventeenth century, terms like "piety" and "pious" have been used mostly in a negative manner; its older positive uses have been largely forgotten. Piety, according to John Calvin, is "a sincere feeling which loves God as Father as much as it fears and reverences Him as Lord, embraces His righteousness, and dreads offending Him worse than death."[1] In a more familiar and accessible volume, he defines it as "that reverence joined with love of God which the knowledge of his benefits induces" (*Institutes* I.2.1).[2] Martin Luther scatters the term through his writings but takes no time to define it. Generally, for him, it expresses being religious, sometimes with positive, sometimes with negative connotations. With the arrival of Philip Jacob Spener on Germany's religious scene, however, "Pietism" has been largely opprobrious in intent.

One still feels a need to apologize for it and for an interest in it, despite the extensive efforts at rehabilitation it has undergone in this century. Peter Erb calls attention to Ernst Käsemann's assertion that Protestantism is currently indebted to Pietism for the vitality and personnel with which it still infuses the churches.[3] Ernest Stoeffler and others argue for the influence of continental Pietism upon American Christianity.[4] Stoeffler's landmark historical investigations of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Pietism with Dale Brown's more popular introduction and Peter Erb's editing of Pietist

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[1]John Calvin, *Catechism* (1537); quoted from Ford Lewis Battles, ed., *The Piety of John Calvin* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), 13.

[2]Ford Lewis Battles, tr., in *Library of Christian Classics*, Vol. 20-21 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960).

[3]Ernst Käsemann, "New Testament Questions of Today," *New Testament Questions of Today* (London: SCM, 1969), 4; in Peter C. Erb, ed., *Pietists: Selected Writings*, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist, 1983), 1. See also Paul Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1968), 305-19; cf. Karl Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (London: SCM, 1972), 33-173 *passim;* Claude Welch, *Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale, 1972), 22-30.

[4]F. Ernest Stoeffler, ed., *Continental Pietism and Early American Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976).

writings for anglophones should enable us and our heirs to appreciate this heritage and overcome the prejudice with which the term is still too often laced.[5]

Philip Jacob Spener (1635-1705) has long been honored as the father of Pietism. His *Pia Desideria*, written first as a foreword to a 1675 edition of Johann Arndt's *Postilla* on the Gospel lections, vaulted him into prominence as spokesman for a hunger and a program for church renewal.[6] Fundamentally, Spener spoke for a spirituality which took seriously the personal confession of Christ. Out of a quotation from Chrysostom's homilies on St. Matthew that an undisciplined people are evidence for unholy priests, the Frankfurt pastor proceeded to lament what Tappert calls "defects in the clergy."[7] Spener had already asserted that many of the civil authorities had fallen victim to a distorted understanding of grace; but it seemed especially reprehensible to him that for too many of the clergy "...their lives reflect... a worldly spirit, marked by carnal pleasure, lust of the eye, and arrogant behavior; and so it is evident that they have never taken even the first practical principle of Christianity seriously, namely, denial of self" (45).

To take Christianity seriously, to be earnest in pursuing a life consistent with the expectations of the Faith, is essential to genuine faith, he argued. "True Christianity... consists of more than avoiding manifest vices and living an outwardly moral life" (45); the churched person should "possess the true marks of a new birth," some "fruits of faith" (46). Far from being a humanly-evoked conviction or pattern of conduct, the true faith of the Christian "is awakened through the Word of God, by the illumination, witness, and sealing of the Holy Spirit" (46); it necessarily results in "an earnest, inner godliness" (47) as well as external righteousness: "The church should be free of manifest offenses [and] the true members of the church should be richly filled with many fruits of their faith" (81). One is not simply saved, baptized, made a child of God, rescued from eternal damnation; rather, God "has made a covenant with you—from his side a covenant of grace and from your side a covenant of faith and a good conscience. This covenant must last through your whole life" (66).

Such notions of evident godliness in character and conduct, Spener claimed, were not new with him. He cites sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Lutheran theologians and churchmen who had spoken to the same intent: John Affelmann, Johann Valentin Andreae, David Chytraeus, Johannes Dinckel, Balthazar Meissner, Erasmus Sarcerius, Christopher Scheibler, Nicholas Selnecker—and Luther himself. The key prefigurer of Pietism among the Lutherans, however, was Johann Arndt, whose writings Spener had known since boyhood.

Heiko Oberman, in fact, avers that Arndt is the real progenitor of the movement. "There can be no doubt that Arndt is the hidden and powerful source of a tradition that moved for

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[5]F. Ernest Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism* (Leiden: Brill, 1965); Stoeffler, *German Pietism during the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1973); Dale Brown, *Understanding Pietism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978); Erb, *Pietists;* Johann Arndt, *True Christianity*, tr. Peter C. Erb, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist, 1979). In Germany under the impetus of Martin Schmidt and others, major volumes appear in the series *Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Pietismus* (Bielefeld: Luther Verlag), and an annual collection of current articles has been published as *Pietismus und Neuzeit* since 1974.

[6]Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, tr. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1964).

[7]Spener, *Pia Desideria*, 44.

How could Lutheranism, which has so often disparaged Pietism, produce and nurture it?

some time in subterranean channels, surfacing toward the later part of the seventeenth century as German Pietism."[8] Spener, Francke, and Zinzendorf, in their turn, retained what was essentially "Arndt's program, developed it, and directed it toward social renewal, cutting through the dead weight of traditional Christianity that had burdened the creative imagination of 'faith active in love' (Gal 5:6)."[9] "True Christianity," "true faith," "true Christian sorrow," and "true worship" appear repeatedly in Arndt's classic and in the writings of those who follow him.[10]

These "earnest Christians" very soon were accused of betraying Luther's hard-won principle of free grace, reintroducing salvation by works into the Protestantism which arose to resist Pelagian errors in the medieval Roman church. Spener and the rest countered with their own accusation that their critics had reintroduced another medieval Roman error, namely, scholasticism, which played with doctrines at the intellectual level but left no impression upon daily life, whether of the church or the whole community.

Pietism's critics seem not to have reckoned seriously with the question that nags increasingly at my mind: how could Lutheranism, which has so often disparaged Pietism, produce and nurture it? Granted, Pietism was a much larger movement than what appeared in Germany and Scandinavia; for generations, however, it has been perceived by those unsympathetic to it as a peculiar pest within Lutheranism. And its proponents, whatever crossfertilizations there certainly were with Jansenism, Puritanism, and other currents of personalized Christian experience since the seventeenth century, have consistently claimed spiritual descent from Luther and adherence to Lutheran Orthodoxy's formulations of his ideas.[11]

The anomaly of Pietists and their critics both appealing to the same sources can be explained simply as sound polemical tactics; no constitutional lawyer would concede his arguments have no points of contact with the nation's fundamental political document. Luther is still invoked quite plausibly against the Pietists on the basis of the *sola gratia, sola fides* principle. For example, a teaser presented as a newly discovered letter by Luther seems intended to dissuade the reader from sympathy for Pietism then and now on the ground that the Reformer has precluded the kind of personalized perception of the Christian life that Arndt and Spener urge.[12]

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[8]Heiko A. Oberman, "Preface" in *True Christianity*, xiii. Cf. Stoeffler, *Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, 202f.

[9]Oberman, "Preface," xii.

[10]Cf. Spener, *Pia Desideria*, and Erb, *Pietists, passim*.

[11]See Spener's own rejection of the Reformed view of the Sacrament of the Altar: *Pia Desideria*, 63.

[12]Charles E. White, "'Concerning Earnest Christians': A Newly Discovered Letter of Martin Luther," *Currents in Theology and Mission*, 10 (1983), 273-82.

Spener, on the other hand, claimed spiritual kinship with the great reformer. Although he usually declined to excerpt from other writings of Luther, he quoted most of two paragraphs from his *Preface to Romans*.[13] Elsewhere he remarked that Lutherans "do not understand dear Luther's teaching about living faith."[14] It is to Luther that he appealed to urge reading of Scripture, exercise of the spiritual priesthood, and use of devotional classics.[15]

Browsing through several of Luther's writings rather at random, I gain the impression that however correctly those who question efforts to be "earnest Christians" have understood his emphasis upon grace, the Pietists have understood his emphasis upon faith active in love. So I offer a reflection in the hope of tempering an unnecessary, unjust, unbiblical, unLuther-an, and ultimately unhealthy objection.

This is presented at the risk it will be dismissed with a "what else can one expect from an Anabaptist and a Puritan?!" There is also the risk an outsider runs when interfering in a domestic squabble. But having lived in the LSTC community for three years, I feel at least a cousin, and therefore, may object legitimately to observed sibling abuse. Presumptuous though it is to attempt a reconciliation in another family, the effort offers a hope that people on all sides will realize that your family has members mightily like my family, and an even larger reconciliation thereby become imaginable.

A methodological warning appropriate to what is attempted here was offered by Oberman in another context: "To collect Luther's explicit statements *re* mystical theologians and their theology would prove to be an illegitimate short-cut."[16] Rather than trying to make such a dubious short-cut to firm conclusions, the present exercise wants to be only a first step toward understanding some of the materials.

Only two of the five "central theological motifs" Brown identifies in Pietism are distinctive enough to distinguish a movement; even they may be seen as emphases or nuances rather than substantial differences. The first is "reformation of life" (*orthopraxis* has a very contemporary sound); closely related to it is a "theology of experience" ("regeneration" is a key concern here—or "subjectivism," as its critics said).[17] August Langen's exploration of a characteristic vocabulary focuses on Brown's second aspect at length;[18] Martin Schmidt's four antitheses address both: life vs. doctrine; spirit vs. office; regeneration vs. justification; piety vs. theology.[19] Pietism is acknowledged, even by its friends, to lean toward moralism. At its worst, this becomes works-righteousness (though nothing should be judged "at its worst"—the doctrine of grace, at its worst, becomes antinomianism).

From the beginning, Pietism's concern with reformation of life raised questions

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[13]*Pia Desideria*, 64f. Cf. Martin Schmidt, "Luthers Vorrede zum Römerbrief im Pietismus," *Wiedergeburt und Neuer Mensch*, Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Pietismus, No. 2 (Bielefeld: Luther Verlag, 1969), 299-330.

[14]Spener, *Pia Desideria*, 58.

[15]Spener, *Pia Desideria*, 91, 93-5, 110f.

[16]Heiko A. Oberman, "*Simul Gemitus et Raptus:* Luther and Mysticism," in Steven E. Ozment, ed., *Reformation in Medieval Perspective* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1971), 232.

[17]Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, 27f.

[18]August Langen, *Der Wortschatz des deutschen Pietismus* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1968, rev. ed.).

[19]Quoted in Michel Godfroid, "Gab es den deutschen Pietismus?" in *Zur neueren Pietismusforschung*, ed. Martin Greschat (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1977), 95. Brown uses two of these as title and subheading in his chapter on reformation of life: *Understanding Pietism*, 83-101.

about the place of works in the life of the justified sinner. In Luther's lifetime, those who (in his judgment) exaggerated the importance of good deeds were soon tagged "fanatics" and "Anabaptists" (unfairly, it seems to me, for if he would allow to them his own definition of "faith," he would have no cause to say: "The papists and the Anabaptists are harmoniously agreed... that a work of God is dependent on the worthiness of man").[20] Not long after, the unkind term was "synergism." Thus, the weaknesses



attributed to Pietism were evident in Luther's time, which allows us to examine how the Wittenberg reformer explained both his own understanding of works and what he saw as a distortion of the truth. Given his positions, then, we can consider what Pietism saw in him to support its stands.

However strongly Luther inveighed against works-righteousness, he nonetheless expected that the righteousness of faith should be evident in conduct. It derives from baptism, that monument of grace and faith, for the rebirth and renewal of baptism have real and overt consequences. In the "baptized a new light and flame arise; new and devout emotions come into being, such as fear and trust in God and hope; and a new will emerges. This is what it means to put on Christ properly, truly, and according to the Gospel."[21]

His early concern was to deprive anyone of spiritual complacency based on behaviors approved by self, custom, church, or Scriptures. So vows were to be rejected for their self-righteous motivation. This was not to say God has no expected conduct, regardless of one's standing before him. "Doing self-chosen works are nothing when compared with the works demanded by God and the vows we have taken in baptism."[22] In the section on baptism in *The Babylonian Captivity* he warns that the practice of making vows is binding oneself to self-chosen works with the result that "faith is extinguished and the liberty of baptism is taken captive."[23] This hardly means the Christian is without obligation. "For we have vowed enough in baptism, more than we can ever fulfill; if we give ourselves to the keeping of this one vow, we shall have all we can do" (74f).

In the year 1520 he also addressed the issue of faith and works in several other places. During a lengthy discussion of good works, which is basically an exposition of the Ten Commandments, he dismisses the popular and canonical definitions of works and explains that good works are simply

[20]Luther's preface to the 1535 edition of his *Lectures on Galatians,* Luther's Works, Vol. 27 (St. Louis: Concordia, 1964): 148. Subsequent listings of volumes in this series will be identified by LW, vol. number and date of publication. Vols. 31ff are published at Philadelphia by Fortress.

[21]Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians* (1519), LW 27 (1964): 353.

[22]Luther, *A Discussion on How Confession Should Be Made* (1520), LW 39 (1970): 43.

[23]Luther, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520), LW 36 (1959): 75.

"those works God has commanded," preeminently faith in Christ.[24] Every other good work derives from this faith (24). God's explicit commandments "teach us how we should exercise ourselves in good works" (34, 81) because they embrace much virtue and drive out much vice (103, 106).

While discussing evangelical confession that same year, he expresses the wish that "everyone understood what is required in obedience to God's commandments.... I say let us put all our strength into this task."[25] The Christian should intend to lead a better life and should hate sin (30). In the corresponding sections in *The Babylonian Captivity* he approves the practice of the ancient church which made clear that "penitents gave themselves with much greater diligence to faith and the living of a new life" than they had prior to making their confession.[26]

From another side of church discipline, he sees that the church may express legitimate expectations regarding conduct through the ban. Its proper use is for our improvement, not for our condemnation or terror. Some things just should not be done by anyone, and the Christian through the law knows better than the heathen what God expects. "The ban should not only be used against those who oppose faith, but also against those who sin in public, as was indicated above by St. Paul, who calls for the ban against slanderers, usurers, fornicators, drunkards, etc." (1 Cor 5:11).[27]

The Freedom of a Christian, the third of the major programmatic works of 1520, sets Christian slavery in counterpoise to Christian liberty.[28] "Although... a man is abundantly and sufficiently justified by faith inwardly... in this life he must control his own body and have dealings with men. Here the works begin" (358). These works are first addressed to self-denial and then to the neighbor. Since one needs none of these things for personal righteousness and salvation, the Christian should be guided simply by a concern to "serve and benefit others in all that he does, considering nothing except the need and the advantage of his neighbor" (365). A truly Christian life "finds expression in works of the freest service" (365). The Christian does not live in the self but "in Christ through faith, in his neighbor through love" (371).

> In reality, piety and sin are mutually antagonistic.

When preaching on John 8:38 in 1521, he put into Christ's mouth his explanation of the freedom the Son offers: "Learn to know the true freedom... that hinges on piety, on abstention from sin, on obedience and on compliance with God's commands. It is vain for you to sin and still expect to be free."[29] Without suggesting that the Christian can be sinless, the promise of Christian freedom is linked to resisting sin: "We want to be free to do whatever we desire. There are but a few who devote themselves to the

[24]Luther, *Treatise on Good Works* (1520), LW 44 (1966): 23.
[25]Luther, *A Discussion on Confession,* 43.
[26]Luther, *The Babylonian Captivity,* 90.
[27]Luther, *A Sermon on the Ban* (1520), LW 39: 21.
[28]Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian* (1520), LW 31 (1957): 343-77.
[29]Luther, *Sermons on the Gospel of St. John,* II (1531-32), LW 23 (1959): 406.

real problem: how to get rid of sin. The majority... are not concerned about serving Christ and being delivered from sin" (407). In reality, piety and sin are mutually antagonistic; "you must become pious and be rid of sin" (407).

He said it similarly enroute to Worms in 1521: "Do not perform good works in order to become godly; but if you are already godly, then do good works, though without affectation and with faith."[30] As one listens to Luther, he makes it clear that it is a fallacy to force a choice between faith and works; while faith has a logical and experiential priority, it is not the whole story. "To fulfill the law, however, is to do its works with pleasure and love, to live a godly and good life of one's own accord ...without the compulsion of the law," Luther says in his *Preface to Romans* (1522).[31] In contrast to the legalist, motivated by a desire for merit, the Christian knows that "this pleasure and love for the law is put into the heart by the Holy Spirit.... But the Holy Spirit is not given except in, with, and by faith in Jesus Christ" (368). Faith frees the Christian from sin so that one "comes to take pleasure in God's commandments" (371). Clearly, "a man is justified without works—although he does not remain without works when he has been justified" (374).

Luther saw Karlstadt reversing the emphasis in 1525 and thus falsifying the reality.

> More depends on the teaching of faith and a good conscience than on the teaching of good works. When works are lacking, help and counsel are at hand so that one can produce them if the teaching of faith remains firm and pure. But if the teaching of faith is placed in the background and works are put forward, then nothing can be good and there is neither counsel nor help. Then works lead to vain glory... while God's glory disappears.[32]

He begins his correction of "the heavenly prophets" with a point-by-point summary of his own basic position: First, preach the law so sin will be recognized; second, preach the Gospel so forgiveness will be recognized; third, put to death the old man; and then, "works of love toward the neighbor should flow forth... as Christ has dealt with us" (83). The error of the new prophecy lay in altering this sequence (149). Consequently, it failed to "teach how we are to become free from our sins, obtain a good conscience, and win a peaceful and joyful heart before God" (223).

The danger of the Anabaptist emphasis on works (turning to another challenge to Luther's reformation program) was that "the thoughtless are tempted to attach themselves to the holiness of the people rather than to the Word of God. Greater honor is then given to man than to God and his Word."[33] Two years later, and ten years after the fateful theses were published, the Wittenberg doctor summarized his understanding in similar terms. "My doctrine of good works is spiritual and based on a distinction between good works for righteousness and good words for the glory of God. Whoever interprets them as necessary for the glory of God has gotten the point."[34] Farther on this exposition he observed, "for to be holy and to be saved are two entirely different things. We are saved

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[30]Luther, *Sermons*, I, LW 51 (1959): 64.

[31]Luther, *Preface to the Epistles of St. Paul to the Romans* (1546/22), LW 35 (1968): 368.

[32]Luther, *Against the Heavenly Prophets in the Matter of Images and Sacraments* (1525), LW 40 (1958): 81.

[33]Luther, *Concerning Rebaptism*, (1528), LW 40: 251.

[34]Luther, *A Confession Concerning Christ's Supper* (1528), LW 37 (1961): 249.

through Christ alone; but we become holy both through this faith and through these divine foundations and orders"; the latter are the office of priest, the estate of marriage, the civil government, and the common order of Christian love, which serves every needy person with benevolent deeds (365). At the funeral of Elector John, Duke of Saxony, in August, 1532, he observed:

> For a Christian should be a new creature or a newly created work of God, who in all things speaks and thinks and judges differently from the way the world speaks or judges. And because he is a new man, everything here in this life should and must become new through faith, as it will become new in the life to come through manifest revelation itself.[35]

Virtually on the eve of the fifteenth anniversary of the *95 Theses* a sermon on "The Sum of the Christian Life" spoke much of active love. "True love flows from a pure heart. God has commanded me to let my love go out to my neighbor and be kindly disposed to all."[36] A pure heart is a consequence of God's Word. "Get that into your heart and order your life by it, and your heart will become pure" (269). "For any man who does not pay any attention to living his life in such a way that he can put everyone to silence and defend himself and prove before men that he has lived, spoken, and done well, that man is not yet a Christian and has neither a pure heart nor love within him" (274). Again he admits every Christian is still a sinner, imperfect before God; "nevertheless he must earnestly endeavor to be blameless before the world" (274).

R. H. Fischer noted[37] the resolution of the synergism controversy attempted in the *Formula of Concord* (1577).[38] That agreement also offers succor to later Pietist emphases. The *Augsburg Confession* (1530) had already affirmed that while justification is solely by grace through faith (Art. IV.1), "it is also taught among us that such faith should produce good fruits and good works" (Art. VI.1). "Amendment of life and the forsaking of sin should then follow repentance and absolution, for these must be the fruits of repentance" (Art. XII.6). "It is also taught among us that good works should and must be done.... When through faith the Holy Spirit is given, the heart is moved to do good works" (Art. XX.27,29; cf. 38).

The *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* explains more fully "that without Christ and without the Holy Spirit we cannot keep the law. Therefore we also hold that the keeping of the law should begin in us and increase more and more. But we mean to include both... the inward spiritual impulses and the outward good works" (Art. IV.135; cf. 348f).

The *Formula of Concord* sought to resolve the controversies over works. Both the "Epitome" (4,6,8,11; cf. *Apology* IV.348) and the "Solid Declaration" follow Luther's lead: "in true conversion there must be a change, there must be new activities and emotions in the intellect, will, and heart..." (SD 2.70). The key is that good works are not to be drawn into the article of justification (4.22,37). Once that is understood, Christians "are most diligently to be admonished and urged to apply themselves to good works" (4.40). An extensive quotation from Luther's *Preface to Romans* is included to clarify the relation between faith and works which the concord intended (4.10-12).

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[35]Luther, *Sermons*, I: 243f.
[36]Luther, *Sermons*, I: 267.
[37]*Luther's Works*, 37: 249, n. 133.
[38]Following quotations are from Theodore G. Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1957).

Luther and his descendants are agreed, it would appear. Yet the descendants don't agree whether all claimants may legitimately use the family name. Michel Godfroid explains the passionate, yet divergent opinions about Pietism by pointing out that the very term itself was a polemical device rather than a descriptive term.[39] Any stigma will do to beat a dogma, says the proverb; and Stoeffler intimates that any experiential Protestantism is liable to abuse.[40] Pietism became the whipping boy in the late seventeenth century because it was irenic and reformatory. Inclusivists don't do well in a polemical age; reformers don't do well at any time.

> Inclusivists don't do well in a polemical age; reformers don't do well at any time.

Whether one follows Stoeffler's seven characteristics of Pietism's religious emphases[41] or Brown's five "central theological motifs"[42] or Schmidt's four anti-theses between Pietism and Orthodoxy,[43] a trip through Luther and the *Book of Concord* only increases the puzzlement over the furor. What nerve does "experiential Protestantism" strike, that makes it arouse joy in one and hostility in another?

Any construction of Luther and later Lutheranism which is unsympathetic to Pietism ignores the movement's own claims to depend on the same sources. Both the Pietist appeal to historic Lutheranism and the prevalence of Pietism in historical Lutheranism force the question: What in Lutheranism made Pietism possible? The impression left by the materials reviewed above is that Pietism's appeal to Lutheran sources is legitimate, and that any grace-vs.-works polarization is not. Pietism's claim to a Lutheran paternity deserves serious consideration, not continued disparagement.

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[39]Godfroid, "Gab es den deutschen Pietismus?" 91-110.

[40]Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, 1-3.

[41]Stoeffler, *German Pietism*, ix.

[42]Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, 27f.

[43]Godfroid, "Gab es den deutschen Pietismus?" 95.

Christian Unity—Our Lutheran Ambivalence: Which Way the ELCA?

James A. Scherer
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Lutheran identity over its 470-plus year history has not been a constant. Few people understand this so well as our honoree in this *Festschrift*, Robert H. Fischer. Different periods in Lutheran history have brought with them contrasting ecclesiological trends: the Reformation period which produced the classic confessions, claiming true apostolicity and catholicity for Lutherans over against Roman charges of Protestant sectarianism; Orthodoxy with its vituperative polemic toward other confessions and its scholastic defense of Scripture and confession; Pietism with its confessional flexibility, its irenic attitude toward other evangelicals, and its experiments in church renewal and mission; the middle third of the nineteenth century with its powerful resurgence of Lutheran confessional consciousness and its distrustful wariness of imposed unions. The last half of the twentieth century presents us with an entirely new profile: Lutherans moving confidently into the ecumenical arena as major actors in the movement for Christian unity.

What accounts for this seemingly erratic and vacillating behavior? Can't Lutherans make up their minds? Why do they at times appear as the greatest foes of church union, and at others as champions of Christian unity? Is there a deeper continuity to be discerned in these changing ecclesiastical preferences? In one way or another the historic confessions which comprise the Book of Concord have served as a Lutheran sheet-anchor for nearly five centuries, providing stability and continuity. Yet those very confessions have been subject to various interpretations regarding their place and authority in the life of Lutheran churches.

