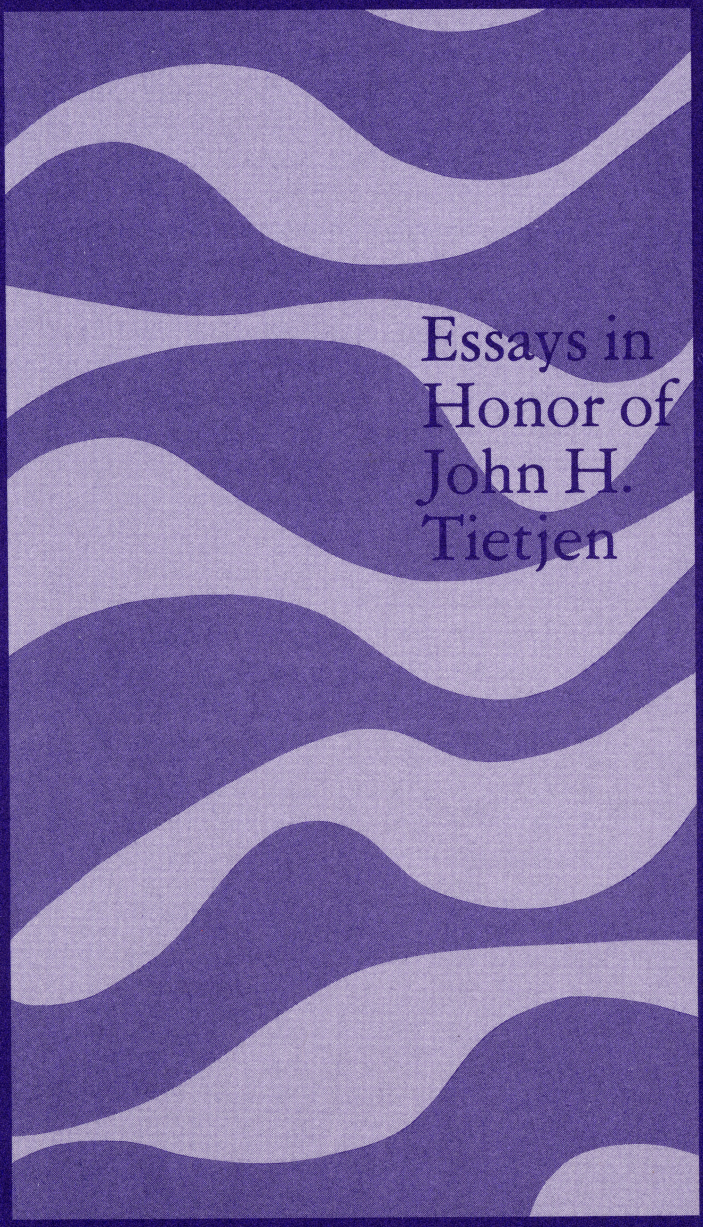
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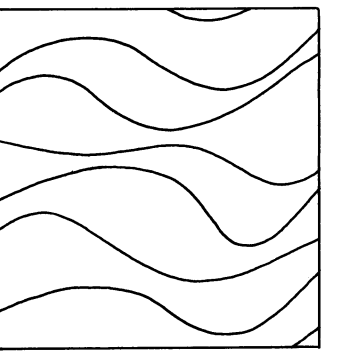
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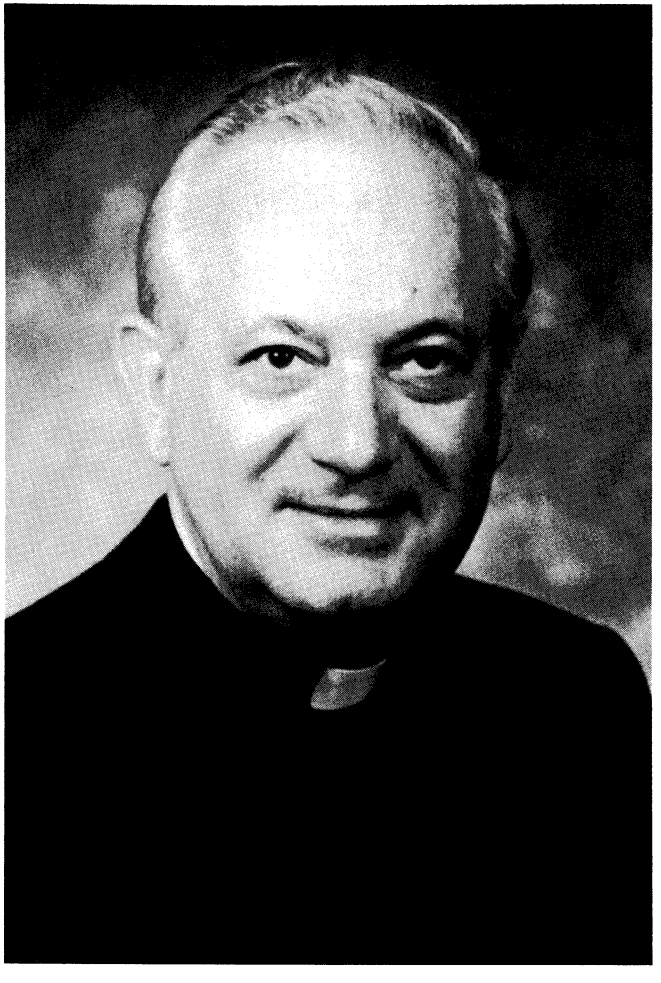
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John H. Tietjen
President, Christ Seminary—Seminex

For the Sake of the Gospel

On December 31, 1987, Christ Seminary—Seminex completed its mission. We who write in this issue were the faculty at that climactic moment, and we gratefully offer the following essays to honor the one who served as our President for nineteen years, John H. Tietjen.

When our teachings were under attack, he defended us and absorbed the full brunt of the attack, He taught us what Christian unity meant, what was worth living and dying for, and how to win while losing. He believed and spoke and lived the gospel, for whose glorious sake he and we were baptized and through which we were called to the ministry.

Back in the early 70s, on a long car trip, Arthur Carl Piepkorn said to me, "I often wonder what God is getting John ready for." He had seen the loveless attacks on John's person and theology, not to mention the frustrations John faced at every ecclesiastical turn. During the years of controversy at Concordia Seminary and during the tenuous career at Seminex, we tasted the fruit from this schooling of our brother John.

It is not yet clear how God will use John in the years ahead. But we all know that God is readying him to exercise leadership among us once more. When John speaks, it is always with clarity; when he acts, it is always with integrity. The bottom line is always the unconditional love of the crucified Christ.

H. Lucille Hager has compiled a nearly complete bibliography of President Tietjen's works echoing the history of his career and sounding the themes that have been his ministry: Crossbound, Eucharistic Living, Expectations of Ministry, Straight Ahead, So That the World Might Live, Unity is our Calling, and On Taking One's Daily Dip in the Font.

Paul Manz has honored our president in this issue by composing music for a hymn whose words were written by John Tietjen himself. **Jeannette H. Bauermeister** shares a few vignettes from John's presidential career that typify the ministry he has shared with us.

John W. Constable finds parallels between some of the ecumenical efforts of Philip Melanchthon and S. S. Schmucker, and between the strong, conservative reactions to both. Whereas Melanchthon and Schmucker felt it necessary to change the Augsburg Confession to achieve union, twentieth century Lutherans have stressed faithfulness to the confessions in their own union efforts. In his earliest publications Tietjen himself appealed to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions as the basis for union—that much and no more. The ELCA seeks to realize the Reformation dream of a unity based on confessional principles.

Carl Graesser, Jr. discovers the biblical roots of modern Christian diversity in the theological emphases of the three major Pentateuchal strata. The Yahwist (J) depicts humankind under a curse and the Israelite empire as gracious gift. J's tensions between curse and blessing, saint and sinner, have been mediated to Lutheranism through Paul. The Priestly Writer (P) emphasized God's continuing love for Israel and outlined a cultic way of life. The sacramental system and the priestly orders of Roman Catholicism seem to offer parallels to the sacerdotal and sacrificial system of P. Reformed theology finds its echo in the emphasis on monotheism, election, covenant, and law in Deuteronomic materials (D). These canonical antecedents remind contemporary Christians that theologies other than their own can be valued for their usefulness in speaking to problems inadequately addressed in one's own traditions.

Basing his reflections on a George Herbert poem, **George W. Hoyer** writes about the three uses of the gospel. The first use is the forgiving action of God-in-Christ; the second is the forming action of God-in-Trinity; the third is the fortifying action of God-in-the-Spirit. God invites us to offer good works to him, as we are moved by his love and as we are enabled by the new life that is in us.

Everett R. Kalin seeks to note the differences among the three accounts of the raising of a ruler's daughter and the healing of the woman with a hemorrhage, and to discern what the Matthean version is trying to say. Matthew encourages us to see Jesus as the willing and active bringer of God's healing. In the restoration of life to the ruler's daughter he announces that the eschatological day of life, peace, and justice has already begun to break into the world. Matthew urges us to be instruments of peace, and to recognize, acknowledge, and try to change ways in which my own life and the life of our nation have often been bad news for the poor.

Robert H. Smith urges us to let John be John, and he seeks John's distinctive message by reflecting on the first word spoken by Jesus in the fourth Gospel. When Jesus asks, "What are you seeking?" he is asking all readers of the Gospel, "What is your target? What is your goal in life?" John is making an appeal to religiously minded pagans, inquirers, seekers, and people attracted by gnosticism and other higher religions of antiquity. Whatever they are seeking can be found in Jesus in the flesh. The crucified and living one is the goal of all their striving. The "I am" statements announce that the goal of all religious questing has been revealed in Jesus.

Mark P. Bangert describes Gospel Motets as a musical repertoire that needs reappraisal. Composers of these motets like the preachers of their day were deeply committed to proclamation. Today, the church's musical enterprise will gain similar integrity when it responds to the central, confessional role of the gospel. A new partnership between homiletics and church music may lead to a fresh consideration of gospel pericopes as sources for church music. The glue to hold together homiletics and music may lie in a number of current compositional processes.

Paul Bauermeister walks us through the ordination rite in quest of the disciplines of pastoral formation: functioning in a collegial relationship with other pastors; studying to keep oneself open and growing; praying, and diligent use of the means of grace. God's love for pastors is the basis for their faithful witness in the world; the means of grace open the way for pastors to be captured by this love. Since God loves pastors, they are to love themselves by caring for their own physical, social, mental, emotional, esthetic, and moral well-being.

How can confessors of the faith be sure of being right when they themselves are sinful and fallible in their act of confessing? **Robert W. Bertram** provides a Lutheran answer to this question by taking us through Luther's own wrestling with it. He speaks of the certainty of the gospel and the dubiousness of those who confess it. The sin of the confessors, which they dare not admit to their opponents or even to their own consciences lest it invalidate their confession, is sin of which they daily repent. Luther directs all confessors in their quest for certitude to the gospel of Christ. What Christ is doing, also through the ambiguous confessors, contrasts dramatically with what is being done to counter Christ through equally human agents. Christ is to be looked to for

consolation both in his original life, death, and resurrection, and in the battle he was waging for God and his word in sixteenth century Germany.

Robert L. Conrad writes about "the hidden curriculum" at Seminex and links this hidden curriculum to biblical precedents and social scientific understandings. What we learned and what we taught were the relativity of institutions, the necessity of a supportive group during periods of rapid change, the impossibility of "going home" once a breach had been made, the ways in which commitment to a cause compensates for poor conditions, the inevitable transition from movement to institution, and the need to replace a common enemy with a positive good. In each case he draws applications from the hidden curriculum for the life of the church.

Frederick W. Danker considers the echoes of the Greco-Roman reciprocity system in the New Testament and in the Apostolic Fathers. For Paul, God is the supreme politician-philanthropist, who announces amnesty for all humanity. The profound goodwill of God, the Supreme Benefactor, finds expression in Jesus Christ, the Great Benefactor. Believers are to respond with unlimited generosity. The well-known differences between Paul and Luke should not mask their common investment in the reciprocity system, nor should we neglect the way in which Luke serves as a bridge to the reformulated theologies of such Apostolic Fathers as 1 and 2 Clement, Didache, and Ignatius. The one non-negotiable item in all this diversity is that God's beneficience has been supremely expressed in Jesus Christ.

William J. Danker notes how Japan has been apparently resistant to Christianity. Yet the Japanese have adopted the traditions of Christianity, and they desire Christian weddings in increasing numbers. Few Americans seem ready to give Christmas in Japan the time to develop the faith, love, and goodness expressed in many American Christian homes. Others content themselves with criticizing the Western wedding fad, without recognizing its great potential for mission. As numerically weak Pauline Christianity penetrated Caesar's household, so the few Christians in Japan have influenced the imperial family itself. Despite representing only one percent of the population, Christians have had an enormous effect upon Japan.

David E. Deppe provides seven steps for functional memorization of sermons. Basic to his approach is a new system of outlining, using both sides of

the brain, which clusters thoughts around one simple idea. He also offers numerous suggestions on moving from outline to delivery. His hope is to recapture for many of you the forgotten art and lost skill of preaching without the use of notes or manuscript in the pulpit. He believes improved delivery is for the sake of the people and for the sake of the gospel they come to hear.

Kurt K. Hendel links Luther's doctrine of the ministry to the Reformer's beliefs on justification, the word, and the church. Luther opposed the hierarchy and affirmed the universal priesthood of all believers, but he also had deep respect for the ordained ministry. Ordination is the public, liturgical affirmation of the community's call. The call is the means whereby the community chooses one of its members—one of its fellow priests—to exercise the functions and responsibilities of the priesthood publicly.

Abraham and Sarah were called to be a blessing to the nations, a vocation shared by Jews and Christians. **Ralph W. Klein** shows that Israel's mission involved service to the nations—just as ours does. Jews and Christians find divergent meaning in the phrase, "Abram believed in the LORD, and he reckoned it to him as righteousness," though it may be hoped that Jews and Christians today will see their differences as complementary, or at least as occasions for understanding the other more sympathetically. The covenant with Abram in which the LORD invokes on himself a curse is structurally similar to a central understanding of the significance of the crucifixion, and therefore a point of convergence today for Jews and Christians. When our parents told us about Abraham and Sarah, they were actually telling us their own story and even our own story. We are all called; we are all bound to God by covenantal promises; we are all part of the community of the people of the God of Sarah and Abraham.

Edgar Krentz rehearses the intra-Lutheran discussion of historical criticism and confessional loyalty. He argues that historical criticism is a legitimate and useful response to a central impetus of the Lutheran Confessions, to ground theological discourse in biblical texts. The confessions do not prescribe a single method of interpretation. Both Luther and Melanchthon put the Scriptures "under judgment" as they looked for texts which honored Christ. But the confessors and the confessions demanded an historical and grammatical reading of the texts. While Lutherans feel themselves bound to the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures, the canonical boundaries of the Bible are nowhere defined.

The gospel, not the Bible, is the source of certainty for the faithful. Faith is certain, even when historical facts are insecure or when extra-biblical material seems to correct the biblical narrative. The Confessions are what particular Lutherans at a given point in history understand the Scriptures to say. The Lutheran Confessions are a good example of martyrological theology, a theology ready to revise the tradition for the sake of the present.

As Jay C. Rochelle reminded us in chapel recently, "It is much easier to die for a cause than to live for one." At Seminex, where the initial "dying" was less than violent, living for the gospel also turned out to be the really hard part. The severe pains and raucous controversy of the early 70s were the easy part, surrounded as John and we were by rock-solid communities and clarity of goals. Living that gospel when the cheering and the finger-pointing stopped—ah, that was the hard part.

Isn't that true for you as well, each of you in her or his separate ministry? That *hard part* is reserved for each of us by a loving God, who, having first sent his Son, thought enough of us also to send us. And now he sends forth John Tietjen into an uncertain future, in which he knows only that God is leading and God's right hand is guiding.

As we pray at Compline: "O Lord, support us all the day long of this troubled life, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes and the busy world is hushed, the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then, Lord, in your mercy, grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last; through Jesus Christ our Lord."

For the faculty of Christ Seminary—Seminex,

Ralph W. Klein
Editor

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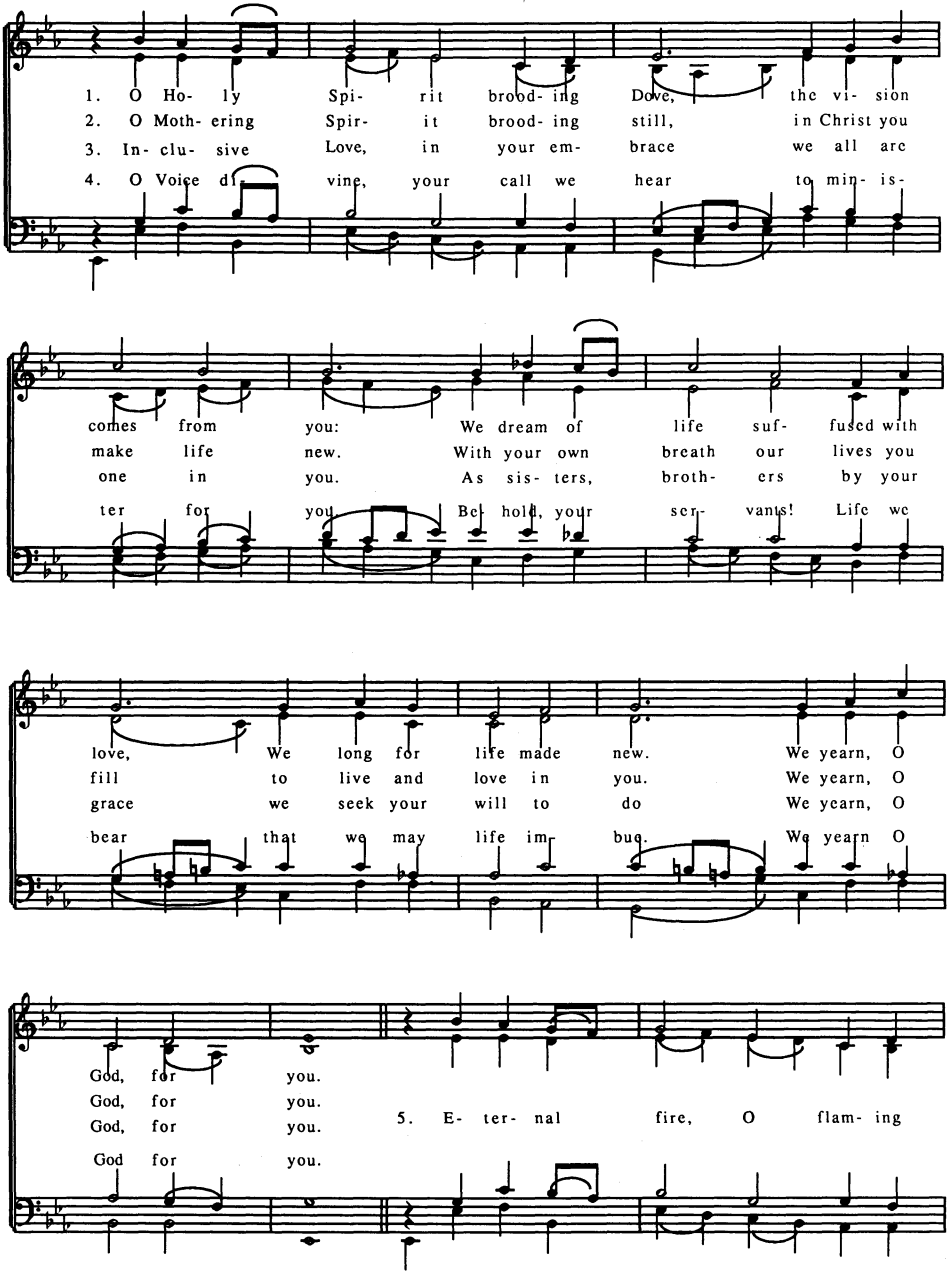
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I express my gratitude to librarians, archivists, and friends who gave assistance in locating some of the unpublished works of John H. Tietjen. I have not compiled a "complete" bibliography of Tietjen's works—there are many more sermons and addresses and also book reviews that are not included. However, the bibliography illustrates how he defended and proclaimed the Gospel as he has served and continues to serve the Lord of the Church.

O HOLY SPIRIT, BROODING DOVE

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TIETJEN




light, melt us as one in you. In us the
fire of love ig- nite. That we may burn as
you to love the way you do. O Ho- ly
Spi- rit, gen- tle might, we yearn, O God, for you.
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To John: With Appreciation for Your Shared Ministry

Jeannette H. Bauermeister
Vice President for Administration
Christ Seminary—Seminex, Chicago, Illinois

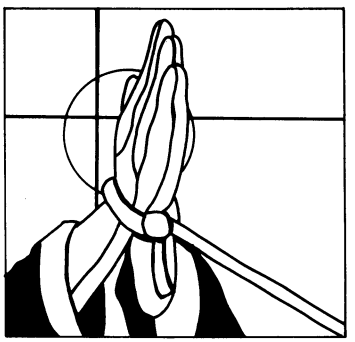
Nineteen years ago a group of women, mostly faculty wives, gathered in the living room of Alfred and Caroline Fuerbringer. Dr. Fuerbringer was retiring as president of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. The people gathered there were waiting to see the white smoke announcing the choice of the next president of the seminary. I was there because my friend, Wilma, had invited me. When the phone rang, many of those present had prayers in their hearts that it would be their choice; at least two candidates were husbands of women present. I did not even know Wilma had a brother named John until that moment. The naming of John seemed to be a surprise to everyone. Later I learned that the person most surprised was John Tietjen himself.

John and Ernestine Tietjen and their children, Katherine, Lawrence, Mary, and Sarah, moved to St. Louis, but these were not easy years for the denomination or for the seminary. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod had recently experienced a conservative take-over, and the president of the denomination was just beginning a doctrinal investigation of the seminary faculty. One might think that this new, 41-year-old seminary president named John would wish he had not moved to the cradle of German Lutheranism. Instead, Tietjen stood firm on his principles and cooperated with all investigating groups. When he was suspended from office in 1974, he remained on campus, in faculty housing, awaiting his hearing, long after everyone else had left to form a seminary in exile.

Concordia Seminary in Exile (later, Christ Seminary—Seminex) was formed as a direct result of students, faculty, and staff remaining loyal to their suspended president. As a member of the staff at Concordia I joined the new venture of faith that came to be known as "Seminex." No one knew what the years

ahead would bring. When John joined the exiled band in 1975 the offices were housed in a former dance studio on the corner of Grand and Lindell in St. Louis. Classes were held at St. Louis University across the street. Mirrors had to be removed from a small rehearsal room to make an office for the president, who sat behind a desk borrowed from a retired teacher in Ellisville, Missouri. One might think that John would want to return to his New Jersey parish, but he stayed on, shaping the fledgling seminary into a viable option for excellent theological education.

At the Seminex graduation in 1976, the Seminary Guild commissioned a small stained glass window, designed by Professor Robert Werberig, as a gift from the graduating class. Werberig interpreted in glass a text from John 21:18. Jesus said to Peter, "I am telling you the truth; when you were young you used to get ready and go anywhere you wanted to; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands and someone else will



tie you up and take you where you don't want to go" (GNB). In the design Werberig expressed his understanding of the text and of the ministry of John Tietjen. The window now hangs in the seminary chapel at LSTC.

Because of his own experience of oppression and vulnerability, John was ready to help others when the odds seemed against them. Prospective students who didn't have "the church" behind them, faculty members who needed help in the classroom, at home, or in the church, friends and relatives who needed additional resources, all knew where to turn. If the task looked impossible John knew where to go for help. His stoic nature and trust in God saw him through many a trial with those who loved him and those who didn't love him.

In 1982, one year before Seminex deployed its faculty to prepare for the new Lutheran Church, John wrote the following in *Preaching Helps*:

> Having experienced the last dozen years, I wouldn't have missed it for the world. God turns adversity into advantage in our lives just as the Cross became the Resurrection.
>
> So believing and confessing Peter is the model for us. The preacher will call the hearers to respond to Jesus as Peter did. Touch and taste are not enough—trust is what we need—trust in God, not reliance on the tangible and the traditional. It is the kind of trust that depends on God to keep the Gospel promise of help in time of need. It is also the kind of trust that obeys, taking Jesus at his word when he calls us to follow him in bearing a cross and losing a life for his sake.

The years following deployment were difficult ones. There was no seminary community for him to lead. There were continuing fiscal concerns as the corporation called

Seminex continued to support faculty in three locations. John and his small staff gathered the necessary resources to accomplish the mission. He often said, "Don't worry about the future. God will have new surprises in store for us."

"God will have new surprises in store for us."

In a recent Fortress publication, Proclamation 3, *Lesser Festivals 2*, John Tietjen gives this advice to those who wish to proclaim the good news by observing the Nativity of St. John the Baptist. "Life lives up to its promise when we serve God's purpose for us. As children of promise we fulfill our potential when we live our life consistently with God's plan for us and for our world. Then, no matter what the circumstances, we are forever in the embrace of the tender mercy of our God."

In Search of a Confessional Ecumenism

John W. Constable
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From the first the evangelical reformers of the sixteenth century strove for the confessional unity of the church. In 1530 these confessors came to Augsburg to "restore unity . . . even as we are all under one Christ."[1] Their desire for unity was not taken seriously by the Roman party.

Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560), as spokesman for the evangelical party, presented a statement which incorporated a theology designed to realize their goal of confessional unity. When it became evident that the church of Rome was not interested in the *Augsburg Confession*, he turned his attention towards a confessional unity with other Protestants.

To further this end he produced a revised and edited version of the 1530 document called the *Variata*. This action split the newly-named Lutherans into warring groups.

His new document failed because he touched the nerve centers of controversy when he revised Article IX on Baptism, suggesting that it was a "ceremony" and not a sacrament, and Article X, stating that in the Lord's Supper the elements were "truly tendered" and not "truly" present.

Melanchthon failed to realize a confessional unity either for Lutherans or with other protestant groups. Even among his own constituency his very name evoked a strong negative reaction for several centuries in spite of the fact that two major documents he wrote (Augsburg Confession and the Apology to the Augsburg Confession) have remained central to Lutheranism. It took until the mid-twentieth century before a balanced study of his work was available.[2]

After over three decades of internal theological strife among the Lutherans in the 16th century, and after nearly all the old polemicists had died, a second Martin (Chemnitz) led them to a confession called the *Formula of Concord* in 1580. This statement of har-

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[1]"Preface to the Augsburg Confession," in *The Book of Concord*, ed. and trans., Theodore G. Tappert (St. Louis: Concordia, 1959), 25.

[2]Clyde Manschreck, *Melanchthon: The Quiet Reformer* (New York: Abingdon, 1958).

mony represented a compromise by the Lutheran parties, but failed to incorporate other Christian groups into a unity of confession.

The Lutherans of the seventeenth century joined other Christian parties in an age of orthodoxy, which effectively severed corporate relationships. Each group maintained its own separate confessional position until pietism forced a movement away from orthodoxy toward a unity often without a strong confessional position or toward a highly subjective rationalism. With the addition of both rationalism and pietism to that of orthodoxy, one can see the three streams of theological baggage that were brought by the new Lutheran immigrants to the New World.

Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg, himself a product of the seminary at Halle in its transition from pietism to rationalism, attempted to organize this Lutheran disparity in the new colonies. In the constitution of the Pennsylvania Ministerium of 1748 every pastor is called an evangelical Lutheran who professed "that he holds the Word of God and our Symbolical Books [as standard] in doctrine and life."[3]

In the decades following Muhlenberg, the American Lutheran church depended either upon the Old World for its clergy or upon candidates produced by reading theology with individual pastors. A subtle, but undirected, Americanization of the Lutheran church went on.