Lutheran ambivalence is nowhere more clearly demonstrated than in the particular

attitudes Lutherans have shown toward the quest for Christian unity. Novice theologians might mistakenly imagine that the high priority currently assigned to ecumenical relations by a church such as the ELCA represents a constant trait of Lutheran identity; yet nothing could be further from the truth! In my course on *Lutheran Heritage* I have to remind students again and again of the importance of approaching Lutheran ecumenical relations with a heavy dose of historical perspective. The new ELCA, although historically less than a year old, will need to ponder lessons from nearly a half millennium of Lutheran ecumenical experience—both good and bad!—as it attempts to set its own ecumenical course.

Current Ecumenical Option

The self-understanding of Lutheranism that enjoys current favor among many member churches of the Lutheran World Federation, and seems to be endorsed by many Lutheran theologians, is the one which sees Lutheranism as a *confessing movement* within the one holy catholic church. According to this interpretation Lutherans are no sect or new church but an historic expression of the one and indivisible *una sancta* from the time of Jesus Christ and the apostles. The strength of this interpretation is that it harks back to the ecumenical purpose of the Augsburg Confession of 1530, and recalls the still fluid character of Lutheran ecclesial identity prior to the Religious Peace of Augsburg (1555). It also appears to validate an activist Lutheran ecumenical role. On the other hand, the obvious weakness of the "confessing movement" designation is that it obscures the solidly institutional character of Lutheranism as one denomination among a growing proliferation of denomination. Who, incidentally, has invited Lutherans to be the theological conscience of Christendom, and where is this call recognized?

The "confessing movement" option contrasts sharply with the Lutheran self-understanding which dominated the nineteenth century confessional revival. It saw Lutheranism as the purest and best of visible churches—thanks to the singular character of its confessional basis—and sought to preserve Lutheran pulpits for Lutheran preachers and Lutheran altars for Lutheran communicants (Galesburg Rule, 1872). In varying degrees, but quite broadly, Lutherans on both sides of the Atlantic kept their distance from Christians of other denominations and only barely managed to maintain friendly relations within the Lutheran fold. The legacy of the Old Prussian Union (1817) was still sharply etched into the psyche of these nineteenth century Lutherans. Even between Lutherans, pulpit and altar fellowship was as much the exception as the rule. Against this background, the vigorous entry of *some* Lutherans into the wider ecumenical arena represents an astonishing departure from an older tradition! May one venture to suggest that the ecumenical leap be made with some degree of caution?

Ambivalence on matters of unity is deeply rooted in the genetic origins of Lutheranism and comes to expression in Article 7 (CA 7) of the Augsburg Confession. The strongly *ecumenical* premise of that article (one holy Christian church will be and remain forever") is counter-balanced by the *confessional* premise ("the assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached *in its purity* and the holy sacraments are administered *according to the Gospel*"—*pure* and *recte* in the Latin text). The solid encouragement which CA 7 initially gives toward promoting unity in Christ (Eph 4:5,6) is heavily qualified by the need to specify who (or which church) has a proper theological understanding of gospel

and sacraments. To be sure, the ecumenical hesitancy underscored by the confessional premise of CA 7 is somewhat softened by the liberating words *"Satis est,"* which call attention to the ecumenical marks of the church: "For it is sufficient for the true unity of the Christian church that the Gospel be preached in conformity with a pure understanding of it and that the sacraments be administered in accordance with the divine Word." Lutherans in recent times have had much reason to be grateful for this formula, which provides an escape hatch from confessional paralysis while at the same time providing some guidance for a Lutheran ecumenical strategy. An authentically Lutheran approach to ecumenical practice can do no better than to take "satis est" as its guiding principle.

Lutheran Ecumenical Ambivalence

The split Lutheran personality when it comes to ecumenical relations reaches full expression at the organizational level. Most Lutheran churches of the world hold dual membership at the global level in both the Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches. This dual loyalty has proved baffling to many non-Lutherans, and has occasioned endless discussions in ecumenical gatherings and at meetings of representatives of world confessional bodies. Prior to the formation of the World Council at Amsterdam (1948), Lutherans, especially from the U.S.A., waged an heroic uphill battle to insure that the constitution of the World Council of Churches would provide for confessional as well as regional representation in the membership of WCC assemblies and in the Central Committee.[1] The concern that global and regional ecumenical relationships should recognize and take account of historic confessional identities—rather than blurring or ignoring them—came partly out of the experience of U.S. Lutherans in supporting their German Lutheran counterparts during and after the German church struggle. At issue was the question of whether German confessional Lutherans after World War II would be swallowed up and absorbed in trans-confessional German Protestant unions inspired by the experience of the *Bekennende Kirche*, and a century earlier by the model of the Old Prussian Union.[2] As it happened, German Lutherans emerged with their own United Evangelical Lutheran Churches intact in both East and West Germany, while at the same time adhering to wider German evangelical groupings—ecclesial organs somewhere between a church and a federation—that were inclusive of Reformed and United Evangelical churches. American Lutherans, led by F. C. Fry, A. R. Wentz and others, together with European Lutheran counterparts, succeeded in their struggle to secure recognition for the confessional principle in the workings of the WCC. Had they failed, it seems probable that Lutherans would have stood alone in the WCC, outnumbered by Protestant groups favoring non-sectarian or trans-confessional church

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[1]The story is told in Dorris A. Flesner, *American Lutherans Help Shape World Council:* The Role of the Lutheran Churches of America in the Formation of the World Council of Churches. Lutheran Historical Conference Publication No. 2 (Dubuque: William C. Brown, 1981).

[2]A recent doctoral dissertation by LSTC graduate James D. Kegel details American Lutheran involvement in the German church struggle. Cf. James D. Kegel, *A Church Comes of Age: American Lutheranism and National Socialism, The German Church Conflict, and the Reconstitution of the Church, 1933-1948,* Th.D. Dissertation presented to LSTC, May, 1988.

unions as the basis of ecumenicity. This dualistic stance toward matters of unity has become the official standpoint of the LWF, and also marks the ecumenical approach of many individual Lutheran bodies.

The LWF Constitution in its statement of purposes (Art. III) embraces this ecumenical duality by giving equal weight to the responsibility "to cultivate unity of faith and confession of the Lutheran churches of the world" and "to foster Lutheran interest in, concern for, and participation in ecumenical movements and to strengthen their responsibility for these." In a carefully worded 1977 statement on "Ecumenical Relations," the LWF Executive Committee expressed its understanding of the relationship between confessional fellowship and Christian unity as follows:

> The purpose of the Lutheran Reformation was to recover for the whole of Christendom the evangelical message in all its purity.... As confessional churches, the Lutheran churches are by nature and origin confessing churches.
>
> Confessional identity and fellowship are therefore, on this understanding, inseparable from ecumenical commitment and Christian unity. The effort to continue and develop the Lutheran heritage and to cultivate fellowship among Lutherans throughout history can and should be accompanied by the effort to achieve the visible unity of the Church of Jesus Christ....
>
> Lutheran churches consider themselves part of the one, holy, catholic Church. The apostolic witness is the basis of their life and proclamation, and they use the creeds of the ancient Church to confess their own faith. At the same time, however, they constitute a distinctive fellowship of churches, united by common confessions and a common history.[3]

Especially to be noted here is the emphasis laid on the *inseparability* of confessional identity and ecumenical commitment. This newer Lutheran ecumenical approach, grounded in a fresh interpretation of Scripture and confessions, sees ecumenical practice not as a deflection from confessional loyalty but as an essential manifestation of it.

Confessional Loyalty and Ecumenical Commitment

Even so, balancing confessional identity and ecumenical commitment in actual practice is easier said than done. Many Lutherans pay little more than lip service to ecumenical commitment, and non-Lutherans are probably right to question the sincerity and depth of that commitment. The bugaboo of unionism lurks in the shadows of the Lutheran subconscious, and continues to trouble ELCA-LCMS relations in the U.S.A. Moreover, the old Orthodox view that what the confessions say about Christian unity really refers to an invisible and ethereal sphere known only to God can provide a way out of the dilemma of ecumenical commitment, even though contemporary Lutheran ecumenists generally dismiss the notion of "invisible unity" as an irresponsible interpretation of CA 7. By and large, Lutherans seem to feel a higher comfort level when they relate to other Lutherans. Hiding behind theological statements can provide a sense of security. Seemingly endless theological dialogues, when combined with the painfully slow process of official "reception" of agreed theological statements by the

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[3] *Ecumenical Relations of the Lutheran World Federation.* Report of the Working Group on the Interrelations Between the Various Bilateral Dialogues. Received by LWF Executive Committee, Divonne, February, 1977 (Geneva: LWF, 1977), 31.

Balancing confessional identity and ecumenical commitment in actual practice is easier said than done.

churches, can have the effect of deferring the existential shock attending any threatened loss of Lutheran confessional identity. Lutherans may logically conclude that confessional loyalty and ecumenical commitment are a bit like "having your cake and eating it too." No great price need be paid, no sacrifices are demanded, and "sinful divisions" need scarcely be repented of!

Occasionally a Lutheran becomes restless and upset by the slow turn of events. Twenty-five years ago, at the LWF Fourth Assembly (Helsinki, 1963), E. Clifford Nelson let fly with a double-barreled barrage at Lutheran ecumenical vacillation. Troubled by the failure to implement pulpit and altar fellowship between LWF member churches, Nelson was outraged by the fact that after so many years Lutherans had not been able to get their ecumenical act together.

> One of the sad facts of Lutheran history is that we have more often been drawn together by common disaster than by common doctrine.... My question is: Why must we wait for disaster to bring us together?.... [Must] the order of events always be: 1st, catastrophe; 2nd, united action; and 3rd, theological substantiation?[4]

Nelson's other blast had to do with the Lutheran style of relating to other Christians. He detected a *monological* and introverted hyper-confessional tendency that prevented Lutherans from taking seriously the concerns of other Christians, and from entering into genuine relationships of dialogue with them.

> I think that it is self-evident that we are today more self-conscious about being Lutheran than we were fifty or seventy-five years ago. There are some attendant dangers, chief of which is that we may become a "monological" church, content to talk to ourselves, limiting our ecumenical concern to the dictum: The way to reunion is for all others to become Lutherans.[5]

The convening of Ecumenical Council—Vatican II two years later by Pope John XXIII would compel Lutherans at both the world and regional levels to prepare themselves rather quickly for the sustained demands of inter-church theological dialogues. These dialogues—with Roman Catholics, Reformed, Orthodox, Anglican, and other churches—have since 1965 become the most lively and challenging feature of current Lutheran ecumenical practice. Besides re-invigorating Lutheran ecumenical ardor, they have had the effect of re-orienting Lutheran ecumenical strategy away from the earlier emphasis on conciliar participation toward a newer stress on bilateral theological conversations. Unquestionably, recent rounds of bilateral theological dialogues, with their intrinsic acceptance of the basic worth of

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[4]E Clifford Nelson, "The One Church and the Lutheran Churches," *Messages of the Helsinki Assembly*. The Lutheran World Federation. "Christ Today" (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1963), 105-6.

[5]Nelson, "The One Church," 107.

historic confessional traditions held by participating churches, have proved a far more congenial forum for Lutheran ecumenical energies than the conciliar proposals of the fifties and sixties, based as they were—albeit unofficially—on proposals for trans-confessional church unions as the preferred road to ecumenical progress. As bilateral theological conversations came to be the major focus of inter-church activity for Lutherans and some others, the ecumenical leadership of the WCC lost much momentum and prestige. Only the WCC's Faith and Order Commission, with the successful adoption of its widely praised 1982 Lima Statement on "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry," seemed to escape the malaise of conciliar ecumenism in the seventies and eighties.

Unity in Reconciled Diversity

"Unity in Reconciled Diversity," a formula originally proposed in 1973 and endorsed by the LWF at its Sixth Assembly (Dar-es-Salaam, 1977), has recently enjoyed considerable favor as a Lutheran contribution to the ecumenical discussion on the nature and road to unity.[6] It is the LWF's response to unity proposals put forward at WCC assemblies beginning with New Delhi (1961), and it has now unquestionably altered the terms of the discussion. The landmark statement on the nature of unity adopted at the WCC Third Assembly (New Delhi, 1961) represented a major breakthrough which continues up to the present to challenge Lutherans:

> We believe that the unity which is both God's will and his gift to his Church is being made visible as all in each place who are baptized into Jesus Christ and confess him as Lord and Saviour are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully committed fellowship, holding the one apostolic faith, preaching the one Gospel, breaking the one bread, joining in common prayer, and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all, and who at the same time are united with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages in such wise that ministry and members are accepted by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires for the tasks to which God calls his people. It is for such unity that we believe we must pray and work.[7]

This "all in each place" statement with its eloquent description of the biblical vision of local unity still constitutes a benchmark for all subsequent unity proposals. Nor can Lutherans escape the impact of its emphasis on the character of Christian unity as visible, local, and identifiable. "All in each place" clarifies and amplifies the intentions of CA 7, making explicit the unspoken ecumenical and missionary assumptions of the Lutheran formula.

The WCC Fourth Assembly (Uppsala, 1968) re-affirmed the New Delhi statement on local unity while at the same time calling on "the churches in all places to realize that they belong together and are called to act together. In a time when human interdependence is so evident, it is the more imperative to make visible the bonds which unite Christians in universal fellowship." An obstacle to local churches in manifesting their universal character was lack of real opportunity for wider fellowship. The ultimate goal should be a "truly universal, ecumenical, conciliar form of common life and

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[6]Cf. G. Gassmann and H. Meyer, *The Unity of the Church:* Requirements and Structure. LWF Report 15 (Geneva: LWF, 1983).

[7]*The New Delhi Report.* The Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches, 1961 (New York: Association Press, 1962), 116.

witness.[8] The WCC Fifth Assembly (Nairobi, 1975), picking up on unity statements from two previous assemblies, proposed the concept of "conciliar fellowship" as a further clarification and development of the New Delhi formula. It said:

> The one church is to be envisioned as a conciliar fellowship of local churches which are themselves truly united. In this conciliar fellowship, each local church possesses in communion with the others, the fulness of catholicity, witnessing to the same apostolic faith, and therefore recognizes the others as belonging to the same Church of Christ and guided by the same Spirit.[9]

With this statement the "all in each place" New Delhi formula for local unity appeared to be firmly conjoined with the conciliar approach of creating local trans-confessional united churches as the way to secure unity. Universal unity was to be achieved through the development of local united churches, one for each place, integrated through regional and global conciliar links, and participating in a universal fellowship. Such a formula, if implemented, would have negated the Lutheran preference for recognizing and relating to historic confessional differences. It could have placed the LWF in the intolerable position of being in confrontation with the WCC over approaches to unity.

"Unity in Reconciled Diversity" was proposed, mainly by the LWF but with implicit support from Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and Anglicans, as an alternative to the "united church" road to unity. It makes a strong case for the affirmation of diversity—confessional, geographic, cultural, etc.—as being no obstacle to genuine unity in Christ, but in some ways an enrichment of that unity. There is possibly a conscious linkage, though none is stated, to the "satis est" formula of CA 7 with its concentration on the essential means of grace (Word and Sacraments) as the basis for unity, and its relegation of structural issues to *adiaphora.*

The LWF Sixth Assembly (Dar-es-Salaam, 1977) lifted up the element of *reconciliation* between Christian traditions, maintaining that such reconciliation, when firmly based on God's own act of reconciliation in Jesus Christ, should not be understood as mere mutual tolerance or pragmatic accommodation to pluralism. The implication is that reconciliation between heretofore hostile confessional groups can lead to deeper unity in Christ than would be possible by another ecumenical methodology. Such reconciliation needed to be linked, as the LWF pointed out, to common efforts toward explicating the apostolic faith, and to a firm commitment binding the churches to a common purpose of witness and service.[10]

At the LWF Seventh Assembly (Budapest, 1984), an official assembly statement wedding the New Delhi local unity formula along with elements of "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" to CA 7 and to the concept of "unity in reconciled diversity" was adopted.

> The true unity of the church, which is the unity of the body of Christ and participates in the unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is given in and through proclamation of the gospel in Word and sacrament. This union is expressed as a communion in the common and, at the

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[8] *The Uppsala Report 1968.* Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, ed. Norman Goodall (Geneva: WCC, 1968), 17.

[9] *Breaking Barriers:* Nairobi 1975. The Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, ed. David M. Paton (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 60.

[10] G. Gassmann & H. Meyer, *The Unity of the Church,* 18-23.

same time, multiform confession of one and the same apostolic faith. It is a communion in holy baptism and in the eucharistic meal, a communion in which the ministries exercised are recognized by all as expressions of the ministry instituted by Christ in his church. It is a communion where diversities contribute to fulness and are no longer barriers to unity. It is a committed fellowship, able to make common decisions and to act in common.

The diversity present in this communion rises out of the differing cultural and ethnic contexts in which the one church of Christ lives out its mission and out of the number of church traditions in which the apostolic faith has been maintained, transmitted, and lived throughout the centuries. In recognizing these diversities as expressions of the one apostolic faith and the one catholic church, traditions are changed, antagonisms overcome, and mutual condemnations lifted. The diversities are reconciled and transformed into a legitimate and indispensable multiformity within the one body of Christ.

This communion lives out its unity in confessing the one apostolic faith. It assembles in worship and in intercession for all people. It is active in common witness to Jesus Christ; in advocacy for the weak, poor, and oppressed; and in striving for peace, justice, and freedom. It is ordered in all its components in conciliar structures and actions. It is in need of constant renewal and is, at the same time, a foretaste of that communion which the Lord will at the end of time bring about in his kingdom.[11]

The LWF Budapest statement on "the Unity We Seek," blending the finest elements of the conciliar tradition of unity with the correctives of Lutheran confessional identity, in itself represents a happy reconciliation and convergence between two ecumenical methodologies. Imaginatively implemented, and supported by a deeply spiritual commitment to the task of unity, it could become the basis for an effective Lutheran contribution to the ecumenical effort to manifest the unity given in Christ.

Critics of "unity in reconciled diversity" have described it as a means to "freeze the confessional status quo," and to insure the "permanent juxtaposition of really divided churches." A serious credibility problem exists: "unity in reconciled diversity"



will not satisfy all ecumenical advocates. Lutherans have the added responsibility of demonstrating that "reconciled diversity" is no mere defensive theological strategy but is rather a program that lends itself to implementation locally, regionally, and globally. Lutherans have an obligation, ecumenically speaking, to *make the formula work.* Lutherans, accordingly, must be in the forefront of those studying and following up the BEM statements; participating in and implementing recommendations from bilateral dialogues; taking the initiative in advocating local ecumenism where it does not exist;

[11] *Budapest 1984:* "In Christ—Hope for the World." Proceedings of the Seventh Assembly of the LWF, ed. Frances Maher. LWF Report No. 19/20 (Geneva: LWF, Feb. 1985), 175.

> It is the performance of Christ's followers, not their intentions, which counts.

working toward the common explication of the apostolic faith; removing barriers to church fellowship where they are no longer felt to be church-dividing; and leading in common Christian efforts directed toward witness and service in the world. Nor should "unity in reconciled diversity" necessarily imply a negative attitude toward local church union proposals. Lutherans should, if so directed by the Spirit, enter into such trans-confessional unions through responsible negotiations when the goal is to unite local Christians into a single community which expresses Christ's will for the church and serves as a valid earthly sign of God's kingdom.

Which Way the ELCA?

Which way the ELCA? The new Lutheran church has for the past six years, including the period of its formation, been engaged in a non-stop intra-Lutheran monologue which for the moment has seriously diminished the church's ecumenical awareness and responsiveness. If long continued, this could be utterly disastrous for the church's spiritual health and faithful pursuit of mission and unity. In 1982 the three uniting churches committed themselves to join in forming once new Lutheran church "with the prayer that the Holy Spirit will guide what is done so that the new church may glorify God and faithfully serve Christ's mission in the world.[12] The intentions that the new church should *glorify God and faithfully serve Christ's mission in the world* were without question taken seriously and made without mental reservation or ulterior purpose. Yet it is not enough to say that the new church was founded on good and honest *intentions*. Sinners may be saved by grace alone, but Christian institutions established for the express purpose of making God's salvation known are held rigorously responsible for their stewardship of the evangelical mandates and spiritual talents entrusted to them. In the numerous parables of our Lord directed toward Christian behavior during the end-time, it is always the *performance* of Christ's followers, not their intentions, which counts. The pursuit of faithfulness to the Lord's call to mission and unity must be insistently pressed at all levels of the church's life, from headquarters staff through synodical assemblies to local congregations, until there is a positive response. The missionary vision of the uniting churches must never be lost!

Now for the other side of the coin. The ELCA as a new church has a God-given opportunity to do a new thing—to become a church imbued from the start with a compelling and contagious spirit of mission and unity. Its forthcoming declaration on ecumenism, and its long-term commitments to mission at home and abroad, are eagerly awaited. May the life-giving Spirit of God, which alone can renew the church, imbue it with those gifts needed for the task. It deserves the support and prayers of all!

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[12]Commission for A New Lutheran Church. Report and Recommendations of the CNLC to the ALC, AELC, and LCA (August 29, 1986), 8.

The Lutheran Ethos and Biomedical Ethics Today

Franklin Sherman
Professor of Christian Ethics and Director of Graduate Studies
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

The problems raised by recent advances in medical technology and biomedical research are questions faced, potentially or actually, by all human beings. Why, then, should one seek for a "denominational" approach to these questions, such as our title seems to imply? Surely, it would be sufficient to seek for a generically Christian viewpoint, or even more broadly, a generically human one. For does not the Christian, in this "kingdom on the left," seek simply for the human good?

There is much truth in this objection, for the essence of Christian ethics, as Lutherans understand it, is that we have been freed through justification to direct all our efforts to seeking not our own welfare but that of our neighbor, i.e., of humanity, and this will of necessity be defined in the broadest terms. The aim of Christian ethical reflection, properly speaking, is not to seek for a uniquely Christian solution to a given problem, much less a Lutheran one, but rather, simply the most humane, that is, the most humanly satisfactory and responsible solution.

But although that is our aim, and in principle all "persons of good will" should agree with our conclusions, as a matter of fact the process of ethical reflection is powerfully influenced by the specific presuppositions that are brought to the reflective process. And this is equally true, whether those presuppositions are religious or secular in nature. Thus, paradoxically, all participants in the discussion are seeking a solution that is valid and pertinent for all; yet their conclusions will differ, to a greater or lesser degree, until and unless they come to share a more common vision at the presuppositional level.

With this in mind, it is legitimate to ask what difference it makes when those who

share that particular version of the Christian tradition called Lutheran enter into the discussion of these new questions; or, to speak normatively, what difference it *would* make, if said Lutherans in fact thought and acted out of a well-grounded grasp of the essentials of their own tradition.

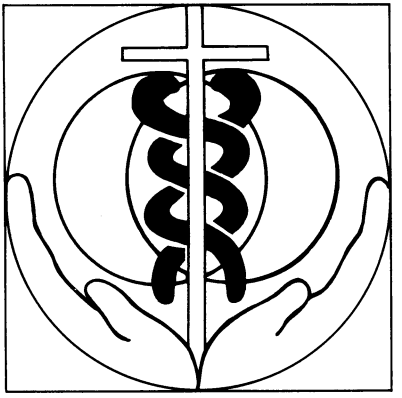
The historical aspect of this question has been thoroughly treated by Martin E. Marty, preeminent Lutheran historian, in his book *Health and Medicine in the Lutheran Tradition: Being Well* (Crossroad, 1983). It forms part of the extensive and broadly ecumenical study of these matters undertaken under the auspices of the Park Ridge Center, an offshoot of Lutheran General Hospital of Park Ridge, Illinois. Given the existence of this excellent resource, I intend in this essay not to provide a summary of Marty's findings, but rather to offer some reflections of a constructive nature, though rooted, I would hope, in historical reality.

> The process of ethical reflection is powerfully influenced by the specific presuppositions that are brought to the reflective process.

In so doing, I shall focus on a familiar concept in analyses and expositions of the Lutheran tradition, namely, that of "evangelical catholicism." I select this category because it has always seemed to me to be *the* most inclusive category for understanding our tradition, and also because of its peculiar relevance to the range of problems confronting us in the biomedical realm today. For I believe that the fundamental question underlying many of the new choices that we face in this realm is that of one's *basic attitude toward modernity as such*, and in particular, toward modern science and technology. The point of special interest in terms of our theme is that on this topic, the "evangelical" and "catholic" poles within Christian thought tend to produce characteristically different responses. What then would it mean for a tradition to embody both these poles? That is the question upon which we hope to shed some light.