Into this admixture of Lutheranism came Samuel Simon Schmucker (1799-1873). Is it not just possible that he was to the Lutheran church in the United States in his century what Philip Melanchthon was to the reformation century in Germany? One is struck by the numerous similarities between these two men three centuries removed from each other.

Both men entered into a church which was suffering in an ill-defined vacuum. Their churches were seeking a confessional unity among Lutherans which might also incorporate more of Christendom within its scope. In each of the periods the church was searching for a confessional identity to meet a changing society. Schmucker like Melanchthon was the scholarly leader of his time. The latter was the *praeceptor Germaniae* (Teacher of Germany), and the former was the first president of Gettysburg Seminary. Both men influenced the Lutheran church in his own and subsequent generations, not only through the development of educational methodology, but also through their extensive writings.

The reaction of their contemporaries to them was similar in nature—both positive and negative. It could be suggested that they were not always aware of the full consequences of their actions and were unable to read the changing times in which they lived. While they were trying to help their churches realize a confessional unity through the *Variata* or through Schmucker's "American Recension of the Augsburg Confession," a shift was taking place among their contemporaries that caused alienation among Lutherans. Both had to face a rising conservative tide that showed a greater interest in confessional orthodoxy than in confessional unity.

The world into which Schmucker came to minister was an extremely volatile one. From

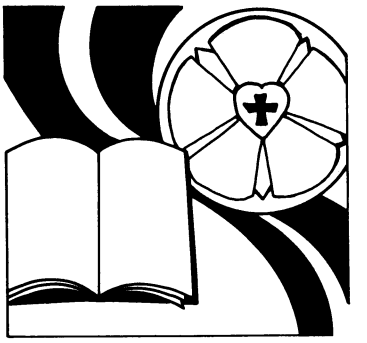
[3]Richard C. Wolf, *Documents of Lutheran Unity in America* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 12.

1783 to 1853 the United States reached its "Manifest Destiny," having expanded from coast to coast. Obviously the Lutherans needed to respond to this growth with missions in the West. To train persons for this would be the responsibility of the new seminary and its president, Schmucker.

Schmucker had as his first teacher his father, John George Schmucker (1771-1854), who was pastor both in Hagerstown, Maryland, and York, Pennsylvania. Under his direction Simon was introduced to classical Lutheran doctrine. His college education was under the direction of Justus Henry Helmuth (1745-1825), a Lutheran cleric trained at Halle and teaching at the University of Pennsylvania. In the nineteen months Schmucker studied theology at Princeton Seminary he was introduced to areas of church history and gained a respect for the teachings of other denominations. After ordination in 1821 at New Market, Virginia, he carried on an effective ministry there until called to the presidency of the new Gettysburg Seminary in 1825.

His experience in the Maryland-Virginia Synod and his contact with other pastors convinced him of the need for a strong Lutheran confessional position. He was disturbed by what he called deism which he claimed to have found within the churches. In a letter of 17 February 1820 to his father he suggested that all applicants for the ministry "be . . . examined in the presence of the entire Synod in regard to his personal Christianity. [He] deplored the ignorance of many of [the] brethren in the ministry."[4]

The challenge of the church in the early decades of the nineteenth century was to reach the hordes of people flooding into the West after the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 and the probing of interior America by national roads. Some denominations with well-trained clergy worked together in union movements on the frontier while others opted for a lower view of ministry and used circuit riders or farmer preachers to conduct revivals. Lutherans were aware of the challenge and at times also used circuit riders (*Reiseprediger*) who called their revival tendencies "New Measures."



Schmucker as leader both of the General Synod and the seminary was uneasy about what he considered only a "heart religion," even though he had been trained by a pietist. In his training of men for the ministry he translated Gottlob Christian Storr's *Lehrbuch der Christlichen Dogmatik* (Handbook of Christian Dogmatics) for seminary usage, but "soon found that the work was too technical for the needs of his students."[5] In 1834 he produced his own text, *Elements of Pop-*

[4]Peter Anstadt, *Life and Times of Rev. S.S. Schmucker* (York, Pennsylvania: Anstadt & Sons, 1896), 63.

[5]E. Clifford Nelson, *The Lutherans in North America* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 130.

ular Theology, the outline of which was based on the first twenty-one articles of the *Augsburg Confession*. He believed that it was necessary for his church to be constantly aware of its confessional position as it ministered on the frontier.

His growing confessional concern is best shown in the oath he took as president of the seminary:

> I solemnly declare in the presence of God and of the directors of this Seminary, that I do *ex animo* believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the inspired Word of God, and the only perfect rule of faith and practice. I believe the Augsburg Confession and the Catechisms of Luther to be a summary and just exhibition of the fundamental doctrines of the Word of God.[6]

Just four years later he helped incorporate a similar pledge into the new General Synod's model constitution for congregations. The General Synod, however, did not stress a strong confessional position since it attempted an inclusive church among the Lutherans in the colonies.

One needs to examine three factors in order to get a balanced view of Schmucker. First is Schmucker's view on the matter of fundamentals vs. non-fundamentals. In his *Elements of Popular Theology* of 1834 he held:

> Christians should agree to controvert with lenity, and differ in peace. Entire harmony of opinion was not an attribute of the church even under apostolic guidance; nor have we any evidence that diversity of view on minor points, was regarded as a barrier to ecclesiastical communion (p. iv).

Here he argued that not every doctrine was basic and there could be differences on non-fundamental ones.

Churches became increasingly aware of other religious denominations.

When Schmucker and other Lutherans became aware of other churches through the increased use of English, they expressed a desire to work and worship together. The American church was rapidly giving up its Germanic background as it accommodated itself to changing conditions in America. Thus the churches became increasingly aware of other religious denominations. Secondly, Schmucker took this Americanization seriously when in 1838 he issued his *Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches, with a Plan for Catholic Union on Apostolic Principles*. Here he offers "The Apostolic Protestant Confession" which was his plan for confessional ecumenism. Thirdly, an extension of his interest in world-wide ecume-

[6]Anstadt, *Life*, 182.

nism is found in 1846 when he went to London for the organization of the Evangelical Alliance. While the *Fraternal Appeal* speaks of union, the Alliance hoped for a closer fellowship among Christians and not an organic union.

The question of theological change within the theology of Schmucker is germane here in view of his *Definite Synodical Platform* of 1855, which contained the "American Recension of the Augsburg Confession." It should be noted that he, like Melanchthon, revised the article on baptism calling it a "necessary ordinance" and on the Lord's Supper he held for the presence of the elements "under the emblems of bread and wine." Thus while it is customary to date "American Lutheranism" from this work, it should be noted that he had held and taught virtually the same position since the publication of his *Elements of Popular Theology* in 1834 (cf. pp. 197 and 240). Why then all the pamphlet warfare over his "Americanization" of the Lutheran Church?

A rather dramatic shift had taken place in Germany after 1817 and again after 1830 with the rise of "Old Lutheranism" as a reaction to the efforts of Prussia to unite the Lutheran and Reformed churches. In the third decade of the nineteenth century large numbers of these conservative Lutherans had come to the United States, and their impact was being felt in all Lutheran synods. Like Melanchthon of old, Schumucker felt the wrath of some fellow Lutherans who saw this "Americanization" process as a new *Variata*. One must assume that Schmucker did not take this new movement in American Lutheranism as seriously as he should have.

Caught in the theological crossfire brought on by a rash of pamphleteering, Schmucker was formally charged in 1857 before the Board of Directors of the seminary with a violation of his professional oath by the Rev. James Allen Brown (1821-1882). In the seven years thereafter Schmucker's influence waned, and it became obvious that "American Lutheranism" had lost the field. In 1864 he resigned his professorship and retired from the seminary scene. He was succeeded by the same Pastor Brown, one of his severest critics.

How far Schmucker was forgotten can be seen in the cryptic remark of Luther A. Weigle writing about the centennial celebration of Gettysburg Seminary:

> . . . there was little mention of the founder of the Seminary, who was for thirty-eight years its first professor and president . . . and when his name was mentioned, there was usually a trace of apologetic in the reference.[7]

And so he remained in relative obscurity after his death in 1873 until 1965 when Frederick A. Wentz reintroduced this almost forgotten seminary president and eminent theologian of the nineteenth century General Synod to modern Lutheran audiences.[8]

In the first six decades of the twentieth century much of the effort of the Lutherans in America was centered on Lutheran union. It is significant to note that in the development of these new synods, a strong confessional

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[7]In Vergilius Ferm, *The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology* (New York: Century, 1927), vii.

[8]Samuel S. Schmucker, *Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches* (Philadelphia: Fortress, [1838] 1965).

statement was incorporated into each constitution. The Confession of Faith of the American Lutheran Church of 1960, the Lutheran Church in America in 1962, and the Lutheran Council in the United States of America in 1967 all have strongly biblical and confessional statements.

From the end of World War II until the 1970s the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod showed a significantly growing interest in confessional unity. One of their clergy, later president of Concordia Seminary at St. Louis, John H. Tietjen, expressed the feelings of many:

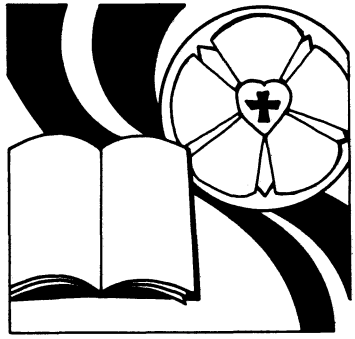
> What should be the basis for uniting Lutherans of America? I suggest that it should be consensus in recognizing the Holy Scriptures as the norm and standard of teaching and in regarding the Lutheran Confessions as the correct exposition of the Scriptures—that much and no more.[9]

In contrast to both Melanchthon and Schmucker who felt it necessary to change parts of the *Augsburg Confession*, twentieth century Lutherans now felt themselves confessionally comfortable as Lutherans in the United States. With this sort of dedication to Word and confession, Lutherans were ready to work more seriously in ecumenical relations both nationally and internationally. Thus many groups felt at home as confessional Lutherans in dialogue with Roman Catholics, the Reformed Church, and the World Council of Churches.

In the Confession of Faith of the new Evangelical Lutheran Church in America of 1988 a strong expression of the Lutheran confessional principle is found. With an Office of Ecumenical Affairs this new church seeks to realize the Reformation dream of the restoration of a unity based on confessional principles.

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[9]John H. Tietjen, *Which Way to Lutheran Unity?* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1966), 151.



Biblical Roots of Our Diversity

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This article offers the hypothesis that some of the theological diversity found within Western Christendom is rooted in diversity already present within the Scriptures, specifically within the Pentateuch. This topic is appropriate for a Festschrift honoring John Tietjen, for his interest and leadership in matters of Christian unity has been a continuous thread running through his ministry, from a doctoral dissertation on Lutheran unity, to unique ecumenical cooperation as president of Christ Seminary—Seminex, to the union of Lutheran bodies in the ELCA. The present article is offered with affection, respect, and profound thankfulness to John for an association begun already in college days.

I first heard this hypothesis regarding the biblical roots of our diversity voiced by my colleague and mentor in Hebrew instruction, Holland Jones. He never developed it fully, to my knowledge, at least not in published form.

Jones expressed the hypothesis simply. "J was the first Lutheran, P was the first Roman Catholic, and D was the first Reformed theologian." That is to say, the theologies of the three major Pentateuchal strata J, P, and D, show remarkable structural similarities to Lutheran, Roman Catholic, and Reformed theologies.

J, the First Lutheran

The Yahwist writer, J, was a theologian of Solomon's day, perhaps even of Solomon's court. The swift changes in Israel brought by the Solomonic empire precipitated a theological crisis. Just two short generations earlier, in the days of the last "judge," Samuel, Israel was a cluster of agrarian, rural villagers, with local clan leaders and little contact with other nations. Now the grandchildren of these Israelites lived in a united organized nation, governed by a commercial, urban bureaucracy, with a dynastic king who exercised international relations and built a national temple. The changes were breathtaking and the challenge to the Yahwistic faith strong. How could the faith of those old-fashioned farmers in the boondocks, with their semi-nomadic ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, speak to the glories of the empire? In addition, there was also a strong temptation to pride. Solomon's

generation must be remarkable; just look at the empire they were able to fashion!

J addresses this crisis of faith by retelling the traditional stories of the ancestors in such a way as to show the relevance of the Yahwistic faith to Solomon's day and to deal in particular with the temptation to hybris.

J's Theology. J's theology and message to Solomon's court may be summarized in three sentences. 1) Humankind is fallen, under a curse. 2) The empire is a gracious *gift* of God. 3) Israel's response should be to share and channel God's blessings to the nations.[1]

First of all, J reminds Jerusalem, in all her glory, that humankind is frail and weak, more plainly, sinful. Left to themselves men and women regularly destroy the good gifts God gives, and bring upon themselves a curse. J's key theological term "curse" echoes through the first chapters of Genesis. A curse is pronounced on the serpent, on the ground, on Cain, and finally on Canaan. (Gen 3:14, 17; 4:11; 9:25) These curses are pronounced in a series of stories which show how humankind has a huge talent for destroying all the good relationships God has given. J in Genesis 2-11 is a devastating depiction of the fallen human condition. This depressing judgment is explicit. "Yahweh saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of their heart was only evil continually" (Gen 6:5).

The honored ancestors of Israel are no exception to this judgment. They are fallible. Abraham can hardly believe the promise, Sarah laughs, Abraham and Isaac try to palm off their wives as their sisters to save their own skin, Rebecca helps Jacob deceive his father, etc. (Gen 15:2-3; 18:12; 12:13; 26:7; 27:19).

J reminds Israel that she too is frail and does not deserve this empire. In fact, there is an implicit warning that Israel could very well lose the glories of empire, this veritable Garden of Eden.

Secondly, J stresses that Israel has the empire as a gracious gift. In Genesis 2-11 Yahweh not only pronounces curses, there are also "grace notes" by which Yahweh ameliorates the curse. The expelled Adam and Eve are given a covering for their nakedness, Cain receives a protective tatoo, and Noah is rescued from the flood (3:21; 4:15; 7:23).

The sheer grace of God is best seen in two passages which enclose the flood story. God sends the flood "because every imagination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil continually" (Gen 6:5). Yet Yahweh promises not to send another flood for the very same reason! "I will never again curse this ground because the imagination of the human heart is evil from youth" (Gen 8:21). Since there is no future in giving Israel what she deserves, God simply *gives* an empire.

Gen 12:1–3 is the focus of J's message, however. After the dreary, unrelieved repetition of the word "curse" in Gen 2-11, suddenly the word "bless" breaks through no less than five times in two verses!—and in terms unmistakably addressed to the Israel of Solomon. It was only at the time of Solomon that Abraham's descendants become a "great nation" and that they gained a "great name" or fame (Gen 12:2).

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[1]The understanding of J, D, and P here is highly indebted to Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis*, rev. edition (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972) and Hans Walter Wolff, in Walter Brueggemann and Hans Walter Wolff, *The Vitality of Old Testament Traditions* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975).

Thirdly, this key word "bless" now recurs through Genesis where Israel's ancestors are dealing with foreigners, the predecessors of the nations about Solomonic Israel. J thus hints that Israel's response to God's gracious gift is to bring blessing to their neighbors, peace to the Philistines, economic trade benefits to Syria, and prosperity to Egypt (26:28-29; 30:30; 39:5).

J and Lutheran Theology. The similarities are so striking that one hardly need argue the case. Although curse and blessing are not precisely the same categories as law and gospel, they do imply the demand of God and God's forgiving grace. Both theologies stress what Lutherans refer to as original sin. In fact, nowhere in the Old Testament is this gloomy view of humankind's potential so stressed as in J.

Lutherans follow Paul in using the codeword "grace." J does not use this term in quite the same manner, but the term "blessing" includes this divine initiative flung in the face of human undeservedness. Likewise, Lutherans who stress *simul justus et peccator* (justified and a sinner at the same time) appreciate the mixed view of the ancestors of Israel in J!

Strikingly, J, though including a message that Israel should respond lovingly to her neighbors, lays primary stress on the fallen human condition and God's forgiving loving response to it. This too parallels a Lutheran emphasis (if not weakness).

J's was a theology for prosperity. Is there some connection here with Lutheranism's being a middle to upper-middle class denomination in the USA?

Lutheran Roots in J. For all the similarities, Lutheranism is rooted in J only indirectly. Lutheran theology can be traced back more directly to Paul. Paul, however, has clear roots in J. This is seen most directly in his emphasis on Abraham as the father of faith, and in Paul's allusion to "original sin" in the discussion regarding Adam's initial sin (Rom 4:1-5; 5:12-17).

P, the First Roman Catholic

As J addressed prosperity, P spoke to adversity. The Priestly writers addressed an Israel in exile, bereft of the primary sign of God's favor, the land, and the usual channels of blessing, the king and the temple's sacrificial system. In this crisis of faith, some, believing Yahweh was unable to beat the Babylonian gods, urged joining the Babylonians in the worship of their victorious gods. Others concluded that the situation was even worse than that. They believed that Yahweh *was* still in control and that God had angrily cast Israel off into exile, as the prophets had said God would.

P rose to speak to this crisis, to fan the dying embers of Israel's faith. First, P retold the stories of the ancestors emphasizing God's continuing love for Israel and proclaiming that God would bring Israel back to the land. Secondly, in the cult-legal portions of the Pentateuch, P outlined a way of life for Israel to follow after returning from exile. She was to worship Yahweh faithfully according to these cultic rules, thus avoiding another exile. It is this latter aspect of P's theology which offers parallels to Roman Catholicism.

P's Cult Theology. 1. The sanctuary and its liturgy are the central focus. God is present in the Glory above the Ark, and thus God's mysterious and powerful holiness infuses the sanctuary and its courts. All the per-

sons, objects, and ritual here must take that holy presence of God into account.

2. Not just anyone can come into the sacred precincts to offer sacrifice. A hierarchy of priests is needed to carry out the ritual. Only persons specially chosen and consecrated, with knowledge and skill of sacred things, can function in the sanctuary. Only the High Priest can enter the Most Holy Place. Only the priests can offer sacrifices. Only Levites can dismantle, carry, and reassemble the tabernacle.

3. Nor can just anyone bring sacrifices! Only Israel, God's special possession, chosen from the nations, can worship. Israel is an exclusive community, and indeed, exclusion from the congregation is the punishment for serious sin (Lev 7:19-27).

4. Even Israelites must be specially fit to worship. They can render themselves unfit by moral sin or by some act which renders unclean. This matter of uncleanness is strange to the modern mind, but it was a fact of cultic life for Israel. To worship, they had to live by a long list of rules of cleanness. Though perhaps the dullest portion of Scripture to us today, these rules were a way of life for many in Israel (Lev 11-14).

5. When Israelites acquired some taint of moral or ceremonial fault, purgative ritual was needed to make worship in the sacred courts possible. So there are ablutions, consultations with priests, confession over animals of sacrifice, and most important, a battery of sacrifices.

P and Roman Catholic Theology. It is difficult to characterize an institution so large and diffuse as Roman Catholicism, which embraces so many cultures and has undergone significant changes over two millennia. Nevertheless, there have existed theologies of a priestly class and of liturgical hierarchialism which bear strong similarities to P throughout most of Roman Catholicism's history, especially since the period of Constantine.[2] It should be noted, however, that Vatican II largely rejected liturgical hierarchicalism.[3] Thus elements of the following discussion properly refer only to pre-Vatican II theology.

1. The liturgy of the Mass is central to Roman Catholic life and existence and formative of its ethos. This corresponds to the centrality of Israel's worship in P in many ways. The presence of God in the tabernacle is paralleled, in a sense, by the bodily presence of Christ in the Mass. Some of the faithful still genuflect towards the reserved sacrament at the altar.

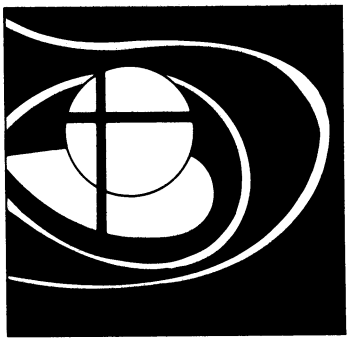
2. A hierarchical priesthood is vital to the understanding of the channeling of God's sacramental grace to the faithful. The Vicar of Christ, St. Peter's successor stands at the head of the hierarchy, first among equals among the bishops. The bishops hand down apostolic authority to the priests, and the priests administer the sacraments validly to the faithful.

3. There is a strong sense of the exclusiveness of the congregation in Roman Catholic theology. One need only think of the debates over the classic phrase, "Outside the Church there is no salvation." The rite of excommunication is a clear expression of this sense of exclusiveness. This sense has been relaxed in post-Vatican II days, but there is still a strong

[2]Donald L. Gelpi, "Theological Reflections on the Priestly Character of Our Jesuit Vocation," ***Priesthood Today and the Jesuit Vocation***, Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits 19/3 (St. Louis: Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality, 1987), 56-64.

[3]Gelpi, "Theological Reflections," 64-68.

feeling for the community which self-consciously calls itself Catholic and looks to the Bishop of Rome as its spiritual leader. This element of exclusivity seems to be an inevitable corollary to the priestly hierarchy both in P and Roman Catholicism.



4. Roman Catholicism has known many dietary and other regulations, especially preparatory to receiving the sacrament in the Mass, particularly in pre-Vatican II days. These are a far cry from the complexity of the cleanness rules of P, but the inner logic is the same in both of these liturgical systems.

5. Finally, some of the most obvious parallels between these two systems exist in the complex of ritual acts enacted by the priests to communicate God's forgiveness and blessing to the lay worshiper. Here the seven sacraments bear comparison with the sacrificial system in P.

Roman Catholic Roots in P. In spite of the close relationships between these two liturgical systems, it does not appear that Roman Catholic Theology is rooted in P either directly or indirectly. Rather it seems that they share a structure derived from a common sociological phenomenon, the priestly/cultic society and culture. No doubt dozens of priestly societies share similar patterns without any direct connection or rootedness between them. Roman Catholic priests no doubt have compared themselves to levitical priests, but these were comparisons after the fact.

D, the First Reformed Theologian

By "D" we refer to that school or group which produced the book of Deuteronomy. This group handed down a long tradition of covenant law, probably centered in northern Israel. After the fall of North Israel to the Assyrians in 721 BCE, these traditions were taken south to Jerusalem and set down in the book of Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy spoke to the crisis in Judah which the Assyrians had precipitated. How was it that North Israel could fall to pagan foreigners? Now that Judah was also pressed by Assyria, indeed had become a vassal to Assyria, would Judah also fall and lose her independence?

D explained the fall of North Israel as due not to any lack of faithfulness on Yahweh's part, but rather as due to Israel's faithless pursuit of other gods, failing to heed the prophets' warning. Secondly, and most directly, D addressed Judah, calling on her to choose between life in the land and death in exile. If she would turn from foreign gods and serve Yahweh alone, Yahweh would bless her with long life in the land.

D's Theology. 1. At the heart of Deuteronomy is the 1st commandment. "No other gods!" is the obverse of the core confession, "Hear, O Israel, Yahweh is your God, Yahweh alone" (Deut 6:4).

2. As Yahweh is uniquely related to Israel, Israel is uniquely related to Yahweh. Israel is Yahweh's *chosen* people, rescued from Egypt, brought into the land. This is reflected in the cliche spread throughout Deuteronomy, "Yahweh, your God."

3. This relationship is imaged by the metaphor of covenant, a metaphor which totally controls Deuteronomy, from its overall outline down to the logic of almost every verse. This "covenant logic" involves three points. First, as Yahweh had sworn to their ancestors, Yahweh brought them into the land after rescuing them from Egypt (Deut 7:8; 8:1). Second, in response to this gift, Israel should faithfully serve Yahweh alone, keeping all the statutes given (Deut 15:15). Thirdly, if Israel obeys she will enjoy the blessings of life and land. If she is disobedient, she will perish from the land in exile (Deut 28).

4. D's moving sermons time and again urge obedience to the law. The law is proclaimed not according to its second use, as Lutherans are want to say, that is, to accuse and to show the fallibility of Israel. Rather the law is proclaimed in its third use, as a guide for the redeemed. Israel is to keep the law in response to God's prior rescue from Egypt and gift of the land.

5. In urging obedience to Yahweh, D spells out a fairly diversified program for everyday life in Israel. But D does not simply reiterate the old laws. D *updates* the laws to bring them to bear on new situations, changes in society, technology, and culture. In short, D urges reform! In the shift from the prior agrarian-clan economy to the monarchy, a class of elite as well as landless poor had developed. D speaks to this with a marked humanitarian emphasis, urging aid and help to the weak of the society, the poor, widows, fatherless, levitical priests, and landless (Deut 14:29; 15:1-10; 24:10-15, 17-18).

6. In D the written law also assumes new importance. The covenant tablets are placed in the ark. The scroll of the law is to be read publically every seven years (Deut 31:9-13). The book of the law itself is recognized as authoritative as is. It is not a developing tradition. "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it" (Deut 4:2).

(loving) sovereignty of God is very near the core of Reformed theology. The famous first question and answer from the smaller Westminster Catechism illustrates this well. "What is the chief end of man? To glorify God and to enjoy him forever."

2. Election and predestination have also been a crucial aspect of Reformed Theology. Consider only the long history of debate as to the exact nature of this predestination, whether single or double.

3. Covenant (the Sinai covenant in which Israel is obligated, not the divine promisory covenant of J and P in Genesis) is a much used metaphor, especially among Scottish Presbyterians.[4] The most striking use of this metaphor was by the Puritans as they made the compact on the Mayflower. Having been rescued from "slavery" in Europe, they crossed the great sea, and before they entered the promised land they made a covenant.

4. As "Law and Gospel" is associated with Lutheranism, so "Gospel and Law" is a typical Reformed cliche. This is the order in D also. First God rescues Israel and gives the

[4]Arthur Carl Piepkorn, *Profiles in Belief*, Vol. II (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 273.

land, then Israel responds in faithful obedience to the law.

5. Calvin set the pattern by his great interest in reforming the society of Geneva, echoing Josiah's and D's interest in reform. There has been a continuing interest in justice and the church's influence on society in Reformed theology.

6. D's interest in written law is paralleled by the even greater stress on the centrality of the Bible in Reformed theology. Early Reformed confessions specify precisely which books of the Bible are canonical and determinative of doctrine. Lutheran confessions, in contrast, simply speak of the "prophetic and apostolic Scriptures" in part because a canon was not a bone of contention, but also because the gospel is the ultimate touchstone for Lutherans.

Reformed Roots in D. Of the three Christian theologies here discussed, Reformed theology is the most directly rooted in the Pentateuchal theology, specifically D. The example of the Puritans using the Old Testament as a pattern for their own experience is compelling here. It would seem this rootedness in D is a function of the central role played by the book, the Scriptures, in Reformed theology. This quite predictably led to a direct use of Deuteronomic texts. The theology of D not only occupies a great deal of space in the OT (Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings) but also deals with ordering a society's everyday life. It is thus no surprise that Calvin and many of his successors often looked directly to Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic texts for guidance.

Concluding Reflections

1. Occasionally one hears that Lutheran Law-Gospel theology is limited in the Scriptures and is basically only Pauline. No, it is clearly present at very least also in the Old Testament's "first theologian," J. It is thus quite "biblical."

2. To paraphrase Job 12:2, "Truth will not die with Lutheranism." Lutherans overenthused about their own doctrine sometimes forget the significant biblical roots of Reformed and Roman Catholic theologies. With such roots, we ought approach these theologies openly and positively.

3. Our theological diversity can be a positive factor in several ways.

a) We can learn from these biblically rooted theologies. When we approach them via their Scriptural roots, we will probably find them a great deal more useful. Furthermore, understanding their biblical roots may help us understand better what they are really about.

b) Studying the biblical roots of other theologies can help us overcome theological myopia regarding our own theology. We will better recognize its weaknesses and areas which it tends to overlook.

c) By studying the focus of each biblical theology, we can better recognize that each contemporary theological system addresses widely differing issues. Theologies other than our own can be valued for their usefulness in speaking to problems our own may not deal with adequately.

4. Finally, every theology ought to be critiqued before being embraced, either wholly or in part. Attention to the biblical roots of a contemporary theology affords a criterion that will give greater clarity to our thought and critique.

The Third Use of the Gospel

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"My deare, then I will serve." George Herbert's line expresses the Christian's response to the third use of the gospel. And love's reply removes any thought that the response is achieved by the third use of the law.

> Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back,
> Guiltie of dust and sinne.
> But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack
> From my first entrance in,
> Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,
> If I lack'd anything.
>
> A guest, I answer'd, worthy to be here:
> Love said, You shall be he.
> I the unkinde, ungrateful? Ah my deare,
> I cannot look on thee.
> Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
> Who made the eyes but I?
>
> Truth Lord, but I have marr'd them: let my shame
> Go where it doth deserve.
> And know you not, sayes Love, who bore the blame?
> My deare, then I will serve.
> You must sit down, sayes Love, and taste my meat:
> So I did sit and eat.[1]

When all was done, not all had yet been said. "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now," said our Lord in the upper room before the passion and his death (John 16:12). There was little opportunity for conversation and less for instruction after that, until after the "It is finished!" until after the resurrection. The first thing to be said, the fundamental thing to be taught was that "He is risen indeed!" No more dramatic a sequence of visual aid is recorded than the events of John 21 . . . and no more difficult a sequence, coming as it does after the concluding words of Jesus in John 20: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe" (v. 29). Raymond Brown sets it all apart as "IV. The Epilogue," and explains: "An added account of a post-

[1]George Herbert, "Love" (III), *The Works of George Herbert*, ed. F.E. Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), 188-89.

resurrectional appearance of Jesus in Galilee, which is used to show how Jesus provided for the needs of the Church" (*The Gospel According to John*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1970, p. 1063). His analysis of the difficult features in the account of chapter 21 brings the conclusion that things are best explained if this appearance is regarded as the *first* to Peter, and the three-fold "Do you love me?" questioning is understood to be a rehabilitation scene (vv. 15–17) made to correspond to Peter's denials. But for the purpose of this consideration of the gospel use, think of the tradition cited by Paul that Jesus appeared first to Peter, which is also found in St. Luke's "The Lord has been raised and has appeared to Simon" (1 Cor 15:5; Luke 24:34). Would Love's first words to him who denied—in front of his companions—be, "Simon, do you love me more than these?"

Such a question—repeated three times—would be more like a third use of the law phrased inductively. And the three-fold injunction to feed the Lord's sheep and lambs would appear to be based upon Simon's love and not on the Savior's.

The First Use of the Gospel My True Love Said to Me . . .

The first use of the gospel is the forgiving action of God-in-Christ.

Peter, puffing still from trying to keep up with "the other disciple," proving still his superiority in impetuosity if not in speed, "went into the tomb and saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, which had been on his head, not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself." That other disciple, it is written, "saw and believed." But of Peter, it says only, that with the other disciple, "he went back to his home." Did it finally reach his comprehension that what he had heard as "a passion prediction" and had protested (Peter took him and began to rebuke him—Mark 8:32) was not nearly so much a passion prediction as a resurrection prediction? And did Peter begin to ask himself, "What will I say to him—what will he say to me—when I see him, living, risen from the dead?"

No doubt words came easily to the Word in flesh—but did the risen Jesus also give some thought to what he would say when first he confronted the first Easter Christians? To Cleopas and the other disciple on the way to Emmaus, risen tongue in risen cheek, "What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?" (Luke 24:17). But to Peter? Could either of them ever really forget the sound of the crowing cock? "What will I say when I meet him on the road? . . . *Quo vadis*?"

> "Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back,
> Guiltie of dust and sinne."

That could well describe Peter even as he heard the disciple whom Jesus loved say, "It is the Lord!" and put on his clothes and sprang into the sea. But at this first meeting on the road, this first sighting after the weeping bitterly, would not the words be more like:

> "I the unkinde, ungratefull? Ah my deare,
> I cannot look on thee."

And would not the first use of the gospel by our Lord be:

> "Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,
> Who made the eyes but I?"

"Oh Jesus! Jesus! I am so sorry . . ." and the tears flowing and then words going on, ". . . so sorry" and the tears, on and on, and falling on his knees to reach out to grasp his feet, to cling to his living body, and in the midst of it all, in the midst of all the shame and personal how-could-I's, slowly to become conscious of the loving voice, "It's all right! It's all forgiven! Why do you think we've done all this—the Father and the Spirit and I? Why all the suffering and the dying—what do you think this rising from the dead is saying? It is finished! It is finished indeed! And all the denying and the bragging and the weeping—all is covered by the 'Amen! Amen! It is I, myself!' "

And it *is* finished—for us, all the Frannys of the world, crying out, "Jesus, Lord, have mercy on me!" for all the Zooeys of the world explaining to Mrs. Glass, "Thank God, she's dropped the 'I a poor miserable sinner part,' " for all of us crying, "Kyrie, eleison, I, a poor miserable sinner confess unto you," and for our:

> "Truth Lord, but I have marr'd them: let my shame
> Go where it doth deserve."

comes the word of the Lord:

> "And know you not, sayes Love, who bore the blame?"

And through our tears, in between our sobs, comes the laughter of the blessed, the wry self-rebuking laughing of the believing, reaching for the Kleenex of repentance:

> "My deare, then I will serve."

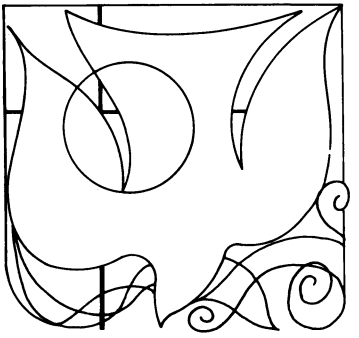
The Second Use of the Gospel My True Love Said to Me . . .

The second use of the gospel is the forming action of God-in-Trinity.

It is the repairing, the fixing, the mending action of God in our lives. The word should begin with "f"—like forgiving—so that we can more easily keep it in mind, but "fixing" seems a little flip, a bit inadequate to describe the gospel's work-of-the-Word. "To fix: to make firm, stable, or fast; to give a permanent or final form to . . ." as in the maturing to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ (Eph 4:13).

The analysis was in the tone of the Lord's query there by the side of the sea, "Lads" he called to them, "You haven't caught anything to eat, have you?" (Raymond Brown adds to his translation "an ironical hint that Jesus knew the helplessness of the disciples when left on their own. It is notable that never in the Gospels do the disciples catch a fish without Jesus' help" *The Gospel According to John*, p. 1071). The second meaning of "fix" is the position of our predicament, the fix we are in. Theirs was another night of toiling and nothing to show for it. We all are "no-shows" and the good we would eventuates in no good, all too frequently, and always in less than we should. If only we could relax—it almost seems—and say, "God will forgive;

that's his business," or with St. Paul's rejected proposal, "Let us continue in sin that grace may abound" (Romans 6:1). But we have died with Christ and want no longer to resist the Spirit who raised Christ from the dead and wishes even now to quicken our mortal bodies like unto his glorious body.



To those fishing disciples the gospel in its second use came in the words, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some" (John 21:6). And the gospel in its power was revealed in both their casting of the net and in the fact that "now they were not able to haul it in, for the quantity of the fish."

"A hundred and fifty and three"—if the count of the fish means anything, it is a measure of the completeness of God's mercy and the fullness of our line of credit no matter what our bankruptcy or indebtedness. "What shall we say to this?" Paul asks. The answer he gives to the fix we are in is, "If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?" And the power to reassure us is the gospel in its second use. The power to form us, the power to repair us, the power to fix us, no matter what our discouragement or our imperfect perfectedness, is the word of the gospel's completed work: "It is God who justifies. . . It is Christ Jesus who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. . . . Nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:31–39).

The Third Use of the Gospel My True Love Said to Me . . .

The third use of the gospel is the fortifying action of God-in-the-Spirit.

Again, the choice of a word beginning with "f" may undercut the objective of this third use of the Gospel. To strengthen and secure seem too defensive in meaning. Empower? it suggests the giving of official authority—a part of it. Enable—better: "*Enable* implies provision of the means or opportunity for doing—to make one able to do." The third use of the gospel is what the word "Comforter" is all about—from the Latin *confortare*—to strengthen greatly. It is "another comforter" from the one we are all too apt to think of—it is God, now incarnate in all who love the Lord Jesus, it is God and the Son and the Spirit making their abode in us, enabling us both to will and to do the sort of things which give God pleasure.

The third use of the gospel is implicit in the risen Lord's three-fold asking to Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Jesus knew before the spiritual-formation people of our day that we hold our children, we kiss and embrace them, not only to express our love but to deepen it. "Let me count the ways" follows upon "How do I love thee?"

"Do you love me?" How that must have stirred up in Peter the recollection of the many times his confession had outstripped his commitment—"Though they would all deny you, yet will I not deny you!" Of course, the three times repeated question would grieve him, reminding him of how the remembrance of his lack of love caused grief for his Lord. The three times repeated query would remind him of his own weeping bitterly after the three times denying—but would even more strongly remind him of the appearing of his forgiving Savior. And it is out of that love that the Lord began to count out the ways that Peter should serve him: "Feed my lambs. Tend my sheep. Feed my sheep." And after this he said to him, "Follow me."

Is it helpful to count out in contrast the three uses of the law? Herman Stuempfle describes the law in confrontation with the first forgiving use of the gospel as God's hammer of judgment. The law in line with the second use of the Gospel as the fixing power of God is described as the mirror of existence (*Preaching Law and Gospel*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978, 20f.).

Could it be said that the third use of the law in relation to the fortifying action of the gospel is the measure of our opportunity?

Letters to "*Christkind*" in our home were laboriously composed, after consultation with the Sears, Roebuck and the Montgomery Ward catalogs, on letter paper, folded and inserted in the crack between the framing of the dining room door and the wallpaper. The letters with all the things we wanted for Christmas were apt to remain in their places for days, to increase the suspense, or to remind us that he was sent first to the house of the children of Israel. But one morning—they would be gone. Now they were in the hands of God, and, we really knew, in the hands of his servants, our parents.

All the law, all the evangelical imperatives, and all the New Testament *paraenesis* are God's Christmas list to us. "I beseech you, by the Christ Child and the Lamb of God who takes away sin and by the Risen One, firstfruits of them who sleep, by all the mercies of God, and by the Spirit who dwells in your hearts, to present yourselves as living sacrifices, and to offer whatever of the following listed good works you are moved by my love to return to me and are enabled by the new life in you to accomplish."

Our prayer list is a listing of God's possibilities. If we have not, our Lord told us, it is because we didn't put it in our list . . . or we didn't ask "in my name" or it wasn't a good idea in the first place, which is why you ended your letter with "not my will but thine be done." The "divine commands" are the listing of our opportunities—"Feed my sheep—you decide on how"—always grounded in "You do love me, don't you?" always suggested after we have counted up to one hundred fifty and three, always proposed after we have had our fill of the bread and fishes.

What then shall we say to all this?

> "My deare, then I will serve."

And our God and Lord is appreciative but even then reminds us to keep all that we do and what he has done in proper proportion:

> "You must sit down, sayes Love, and taste my meat."

So we do sit and eat.

Matthew 9:18-26: An Exercise in Redaction Criticism

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This article is a modest attempt to express my gratitude to John Tietjen. Because of *his* courage and Herculean effort (as catalyst for the bold efforts of untold others, and under the blessing of God), my colleagues and I—formerly on the faculty at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis—have been able to keep doing what we were called to do. In my case that calling is helping people learn to interpret the Scriptures, and so my expression of gratitude takes the form of brief reflections on interpreting a passage in the Gospel of Matthew.

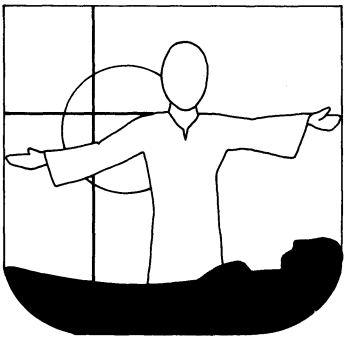
It is usually helpful to read Gospel texts in a synopsis of the Gospels, which shows in parallel columns the way each evangelist words the account in question.[1] It is often the differences between the accounts that reveal the particular interests and emphases of the individual evangelists. To discern these interests and emphases is a principal goal of redaction criticism, a study of the way in which authors modify and recast the material in their sources in order to address the particular needs of their own readers. Especially when we can compare the account we are studying with the wording of a parallel account that may well have served as our author's source, omissions and additions can provide valuable clues to what our author was trying to convey to the reader. In the following attempt to understand Matt 9:18-26, which has parallels in Mark 5:21-43 and Luke 8:40-56, I operate with the assumption that the Markan account served as the source for both the Matthean and Lukan versions of the story. Though it has its problems, and though some scholars continue to question it, the most widely held hypothesis about the relationship between the Synoptic Gospels is that the Gospel of Mark was a principal source for the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. If the line of argument pursued in this article is convincing, it can provide some support

[1]The United Bible Society publishes a very useful synopsis, edited by Kurt Aland, that is available in Greek, in Greek and English, and in English alone.

for the idea that, at least with respect to this story, Mark might well have served as Matthew's source.

This article seeks to read the three accounts of the double event of the raising of a ruler's daughter and the healing of the woman with a hemorrhage, to note a few of the differences between the accounts, and to discern what the Matthean version of the story is trying to say. The following is an attempt to answer the question, addressed to the author of the Gospel of Matthew: "*Why* are you telling me this story *in this way*?"

Printed on the next few pages are Matthew's, Mark's, and Luke's accounts of this double event.[2] I invite you to read the three versions, noting differences that you find. Then I shall mention, and try to account for, a few of the differences I have seen.



[2]This synopsis is copied from Kurt Aland, *Synopsis of the Four Gospels. English Edition* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1982), 84-86, and used by permission.

Matt. 9.18-26

18 While he was thus speaking to them, behold, a ruler came in

and knelt before him,

saying,

"My daughter

has just died; but come and lay your hand on her,

and she will live." 19 And Jesus rose

and followed him, with his disciples.

20 And behold, a woman who had suffered from a hemorrhage for twelve years

came up behind him

and touched the fringe of his garment; 21 for she said to herself, "If I only touch his garment, I shall be made well."

22 Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "Take heart, daughter; your

Mark 5.21-43

21And when Jesus had crossed again in
the boat to the other side, a great
crowd gathered about him; and he was be-
side the sea. 22Then came one of the
rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name;
and seeing him, he fell at
his feet, 23and besought him,
saying,
"My little daughter
is at the point of death. Come and
lay your hands on her, so that she may be
made well, and live." 24And he went with
him. And a great crowd followed him and
thronged about him. 25And there was a wo-
man who had had a flow of blood for twelve
years, 26and who had suffered much under
many physicians, and had spent all that she
had, and was no better but rather grew
worse. 27She had heard the reports about
Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd
and touched his garment. 28For
she said, "If I touch even his
garments, I shall be made well." 29And im-
mediately the hemorrhage ceased; and
she felt in her body that she was healed of
her disease. 30And Jesus, perceiving in him-
self that power had gone forth from him,
immediately turned about in the crowd, and
said, "Who touched my garments?"
31And his disciples said to him,
"You see the crowd pressing around you,
and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'"
32And he looked around to see who had
done it. cp. v. 30
33But the woman,
knowing what had been done to her, came in
fear and trembling and fell down before him,
and told him the whole truth.

34And he
said to her, "Daughter, your

Luke 8.40-56

40Now when Jesus returned,
the
crowd welcomed him, for they were all
waiting for him. 41And there came a man
named Jairus, who was a ruler of the
synagogue; and falling at
Jesus' feet he besought him
to come to his house, 42for
he had an only daughter, about twelve
years of age, and she was dying.

As he went,
the people
pressed round him. 43And a wo-
man who had had a flow of blood for twelve
years[b]
and could not be healed by any
one,

44came up behind him,
and touched the fringe of his garment;

and im-
mediately her flow of blood ceased.

cp. v. 46

45And Jesus
said, "Who was it that touched me?" When
all denied it, Peter[c] said, "Master, the multi-
tudes surround you and press upon you!"
46But Jesus said, "Some one touched me;

for I perceive that power has gone
forth from me." 47And when the woman
saw that she was not hidden, she came
trembling, and falling down before him de-
clared in the presence of all the people why
she had touched him, and how she had been
immediately healed. 48And he
said to her, "Daughter, your

faith has made you well."
And instantly the woman was made well.

23And when Jesus came to the ruler's house, and saw the flute players, and the crowd making a tumult,
24he said, "Depart; for the girl is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him.
25But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose.

26And the report of this went through all that district.

faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."
35While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" 36But ignoring[a] what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe."
37And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James.

38When they came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, he saw a tumult, and people weeping and wailing loudly. 39And when he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a tumult and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." 40And they laughed at him.
But he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. 41Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Talitha cumi"; which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise."
42And immediately the girl got up and walked (she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement. 43And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

You may have noticed that Matthew does not name the person who comes to ask Jesus to help his daughter. While Mark and Luke speak of Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, Matthew identifies the person only as a ruler. Another obvious difference in the accounts is that Matthew's version is so much shorter than Mark's and Luke's. If Matthew did use Mark's account, he omitted many details, and the omissions may signal his interests.[3] I shall call attention first to a change I see in the inner story (about the woman with the

[3]It should be noted that the two observations we have already made (Matthew does not name the ruler while Mark calls him Jairus; Mark's account is much longer than Matthew's) have been used to argue that Mark is using Matthew's account rather than the other way around. Now it is true that traditions can

faith has made you well; go in peace."

49 While he was still speaking, a man
from the ruler's house came and said,
"Your daughter is dead; do not trouble
the Teacher any more." 50 But Jesus
on hearing this answered him,
"Do not fear; only be-
lieve, and she shall be well." 51 And when he
came to the house, he permitted no one to
enter with him, except Peter and
John and James, and the father
and mother of the child.

52 And all were weeping and
bewailing her; but
he said, "Do not
weep; for she is not dead but
sleeping." 53 And they laughed at him,
knowing that she was dead. 54 But

cp. v. 51

taking her
by the hand he called, saying,

"Child, arise." 55 And her
spirit returned, and she got up
at once; and he directed that something
should be given her to eat. 56 And her parents
were amazed; but he charged
them to tell no one what had happened.

cp. v. 55b

hemorrhage) and then to a change in the outer story (about the ruler's daughter).

First, the cure of the woman with the hemorrhage (Matt 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:43-48). The Markan account is much more detailed than the Matthean. Matthew does not dwell on the severity of the woman's illness, the press of the crowd (actually, he does not even mention a crowd), or Jesus' exchanges with the disciples and the woman. In both Mark and Matthew the woman expresses her belief that she would be cured if she could touch Jesus' garments. But the cure is described in the two accounts in rather different ways. One of the ways of indicating that is to ask at what point the healing actually occurs in the Markan account. An obvious answer is v. 29: "And immediately the hemorrhage ceased; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease." But verse 34 offers another possibility, as Jesus says to the woman: "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease." "Be healed of your disease" is clearly like the healing words of Jesus on other occasions: "Be clean" (Matt 8:3); "Be opened" (Mark 7:34); and, in the second half of the account we are studying, "Child, arise" (Luke 8:54). So you could say that the cure took place immediately, as the women touched Jesus' garment (v. 29) or that it occurred when Jesus spoke the word of healing (v. 34). Actually, in verse 34 itself, prior to the words "Be healed," there are words that seem to imply that the cure had happened

get more detailed as they are transmitted, including the addition of names. In fact, in versions of this story found in non-canonical gospels, the woman with the hemorrhage—unnamed in the canonical accounts—is called either Mariosa or Bernice = Veronica (the texts in question are available in Edgar Hennecke and Wilhelm Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. 1, *Gospels and Related Works* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963], 151 and 457). But these rules of tradition transmission (longer, more detailed is later, for example) are by no means universally followed. And any person who tries to demonstrate dependency (in my case, Matthew's dependence on Mark) needs to offer plausible explanations for the changes that are seen. The material that follows seeks to do just that.

earlier, for Jesus says, "Your faith *has made* you well" (the perfect tense of the Greek verb—*sesōken*—is used). But—and this point will become more important when we discuss below Matthew's use of "your faith has made you well"—this phrase need not imply that the cure has already occurred. The cure can also *follow* this phrase, as it does in Mark 10:51f., for instance—"And the blind man said to him, 'Master, let me receive my sight.' And Jesus said to him, 'Go your way; your faith has made you well.' And immediately he received his sight . . . ."

The issue we are discussing can be seen from another angle by asking how Luke and Matthew describe the cure. In their accounts, does the cure occur immediately, as soon as the woman touches Jesus' garment, parallel to Mark 5:29, or after a word of healing, parallel to v. 34? In Luke, the answer is clear: the cure occurs immediately. Luke 8:44 says that the woman "came up behind him, and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her flow of blood ceased." Luke underscores his emphasis on the immediacy of the cure in two ways. First, in a statement peculiar to his account, he has the woman say that she "had been immediately healed" (Luke 8:47). Secondly, although he has an exact parallel to Mark 5:34a: "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace" (v. 48), Luke has omitted the word of healing, "Be healed of your disease." In the Lukan account, even more than in the somewhat ambiguous (in this respect) Markan version, what the woman expected to happen (if I touch his garment, I shall be healed) is what did happen—she touched, and she was healed.

Matthew's answer to when the healing occurs is just as clear as—and completely different from—Luke's. In Matthew the healing occurs not at the point of touch but only after Jesus' word of healing. Although he says that the woman touched Jesus' garment, and although he says that that was all that the woman thought was necessary—"If I only touch his garment, I shall be made well" (Matt 9:21), Matthew omits completely the statement that the woman was healed immediately. Instead, in this account Jesus takes direct charge of events. He turns, sees the woman, and speaks: "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." To which Matthew adds: "And instantly [the Greek says, "from that hour"] the woman was made well." For Matthew, it is not the woman's touch (even her touch of the garment *of Jesus*), but Jesus' word that effects the cure. For some reason the "word" that Jesus speaks in Matthew's account is not the phrase I have identified as the word of healing in Mark ("be healed of your disease"), but "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." In a way, this phrase seems incongruous in Matthew's account, for it could imply that the cure had already oc-

Jesus brings the shalom of God to this stricken woman.

curred ("*has made* you well"), which is what, in my view, Matthew's version denies (by omitting Mark 5:29 and by saying *only after Jesus speaks* that the woman was healed "from *that* hour"). But, as was shown above by reference to the healing of the blind man in Mark 10:51f., "your faith has made you well" need not imply an earlier cure (as is evident here in Matthew) and can itself serve as the word of cure (as here in Matthew).

In any case, as I read the accounts, in Matthew the woman is healed by the word of Jesus, who actively and consciously brings to this stricken woman the shalom of God. In Mark and Luke, by contrast, it is the touch that heals, through a power that flows from Jesus, in apparent independence of his will and purpose and with a kind of life of its own ("And Jesus, perceiving in himself that *power had gone forth* from him, . . .said, 'Who touched my garments?' " Mark 5:30). Now obviously in Mark's and Luke's accounts the power that heals the woman is the power of Jesus, or better, the power of God working through Jesus. But it seems to me that their telling is more open than Matthew's to the kind of sequel the story gets in an account found in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 7.18, which describes a bronze relief, found at the gates of this woman's house ("I have seen it with my own eyes," says Eusebius, three centuries after the event), showing the woman kneeling before Jesus, who is "clothed in a comely fashion in a double cloak and stretching out his hand to the woman; at his feet on the monument itself a strange species of herb was growing, which climbed up to the border of the double cloak of brass, and acted as an antidote to all kinds of diseases"[4] ("If I only touch the border of his garment—or the herb that touches the border of a replica of his garment . . .").

The other detail of the story that we shall consider concerns the condition of the ruler's daughter. In Mark, when Jairus first asks Jesus to come to his house, he says: "My little daughter is at the point of death" (Mark 5:23; Luke 8:42 says "she was dying"). Jesus goes with Jairus and on the way has his encounter with the woman with the hemorrhage. While he is still speaking with her, a delegation comes from Jairus' house and says to Jairus, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" (Mark 5:35; cf. Luke 8:49). Jesus, rejecting their idea of the limits of God's power—if she's dead, what's the use?—continues to Jairus' house and raises his daughter from the dead. In Matthew there is no reference in this part of the account to a delegation bringing the ruler the news that his daughter had died. The reason for this omission is clear. In Matthew's account the ruler says to Jesus at the beginning of the story, "My daughter has just died" (Matt 9:18). Although all three accounts are ultimately about Jesus restoring the life of a dead girl, it is only well into the story in Mark and Luke that we learn of her death. In Matthew, we know from the very beginning that the story is about a dead girl, whom Jesus will raise. Why did Matthew make this striking change?

I believe the answer can be found in Matt 11:2-6. While in prison, John the Baptist hears about the deeds of the Christ and sends his disciples to ask, "Are you he who is to

[4]The translation is from the Loeb Classical Library edition of *The Ecclesiastical History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957).

come, or shall we look for another?" Jesus responds as follows:

> Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offense at me.

It is striking that *prior to this point* in the Gospel of Matthew the author has provided an example of every detail in Jesus' response to John's disciples. He has accomplished this by rearranging the sequence of several stories in Mark. Thus, this story of the ruler's daughter and the woman with a hemorrhage is moved from its sequence in Mark 5 to follow events in Mark 2.[5] As John's disciples are told to tell John what they hear and see, the readers of Matthew's Gospel are encouraged to ponder what *they have just read*:

the blind receive their sight:
9:27-31—two blind men are cured;
the lame walk:
9:1-8—the healing of the paralytic;
lepers are cleansed:
8:1-4—the healing of a leper;
the deaf hear:
9:32-34—a dumb demoniac is healed;
the dead are raised up:
9:18-26—the ruler's daughter is raised;
the poor have good news preached to them:
chapters 5-7—
the Sermon on the Mount, which opens, "Blessed are the poor in spirit").

Thus the story we have been considering is Matthew's illustration to John and to the reader that the dead are raised up—and in his Gospel, and his alone, the story says that from the beginning.

But if Matthew recasts our story to make it illustrate more clearly one of the events listed in Matthew 11, why have precisely these events been chosen as evidence for John and the reader? Not, it should be said, just to list a string of "wonders," not even a string of wonders *done by Jesus* to show what a great miracle worker he is (which *is* the kind of thing we find in the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, which has Jesus make clay pigeons that fly and has him stretch boards that his carpenter father had sawn too short).[6] Rather, these events are chosen because they are the events expected on God's day of eschatological deliverance, as anticipated in certain Scriptures, for example, Isa 61:1 ("The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the poor") and Isa 35:5-6 ("Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy").

To summarize, by recalling the question asked at the beginning of the article: Matthew, *why* are you telling me this story *in this way*?

Why, rather than having the woman with a hemorrhage healed the instant she touched Jesus' garment (Mark/Luke), do you have

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[5]In contrast to the setting of our story in Mark and Luke, in which Jesus has just crossed the sea, in Matthew he is in a house with tax collectors and sinners, seated at a table—Matt 9:10 [par. Mark 2:13], which is why, in Matthew alone, he *rises* to go with the ruler—9:19.

[6]The text of this non-canonical gospel can be found in Hennecke-Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 1:392ff.

her healed at Jesus' word? Because this focuses attention not on a power surging forth from Jesus apart from his will, but on Jesus as the active and willing bringer of God's shalom.