First, let us note that under this general rubric, i.e., one's basic attitude toward modern science and technology, the chief form in which the issue presents itself within the biological and biomedical realm is the question of *intervention in the life process.* Most of the powers that we have as moderns that our forebears specifically lacked fall under this heading. This question itself is broad enough to encompass a whole series of more specific issues. Even before the problem of abortion ("before" in the sense of the total human life-process envisioned as stretched out on a timeline) are the problems of contraception, sterilization, artificial insemination, *in vitro* fertilization, genetic manipulation, and the like. At the other end of the spectrum, there are not only the now familiar issues of "death and dying," but even beyond the moment of death, questions about how to deal with the newly dead—"neomorts," as Dr. Willard Gaylin calls them. To what extent is it legitimate to "mine" their bodies for precious organs that could give life to others?

In a yet more exotic realm, and stretching even further beyond the point of death,



there are the questions arising from the new field of cryobiology: the study of how low temperatures, and specifically freezing, affect living systems. One vivid instance of this is the story of Dr. James Bedford, a retired psychology professor from Glendale, California, who died of lung cancer in 1967. In accordance with his instructions, his body was immediately packed in ice, later in dry ice, and subsequently placed in a capsule cooled with liquid nitrogen to -310° Fahrenheit. There it remains to this day, awaiting the time—according to Dr. Bedford's plan—when medical technology will have reached the point that lung cancer can be cured and the damage already done repaired.

I owe this bit of in formation to an intriguing book by a Lutheran lay person who has long concerned himself with these matters, Dr. Allen Utke, a professor of chemistry in the University of Wisconsin system. Published by John Knox in 1978, the book's title, *Biobabel*, already gives a clue as to the nature of its approach—as does the question that forms its subtitle: *Can We Survive the New Biology?* Utke is doubtful that an affirmative answer can be given to this question.

His book takes up in succession the topics of human reproduction; the physical modification of human beings; the mental modification of human beings; the prolonging of life; and the creation of life. Other chapters deal in a cross-sectional way with the implications of current or anticipated capacities for manipulating the biological environment under the twin headings of "Bio-blessings" and "Bio-danger," with a further chapter on recommended responses entitled "Bio-action." The book is perhaps best known for its conclusion, in which Utke proposes that the American scientific community observe a ten-year moratorium on certain kinds of biological research. Those he mentions particularly are research on artificial inovulation; the development of artificial wombs; cloning, especially as applied to mammals, including humans; and recombinant DNA.

Ironically, the very first item on Utke's proposed "forbidden" list, the effort to achieve artificial inovulation (the fertilization of an egg outside the mother's body) achieved success just a few months after the book was published, with the birth of the first "test-tube baby," Louise Brown. Likewise, research has proceeded on the other topics he lists, and considerable progress has been achieved—though the question Utke raises is whether this in fact deserves to be called "progress."

Utke's book, with its almost apocalyptic tone, is illustrative of one position that can be taken on the key question that we have identified, namely, that of one's basic attitude toward the whole enterprise of modern scientific and technological research, the most dramatic developments of which seem to be taking place today precisely in this realm of biomedical research and practice. Utke objects to many of the ways in which the new technology has been used, or might be used, to intervene in the life process.

Hence his fundamental attitude—even though he himself is a part of the scientific community—is basically negative toward the enterprise. There are other possible positions, however; and it is not to be taken for granted that this kind of alarmism—though it makes good sermon fodder—is the most appropriate response of Christian ethics.

How *shall* we view the whole matter of "test-tube babies," for example? Many concerned Christians would see it in a positive light, as an example of the "miracles of modern science," one of the most intimate and momentous in its long series of benefactions to the human race. Anyone who has met the parents, or, as I did recently, the proud grandparents of such a child, born after long efforts to conceive in the normal manner, cannot help but be impressed with how great a blessing it can be. It can assist a loving and committed but infertile couple to fulfill that most ancient biblical injunction, "be fruitful and multiply."

Clearly, the problems are manifold; the question is whether one has the courage to deal with them.

On the other hand, the very same set of facts and the same sequence of events can be viewed, not as a positive achievement, but as a very dangerous step toward the Faustian goal of total control by human beings of their own life, death, and destiny—a Faustian goal that may well have Frankensteinian consequences. This general attitude toward the modern world as consisting of an immense set of pitfalls for the human spirit is typified by the "Syllabus of Errors," the Encyclical Letter issued by Pope Pius IX in 1870. The encyclical consists of eighty theses, which—unlike Luther's ninety-five—are formulated as negatives, setting forth propositions that are *not* under any circumstances to be accepted. The last such thesis-to-be-rejected serves as a sort of summary and will convey the flavor of the whole:

> 80. That the Roman Pontiff can and ought to reconcile and adjust himself with progress, liberalism, and modern civilization.

Although that attitude did characterize much of the Roman Catholic teaching and practice in the succeeding decades, we have seen in our own generation, beginning with the pontificate of the "good Pope John" (John XXIII), the development of quite a different stance. Pope John's motto was not "hold the line," but *aggiornamento:* literally, "updating." The sense is opposite to that of Pius IX; the assumption is that there is much that is good in the modern world with which the church, in a sense, must catch up, and to which it must learn to relate in a constructive manner.

Probably the best known example of this more affirming attitude toward modernity is Dietrich Bonhoeffer's notion, set forth in his *Letters and Papers from Prison,* of a "world come of age." Bonhoeffer rejects the image of the modern age as one of apostasy and rebellion from an earlier, romanticized "age of faith." He sees the steady increase of human powers since the Industrial Revolution and the Enlightenment as a providential development, and one quite in accord with the whole biblical story of God's granting to

the human creature the task of stewardship over the creation.

Bonhoeffer's words initially were understood, by some readers at least, as being so affirmative of modernity as to be uncritical of it, almost an attitude of "whatever is, is right." Subsequent study of the *Letters and Papers* in the context of his thought as a whole, however, has revealed that this is not really what he meant. After all, Bonhoeffer was writing from a prison cell, having landed there as a result of his courageous opposition to what he clearly perceived as a demonic regime. Rather, he was trying to convey the point that even the problems of the modern era cannot be addressed aright unless they are addressed *from within*, i.e., on the basis of a fundamental act of identification with the modern venture. And he felt that such an act of identification was not only prudent but theologically well grounded; he rooted it in a theology of creation and of the Incarnation. Karl Barth later put it quite simply, in words with which Bonhoeffer would have agreed: "God is for man." ("For humanity," we would say today.) God is not jealous of the development of human powers; rather, God's concern is simply that they be used for the welfare of humanity.

We have compared the view of a Pius IX with that of a Dietrich Bonhoeffer, seeing them as opposite ends of the spectrum, the one more modern-world-denying, the other more modern-world-affirming. There is a limit, however, to the usefulness of such broad comparisons. As is the case with most typologies, there is some truth at the one end that needs to be combined with the truth at the other. Scholars would call this a polar relation, or perhaps a dialectical one. Bearing this in mind, the basic question could be put like this: Does one proceed from a basic affirmation of modernity, followed by some or many qualifications thereof; or does one proceed from a basic negation and rejection of the modern age, while adding a grudging acknowledgement of its positive achievements?

The former attitude tends to produce a praxis of *critical participation* in the modern venture. The criticism can be serious indeed, and can fuel an activistic program of reform. But one stands shoulder to shoulder with those who are at the forefront of "progress, liberalism, and modern civilization," to quote Pius IX again. It is "we" who have the problem, not "they." The latter attitude tends to produce what might be called a *sectarian* praxis—and even institutions like the Roman Catholic Church or Lutheranism can be "sectarian" in this sense. In this view, the we/they distinction is fundamental. They have the problem; we have the answer.

There is a kind of historical nostalgia, too, that often accompanies this latter view, a hankering after a Golden Age, whether that be located in the 16th century, the 13th century, or even the 19th century—the simpler days of Walden Pond and the American frontier. But such nostalgia is illusory. I believe it was Winston Churchill who remarked, "Blessed is he who does not wish that he had been born in another century." I would commend this view as a starting point for the consideration of a whole range of issues, including those we are concerned with in the biomedical realm. It speaks of the kind of acceptance of who and what one is, and of who and what we are as modern persons, that is a powerful testimony to a fundamental sense of at-homeness in life. For some, such a sense may be naturally given, and may not be articulated theologically. For most of us, it proceeds from our faith in the beneficence of God, as revealed by Israel's prophets and sages and as made real for us by the one who, preeminently, has opened up access to the throne of grace. A firm conviction of one's justification by grace alone, through faith, is the best possible

platform for dealing with these vexed questions of the modern world. For, clearly, the problems are manifold; the question is whether one has the courage to deal with them.

The fact is that not only as persons but also as a society, and as an era, we can never get beyond the position of *simul justus et peccator.* It is the *justus* that gives the fundamental tone, a self-affirmation grounded in God's forgiveness. The various aspects of the *peccator* become items for "confession, repentance, and emendation of life"—and then for confession once again, for the cycle never ends. The fruit of such a faith is not passivity or cynicism, but the kind of bold and daring confidence in God's grace that moved a Martin Luther, who was not one to let the ambiguities of ethical decision-making deter him from an energetic course of action.

Yet the world's understanding of Lutheranism is quite different; it is that we are, in Reinhold Niebuhr's term, "cultural defeatists," and that we specialize in finding the worm in every apple. Thus in the days when the Swedish film director Ingmar Bergman was popular, the movie critics used to speak of the "dark, brooding, Lutheran" mentality of his films. I think Lutheranism has gained this reputation primarily as a result of Pietism and what it did to intensify, and at the same time to narrow the focus of, certain Reformation themes. Pietism represented the development, on the soil of the classic Reformation, of the "Christ against culture" motif which in the 16th century had been represented by the Anabaptists. It did not counsel an outward withdrawal from the world, nor did it lack a strong impetus towards works of mercy; quite the contrary: its record of service to the handicapped and otherwise disadvantaged is magnificent.

Nevertheless, Pietism's stance of suspicion toward "the world" could only result in an attitude of bewilderment, if not outright hostility, toward the typically modern style of life as it developed in the 19th and 20th centuries, including its drive for scientific and technological research and innovation. Somehow Pietism had lost touch with the doctrine of the *Schoepfungsordnungen,* the orders of creation, a doctrine which itself needs updating, but which had the virtue of embodying in conceptual form the sturdy world-affirmation that had been so much a part of the original spirit of the Reformation.

We have no license to be fundamentally anti-technological.

James Burtness, a Lutheran theologian and ethicist who has dealt rather extensively with biomedical questions, once stated that although "optimism" and "pessimism" are obviously oversimplified as stances toward life and history, if forced to choose, the church would side with the optimists. Burtness draws from this the conclusion that with regard to the question of permitting or forbidding potentially dangerous, but also potentially very beneficial, forms of biomedical research, the burden of proof should be on those who would *forbid* such research. We have no license to be fundamentally anti-technological, despite the fulminations of a Jacques Ellul.

This means that we will not yield to the temptation to conclude, for example, that the maze of machinery by a hospital bedside *ipso facto* implies a depersonalization or

routinization of medical care. But neither will we be insensitive to the severely dehumanizing effects that the mindless employment of such technology can have. There are serious value conflicts, even value dilemmas, involved in such questions as what sort of research to fund, how to adjudicate between types of patients to whom its benefits might be applied, when to use and when to desist from using all available means to save or preserve a life. This open, affirming, and yet critical attitude will be directed to modern medical technology and to those who exercise it. The men and women in white coats will be viewed neither as demons nor messiahs, but as ambiguous, flesh-and-blood human beings like ourselves, affirmed by God the Creator and Redeemer and called to responsible action in their calling.

Many of the problems in biomedical ethics can be conceptualized in terms of the problem of intervention, as I suggested at the beginning. The question of abortion is perhaps the clearest example of how the various positions on the issue of intervention play out. The question that has long been said to be *the* crucial question in this area, "When does human life begin?" has now conclusively been shown to be a non-question. Both pro- and anti-abortionists must admit, in light of what we have learned of the process leading from conception to full maturation of the fetus, that there is no one distinctive point at which the leap from nonhuman to human status can be said to take place. It is all one continuous process, which bears within itself from the very beginning the genetic programming to produce a unique human individual.

The awesome question then becomes, When are we justified in intervening in this life process? The word "intervening" functions here as a euphemism for "terminating," and it is for this reason that the choice is awesome. I deliberately use the term "awesome," invoking Rudolph Otto's sense of the *mysterium tremendum,* which he described as the very heart of the notion of the sacred. For unless we begin with this sense of reverence before the God-given mystery of the life process—its sacredness, if you will—we will get nowhere, ethically speaking, in our efforts to deal with these questions.

Here is where I see a clear distinction between typically Catholic and typically Protestant attitudes, the one more hesitant about such intervention in the life process, the other more open to it. This is at the same time—and not coincidentally—a difference between typically medieval and typically modern attitudes, or, otherwise put, between those characterizing pre-industrial and industrial civilization. The one has a fundamental sense of passivity before nature; the human is understood as fitting into and forming an organic part of the natural environment, and it is in the rhythms and regularities of nature that the work of a benevolent God is to be found. If one intervenes (as even a primitive farmer does to a certain extent), it is only to foster the natural process, not to reverse it or alter it beyond recognition. This is a typically agrarian attitude. The human is subservient to the natural, and the emotions of dependency and gratitude are dominant.

The other point of view, more typical of an industrial and urban civilization, envisions the human as jutting out from nature, that is, transcending it and called to master it. Intervention is the order of the day, and the integrity of the natural is experienced chiefly as a limit on what would otherwise be the ever-expanding exercise of human powers. My point here is that whereas the former is a typically Catholic attitude, the latter is a typically Protestant one. Their clearest theological/ethical equivalents are traditional Roman Catholic natural law doctrine, on the one hand, and the aggressive Calvinist drive toward world mastery, as chronicled by Max

Weber and others, on the other. Lutheranism, as a *via media* between these two, quite understandably finds itself situated midway between the two positions, sharing elements of both.

Those who are shaped by the Lutheran tradition will have a profound sense of reverence before the life process, whether expressed in the beginning, the middle, or the end of life. The statement on Death and Dying of the former Lutheran Church in America, which I had the privilege of helping to create and see through the process of adoption (Louisville, 1982), refers to this motif in the first two of the six "interpretive principles" that it proposes:

1. Life is a gift of God, to be received with thanksgiving.
2. The integrity of the life processes which God has created should be respected; both birth and death are part of these life processes.

This means that we will be reluctant to intervene, either to cut off the life process once it has begun, or to artificially prolong it once it has entered on the path of termination. The burden of proof will be on those who purpose so to intervene. Yet we are "modern" enough and interventionist enough to believe that such actions, in specific cases, may prove justifiable.

This reverence for the life process is a contemporary transcription into biomedical terms of the traditional Lutheran doctrine of the orders of creation, to which we have already referred. It does involve a certain passivity, a sense that "What Gott tut, das is wohlgetan" (What God ordains is always good). However, it also involves the realization that what God gives is not fixed orders but ongoing processes, processes that may and do go awry, sometimes very seriously so. Analogously, Lutheranism had to learn in the political sphere that the order of creation may become a disorder, and may require intervention; Bonhoeffer is the exemplar of this, both in his thought and in his life. This intervention will not be reckless, however, but restrained, and will be kept to the minimum necessary to restore the life process to its health.

There are two other ways in which Lutheranism, understood as evangelical catholicism, finds itself today poised midway between certain opposing parties in the debate about bioethics, and ethics generally. The first has to do with the contrast between rule- and act-oriented approaches to ethics, or, in the rather pejorative terms popularized by Joseph Fletcher, "code morality" versus "situation ethics." It has been assumed by many that Lutherans, taking as their clue Luther's principle of Christian liberty ("The Freedom of a Christian") will be situationists through and through. In my judgment, this would be a grave mistake.

If we are to take Luther's theory and praxis as a guide, we must acknowledge both a situational and a trans-situational element in Christian ethics. When Luther was asked, whether by an actual correspondent or by a rhetorical interrogator, "What are we to do?"—i.e., "What *are* the good works which, you are telling us, faith active in love will so diligently seek to perform?"—he would often reply in terms of two injunctions: "Remember the Commandments" and "Consider your station." The first injunction, as I see it, refers to the universals in Christian ethics, as typified by the Decalogue. The latter refers to the particulars; we could well re-translate it, "Consider your situation."

The Lutheran ethic, properly understood, involves an interplay between law and liberty, between precedent and inspiration, between the common and the unique elements in ethical situations. Thus, in the debate between more "act" and "rule" ori-

ented thinkers over both method and substance in biomedical ethics, there is no reason for Lutherans automatically to prefer the former. In questions of how to deal with terminal patients, for example, I find in Paul Ramsey's principle of "keeping covenant with the dying" (and therefore doing nothing either to hasten death or artificially to prolong its coming) a closer equivalent of Reformation ethics than a ready espousal of euthanasia.

Furthermore, there is no reason to be so situational as to resist the notion of making policy judgments about *classes* of patients (with reference, for example, to who will be granted access to renal dialysis machines) rather than on a "case by case" basis. Nor is it incompatible with our tradition to invoke the Kantian test of universalizability ("What if everyone did it?") or any of many other means by which contemporary ethicists and clinical practitioners seek to overcome the burden of having to make every decision afresh. Likewise, even though they have not been a part of our traditional vocabulary, we need not shy away from such terms as "value" and "virtue," "duty" and "obligation," "rule" and "principle." These all are simply ways of reckoning with the elements of continuity and commonality in ethics, what I call the "trans-situational" elements. We are not ultra-Protestants and need not espouse a pure situationalism or occasionalism, whether in sacramental doctrine or in ethics.

At the same time, we will never take the route of trying to create manuals in which all the answers can be looked up, in which all "cases of conscience" are neatly resolved, as pre-Vatican II Roman Catholicism aimed to do. Our medical practitioners and biological researchers don't need canon lawyers looking over their shoulders. They do need and deserve some guidance from the church, however, in the articulation of fundamental norms and, above all, in the opportunity themselves to reflect—in a context the church is uniquely fitted to provide—on the ethical choices they confront.

The final contribution of Lutheranism that I will mention is a reprise of a basic Lutheran theme to which we referred earlier: the courage to act despite the ambiguities, or, in Luther's more vivid words, to "sin boldly." That, of course, was not Luther's complete phrase. His true motto was: "Sin boldly, but believe and rejoice in Christ more boldly still (*pecca fortiter, sed fortius fide et gaude in Christo*) (WA Br 2, 424:84f.). In many biomedical situations, as in many of life's situations generally, there is no one clearly correct and problem-free answer. It is often a matter of weighing detriments and benefits, the famous "cost-benefit ratio," which has its significance in ethics as well as economics.

On both sides of the equation, we are notoriously fallible, whether in predicting benefits or anticipating risks. At the same time, there is undeniably the temptation to play God, a temptation experienced very strongly by both practitioners and researchers in this particular realm. The temptation is to use one's skills and knowledge as a means of lordship rather than servanthood. Persons working in this realm, therefore, need to hear the unique double message of Law and Gospel, involving a rebuke to our excesses, and even more powerfully, a proclamation of the grace that is sufficient to cover all our sins.

Samuel Simon Schmucker and Philip Schaff: Nineteenth Century Ecumenical Pioneers

Frederick K. Wentz
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

What was the relationship between Samuel Simon Schmucker and Philip Schaff?[1]

In the new *Encyclopedia of the American Experience*, Paul Crow, discussing the Ecumenical Movement in the nineteenth century, notes three approaches to Christian unity (individual contacts, federation, and organic union) and introduces his elaboration of the federation approach with this paragraph:

> The second approach to Christian unity in nineteenth-century America was federative action by denominational bodies. In this model the relationships were not those of individuals but of churches en-

[1]The historical reasons for connecting these two names are set forth in the article. There are contemporary reasons as well. It is an appropriate topic to honor Professor Robert Fischer's scholarly career. He has been interested in Lutheran-Reformed relations, in the movement toward Christian unity, and in the history of American Lutheranism, especially the Gettysburg and General Synod tradition. It is also an appropriate topic because 1988 has been a banner year for the study of Philip Schaff and his influence, since this is the centennial year of the American Society of Church History.

In 1999, the bicentennial of Schmucker's birth, it is hoped by leaders at Gettysburg College and Gettysburg Seminary that there will be a renewed interest in their founder and in his contributions to public life. In this connection the author of this article is trying to locate any letters of Schmucker or other primary sources, and would appreciate any leads or helps forthcoming to 130 S. Hay St., Gettysburg, PA 17325.

> gaged in official relations of cooperative witness. Two German-American theologians—Lutheran Samuel Simon Schmucker and Reformed Philip Schaff—were the most articulate proponents of federation.[2]

Crow first characterizes the proposals of Schmucker's *Fraternal Appeal* in 1838 and 1870, then quotes a similar position taken by Schaff in 1893 in a paper delivered at the World's Parliament of Religions. Crow's summary sentence is:

> While lonely prophets in the nineteenth century, Schmucker and Schaff offered a vision that was partially fulfilled in the next century.

In Rouse and Neill's *A History of the Ecumenical Movement*, Donald Yoder combines these two in ecumenical leadership:

> From an obscure part of the American Zion—the Churches of the Lutheran and Reformed traditions—there came not only the first American plan for organic union based on doctrinal compromise, but two of the principal ecumenical leaders of 19th-century American Protestantism, Samuel Simon Schmucker (1799-1873) and Philip Schaff (1819-93).[3]

For more than two decades, from 1844, Schmucker and Schaff were neighbors in theological education. After discussing Schmucker's impact, Yoder moves to Schaff with this sentence:

> Thirty miles across the mountains from Gettysburg, in the Allegheny Mountains, was another little town and another infant theological seminary from which came flashes of ecumenical lightning.[4]

Schaff arrived in Mercersburg from Germany in 1844, and his son states that "his first circle of friends outside of the Reformed Church" were his nearest neighbors in theological centers.[5] Schmucker is one of the four persons named.

Besides propinquity and ecumenical concern, Schmucker and Schaff had other natural bonds. Both were leading interpreters of German religious and theological life to Americans and spokesmen for the German element in America. In the 1920s, for example, Schmucker had translated and edited a German theological textbook for English students, and he frequently appeared (in person or in correspondence) in major eastern cities appealing for funds to educate German-speaking Americans. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, Schaff, from his professorship at Union Theological Seminary in New York (1870-1893), was

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[2] *Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience*, ed. Charles H. Lippy and Peter W. Williams (New York: Scribner's, 1988). The following two quotations are from p. 982. This linkage is not new. Elias Sanford in 1916 wrote: "Samuel S. Schmucker, the Lutheran theologian and ecclesiastical leader, and Philip Schaff, the Reformed and Presbyterian Church scholar and historian, were the earliest seers and prophets, in this country, of the federal conception of Church Unity," in *Origin and History of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America* (Hartford: S.S. Schmucker Co., 1916), 99. Similarly, Charles Macfarland in 1948 discussed the early leadership of Schmucker in the Evangelical Alliance and adds: "Associated with the name of Dr. Schmucker should be that of Philip Schaff of the Reformed Church in the United States, whose personality exerted great influence later on," in *Christian Unity in the Making* (New York: Federal Council, 1948), 19.

[3] *A History of the Ecumenical Movement*, ed. Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954), 241.

[4] *A History of the Ecumenical Movement*, 246.

[5] David S. Schaff, *The Life of Philip Schaff* (New York: Scribner's, 1897), 143.

the leading mediating interpreter between Americans and Germans in religious life and theological scholarship.

Both of these men were active in behalf of sabbatarian reform, religious liberty, and the other causes that were foremost in the social concerns of the Protestant establishment of their day. Both were enthusiastic about America, the democratic ideas and institutions of the United States, and the provision of freedom of religious life from state control. Both strongly opposed slavery and agonized over the Civil War, even as their two seminaries served as hospitals for soldiers wounded during the Gettysburg campaign.

Did they influence each other, and how much actual contact did they have? The extant evidence is fairly scant, but it implies quite a bit of exchange. They must have met at many of the annual meetings of the national societies of the day, usually in New York. How often they met or corresponded on a personal basis is unclear. Presently we have ten letters between them, the first letter in 1846 and the last during Schmucker's last years in the early 1870s.[6]

Their correspondence reflects mutual respect, a more than formal cordiality, the easy and friendly communication of familiar co-workers.