Why, rather than having Jairus and the reader learn of the girl's death only after the story is more than half over (Mark/Luke), do you inform the reader of her death from the beginning? Because this story is meant to serve as the illustration to the reader that "the dead are raised," one of the events to be listed in Matthew 11. And these events in Matthew 11 are catalogued in such a way that they tell the reader that in Jesus, God's day of eschatological shalom is at hand.

One final observation, based on our original question, but with a change in emphasis: Matthew, why are you telling *me* this story in this way? It will be noticed that the article has tried to explain changes Matthew made in Mark's account for the sake of his own first century readers. But we read Matthew as Scripture in order to hear God's message for us today. I have just been powerfully reminded of that by recent contacts with ecclesiastical base communities in Cuernavaca, Mexico. These small groups of (mostly poor) Christians gather weekly to pray, to read Scripture (asking one another, what does this passage say to you *in the context of your/our own life situation*), and to consider courses of action appropriate to this life situation in the light of the message from Scripture.

My own answer is that Matthew has told *me* this story in this way *for the sake of the gospel*. He has encouraged me, in my own brokenness and weakness, to see Jesus as the willing and active bringer of God's healing. He has encouraged me, in the face of a world beset by poverty, injustice, and war, to see in the restoration of life to the ruler's daughter—and in Jesus' ministry, death, and rising as a whole—that the eschatological day of life, shalom, and justice (good news for the poor) has already begun to break into our world. As I await the fullness of that day, he has encouraged me to be an instrument of shalom and to recognize, acknowledge, and try to change, ways in which my own life and the life of my nation have often been *bad* news for the poor. What do these words of Matthew's mean to you?

"Seeking Jesus" in the Gospel of John

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Times change. I am aware of a number of complex changes, as I look back to the end of the 60s and the beginning of the 70s and think of events in the branch of the Lutheran Church of which I was then a member. Those were days of ferment both inside the church and outside. Inside, one of the elements in the controversy was the interpretation of the Bible. In fact John Tietjen was in trouble with the administration of the church body because he resolutely defended the way the Bible was being read and interpreted by the faculty over which he presided.

That last statement can and perhaps should be worded even more personally. I am still a teacher of Bible today, enjoying considerable freedom, in very large measure because of John Tietjen's stubborn unwillingness to brand people like me false teachers, his unwillingness to muzzle or fire me and my colleagues back in the days when that controversy was raging.

I am conscious of a debt, and I am aware also of how times have changed. I do not now read the Bible exactly the way I did then. He defended me when I read the Bible one way back in the late sixties, and through all the years of the life of Seminex he kept right on permitting me all kinds of freedom, granting me all kinds of support, through all kinds of convolutions of approach and permutations of method.

One of the things that indicates to me is that the heart of the controversy cannot be defined simply in terms of attitude toward "the historical critical method." Is there even such a thing as "the historical-critical method?" We tried to say that that title is a catch-all term for a really complex set of tools and that no two practitioners operated in exactly the same fashion or with exactly the same assumptions. But the title became a slogan, stripped of all subtlety and nuances. You were either for "it" or against "it." But in reality the issues were larger and deeper and more complicated. They had to do with the nature of the church and our definitions of Christian existence and of the Gospel in relation to the Bible.

John and countless others have been patient and supportive over the years, and I hope that their patience will extend also to

this present reading of some verses in the Gospel of John.

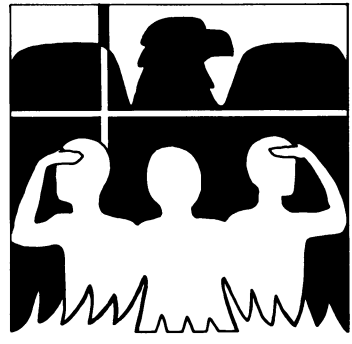
Let John Be John

For a long time now I have been trying to read each one of the four Gospels as much as possible on its own terms. I try to let Matthew be Matthew and let John be John. I am not interested in mixing bits and pieces of Matthew and Mark and Luke and John together into one continuous story. That way of reading the Gospels always requires forcing many of the details into an alien pattern and always results in a portrait of Jesus that differs markedly from what any one of them has actually written. The process yields nothing less than a fifth Gospel, different from the four we already have.

The four we already have are "canonical," recognized as authoritative by the church over the centuries. For a variety of good reasons the early church resisted the notion that one of our now canonical Gospels should crowd out the other three. Additional Gospels were in circulation: the Gospel of Peter, the Gospel of Thomas, and others. These Gospels, now called apocryphal, were indeed edged out and it was decided that they should not be read in public worship and should not be accorded stature in the church like that given to the canonical Four. And the church also rejected the attempt to blend the Four into One Gospel, as Tatian attempted to do with his Diatessaron.

Those were decisions made in the first few centuries of the church's life. It is a curious fact that in the more or less recent past it has been standard operating procedure both for the most fundamentalistic and for the most critical interpreters of Scripture to ransack the four canonical Gospels with their four canonical stories looking for the one "real" story of Jesus.

Fundamentalists and other conservatives have attempted to "conserve" as much as possible, jamming details of one Gospel into sometimes strange juxtaposition with details of another, lest anything be lost. And at the same time the more "liberal" or critical have sifted through the sentences and paragraphs of the Gospels, more or less cheerfully eliminating (not conserving) details which, by one standard or other of historicity, did not measure up and which they discarded as a piece of primitive Christian myth-making. So



it was that "conservatives" and "critics" somewhat ironically both set out on the identical quest: to find the "real" Jesus whose story allegedly lies hidden in or behind the four Gospels. The conservatives used an ingenious mathematics of addition, while the critics majored instead in subtraction. But both parties regarded the four Gospels as mere jumping off points, as inferior means to a superior end, as inferior stories compared to the one superior story the interpreter was prepared to reconstruct for us.

Both the most conservative and the most critical acted as though they knew the historical truth better than the evangelists. And both ignored the possibility that the evangelists had more on their minds than facts and events, which have cast their spell over the minds of interpreters (both conservative and critical) since the rise of the Enlightenment.

What if each evangelist, besides being an evangelist, or precisely in his calling as an evangelist, is more like an artist than a historian? Each evangelist certainly does have and does proclaim a distinctive vision of Jesus. Instead of asking how close each may have come to the historical truth, it is better to ask what each has seen and what it is that each one of the evangelists is attempting to share with the first readers and with us.

Our own confessional writings should have taught us long ago that a knowledge of history is one thing (no doubt a very important thing) and that faith and the object of faith is another. Faith is not simply affirming that certain events occurred in the past, even wonderful events like the birth of Jesus and his resurrection. Faith is instead a trusting reception of God's affirmation announced to each one of us in Jesus Christ.

Each evangelist was captivated by a vision of Jesus Christ and announced that vision in his Gospel. That is the fundamental vocation and achievement of each evangelist. Each evangelist received the Good News of Jesus Christ, was enthralled by it, and then began to apply it, first to his own life and then to the life of his community. Each Gospel is the deposit, the record, of the blessed effort of the evangelist to articulate the Gospel for a particular ancient community and situation.

That is an assumption I make about the evangelists and the Gospels they have written. With that as a presupposition I ask how I might then use that assumption. How can I go about the business of finding the unique vision, recovering the special portrait of Jesus offered by each?

Many ways, no doubt. In attempting to retell the story of Jesus, interpreters regularly categorize the material in the Gospels as 1) Jesus' Teaching, 2) Jesus' Actions, and 3) Jesus' Passion. While these three types of material may be distinguished, they are not merely interwoven but are all flashes of light from the same flaming center. Studying any one of these blocks of material will lead us to the center.

Each evangelist does proclaim a distinctive vision of Jesus.

So it is certainly legitimate to focus on the words or sayings of Jesus as recorded in each Gospel. The rhetoric of Jesus is an important clue in tracing each evangelist's vision of Jesus. And among all the words of Jesus, we could focus on last words. Years ago it occurred to me that the so-called seven last words of Jesus are usually dealt with in sermons on Good Friday as though Jesus spoke these sayings one after the other on the day of his crucifixion. And yet Matthew and Mark sum up everything about Good Friday in the one saying, "My God, my God, why have you

forsaken me?" Meanwhile Luke offers three entirely different sayings from the cross, and John has three more. Each evangelist recalls particular words of Jesus calculated to bring his Gospel to a fitting and apt conclusion. And it muddies rather than clarifies when we string them all together in a single series. By lifting them out of their context, where they serve as integral pieces in the total vision of the evangelist, we distance ourselves from the evangelist and from what the evangelist is proclaiming to us.

So one of the things it is good to do is to listen to the words of Jesus in the context of the Gospel in which they stand, before we start constructing some other context, some artificial context for them.

Then of course we all recognize that the sayings from the cross are not really "the last words of Jesus." After he was raised from the dead, he came and spoke still more words, at least in three of the Gospels. (For good reasons, verse 8 of chapter 16 is regarded as the final verse issuing from the evangelist's own hand in the Gospel of Mark.)

The last words of heroes or protagonists seem especially important in stories and books. The last words from the mouth of Jesus in each Gospel are remarkable for the way they do sum up what that Gospel is all about. And I think that first words are also. I do not any longer remember when or where it occurred to me to focus on the first sayings of Jesus in each of the Gospels as a possible clue to the comprehensive vision offered in each Gospel. I really forget. But focusing on the "first words of Jesus" in each Gospel intrigues me as one device for entering quickly into the mind of each evangelist. It is intriguing partly because this approach, as far as I know, is fresh and untried.

First Words

It may be only a coincidence, but the first saying of Jesus in each Gospel really does seem significant, seems perfectly appropriate for that Gospel, seems crafted by the author to serve as key to that author's vision of the Christ. These are the sayings that I count as "first words of Jesus." They are first public sayings, uttered as Jesus stands at the threshold of his public ministry:

Matthew 3:15
Mark 1:14-15
Luke 4:18-19, 21
John 1:38

It could be objected that Jesus in Luke's Gospel speaks earlier to Mary and Joseph, when they finally track him down in the temple (Luke 2:49). Or that Jesus uttered marvelous sayings earlier in speaking to the devil in the agony of temptation (Matthew 4:1–11; Luke 4:1-13). So again I define "first sayings" as the first public words spoken by Jesus.

Of course I am speaking here about a literary-critical observation. I am not asking, "What was the very first thing Jesus ever said in his entire lifetime." No. It is a different question, launching a different kind of quest. "What is the first saying of Jesus narrated by each evangelist?" And, "Does the evangelist load that saying with some clue as to what he believes Jesus was all about?"

I believe the answer to this last question is "Yes," even though Walt Wangerin, Jr. has told me he is not so sure. He of course is novelist and shaper of stories, and I take his words with utmost seriousness. But I find myself daring to disagree and offer the following "experiment in reading," in spite of our not seeing eye to eye on this matter.

John 1:38

Let's take John 1:38 as a kind of test case. This verse records the first word out of the mouth of Jesus in the fourth Gospel. According to that Gospel, Jesus is himself the first Word out of the mouth of God. In fact Jesus is represented as the Word that was always in God's mind and always in God's mouth and on God's tongue. After the Prologue has made declarations of that sort, the scene is set for the words in Jesus' mind and on his tongue.

John the Baptist is neither Word of God nor Light of the World but bears witness to the Word, the Light, the Lamb. Two disciples of John thereupon begin to follow Jesus (John 1:37). Jesus then turned, spotted them following him, and asked them a question. This now is the "First Word" of Jesus in the Gospel of John. And in this case the First Word is a First Question. Jesus asked them, "*What* are you seeking?" (1:38). A variant reading stands in some ancient manuscripts: "*Whom* are you seeking?"

One of the things that makes me pounce on this as a significant utterance is the fact that close to the end of this same gospel Jesus asks almost the same question. At the tomb on Easter morning, Jesus puts a question to Mary Magdalene, who has still not recognized him and who is still weeping, in spite of finding the tomb empty and in spite of having been granted a vision of two angels, one sitting where his head had been and one where his feet had rested. Jesus asked her, "*Whom* are you seeking?" Again ancient texts offer a variant reading. This time the variant is, "*What* are you seeking?" It is almost as though this question brackets the entire gospel.

Similar questions or statements about seeking are found in the other Gospels, but not as first saying or last saying. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus says, "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness (cf. 3:15), and all these things shall be yours as well" (Matthew 6:33; cf. Luke 12:31). And also in the Sermon Jesus says, "Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find. . . .whoever seeks finds" (7:7-8). And there is the famous word in Luke 19:10 at the end of the story of Zacchaeus, a word by which Jesus justifies his dining with that chief tax collector: "The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." How poignant are the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin where shepherd and woman seek their lost property, and having found them, cry out to friends to rejoice with them (Luke 15:1-10; cf. Matt. 18:11-12). Elsewhere Jesus speaks of the merchant on a life-long quest for the great pearl (Matthew 13:45). Paul says that Greeks seek wisdom (1 Cor 1:22) and summons the Colossians to seek the things that are above (Col 3:1).

The idea of human beings seeking God, seeking the face of God, or seeking the kingdom, or of Jesus' seeking sinners is a theme in many strata of Scripture (cf. Psalm 27:8; 24:6; 40:16; Acts 17:27). But John seems to me to have raised that theme to new significance in his Gospel.

John has done the same sort of thing with other themes. For example, only once in Matthew's Gospel is it said that anyone believes in Jesus (18:6). Believing in Jesus is not a theme, not in so many words, in the Synoptic Gospels, but it is a central theme of the fourth Gospel. John often seems to fasten on some verse or idea present in the other Gospels and to work it over, to meditate on it.

Matthew, for example, has meditated on the fact that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, and he has found wonderful sustenance in that fact. John knows that Jesus hails from Bethlehem and Nazareth but thinks that knowledge of such mundane geography pales in comparison with understanding that Jesus is "from above." Luke goes into raptures in view of the swaddled infant lying in a manger, while John sings of divine and life-giving light swaddled in human flesh.

John raised the theme of seeking to new significance in his Gospel.

The fourth Gospel meditates deeply on the origin and identity of Jesus and on the way people are connected to Jesus. In the Synoptic Gospels Jesus seems to talk more about God or the kingdom of God or the possibilities of prayer than to talk about himself. But in the fourth Gospel Jesus is not at all secretive or bashful. He talks freely and publicly, bluntly and boldly about himself. Such talk is not totally lacking in the Synoptics of course. But in the fourth Gospel there is a fierce concentration on who Jesus is and on right connection with him.

Now it is possible that the first words from Jesus' mouth in John's Gospel ("What are you seeking?") have little significance. It could be that Jesus is asking a simple, common-sense question: "Why are you two following me?" But I think he is asking those disciples of John and all the readers of the Gospel, "What is your target? What is your goal in life? What is it that you seek to have and to be? With all your striving and working and spending and living, what are you aiming at, and what do you hope to grasp and get and gain?"

The disciples of John respond to that question with a question: "Where are you staying?" "Where do you dwell or abide?" That question at first does not seem appropriate. And it is possible to take it as a humdrum or confused utterance. But chapter 14, for example, shows how important that theme of dwelling or abiding (*meno*) is in the fourth Gospel. Both Jesus' question and the question with which the disciples respond are brimming with significance.

This has been noticed before. Rudolf Bultmann in his commentary on the fourth Gospel writes as follows: "It is clearly the first question which must be addressed to anyone who comes to Jesus, the first thing about which he must be clear. And it is essential to know where Jesus 'lives'; for in the place where Jesus is at home the disciple will also receive his dwelling (14:2)" (p. 100). I want both to support and to extend that observation.

In an effort to unpack the exchange between Jesus and those disciples, it may help to look into the context in which the Gospel was written. The context may help to explain why the fourth Gospel concentrates such a powerful light on seeking Jesus and abiding in him.

The Original Readers

Two different contexts are usually suggested for the fourth Gospel, two theories, two guesses. 1) Most commentators today think that the fourth Gospel was written in the aftermath of a fierce struggle inside the synagogue. Christians who confess Jesus as the Messiah have been forced out, excommunicated. Feelings run high in such situations. The Christians have been kicked out and feel alienated, strangers in a hostile world. (The ground-breaking work developing this kind of background was published as *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, by J.L. Martyn).

> The goal of all religious questing has been revealed in Jesus.

2) A second possible context is one that strikes me as far more plausible and likely, even though it is held by a minority of interpreters today. A few commentators (including R. Bultmann, C.H. Dodd, E. Kaesemann, and E.C. Colwell) think not of a struggle between church and synagogue but think of a Christian community making an appeal to religiously minded pagans, inquirers, seekers, the same sort of people to whom Philo and the gnostics appealed.

The cast of characters in the fourth Gospel supports this theory. Certain characters, well known from the Synoptic Gospels, are missing from the fourth Gospel. Missing are children, poor people, lepers, shepherds, demoniacs, prostitutes, tax-collectors, and sinful rich people. Writers of stories define their characters by means of the situations they portray, the transactions in which their characters are involved. Jesus is obviously defined differently when all these characters are omitted. And a few new characters walk onto John's stage: Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, the Beloved Disciple. And some disciples known from the synoptics are emphasized and play fresh roles: Andrew, Philip, Nathanael, Thomas, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.

What kinds of transactions does John portray? In the fourth Gospel it is primarily adult seekers who come to Jesus and converse with him about life and death, about rebirth and revelation. They come not as wretched poor or painfully broken, not as outcasts or penitents, but as representatives of other religions, people addressing Jesus on the basis of religious choices long since made and settled (John the Baptist, his disciples, Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman). Or they come as people on a quest, open, inquiring (the Greeks, 12:20).

The author obviously wants us readers to know Jesus and believe in him. He wants us to see that everything we seek is to be found in Jesus. He passionately believes that Jesus alone will satisfy the deepest spiritual longings of humankind, and that seekers who reject Jesus or who come to rest apart from Jesus will be frustrated.

I AM

The great "I AM" sayings of Jesus have long fascinated and inspired readers of the

fourth Gospel. These sayings come into their own in the context of spiritual questing and seeking. This is their true home.

I AM the Bread of Life (6:35)
I AM the Light of the World (8:12; 9:5)
I AM the Good Shepherd (10:11)
I AM the Resurrection and the Life (11:25)
I AM the Way and the Truth and the Life (14:6)
I AM the True Vine (15:1)

Each of those predicates—The Bread, The Light, The Shepherd, The Life, The Way, The Vine—is not some unknown. Quite the contrary. They are powerful symbols living and breathing in many ancient and modern hearts. What the author of this Gospel is asserting is that the goal of all this teeming religious questing is here, has been revealed, in Jesus, in this speaker.

What are you seeking? Bread? Light? Life? That Bread you are seeking AM I, that Light you are aiming at AM I, that Life you are pursuing AM I. Come and dwell in me and you will see and taste and know.

The author appeals to people attracted by gnosticism and other higher religions of antiquity. He removes certain objectionable features of the story of Jesus. But he insists on the fact that Jesus in the flesh is the reality for which seekers are yearning. In fact he insists that Jesus crucified is that reality.

I AM Bread, Light, Life. Who is this "I"? Jesus, the Word who became flesh (1:14). Jesus the one lifted up on a cross.

Do you seek Bread? Light? The Way? Life? the Primal Life-Giving and Healing Tree (Vine)? Jesus cries, "I, hoisted upon the tree, AM that Bread, that Light, that Way, that Life, that Good Shepherd, that Tree (Vine)." The Goal of all your questing and striving AM I, the Crucified and Living One, the One exalted and lifted high.

The first word out of the mouth of Jesus in the fourth Gospel trumpets one of the great themes of this particular Gospel: seekers will find in the crucified and resurrected Jesus "life eternal," life true and deep and abiding.

This Johannine first word differs sharply from the first words found in Jesus' mouth in the other three canonical Gospels. Those other "first words" fit perfectly into the context of their Gospels. But Jesus' question, "What (whom) are you looking for?" (John 1:38) is a precisely appropriate prelude to everything that the fourth Evangelist unfolds in his unique narration of the words and deeds and experiences of Jesus.

Gospel Motet: Theme and Variations

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Larger older repertoires of church music continue to go unnoticed except by a few privileged musicologists. Some of this specialized repertoire represents unique insights into the entire practice of church music. One such repertoire that needs reappraisal is the historic Gospel Motet.[1]

I.

By definition a Gospel Motet is a polyphonic (more than one musical line) setting of a text taken from one of the Gospels. Gospel Motets were popular in Protestant Germany during the late 16th and early 17th centuries, though their origins can be found earlier in fifteenth-century polyphonic settings of the Passion. A recent example of a Gospel Motet is the setting, "Jesus Said to the Blind Man," by Chester Alwes, published by Augsburg Publishing House in 1983. Apart from a handful of examples from German neo-classic composers committed to post World War II church musical revival (Pepping, David, Bender, Krapf) the Alwes piece is something of an unicum. Contrast the popularity of the genre three hundred years ago: according to the research of Carlos Messerli, nearly fifteen major cycles of Gospel motets were published between 1565-1681, and in the short space of thirty-two years (1594-1625) a total of twenty-nine editions of various cycles were published.[2]

The significance of these collections becomes clear as one discovers that each major cycle contains a Gospel motet for every Sunday and Festival of the church year (according to the one-year pericopal system). The composer Georg Otto issued two such cycles, one for two voices (1601) and another for four voices (1604). Two-voice settings were common, since they adequately served those parishes with boarding schools

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[1]Helpful information on the Gospel motet is located in: Carlos Messerli, "The *Corona harmonica* (1610) of Christoph Demantius and the Gospel Motet Tradition," dissertation (University of Iowa, 1974); Hans J. Moser, *Die Mehrstimmige Vertonung des Evangeliums*, I, rev. ed. (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1968).

[2]*Key Words in Church Music*, s. v. "Gospel Motet," by Carlos Messerli.

with choirs composed of unchanged voices (like Bach's St. Thomas in Leipzig).

As a rule the motets from these cycles evolved from aphoristic verses extracted from the entire Gospel pericope, though some resulted from more complete texts. An example of the aphoristic type is the 1621 motet written by Johann Christenius for the Feast of the Three Kings (complete here with repeated phrases):

> And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
> are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; among the rulers of Judah;
> among the rulers of Judah
> for from you shall come a ruler,
> for from you shall come a ruler,
> a ruler, a ruler, a ruler,
> who will govern my people Israel,
> who will govern my people Israel.
> Noel (Matt 2:6).

General conservatism in cultic language and practice was assisted by cross-denominational interchange of Gospel motets by both Lutherans and Roman Catholics. Latin facilitated such sharing. Further, composers were fond of linking the motet to chant formularies designed for Latin.[3] With the beginning of the seventeenth century, German begins to prevail as the language for all of Lutheran church music. From then on Protestant and Roman Catholic church musicians took off on separate courses.

In retrospect it can be said that the musicians who created these Gospel motet cycles are not among the stellar colleagues of their generation. Unknowns like Herpol, Wanning, and Dulichius are balanced by somewhat more familiar names like Demantius, Vulpius, and Melchior Franck. Most have notable rank in German music history. Some individual Gospel motets however, come from the hand of composers of more international fame, such as Josquin Des Pres and Orlandus Lassus.

For the style conscious it can be pointed out that these motets are mostly written in the late Renaissance vocal style, though some of the middle and late seventeenth century collections specify independent instrumental lines.

II.

This basic description of the repertoire provides a context for appreciating its significance. Of far greater interest are the energies which generated this genre, and which lent it popularity.

Loyalty and commitment to the Gospel permeated most Lutheran theological thinking at the close of the sixteenth century. In the second paragraph of the Preface to the 1580 *Book of Concord* this dedication is summarized: "God . . . has permitted the pure, unalloyed, and unadulterated light of his holy Gospel and of the Word that alone brings salvation to appear."[4] That grateful

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[3]Performance in the liturgy varied. Sometimes the motet was sung in place of the chanted gospel. If the motet was simply a verse from the Gospel, it was sung in course with chant before and after. At other times a verse motet was sung by the choir after the singing (reading) of the gospel, especially if the motet was in German and the Gospel in Latin. Often the gospel if sung in Latin was read again in German right before the sermon. Walter Blankenburg, "Der mehrstimmige Gesang und die Konzetierende Musik," *Die Musik des Evangeliscben Gottesdienstes, Leiturgia*, Vol. IV (Kassel: Johannes Stauda, 1961), 684ff.

[4]Theodore G. Tappert, ed. *The Book of Concord* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 3.

recognition sets the tone for the rest of the confessional writings. No one, of course, would have narrowly understood "Gospel" as the mere words of the pericopes. Nevertheless the observation of Michael Praetorius in the first volume of his 1615 encyclopedic *Syntagma Musicum* probably describes the inclinations of most of his musical and theological contemporaries: "The [appointed] Gospel is the head and foundation of all, as it is spoken, sung, and read at the Office of the Mass."[5] What was central to Lutheran Confessional Theology became subject for the composer.

Gospel texts were fertile ground, at least during the Latin period, for both Roman Catholic *and* Lutheran composers. Evidence points to a repertoire universally produced and shared, probably because the genre itself owed its origins to the Responsory form from Matins and Vespers.[6]

The Gospel motet gave an inventive composer opportunity for personalizing a part of the proclamation. Traditional chant formulas for the Gospel were not conducive to nuanced presentation. Polyphonic settings increased such a possibility immeasurably, especially as Lassus' more expressive style of writing gained converts right and left in Germany. The creative urge of the composer found outlet in the Gospel motet while worshipers were introduced to bolder interpretations of the Gospel.[7]

The classic Gospel motets derived from distinct and deliberate beliefs about the function of church music. Composers preferred this form during a period when music theorists were beginning to describe the vocal compositional process in terms belonging to the discipline of rhetoric.[8] Decades earlier, humanists had prepared the way by revitalizing the precepts of Quintillian. In most schools liberal arts education was achieved in part by the Trivium of grammar, rhetoric, and logic. Rhetorical know-how was essential to the structures of learning.

Thus, the framework of rhetoric became the method by which theorists could construct understandings of the compositional process. Just as the expert orator required a common stock of figures of speech, so heightened speech, that is vocal music, required its own array of figures. Described and codified, they became grist for the composer and made possible that music which now we describe as "expressive."

Gospel Motets could be a form of proclamation equal to the sermon. Martin Luther already prepared the way to that insight when he once described the music of Josquin as "*klingende predigt*" (ringing [musicized] gospel). In retrospect contemporary commentators[9] have drawn parallels between the style of these motets and concurrent theories of homiletics. Evidence suggests that preachers were trained to develop sermons around the classic four-fold rhetorical structure consisting of *exordium* (introduction), *corpus* (body), *confirmatio* (support), and

[5]As cited in Moser, *Vertonung*, 7.

[6]Moser, *Vertonung*, 19ff.

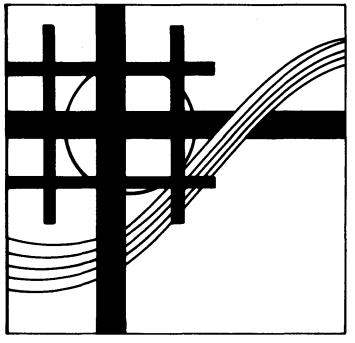
[7]Running through this discussion is the question about how dramatic an interpretative presentation of a liturgical lesson might be, a question which still prevails.

[8]Two useful studies of musical rhetoric are: Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, *Heinrich Schütz, Musicus poeticus* (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959), and Warren Kirkendale, "Ciceronians versus Aristotelians on the Ricercare as Exordium, from Bembo to Bach," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 32 (1979): 1-44.

[9]Blankenburg, "Gesang," 672ff.

epilogus (conclusion). Orators had been following this scheme for centuries. In the third section of this method a presenter was expected to compile a series of proofs or assertions. Repetition was the key to success in this task, and repetition was used extensively in musical presentation as well. For a musical *exordium*, composers often summoned attention by introducing voice parts gradually. They achieved conclusions by employing conventional cadences and chord progressions designed to convey arrival.[10]

Preacher and musician arrived at their common tasks not by vying for equal profile. Rather they both understood themselves as confronted with the precious opportunity of presenting the gospel through aural means. Only their techniques differed. Their common



commitment to *proclamation* gained importance through a common love of the gospel and through a sense of personal investment in its presentation. The composer could rejoice in the knowledge that such musical creativity was occurring as a part of the total musical enterprise of the time. In retrospect, historians speak of the time as the "Golden Age of Church Music."

III.

Is it possible to find in the evolution of the Gospel Motet some directions for the church musical enterprise today? Often and with obvious anger, contemporary church musicians challenge clergy to embrace them as real partners in the proclamation of the Gospel. The winning of such recognition, church musicians need to be reminded, does not come easily. Power and profile issues aside, any preacher serious about gospel proclamation knows that successful preaching happens with hard work, luck sometimes, and energy from the Spirit. Clergy need to be reminded, at the same time, that the same Spirit, luck, and hard work are also the province of the musician, and that in addition the church musician possesses the gift of "heightened speech."

But let's assume good will on all sides and a recognition of one another's gifts. Who will provide the catalyst? Little leadership issues from the publishers. They seem to be stuck on texts which are either a) poems from another time, b) selections from the Psalms, or c) snippets from biblical or non-biblical sources with non-threatening praise or non-descript Christian service. To be sure, musical slogans have their place, but they can be read as one of many indications of the church's musical disjointedness.

If energizing integrity is sought, it is there where we should expect it. If a confessing segment of the church has any reason at all to be noticed, it deserves a hearing because it stresses the centrality of the gospel, espe-

[10]Homiletical method a hundred years later stressed *applicatio* (application) which then found its parallel in the Aria of the Baroque cantata form.

cially in the sense of the good news of forgiveness, life, and salvation. The church's musical enterprise will gain integrity when it responds to that confessional call.

Perhaps the point is more profoundly expressed when it is recognized that the contemporary experience of the gospel is tied to contemporary forms of delivery. The possibility for effective, contemporary gospel-centered church music can be significantly realized should the writing, choosing, and presenting of "performed" church music conform to current homiletic method. Though there is no *one* current homiletical method, many preachers are finding the tool of storytelling useful. In spite of possible banalities, storytelling "my story, your story, and God's story" has potential for all kinds of structural delivery of the Gospel.

What's interesting is that some of the best-loved new texts are those which present themselves as stories. Many of these come under the rubric of God's story. Consider *LBW* 378, Jaroslav Vajda's versification of the Vineyard parable, or Gracia Grindal's hymn "And God Said, Show Mercy," (*Songs of the People* 2).

Others arrive at this fullness by way of experience common to all, by way of a kind of shared story. Carols are innately fertile for such a journey. Consider the beauty of these lines from Madeleine Forell Marshall:

> Dance and song and love of kind
> Sanctified in this glad season
> Well become all Christian folk
> God has renewed all creation.

An even clearer example of this second type is John Ylvisaker's text "I Was There to Hear Your Borning Cry" (*Songs of the People* 29). Through prolonged ambiguity Ylvisaker transforms a parental memory of child into that story God has with each baptized child.

The gospel lifted up in story form offers a path for revitalization.

These may be signs of a new partnership between homiletics and church music. Such a linkage may lead to a fresh consideration of gospel pericopes as sources for church music, though thoughtless imitation of the Golden Age has no inherent merit or promise of musical alchemy. What's not being sought here is a revival of the classic Gospel Motet. Rather, the gospel lifted up in story form offers a promising path for the revitalization of church music.

The tradition at this point invites inquisitive ruminating in search of inspiration, also in musical matters. It suggests that we search for the possibility of a contemporary musical glue similar to musical rhetoric. Musical rhetoric does not exist currently, though aspects of the classical theory persist into the present day. Most people, for example, hear an upward melodic movement as a reflection of aspiration.

The story approach to homiletics relies on convergence, repetition, and an evolutionary transformation of an idea or theme.

That notion of transformation is a generating force behind at least four current musical models.

Serialism as a compositional process enables a composer to structure recurring melody, harmony, dynamics, rhythm, etc. according to patterns (series) arbitrarily conceived but carefully observed. The result, though often quite cerebral, is an example of idea transformation.

A second example of the contemporary penchant for transformation comes from the popular music repertoire. Much of that music is constructed from a stock collection of rhythmic grids (selectable nowadays on electronic keyboard) which serve as the structure for a variety of differing pieces. With each new example, the grid is transformed.

Attraction to transformable grids shows up in the current popularity of an otherwise innocuous piece, the Pachelbel Canon in D. Its high profile may in fact be related to its structure: besides being a canon, it is constructed on a chordal ostinato (repeating sequence), presenting an experience of evolutionary transformation.

Finally, music of contemporary composers Steve Reich, Philip Glass, and others often derives from quite tiny musical kernals which are then transformed through repetition and almost imperceptible change.

Common to all of these diverse styles is the notion of evolution, the gradual change of idea or material. It is difficult to resist the suggestion that somewhere in these compositional processes resides the glue to hold together a shared homiletical/church music presentation of the gospel.

Should the tradition in this case be heard as inspiration, the first steps to faithfulness would already have been made. The end may be an empowered surge of gospel-centered music for the church.

The Disciplines of Pastoral Formation: Habits toward Holiness

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Red stoles are everywhere, including one for you laid across the communion rail. A nod from the Presiding Minister invites you to come forward. You move too quickly, and then manage to walk with more dignity, an almost studied stride.

Presenter: "I present for ordination to the holy ministry of Word and Sacrament, (your name). . . ."

Congregation: "Thanks be to God."

Notice what gets capitalized. Not ordination. Not holy ministry. What gets capitalized is Word and Sacrament, which lets us know what is important here. The absence of an exclamation point following the congregation's response carries the same nuance a bit further and suggests that this candidate is being received calmly by the church as one of the ordinary gifts of God to the people of God. While naming the candidate and speaking of the candidate's ordeal, "prepared, examined. . .certified. . .called. . ." the purpose of this presentation is not to glorify the candidate, but to glorify God who in goodness and mercy supplies ministers for the pastoral office.

Steady now, here comes question one.

Presiding minister: "Before Almighty God. . . and in the presence of this congregation, I ask: Will you assume this office. . .?"

Your name has been named and there is no turning aside now to reconsider, no asking for more time, no more hours for meditation, no more days of preparation. Today is the day you join the ranks of the clergy. All those clergy persons you have known, the ones you admire and respect as well as the ones who get varying degrees of your disapproval, all of them will become linked to you today in a way they were not yesterday. Today you will stand with them in a new solidarity.

There is a good practical reason why the clergy gather around you today for this rite. The truth is the clergy need each other to do what they are called to do, and the presence of those clergy today symbolizes that mutual need. The office you are assuming today places demands on you that no one can fulfill

alone. The office is not yours to own. You do not get a license for the independent practice of pastoral ministry today. The office committed to you today is yours to exercise in cooperation and concert with the whole people of God and with the other pastors of the church. These pastors form a *collegium*, a group of people called to the same mission.

Joining the ranks of the clergy is a single event, a milestone on your life's journey. Building and maintaining the necessary collegial relationships that will keep you and your ministry vital and growing is now a need that begins in earnest for you today and continues as long as you are in the pastoral office.

It is up to you to identify some from among this *collegium* who will function as your colleagues. It is also your task to form the initial connection to them. Choose some who are sufficiently affirming of you to offer both professional and personal support. Be sure to pick some who are strong enough and who love you and your ministry enough to offer you the solid critique you need in order to continue to grow as a pastor of the church. Colleagues are among the gifts that go with ordination along with the stole and chalice, but you must claim these collegial gifts for yourself by your action and initiative.

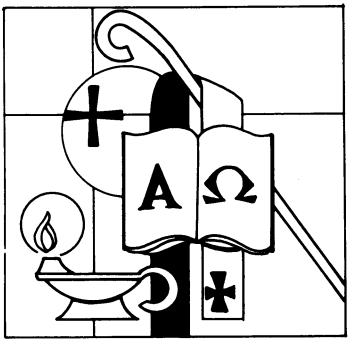
This is the first discipline for pastoral formation, the discipline of functioning in a collegial relationship with other pastors. They are pledged to both support and critique you and your ministry. You make the same pledge to them. Collegiality is mutual by definition. With such colleagues around you, you can think about assuming the office of pastor.

Functioning with colleagues is not something new to you. You did it automatically at seminary with friends and classmates. You did it on CPE and learned a lot about yourself from the experience. You found you had to do it on your internship in order to stay alive. Just possibly, your learning how to function with colleagues was one of the reasons some of those experiences were included in your training.

Go ahead, tell the one who would ordain you that you will assume the office.

Candidate: "I will, and I ask God to help me."

How appropriate. Your answer is a prayer!



You know the question that comes next, the one about the Bible, the three Ecumenical Creeds, and the Lutheran Confessions.

Presiding Minister: "Will you therefore preach and teach in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, and these creeds and confessions?"

This question marks you as a Western Christian pledged to the Lutheran Confessions. It identifies our place in the church which is one and holy and catholic and apostolic, to whose ministry you are to be ordained. Do not take lightly your Lutheran identity. On the one hand you may be

tempted to form it into a "Lutheran Club, No Others Need Apply." On the other hand you may be tempted to submerge your Lutheran identity in a confusing sea of ecumenism mixed with religious pluralism. Staying Lutheran and clear about it is going to require faithful study and careful thought.

Look at the task this question defines! It speaks of preaching and teaching in accordance with Scripture and creeds and confessions. All of those documents are old. Some are ancient! And complicated, way more complicated than you thought when you first came to seminary thinking of the Bible as a book you could hold in one hand. As if that were not enough all by itself, preaching and teaching means taking those old documents, finding their truth and then marketing it in today's world, to everybody from the Yuppies in the condos, to the Asian and Hispanic newcomers, to the growing masses called "underclass" in the ghettos of the rustbelt cities. Whew! Now you can see what was meant by the earlier reference to the demands this office places on you.

This task is no small one. You are asked to stay theologically alive, which means open to the cultures that surround you, as well as open to a world that virtually explodes with change and strife. Colleagues can be helpful at this task, and you can be helpful to them, but the whole scheme will work only if there is a discipline of study which keeps you open and growing and also aware of where you are not open and not growing.

A lot of this kind of growing happened at seminary, and at college, so you have some good practice at it and a few good examples. But to answer this question about preaching and teaching you need another discipline.

Here is the second discipline of pastoral formation. You study in order to have a mind that is constantly being prepared for ministry. You study to freshly relate the ancient gospel to a world that will not hold still.

Then go ahead, tell the one who would ordain you that you will preach and teach in accord with the Scriptures, creeds and confessions.

You know what hard work prayer is.

Candidate: "I will, and I ask God to help me."

It is the same prayer you said before. It gets better as it is repeated, each time you will find yourself reaching deeper for it, more grateful for it.

The next question is really two questions, but they run together. Listen . . .

Presiding minister: "Will you be diligent in your study of the Holy Scriptures, and in your use of the means of grace? Will you pray for God's people, nourish them with the Word and Holy Sacraments, and lead them by your own example in faithful service and holy living?"

The second question has heavy words in it. You are being asked to pledge yourself to faithful service and holy living. You! Faithful and holy!

You are not being asked to try hard or to do your best. You are being asked to pledge

yourself to faithfulness and holiness. There is a redeeming logic in the order of these questions that should not be missed. The heavy pledges are in question two. Question one has only one heavy word: diligent. The logic hidden in the order of the questions has the first question describing the discipline that makes possible your "I will" to the second question.

"Will you be diligent in your study of the Holy Scriptures, and in your use of the means of grace?" You are being asked to wrestle with Scripture and the Sacraments, to meditate, to open yourself as God comes to you through word, music, nature, art, people, poetry, and to experiment so that God might come to you in new ways, in silence, retreats, spiritual direction, with Theresa, Luther, Hopkins, Merton, Wangerin, alone, one on one, in groups. The discipline is, of course, the discipline of prayer.

The word "diligent" already implies a discipline, a seriously assumed and rigorously applied discipline. Not one forced on you by some outside authority, but a discipline you choose to take on yourself because you know you dare not attempt pastoral ministry without it.

This question assumes that you have found a form of prayer, one connecting you to the means of grace. The question asks you to be diligent, which is a promise you can make. "Diligent" means you set aside time for your prayer and guard it. All too often the first thing pushed aside in the busy pastor's schedule is the time for prayer. If that happens to you, the even more important question about your willingness to let God help you with faithfulness and holiness is at risk. The promise to be diligent means you are committing yourself to not let your prayer get displaced. It means if you slip and your prayer gets pushed aside one day, you will get it back the next day.

A discipline of standing before God to receive God's gifts for yourself, regularly, always, without fail, when you feel like it and when you do not feel like it, is the discipline called for by this question. On the basis of this diligence, which you are able to promise, the church then invites you to promise faithfulness and holiness. There is no other way to faithfulness and holiness.

You have some experience with this diligence. You know what hard work prayer is and how you resist it. You know how easy it is to let ministry to others intrude on your prayer time. You also know that if you are diligent in your prayer for yourself, you also can pray for God's people, nourish them with Word and Sacrament and lead them.

The third discipline of pastoral formation is a discipline of prayer. Answer the one who would ordain you. You are being asked about diligence in your use of the means of grace and about faithfulness and holiness which are gifts God would give you in Jesus Christ.

Candidate: "I will, and I ask God to help me." Asking God to help you on that one allowed you to breathe more easily because faithfulness and holiness surely lie beyond what we dare claim on our own.

Finally, question four, the last one, is upon you.

Presiding Minister: "Will you give faithful witness in the world, that God's love may be known in all that you do?"

You have already pledged faithful service and holy living, but that was with reference to

leading God's people. This one is with reference to your witness in the world. And notice, this time faithfulness is defined as making known God's love. This question moves you squarely into the ministry of living in the world. With this question the one who would ordain you lays hands upon your heart and asks you if it beats for Jesus Christ.

We must find our own hearts captured by the love of God!

Of course, you have affirmed that already with your responses regarding the Scriptures and the creeds. Of course, what motivates your diligence in the use of the means of grace is not just the needs of those you serve, but your own need for God's grace in Christ Jesus. With those questions and answers as prelude we now come to the core theme which permeates everything we do today and all the days of ministry to come.

"But wait a minute," you say, "if this question is so preeminent, so important, so vital, why do I not feel more ready to shout 'Yes!' on my ordination day?" The answer is precisely because it is so central, so vital. This question touches the central tension within you regarding God's love, and because you have exercised some care in your preparation for this day, you have noticed, and perhaps even counted your failures as a witness of God's love in the world. You have produced some examples of faithful witness, even a few times when even you could see some effect of your witness. There have also been all those other times when your faithfulness got tangled around your self-esteem or the times when faithfulness demanded a sacrifice that you would not give and your witness failed. Try as you might to believe in God's grace in Jesus Christ, you have found that you cannot erase these failures from your memory.

The earlier heavy question about faithfulness and holiness could be answered because the diligence question showed us where the strength could be found, namely in Word and Sacrament. This present question about faithful witness in the world asks that God's love may be known in all you do. Please notice, this question is not asking you to be perfect, nor even that you be a perfect witness. It is asking that you keep at the center of your being the love of God. Not the law of God, not the will of God, not the demands of God. None of us could do that. It is asking that you keep the *love* of God at the center. Love, which we come to know through Jesus Christ as the gracious, merciful, forgiving love of God, the enduring, steadfast, patient, faithful love of God. We have learned to look for the radically incomprehensible love of God lying in a manger or hanging on a cross or standing beside an empty tomb.

There is only one thing in the world that will make faithful witnesses to the love of God out of any of us: we must find our own hearts captured by the love of God. That capture is never without resistance. Though captured again and again we keep on resisting as long as we live. We keep needing to be captured once more. Diligence with the means of

grace opens the way to our capture, and recapture. This capture-resistance tension yields whatever faithful witnessing to God's love will come from us.

Do not be misled by our earlier emphasis on diligence. Our performance as a witness rests on our diligence only secondarily. Its much deeper foundation is in the enduring love of God who sent among us no less than a Son. This love of God in Christ Jesus is the basis for the disciplines of collegiality, of study, and of prayer.

Before you leave this love of God, notice it necessitates a new quality of love for yourself, and therefore, a new quality of care for yourself. This is no dried up and sour god you keep asking to help you. This God is the God of love.

The love of God for you blossoms into a whole bouquet of disciplines for your pastoral formation. If God loves you, can you do less than love yourself? That surely must imply care for your own physical, social, mental, emotional, aesthetic and moral well-being.

Thus, the final question is a strangely familiar one. You have answered it before, at each remembrance of your baptism. Many Christian people consciously and intentionally answer this question daily by their prayer, their witness, their service.

The discipline called forth in this question is the intentional expression of the faith. The answer you have been using all along, the prayer answer, makes perfect sense here. You, a faithful witness? Never without the help of God. God's help *is* there in Jesus Christ! This time your answer-prayer offers high praise to the God of love. In fact, your answer is a witness in the world to the love of God. Quickly, now, answer. . . .

Candidate: "I will and I ask God to help me."

Now you are ready to have hands laid upon you. Notice the emerging disciplines of pastoral formulation: the discipline of collegiality, the discipline of study, the discipline of prayer, and finally the discipline of faithful witness, with its attendant discipline of care of self.

Take note of two more things about this array of disciplines for pastoral formation. They offer us a way to assess pastoral formation in terms of what pastors do. You might even say we can assess pastoral formation by counting the hours pastors spend at these disciplines. But, let us not push it that far. The wonder is, since we can assess pastoral formation, we can also plan pastoral formation.

The whole thing was there in the four questions answered at ordination!

Confessing as Ambiguous Certitude

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One of the most incongruous things about martyrs and confessors is the certitude they project, incongruous in view of how uncertain and ambiguous their situation is in other respects. How can they be so sure of their confession considering what a mixed reception it gets? More to the point of this article, how can they be so sure of being right when they themselves are so manifestly fallible and sinful—in short, so habitually wrong?

Such ambiguity of course undermines the confessors' certitude. At the same time it puts their certitude to the test and, most remarkably, even serves to confirm it. Those of us privileged to have been John Tietjen's coconfessors have known that disconcerting ambiguity but also the concomitant certitude. It was an irony we had to re-learn from the confessors of the Reformation.

Confessors by definition are defendants, and what they are compelled to defend is not just the gospel but, far more humblingly, themselves and their own ambiguous record. How can they defend the indefensible? *They* cannot. But there is Someone who can, the God in Christ who specializes in defending sinners. Yet he does so only through the words and acts of known sinners, like confessors. Their ministry of the Word is his ministry of defense.

A. Sins Aplenty

1) Confessors and martyrs have been idealized by their partisans, not only posthumously but during their lifetime, sometimes to the point of becoming cult objects, and not always without their self-promotion.

2) At the same time confessors seldom lack for perceptive critics with an eye for detecting hypocrisy and grandstanding, not to mention—though mention they of course do—the confessors' larger sins of insubordination and vindictiveness and schism and heresy. All of which the confessors themselves, the authentic ones, are certainly sensitive to and to which they add their own list: fear of failure, unclarity, second thoughts, weariness—with God finally.

3) This is conspicuously true of the confessing movement in the sixteenth century, often invoked as a precedent for confessing movements today. The confessors then, too, were accumulating an impressive record of

public sin. I mean not only their sins as ordinary human beings but sins committed in direct connection with their reforms and their confessing.

4) Recall Luther's own prince, Duke John of Electoral Saxony, the selfsame confessor at whose funeral Luther eulogized: At Augsburg "our beloved elector openly confessed Christ's death and resurrection before the whole world and he stuck to it, staking his land and people, indeed his own body and life, upon it."

5) The truth is, the "land" which Duke John "staked" now included church property, which civil governments aligned with the reform movement had forcibly appropriated in a systematic program of "secularization."

6) Preacher Luther declined to use the elector's funeral to re-open his earlier criticism of this princely breach of public trust. Instead he reassured the mourners that even such sin is forgivable. But his reassurances betray how embarrassing such malfeasance in high places must have been to the confessing movement.

7) Another example of public offense is Luther's use of vituperation and namecalling. Granted, that may have been the polemical style of the times and, for that matter, the style of Jesus and the prophets. And granted that even Luther was surpassed in this art by some of his opponents.

8) Yet there is warrant for suspecting that Luther's acerbic rhetoric was not incidental but essential to his intention as a confessor. If so, does that not suggest that his confession itself was offensive and incredible deliberately? Or at least knowingly?

9) "Knowingly" is not too strong a word. In his *Warning to His Dear German People* (1531) Luther comments on the public offense caused by his abusive epithets. He can hardly be said to be begging his readers' pardon, but he at least feels obliged to explain himself to those he was offending. So he was intentional about this behavior, which, for many of his readers and hearers, compromised his witness.

10) These are only two samples of the confessors' frequent (and frequently noted) offenses, namely, their secularization of the monasteries and their harsh language. But these two samples pale into insignificance by comparison with an even graver offense, the confessors' seismic subversion of the whole traditional social and ecclesiastical order and its authority. That marked the confessors, in the language of Psalm 118, as "destroyers"—and as Luther had to remind Melanchthon, "deservedly so."

11) For even if we grant that the confessors were forced into being "destroyers" against their will, and if we grant that they—at least some of them some of the time—did not want to seize the church's authority, even its secular authority for themselves, and if we further grant that they wanted only that the church's secular authority be sublimated to its other, very different ***kind*** of authority, that of the gospel, so what? Fact is, these distinctions were unsustainable in practice, and the confessors found themselves party to the destroying all the same, willy nilly.

B. Confessable Sins?

12) But now let us sample the ways—again, only a few—by which those confessors strove to keep the offense from discrediting their confession. How to defend their gospel but not their sin? The most obvious

way would have been never to commit such scandals in the first place. But as Luther observes, that is more easily said than done, particularly when one is subject to the pressures of public life.

13) Presumably even the best intentioned efforts at reinstating the gospel of Christ as the church's dominant authority over its other, necessarily secular modes of authority seemed doomed to incur retaliation by force from church officials, maybe from their civil counterparts to boot. Sooner or later the confessors, if only in "self defense," would have blood on their hands as well. Why else would Luther's *Warning* have to labor so hard to clear him and his co-confessors of sedition?

14) But then would not the next most responsible course, next to avoiding such sins altogether, have been an open admission of the sins committed and open repudiation of them? That suggestion, too, is simplistic.

15) When confessors fault their own failings publicly, that is, within the hearing of their adversaries, they virtually invite the latter to misconstrue a confession of sin as invalidating the confession of faith. Under no circumstance dare that misimpression be given.

16) This is the dilemma later noted by the confessor Bonhoeffer: telling the truth sometimes requires *not* telling it, "not discussing one's sins with the devil."

17) The question arises, how are these two sorts of confessing, of sin and of faith, related? Is it altogether accidental that the verb in both cases is the same? I think not. At the very least the confessing sinner and the confessing believer, the *martys*, is one and the same defendant under judgment from superior, critical authority.

18) In both cases the confessing, whether of sin or of faith, is likely to confirm the accusers' suspicion of guilt. Rightly so? Might it just be that the very content of the faith being confessed requires exactly that, requires that the ones confessing it be identified as sinners in the process? Strange as it seems, might not their culpability confirm the credibility of the faith they confess?

19) For now let us observe that the confessors' undeniable wrongs, which incriminate them if they minimize them, cannot be called attention to lest that undermine their higher confession, the gospel. The gospel is not expendable, they are. Of it they can be certain, of themselves not.

C. When Sin Belies Gospel

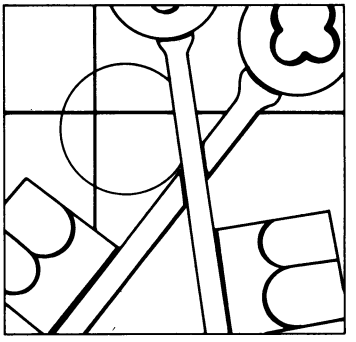
20) This whole distinction between the certainty of the gospel and the dubiousness of those who confess it, as though the latter can in no case vitiate the former, must not be pressed too far. In historical fact, so far as I know, there never has been a defending of one's confession which was not inseparably a defending of oneself, much as the confessor might have preferred otherwise.

21) Even logically, the truth of the gospel—not just its credibility but its truth—can indeed be falsified by the untruthfulness of its bearers. Admittedly the Word and the sacraments were for the Lutheran confessors as for all good Catholics, all anti-Donatists, valid independently of the sinners who administered them. Valid for *others*!

22) But this should not be taken to mean, nor may the confessors appear to suggest,

that the gospel is true of just anyone regardless of how he or she may appropriate it. The promise of forgiveness may be refuted in practice by those who make themselves unforgivable.

23) The confessors at the time of the Reformation had to make clear that they understood that sobering truth. Else not only they but also the gospel they would thus be cheapening would stand refuted.



24) Luther took pains publicly to disassociate his confession from those "fanatics" within the larger reform movement who "cry out, 'Do what you will, it matters not as long as you believe, for faith blots out all sins' " (SA 3,5:42).

25) "It is therefore necessary to know and to teach," Luther replies, "that when holy people, aside from the fact that they still possess and feel original sin and daily repent and strive against it, fall into open sin (as David fell into adultery, murder and blasphemy), faith and the Spirit have departed from them" (SA 3,5:43).

26) "This is so, " Luther explains, "because the Holy Spirit does not permit sin to rule and gain the upper hand in such a way that sin is committed, but the Holy Spirit represses and restrains it so that it does not do what it wishes. If sin does what it wishes, the Holy Spirit and faith are not present" (SA 3,5:44)—not even, presumably, in confessors who simultaneously may be mouthing the gospel.

27) Then the gospel they are confessing, if at the same time their sin is doing "what it wishes," is a gospel which is inapplicable to themselves and so, in its most immediate reference, is literally untrue. The gospel is objectively untrue of those who speak it if subjectively they deny it. That hardly makes for a convincing witness to others. Also, it nullifies any certitude of their own.

28) That, I take it, is a primary theological reason (not just a juridical reason) why Luther's *Warning* has to demonstrate that the impending violence in Germany, for all the guilt that it may expose on both sides, is contrary to everything he and his fellow-confessors intended and worked for. If their civil rebellion is sin, in their case it is not sin simply having its own way, doing "what it wishes." Sin it may be, yet not as something they defend. But the question remains, then how can they—not only the gospel but *their* gospel—be defended if the only way they can do that is sinful?

D. Snubbing the Devil

29) Not that confessors must be sinless before their confession can be convincing, but their sin must be the sort which they "daily repent and strive against"—repudiated sin. The opposite, the kind which disqualifies the *confessio* as well as the confessor, is the sort of sin which has become

intentional, official, a matter of policy, not only not repented but adopted and institutionalized or, as Luther says, "defended" and even "enforced." Such practice, by definition, would be the opposite of orthopraxy.

30) Luther claimed to find that sort of defended and enforced sin, sin-made-policy, in the papal-imperial forces which were threatening to invade Germany in order to silence the Augsburg Confession by force. He dares the leaders of those forces to submit their perverse plans to God in prayer, wagering that they would find it psychically impossible to invoke divine blessing upon their perfidy with anything remotely like a clear "conscience"—that is, with faith. For Luther that seems to have been a test of what qualifies as Christian praxis.

31) About his opponents' "shameful, blasphemous, unchaste, accursed, hellish, and devilish life," Luther shrugs, "all of this might be tolerated if they did not presume to *defend* it and insist with force on being in the right."