In March of 1846, as Schmucker approached his first tour of Europe in connection with the World's Evangelical Alliance, Schaff (recently moved from Germany to the United States) wished Schmucker a safe and pleasant journey and added some advice. For example: "You must call on Pastor Souchon and hear him preach," when in Berlin, since he "is one of the most distinguished and earnest pulpit orators of Germany...."[7]

In October, Schmucker, just back to Gettysburg from Europe, wrote to Schaff in a cordial, enthusiastic vein, sending letters and packages and many greetings from German professors. He stated that things went well, that he was grateful for the contacts given, that he was well received everywhere with the exception of "one or at most two ultra Lutherans (Altlutheraner)...." He related to Schaff some of his impressions. The church in Germany was in some points, it appeared to him, ahead of America and in some points in our rear. The principle defects arose from "the union of church and State." Their leaders were becoming more aware of this problem. The theological institutions of Germany were far ahead of us in libraries and scholarly specialization, but we did better in actual religious preparation in our schools "and this was acknowledged by not a few pious men in Germany with whom I conversed on the subject."[8]

Six of the extant Schaff/Schmucker letters are largely taken up with routine transactions. One, concerning the Evangelical Alliance, will be mentioned later. Twice (1847 and 1849) Schaff recommended someone to do missionary work among Germans, and Schmucker explained that his committee (in

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[6]Six of these ten, all Schmucker's, are located in the Philip Schaff collection at the Lancaster Seminary and are used with permission of the Lancaster Archives of the Evangelical and Reformed Church. The other four, three by Schaff and one by Schmucker, are at four different places footnoted later. These letters are the largest number extant with any one correspondent beyond his family, for Samuel Simon Schmucker.

[7]Letter of March 16, 1846, available only as printed in P. Anstadt, *Life and Times of Rev. S. S. Schmucker, D.D.* (York, PA: Anstadt, 1896), 301-2.

[8]Letter of October 5, 1846, to Philip Schaff (his name was spelled with only one "f" until the next year), Lancaster Archives of the Evangelical Reformed Church (hereinafter called Lancaster Archives).

the General Synod) did not have funds to employ that person. In November 1847 he also commented on materials that dealt with American Lutheran history and promised to send to Schaff the two volumes of Hazelius at a later date. He concluded: "I should be pleased to visit your place, and if I find leisure will do so."[9] In 1849 he sent along two dollars for his subscription to Schaff's *Der Deutsche Kirchenfreund* with which, he asserted, "I am in general much pleased."[10]

Both Schmucker and Schaff entered sharply into the theological controversies of the day.

In a September 1855 letter Schmucker wrote: "I rejoice in your safe return from Europe, and shall at all times be happy to welcome you at my home."[11] The letter was occasioned by Schaff's notice that the papers of the Kirchentag at Frankfurt would be arriving for the General Synod's use. Schmucker praised the Kirchentag and elaborated on his own commitment to interchurch cooperation. He also sent some money to cover a bill "long since due," and 50¢ postage to pay for the pamphlets.

In Schmucker's letter of February 1866 (Schaff was now in New York) he again expressed pleasure in Schaff's safe return from Europe and thanked him for his letters from Germany.[12] Referring to "our last interview in New York," he described progress in "the translation of Dr. Luthardt's *Apologetische Vorträge*, pointed out that Mr. Scribner had not yet committed himself to its publication, and urged Schaff, "as you frequently see Mr. Scribner," to commend its publication as one who had "advised the enterprise." Schmucker then asked several questions about how much remuneration he should request for this task and which portions would be most acceptable as pre-publication articles. Evidently this work did not reach publication.

In December of 1870 Schmucker wrote to Drs. Schaff, Prentiss, and H.B. Smith, sending his own $10 and $10 for Dr. Charles Hay, his colleague and a former student of Tholuck, as contributions to the American part of a project to honor Dr. Tholuck.[13] He expressed warm sympathy for the project and mentioned his own contact with Tholuck in 1846.[14] He concluded by hoping "that the contribution from America will be creditable, and that the good old gentleman (who is exactly of my age!) may have the pleasure to recognize among the donors, the names of many of his former pupils and visitors...."

Only two of the letters reflect the theological attacks which beset both these men in the 40s and 50s. Both Schmucker and Schaff entered sharply into the theological controversies of the day. Both were under severe

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[9]Letter of November 27, 1847, Lancaster Archives.

[10]Letter of September 22, 1849, Lancaster Archives.

[11]Letter of September 4, 1855, Lancaster Archives.

[12]Letter of February 5, 1866, Lancaster Archives.

[13]Letter of December 22, 1870, The Burke Library, Union Seminary, New York. Philip Schaff papers, Box II, item II. 41. 447. Used with permission of the Burke Library.

[14]For a description of Schmucker's visit to Tholuck, cf. Abdel Ross Wentz, *Pioneer in Christian Unity: Samuel Simon Schmucker* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), 302-3.

and direct attack for heresy in these decades. On the other hand, both made large contributions to ecumenicity in part because they were irenic personalities, seldom entering into personal invective against their opponents and usually looking for ways to provide unity and cooperation on a broader front.

But they made common cause in opposing the strict confessionalist Lutherans. In March of 1851 Schmucker wrote Schaff:

> I was much gratified by the freedom with which you gave utterance to what I regard as a correct opinion of the literary standing and reputation of Dr. Guericke as a historian. I had myself styled him a "*bigotted* old Lutheran" in my controversy with Dr. Reynolds. In the April No of the Ev. Review, which has just left the press, you will find a caustic response to your article, the authorship of which you will easily learn from the style; whilst the spirit of the article will exhibit little evidence of gratitude for the literary honours of your institution. The reviewer's charge of dishonourable conduct on your part, in publishing *private* conversations, of course depends on whether they were designed to be confidential and secret, which I suppose was not the case. I became personally acquainted with Dr. Guericke in Halle, and formed no favourable opinion of him either as a gentleman, or as an enlightened impartial theologian. Indeed, the fact that a man of his general attainments, who devotes himself to the Professorial life, and at his age, is yet merely Prof. *extra*ordinarius, is no very flattering evidence of high estimation at home.
>
> In reading several German publications of recent date, I find opinion of Dr. G. coincident in part at least with yours, and to send you (*sic*) these lest possibly you might not have them at hand.
>
> I am told the Lutheraner of St. Louis, is also out upon you; though I have so little respect for those bigotted ultralutherans, that I have never taken their paper.[15]

There follows a discussion of the author's position in the matter of dividing assets of Franklin College,[16] which leads to this typical sentiment as a conclusion: "That both of our churches may gradually learn to lay more stress on the fundamentals in which we agree, and less on the points in which we differ, is the earnest wish and prayer of...Yours Fraternally, S. S. Schmucker." We do not have any response from Schaff, but we know he would not quite have agreed with Schmucker in the last sentiment because he felt Lutherans should represent the Lutheran tradition in any concern for unity, and he felt that Schmucker had compromised that position theologically.

The letter Schaff wrote to Schmucker in February of 1861 is the only one of the ten letters at hand which reflects the considerable differences between the two men. In 1855 Scribner had published Schaff's *America*, consisting of lectures given in Berlin and Frankfort the preceding year. Schaff described Lutherans in America in three groupings and set forth Schmucker's confessional position as representing "American Lutheranism." His judgments are harsh. We shall look at these judgments below. Six years

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[15]Letter of March 25, 1851, Lancaster Archives. Heinrich Ernst Ferdinand Guericke (1803-1878) was a German Lutheran theologian, professor at the University of Halle (from 1829), author of a number of works in the field of historical theology and a biography of August Hermann Francke.

[16]Franklin College in Lancaster had been a cooperative project of the Lutherans and the German Reformed in Pennsylvania. Both Schmucker and Schaff favored the realignment which brought Marshall College from Mercersburg to join Franklin. The Lutheran interest was transferred to Gettysburg College at Schmucker's urging, rather than retained as a professorship at Franklin and Marshall.

later, evidently after a visit to Schmucker, he wrote the following letter and the following "A Correction":[17]

> On my return home last evening I examined, according to promise, my book on *America* with reference to the objection made by you regarding my statement of your doctrinal position, and find on p. 187 on the margin the insertion of 'the *old symbolical,*' before 'doctrine of original sin and guilt,' which would avoid all misunderstanding. But I doubt whether this book which was never stereotyped, will be republished. (A second edition appeared in Germany several years ago.) I would have to make so many additions and improvements that it would require as much trouble as a new book.
>
> I may have occasion to make the above correction in some other way, and will do it cheerfully whenever a proper opportunity affords itself. In the meantime I send you a statement of which you may make any use you see fit.
>
> I send this note with Mr. Gejer, the gentleman who brought me from Gettysburg, and will return tomorrow morning. I also send a copy of the large edition of my German Hymn Book which please accept as a present from... Your obedient servant and brother Phil. Schaff
>
> A Correction
>
> My attention having been called to a statement of the doctrinal position of the Rev. Dr. S.S. Schmucker as contained in my work on "America" p.187 of the English translation (p. 228 of the German original), where he is made to deny among other articles of the Lutheran symbols the "doctrine of original sin and guilt": it gives me pleasure to confess that I was not sufficiently guarded in the expression and have unintentionally given cause of complaint to Dr. Schmucker. For although the statement is clearly explained by the words immediately preceding: "He (Dr. S.) then rejects as unscriptural the following *Lutheran* doctrines and practices," etc., yet it may easily be misunderstood to mean a denial of the entire doctrine of natural depravity which Dr. Schmucker firmly holds and teaches in his works. I meant merely to say that he rejects, according to his own statements, the *old Lutheran*, or *symbolic Lutheran* view of original sin and guilt, or more particularly of the imputation of Adam's guilt to all his posterity, as taught in the Lutheran Confessions, and in part in all the confessions of the Reformation... Philip Schaff

One can only conjecture as to whether Schmucker expressed any other objections to the way Schaff was presenting him to a wide public in America and Germany. Obviously he wanted to make sure that his theological position was understood. It would also appear that the relationship remained cordial.

This 1861 letter was not the first evidence of disagreement between Schaff and Schmucker. Before looking at the particulars, let's point out the broad factors which kept these two ecumenical leaders, who had so much common ground, from any significant degree of collaboration.

First is the matter of timing. Schmucker (1799-1873) was twenty years older, well established and set in his thinking, when Schaff (1819-1893) reached his first teaching post, Mercersburg, in 1844. Filled with German university scholarship, young, confident, enthusiastic, Schaff was not yet fully formed in his thinking, nor could he evaluate his impact upon the American scene—the passionate response to his inaugural address surprised him.[18] Surely, Schmucker was shocked or at least disappointed at Schaff's

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[17]Letter of February 26, 1861, Lancaster Archives.

[18]Cf. Perry Miller in the preface to his edition of Schaff's *America* (Cambridge: Belnap Press, 1961), xx-xxi.

Schaff interpreted both the medieval Roman Church and the Reformation tradition of Protestantism in positive fashion.

position (the lecture was published in German and in English as *The Principle of Protestantism*).

As a disciple of Neander, Schaff was well within the movement we now call Romanticism, so that James H. Nichols in his study of the Mercersburg theology of Schaff and his colleague John Williamson Nevin used the title *Romanticism in American Theology*. It was Hegel's thinking appropriated for Protestant theology by way of Neander. It was the latest German theological scholarship brought right next door to the American frontier. Though these statements oversimplify, they suffice to indicate the impact. For many of Schaff's new colleagues, and for Samuel Simon Schmucker, this smacked strongly of "Romanism and Puseyism." It didn't help matters that Schaff had spent six weeks in England on his way to America, had clearly become an Anglophile, and had talked freely with Edward B. Pusey (a leader of the Oxford Movement). Schaff easily survived a heresy trial and soon was able to express himself in ways that gathered support for more than two decades within the German Reformed Church and a like period within the Presbyterian Church and, from New York and Union Seminary, a wider Protestant and national public.

But in the 1840s a youthful Schaff raised hackles with a majority of American Protestants who were intense about their opposition to the Roman Catholic Church. In ecclesiastical circles his position carried the opprobrium of "High Churchism." An Ohio pastor and recent student of Schmucker's wrote him encouragement in 1849 and stated: "I hope you will not yield a single iota to their *Soul destroying High Church-ism.*"[19] This was a comment about Lutheran attacks on Schmucker. But Nichols, in assessing the impact of the Mercersburg Theology and of Nevin and Schaff, makes this comment: "Their contribution to the defeat of the 'American Lutheranism' of B. Kurtz and S. S. Schmucker and the triumph of a more traditional Lutheranism has been variously assessed, but probably was significant."[20]

In the following three decades Schmucker's ecumenism could not broaden to encompass this budding "churchly" movement that has meant so much to twentieth century ecumenism. On his part, Schaff, as a young German theologian, took some time to broaden his vision of the unity of the church to include in positive fashion elements of American religious life which in Germany were deprecated, perhaps deplored, as "sectarianism." He did become a notable broad churchman and an enthusiastic advocate of American-style religious freedom,

[19]Letter of D. S. Altman to Schmucker, December 29, 1849, Schmucker file #3249. 1229, Abdel Ross Wentz Library, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. All materials from this file quoted by permission.

[20]James H. Nichols, *Romanticism in American Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1961), 309.

but largely after Schmucker had reached the twilight of his career.

Probably the sharpest clash in the Schmucker/Schaff relationship, especially as it effects the ecumenical roles of these two, lies in the understanding of history, the interpretation of the medieval church and the Reformation, and the role of creeds. Schaff embraced the new developmental view of history which has dominated historical scholarship to our own day but was foreign to Schmucker and the thought world he inhabited. This early—romantic and optimistic—developmentalism meant that Schaff interpreted both the medieval Roman Church and the Reformation tradition of Protestantism in positive fashion, as two phases which would contribute two sides to the coming era of a broader and more catholic or universal church. Schmucker and American Evangelicals generally viewed medieval Catholicism and the contemporary Roman Church negatively and expected Evangelicalism to carry the Gospel and the true Church not only to the pagan world but to various forms of apostate Catholicism.

It is not surprising, then, that young Schaff in his book, *What is Church History?* (1846) attacked the way Schmucker handled creeds. Schmucker's most influential work in the cause of Christian unity had begun in 1838 with the publication of his *Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches with a Plan for Catholic Union on Apostolic Principles.*[21] Through the rest of his life he diligently promoted this work, reissued in 1870, and especially his Plan, often modified. Late in 1845, preceding the first meeting of the Evangelical Alliance in the following year, Schmucker reissued his Plan, with about forty-five endorsing signatures, as the famous *Overture For Christian Union.* The Plan included a proposed "United Protestant Confession." Schmucker claimed authority for his Confession because it was put together by using nothing but phrases from many of the basic Protestant confessions and excluded only those statements peculiar to some groups but not common to all.[22] Schaff is devastating in his attack upon the scissors-and-paste approach to confessional documents as found in the *Overture.* A "defect too generally characteristic of our efforts for union," he declares, "is doctrinal indifferentism and an undervaluation of history."[23] He goes on to elaborate:

> The differences that exist among religious parties are viewed as of small account; and so to make room for union, peculiarities of doctrine are to be surrendered, for which our fathers contended and made the greatest sacrifices, as for points of vital solemnity. Whole centuries of separation are to be sunk into nothing, only to come together again at the common point of departure. The process must be from the definite to the indefinite, from the concrete and particular backwards to abstract generalities. Thus, for instance, the Apostles' Creed, or some loose compilation made up of the most formal propositions, (anti-papistical in particular) from the different protestant symbols, are to represent these

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[21] *Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches with a Plan for Catholic Union on Apostolic Principles,* latest edition (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1965), edited and with an introduction by Frederick K. Wentz.

[22] Cf. *Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches,* 34-35, for a discussion of this method of handling creeds.

[23] Philadelphia, 1846. Reprint: Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott, 1872. This and the following quotations are found on pp. 124-27 of the 1846 edition. Schmucker had called his whole creedal statement "The United Apostolic Protestant Confession." It consisted of two parts: the Apostles Creed and "The United Protestant Confession." See item #3740.0002, Schmucker file at the Gettysburg Seminary.

> symbols themselves! With such a so called "United Apostolical Protestant Confession," we have been lately favoured in fact, from a worthy and zealous leader in the cause of Christian union."

Here Schaff footnotes as follows:

> "Overture for Christian Union, submitted for the consideration of the evangelical denominations in the United States," subscribed by quite a number of distinguished names.
>
> But [Schaff continues] what a full mistake it is to project a symbol before the body is formed that shall take it for its confession! It is as though one should think to speak before he has a mouth, or to walk before he has feet. What is a symbol, in its only true and proper sense? A formal representation on the part of the church, of a common living faith already at hand.

At this point Schaff in a footnote names Schmucker: "We would respectfully submit to our honoured friend, *Dr. S. Schmucker*, the author of this symbol, the following words of one of the most eminent German theologians, for consideration," following with a lengthy quote along the line of his own argument from Ullmann, *Studien und Kritiken*, 1845. Schaff continues in the text:

> It supposes the presence of a certain form of life, in its very nature, of which it is simply the expression and transcript. The Apostles' Creed appeared long after the time of the apostles; the Augsburg Confession full thirteen years after the commencement of the Lutheran Reformation; the Heidelberg Catechism, and other protestant symbols, still much later. But where now is the United Protestant church, in which Lutherans, German Reformed, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, etc., join hands fraternally in *twelve* articles of faith? It has not yet come to light; and it will not be called into being, I am afraid, by this "United, Apostolic, Protestant Confession." A church is not to be fabricated in the study, by simply extracting, and putting together in an outward way, some propositions of apparently like sound, out of different symbolical books. It comes not by the pious wish and operation of a human individual as such. God alone can produce a union, by the objective course of history itself....
>
> And what a wretched union must not that be counted in the end, which might thus be constructed, in any case, only on the ruins of history! Have the dogmatic struggles of our ancestors then been all in vain? Has the peculiar development of the different branches of Protestantism gone forward thus far, without meaning or fruit?... Is it not an enormous presumption, when we look at it properly, to suppose that a few men of the 19th century, in such an outward mechanical way, should succeed in bringing something permanently stable to pass, where the whole Christian past is practically charged with having laboured to no purpose?

In that same year, 1846, as we have seen, Schmucker carried letters of introduction from Schaff to a number of German worthies. It is not surprising that Schmucker found himself discussing Schaff with several whom he visited. One of his most interesting contacts was in Berlin with the powerful preacher and influential churchman, F.W. Krummacher.[24] Krummacher had been offered the position which Schaff subsequently accepted at Mercersburg, and he took a personal interest in both Schaff and the school. In Schmucker's diary for his

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[24]Friedrich Wilhelm Krummacher (1796-1868) was an influential preacher in the Reformed tradition; in 1847 he became preacher at Trinity Church in Berlin and in 1853 court preacher at Potsdam.

European trip[25] he describes in detail many whom he met and the gist of their conversation. The following is part of what he wrote about his conversation with Krummacher:

> Dr. Krummacher very soon began to speak of the church in America, in which he feels a deep interest. Especially were his inquiries minute in regard to the dispute in the Reformed church, caused by the work of Prof. Schaff. He took occasion to say that he was no less surprised than grieved at some of the principles it contained, especially as Prof. S. had spent weeks with him and appeared then to have different views. He expressed his decided disapprobation of Prof. S. view of justification and declared it irreconcilable with the Heidelberg Catechism. He also disapproved of Prof. S's views of the church as an organic body independently of the members of the church and anterior to them, and regarded it as a given of Romanism and Puseyism. He said Prof. S's views were yet unsettled, and that it is unfortunate that the Reformed ch. of America should be agitated by his fluctuations. He further added that he did not regard Prof. S as having fully experienced experiential change of heart; that he had yet many things to learn which he doubted not the Lord would teach him. He added that he had written to Prof. Schaff stating his decided objection to his book on the points referred to.

With Schmucker during this trip and this conversation was Dr. Benjamin Kurtz, Baltimore pastor and editor of the *Lutheran Observer*. It is typical of their relationship that Schmucker made comment only in his private diary, whereas Kurtz rushed a letter to his paper with flamboyant assertions. His dateline from Berlin was May 18, and the *Observer* on August 14 of 1846 published his communication. This was picked up by the editor of the *Weekly Messenger* of the German Reformed Church, Samuel R. Fisher, who on December 2 quoted a long paragraph from Kurtz, related how Schaff had written Krummacher because of rumors that he was critical of Schaff's position, and then printed Krummacher's letter to Schaff of October 15. Kurtz declared concerning the Mercersburg theology that "their friends in Germany interpret as we do, and condemn quite as decidedly and unsparingly." Fisher assumed that the misunderstanding was either Krummacher's bad hearing or Kurtz's bad German. Krummacher was very careful not to offend, generally supported Schaff, but indicated some concerns with trends of thought or unwise expressions on Schaff's part.

As insight into the Schmucker/Schaff relationship, this incident illustrates the way the two men let others do battle while maintaining their own equanimity and working relationship.

In the next decade Schaff reached a wide readership with his discussions of American religious life. In connection with our discussion above of Schaff's letter of 1861[26] we stated that Schaff's judgments on Schmucker's "American Lutheranism" were harsh. There follow, briefly, two examples.

His lectures to German audiences, which included a lengthy discussion of tripartite Lutheranism in America, were printed in a number of editions and widely quoted, most

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[25]This diary consists of 230 pages of fine script, unnumbered. The passage quoted is under the "Berlin" heading. I have tried to reproduce the spellings and abbreviations of the original, without burdening the text with *sic*. The diary is in the Special Collections of the Musselman Library of Gettysburg College and is quoted by permission. Cf. A. R. Wentz, *Ecumenical Pioneer*, Chapter Seventeen. A number of others, besides Krummacher, referred to in the text, discussed Schaff's views with Schmucker.

[26]Footnote 17 marks this discussion.

recently in a two-and-one-half page quotation in the textbook widely used in Lutheran seminaries in America.[27] Schaff did not hesitate to identify with the middle position (that which would become the position of the General Council) and to express criticism of the Confessionalists, on the one hand, and the American Lutherans, on the other. The following sentences represent the least restrained ones, those potentially most offensive to Schmucker. Characterizing the New Lutheran party as an amalgamation of Lutheranism with American Puritanic and Methodistic elements, Schaff added:

> It makes little of thorough theological education, and much of oratorical talent, practical activity, and business tact. To it properly belong the literary institutions at Gettysburg, Pa., Springfield, O., Springfield, Ill.; and it has thus far spoken the great word in the General Synod.[28]

Another example of this kind of judgment made by Schaff appears in his *Germany, Its Universities, Theology, and Religion*. In pointing out how widely venerated was the name of Martin Luther, Schaff stated that "even those numerous American Lutherans who disown every distinctive doctrinal feature of Lutheranism, and are pure Zwinglians or even downright rationalists in their views on baptism and the eucharist" venerate Luther's name "and are as sectarian in practise as the strictest old Lutherans who revere the *Formula of Concordioe (sic)*, as the perfection of theology."[29]

Thus these two ecumenical pioneers, despite many interests in common and a good working relationship, had too much difference of viewpoint to work well in harness on ecumenical concerns. Schmucker could not incorporate Roman Catholicism in his practical projects, indeed, could not include the Catholic traditions of his day within the orbit of his Christian fellowship. At mid-century Schaff was so intent upon the coming great Church which would encompass both Catholics and Protestants that he could not identify with efforts of Evangelicals to promote unity among Protestants.

For Schaff this was not only a matter of criticism of Schmucker's handling of creeds, as we have noted above. He could not support the Evangelical Alliance. In *What Is Church History?* (1846) he refers to the coming London meeting of that Alliance, notes that it is a practical testimony furnished by the conscience of the church against the great evils of sects, but declares, "we must enter our decided dissent from the general movement." It is too narrow because it omits the Romans and the Greeks.[30] It is in that context that he criticizes Schmucker's United Protestant Confession.

After the London meeting, Schmucker was active in the attempt to form an Ameri-

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[27]E. Clifford Nelson, ed., *The Lutherans, in North America* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 211-13. I find it surprising that a Reformed theologian is depended upon by that text in such a long quotation to provide the basic theological positions of mid-nineteenth century Lutheranism in America. It is unfortunate that it makes Schaff's only appearance therein harshly critical toward Schmucker (along with the Confessionalists) in his speeches to German audiences.

[28]Philip Schaff, *America* (New York: Scribner's, 1855), 183. This passage translated from an 1858 edition of the German (*Amerika*) by August R. Suelflow, reads in the Nelson textbook (cf. footnote 27) as follows: "Theological training and thorough education is not found among them, but instead mostly superficial American routine sophistication, gift of eloquence, knowledge of parliamentary order, and businessmanship."

[29]Philip Schaff, *Germany, Its Universities, Theology, and Religion* (Philadelphia: 1857), 169.

[30]Schaff, *Germany, Its Universities*, 169.

After the Civil War, both became active in efforts to promote Christian unity through organizations and programs.

can Branch of the Evangelical Alliance in 1847. He also got the General Synod to adopt his Plan (1848) and by 1850 reported that three other denominations had approved or recognized it. Very little came of this effort. Within the Alliance the issue of admitting slaveholders (raised by the British at London) became sharply divisive. Actually, by this time the trend of both national life and church life had turned against conciliating efforts.