32) Of course, the same rule which applies to the adversaries must apply to the confessors themselves. Yet because as defendants they are the ones on trial in a way that their adversaries are not, their difficulty is compounded by a special dilemma. On one hand, in order to make clear that their sin is not something they defend, they ought to make a clean breast of it explicitly and publicly.

33) On the other hand, on the principle of not discussing one's sin with the devil, the confessors dare not indulge in too generous a confession of their own sin lest that neutralize their confession of faith, which is not just their own. What a humbling realization it must be for confessors to discover how much they have to resemble politicians!

34) Hepworth and Turner, two British sociologists, have studied murderer's confessions of guilt, especially in the Christian West, and they marvel "not why people confess but how they remain silent" in face of withering pressure, inner and outer, to the contrary. The compulsion to confess—nowadays especially our sexual secrets—has been exposed by Michel Foucault as still almost overwhelming.

Confessors dare not indulge in too generous a confession of their own sin.

35) In his *Warning* Luther recalls how the spiritual authorities in the penitential system of that day enforced "the intolerable torment and impossible toil of relating one's sins and of feeling contrition for them." Up against this compulsion to confess their sin, confessors of the faith had to withstand the pressure for additional reasons of their own, namely, that their confessed gospel not be disgraced by their confessed sin.

36) Luther faced that dilemma on the question of armed resistance. He anticipated that, if the papal-imperial forces would invade Germany to enforce the edict against the Augsburg Confession, his fellow Germans

and even his German followers would surely revolt by force. That contradicted his own deep convictions of how the gospel is to be defended. This time, however, he refused to censure such violent recourse. For otherwise he would only be giving an alibi to the invaders who would then use the confessors' self-criticism as an admission of insurrection, and as justification for their repression.

37) The invaders, should they provoke a German uprising, would be only too eager to rationalize, "See, that is the fruit of Lutheran teaching." Instead, Luther counters, "I want to . . . deprive the bloodhounds of the pretext of boasting that they are warring against a rebellious people." Therefore he would not openly reprove the people as rebellious.

38) "If war should come now," Luther announces, "I will surely hold my pen in check and keep silent and not intervene as I did in the last uprising." For the adversaries' larger strategy, according to *Warning*, is "to arraign us as recanters of all our teaching . . . by our own lips." That is "the tomfoolery of the devil." Why put words in the devil's mouth by admitting to the charge of sedition?

E. "Our Heart" Versus "Our Works"?

39) Besides withholding evidence from the devil, Luther had also another reason for not being too critical of his people's taking up the sword, and that reason was *not* that self-defense was their manifest Christian right. (He was only barely convinced that it was a legal right.) No, his reason rather was pastoral. It had to do with the confessors' faith, their own "conscience," what we have been calling certitude.

40) He explained, "I do not want to leave the conscience of the people burdened by the concern and worry that their self-defense might be rebellious." For he knew "what it means to wage war with a bad conscience and a despondent heart"—what we have been calling ambiguity.

41) So then it is not just "the devil" in the form of the opponents who must be spared the details of one's sin. Those details must be withheld from one's own "conscience," lest the confessors' struggle be waged without the certitude of faith.

42) How to rally the German resistance movement against the invading "enemies of the gospel" yet without burdening the resisters' "consciences" with self-doubt about their justification, thus losing the confessional cause altogether? One way would be to reassure them that in this instance they would not be guilty technically of "insurrection" but only of "self-defense" or civil disobedience.

43) Yet that is only a second-best reassurance, one which is better left to the lawyers. Pastorally it mislocates certitude in the relative rightness or wrongness of the confessors' own acts. Luther's preferred alternative, as one might expect, is to redirect the resisters' certitude to the gospel of Christ, especially to that "cardinal doctrine according to which our heart is to look to Christ alone for consolation and assurance and not to look to our own works."

44) But ah, how easily this Lutheran antithesis between "our heart" and "our works" could be misunderstood, notably by Lutherans. For at first glance everything for

Luther now seems to depend on the confessors' inwardness, their subjectivity: on where "our heart is to look. . . for consolation and assurance." And clearly their hearts are "not to look to our own works."

What difference does their public confessing or non-confessing finally make?

45) But if "works" are not to be considered in this very public trial, when that is what it has been all about—a very public "work" at Augsburg and now with an impending military invasion the "work" of open resistance—then isn't Luther's *Warning* tragically privatistic, de-politicizing and (to our point presently at issue) quite evasive of the confessors' responsibility for their own ambiguous "works"?

46) Wasn't that Lutheran tactic all too predictable, that when the confessors' "own works" betray and worry them they abruptly change the subject away from themselves to a conveniently private Christ of "our heart," hoping that even their ecclesiastical adversaries—and with practice, possibly their own consciences—dare not pursue them into that off-limits sanctuary?

47) Moreover, might not that forgiven-if-you-do-forgiven-if-you-don't sort of certitude backfire? Might it not suggest, if Christ will forgive our fighting the invaders he will also forgive the opposite, our capitulating to them, so long as we turn our "consciences" over to him for "consolation"? If that reassures the certitude of the confessors in face of their sin, it also faces them with a new, worse ambiguity: what difference does their public confessing or non-confessing finally make, either to them or to Christ?

F. Christ Versus Counter-Christ

48) All these questions, though not without historical warrant, patently misread Luther's antithesis, above, and indeed the whole argument of his *Warning*. His contrast is not at all between "our heart" and "our works" but rather between "Christ" and "our works," between which of these two our heart will "look to . . . for consolation and assurance."

49) But the distinction is a fine one. For the Christ to whom our hearts are to look is almost indistinguishable from "our works," those same ambiguous works of human preaching and reform and resistance through which alone Christ intervenes for sinners' defense. True enough, he is anything but an inner Christ removed from the public sector. On the contrary, this is a Christ who is presently engaged and is overtly identifiable in the social order of the day and in the known events of recent history: in the work of reform and confession. But then isn't he virtually synonymous with what to all the world look like "our own works?" Yes, virtually.

50) For "now—praise be to God—it has come to pass that man and woman, young

and old, know the catechism; they know how to believe, to live, to pray, to suffer and to die . . . how to be Christians and how to recognize Christ. . . . Pulpit, altar, and baptismal font have been restored to their proper place, so that—thank God—the form of a Christian church can again be recognized." Notice the self-confidence, the "certitude."

51) Whose accomplishments were these, the confessors' or Christ's? Yes. Simultaneously they were "all the good which the dear *gospel* has again restored" but which in the same breath is restated," *our* gospel has accomplished much good, thanks to be God."

52) That is where Christ is presently to be looked to for "consolation and assurance": in his original life and death and resurrection, yes, but also in the battle he is currently waging for "God and his word" in Germany, and all very publicly.

53) There, however, the primary antithesis is not between "our own works" and Christ's, for there they may be one and the same, or at least the one as *medium* for the Other's *gratia*. No, there in that imminent apocalyptic showdown, in that "time for confessing," the dominant antithesis is rather between what Christ is doing, albeit through his ambiguous confessors, and what is being done on the other hand to counter him through equally human agents.

54) But if Christ wages his cause, the defense of sinners, through such compromised instruments as these sinful and sinning Germans, why cannot the same be said for their sinful opponents? To establish his antithesis between "Christ" and "Counter-Christ" it is essential for Luther's *Warning* to document historiographically and empirically, "with clear and strong reason" not only that the opponents at this juncture are sinners—who isn't? "All of this might be tolerated!"—but that they are sinning against the very exertions of Christ himself to reform his church with his gospel, *and are doing that "knowingly*."

55) Because they oppose the gospel knowingly and not repentingly, the opponents are defending themselves not *by means of* Christ but *against* him. Such "conscious," "defended," "enforced" sin against the gospel distinguishes these churchly opponents from, say, the invading non-Christian "Turks," who would be innocent of such intentionality. In one reference after another Luther cites bishops and cardinals at the Diet of Augsburg, even the emperor, as having acknowledged that the Augsburg Confession was scriptural and Christian and that its reforms were needed and timely.

56) If so, if the issue of the Reformation at this point was not so much the gospel of justification by faith as such, what was it? It was, so Luther charged, the principled, self-defended refusal by the church's leaders—"for the sake of their stomach and their dominion"—to let that gospel dominate the church's governance. "Certainly we know the truth," he pictured them saying, "but we cannot stomach it."

G. When Ambiguity Begets Certitude

57) At that, Luther's really practical purpose in his *Warning* is not just to expose innocence or guilt, even the "knowing" guilt of the adversaries against their only remedy, Christ. His exposure of them is only a means to a more activist end. He hopes to rally the

sinners of Germany to active defense—of the gospel, yes, but thereby of themselves as well. To do so, he must make crystal clear whose defense is at stake, namely theirs, and wherein their defense lies, namely in the free course of the gospel.

58) The party whose defense hangs in the balance is certainly not Christ and his gospel as such, whose victory is ultimately assured no matter who loses, but rather it is the German people. Should they join in defending the papal-imperial "enemies of the gospel" they would now be doing so just as "knowingly" as those enemies themselves, now that they too know—thanks to this published *Warning*—that it is in defense of "Counter-Christ" and against Christ that they would be siding. In that alignment not even Christ could defend them.

59) By the same token, though Christ may not need the German people to defend him, they do need him to defend them. If in the phrase "self-defense" the word "self" means the one who is being defended, then yes, time has indeed come for Germany's self-defense. But if the "self" in self-defense means the one who is doing their defending, then no, Germany is not that self, that defender, except only secondarily.

60) Least of all can Germany defend itself against its own sin, which is too manifest to hide either from the devil or their own consciences—this people of "dolts and clods" who for so long have allowed a tyrannical papacy "to hoax and dupe us."

61) All the more reason, therefore, that the gospel of Christ must be kept in force among them against all odds. Without it Germany is defenseless, and not only against the emperor but against God. "For if this doctrine vanishes, the church vanishes. Then no error can any longer be resisted, because the Holy Spirit will not and cannot dwell with us apart from this doctrine."

62) So in the end, strangely enough, the confessors' own ambiguity only supports the certitude of their own rightness—about "God and his word." Who else so corroborates "the consolation in Christ" but people whose need of him is so manifest, whose record so shameful and flawed? And what other defense do they have than his gospel, their only certitude, though their conduct of their defense is always ambiguous?

63) How incongruous that these unlikely confessors, the laughing-stock at Augsburg, had to bear such an embarrassing burden. And what burden was that? The burden that at Augsburg they, of all people, were right. No wonder one of the bishops there is reported to have complained that "what he could not tolerate was that such a doctrine [true enough by itself] should . . . emanate from such a remote nook and corner" as Wittenberg. That serves confessors right.

Seminex: The Hidden Curriculum

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Every seminary has a prescribed curriculum. It consists of the required and elective courses which students must or may take. But every seminary also has a "hidden" curriculum. It consists of the unplanned experiences that teach people a great deal.[1] Sometimes the "hidden" curriculum contradicts what is taught in the "visible" curriculum. Sometimes it reinforces what is taught. But what it teaches has a long-lasting impact on those who experience it. The "hidden" curriculum of Seminex was no exception. Everyone who taught or learned at Seminex can identify some aspects of the "hidden" curriculum. This essay represents the experience of one person and his interpretation of the lessons to be learned from the "hidden" curriculum of that seminary. Each section tells of a Seminex experience related to the theme of the section, the biblical precedent for it, social scientific understandings of the experience, and the lessons to be learned from the "hidden" curriculum.

I. Things Aren't Always What They Seem to Be: The Relativity of Institutions

Many people regard institutions as absolute, having a life of their own apart from the human beings who created them. The rules and regulations of those institutions are to be obeyed without regard to their effect on persons. They insist that institutions exist for their own sake rather than for the sake of people. The faculty and students of Seminex experienced the "absoluteness" of the institution of the church through the demand that the Constitution and By-Laws of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the dictates of the Board of Control of Concordia Seminary

[1]Donald E. Miller, *Story and Context: An Introduction to Christian Education* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987), 312.

be obeyed without question. For persons brought up within the Missouri Synod it was difficult to question that authority. Yet the legalistic demands of the institution made possible the growing realization that a house built by human beings could be re-built in a different fashion. Human institutions can be built in many ways but they must be built for the benefit of those who inhabit them, not for the benefit and preservation of the institution itself. The church as institution must always be open to reform or it becomes an entity that acts back upon its creators in a destructive way.

That realization is nothing new. The forms that institutions take as human beings devise ways to incorporate the will of God become distorted over a period of time. The religious leaders of Israel were certain that their institutionalization of the will of God was best and absolute, but Jesus challenged it at several points, not the least of which was the teaching regarding the Sabbath. He broke several rules related to observance of the Sabbath and insisted that the Sabbath was made for human beings and not human beings for the Sabbath (Mark 2:23-28). Of course, he paid dearly for daring to challenge the institutional church of his day.

Our understanding of the way in which social structures come into being is illuminated by the work of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann. They speak of three "moments" in the creation and maintenance of social structures.[2] The first is the process by which humans agree that certain things exist apart from subjective human experience. They become "objective." Persons agree, for instance, that monogamous marriage is the way things are and ought to be. So, in the second "moment," marriage becomes institutionalized. It is then supported by a whole system of thought. And, finally, in the third "moment," it is internalized by the next generation which is taught what marriage is and ought to be. The same is true of the institution of the church. There is a primary core of belief related to the human experience of God in Jesus Christ. That core can be most simply stated as Word and sacraments. The human beings that make up the church devise structures that incorporate the core. But what has been humanly devised can also be revised. Human beings are in a dialectical relation to their social creations. They make them, are made by them and yet can re-make them again.

The lesson to be learned from this aspect of the hidden curriculum is that no human institution is absolute. It is necessary for human beings to devise ways to order their lives but those ways can be changed. Institutions should always serve people as God intends them to be served. They do not exist for blind obedience. The church must always be open to reform.

II. You Can't Go It Alone: The Community Vs. the Individual

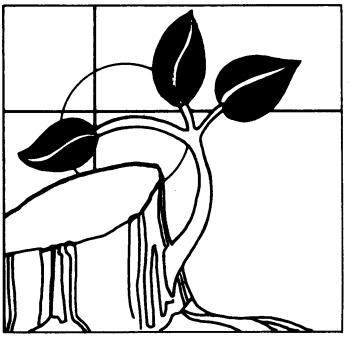
It takes a sizable group of people to protest legalistic action, give witness to the primacy of the Gospel, and begin a new seminary. Solitary individuals cannot do that. When the Board of Control of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, suspended John Tietjen

[2]Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966), 60-61.

in January, 1974, almost the entire student body agreed to a moratorium that suspended normal academic activities. The faculty majority joined them a day later. Faculty and students held meetings in which they supported one another. They formed "Outreach" teams that traveled to various churches in order to explain their stance and gain support. When the Board of Control ordered all faculty to resume teaching or be fired, the faculty majority stuck together in their resistance. They were assured by outside sources that a growing number of people in the church stood with them. Students and faculty walked off the campus and formed Seminex on February 19, 1974. Students, faculty, and supporters formed a mutually supportive community which made Seminex possible. Many thought that a large number of congregations would join the protest and leave the Missouri Synod. Only 225 did so, and most of them were in the English Synod, a group which had a certain solidarity and moderate stance prior to 1974. It was difficult, if not impossible, for solitary pastors to convince resistant congregations to leave the Missouri Synod.

Christians have realized from the beginning that one cannot be Christian alone. Paul speaks of the importance of every member of the Body of Christ. (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12) Each member is to be supportive to all other members in the body. None can do without the others.

Sociologists confirm the importance of support groups. Berger and Luckmann say that every institution needs a "plausibility structure," i.e., people and processes which affirm the belief and the believers.[3] People do not remain believers all by themselves. Other social scientists indicate that people fashioning a new belief and forming a new group always seek others who agree with them and will support them.[4] Persons who are alone do not stay with the beliefs of the group very long.



This aspect of the hidden curriculum affirms the necessity of a supportive group of people for any change or reform. It also indicates the importance of seeking support from others outside the group in order to maintain the institution. Solitary individuals do not last long in their attempts at change.

III. You Can't Go Home Again: The Impossibility of Return

When deep commitments to a new direction have been made it becomes impossible for people to return to their former stance. The formation of Seminex in February, 1974, was a great commitment on the part of students and faculty. There were several at-

[3]Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction*, 154-55.

[4]Leon Festinger, Henry W. Riecken and Stanley Schachter, *When Prophecy Fails* (New York: Harper and Row, Inc., 1956).

tempts at negotiation and reconciliation. Representatives of Seminex and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod met more than once. There was no progress. Each group of representatives wanted the other to compromise. There was no commitment to the mediating group as such. As time went on it became clear that there was no going back even though some yearned to do so. The impossibility of return became abundantly clear when the name "Concordia Seminary in Exile," or Seminex, was given up and the name "Christ Seminary—Seminex" was adopted. It was significant that it happened in the Fall of 1977 after the last members of the original student body had graduated.

God's people have often yearned to return to whence they came but find it impossible to do so. It was true of the children of Israel who yearned to return to Egypt but had to keep going to the land of Promise. Peter yearned to remain a part of the people of Israel but found that he could not. On the one hand, he agreed at the Council of Jerusalem that Gentiles did not have to be circumcised. But, on the other hand, he preferred the company of Jews and was reluctant to include the Gentiles both at Antioch (Galatians 2) and Caesarea (Acts 10). In both instances, he was reproved and moved to act on his commitment to Christ.

Leon Festinger, a social psychologist, indicates in his studies that persons who take actions related to their beliefs, especially actions that are difficult to undo, will not likely change their beliefs.[5] They seek support from those who agree with them because the solitary believer cannot long endure. Harold Leavitt sheds light on why negotiations between representatives of various groups often fail. Representatives espouse the position of the group they represent and have no commitment to the mediating group. If any progress is to be made, members of the mediating group must have some commitment to that group as well as the group they represent.[6]

The lesson of the hidden curriculum at this point is that persons should be prepared to stay away from "home" when they take actions that are difficult to undo. It is best to "count the cost" before the action it taken. It is also evident that negotiations between representatives of groups will accomplish nothing if there is no commitment to the mediating groups or process. One might as well not go through the motions.

IV. Commitment to a Cause Means More Than Just a Job: Commitment and Conditions

When people are committed to a cause they are willing to put up with conditions they would otherwise complain about. Seminex students and faculty were convinced that what they were doing gave "witness to the centrality and sufficiency of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and its radical implications for faith and life."[7] Such commitment moved students to come to a seminary that offered an excellent theological education within the context of a worshiping and witnessing community—but offered them no promise of placement. It was a risky seminary to attend. The same commitment led faculty

[5]Festinger, et al., *When Prophecy Fails*.

[6]Harold J. Leavitt, *Managerial Psychology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 236.

members to put up with lower salaries, cramped offices, few support services, loaned libraries, odd-shaped classrooms, and leaky roofs. Conditions were not good but participation in a committed community made up for them. Commitment to the cause of the gospel led many people in the church to send their money to the seminary in order to support its work. It was a risky thing for many of them since friends and family did not approve.

Seminex people were not the first to put up with poor conditions for the sake of the gospel. Paul endured many things for the same reason. Five times he was given forty lashes save one. He was stoned, shipwrecked, and adrift at sea. He was in danger from robbers, his own people, the Gentiles, the city, the wilderness, the sea, and false brothers and sisters. He suffered sleepless nights, went without food, was cold and exposed (2 Corinthians 11). He boasted of his weakness rather than his strength (2 Corinthians 12). The cause was more important than the conditions.

Social psychological studies show that people committed to a cause are willing to forego the usual niceties of life. The cause is more important than comfort. However, commitment to a cause can become distorted and make people lose sight of reality. They are unwilling to change their minds even in the face of disconfirming evidence.[8]

The hidden curriculum teaches that commitment to a cause compensates for poor conditions. A fine theological education can occur in second-rate facilities when there is a competent, committed faculty and a dedicated student body. Such commitment also attracts support from people in the church. When a group has little or no commitment to an over-arching cause there is a lot of griping about conditions. When people are just doing a job, conditions become very important. In a seminary where people are deeply committed to the cause of the gospel, conditions are secondary.

V. From Movement to Institutions: Seminex and Organization

What began as a highly participative movement became, in a relatively short time, a more organized institution. More and more authority was delegated to others. In the beginning, almost all decisions were made through discussion and vote by the entire student body and faculty. The seminary functioned with an Acting President and a Dean. Soon a governing structure was devised that consisted of three classes, the student body, the faculty, and a board. All three groups participated in the discussion and settling of issues. The level of participation in decision-making was high. Ownership in the seminary was high. As time went on and other students replaced the original students, it became more and more difficult to get a quorum at student meetings. The level of interest and the willingness to participate were not as high. Revisions were made in the governing structure that allowed goals to be initiated by anyone in the seminary but they were to be funneled through a more centralized structure. Students were represented through a group rather than through the en-

[7] *Christ Seminary—Seminex Catalogue, 1980-82* (St. Louis: Christ Seminary—Seminex), 5.

[8] Festinger, et al., *When Prophecy Fails*.

tire student body. The faculty reserved some areas for itself, such as curricular decisions. But the faculty also allowed the board to make some unilateral decisions, such as the reduction in the size of the faculty in 1977. However, the faculty regretted the way in which those decisions were made and strove to change the process to a more participatory one when later reductions were necessary. Through it all the seminary changed from a loosely organized movement to a more organized institution.

Christians through the ages have experienced the change from movement to institution. The earliest Christian community had all things in common, distributed to those in need, attended the temple as a company, broke bread together in their homes, and partook of food with glad and generous hearts. (Acts 2: 43-47). There soon arose the need for some to be appointed as helpers to the apostles. Seven deacons were appointed (Acts 6). As the Christian community grew, elders were chosen as leaders in local congregations (Acts 20). By the time of the Pastoral Epistles there were bishops as well (1 Timothy 3). At first, the bishops were responsible for a local congregation with the help of presbyters and deacons. Over time, the bishops became responsible for the oversight of many congregations and presbyters served as pastors of local congregations. Deacons assisted both bishops and pastors.[9] Further organizational development followed the Roman pattern of administration resulting in the papacy. Movements become institutions.

H. Richard Niebuhr documents the same change in *The Social Sources of Denominationalism*. A movement, he claims, is valid only for one generation. At a seminary that means only the original student body. The second generation does not hold convictions with the same fervor of the previous generation who fashioned them in the heat of conflict and at some risk.[10] The second generation must be informed and educated into the ideals which have now become part of the tradition. Niebuhr points out that the more organized institutional form runs the danger of sublimating the original ideals and goals to ones that are irrelevant or even contrary to the original ones. The temptation is to make self-preservation and extension the primary goal. In addition, Harold Leavitt states that though organizations may have to centralize their decision-making processes, the morale, self-correctiveness, and creativity of the group is higher when information is shared, communication is open, and more people share in the decisions.[11]

This aspect of the hidden curriculum teaches that movements almost invariably change to a more organized institutional form. But, in so doing, the members of the movement must carefully review their original ideals and goals and incorporate them into the developing institution lest they subvert their original purpose and settle for institutional survival and maintenance. A second insight is that members must try to maintain as high a degree as possible of shared information, open communication networks, and participation in making decisions. The result will be higher morale and greater ownership in the institution.

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[9]*Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), 24.

[10]H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1929), 20.

[11]Leavitt, *Managerial Psychology*, 198.

VI. It's Easier to Begin Than to End: Common Enemy and Common Good

It is far easier to begin a movement because of a common enemy than to give it up for the sake of a greater good. Seminex was formed in the heat of the controversy within the Missouri Synod. The Board of Control of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, was a more immediate opponent. It was easy to identify the common enemy. Its actions galvanized the faculty and student body of the seminary. However, as time went on and the common enemy receded into the background, it became apparent that a seminary cannot continue to look back to the defeat of a common enemy, but must look forward to greater and more positive goals. The greater good became that of Lutheran unity. As part of attaining that greater good, it was proposed that Seminex deploy its resources to three other seminaries in the church. As the proposal became more and more concrete, the discussions at Seminex became more heated and controversial. Faculty members who had no reservations about beginning a seminary in the face of a common enemy now had objections to changing the form of the seminary for the sake of a greater good. The common good was harder to attain than the resistance to a common enemy.

Christians in the past have experienced the same thing. Peter, for instance, could come out swinging when he found an identifiable enemy in the form of the high priest's servant (John 18: 10-11). But he found it very difficult to put down his own desires for the sake of the greater good which Jesus could accomplish by going to Jerusalem and to death (Matt 16: 21-23). It is always more difficult to work for a greater good than to fight a common enemy.

Research on how groups interact indicates both the difficulty and the necessity of getting groups to work together for a goal greater than either of them. Muzafer Sherif and his assistants brought two groups of boys together at a camp.[12] They pitted them against each other in various contests. The groups became enemies. Then the researchers tried to get them to work together. The successful strategy involved common effort to achieve a superordinate goal. The researchers disabled the food truck so that it took both groups to pull it into camp. The water supply was cut off, and it took both groups to trace the line and discover and repair the blocked valve. Through common effort the two groups became friends rather than enemies.

The hidden curriculum teaches that, though it is easy to bring people together against a common enemy, it is not possible to continue to exist with that motivation. A more positive, super-ordinate goal must be found. Seminex found that goal in Lutheran unity. It required the efforts of many groups of people, and it required that Seminex give up its form of life for the sake of the greater good. The ending was more difficult than the beginning but the accomplishment of the goal was more important than the pain.

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[12]Muzafer Sherif and others, *Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation: The Robbers Cave Experiment* (Norman, OK: Institute of Group Relations, University of Oklahoma, 1961).

Bridging St. Paul and the Apostolic Fathers: A Study in Reciprocity

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Descriptions of the thought of Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Diognetus, and Barnabas and in the documents known as Shepherd of Hermas and the Didache are plentiful. More needed is an exploration of cultural factors that helped shape the thought and forms of expression in these documents.

Such inquiry ought to help account for certain factors of discontinuity that surface when these documents are read against the background of New Testament lines of thought, with special reference to significance accorded the Christ-event in moral and ethical decision. In this essay, I propose that aspects of the reciprocity system as depicted especially in documents of the ancient Mediterranean world will assist students of the Apostolic Fathers not only to sharpen perception of topical relationships in these writings but also to account for what some have viewed as a decline in appreciation of St. Paul's approach to the relation of divine grace and Christian response.[1] Particular emphasis will be given to 1 and 2 Clement, the Didache, and Ignatius. That theological disparities between St. Paul's Romans and Luke-Acts are frequently alleged is common knowledge. What is not generally known is the probability that these New Testament documents contain the clues that can help students of the Apostolic Fathers understand factors of apparent discontinuity with the New Testament.

Reciprocity

Reciprocity in the Greco-Roman world included two basic features. When Chrysippos, a Stoic philosopher, defined *philanthrōpia* as "friendly help in time of need,"[2]

[1]For documentation, see Thomas F. Torrance, *The Doctrine of Grace in the Apostolic Fathers* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1948). For Greco-Roman cultural aspects cited in this paper, see Frederick W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman Semantic Field* (St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1982), cited as *Benefactor*, with "No." referring to specific documents that are translated in this work. For a brief discussion of beneficence in patristic literature, see Eberhard F. Bruck, "Ethics Vs. Law: St. Paul, the Fathers of the Church and the 'Cheerful Giver' in Roman Law," *Traditio* 2 (1944) 97–121.

[2]Fragment 292m, *Stoicorum veterum fragmenti* 3:72, lines 3-4.

he was describing a predominant feature of Greco-Roman culture, namely the passion to be identified as a person of extraordinary merit, especially through exhibition of good will in the public sector. Beneficiaries, in turn, were obligated to show their gratitude.

In Homeric times, exceptional merit, called *aretē*, was especially linked with military prowess in behalf of one's land or city. This phenomenon coincides with the widespread understanding that the chief task of deities and rulers is to ensure the safety and the well-being of those who rely on their services. If they discharge their task well they are recognized as benefactors or saviors, and a few mortals, such as Herakles and Dionysos, achieved immortal status.[3] Such recognition, as time goes on, takes the form of public aretalogies or accolades expressed in declarations by heads of state, in civic decrees, or in more private rhetorical formulation.[4]

Since autocratic rulers need not wait for public recognition, it is not surprising that personal declaration of one's own laudable characteristics should find expression in various lands and cultures. The Behistun monument, inscribed by authority of Darius I, is but one of many autobiographical aretalogies outside the Greek-speaking world. In the Greco-Roman world such rulers as Antichos I of Kommagene[5] and Caesar Augustus left imperishable records of their personal merits and achievements. The summary that Augustus made of his statecraft is known as the *Res Gestae*.[6] The autobiographical style was used also by poets who permitted deities to recite their merits and achievements in the first person.[7] Apart from such specific declarations of merit, people in powerful positions could convey indirectly their capacity as benefactors by publishing edicts that promised relief from a variety of oppressive circumstances.[8]

When political fortunes shifted in Greece, the city-state lost its significance as a controlling factor in people's lives, and more intimate types of association became popular. But the forms of recognition that had developed in the public sphere were taken over practically unchanged by clubs and societies that sprang up throughout the Mediterranean world. Their resolutions in recognition of merit therefore read like documents passed by city councils or federations of cities, and for all practical purposes fall into the general classification of decrees, despite their lack of public legal status.[9]

In keeping with the development toward recognition of personal merit is the biographer's interest in the character and pronouncements of philosophers. Like saviors of the state, they are, by virtue of their inward excellence and their prudent counsel, the benefactors of humanity. Diogenes Laertius

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[3]Cf. Diodoros Siculus 6.1.13; Philo *Embassy to* Gaius 77-114; Plutarch *Pelopidas* 16; cited by Charles H. Talbert, "The Concept of Immortals in Mediterranean Antiquity," *JBL* 94/3 (1975): 419-36.

[4]Nero gives thanks to the Gods of Hellas for his safety (*Benefactor*, No. 44). Demetrios the Great, son of Antigonos, was hailed as liberator of Greece (*Benefactor*, No. 30). In Apuleius' *Golden Ass*, Lucius praises Isis (*Benefactor*, 178-79); and Asklepios receives adulation in a private inscription (*IG*^{2}, 4514.1-10; trans. in *Benefactor*, 193).

[5]*Benefactor*, Nos. 41 and 42.

[6]For a translation of Augustus' *Res Gestae*, see *Benefactor*, No. 43.

[7]In praise of Isis, see, e.g., *Benefactor*, No. 29.

[8]See, e.g., *Benefactor*, Nos. 50 and 51.

[9]For literature on associations and for samples of texts, see *Benefactor*, 152-72.

(7.10-12) records the award of a golden crown and a statue to Zeno by the people of Athens. The decree reads:

> Whereas, Zeno of Kitium, son of Mnaseas, has for many years been engaged in philosophy in our city, and in all other respects has spent his days here as a model citizen; and whereas he continually exhorted the youth who approached him for growth in noble worth and fine character and thereby urged them to press on toward the best, and at the same time set forth publicly in his own life a pattern of conduct that was in harmony with his instruction, therefore be it resolved by the People of Athens to commend Zeno of Kitium, son of Mnaseas, and in accordance with law and custom to award him a golden crown for his noble worth and fine character, and to erect for him at public expense a tomb in the Keramikos; and be it further resolved that five Athenians shall, by appointment of the People, serve as a committee to supervise the making of the wreath and the erection of the tomb, and that the Recorder shall have this decree inscribed on two stone pillars, with authority to set up one in the Academy and the other in the Lyceum, and that the Treasurer shall apportion funds for the cost of the pillars, to the end that all may know that the People of Athens honors fine citizens, whether they are living or dead.

Stoic diction relating to moral counsel found fertile soil in such documents and influenced the formulation of public decrees. Even a non-public person such as a youth named Eudamos upon his death receives an accolade that suggests Stoic thinking.[10] But it would be erroneous to conclude that a background in Stoicism would have been necessary to enable formulators of decrees to express themselves in "Stoic" themes and turns of phrase.

God publishes amnesty for all humanity through a proclamation of reconciliation.

Hellenistic Christian communities were quick to exploit the developing democratization of excellence, and with the aid of their Jewish inheritance proclaimed an intimate connection between religious devotion and personal character and performance, an approach that was relatively new to traditional Roman compartmentalization of morality and commitment to religious obligation. Now slaves and ordinary women found themselves on the same plane of evaluation with people of high station, and all possessed the potential of contributing as people of exceptional merit—that is, as benefactors—to the welfare of humanity.

In brief, about eight centuries separate Homer and the flowering of Hellenistic Christian communities, yet the cultural phe-

[10]Translation in *Benefactor*, No. 7.

nomenon of interplay between people of excellence and those on whom they make their impact finds continuous celebration, with a fairly consistent pattern of themes and diction developing in the last five centuries preceding the reign of Caesar Augustus.

St. Paul

Much of St. Paul's success can be attributed to his exploitation of the hermeneutical possibilities in Greco-Roman cultural phenomena for proclaiming the unique action of God in connection with Jesus Christ. God is for Paul the supreme politician-philanthropist, who publishes amnesty for all humanity through a proclamation of reconciliation and of uprightness through faith (Rom 5:1-11; cf. 2 Cor 5:11-21).[11]

Paul's main perspective is clear from Rom 1:9–3:20, in which he says nothing about Jesus Christ, but concentrates on the beneficence of God and the total lack of reciprocity previously exhibited by all beneficiaries. Since uprightness (*dikaiosynē*) is the fundamental quality of heads of state and other public servants,[12] Paul features this term in his discussion of God's character and the contrasting ingratitude and lack of uprightness in the beneficiaries. At 3:21 he then sounds the prelude to the most dramatic exhibition of beneficence that the world has seen or will see, and as v. 22 states, this extraordinary demonstration of good will finds expression in Jesus Christ, who is in turn the Great Benefactor. Now one of the outstanding marks of Greco-Roman benefactors is a pandemic (*pan*, all; *dēmos*, the people) concern.[13] Hence Paul emphasizes that all (*pantes*) who recognize, that is, believe in the divine generosity (v. 24) as expressed in Jesus Christ (v. 22), are no longer in the lamentable condition described in Rom 1–3. In Greco-Roman culture it is also assumed that beneficiaries will reflect the characteristics of their benefactors. That is, a display of generosity ought to trigger it in others.[14] Paul trumps the cultural expectation and shows that God finds a way whereby believers can exhibit the characteristics of their Supreme Benefactor. That way is through the donation of the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom 8 and 12), the crown of divine beneficence.

Paul's own appraisal of the staggering amount of divine beneficence urges him to total commitment in the cause of the gospel. In the absence of an income tax, the wealth of notable citizens in the Greco-Roman world was tapped for public works, festivals, and restoration of temples, or for service as a priest. Such assumption of public responsibility was termed a liturgy and the benefactor was called a liturgist.[15] St. Paul identifies himself with this cultural phenomenon when he declares at Romans 15 that as God's priestly "liturgist" (15:16) he administrates the good news of Christ over a vast territory (v. 19).

Yet, when all it taken into account, St. Paul's use of Greco-Roman reciprocity fea-

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[11]Cf. Rom 1:16-17, in the context of a review of divine beneficence and ingratitude (1:18-25), and the climactic demonstration of divine beneficence, 3:21-24.

[12]On the theme of uprightness, see *Benefactor*, 345-48.

[13]On concern for the general public, see *Benefactor*, 336-39.

[14]On the theme of imitation, see *Benefactor*, 437-40.

[15]On "liturgists" and the *leitourg-* family, see *Benefactor*, 330-31.

tures is mainly formal. For his understanding and presentation of the significance of Jesus Christ he draws primarily on his own experience of divine beneficence in selecting him as apostle to the gentiles; and for his interpretation of the new age that has come to pass in connection with the Christ-event he draws on the Jewish Scriptures. Hence there is much in his letter to Rome about the blood of Jesus Christ as the cleansing agent from sin (see esp. Rom 3:24–26), and about intimate association with the fortunes of Jesus as the way to life out of death (cf. Rom 6:1–11). But how will such theology fare when proclaimers of the gospel increasingly accept the challenge of communication in the Greco-Roman world? To answer this question it is necessary to consider the role played by St. Luke and the Apostolic Fathers in the interpretation of the gospel for their time.

St. Luke

St. Luke's interest in Greco-Roman political and cultural factors offers a bridge from St. Paul to the post-Pauline period. In his two-volume work God is the Supreme Benefactor, who gives Jesus as the Great Benefactor. Jesus is identified as such in a familiar formulation, "mighty in deed and word" (Luke 24:19), and his beneficence is displayed in the healing of a lame man (Acts 4:9).[16] Acts 10:38 expressly states that "Jesus went about as a benefactor [*euergetōn*] and healed all who were dominated by the devil."

To set the stage for this declaration, Luke wrote his first volume, the Gospel, with stress on aretalogical features. Since the term "aretalogy" in application to gospel writings is under debate, it is necessary to define its use here. The word itself is derived from *aretē* (exceptional merit or performance) and *logos* (account). Its use in ancient times was rare, but it has become fashionable to use the term as though miraculous deeds are the only appropriate referent. Such restriction is pedantically dogmatic and leads to unscientific conclusions, not to speak of needless debate. The fact is that the term *aretē* is used in thousands of Greco-Roman documents that recite non-miraculous deeds, and one of the most renowned is Caesar Augustus' *Res Gestae*, a recital of achievements during his administration of Rome's affairs, of which he had Greek translations posted in various parts of the empire. The climactic statement in the emperor's account is the pride he took in the people's recognition of his *aretē*.[17] Therefore I do not deny that Luke's account of the ministry of Jesus might well be described as an aretalogy, that is, a recital with stress on the words and deeds of Jesus, the Great Benefactor. But I prefer the more precise description, "recital with aretalogical features," with due recognition made of the fact that such features are not limited to accounts about Jesus.

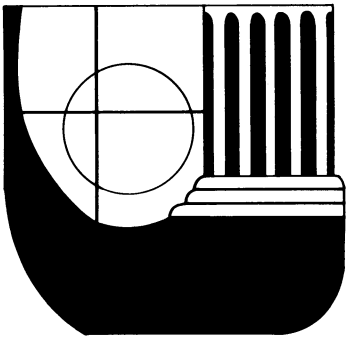
Indeed, Luke's Gospel and Acts together constitute one aretalogy—the story of God's extraordinary demonstration of good will toward humanity.[18] And Jesus himself understands that he "must" (Luke 2:49, et. al.) carry out his heavenly Parent's purpose. As for the death of Jesus, God demonstrates the

[16]On the *euerg-* family, see *Benefactor*, 323-24.

[17]*Benefactor*, No. 43.34.

[18]On the genre of Luke's Gospel, see especially F. W. Danker, *Proclamation Commentaries: Luke*, 2d ed., rev. and enlarged (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), ch. 3.

ultimate in beneficence by raising him from the dead and offering him once more to the world as the supreme expression of good intent for humanity. God counters ingratitude through beneficence (Acts 2–4). The Jewish sacrificial model and aspects of incorporation that Paul considered so important for communication to the recipients of Romans have little place in Luke's concern for a less cluttered soteriological model that would more readily reach his Jewish and his non-Jewish publics.



Fundamental to Luke's projection of the divine plan is the role of the Servant of the Lord, who finds primary expression in Jesus. By using the Isaianic tradition (cf. Luke 4:18–19 and Acts 8:28–33) in this way, Luke endeavors to interpret the significance of Jesus for a traditionally oriented Jewish public, but without dependence on sacrificial models as defined in priestly circles. At the same time, Luke's manner of reciting throughout his work the kinds of deeds pronounced in the diction of the servant at Luke 4:18 suggested to Greco-Roman auditors their own cultural context in which the public benefactor was a dominant figure.[19]

The flexibility of the servant figure in Jewish tradition in turn made possible Luke's interpretation of the apostolic mission as an extension of Jesus' function as the servant. For this reason numerous aretalogical features are present in Acts in association with lesser figures. God and Jesus are the primary agents, but frequently they act through their emissaries, as the programmatic text of Acts 4:8-12 points out. Hence Luke records that God has made Paul and his associate Barnabas a "light to the nations" (13:47). The way is here prepared for understanding Paul as the primary agent for Jesus the Great Servant. At Acts 26:16-18 (cf. Isa 42), which further echoes Luke 4:18–19 and Acts 10:38, the apostle is climactically defined as the Lord's servant. At Acts 22:15 Paul was told that he was to be a "witness to all people of what you have seen and heard." The emphasis, as in Luke 24:19, is on deeds and words, the combined mark of an exceptional person in the Greco-Roman world.[20] This interpretation of Paul's servant role is in harmony with Paul's own self-estimate as a liturgist or public servant (Rom 15:16). Thus both writers have succeeded in making the traditional Jewish figure of the Servant of the Lord intelligible for their Greco-Roman constituencies, except that Paul features himself as the servant figure, whereas Luke considers Paul's servant function in the context of the apostolate of Jesus as the Lord's anointed servant (Luke 4:16–19).

Luke's interest in bureaucratic protocol reaches a high point in his account of the Je-

[19]Danker, *Proclamation*, 28-37.

[20]On the combination of word and deed, see *Benefactor*, 339-43.

rusalem conference (Acts 15), whose proceedings he reports in the diction and formulation that is typical of Greco-Roman decrees.[21] And a direct result of the evangelist's concentration on the formal and topical aspects of Greco-Roman reciprocity structures as interpretive media for understanding God's action in connection with Jesus Christ is the relative lack of Pauline formulation exhibited in his understanding of the saving significance of Jesus' death. Yet the theological differences between Luke and Paul are not such as to give the differences a decisive edge in determining that Luke was not the companion of Paul to the extent outlined in Acts. Both authors are intent on reaching Greco-Roman publics. The soteriology of both can be grasped by Greco-Romans who bring their cultural model of philanthropists to a hearing of the Christian proclamation. But Luke evidently considered some of Paul's lines of thought too esoteric for a general public. The fact that he trimmed off what he probably considered to be levitical fat does not mean that he was deficient in awareness of Paul's theology. For both authors, God is the Supreme Benefactor and Jesus the Great Benefactor. And there is no question about salvation alone through God's beneficence as demonstrated in Jesus Christ. Certainly Paul's trumpet does not blare *sola* in more decibels than does Luke's non-negotiable declaration at Acts 4:12. In the writings of both, God ultimately invokes executive privilege. Luke serves as a bridge from Paul to the Apostolic Fathers.

> Paul concentrated on God's zeal to bestow bounties.

The Apostolic Fathers

1 Clement

Of the patristic documents here under consideration, 1 Clement bears the closest affinity to Luke-Acts in the use of Greco-Roman bureaucratic-sacral themes and diction.

In the opening address, the fidelity of the recipients is identified as a model of excellence (1.2).[22] Like some Herodes Atticus, a contemporary billionaire from Marathon, they have an insatiable desire to do good (2.2). In ch. 5, Peter is presented as a superstar who endures all to make his testimony, and he is matched by Paul, who becomes a worthy object of imitation (5.7). Noble women are included as examples of fortitude (6.2). God is the Supreme Benefactor, who offers the benefit (7.4) of repentance to all the world. In this respect God is in continuity with the divine practice of offering salvation in the time of Noah and Jonah.[23] The *leitour-*

[21]See the index of passages for Acts 15 in *Benefactor*, 503.

[22]They have been adorned with a *politeia* that is a model (*panaretos*) of excellence and honor (*sebasmios*).

[23]This pandemic aspect is one of the principal features of a Greco-Roman emperor, such as Augustus or Nero.

goi of God have spoken of the divine beneficence (8.1). God's purpose is confirmed by God's own counsel (8.1–5). This counsel of God is described at 9.1 in terms appropriate to the kind of diction used in decretal adulation of publicly spirited citizens.

As indicated above, basic to the reciprocity system is the understanding that receipt of benefits conferred involves the recipient in thanksgiving. Paul elicited awareness of this cultural expectation especially through his denunciation of humanity's ingratitude (Rom 1:1; 2:4) and in his numerous epistolary thanksgivings.[24] Luke stressed the importance of thankful response in a story about ten lepers (Luke 10:12–19), which forms the background for the hostility of Israel's leadership in the face of divine beneficence as exhibited in the resurrection of Jesus (see, e.g., Acts 4). Clement follows a related line of thought in 1 Clement 38.3–4. God brought us out of darkness into the world and bestowed benefits on us. "Since, then, we have all these things from him, we are obliged to give God thanks for everything" (38.4).

In numerous Greco-Roman decrees the point is made that a city recognizes its benefactor so that the benefactor may be encouraged to bestow even more benefits. St. Paul showed his awareness of this factor (1 Cor 1:8; 2 Thess 1:11–12; Phil 1:6; Col 1:9), but concentrated on God's zeal to bestow bounties, without suggesting that individual merit would secure the benefit. In 1 Clement the reciprocity system is reflected in Clement's teaching that repentance is a resource for securing further divine favor. Hence Clement sets before Christians the model life of *liturgists* of the past (Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Lot, Rahab), who received divine favors for their performance.[25] The gifts of God are wonderful, but there are more to come according to the divine *promise* (35.1–12). Near the end of his epistle, Clement proclaims the mighty deeds of God, and then goes on to use them as a base to plead for mercy (59–61).

As noted above, a major theme in honorary documents is the encouragement of others to imitate those who have showed the way in beneficence. St. Paul applied this cultural expectation at, for example, 1 Cor 11:1 and 1 Thess 1:6, and Luke exploited it in Luke 6:35. In 1 Clement the Creator's *chrēstotēs* (the verb is used in 13.2) is displayed in the creation and in all the providence that is expressed in that creation (chs. 19–20).[26] God's goodness prompts us to rejoice in goodness and to follow the pattern of good deeds (33.1–8).[27] By contemplating God in our liberation from the divine wrath we are able to move toward the goal of peace (19.2), a benefit that tops the list of benefactions that were especially prized in the Greco-Roman world.[28] God's goodness prompts our own goodness (21.1); and we are to act as citizens worthy of God (21.1, a typical formulation). Let the rich, therefore,

[24]E.g., 1 Cor 1:4-5; 1 Thess 1:2-5; 2 Thess 1:3-4; Phil 1:3-6; Col 1:3-11; cf. Eph 1:16-19; 2 Tim 1:3-5.

[25]The application of the verb *leitourgeō* (9.2) and the noun *leitourgia* (9.4) to the loftiest type of moral and spiritual performance shows that Clement understands the ideal Christian life as the ultimate in excellence, which is in turn to be rewarded by God (13.2-4).

[26]Note *euergesia*, 19.2; 20.11; cf. Acts 14:15-17; 17:24-28; and for an exemplar of Greek expression, see Xenophon *Memorabilia* 4.3.1-14.

[27]Xenophon *Memorabilia* 4.3.14-17.

[28]See, e.g., Augustus' frequent references to *pax* in the *Res Gestae*.

serve as ministrants (38.2) to the poor. Since God is beneficent (23.1), sincerity is our appropriate response. In keeping with such a view of God's providential concern, the resurrection is presented as a further demonstration of divine beneficence (24.1–5).[29] The *Phoenix* sets forth the confidence we can have in the divine promises (chs. 25–27).[30] And if we perform in accordance with the divine purpose, we also will be people of such excellence that others can make attestation of us for our good deeds (30.7).[31] The acknowledgment of Jesus Christ's humility (ch. 16) is in the same vein. Others to be imitated are Elijah and Elisha, Abraham, Job, David (chs. 17–18).

1 Clement's use of the reciprocity model maintains the primary focus on God's beneficence. In discontinuity with Paul's letters to Rome and Corinth, 1 Clement shows affinity with Luke's interest in repentance as a major change in one's attitude towards God and in one's style of life, and his apparent conflict with Pauline theology on good works as fruits of faith is due to his more thoroughgoing use of the Greco-Roman reciprocity model.

2 Clement

Reciprocity is a dominant strain in the pseudonymous document known as 2 Clement. God has made salvation possible, and for this due thanks ought to be rendered through total commitment to God (18). In view of the endurance of Jesus Christ in his suffering, what fruit shall we give him that is worthy of his gift to us (1.3)? He is, indeed, more ready to give than we are to ask (15.4).[32] Sincere repentance is the appropriate recompense for the healing we receive from God (9.7–8). Through such repentance we give ourselves, as 19.1 declares, salvation and life and (as in the decree for Zeno), set an example for the young, who wish to labor in the interest of piety and generosity. In the end, because of such practice of uprightness (*dikaiosynē*) we shall get saved. Here *dikaiosynē* is the ultimate in excellence (*aretē*) and receives its appropriate reward.

> Christ is more ready to give than we are to ask.

Therefore we should earnestly pursue *aretē* and be zealous in doing good (10.1–2). In this connection, the writer emphasizes piety and righteousness (chs. 10–11), the standard word-pair in decretal recognition,[33] and with reference to the promises of God. The reciprocity system is further apparent in the reference to righteousness as a means of entry into the Kingdom (11.7). Since liberality is a primary mark of the Greco-Roman bene-

[29]Cf. the night-day sequence in Xenophon *Memorabilia* 4.3.4.

[30]For classical references, see BAGD (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the NT and Other Early Christian Literature*, 2d. ed., 1979), s.v. *epaggelia*.

[31]On this theme, see *Benefactor*, 442-47.

[32]Cf. Nero's statement, *Benefactor* No. 44, line 10.

[33]On the word-pair *eusebeia-dikaiosynē*, see *Benefactor*, 343-48.

factor, 2 Clement praises almsgiving as a lightener of sin (16:4). The letter ends with the recognition that Jesus is savior and introducer of immortality (20.5).

2 Clement is further removed than 1 Clement from Paul and Luke, who constantly focus on the beneficence of God as exhibited in Jesus Christ. In this pseudonymous document Jesus is a superstar whose death has exemplary quality. This is more in harmony with Greco-Roman thinking about heroes as models for behavior. Hence Christians are given dominant billing as superstars who will receive appropriate recognition for their performance.

Didache

A major contribution in the Didache is the discussion of the Eucharist (chs. 9–11). Not only does the Didache amplify Hellenistic notes in the account in 1 Cor 11:23–26 and Luke 22:19, but it transposes them into a different key, which communicates even more immediately to a Greco-Roman public than does Luke's modification of tradition. The typical depiction of the creator's goodness is associated with the gift of food and drink in the Eucharist. All is for the enjoyment of humanity, so that we might give thanks.[34] This emphasis on God as the beneficent creator is in keeping with deeply rooted Greek tradition concerning God as the source of the principal benefits enjoyed by humanity, including especially the blessings bestowed through the action of heavenly bodies which effect day and night and life-nourishing seasons.[35] Being sharers in the immortal things, we should share the mortal (4.8).[36] Chapter 4.5 therefore expresses strictures against stinginess.[37] Beneficence invites its imitation.

Ignatius

In Ignatius' theological world, *aretē* or excellence characterizes every one, but there is no question as to the identity of the super superstars. Ignatius knows Paul, but his awareness of Greco-Roman hermeneutical sensitivities is more in line with that of Luke, who helped a growing non-Jewish public understand the Jewish Christ by translating him more plainly than did Paul into a Hellenistic superstar, but unique by virtue of the facts recorded in Acts 4:12. In keeping with Greco-Roman expectations, Ignatius tacitly accepts what is implicit in Acts 4:12 but explicitly recognizes Jesus as an immortal who enjoys the status of deity. And to "attain God," that is, to be in receipt of all that God spells by way of beneficence, is Ignatius' ultimate desire.[38]

Conclusion

The preceding outline of early patristic use of Greco-Roman reciprocity structures and benefactor models is primarily programmatic. It suggests a theoretical framework within which the varied thought of the Apostolic Fathers, and of St. Paul, who locates the source for sanctification in the constant awareness of divine beneficence, can

[34]On *apolausis* as a prime benefaction, see, e.g., the decree of 27 B.C.E. in honor of Euphrosynos and Epigonos, who brought relief from hunger (*SIG*[3] 783.18) and the use of the verb with the term *euergesia* (*Benefactor*, No. 51.2).

[35]Xenophon *Memorabilia* 4.3.4., night-day sequence.

[36]Cf. Rom. 15:27.

[37]On stinginess, see Aristotle *Nikomachean Ethics* 4.37-44.

[38]See the passages cited in BAGD, s.v. *tygchano*.

be understood.[39] In Luke-Acts we possess the basic bridgework that will go far in explaining why the Apostolic Fathers at so many points appear to disclose little contiguity with Pauline tactics for achieving a life that is morally compatible with one's profession of faith in Jesus Christ. Further study must take into consideration a variety of social and political factors, including, for example, Roman anxiety about illicit religious activity and associated phenomena, that moved ecclesiastical leaders to develop a theological language that would promote in their day the unity that Paul and Luke sought for the church in their day. Out of such more comprehensive study will come a fairer assessment of the theology of the Apostolic Fathers.

The theoretical structure offered here may well be used also to examine developments of a related nature in the writings of the later Fathers and Mothers of the Church. And one can even hope that the bridgework here explored may lead others to see the bridge that links Trent and its concern for uprightness with Augsburg's interest in the non-negotiability of divine beneficence. Others will see possibilities for application to current issues facing the people of God. Item: the fact that both Paul and Luke are in the canon suggests that Christian unity does not depend, for example, on formulations from Romans. The non-negotiable item is that God's beneficence has been supremely expressed in Jesus Christ. On this all our New Testament and early apostolic documents are in agreement.

Certainly John Tietjen showed many, including the contributors to this volume, what it means to be Pauline in Lutheran theology.[40] In keeping with Luke, he demonstrated in word and deed how changing times and circumstances require reformulation of the proclamation, but without sacrifice of the gospel. Such commitment, as the contributors to this volume readily discovered, led to the trimming off in ourselves of traditional "levitical" fat that was not so much biblical as sub-Lutheran and therefore subcatholic tradition. It remains to be seen whether Lutherans—those under other brand names presumably will do their own quality control—become more expert in the ability to be sacrificed instead of sacrificing the gospel in the interest of traditional institutional securities. For one who charted visionary paths,[41] a true benefactor, recognized for his piety and uprightness, I give thanks to God.

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[39]See 1 Thess 5:23; 2 Thess 2:16; 3:5; Rom 13:11-12; 1 Cor 6:12-20; 2 Cor 13:4; Gal 5:13-26; Ephesians *passim*; Phil 2:1-13; Col 3-4.

[40]Details in F. W. Danker, *No Room in the Brotherhood* (St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1974), *passim*.

[41]In *Which Way to Lutheran Unity?* (1966, reprinted, St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1975), Tietjen spoke a prophetic word that did not return void.

Yardsticks for Japanese Christianity

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"In God for the World" was the title of John Tietjen's inaugural address as president of Concordia Seminary, on Martin Luther's birthday, November 10, 1969. He declared, "Concordia Seminary's chief objective should be to help the church achieve its mission of bringing God's life to the world. And that objective ought to determine what the seminary is and does."

His theme was true to the *Mission Affirmations* adopted with virtual unanimity by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod only four years earlier at its Detroit Convention. But, unfortunately, other persons with other goals frustrated the shining mission purpose both of his inaugural address and of the Synod's *Mission Affirmations*. Now remnants of Concordia's faculty have merged with another seminary under another inspired leader. Together they are working out what it means for a seminary to dedicate itself, all its courses and all its life to the mission of God.