After the Civil War, both Schmucker (now retired) and Schaff (now in New York) became active in efforts to promote Christian unity through organizations and programs. Schmucker never wavered from his concern for federative association. In *The Church of the Redeemer* (1867) he reprinted the *Overture* of 1845 and claimed that the "*first* object or design of the General Synod was to promote Christian union among the different portions of our Church, and among all denominations of Christians in general," quoting the explicit words of the constitution of 1820.[31]

Then he helped form two American organizations for the furtherance of Christian unity.[32] The second one, meeting in 1869, proved short-lived, but it was the continuance of the federative principle. For this organizing meeting of a National Council of Evangelical Denominations Schmucker was one of the worship leaders, served on the business committee, the nominating committee, and the committee on permanent organization, and presented the basic motions on the nature and influence of Christian union.

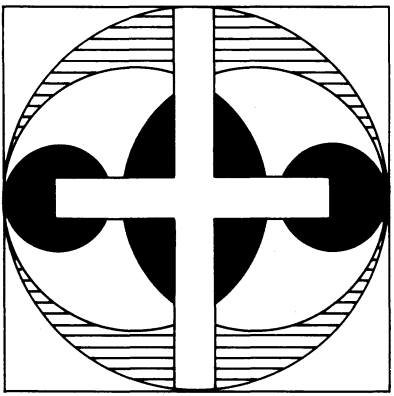
Meanwhile, however, the American Branch of the Evangelical Alliance was revived. Schmucker was present at the meeting in New York on May 11, 1867 and was a member (along with Schaff) of the committee charged with the organizational business of that body. In 1869 Schmucker hoped that these two organizations—with overlapping purpose and personnel—could become one by a reshaping of the American Branch of the Evangelical Alliance. Thus he produced a document with a detailed plan for modifying the World's Evangelical Alliance at the proposed meeting in 1870 in New York. He also issued his last book in 1870, *The True Unity of Christ's Church*, in which he retraced the story of unity efforts since 1838 among American Evangelicals, republished the *Fraternal Appeal*, and provided one more new "Modified Plan Proposed."

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[31]Samuel Simon Schmucker, *The Church of the Redeemer* (Baltimore: Kurtz, 1867), 230-31.

[32]For a careful description of American Christian unity moves centering in the Evangelical Alliance, cf. Philip D. Jordan, *The Evangelical Alliance for the United States of America, 1847-1900* (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1982). Cf. also for Schmucker's role the previously mentioned introduction to the 1965 edition of the *Fraternal Appeal* and A. R. Wentz, *Ecumenical Pioneer*.

When the New York meeting was delayed until 1873, Schmucker continued to modify the plan to meet objections that were raised. He was scheduled to address the Conference in October when he died in July of 1873. At the Conference itself Schmucker was honored by several speakers, but his Plan received no consideration from a body



that was firmly committed to individual membership. His Plan and an abbreviated appeal were published in an appendix to the official proceedings.

Philip Schaff, meanwhile, had become the driving force for the American part of the Evangelical Alliance and the major organizer of the New York Conference. Obviously he was much more willing now, than two decades earlier, to espouse particular programs of Evangelical Protestants that did not include Catholic portions of the Christian church. As early as 1859 he had prepared but did not deliver an address to the Berlin Conference of the World's Evangelical Alliance. There are different versions about the beginnings of the American Branch after the Civil War—Samuel Irenaeus Prime states that it began in Philip Schaff's New York study in 1865.[33] His prominent leadership dates from 1869, when he became a kind of secretary and commissioner to Europe for the American movement.

We have two evidences of Schaff/Schmucker interplay at this point. A letter from Schaff to Schmucker, dated July 24, year not given (probably 1870), states that the Committee on the Programme wanted Schmucker to give a ten to fifteen minute address on Christian Union. "Your long familiarity with the topic and your hearty sympathy" with the purposes of the Evangelical Alliance, Schaff wrote, "of which you are one of the founders," make it "desirable that you should favor us with the mature results of your studies."[34]

Schaff's reservations about Schmucker's Plan—at least for the Alliance—are evident in his editing of the appendix containing that Plan in the 1874 volume of the proceedings of the Conference.[35] At the Conference F. W. Conrad (Lutheran pastor from Philadelphia) had given a speech prefaced by a kind of highlighting of Schmucker's contribution to the Alliance and to Christian unity, ending with reference to his Plan and his expectation of submitting it to the Alli-

[33]Samuel Irenaeus Prime, *Autobiography and Memorials* (New York: Randolph, 1888), 290. Cf. also David Schaff's biography of his father, 254, and Jordan, *The Evangelical Alliance*, 75.

[34]Letter of July 24, 1870?, The Burke Library (Union Seminary, New York), Papers of the Evangelical Alliance, #114. Used with permission of the Burke Library.

[35]*Evangelical Alliance Conference, 1873*, ed. by Philip Schaff and S. Irenaeus Prime (New York, 1874). From the description of the division of labor between the two editors, p. iii, I conclude the editor on pp. 174 and 742 is Schaff.

ance in person. Here the editor added the following footnote:

> It is proper here to state that, while the late venerable Dr. Schmucker, in his 'Plan,' aimed at an official confederation of the various denominations, the Evangelical Alliance confines itself to the promotion of union among individual Christians, without interfering with their preference for, or loyalty to, their particular denomination, and without any attempt at an organic or confederate union of churches as such, which, however desirable it may be in itself, is certainly not practicable or obtainable at the present time. —*Ed.*[36]

In the appendix where Schmucker's Plan is published, the editor made the same comment,[37] pointing out that such a Plan "is a proper subject for discussion at the Conference, and possible for future action, though not by the Alliance as now constituted."

But Schaff continued his ecumenical leadership for two decades more, and things changed. The Social Gospel had its impact. Even in the Evangelical Alliance, with Josiah Strong as general secretary, cooperation in pragmatic action became more important by the 1890s. This required a closer relation to the denominations themselves. As the historian of the Alliance, Philip Jordan, puts it: "...(the) federal union posed by Samuel Simon Schmucker and thought too illusory by the Alliance of the 1870s now became a topic of admiration, discussion and potential reality."[38] Thus Schaff's speech in Chicago in 1893 at the Conference of the Alliance, set within the World's Parliament of Religions,[39] made a great impression and is often named as prophetic for the coming century of federations. While he still set forth for the future an organic union that would include all Christians, his more pragmatic suggestions in the area of federative union were those which commended themselves to his listeners and readers.

They maintained for nearly thirty years a cordial relationship despite the controversies that surrounded and enfolded them.

In assessing the interaction between these two men in their roles with the movement for Christian unity, we arrive at conclusions similar to those stated earlier to characterize their relationship in general. They had a cordial working relationship, but there was a distance that precluded warm collaboration.

There was the distance of two decades. Schmucker was a forerunner of the twentieth century federative movement. Elias Sanford in 1916 described mid-nineteenth century "springs of life and thought" as "the fountain head" of that movement and singled out Schmucker as the initiator thereof.[40] In the

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[36]*Evangelical Alliance Conference, 1873,* 174.

[37]*Evangelical Alliance Conference, 1873,* 742.

[38]Jordan, *The Evangelical Alliance,* 194-5.

[39]This speech was published with the papers of that World's Parliament and in an expanded form as Schaff's own monograph, *The Reunion of Christendom* (New York, 1893).

[40]Elias B. Sanford, *Origin and History of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America* (Hartford: S. S. Scranton), 89-90.

1870 to 1893 period, Schaff, from a more influential position within the religious world, was hailed by later voices as the pioneer of federation, though he continued to be more intent upon a broader Christian fellowship.

There was also the distance of differing historical understandings and ecclesiological commitments. Schaff made larger contributions to the twentieth century Ecumenical Movement through a developmental concept of church history and a broad churchman's vision of the whole of the Christian community. Schmucker focused upon progress in cooperative activities among Evangelicals.

It is a testimony to the irenic natures of the two men, and to their steady passion for Christian unity, that they maintained for nearly thirty years a cordial relationship despite the controversies that surrounded and enfolded them. The vision that directed their passion for Christian unity was notably similar for the two men—a world evangelized to Christ and united in a fellowship that cordially embraced all Christians.

When Schaff wrote to Schmucker after attending the 1855 Kirchentag in Frankfurt, Schmucker's reply endorsed the Kirchentag idea and then swung into a clear and forceful statement of his position and commitment. Schaff, unable to share that exact position, must have resonated to the conviction expressed. Schmucker wrote:

> It is by a practical recognition of each other, and cooperation in objects of mutual and common interest, that the different parts of Christ's church will gradually be brought into closer union; rather than by any attempt to make them all think alike on nonfundamental points of doctrine. This has been my opinion for a quarter of a century, and I have never published a word, to my knowledge, which properly interpreted can have a different tendency. In this course I expect to continue until I may by the grace of God be permitted to unite with all God's people in the celestial church above. Yet as preparatory to that blessed period, I long for a more cordial union and fraternal recognition of the different portions of the church on earth.[41]

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[41]Letter of February 5, 1866, Lancaster Archives.

Reform of the Church: A Roman Proposal of 1522

Jared Wicks, S.J.
Gregorian University, Rome

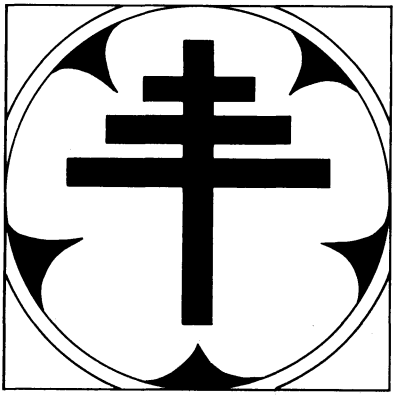
Luther's famous "three treatises" of 1520 gave the nascent movement of the Reformation an impressive forward thrust. Among these works, the great broadside, *To the Christian Nobility Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate*, was a potent statement on abuses to be suppressed and grievances to be redressed. This work, more than any other, made Luther the unquestioned spokesman for numerous German groups then longing for a new ordering of church life and of social structures.

It is less well known that, just two years later, a different group of Europeans began voicing their aspirations for reform in expressions largely independent of Luther. The occasion was the papal election of early January 1522, by which Cardinal Adrian Floriszoon, originally of Utrecht, became the successor of Leo X. Adrian once held a chair of theology at Louvain, but had gone into the service of Charles V. During the conclave that elected him, Adrian was co-regent of Spain, while the Emperor attended to affairs in his German and Netherlands domains. The nearly eight-month interval between Adrian's election and his arrival in Rome provided the opportunity for a scattered group of critical observers to draw up lists of the proper priorities for reformatory action in the new pontificate.[1]

The proposals made to Pope Adrian do coincide with a few of Luther's recommendations about taxing policies and fee-scales imposed by the Roman curia, but on the whole they show more awareness of the

[1] A convenient survey of these documents is Robert E. McNally, "Pope Adrian VI (1522-23) and Church Reform," *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae* 7 (1969), 253-85, at 261-79.

constraints under which the central Roman administration was then operating. For instance, while Cardinal Lorenzo Campeggio excoriated the venality of curial officials and the excesses in recent offerings of indulgences, he also counseled against draconian decrees, lest administrative chaos impede the transition to a reformed set of practices. Campeggio urged Adrian to commission a thorough audit of all curial transactions in the previous eight years (Leo X's pontificate), so that a report might be drawn up on just how shortsighted and profligate were the policies of the previous pope.[2]



Cajetan on Reform

Another proposal for reformatory action by Adrian VI, an unsigned document, has been linked with the name of Cardinal Tommaso de Vio (1469-1534), known as "Cajetan" from his birthplace Gaeta (in Latin, *Caieta*). Many know Cajetan as the stern papal representative whom Luther encountered in Augsburg in the fateful hearings of mid-October, 1518.[3] Others know as well that Cajetan is a "founding father" of modern Catholic systematic theology through his commentary on the *Summa theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas, a set of explanations which helped make Aquinas a normative theologian for modern Catholicism. But Cajetan was also a force for reform in the Dominican order, which he led as Master General from 1508 to 1518. And Cajetan's voice did sound in the chorus of reform proposals made in 1522.[4]

G. B. Flavio, who had been Cajetan's secretary since 1518, summarized in 1535 a set of Cajetan's ideas on ecclesiastical abuses and their reform. Flavio placed these in immediate connection with the short pontificate of Adrian VI. Flavio went so far as to interpret Cajetan's mission to Hungary, which took him away from Rome in mid-1523, as a measure concocted by certain members of the Roman curia who found their security threatened by the radical ideas on reform Cajetan was advancing in Adrian's presence in 1522-23.[5]

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[2]Campeggio's memorandum, dated March 22, 1522, is given among the treatises judged to prepare the way for the Council of Trent in the Görres Gesellschaft's monumental edition, *Concilium Tridentinum*, vol. 12, ed. V. Schweitzer (Freiburg/B., 1903), 5-17.

[3]More recent scholarship on the Luther-Cajetan episode is reflected in J. Wicks, "Roman Reactions to Luther: the First Year (1518)," *Catholic Historical Review* 69 (1983), 521-62.

[4]There are scattered criticisms of abuses and appeals for reform in Cajetan's *Summa* commentary on Part II-II (written 1512-17). Then on March 10, 1522, the cardinal dedicated the final volume of his commentary to the newly elected Adrian, in a letter that forthrightly names the maladies afflicting the church and the steps to be taken in applying the needed remedies. *S. Thomae Aquinatis Opera omnia*, Leonine Edition, vol. 11 (Rome, 1903), 3-4.

[5]Giovanni Battista Flavio, *Oratio de vita Caietani*, ed. M. H. Laurent, *Revue Thomiste* 17 (1934/35), 456-90, at 479-80.

According to Flavio, Cajetan denied that the Pope and his consistory of cardinals should exact any payment for benefices to which they confer title or for any other concessions in church matters. Above all, ecclesiastical appointments should go to men of the same nation in which the benefice or office was located. Pluralism in holding title to church-positions had gotten out of hand, especially by officials residing permanently in Rome. Many such men had been consecrated bishops, but they held posts in the Roman curia which kept them far from the dioceses of which they were nominally the chief pastors. Cajetan had wanted the Pope to order them to leave Rome.[6]

Cajetan, according to his secretary, was also critical about recent grants of dispensations and indulgences: these should not be for a price, not granted frequently, not for just any reason, and not to everyone. The Pope was overextending himself by trying to administer the whole church and thereby having to examine and decide numerous matters about which he could not hope to be well-informed. The Pope was only human; he could not have accurate knowledge about what needed to be done in places far from Rome. Above all, he did not have a good idea of the personal qualities of individuals whose petitions he considered and whose cases he decided.[7] The Pope should instead concentrate on matters of major significance or special difficulty, such as promoting the selection of first-rate bishops, fostering peace between Christian rulers, and counteracting the factious and litigious spirit now abroad in Christendom.

Flavio's 1535 report that Cajetan had espoused a better division of ecclesiastical responsibilities is a first reason for connecting Cajetan with the anonymous treatise on reform found preserved in the papers of Girolamo Aleandro, who at times drafted documents for Adrian.[8] This memorial on reform does espouse a notable decentralization, especially concerning the manner in which bishops are selected. And several other proposals in the treatise on reform echo Cajetan's own published works.[9] Furthermore, the author of the treatise claims to have good knowledge of the growth of observant houses and provinces of the Dominican order, to which Cajetan belonged.

Cajetan's commentary on Parts II-II and III of the *Summa*, written between 1512 and 1520, had provided occasions for him to express scattered ideas on abuses and their reform. These remarks reached a minor crescendo in early 1517 in Cajetan's extended comments on ST II-II, 185, 5, concerning the serious obligation binding a

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[6]Pope Paul III, elected in 1534, made a strong effort in 1540-41 to force bishops to leave Rome and return to their dioceses. L. von Pastor, *History of the Popes*, vol. 11 (St. Louis, 1923), 208-12.

[7]Cajetan was reacting to what B. M. Hallman found in the records of consistories between 1492 and 1563, namely, "a kaleidoscopic succession of nominations, resignations, translations, exchanges, reservations, and other dispositions of ecclesiastical benefices." *Italian Cardinals, Reform, and the Church as Property* (Berkeley, 1985), 21.

[8]Vatican Library, *Codices Vaticani*, no. 3917, fols. 20r-24v, ed. by V. Schweitzer, in *Concilium Tridentinum*, 12:32-39. In 1918 P. Kalkoff concluded that Flavio reported ideas so similar to the content of the memorial preserved by Aleandro that Cajetan should undoubtedly be seen as the author of the latter. "Kleine Beiträge zur Geschichte Hadrians VI," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 39 (1918-19), 31-72, at 71-72. V. Schweitzer accepted this attribution to Cajetan in his 1930 edition, as did H. Jedin, who judged parts of the treatise to contain quite drastic ideas (*History of the Council of Trent*, v. 1 [St. Louis, 1957], 208).

[9]I will give full documentation of these echoes in a chapter on Cajetan as architect of reform in a book now in preparation.

bishop to reside in his diocese, and on ST II-II, 189, 5.7.9, concerning the promotion of reform in the religious orders. The anonymous memorial develops precisely these two topics in its first and fifth sections. Thus, there is reason to see the memorial saved by Aleandro as a work coming from Cajetan, although we cannot conclude with full certitude to his authorship.[10] The document, of course, is inherently interesting, as an example of early reformation thinking about church life by a reflective and quite incisive exponent of reform. The high probability that Cajetan, a most able theologian, was the author, raises the document to the level of a major statement on *the* issue of the day in the early 1520s.

A Five-Point Program

The memorial looks to the renewal of pastoral care in the church by new papal policies enforcing episcopal residence, upgrading theological education, and fostering observant movements in the religious orders. The author is not oblivious of the Apostolic See's financial troubles, but his recommendations do not speak to this problem with the directness of Cardinal Campeggio. The main concern of our document is pastoral effectiveness throughout Christendom. Cajetan's long service of leadership in the world-wide Dominican order, together with his legation to Germany, would have attuned him to the problems of dioceses far from Rome in realms beyond Italy. A concern for the universal church animates our memorial. The document refers to its proposals as a ten-year program of renewal by which the church will become more prepared to expand by evangelizing present-day unbelievers outside Europe.

The memorial begins on a high level by explaining that its own motivation is solely a sincere love for souls. Every Christian should be driven by the force of love toward engagement for the good of souls. God became man and suffered torment and death on the cross to redeem humankind. Pondering this, a person is spurred on to that special expression of love that is zeal for the good of those gathered into the church, the temple and house of God, for which one should be compelled to say, "Zeal for your house consumes me" (Ps 69:10, Jn 2:17).

The first section of the treatise is a tightly argued case for episcopal residence, based on the easily grasped images of head and body, groom and bride, and shepherd and flock. Each particular church needs to have actually united with itself a head, spouse, and shepherd. Christ himself, to be sure, remains united with the church in each of these relationships, but the same Christ has determined through his apostles that each local church is to have its own visible shepherd, head, and bridegroom, with the Pope being responsible for making provision in each case.

From these images the memorial then explains the pastoral role and the horrendous consequences following from episcopal non-residence. As shepherd, the bishop is to nourish souls with the word of God, require the observance of holy doctrine and institutions, and use the staff of his authority to bring the errant back to the right path and

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[10]Although one can show several similarities between the memorial and Cajetan's writings both before and after 1522, numerous points of the reform treatise are not echoed in Cajetan's works. Furthermore, we have no evidence with which to construct a plausible account of how a document Cajetan would have composed in Latin then passed into the Italian text saved by Aleandro.

defend them from attacks by wolves. Christ requires as well that each church be given a head who will instill in the body whatever makes for its health and vigor. Similarly, the Pope is to provide each church with a spouse who in love will impregnate his bride with the seed of God's word so that she comes to abound in holy offspring. But absentee bishops cannot perform these actions essential to the episcopal office. A bishop who does not reside is leaving his sheep to wander, his bride abandoned, and his body to die headless. The devil knows this all too well, and he promotes non-residence by various tricks—an abusive practice provoking Christ's anger against those responsible for neglecting the souls for whom he shed his own blood (Acts 20:28).

The memorial explains the pastoral role and the horrendous consequences following from episcopal non-residence.

The second section of the memorial shows that a certain practical sense does underlie its proposals, because here it deals with a principal cause of episcopal non-residence, namely, the accumulation of bishoprics by the cardinals resident in Rome. It is right to provide the cardinals with adequate revenues, but means are now being used which run contrary to Christ's intent and lead to the ruin of souls. The Pope should decree a five-thousand-ducat limit to the cardinals' annual income from ecclesiastical sources. Furthermore, the college is now excessively large and should be gradually reduced from 48 to the more manageable and economic number of 24, as suggested in Revelation 4 by the 24 elders seated around the Lamb enthroned in majesty.

The Pope should take steps, therefore, to compel the cardinals to transfer their bishoprics to individuals who will reside and promote the salvation of their people in the image of saintly bishops. The present cardinals will likely oppose making such a renunciation, since they are more avaricious than zealous for helping souls. To overcome this opposition, the Pope could as a transition measure allow them a lifetime share in the revenues of the sees they will resign. Even better would be the creation of a new rank and dignity in the church for the cardinals and the tapping of a new source of income to support them.

The memorial recommends making each cardinal the Protector of the church in a particular nation or realm. The college should be internationalized by creating as future cardinals one outstanding churchman from each Christian realm. The Protector would reside in Rome as the promoter of the church's pastoral mission and of the faith in his own nation. A Vice-Protector could well reside in the country to serve as the conduit of information and recommendations to the Protector in Rome. The overall aim is the good of the local church by the advancement of dedicated and capable individuals and by promotion of literary and theological studies.

The church in each realm should supply the annual income of its Cardinal Protector. But this way of relieving the budgetary pressure on the Apostolic See is only one advantage of a well-functioning protectorate. It

should also help overcome the feelings of resentment now harbored by many peoples toward the Roman church. They refuse to revere and obey the Pope because they feel that he does not esteem their own best people. The Pope should act to assuage this wounded pride, for example, by singling out a leading churchman from every nation for advancement to the highly visible post of Cardinal Protector of the church in his nation.[11]

To give proper orientation to theology and popular instruction, the Pope should promulgate a decree on the norms of Christian doctrine.

In its third section, the reform memorial moves from the cardinals to treat the responsibility of the local bishop to enforce certain standards of clerical education in his diocese. The Pope should order the bishops to provide teachers for their future priests and to apply definite criteria for ordination and appointment to pastoral posts. Sub-deacons must know Latin grammar, deacons should be versed in Latin composition, and priests should have studied philosophy or canon law for three years. The newly ordained then continue their studies while being supported through a benefice not entailing the care of souls. A 30-year-old priest may be appointed pastor providing he has attained a sufficient knowledge of moral matters for hearing confessions, that is, discriminating between different sins, gauging their gravity, and recognizing the cases and censures whose absolution is reserved to a confessor with special faculties.[12]

A priest placed in charge of a parish church is to take responsibility for the schooling of youngsters in reading and writing. His catechesis should be organized around the great liturgical solemnities, with Easter and Pentecost in the first place. A second cycle of instruction moves from Christmas though Lent to explain why Christ had to suffer and what his passion gained for those who believe in him. A third level of instruction focuses on the three major Marian feasts of the Assumption, the Annunciation, and Purification. Along with literacy and the central Christian mysteries, the pastor—by his own preaching or that delegated to reformed religious—must teach and exhort in good morals. The pastor should punish bad conduct lovingly out of zeal for virtuous living, while urging his people to confess their sins and receive Holy Communion several times each year.

The memorial moves on to sketch what the bishop, with the local ruler, should do for higher education. Each major city of Chris-

[11]This line of thought could well derive from Cajetan's personal experiences and observations in 1518-19, when he was papal legate in Germany and he encountered fierce anti-Roman sentiment at the Diet of Augsburg and in the negotiations preceding the election of Charles V.

[12]Cajetan's manual for confessors, the *Summula peccatorum*, completed in 1524, intended to supply priests with the information which the memorial declares to be prerequisite for hearing confessions.

tendom should have a collegial body of clerics serving as teachers of philosophy and theology in programs leading to the standard degrees in accord with definitely determined programs of study. From such studies, the memorial anticipates that the church will come to abound in learned persons able to withstand the destructive influence of doctrinal error.

To give proper orientation to theology and popular instruction, the Pope should promulgate a decree on the norms of Christian doctrine. This would not be a proscription of particular errors, nor in itself a binding formulation of orthodox teaching. Instead, it would give an official catalogue of the normative "holy doctors" whose doctrine is to be respected and not contradicted by present-day teachers. God's revelation has been mediated to believers by those who received direct communication of the treasures of divine wisdom. These then labored to express revealed truth for our instruction and guidance. Therefore, it should be declared openly how disgraceful it is for Christians to follow those who break the bond of unity and despise the nourishing bread of life and understanding communicated by our "fathers and pastors."

Since the bishop is to oversee preaching, teaching, and discipline, the manner of his selection is of critical importance. The memorial dedicates its fourth section to proposing that the Pope sanction a shift from himself appointing bishops to their election by a chapter of college of electors from the diocese.[13] Electors would include the cathedral canons, abbots and major religious superiors in the region, local church dignitaries and heads of collegial clerical bodies, the masters of the diocesan faculty of study, and others holding a doctorate in theology or canon law. They should use secret ballots to guard their freedom of choice in electing one of their number as bishop. The system should in time create an episcopate cleansed of those whose quest is for wealth through an ecclesiastical career. The Pope would retain the prerogative of intervening to appoint the bishop when it is unlikely that a suitable candidate is to be found among the electors. But the restoration of the ancient custom of election should for the most part relieve the Pope of the irksome duty of making appointments from candidates whose qualifications he cannot know well. A local assembly of electors can bring accurate knowledge to this task, and if they gather in the right spirit, Christ will surely hear their prayers and give the diocese a holy and humane pastor.

The fifth part of the memorial addresses the issue of reforming those segments of monastic and mendicant religious orders in which discipline and study was still at a low level. The author is convinced that "observant" or reformed religious are sources of a host of spiritual values in the church for the salvation of souls.[14] The overall aim of papal policy should be the extinction of "conventual" or non-reformed provinces of the orders with the transfer of their houses to reformed groups dedicated to reviving the pastoral ministry.

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[13]The Dominican order was from the beginning, and by its Constitution, committed to election by the members of their local priors, regional provincial superiors, and order-wide master general. Cajetan is here proposing that the whole church learn from the experience of his own order.

[14]The historical growth of observant movements between 1350 and 1530 is set forth by Mario Fois, "Osservanza, Congregazioni di osservanza," *Dizionario degli Istituti di perfezioni*, 6 (Rome, 1980), 1037-57. We recall that in Erfurt in 1505 Luther entered a community of the Augustinians which belonged to the reformed branch of that order.

The Pope's promotion of this reform needs to be institutionalized in the office of a papal vicar as "universal reformer" of the orders. Such a person should be the member of an order, could well have his own vicars in each region of the Christian world, and should have an authority overriding the competence of any superior general of a conventual order.[15] Further steps could be taken by moving men from houses in which observance is now flourishing into the as yet unreformed communities, with an accompanying mandate to the conventuals to either embrace pristine observance or to leave the order.

Religious observance should be especially promoted where monastic or mendicant communities have large churches in their care. Better that these communities be smaller, since important pastoral benefits will follow from cutting back the number of masses celebrated by the priests in the church, so that worshipers may devoutly follow the principal mass.[16] Such a dignified and uncluttered liturgical practice will be one factor in drawing younger recruits to these reformed groups of religious.

The Pope's promotion of the reformed religious orders, exercised through his vicar for reform, should be especially attentive to enforcing the rules for canonical election of religious superiors by secret ballot, for limited terms of office, and with provisions to impede the constant re-election of the same individuals.

This, then, is the reform program presented to Adrian VI. The author, in all likelihood Cardinal Cajetan, foresaw a ten-year period of change through application of the norms he elaborated concerning episcopal residence, a new role for cardinals, more demanding standards of ecclesiastical education, local election of bishops, and insistence on "observance" in the orders. Careful, reflective analysis has identified five primary ways of intervening at strategically placed parts of the the church's life. The Pope stood before a momentous choice: he could do a service greatly pleasing to God, or he could allow the abuses to continue and proliferate. Good intentions would not be enough, and now was a time for the Pope to use the high authority given him and so to escape that more severe punishment awaiting those of higher position (Wis 6:6.9). The Pope should use his five talents to gain five more and so be ushered into eternal joy in the heavenly kingdom (Mt 25:20f).

We know that Adrian VI faced enormous obstacles once he arrived in Rome and began to make papal decisions on a day-to-day basis. Leo X had left huge debts. Adrian's own dour, methodical ways were not appreciated by the Romans. He had no immediate advisors well versed in established procedures of the curia. Many officials had fled Rome, because bubonic plague had broken out just before Adrian arrived. This man of proven intelligence and integrity died a short year after coming to Rome. Still, Adrian's election was the occasion for reviving in Rome the tradition of reform-thinking, and one at least of the 1522 expressions of this tradition was an analysis from which church leadership can learn in any age.

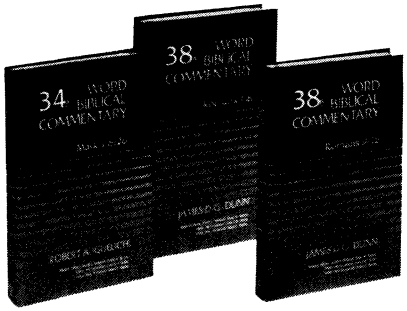
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[15]Surely, Cajetan himself was eminently qualified to be named to such a position. In 1531-34 he made numerous interventions promoting Dominican "observant" branches during his time as Cardinal Protector of his own order.

[16]This passage closely parallels Cajetan's commentary on ST II-II, 188, 7, which states that religious orders should be selective in accepting candidates, that is, taking only those suitable to become preachers and confessors. A reduction in number from present levels will be pastorally beneficial precisely through the concentration of eucharistic worship on the main altar of the church. St. Thomas, *Opera*, Leonine Edition, 10:533a.

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Book Reviews

BEING RELIGIOUS IN AMERICA: The Deepening Crisis over Public Faith. By Erling Jorstad. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986. 143 pages. Paper. $6.95.

This author, who has written other books on the emergence of the religious right, discusses some central tensions that have emerged in the 1980s over the relationship between religion and politics. Since 1945 there have been significant shifts in what it means to be religious.

> As religion has gone public, it has created deepening hostility and partisanship among us. We are being 'tribalized' to an extent unknown before in our history. Each "tribe" sees its own religious commitments as the standard by which to exclude those outside its boundaries.... We wonder why after more than 200 years of pursuing religious freedom as a people, we find ourselves involved in more conflict, more contention, more public acrimony over what being religious in America means (14-15).

The clear intent of this book is to get local parishioners talking about such issues as faith and patriotism, religious pluralism, public policy-making, and religion and the public schools. Jorstad helps to clarify the tensions at play in these and other issues (e.g., how can we be patriotic without being idolators?). He does so in a way that encourages those with different positions on these matters to remain in dialogue.

But those who are aware of the tensions are likely to feel frustrated with what is primarily a descriptive historical rather than a prescriptive theological treatment. For example, he refers to how Lutherans have tended to separate the two realms of religion and politics, but does not go on to show how this is an inadequate interpretation of Luther. He alleges that religious movements for liberation lead to new tribes or clans, but ignores the theological concern for all humanity and creation that underlies such movements.

He raises up some of the key challenges facing us. In the end he asserts that religion in America must become more public, political, pluralistic, prophetic, and persuasive. Yes, but *how* shall that occur? More guidance is needed for dealing with the tensions he identifies.

Karen L. Bloomquist
Director of Studies
Commission for Church in Society, ELCA

THE TEACHING OF ECUMENICS. Edited by Samuel Amirtham and Cyris H. S. Moon. Geneva: WCC Publications, 1987. xii and 142 pages. Paper. $12.95.

Ours is the time of a clarion call to view Christianity in ecumenical and global perspective. Ours is the time when almost all Christian denominations are engaged in ecumenical dialogue toward mutual understanding and acceptance. This book goes beyond mere dialogue to the conviction that "no church or school can afford to do theology in isolation" (p. vii). The book takes ecumenism from the dialogue table to the classroom to mingle with all theological disciplines.

The book, based on a 1986 WCC international workshop for theological educators, is divided into two parts, with appendices and list of participants. Part 1 is made up of ten papers on various aspects of the theme, such as "An Ecumenical Approach to Teaching the Bible" by John Mbiti and "Church History in Ecumenical Perspective" by T. V. Philip. Part 2 presents reports of the working groups which outline the implications of dealing with specific theological disciplines, such as biblical studies, systematic theology, church history, etc., in ecumenical perspective. Concrete guidelines and bibliographies are given.

The purpose of the book is expressed as follows:

> Those of us who produced the material in this book hope that the text will be considered by theological educators to be a gentle but firm nudge from colleagues as well as a useful educational resource. We consider this book to be a nudge because we are convinced that academia needs to move more in the direction of the *oikoumene* in both theory and practice; we see it as a resource because we acknowledge that the space between academia, particularly theological education, and the emerging field of ecumenics is wide and in need of being bridged (ix).

The book is intended for the use of theological schools. It is equally useful for pastors and laypersons who are involved in ecumenical dialogue as well as for those who are interested in knowing what is going on in the ecumenical movement.

Debela Birri
Graduate Student
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS AND THE CHURCHES. Edited by Allan R. Brockway and J. Paul Rajashekar. Geneva: WCC Publications, 1987. xix and 200 pages. Paper. $12.50.

New Religious Movements (NRMs) are all around us; in fact, some of them (the Hare Krishnas and the Moonies come immediately to mind) have become pretty well established in our society. Should the church respond to them with blind, automatic rejection, characterized by pejorative terms like "cults" and "sects," and accompanied by almost total disinterest in who they are and what they believe? This collection of papers given at a 1986 Lutheran World Federation/World Council of Churches-sponsored consultation on NRMs suggests that a different response may be more useful and valuable in the long run.

This book is not for readers simply seeking ammunition for attacking NRMs. The papers encourage honest reflection on some significant issues raised by these "New" Religious Movements. (They also remind us that some "new" movements are actually representatives of very "old" and highly developed religious traditions—Hinduism is an example—largely from the Third World. They seem new to us only because they have just recently begun to reach out to cultures different from their own.) Ultimately, the essayists urge the church to engage these movements in dialogue in order to understand them better and respond to them more effectively and properly.

Three issues are of special significance to the parish situation: first, the different "view" of religion and spirituality inherent in many of these groups (particularly in their fondness for a kind of 'syncretizing ecumenicity') that is distinctly at odds with Christian tradition (Jean Francois Mayer, 60-68); second, observations on—and some "demythologizing" of—recruitment techniques (Eileen Barker, 69-83); and third, the very sticky, often discomfiting issues of religious liberty, "conversion" vs. "brainwashing," "deprogramming," and efforts to harass and/or bankrupt religious movements through civil suits (Dean M. Kelley, 89-116).

One might criticize a lack of vigorous "give and take" between many of the essayists and their respondents (an exception is Rüdiger Hauth's strong critique of Barker, 84-89). There is also some unevenness among the essays, but even the weaker ones offer worthwhile observations. NRMs are a lively issue, particularly in the parish, and this book makes a worthwhile contribution to pastors' and congregations' thinking on the subject.

Keith Killinger
Th.D. Student
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

TEACHING THE GOSPEL TODAY. By Margaret A. Krych. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987. 173 pages. Paper. $10.95.

Margaret Krych, Associate Professor of Christian Education at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, has written a very helpful volume for professional Christian educators in which she presents her transformational narrative model. She incorporates the work of James Loder concerning the process of transformation, the method of correlation of Paul Tillich, and an understanding of narrative structures.

The book is a result of her doctoral studies at Princeton Theological Seminary. It shows her indebtedness to the work of James Loder of Princeton in the way in which she fashions a teaching-learning model of transformational narrative. Loder has developed a five-step model of the transformational process which begins with conflict; second, involves an interlude for mental scanning; followed by a third step, the constructive act of the imagination. The fourth step involves a release of energy and an opening of the knower to the self and the contextual situation, and the last step is the interpretation of the imaginative solution in the context of the original conflict.

Krych's model incorporates Paul Tillich's method of correlating human questions with God's answers. Human existence raises questions, especially the question of estrangement. The gospel answers those questions, most especially in terms of acceptance. When Krych puts Loder's model and Tillich's method together, the result is that Loder's first two steps involve Tillich's question and the last three steps the answer.

Krych adds one more element to the final form of her model of transformational narrative, and that is an understanding of narrative structures. The most useful narrative structure is that which begins with a problem situation. A person seeks to solve a problem and fails. A second person solves the problem using a means opposite to that of the first person. The first person is thus able to participate in the final solution in a way that is of greater benefit than anticipated. This narrative structure is understandable to children who think very concretely and in terms of story. The narrative structure also embodies the question and answer form of Paul Tillich.

An example of the use of biblical story via Krych's transformational narrative model is that of Peter's denial. The Loder steps are indicated in parentheses. Peter's confidence in himself is first presented, then his sorry denial in the courtyard of the high priest. The learners are asked how Peter must have thought and felt, followed by a discussion of the times they have thought or acted like Peter (conflict). Then comes the gospel answer to the human question in terms of Jesus' acceptance and restoration of Peter in the John 21 post-resurrection scene (scanning and imagination). The learners are asked how Peter must have felt when Jesus gave him a new beginning and how they also ask for forgiveness and a new beginning (release and interpretation).

The transformational narrative model, says Krych, cannot be used with children before they reach the age of Piaget's concrete operational thought (age 7-11). Very young children cannot move from the story to themselves and back again in the way the model requires. But the model can be used with youth and adults, and the author demonstrates its use at those levels as well.

Margaret Krych has made a valuable contribution to the field of Christian Education. It is especially valuable for professional educators and students in higher education. Her contribution might be of even greater value in the church if she would write a transformational narrative training manual for use in workshops in the local congregation. Many church school teachers will find it difficult to read through the entire text due to its length and the complexity of some of its language. The book exemplifies the difficulty of turning a doctoral thesis into a volume for popular consumption, even though Krych has done an admirable job. The book also demonstrates the influence of James Loder in stimulating Christian educators, Krych and this reviewer included, to investigate further ramifications of his work in transformative thought.

Robert Conrad
Professor of Educational Ministry
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

MAHAMUDRA: THE QUINTESSENCE OF MIND AND MEDITATION. By Takpo Tashi Namgyal. Translated by Lobsang P. Lhalungpa. Boston: Shambala, 1986. lxii and 488 pages. Paper. $25.00.

PRIMORDIAL EXPERIENCE: AN INTRODUCTION TO DZOG-CHEN MEDITATION. By Manjusrimitra. Translated by Namkai Norbu and Kennard Lipman. Boston: Shambala, 1987. xv and 158 pages. Paper. $14.95.

While translations of texts from the Zen Buddhist tradition continue to appear in the West, little of the Tibetan Buddhist canon has yet reached Western readers. These two recent translations of major Tibetan Buddhist texts are, therefore, a welcome addition which will provide for a fuller appreciation of the range of Buddhist speculative and contemplative thought and practice.

Mahamudra and *Primordial Experience* both present excellent translations by prominent Tibetan scholars of classical meditation texts from the Kagyu and Nyingma sects, respectively, of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Both books also provide prefaces by noted Tibetan scholars which discuss the history of the text, its author, and its philosophical setting. *Mahumadra* is a very thorough presentation of the progressive levels of advanced meditation practice. A detailed analysis of the stages of tranquility and insight meditation precedes an explanation of how to achieve and maintain full realization through the mahamudra system. *Primordial Experience* is a much briefer exposition which examines the key concept of enlightened mind in the tradition called Dzog-chen. It distinguishes Dzog-chen from other Buddhist and Hindu tantric systems, and, finally, presents the actual meditation practices.

Both texts are primarily concerned with attaining the experience of the ultimate reality, referred to as "The Great Symbol" (Mahamudra) or "Complete Perfection" (Dzog-chen). These terms are closely related in meaning to the Zen concept of "Openness" (Sunyata) and also are analogous to Meister Eckhart's idea of the "God beyond God."

It is interesting to note that the lengths of the texts reflect the approaches of their respective traditions. The mahamudra text presents a system which calls for an elaborate preparation in stages as the path to enlightenment and is lengthy. The shorter dzog-chen text teaches a more direct approach to ultimate realization. The fact that one text is lengthy and analytical while the other is almost cryptically succinct might tempt the reader to look for a middle-size account of Tibetan Buddhist meditation. Taken together, however, these volumes have the virtue of leading the reader to an appreciation of the diversity and richness of their tradition.

Knowledge of this tradition will expand the realms of meditation for those already familiar with Zen and other forms of contemplation. It will also prove valuable to students of comparative sprirituality, Christian-Buddhist ecumenists, and to pastors and lay people who are interested in the most profound possibilities of human consciousness.

Fr. William H. Green
University of Chicago Divinity School

All books reviewed in *Currents* can be obtained through Fortress Church Supply Stores—LSTC, 1100 East 55th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60615; (312) 752-1766.

Preaching Helps

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany—Good Friday, Series C

Big Sky, Bright Sky, Dark Sky

In the days between Transfiguration and Good Friday, Jesus moves from glory to glory, from the heights of Mount Tabor (or Mount Hermon or whatever mount it may have been) to the lesser (?) heights of Golgotha. From the incandescence of that experience in the north to darkness one noon in Jerusalem.

The glory glimpsed at Transfiguration was always his, both before and after. He just let us see it. He let it loose for a moment to assure us that he has it. And the weakness, the foolishness, the service of the cross was always his, both before and after. There's just no ignoring it on Good Friday.

From glory to glory. And the two are one. Transfiguration affirms the wonder of his Servant's path. And on Good Friday the cross shines forth in mystic glow, with power to transform hearts—as well as whole societies. The road from Transfiguration to Good Friday is the path not only to a new consciousness but to a new creation.

Thomas R. Lees, Ph.D., is campus pastor in Missoula, Montana, and is Director of the Northern Rockies Institute of Theology. He offers a penetrating analysis of the texts in the First Readings for this issue. Curtis B. Haney, Pastor of First English Lutheran Church in Billings, Montana, opens his heart and shares his thoughts with us in the Pastoral Reflections.

I met these good brothers last Easter in Lewistown, Montana, where we had the chance to talk about the Bright Sky of Epiphany and the Dark Sky of Lent and how all that worked in the Big Sky country of Montana.

Once again Don Prange from the coal country of Appalachia challenges us to ponder the full-bodied economic and political dimensions of sin and grace in Prophetic Voice.

Many thanks to them for their service of writing.

Epiphany and Lent are the best of all times to be a preacher. The texts are so weighty, so urgent, so glorious. And they are not encumbered with the gloss of sentimentality that lies heavy on Christmas and Easter. All eyes are fixed on the progress of that mysterious Pilgrim moving on the Servant's path, cheered on by Moses and Elijah, affirmed by the voice from heaven, "This is by Beloved Son; listen to him!"

Yours attentively,

Robert H. Smith
Preaching Helps Editor

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany January 29, 1989

Jeremiah 1:4-10
Psalm 71:1-6, 15-17
I Corinthians 12:27-13:13
Luke 4:21-32

A FIRST READING

The person, role, and word of the prophet are themes that may be traced through this Sunday's lessons. As Paul recounts the variety of gifts given to the body of Christ, before showing us "a still more excellent way" (1 Cor 12:31), he reminds the Corinthian congregation that the role of the prophet is second only to that of the apostle in the life of the church (12:28). The psalmist, in the lament of Psalm 71, exhibits prophetic diction when he vows he will sing of Yahweh's "righteous acts" and "deeds of salvation" (v. 15). Prophetic speech likewise was premised on the remembrance of God's saving acts—Exodus and covenant at Sinai.

The primary expression of prophetic themes this Sunday, however, is seen in the Gospel and First Lesson. The Gospel opens as Jesus concludes his reading of Isaiah 61 in Nazareth's synagogue. The reading spoke of the servant-prophet, once announced by Second Isaiah (cf. Isa 50:4-11), whose coming was anticipated as well by his post-Exilic disciple—Third Isaiah. By his commentary on this text, the community wonders, does Jesus now claim to be this prophetic figure (Lk 4:21)? The synagogue congregation, though impressed with his "gracious words," has its doubts: "Is not this Joseph's son?"

The scandal for the Nazareth congregation was that prophetic claims should have been made by this local boy. But our First Lesson from Jeremiah reminds us that Israelite prophecy had always known this tension between office and person. Jeremiah 1:4-10 is the story of Jeremiah's call. It and other OT prophetic call narratives (Isa 6:1-13, 40:1-11; Ezek 1:1-2:11; Ex 3:1-12) represent a common form. In each God's call to prophesy is answered by the prophet's objection: Jeremiah laments that "I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth" (1:6), while Isaiah protests the length of time during which he must announce Yahweh's word of judgment: "How long, O Lord?" (Isa 6:11a). But to the objection Yahweh responds with a word of reassurance: the efficacy of prophecy is not dependent on the personality of the prophet, but on the word of Yahweh which the prophet speaks (Jer 1:7-8). Those who speak God's word, both then and now, can take confidence that it is the Word which authenticates our calling—apart from personality and our frailties. TRL

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

Today's texts are messages for the messenger, sermons for those who preach. As I pen these words (July, 1988), national political conventions are in full swing. In the stirring dust of political rhetoric and skirmishes, the question arises about substance versus style, conviction versus calculated relevance. God's spokespersons struggle every week with this dilemma.

As preachers we walk the narrow ridge between speaking the Word of the Lord and saying what parishioners want to hear. Sometimes we are blessed in discovering that God's Word for the day is the healing Word our listeners long for.

Then again, we face the hard reality when God's word and human concerns don't jibe. Does the fault lie in our secular culture, in shallow values, in archaic biblical concepts? I suppose each of us must reason that out.

The biblical viewpoint reminds us that God's calling and God's Word is forever confronting the human viewpoint. Jeremiah, the young man of God, considers himself too young to speak God's Word (Jer 1:5-6). By contrast, Christian enthusiasts, sparkling and charismatic in speech, were confident that they could woo and win listeners with their eloquence (1 Cor 13:1). Yet the authentic Word is dependent neither on the age and experience nor on the oratorical skill of the preacher. In God's economy, faltering delivery and smooth talk are equals.

Relevant illustrations and fresh imagery are useful in preaching, but the Word of the Lord shapes an obedient preacher before the preacher shapes the message for good listening.

The offense, the stumbling stone, is the human factor. This is clear in each of the texts before us. Jeremiah must overcome his inadequate self-image. Those Christians at Corinth needed to swallow their spiritual superiority. The hometown people in Nazareth were challenged to reject racial and religious pride. Without willingness to change and accept God's wider vision, the Word will not find its way into the ears and hearts it is meant to penetrate.

So, preacher, take the precious time it takes to sort through the scramble of your life before you are readied for hearing and handling the Word of the Lord. Read and reflect on the Word that first of all addresses you: "I have been sustained by you since I was born; from my mother's womb you have been my strength; my praise shall be always of you" (Ps 71:6). CBH

PROPHETIC VOICE

Jesus' understanding of his mission takes on a radical dimension when he says, "This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen" (Lk 4:21). It's not a new or creative interpretation of the text, something 'theologians' could latch on to; nor is it simply restating old promises about the coming reign of God. What gave the teaching of Jesus "authority" as it "made a deep impression on the people" (4:32) is that it proclaimed in thought, word, and deed that the reign of God is a here and now reality, and that it is unmistakably "good news to the poor" (v. 18).

What Paul later alludes to as "a way that is better" (1 Cor 12:31) becomes an operative platform for action. *Gospel* is something being done, and it goes far beyond the traditional expectations of a 'spiritualized' religion or an exclusive Jewish nationalism symbolized by the Nazareth synagogue.

The good news of Jesus is an unequivocal proclamation of the realities of Jubilee! (Cf. Lev 25.) With the Psalmist who sees God as a rescuer from the "clutches of rogue and tyrant" (71:14) and with Jeremiah, Jesus sees the need for a radical transformation of social, economic, and political systems: the need "to destroy and to overthrow" as well as the need "to build and to plant" (Jer 1:10). Jesus' good news signaled an end to hierarchies and patriarchies by bringing the faith and hope of a people to an authentic adulthood and to a maturity (cf. 1 Cor 13:11) in which *agape* would be the controlling and ruling principle of human community (cf. 1 Cor 13:13). DP

The Transfiguration of our Lord February 5, 1989

Deuteronomy 34:1-12
Psalm 99:1-5
II Corinthians 4:3-6
Luke 9:28-36

A FIRST READING

Today's psalm (and also, Ps 47, 93, 95-98) extolls that God reigns over all peoples, that his glory is spread among the nations. Along with Paul, though, we recognize that God's saving rule is veiled to the nations: "the god of this world has blinded" unbelievers to "the gospel of the glory of Christ"—in whom God is to be seen (2 Cor 4:4). But it is not so with us. We, like Peter, James, and John, are privileged to glimpse the transfigured Christ. Unlike Peter, however, as we shall see, Luke would have us not repeat Peter's misinterpretation of the revelation of Jesus' glory.

Luke's account of the Transfiguration opens with the disciples accompanying Jesus to "*the* mountain" (rather than Mark's and Matthew's "a high mountain"). The mountain is a place of revelation (cf. Sinai/Horeb, Ex 19:3ff., 1 Kings 19:8ff., and Zion, Isa 2:2-3). There, unlike Moses who could not see the fulness of Yahweh's glory (Ex 33:18-23), the glory of the transfigured one is manifested to the disciples. Besides the allusion

to the Sinai narratives, Luke seems to refer to traditions surrounding the feast of Tabernacles—where the making of booths was to remember the ancestors' temporary shelters when Yahweh brought them out of Egypt (Lev 23:33-36, 39-43). But when Peter exclaims that he wishes to construct such booths—one for Jesus, one for Elijah, and one for Moses (whom our First Lesson praises as the prophet *par excellence,* Deut 34:10-12)—Luke notes that Peter did "not know what he said" (Lk 9:33). Peter speaks not out of fear, as in Mark, but from misunderstanding. Dulled by sleep, he fails to sense the import of what has happened. The Transfiguration is not the climax of Jesus' ministry. Peter and the others are not to build booths and stay on the mountain to celebrate the eight days of Tabernacles. Rather Luke, alone among the synoptics, makes explicit how Jesus' glory will be manifest. In vv. 31-33 (unique to Luke) Moses and Elijah speak with Jesus about his "departure" (literally, his "exodus"). Not the Exodus of long ago celebrated at Tabernacles, but the exodus which Jesus will accomplish "at Jerusalem" in his passion, death, resurrection, and ascension. After the conversation Moses and Elijah depart; the representatives of the old Israel give way to him who forms a new Israel. Finally, out of the cloud comes the affirmation that "my Son" is also "my Chosen one." The latter picks up the opening line of the first Servant Song of Isaiah (Isa 42:1). The rule of God—the glory of God—veiled to the world, will be manifest in the suffering servant who now begins his journey to Jerusalem. TRL

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

The Transfiguration is another opportunity to depict the glory of God. Some of us shy away. Glory-based theology entices Christians to float somewhere between earth and sky, reality and spiritual wishing. However, the glory of God in this context points us to Christ.

Here the biblical revelation carries its own correctives. The glory of God is not drifting about in the air nor shining in great shafts of light from an evening sky. This glory of God is embodied in a human person, in the "face of Christ," the likeness of God (2 Cor 4:4, 6).

Both Mark's and Luke's narratives are set within the journey to the cross. Notice their placement within specific references to crucifixion (Mk 8:31, 9:9-12; Lk 9:22, 9:44).

This is the paradox at the source of Christian doctrine, that the glory and majesty of God shines forth through the One who suffers and dies among us.

Preaching the Transfiguration drama requires a backdrop of the invisible, indescribable God, with one unusual human player center stage. Moses and Elijah appear briefly to lend historical substance. Peter, James, and John (and the congregation!) are the audience. About as quickly as the special effects heat up and the lights make the eyes blink, we're back to where we were with the same company we started with. Looking around, everything seems the same. But now the future has a different quality. Because God's glory is revealed in the face of Christ, our destiny is bound to eternal purpose.

The Evangelist John expresses it thus: "We have beheld his glory... and from his fullness have we received, grace upon grace.... For the law came through Moses; grace and truth came though Jesus Christ" (Jn 1:14b, 16, 17).

Jesus' special human nature injects value and endurance into ours. While the mountain experience might be called a vision, it is more than a vision. C. S. Lewis calls it a "metamorphosis," a substantive change that reveals Jesus' unique person and relationship with the Godhead. But then Lewis goes on to speculate that this transfiguration of Christ reveals not only Christ's glory but "a glory that all risen humans will inherit" (*Miracles,* p. 158).

It is proper, then, to depict the Transfiguration of Jesus as a rare opening between God's heaven and our lowly planet. It is not improper to also imply that the theophany carries within it a glimpse of our own destiny. We cannot know much about the new creation, but we may make room for our own glory "as servants for Jesus' sake." CBH

PROPHETIC VOICE

The glory of Yahweh, the ultimate principle for the call to a life of faith and worship, is that God loves and insists on justice! (Ps 99:4) And this is no theological abstraction; we come face to face (cf. Deut 34:10) with that reality in the Christ. "The Good News of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Cor 4:4) reflects a God moving in history—within a particular history to be sure, but with universal and transcending implications. In Christ we come face to face with a God who joins the human struggle, not as an authority figure or even as some wise interloper suggesting there might be a better way of living life, but as one actively engaged in the struggles to create the better way, the way of liberation and justice. So to take seriously the voice of God which says, "Listen to him!" (Lk 9:36) is to become engaged in the struggle for liberation and justice.

But this is not some adventurous or romantic escapade. Possessed by "minds the god of this world has blinded" (2 Cor 4:4), the disciples of Jesus too often seemed to see it that way, holding on to visions of 'greatness' when the realities of oppression were all around them and failing to comprehend the vision of Jesus. Or they had an 'it's good to be here' (Lk 9:33) mentality which looked ahead to glory without some kind of struggle. And that is precisely the meaning of the glory of Yahweh: Struggle! But to be part of it is also to know the celebrative experience of transfigured and transcending realities, of coming face to face with the glory of Yahweh, of knowing the affirmation that we are not alone in the struggle, that we are surrounded by those who have struggled before—Moses, Elijah, Jesus, Peter, and a host of others engaged in the struggle of liberation and justice. DP

Ash Wednesday
February 8, 1989

Joel 2:12-19
Psalm 51:1-13
II Corinthians 5:20b-6:2
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

A FIRST READING

Paul's imperative, "be reconciled to God" (2 Cor 5:20), summarizes the message of this day. Up to this point in 2 Corinthians Paul has defended his ministry—a ministry of reconciliation (5:18-19). Now he moves to the implications for the church: be reconciled to God and be reconciled to our ministry (6:11-13, 7:2ff.).

Reconciliation has both its public and private expressions. In Joel 2:12-19 the community of Israel is summoned to return to Yahweh. A plague of locusts (1:1-20) has swept through the land: heralds of the apocalyptic army before whom Israel now is in peril (2:1-11). The Day of Yahweh is at hand—the day of God's Holy War against his own people. Unlike pre-exilic prophecy where the Day of Yahweh was the consequence of Israel's failure to keep covenant, Joel makes no reference to specific cultic, social, or moral transgressions. Rather, the post-exilic community's sin was what Hans Walter Wolff calls "self-assured and secure churchliness." Thus Israel is summoned to repent, to return to its calling as the servant people of God. And to the community that repents, the good news is that Yahweh is "gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and repents of evil" (2:13).

Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount—his declaration of Messianic *torah* for the new Israel—calls attention to how reconciliation is to be expressed in private piety. As in old Israel, members of the new Israel will give alms, pray, and fast. What is to be different, however, is the manner in which the individual will practice these. The believer is to do not as the hypocrites: setting oneself up as a self-conscious model for

others to emulate and to praise. When you give alms, Jesus says, "sound no trumpet" (Matt 6:2). Behind the Greek "trumpet" is the Hebrew *shofar*. But instead of the ram's horn, *shofar* here refers to the horn-shaped container (mentioned in Rabbinic literature) used for the collection of alms in the Temple. Thus Jesus tells his hearers "not to cause the *shofar*-box to be passed in front of you" in order to make a show of your alms-giving.

Jesus does not criticize public prayer (note that his teaching of the Lord's Prayer—the prayer of the community—is framed by 6:6 and 6:16). Rather, his concern is with not making a show of individual prayer (cf. Dan 6:10). Jesus' word is the same concerning fasting, a part of the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:31), and a twice-weekly (Monday and Thursday) individual discipline. Make your fast a sign of inward sorrow, not an outward show so that others will praise you for your piety. TRL

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

O Lent, O length of days! While the sun rises and lives a bit longer each day, we servants of God must endure the more. Another round of repentance, whatever that means. What *does* it mean?

The small-faced, worn-out woman came asking, "Can I be forgiven for the way I've been living?" She bore one, maybe two, children out of marriage. Spent more than one night in bed with different partners. Now she had been beaten and bruised, without and within.

I started to hedge and modify repentance and forgiveness especially for her. She would have to be honest with herself. She needed to make amends with her parents. She could receive forgiveness, but... I had doubts about her sincerity and the staying quality of her penitence.

Why do we qualify repentance? Why the fences and requirements about it? Rather than dealing creatively with this person, I referred her to a counselor. I defend myself by remembering that she had asked to see one.

Could it be that our usual rushing around retards our reflections on life's deeper meaning? This woman's guarded confession of prostitution was probably as large a blow for me as the physical blow she felt that brought her back to reality.

It is true, self-centeredness blinds us from seeing our sins as transgressions against God. Not long ago a theologian pointed out that narcissism, one of our society's epidemics, lifts the limits from the ego. It expands the ego and erases all boundaries. Therefore, we face losing our sense of feeling any remorse or repentance. And what of God's role in it?

Christians confess the God-dimension of sin, which is the stuff of Lent. Our confession sounds illogical, unreasonable. We confess in the trust that we shall encounter a reconciling God. God who made (one) "to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:21).

If this is what God does and who God is, we have a gospel for everyone; for we who have heard this precious Word since childhood, for the narcissistic sensualist whose conscience is numbed by pleasure, for men and women battered and nearly defeated by their sense of unworthiness.

Repentance is no fleeting twinge of remorse; no more than it is an exercise in holy ritual that we pass through seasonally. Repentance is the dawning awareness that another Person suffers on our behalf. And when that Other is God, we might do well to go into our closet and shut the door and ponder for several weeks. After our time with self and God we might emerge to face the world more honestly, more realistically, more compassionately. CBH

PROPHETIC VOICE

Lent, starting with Ash Wednesday, gets at the heart of what it means to say "yes" to messianic community and its commitment to the struggle of liberation for the oppressed. At the heart of Jubilee is the concept of making restitution for injustices, which is the fundamental meaning of "almsgiving" (Mt 6:1-4). And it is hardly accidental that at the heart of the Lord's Prayer (Mt 6:9-13) is the concept of the forgiveness of debts, the very heart of Jubilee. Nor does it seem accidental that when Paul speaks of being "reconciled to God" (2 Cor 5:20) he uses 'the favorable

time' and 'the day of salvation' language of Isaiah 49:8 out of a context full of concepts of liberation and restitution associated with Jubilee.

So the heart of Jesus' instruction is that almsgiving, doing justice, is not to be replaced and prostituted with the piety of public acts of charity (Mt 6:1-4), especially if one is fundamentally engaged in the idolatrous behavior of 'storing up treasures on earth' (Mt 6:19), something diametrically opposed to the concept of Jubilee. So if Jesus is announcing 'the favorable time' or 'the Lord's year of favor' (Lk 4:19), the moment of God's acceptance, to be 'reconciled' to God means to abandon things unacceptable and irreconcilable to a God of justice and mercy, a God who does not abandon (cf. Ps 51:11) the oppressed. To "come back with all your heart" (Joel 2:12) is to come back to God with a prayer for "a clean heart" and "a new and constant spirit" (Ps 51:10) for celebrating and doing justice and Jubilee. DP

First Sunday in Lent
February 12, 1989

Deuteronomy 26:5-10
Psalm 91
Romans 10:8b-13
Luke 4:1-13

A FIRST READING

"Full of the Holy Spirit... led by the Spirit" (Lk 4:1), Jesus faced temptation by the devil. The devil—*satan* in Hebrew—was originally the adversary in a court of law. After the Exile, however, in the Chronicler, satan had become a tempter (cf. 1 Chron 21:1). In Luke the devil tempts Jesus three times. (1) He says, in effect: God fed Israel with the miracle of manna; use your Sonship, "command this stone to become bread" (4:3). (2) Look at the world's kingdoms; I can give them to you "if you will worship me" (4:5-7). (3) "Throw yourself down from here"—use your claim of Sonship to test God's protection (4:9-11). The devil even quotes scripture; in the third temptation he cites vv. 11-12 of this Sunday's psalm, Ps 91. A fitting selection, for Psalm 91 is a Royal Song of Trust.

The devil quotes scripture. Jesus, too, uses scripture. To refuse the devil's seduction Jesus turns to Deuteronomy. Yes, God fed Israel with manna, but God also said that we "do not live by bread alone" (Deut 8:2-3). Moreover, the land is not yours to give, for it is Yahweh's. He brought us out of Egypt and to this place (Deut 6:10-13, cf. Deut 26:9). And Yahweh's protective power is not to be exploited: "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test" (Deut 6:16).

Unlike Matthew, whose sequence of temptations ends with Jesus being shown the kingdoms of the world from the mountain (cf. Mt 28:16-18 where, on the mountain, Jesus—not the devil—finally has "all authority"), the climax of Luke's sequence has Jesus and the devil in Jerusalem. The gospel points towards Jerusalem (Lk 9:31, 51; 18:31), so too the temptations: from the wilderness to Jerusalem where the devil, "at an opportune time" (4:13), will tempt one final time—as he enters Judas Iscariot (22:3).

Israel too was tempted to forget Yahweh. Heeding Moses' warning of Deut 6:10-15—the source of Jesus' words above—Israel would annually recite the *credo* of Deut 26:5-10. This liturgical text recalls salvation history from the call of the patriarchs ("Aramean" in v. 5 recalls that Aram was the land of the patriarch's kin) to Exodus, and finally to the gift of the land, Israel confesses that Yahweh has been Lord.

Deuteronomy is also the starting point for Paul's words about confessing Jesus as Lord (Rom 10:8b-13). Struggling with the problem of Israel's unbelief in Romans 9-11, Paul offers a new interpretation of Deut 30:11-14: "the word is near you." Rather than Moses' claim that the commandments are not too difficult to fulfil, Paul believes it to refer to the immediacy of the word of faith: "confess... believe... and you will be saved" (Rom 10:9). TRL

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

People today are engaged in a spiritual search. The names given to this search vary: spiritual enlightenment, self-actualization, eternal progression, merging the self with God. The goal of the search is identity, satisfaction, belonging, self.

Call it what we will, though, much that is spiritual is an attempt to claim for self what is rightly God's. This is the same devil's trick of the ages. Human appetites are heightened and poised with the expectation that satisfying them also fills the soul.

But of course, the temptation behind the temptation is power, power to make happen what one wills to happen. Jesus heard the words of power:

> "*Command* these stones to become bread"
> "*Say 'yes,'* and the world is yours"
> "*Live dangerously,* you can get more from living." (You might even cheat death.)

The lifelong search for life in its fullness is condensed into 13 verses in Luke 4. This text is surely a profound parable of Jesus' inner stirrings and continuing temptation. It might also serve to mirror our own search for self and God. In this search we are exposed to the common wilderness of humankind, and Jesus' experience connects with our own.

Might Jesus' temptation serve as a kind of prototype for all those who are led by the Spirit? We who seek spirituality? Whether in or out of the Lenten season? Jesus is faced with the option of claiming what is God's for his own possession. What's more, Jesus may choose power that masquerades as God's, yet comes from sorcery. Jesus stands there in the wilderness as freshly appointed and still untried Hero, and he faces hard tests. And he wins with God's Word. And he wins for us.

We who live in Christ encounter the same hazards of claiming for self what is rightly God's. We are tempted by promises of power and meaning and life. But who is calling? Who is promising? Does the voice belong to God, or is it a voice of spiritual intrigue, an invitation to revel in heightened appetites? To find out we must call on the name of the Lord and search the Word of the Lord: "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve!" (Lk 4:8) and "Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom 10:13). CBH

PROPHETIC VOICE

Lent pursues questions of identity and purpose. Part of Jesus' own struggle with the 'if you are' kinds of questions (Lk 4:4, 9) related to breaking through the false 'theologies' of the traditions which had grown up around temple and synagogue. In the power of the Spirit Jesus made his way back to the fundamental tradition of an identity shaped by the "wandering Aramean" liturgy of Deuteronomy 26:5-10. The nationalistic pride surrounding Jerusalem and the temple was far off the mark from the calling of a people to the Word of Yahweh, a Word which had called Abraham and his descendants to be doers of justice (Gen 18:19), a Word which anticipated the gathering of human community recognizing a universal human right to "feast on the good things Yahweh has given you" (Deut 26:11), a universalism of good news to the poor which becomes central to Paul's theology (cf. Rom 10:8b-13). It is all very consistent with the Epiphany spirit of Isaiah 61:1-2 and Luke 4:18-19, the spirit of Jubilee.

With that in mind, the 'temptations' of Satan push us to ask some "who are we" kinds of questions in a world of injustice and oppression—questions probing the relationships fo materiality and worship, power and service, theology and a way of life. God's not on trial (Lk 4:12), but we are! DP

Second Sunday in Lent
February 19, 1989

Jeremiah 26:8-15
Psalm 42:1-7, 11-15
Philippians 3:17-4:1
Luke 13:31-35

A FIRST READING

Luke's Jesus resolutely moves toward Jerusalem. Now, as he departs Galilee in 13:31-35, the goal of Jerusalem appears in sharper relief. The pericope is in two parts: vv. 31-33, unique to Luke, and vv. 34-35, which Luke and Matthew share. In the first, the Pharisees warn Jesus that Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, seeks Jesus' life. Jesus comments that even the sly tetrarch ("that fox") cannot stop Jesus from his appointed end—death, resurrection, and ascension in Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the catchword to open vv. 34-35: Jesus' lament over the city.

There is an irony here. If there is one city that ought to receive him with joy, it should be the city of the Temple and the Davidic king. Yet Jerusalem kills the prophets (cf. comments on Jer 26 below, and also 2 Kgs 21:16, 2 Chr 24:20ff.). Because of its recalcitrance in the face of Jesus' ministry, its "house"—perhaps both the Davidic "house" (cf. Jer 22:5-6) and the Temple—is forsaken. Yet Jesus will come to the city. But not until the day that the *hallel* psalms are sung (cf. the quote of Ps 118:26), namely at Passover when he will enter Jerusalem on an ass at the beginning of Holy Week.

Jeremiah 26:8-15 is the text against which to view Jesus' lament over the murder of the prophets. Jeremiah has preached his Temple Sermon (26:1-7, cf. 7:1-15) against Judah which trusts in the inviolability of Zion at the same time as it disobeys the commandments. Jeremiah prophesies the destruction of the Temple as punishment. In our text, vv. 8-15, Judah reacts to Jeremiah's word. Priests and prophets ("The false prophets" of Jer 23:9-22), custodians of the official theology, regard it as heresy. They seek Jeremiah's life, but to assure the pretense of legality, a court of the princes is convened. They hear the case in the "New Gate" (v. 10), the city gate being the site of the lawcourt. Jeremiah speaks in his own defense (vv. 12-15), and to the surprise of his accusers, he is acquitted (vv. 16-24).

The language of the person falsely accused (or experiencing grief or torment) is the language of lament. Today's psalm (Ps 47) belongs to this genre. The authors of these psalms, trusting Yahweh, openly complain and ask God for deliverance. Certain that Yahweh will answer, they close with a vow and/or a doxology. Such psalms offer worshippers a vehicle for acknowledging their affliction before God.

Paul from prison exhorts the Philippians, Roman citizens who are now members of a heavenly commonwealth (3:20), to watch out for those who fail to understand the significance of Jesus' death: both Judaizers (3:2ff.), who still insist on the law, and libertines (3:18-19), whose self-indulgence has made them "enemies of the cross." Paul says, "Imitate me" and those who follow my example (3:17), rather than following the Judaizer and the libertine, for my righteousness is through faith in Christ. TRL

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

The texts are comforting music to pastors who face declining attendance and lagging response by members. Yet, sounds of empathy from God's Word are not the dominant ones. The Scriptures' dominant chords sound the forward march of God's purpose in history.

In his forced career crisis, Jeremiah complained—but not for long. True to prophetic tradition he said, "Know for certain that if you put me to death, you will bring innocent blood on yourselves... the Lord sent me" (Jer 26:15).

The Apostle Paul grieved over his opposition. And he too refused to play the "ain't-it-awful" game. Appealing to his reader's higher sentiments, he urged them to "stand firm in the Lord.... Our commonwealth is in heaven" (Phil 3:20, 4:1).

Poised for a life-and-death standoff with Herod, Jesus announced his determination to finish the course he began. Earlier Jesus "set his face to

go to Jerusalem" (Lk 9:51b). Now, farther along that path, he was not about to allow a decadent puppet king to stand in his way.

These prophets of God take the proactive stance rather than allowing themselves to be pushed down or aside by the bullies of history. Their assertiveness arises from unswerving faith in God, not of mere spunk or testiness. The Spirit of the Lord was upon them and within them.

So, in preaching we may proclaim one or several variations of the strong Word of the Lord. We are summoned to take the high road of commitment and courage. Enlighten the Lenten journey with the sense of purposeful direction and confidence that shines from the prophets and apostles.

T. Simon Farisani, exiled Lutheran pastor from Namibia, told 20,000 Christian youth at San Antonio that his message of love for all people stirred the forces of fear and hatred in his homeland. The government took away his job. The South African white minority took away his freedom to preach. He was arrested and imprisoned, but no one could ever take away his freedom to praise the Lord.

We face obstacles and enemies to God's mission and the church. People who stand in the way of Christ will always bring discouragement. They may attract attention and prompt our reaction, for a time. Most certainly, though, we need to move beyond hindrances and treat enemies as frightened people who need to see our action as signs of God's presence in the world.

Secure in the hope that the future is claimed by God, we may walk the way of the cross today and tomorrow and the day following. CBH

PROPHETIC VOICE

Addressing the imperialism of economic domination is probably still regarded as nationalistic heresy (cf. Jer 26:8-11) by the 'Jerusalems' of today. And while the mentality of economic domination is backed up by the rhetoric of the religious right, a major form of support for the perpetuation of a 'U.S. Empire' is the silence of liberal churches or those who consider themselves 'moderates' with respect to the systemic oppression inherent in the way we do economics. So in one way or another the church is too often part of the conspiracy to "kill the prophets" (Lk 13:34). And when many congregations this Lenten season will be proudly singing hymns like "Lift High the Cross" and "In the Cross of Christ I Glory," it may be time to reflect more deeply on Paul's thoughts about those "who are behaving as the enemies of the cross of Christ" and "are proudest of something they ought to think shameful" (Phil 3:19). Somehow the old King James Version is even more to the point. It talks of those "whose glory is their shame"—whose glory is in their statistical success, whose glory is in their million-dollar addition, whose glory is in their orthodoxy—a glory far from a genuine theology of the cross rooted in the Jeremiah and Jesus tradition of confronting the 'Jerusalems' of the world. Struggles for liberation in the world are much closer to the compassionate voice of God longing to bring about a new creation and a new society, with aims as non-threatening as "a hen gathers her brood under her wings" (Lk 13:34). DP

Third Sunday in Lent
February 26, 1989

Exodus 3:1-8b, 10-15
Psalm 126
I Corinthians 10:1-13
Luke 13:1-9

A FIRST READING

We proclaim that in Christ the transcendent God took on flesh for our sake. In Exodus 3 this transcendent God, revealed in a theophany, before whom Moses must remove his shoes, also exhibits pathos: "I have seen the affliction of my people... I know their sufferings" (3:7). Exodus 3:1-12 is one of the prophetic call narratives already mentioned (cf. First Reading, Epiphany IV). Its account of Moses' call became the prototype for how subsequent prophets described

their commissioning: by use of this form Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others seek to present their experience as replicating that of Moses, the greatest of the prophets.

Up to this time Israel's deity has only been known as *elohîm* (God). Now, as God initiates the salvation of his people from Egypt, he will be known by his personal name, "Yahweh." Yahweh, it is believed, is a causative form of the Hebrew verb "to be," originally appearing in the phrase, "He causes the hosts of heaven to be." Hence the "I am" wordplay in our text.

God knows our sufferings, and he comes to save. But the confidence of the psalmist in Ps 126, a prayer for deliverance, needs to be tempered with the realization that we cannot take advantage of God's pathos. Thus both the Second Lesson and the Gospel warn against overconfidence. Paul uses examples from the Exodus, the great act of deliverance, to warn the Corinthians. Israel, though sacramentally baptized into Moses and fed with manna, sinned. Take heed, Paul says, lest you be lulled into overconfidence by presuming some kind of sacramental protection (1 Cor 10:11-12). You will be tempted. But know also that temptation has its limits; nothing will tempt you that others have not experienced (10:13).

Paul warned against overconfidence by using examples from ancient history. In Luke 13:1-9 Jesus draws upon examples from recent history. He declares that God does not follow a mechanical formula of reward and punishment. The murder of those Galileans by Pilate was not because they were worse sinners than others. Neither were the eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell. Yet detaching punishment from sin does not abrogate the need for repentance (13:5). And to reinforce the warning, Jesus tells a parable: the fig tree that does not produce fruit within a reasonable time (a period of grace) will be cut down (13:9). TRL

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

I see the cross in the fig tree. Jesus identified completely with the will of God; he also identified himself fully with the plight of humankind. Both identifications are illustrated in the fig tree.

Every fruit tree is created to bear fruit, as heavily as possible. This is God's will in order to feed earth's creatures and for nurturing a new generation of healthy trees. However, for one reason or another, some fruit trees fail to develop and produce.

Jesus speaks of a fig tree. Three years it stood barren while under the care of a vinedresser. Of course Jesus is talking about the people of God and failure to yield fruit.

How does the Lord of the land approach the performance gap? With grace. If God was moved only by justice, there would be no grace period, and God's people would utterly perish. But the presence of Christ announces time and patience.

In Christ, God steps into the gap between the divine will and human failure. The result is stress, and the burdensome work of carrying the cross.

The church is called to accountability. We are called to self-examination in our Lenten pilgrimage. But more: we are called to see the cross in the fig tree, the patience, the nurture, the costly grace of God in Christ. CBH

PROPHETIC VOICE

Idolatry, not atheism or even paganism, is the fundamental sin the people of God must contend with, and being part of struggles for liberation, as the oppressed or as those in solidarity with them, does not free us from the danger. We are always living under the reminder that in our dialogue with God we are standing on 'holy ground (Ex 3:5), so we need to remember: If we think we are liberated, we'd better be careful (a paraphrase of 1 Cor 10:12).

The prophetic word not only challenges those who perpetuate oppression; it must also be heard by the oppressed and those in solidarity with them. The subtleties of idolatrous possibilities only intensify the struggle. We can focus too much on our own personal struggle and forget the

whole picture of liberation struggles in other contexts. So there's a reminder: Be careful! "The trials you have are no more than people normally have." But there is also encouragement: "You can trust God not to let you be tried beyond your strength; with any trial God will give you a way out of it and the strength to bear it" (1 Cor 10:13). DP

Fourth Sunday in Lent March 5, 1989

Isaiah 12:1-6
Psalm 32
I Corinthians 1:18-31 (or 1:18, 22-25)
Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

A FIRST READING

How we respond to the gift of salvation is addressed by each of this Sunday's texts. In Israel, when individual believers recited the words of the lament (cf. Lent II, First Reading comments on Ps 42), and their plea for healing was answered by Yahweh, lament would turn to thanksgiving as in Ps 32. Here the psalmist rehearses how affliction (vv. 3-5) led to confession of sin (v. 6). Yahweh answered his plea with healing and therefore not only did the psalmist rejoice (vv. 1-2), but he exhorts others to trust in the God who forgives (vv. 7-12). The individual psalm of thanksgiving gave Israel language with which to respond to Yahweh's deliverance of the community. Isaiah 12:1-6 employs the diction of the thanksgiving (vv. 1-3) and of the hymn (vv. 4-6) to praise God for the grace Israel would experience with the advent of the messiah (Isa 9, 11). In the thanksgiving section the psalmist acknowledges that though Yahweh was angry, his "anger turned away" (v. 1, cf. Ps 32:4-5).

Our response to the salvation effected through the cross is the subject of 1 Cor 1:18-31. Will our response be like that of the Jews, who find the cross an offense to their sensibilities (*skandalon*, 1:23)? Or will we be like the Greeks who, in their penchant for wisdom, regard the cross as foolishness? But the irony is that the cross *is* wisdom—the Wisdom of God which has existed since creation (cf. Prov 8:22ff.; Sir 24:1ff.).

The Jews were scandalized by Paul's proclamation of the cross. Likewise the older brother in the Parable of the Prodigal Son resents that this wasteful sibling should be received back so graciously by his father. Crossan comments, "In the end the parable shows a prodigal son inside feasting and a dutiful son outside pouting" (*In Parables*, p. 74). Do we respond to the cross with a psalm of thanksgiving? Or do we, like the older brother, "pout" at the offense of it? TRL

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

The Canaanite and Greek worlds resemble one another in their devotion to creature comfort. We too run after many gods: technology (wisdom), national pride (power), luxury (status), physical fitness (sex appeal), astrological meaning (signs), and new age consciousness (identity).

We locate Wisdom out there, in the changing world, the campus, the lab, at the edge of discovery. In human pursuits, wisdom means looking out for one's self in the harsh world.

Wisdom is hardly ever located in traditional values. Youthful contemporaries may scoff at the prodigal's squandering of an inheritance, while repeating the same distaste for parental guidance. Cautious middle-agers err on the side of the elder brother's envy, yet feel alienated in a home that includes others of different values.

As a society and as a nation we shudder in competition with other nations in a new and bigger world economy. Our former securities are disappearing under our eyes.

We preachers know all too well the face of Paul's words about the "Folly of what we preach." Today's with-it Americans would rather hear a sermon about human potential than about our dismal weakness. And yet Paul announces that "God chose what is weak... what is low and despised."

As Christians, foolish in the lens of history and God's time, might we yet seek and choose

life? Suppose we envision and present the reign of God as a more thoughtful, enduring alternative. Suppose we envision a world growing older in which the Creator God is still the source of life. In Christ, a new humanity has come and is coming. And although the present world is changing and passing away, we participate in a new era and a new humanity. By Holy Baptism and through faith we look and labor for a time beyond the present time in which peace and justice bind us together. To know, to share, to give one's energy to that vision, is wisdom. CBH

PROPHETIC VOICE

The most exciting thing about Jesus bringing good news to the poor is that it was always a here and now reality. Jesus' major organizing principle seems to be, *Let the celebration begin!* It's impossible to speak of a world of justice without celebrating it and living it out. "Rejoice, shout for joy, all upright hearts" (Ps 32:11). "Marvelous things" are happening, "let them be made known to the whole world" (Isa 12:5). What makes it so hard to celebrate the struggle of liberation for the oppressed? What makes it so hard to celebrate 'theologies of liberation' and new social, economic, and political orders bringing justice to the people? Have we so misconstrued and distorted the meaning of "preaching a crucified Christ" (1 Cor 1:23) that it has become our own "obstacle" to what is ultimately the primary concern: the mercy and justice of God? If Jesus was crucified by those who resisted the celebration of Jubilee, where does that leave us when, with 'elder brother' piety (Lk 15:1-3, 28-30), we reject and resist moments of Jubilee breaking into the world today? DP

Fifth Sunday in Lent
March 12, 1989

Isaiah 43:16-21
Psalm 28:1-3, 7-11
Philippians 3:8-14
Luke 20:9-19

A FIRST READING

God's decisive action is imminent. Jerusalem, the place where all will be accomplished, draws nearer. Liturgically we enter Jerusalem next Sunday. But in Luke 20 we are already there: Jesus is teaching in the Temple (20:1), and there he recounts the parable of the wicked tenants. Though a parable, the story has allegorical elements: the vineyard is Israel (cf. Isa 5:1ff.), Jerusalem's behavior is like that of the tenants, and the series of servants are the prophets of old. There's an echo here of the lament over Jerusalem (13:34-35), the Gospel for Lent II. There Jerusalem stoned the prophets; here the tenants abuse the servants and send them away empty-handed. Now the "beloved son" is sent (the same phrase as at Jesus' baptism, cf. 3:22). The tenants kill him, and now what will his father do? The tenants—Jerusalem—will be destroyed, and the vineyard will be given to others.

The immediacy of what will be accomplished at Jerusalem recalls the imminence we sense in the prophecy of Second Isaiah. Already, even as he speaks to the community exiled in Babylon, the liberating army of Cyrus is on the move. Salvation is at hand: :"Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth" (Isa 43:19). Soon Israel will march home across the Syrian desert in the New Exodus of our text. This motif is a common one in the exilic Isaiah (cf., e.g., 35:1-10, 42:15-16, 48:20-21). Unlike the first Exodus, when Israel complained of bitter water, the wilderness now will be transformed: Yahweh will "give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people" (v. 20).

Philippians 3:8-14 is bracketed by the sections where Paul warns the church not to follow

either the Judaizers (3:2ff.) or the libertines (3:17ff.). (On these sections see First Reading, Lent II.) It is Paul's warning against the Judaizers that led him to outline his impeccable credentials as a Pharisee. But now even these (3:4-6) he counts as refuse alongside the righteousness which is ours through faith in Christ.

Today's psalm is an individual lament (cf. the other laments appointed for these weeks: Ps 71, 51, 42, and the lament section in the thanksgiving of Ps 32). Psalm 28 is a nice example of the form, moving directly from plea to praise. It ends with the prayer (v. 11) that Yahweh will "save... bless... (and) shepherd" his people forever. This too is the prayer of the church as Jesus draws near to Jerusalem. TRL

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

Tracing Jesus' words and actions toward Jerusalem is somewhat like watching the lonely good guy ride into a town that is overrun by a corrupt syndicate. Jesus is heading for a showdown.

Jesus predicted his eventual confrontation with the high and holy authorities of the capital city. In Luke 20, a potential lynching scene results from a poignant story. Jesus' willingness to take on the establishment with unflinching accusations and hard truth set the teeth of his opponents on edge and placed Jesus in harm's way.

Jesus' journey toward Jerusalem reminds us of his commitment to the truth of God in a way that is missing from most motion pictures. Jesus confronts the real world. The disagreements are deeper than mere personality conflicts. The problems dividing the traditional and the new religion can't be settled by conversations and compromises. Jesus speaks the truth from God and looks the big guns straight in the face. And that is the root of the problem, which leads to his arrest, conviction, and execution.

Jesus is more than a fully human person tempted by very human passions. He is more than a Clint Eastwood fighting for the little people. Jesus does more than walk a mile in everyone's shoes, even though personal empathy is part of his humanness. Novels and films can paint him as powerful hero; but he is more.

Jesus, the Christ, brings God's Word and God's justice to a sick and dying world. Therefore the Apostle Paul could say, "I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil 3:8).

That same Jesus bids us come with him to face the real world not as heroes or saviors but as witnesses to God's truth, as women and men who press on toward the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. CBH

PROPHETIC VOICE

The ultimate economic and/or theological sin goes beyond mere idolatry; it involves usurping the role of God as the Owner of all that is. And that can happen in life, because God is no manipulator and God does not operate in the ways of the world just to maintain domination. If the creation were seen as some kind of laboratory experiment, God would rather see the experiment fail than to juggle the process just to make things come out a certain way.

But if God refuses to reign by means of force and repression, neither does God back off when forces of oppression stop at nothing to maintain domination. While that is clear throughout the Scriptures, it is especially clear in the story of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus identifies with the forces of liberation, forces shaped in the faith that "Yahweh is the strength of the people" and that Yahweh will "save" and "bless" the heirs of the promise of justice (Ps 28:8), forces shaped in the ethic of doing the "new deed" (Isa 43:19) which brings justice to the people. But Jesus is always challenging those forces to a "perfection" of justice "based on faith" (Phil 3:9), to a quality of justice which gives true glory to God. So Jesus consistently confronts the idolatrous economics and the idolatrous social and political practices which deny people and the earth the justice to which God says they are entitled—along with a challenge to all the doctrinal orthodoxy which masqueraded as theology and played its part in maintaining the idolatries of domination. At no time does he give in to any part of the idolatrous

sin which is a constant option put before him by both friend and foe. And in his ultimate resistance to idolatry he is willing to be crucified rather than capitulate.

But the 'glory' of the idolatrous forces of domination is short-lived. Jesus dies; just justice triumphs. That is the meaning of "the power of his resurrection" (Phil 3:10). With power he continues to resist the idolatries of injustice and to struggle with the forces of liberation and justice as his own followers reproduce the pattern of his death (Phil 3:10). DP

Sunday of the Passion March 19, 1989

Deuteronomy 32:36-39
Psalm 31:1-5, 9-16
Philippians 2:5-11
Luke 22:1-23:56 or Luke 23:1-49

A FIRST READING

Holy Week begins with a hymn about the omnipotence of God. Deuteronomy 32:36-39 is part of a hymnic addition to the Song of Moses, whose first section (vv. 1-29) is in the form of a covenant lawsuit (cf. Isa 1, Jer 2, Mic 6). In the lawsuit Israel was indicted for apostasy: they "forsook God... the Rock of salvation" (32:15) for the deities of Canaan. But where, the poet now asks, "are their gods, the rock in which they took refuge?" (32:37). The gods of Canaan are vain, for there is no god besides Yahweh. This monotheistic refrain will later be a key theme of Second Isaiah (cf. Isa 41:23; 43:11; 45:5, 21). Yahweh alone holds the power of life and death: "I kill and I make alive" (v. 39; cf. the contemporary Song of Hannah, 1 Sam 2:6).

Such claims of omnipotence are what Jesus chose to empty himself of in Phil 2:5-11. Paul, as he exhorts the Christians of Philippi to live in harmony (2:2), offers the example of the Christ who willingly assumed the role of servant. Here Paul quotes an early Christological hymn, inserting in it his own emphasis: "even death on a cross" (2:8). *Kenosis*, to empty one's self in service without expectation of reward, defines for Paul the shape of the Christian life.

Once again this Sunday's psalm is a lament. The parallelism in Ps 31 of vv. 1-8 with vv. 9-24, each section exhibiting the movement from plea to praise, makes it almost a "double" lament. In vv. 10-11 the psalmist seeks healing from illness; in v. 13 (and v. 47) he seeks deliverance from those who slander him.

Rather than using the Lukan passion narrative in some way as a sermon text, the homilist may prefer to preach on the processional gospel: the Palm Sunday account of Luke 19:28-40. Luke does not mention the ass of Matt 21:2 (Luke simply uses *polos*, "colt," which can be either the colt of an ass or of a horse), nor does he quote the text of Zech 9:9. Yet the tradition that Jesus rode into the city on an ass deserves comment.

Contrary to the notion that an ass was chosen because it is an unregal, comic animal, it was in fact deemed worthy of rulers in the ancient Near East. Judges rode asses (Judg 10:4, 12;13), as did David (2 Sam 16:1-2). In time, however, Israel succumbed to an alien understanding of kingship. Despite Samuel's warning (1 Sam 8:11), they opted for kings (e.g., Solomon) who used the horse and chariot to exploit. Yet the tradition remembered that the horse—and the ideology it represented—were foreign to Yahwism. In Ps 20:7 the psalmist contrasts those who boast of horses with those who boast in the name of the Lord. And years later the tradition celebrated that the coming king would once again ride the noble beast of Israel's early egalitarian years, the ass (Zech 9:9; Matt 21:2, 5). TRL

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

The Lenten journey now turns to our Lord's passion. This shift needs attention as we plan worship and preaching from the beginning of the Lenten season. Some of us still confuse Lent and Passion, and we come up short. Lent is reflection on the meanings of our life in Christ. Passion

recalls and acknowledges the suffering and death of our Lord, and proclaims that "all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death" (Rom 6:3).

A discerning hand is called for in this recital of the passion. We must proclaim the historical events without locking up Christ in history. We recall the cross and passion, yet find their presence today in contemporary situations.

Evidences of passion may be seen through the interactions between the religious accusers, Herod, Pilate, and Jesus. We might illustrate the cross and passion with these biblical references:

- The shallow accusations against Jesus: "perverting our nation" (v. 2), "forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar" (v. 2), "stirring up the people" (v. 5).
- The evasive and frightened reactions of political leaders (vv. 7, 15, 25).
- The weak and crowd-pleasing actions used to solve a matter of human rights: mockery (v. 11), giving in to the crowd (v. 24), releasing a murderer (v. 25).
- The belated recognition of innocence (v. 47).

These foibles of human behavior may be seen in contemporary life. By translating them to our times and places, we interpret human history in the light of God's suffering patience and love.

When and where easy peace is desired more than truth and justice, and where shallow interests are shouted louder and louder, that is a sign that God's will is compromised.

When and where political leaders evade and sidestep spiritual and ethical commitment, there Christ's will and determination are scoffed at.

When and where innocent lives are tossed about as bothersome, dispensable objects, then the suffering and death of Christ is repeated.

When and where the church shrinks from its calling to stand with the poor and disheartened, then the church is an accomplice to the powers of this world. CBH

PROPHETIC VOICE

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and the events which took place in the days that followed stand as his final *no!* to the ethic of imperialism, whether it is political, social, economic, or religious. And it is also a *no* to the false expectations of his followers whose visions of greatness only make them imitators of the oppression they hoped to overcome. He was still walking in the faith of the 'wandering Aramean' who saw a God who would ultimately emerge victorious over all other rivals. "See now that I, I am (God), and beside me there is no other.... It is I who deal in death and life" (Deut 32:39).

So the living commentary of Jesus on the God of justice, mercy, and compassion was to live out that truth of God among the oppressed. Paul invites us to reflect on our own life-commentary on the Christ, a life-commentary which includes the way we do economics and the way we function politically and socially (and religiously) in relation to the prevailing and dominant ideology. If we call ourselves Christians, then the words to the Philippians (2:5-11) suggest the context in which that commentary will be shaped. Imperialism, in all of its manifestations, seeks to *use* people, resources, and other things to enhance its power and domination; Jesus demonstrates a power that does not seek to control or dominate, but to serve. And he serves the liberation of the oppressed. "In your minds you must be the same..." (Phil 2:5). DP

Good Friday
March 24, 1989

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 or Hosea 6:1-6
Psalm 22:1-23
Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9
John 18:1-19:42 or John 19:17-30

A FIRST READING

Both the First and Second Lessons offer texts against which to interpret the significance of the crucifixion. The early church's understanding of Jesus' sacrifice was shaped by its reading of Isaiah 52:13-52-52:12, the Fourth Servant Song. In form it comprises three parts: a third person narrative about the servant (53:1-11) which is framed by two first-person divine pronouncements (52:13-15 and 53:12). The anonymous servant is a prophetic figure (cf. Isa 49:1-6 and 50:4-11). Like Moses and Jeremiah he intercedes for the transgressors (53:12d), and as Jeremiah suffered because of his office, so does he (53:3, 7; cf. Jer 11:19, 15:18). What is new about this prophetic servant is that his suffering is redemptive (53:4-5, 12c).

The high priest, as the one who effects atonement for Israel, is the image employed in Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:7-9 to describe the work of Christ. The Jerusalem high priest was the only one who could enter the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement to make the sin offering for Israel (Lev 16; cf. also Sir 50:5-10 for a 2nd century B.C.E. description of the high priest on Yom Kippur). Yet it is not the Aaronic high priestly office that Jesus holds, for that is provisional. Jesus is high priest according to the order of Melchizedek: the eschatological high priest prophesied on the basis of Jewish exegesis of Gen 14:17-21 and Ps 110:4. According to a text from the Qumran community at the Dead Sea, Melchizedek was expected to return in the last days to proclaim release to the captives and atonement for their sins. This activity of Jesus, the eternal high priest, is described by the author in terms reminiscent of Phil 2:5-11: obedient (5:8), he suffers (5:8), he is tempted as we are (4:15), and finally he too is exalted (5:9). With such a high priest we are confident of God's grace and mercy.

The opening verse of Psalm 22, the Psalm of the Passion, is quoted in Aramaic by Jesus on the cross (Mk 15:34; Matt 27:46). It is a composite psalm: vv. 1-21 are a lament, while vv. 22-31 constitute a psalm of thanksgiving. Lament and thanksgiving are held together. But that is the Good Friday story: alongside our awareness of sin and our inability to justify ourselves is placed the assurance of the gospel. Though it is a painful day, we too can speak our psalm of thanksgiving. TRL

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

The issues of power and authority are close by whenever we observe the high points in Jesus' life. Power always feels nervous in Jesus' presence.

The power struggle of Jesus and his contemporaries reaches its highest point in Jesus' identification as King of the Jews. Early on Herod (the Great) reveals his insecurity by the birth of the infant king (Matt 2:3, 7-8, 16). Throughout Jesus' ministry the question of authority lurks in his freedom to forgive sins. The Gospel accounts of miracles pit Jesus' power against the powers of darkness, death, and Satan.

Pilate argues with religious leaders over the title, "King of the Jews." Pilate and Jesus speak past one another about power and kingship and truth (Jn 19:10-11).

Within these struggles and maneuverings, it becomes apparent that rulers and religious leaders desired to hold power and were willing to do almost anything to maintain their power.

Most people within our preaching and hearing are interested in power of a personal kind. How might I acquire the power of personality? What is needed to gain greater control of my life? What are the possibilities that I might avoid misfortunes or reverse the misfortunes I've already experienced? In what ways might I postpone death or keep it from stalking me?

Empowerment, for the Christian, is shaped by surrender to God's power and love. The writer

to the Hebrews gives witness to this by identifying Jesus as a great high priest, but as one who "does not take honor upon himself." Jesus did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but "was appointed."

Jesus died a truly human death, accompanied by fear and loneliness and physical anguish. But his death demonstrates the willingness of a new humanity to let God be God in all circumstances. In Christ and the cross we see that suffering and death may have their way with us, even drain the life from us. Nevertheless, in the end all life and power is God's, and God will have the final say.

That is more than any political or ideological entity can promise, more than any philosophy or mind alteration can provide. CBH

PROPHETIC VOICE

There was a lot Jesus was saying *no* to, and he might have been tolerated if he had just been an itinerant rabbi who was stirring up reforms in temple and synagogue. But it is for what he was saying *yes* to that he was arrested, framed, and executed. It's a familiar story among those who have been his disciples, those who have kept alive the faith of universal justice in the liturgy of the 'wandering Aramean' and in the theology of 'liberation for the oppressed.' A hymn of a few years ago said it well:

Hangin' on a tree he was, hangin' on a tree.
My Lord, my life, my Savior there,
hangin' on a tree.

They hung him in Jerusalem, and in
Hiroshima,
In Dallas and in Selma too, and in
South Africa.

It happens many times a year
And still we're askin' why.

If the *why* is from the perspective of imperialism, the answer is simple. Its will to dominate has no regard for human life or the care of the earth. But if we look at the *why* from the perspective of Jesus and his followers, we discover something else. The writer to the Hebrews saw it this way: "For the sake of the joy which was still in the future, he endured the cross" (12:2).

It all comes back to the hope expressed in the lives of oppressed people who are caught by a vision of God's intentions for them, of people who in one way or another are living out a commentary on what it means to be Child of God.

To truly remember the death of Jesus on the cross is to let them know they are not alone in their struggle, no matter what that may cost. And we will discover that we are also not alone, that we have not been abandoned (cf. Ps 22), and we go on living 'for the joy which is still in the future.' CP

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Robert Harley Fischer

William E. Lesher
President, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago



The most important thing I learned from Robert Harley Fischer was that the church, though reliably fallible, is worthy of our love, sacrifice, and surrender. He never said it this way. He may never have intended this to be his message. But in the peculiar exchange between teacher and student, in which the lessons taught are filtered through the experiences brought by the learner, it is the message I received and for which I have been immensely grateful throughout my ministry.

The full value of this learning became sharply apparent to me about ten years after my ordination, when I was serving a middle-city congregation in what was then called the Northwest Lutheran Parish of Chicago. It was the late sixties. The lights of promise had dimmed. John Kennedy, Pope John XXIII, and Martin Luther King had flashed brilliantly at the opening of the decade, and then each light, in turn, went out. The exciting ecumenical programs that had brought Catholics, Protestants, and Lutherans together with such promise in our neighborhood began to flounder. The young team of clergy, who felt such a deep sense of comraderie in ministry, began to break up. Several priests left their parishes for marriage. A Methodist minister, his wife and family were tragically murdered, victims of vicious gang rivalry. Several months later, a United Church of Christ pastor resigned from his congregation and told all in an interview with a leading national magazine published with the title, "Why I Left the Ministry." His reason: "The people in my church were not Christian."

I can remember sitting at my desk in my study at home late one afternoon pondering all these matters and wondering why I had no intention of leaving my ministry. I thought of Professor Fischer in particular, again, not so much for what he had said, but for what I distinctly received. And I knew why I had no intention of leaving. I had been carefully taught, with overwhelming evidence from historical examples, that the church is reliably fallible. It often fails to live up to the promise and regularly disappoints those who expect it to be a slice of the Kingdom now. But it still commands our love and our loy-

alty because it keeps the vision alive in Scripture and sermon and song and, now and then—just often enough—it comes through on the promise. I pushed away from my desk and went down to join the family at dinner, knowing why and knowing how I knew.

Several years later, I joined the faculty at LSTC and had what I considered to be a rare opportunity to give back something of what I had received. This was the seventies now, and it was not a particularly good time for church history or church historians. Students were into the urgent issues of the present, not the lessons to be learned from the follies of the past. I don't exactly remember the circumstances, but I do recall an occasion when Professor Fischer wondered aloud about the relevance of teaching history at all. That was my chance to tell my story and in so doing, to say thanks and to strongly affirm the role of history and the ministry of the historians.

I have no idea if Robert Fischer remembers any of these incidents (most likely he does not), or if he sees himself reflected in my recollection. But, no matter. Teachers have no control over their words once they are released. They can only hope they do not return void.

Thank God for faithful teachers of the church. Thank God for Robert Harley Fischer!

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