Church and seminary will be sensitive not only to the mission but also to its results. Some observers fail to recognize the fruits of the gospel because they rely too heavily on measurement devices too crude and quantified to evaluate the subtle work of God's life-giving Spirit. The following case study attempts to make this point.[1]

In Japan it is often amazingly difficult to recruit people for baptism and regular church attendance. Japanese culture is therefore seen as hopelessly resistant to Christianity. Missionaries, visitors to Japan, and journalists often reflect this frustrating conclusion.[2] In the *Wall Street Journal*, most widely distributed newspaper in the world, a front page headline lamented in unrelieved pessimism, "Barren Ground: Christian Mis-

[1]This chapter expands and documents my article in *The Lutheran* of November 19, 1987, which grew out of my letter to the *Wall Street Journal* of July 24, 1986. Japanese names appear in Japanese order, family name first and surname last.

[2]A more optimistic minority perspective permeates Stuart D. B. Picken's *Christianity and Japan: Meeting—Conflict—Hope*. Tokyo, New York, San Francisco: Kodansha International, 1983. Professor Pickens teaches at International Christian University in Tokyo, which includes the Institute for the Study of Christianity and Culture, and the Institute of Asian Studies.

sionaries Sow the Seed in Japan But Find that Little Grows."[3] The story concentrates on low membership growth and poor church attendance. It is true as far as it goes, but it goes neither far nor deep.

Western-style yardsticks may not accurately measure change in Japanese religion. To begin with, Japan has no general religious custom resembling hour-long weekly Christian worship complete with liturgy and sermon.

More significant in Japanese religion are such factors as festival, ritual, values, art, and indigenous proponents.

Nakamura Hajime, distinguished professor of philosophy and religion at Tokyo University, has pointed out in his *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples*[4] that Japanese are not primarily interested in metaphysical theory and logical systematic doctrine. They look for a way of life. Come to think of it, the early Christians were called "People of the Way." The Japanese are attracted by truth embodied in a fascinating personality. They are saying, "Jesus, yes; the Western-style church, no."

In a population where the percentage of baptized church members is 1% or less, the Bible has been the run-away number one best seller ever since World War II. It is found in 50% of Japanese homes, says the *World Christian Encyclopedia*.[5] On a gift-giving occasion, non-Christian young people often give a Bible to a friend. Six hundred fifty thousand have enrolled in Bible correspondence courses of the Japan Lutheran Hour, oldest continuous program of any kind on commercial radio, dating back to 1951. At its peak, 117 stations carried the Lutheran Hour. Today, 10 distinct programs target specific audiences. Many of today's Japanese pastors came to faith in Christ through the Japan Lutheran Hour and other Christian broadcasts.

The manager of the broadcast, Harada Masaharu, or Mike as he wants his American friends to call him, declares, "There are ten sympathizers for every baptized Christian in Japan." He also maintains, "Of all the religions in Japan, Christianity is the most active."[6] James M. Phillips' book, *From the Rising of the Sun: Christians and Society in Contemporary Japan* (Orbis Books, 1981) would seem to substantiate him. Christians engage in an astounding kaleidoscope of activities. The yeast is alive.

In Japan a religion can exert great influence without assembling large throngs for regular worship. Example: the steel rods of Confucianism penetrate and reinforce the structure of Japanese society. Yet, unlike China and Taiwan, Japan has but one or two Confucian temples, and those little used. Zen has been a powerful cultural force, yet if attendance at any kind of public meeting is really poor, Japanese are likely to comment that the hall is "as empty as a Zen temple."

Japanese Christians dislike large congregations. Churches with more than 50 members are likely to be seen as "too large" by Japanese Christians who prefer an intimate

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[3]July 9, 1986.

[4]See Chapter 36, "Non-Rationalistic Tendencies" in *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples*. (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1964) 407-8.

[5]Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1982, p. 419, third column, last paragraph.

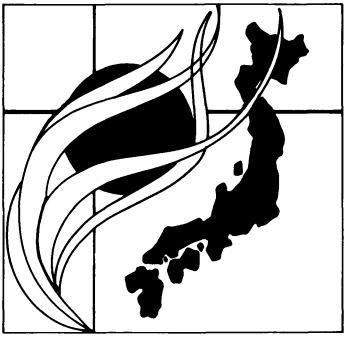
[6]"Loved to Love" 30th anniversary brochure, 1981. Japan Lutheran Hour, Kudan Building, Minami 2-chome, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102, Japan.

face-to-face fellowship.[7] They maintain a high level of giving. Women far outnumber men in worship services, yet it is also the wife who controls the purse strings, while putting her salaried husband on an allowance. Thus, women are a more direct channel of support for the church.

Factors other than church attendance, membership statistics, or financial support may, however, be more significant.

For the first time since Francis Xavier pioneered Christianity in Japan in 1549, at Japanese initiative, a Christian celebration—Christmas—is entering the festival cycle. Though not yet well understood by many Japanese, Christmas is carving out a niche for itself. A uniquely Japanese custom calls for a decorated Christmas ***keki*** (cake) in most households. Christmas gift giving is appreciated because it is "democratic." Anyone can give, in contrast to rigid New Year protocol which emphasizes giving by superiors. Each December, Handel's ***Messiah*** is sung in concert by hundreds of choruses composed largely of the unbaptized. Johann Sebastian Bach is a favorite composer. The celebration of Christmas by, e.g., buying a Christmas cake, is regularly observed by 65 percent of the population, while another 18 percent have at least experienced it, according to a recent survey. This overall total of 83 percent compares with 81 percent who visit a Shinto shrine or Buddhist temple at New Year, and 89 percent who visit the ancestral tombs at ***higan*** the spring and fall equinox and at ***Obon***, "the feast of the dead" in July and August.[8]

Christians ought to rejoice that at their own initiative Japanese have begun to make Christmas one of their own festivals. But many American observers seem only to lament that the Japanese Christmas is still too superficial, too commercial, too much given to parties, liquor, and gift exchanges. Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and Jingle Bells are heard almost non-stop at Christmas time in Japan. In other words, a Japanese Christmas has much the same blemishes American Christians criticize in their own Christmas. But too few American Christians seem ready to give Christmas in Japan the time to develop also the faith, the love, and the goodness expressed in many American Christian homes and communities at Christmas.



For the first time in four centuries, again at Japanese initiative, Christianity is entering the ritual cycle of the personal rites of passage. Young couples besiege churches in quest of a Christian wedding. One modest Tokyo chapel is the scene of about a thousand weddings a year. Why do bridal couples persist in spite of frequent refusals by over-

[7]For that matter, in 50% of Protestant churches in the U.S.A. the average Sunday attendance is 75 or less. Cf. Lyle Schaller.

[8]Jan Swyngedouw, "Religion in Contemporary Japanese Society," *The East* 22:2 (April 1986): 13-14.

scrupulous pastors who ascribe to them all manner of unworthy motives? My first assistant upon my arrival in Tokyo in 1948, Kiyoshi Hasegawa, now a highly successful professor of English at a national university, stressed a disarmingly simple fact, "They can understand the words." At traditional Shinto shrine weddings few comprehend the archaic language. Besides, Shinto shrine weddings have been in fashion for an astonishingly brief time. They became popular only after the Shinto marriage ceremony held for the Crown Prince in 1900.

One would think that the church both in Japan and the West would respond with unanimous joy to the opportunity to serve couples with a Christian wedding ceremony including a gospel message, and would rejoice that the bridal pair's non-Christian relatives and friends would receive an introduction to Christianity in such a joyful setting. Adlai Stevenson once dubbed Japan a "photocracy." At one of the weddings at which I was invited to officiate in Tokyo in 1984, the complete ceremony including the Japanese pastor's sermon was recorded in sight and sound on video cassette. In this way the gospel can reach absent non-Christian friends and relatives as well as children yet unborn.

But many Christians on both sides of the Pacific are as critical of the Christian wedding trend as they are of the Christmas cake. These couples are coming for the wrong reasons: the white wedding gown vogue, youthful love of American life style, or just because it's cheaper than the traditional Japanese ritual. And their accusations may be correct, for all that. But Lutherans among the critics seem to have forgotten their own theology. It's impossible for any non-Christian to come to church for the right reason. Luther's explanation to the Third Article says so: "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him."

The western style wedding is no passing fad. I have watched this trend for nearly 20 years, and it's bigger every time I get to Japan, in spite of Christians and non-Christians who try to discourage it. Dr. Nabetani Gyoji, president of Kobe Lutheran Seminary, who earned his doctorate in Old Testament at Concordia Seminary when John Tietjen headed it, estimated in 1987 that one third of Japanese young people want a church wedding.

Japan may be trying to teach us how to share the gospel in technological society.

Jesus did not say, "Go into all the world and judge all nations." He did say, "Go into all the world and teach all nations." No teacher imparts much to students, unless (s)he is willing to learn from them, too.

Japan may be trying to teach us how to share the gospel in a highly technological, cultured, moral, and polite society. St. Paul preached the gospel in season and out of season.

The creative Christian one percent has been the salt of the earth in education. Chris-

tians today hold leading academic positions within every kind of Japanese educational institution. At least two post-war presidents of the prestigious University of Tokyo, still the number one school in Japan, were Christians.

The number of Christian authors is out of all proportion to the small church attendance. Endo Shusaku, winner of virtually every major literary award in Japan, is the most admired and widely read Christian writer in Japan. Miura Ayako also witnesses Christ through her best-selling novels.

A prominent secular corporation, the Tokyo Fire and Marine Insurance Company, awarded Dr. Nao Kosaku, former professor at Japan Lutheran Seminary, its 1982 literary prize for his pioneering Hebrew-Japanese lexicon, issued by Seibunsha, an enterprising Lutheran publisher in Tokyo. Not exactly what Prudential or Metropolitan might single out.

Watanabe Sadao (1913-) is Japanizing biblical art with traditional materials and techniques that come from the people. His vital and powerful works communicate fresh and vivid revelations of the Word made flesh. Watanabe's art has been honored both in Japan and abroad, most recently with the Confessor of Christ award by the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and Christ Seminary—Seminex.

The small Christian community in Japan has produced a surprising number of heads of state. Hara Takashi (1856-1921) was the first Christian prime minister, serving from 1918 to 1921. At age 15, like others of his generation, he went up to Tokyo to acquire knowledge and skills appropriate to the new Meiji era. There he studied English and French and was baptized into the Catholic faith as David. Government by the *genro*, or elder statesmen, was the hallmark for decades. They chose and recommended prime ministers to the emperor for appointment. Hara is recognized as one of the principal architects of democratic party government in modern Japan.

Hara's dedication to his party was remarkable among Japanese politicians. He traveled far and wide to encourage people at rallies. He was generous in providing campaign funds to candidates. At the same time, he took little for himself, lived in humble surroundings and avoided ostentatious display. In 1921, en route to a party rally, Prime Minister Hara was fatally stabbed by a youthful ultrarightist in Tokyo Station.[9]

In 1947, Katayama Tetsu became the nation's first post-war Christian premier. A lover of peace, he helped build a barrier that still stands against the reestablishment of unrestricted conventional armed forces and a revival of militarism.[10]

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[9]Najita Tetsuo, "Hara Takashi," *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1982), 102-3. See also Oka Yoshitake, *Five Political Leaders of Modern Japan*. Translated from the Japanese original *Kindai Nihon no Seijika* (Iwanami Shoten, 1979), 85-123. After a year in Tokyo, too poor to gain acceptance at a Japanese school, Hara entered a Catholic theological school. But several years later he was accepted by the Justice Ministry Law School (Oka, 87-88). As prime minister, he worried that, unlike Confucianism and Buddhism, Christianity had not yet been Japanized but was propagated by foreign missionaries, who brought in disturbing western ways of thinking (Oka, 117). Opponents criticized Hara harshly for what they perceived as his selfish exploitation of government in the interest of his party. "He used power to do things forcibly" (Oka, 122–23).

[10]James Phillips, *From the Rising of the Sun: Christians and Society in Contemporary Japan* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1981), 21. See also *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan*, 4:167.

Former U.S. Ambassador E. O. Reischauer found Prime Minister Ohira Masayoshi, who served from 1978 to his death in 1980, always straightforward and reliable: "The fact that he was a Christian . . . may have contributed to those traits." At the same time Reischauer, son of Japan missionaries and Professor of the History of Japan at Harvard, attests, "Ohira seemed to me the most effective of politicians, having the daring to steer the public toward necessary though unpopular goals and the wisdom to do this with tact."[11]

Hatoyama Ichiro, who served as prime minister (1954 to 1956) is termed an inactive Protestant by James M. Phillips. Both Hatoyama and Ohira were sharply criticized by Protestant spokespersons because they made visits to the Ise or Yasukuni shrines. Phillips regards Ohira, too, as an inactive Protestant. Yoshida Shigeru, prime minister from 1946 to 1954 was baptized a Catholic after his death![12]

Surprisingly, in contemporary politics a Christian woman, member of Doshisha Church in Kyoto, which belongs to the United Church of Christ in Japan, became the head of the Socialist Party in male-oriented Japan in 1987. When the Socialist parties were organized in prewar years a large number of the leaders were Christians. They championed such causes as labor unions, rural cooperatives and social welfare legislation. Individual Christians and even pastors have held political posts in all political parties except the Japan Communist Party. The election of four Christian heads of state, whether active or inactive church members, and not counting Yoshida, is a remarkable record for a Christian Church that claims a baptized membership of only 1% in Japan.

When a fresh translation of the New Testament in colloquial Japanese was published after World War II, I was present when Prince Mikasa Takahito, the emperor's younger brother, appeared as an honored guest and speaker at special ceremonies held by the Japan Bible Society. I later learned that he had studied Hebrew and translated several books by Jack Finegan on the background of the Bible.[13]

Now Prince Mikasa explains his interest in ancient Middle Eastern History in his new book, *Oriental History and Myself*. While the Prince served as an army officer in China during the war, he had two moving experiences. One was the work of Christian missionaries, evident wherever he went, even in the remotest parts of China. He was persuaded that the Japanese, his own people, were a delightful people, but it seemed to him that they worked only to advance their own interests. Prince Mikasa wondered what made these missionaries come to distant China, far away from home. They got little out of it in terms of honor or profit or recognition. What made them choose this way of dedication and service?

When he encountered the Red Army, he was impressed to see how disciplined the soldiers were. They protected women and children in the villages. Signs of stealing and raping were few. Disciplined Japanese soldiers could fight and win battles, but they were not concerned about the welfare of

[11] *My Life Between Japan and America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), 181.

[12] Phillips, *From the Rising of the Sun*, 45.

[13] *Light from the Ancient Past*, 1946; *Handbook of Biblical Archaeology*, 1967; and *Archaeology from the Ancient History of the Orient*, 1983.

women and children in foreign lands. The Prince wondered why the communist soldiers were more disciplined than the nationalist forces of Chiang Kai Shek.

These two real life encounters—meeting dedicated missionaries in out of the way places in China and seeing the disciplined behavior of communist soldiers—moved Prince Mikasa to study the historical background of the Judaeo-Christian tradition (which also influenced Karl Marx). His perspective changed from traditional Japanese nationalism to biblical humanism.[14] His elder brother also received Christian influence. Crown Prince Akihito's private tutor beginning at age 12, from 1946 to 1950 was Elizabeth Gray Vining, a Philadelphia Quaker. She stressed his need for a broad vision of society and the world and for the development of an outstanding personal character. The Japanese in this immediate postwar period were impressed by her learning and her strong pacifist convictions.[15]

Christianity has leavened Japanese society in the field of values.

Crown Prince Akihito married a commoner who attended Sacred Heart College, a Catholic school in Tokyo. Now Princess Michiko, she enjoys wide popular esteem and affection.

Clearly, just as numerically weak Pauline Christianity penetrated Caesar's household, so the one percent Christianity of Japan has influenced the imperial family itself.

Christianity has leavened Japanese society in the field of values. I once asked Nishitani Keiji, noted Buddhist philosopher in Kyoto, "In what area, if any, has Christianity made an impact on Japan?" He replied, "In ethics."

One obvious instance: the Japanese Salvation Army and Japanese Christian women's societies have been in the vanguard of the fight against prostitution and for women's rights.

The example and popular writings of evangelist Kagawa Toyohiko (1888-1960) intensely stimulated Japan's social conscience. His non-violence pre-dated that of Gandhi whom he criticized as advocating narrow nationalism. By the way, he too first visited a missionary's home for the "wrong reason." He came to learn English. But he went on to use all the language he knew to preach the gospel of Christ in Asia and America.

Jesus instructed his followers to be a salt and a leaven. He did not provide statistical yardsticks or computer software to quantify the subtle, significant influence of a disciple.

It is more important to weigh converts than to count them, in Japan or anywhere else.

[14]Masao Takenaka, *God is Rice* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1986), 11-13.

[15]Elizabeth Gray Vining, *Window for the Crown Prince*, 1952.

Preaching from Memory: Forgotten Art or Lost Skill?

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It is with great joy that I, as a homiletician, write an article on preaching for a *Festschrift* honoring John Tietjen. The joy is not just in writing the article, or writing it in honor of the man, but writing it in honor of one who is himself an exemplary preacher. This article focuses not on the excellence of content, although John Tietjen does model that, but on a style of delivery that makes that content come alive, and John also models that. John Tietjen preaches as one who is engaged in an intense conversation with another, a conversation that is not casual chit-chat, but determined; not off-the-cuff, but penetrating; not rambling, but carefully prescribed and with clear direction. Like most conversations, it is done without the use or benefit of notes or manuscript. And that is the point of this article: preaching, as if in conversation, without the use or benefit of notes or manuscript—a forgotten art or lost skill?

Now some would say: well, that's just the man, a man with extraordinary gifts. And I do not doubt that for a moment. At the same time, I would suggest that such preaching is also a skill that can be learned by most preachers, that is, if we are willing to give it the time and the attention that it requires. This article encourages that kind of skill acquisition and provides a way to accomplish it, not for the sake of making the preacher look better (although it will probably do that), but for the sake of the gospel and for the sake of those who have come to hear that gospel proclaimed.

Very little has been written on the art of sermon delivery. The last textbook I have seen on the subject dates back to the late 50s. Most homileticians focus on content and types of sermons and preparation of manuscripts, etc. Few touch on what happens while the preacher is in the pulpit, and those who do often present the material as an

"and-oh-yes-by-the-way" chapter which is little more than a condensed and somewhat watered down version of a high school speech course. Having said that, this author puts himself at great peril so as not to repeat the "and-oh-yes-by-the-way" model.

First of all, allow a few observations. Preaching is an art. I would be the last to deny that. And it is true, some preachers are more gifted than others. But preaching is also a skill, a skill, as noted above, that anyone can develop if we are willing to give it time and practice. Ah, but there's the rub, *time*! There is just so precious little of it. So much is demanded of us preachers. So much crowds in on our busy schedules and crowds out preaching preparation time. It would seem as if the preacher is expected to shake those weekly (or does one spell that weakly!) gems out of the proverbial sleeve. But not even Almy or Fortress offers a clerical shirt of that quality. Let me say it up front, unless you are willing and able to carve out some eight to ten hours each week for sermon preparation, this article will not help you. In fact, reading this will be a waste of time. And you don't need your time wasted. But if you have the time or are willing to take the time, then read on. You may discover a fresh and creative approach to sermon delivery, which can and will change you and your hearer.

Preparation for sermon delivery takes place long before Sunday morning. It happens weeks before, in the quiet of your study and in the day-to-day pastoral care of people. That already says something about this method. It is not something that happens late Saturday night. It has been in planning for a long time. Good preaching begins with advanced long-range preparation where the preacher becomes familiar with texts and themes, sacred days and holy observances. There is a unity and a wholeness to our feasts and celebrations, but a unity and wholeness that must be discovered and studied and understood. It does not simply jump out at you from the pages of *Proclamation* or *Preaching Helps*, or the million and one other preaching aids, as good as they may be. The same holds true for the careful study of the Scripture and the detailed analysis of the preaching community to which you have been called to speak the Word. The preacher cannot preach and do it well unless thoroughly familiar with the Word and with the people and their life situation. Too many of us are still into "canned" sermons, pulpit commentary digests, and "Saturday night specials." And the reason we give? Not enough time! Now most of these issues are outside the purview of this article, except to mention them in passing. They will have to wait for a future article. The point of all of this is: Good preaching takes time!

"Preparation for delivery requires that the preacher go through the carefully planned sermon repeatedly, with people in mind, until its structure is solid and its expressions are meaningful." Those words do not originate with me, but rather with one who served as teacher for many of us, Richard R. Caemmerer, Sr. He called it "Functional Memorization." "Good delivery," said Caemmerer, "depends on remembering not just the address, but always the people who are addressed." Consequently the preacher will want to avoid those things which get in the way of remembering people, such things as reading from a manuscript, rote memorization, poor use of body language, concern about self and "how am I doing," and failing to engage in "active listening." What follows

is seven steps for "functional memorization," that is, readying the prepared sermon for delivery. The first two steps are clearly the most important and will be presented here in greater detail; the remaining five steps are just a refresher exercise in common sense, but something we may have easily forgotten or overlooked with time. One will immediately recognize some similarity between these steps and those suggested by Caemmerer years ago. The similarity is not accidental. It is a method that works. What I present here are steps that I would like to think of as more fully developed and refined. Let the reader judge. The end result, however, is a process that, if followed carefully, will engage preachers and hearers in lively "conversation" without the use or benefit of notes or manuscript. That, of course, is what preaching is all about: pastor and people engaging each other in lively conversation. Years ago, Reuel Howe described such engagement as the "miracle of dialogue." When the "miracle" takes place, the gospel is served well. Without the "miracle," there is only boring monologue which engages no one, not even the preacher, and serves the gospel poorly.

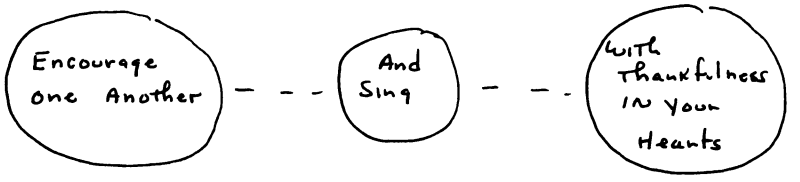
Step 1: Needing a Clear Outline

As stated earlier, preparation for delivery begins long before the actual delivery. Most important in those preparation steps is the writing of an outline. The outline is the backbone of the sermon and the key for effective delivery. Outlining, however, is not easy. It is particularly difficult in oral communication. Most of us preachers had been given a preset mold: every sermon has three points, with each sub-point "A" followed by a sub-point "B," etc., and I must confess I have taught that method myself. But no longer! I seriously question if such a linear, sequential model is the most effective way to prepare or present a sermon. It may be a good model for the term paper or a theological treatise, but it does not lend itself for good conversation. To be sure, there are a number of ways to outline; there is no one correct way. Whatever the structure, however, it must engage preacher and people in mutual conversation.

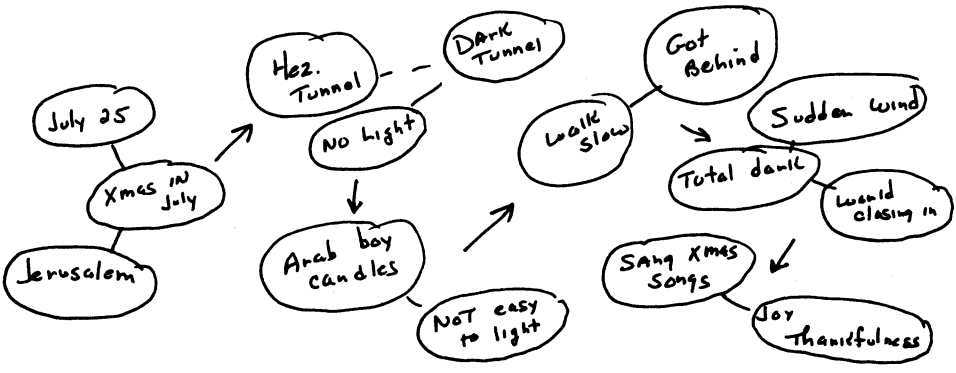
In this regard, I have found most helpful a model developed by Gabriele Lusser Rico, Professor of English and Creative Arts at San Jose State University in California. In her book, *Writing the Natural Way: Using Right-Brain Techniques to Release Your Expressive Powers* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, Co., 1983), she describes an outline-type process that she labels "clustering." "Clustering" is an ordering of ideas and thoughts that requires one to use both sides of the brain: the left hemisphere, which is largely occupied with rational, logical representation of reality; and the right hemisphere, which is occupied with symbol and pattern and design. The first step in any creative process, is to become aware of the two-sided nature of our mental makeup and to employ both. Human beings engaged in any kind of creative activity explore an astronomical number of possible patterns before settling on one idea. What we lack is not ideas, but the key to get in touch with those ideas. "Clustering" is that magic key. "Clustering" is a nonlinear brainstorming process akin to free association which bypasses our logical, orderly consciousness in order to touch the mental life of daydreams, random thoughts, remembered incidents, images, or sensa-

tion. It begins with a simple idea or concept around which one allows to "cluster" related and inter-related ideas and concepts. As one "clusters" these ideas and concepts, connections are made and suddenly, as Rico describes it, there is a shift from a sense of randomness to a sense of direction. Whereas the model is designed for writing, I have discovered that it works equally well for preaching, both in the writing of the sermon manuscript and in the delivery of it.

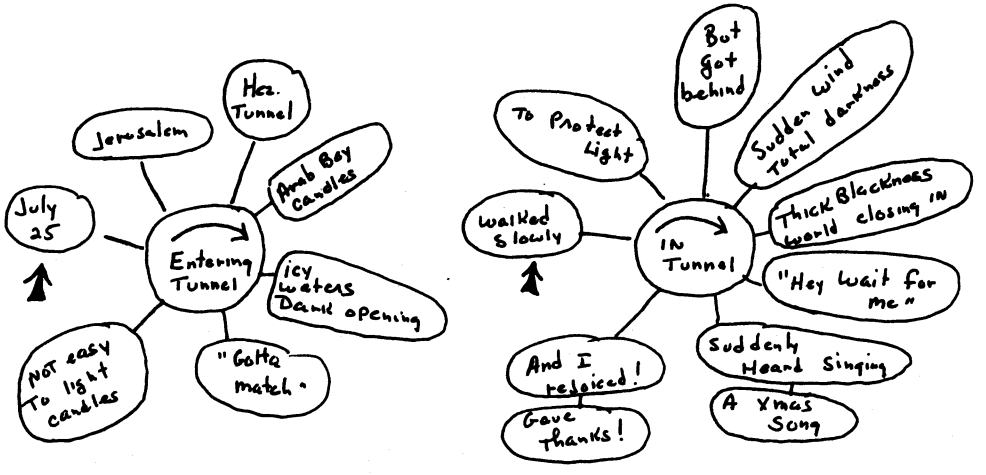
For the preacher, the beginning idea or concept is the central thought or theme which emerges from the biblical text and from the careful study of the contemporary situation. To demonstrate this method, I am using portions of an outline that eventually became one of eight sermons based on Colossians 3 and was preached during the 1987 tour of the LSTC Choir. This sermon was based on Verse 16 (a copy of the entire sermon is available by writing the author at LSTC, 1100 East 55th Street, Chicago, IL 60615). The first thing is for the preacher to jot down the central thought in a couple of words and circle them:



Simple enough. Next, this preacher thought of a story that would best illustrate that central idea. I left the central idea without developing it. That could wait until later. The story was now pressing me and needed my attention. I do not want to suggest here that every sermon should have or be a story. Creative preaching calls for a variety of forms. But this sermon would have a story, a story that I call "Hezekiah's Tunnel." At the same time the idea "Christmas in July" (the story had occurred in July) popped into my head, along with rejoicing and singing. These were quickly jotted down and "clustered:"

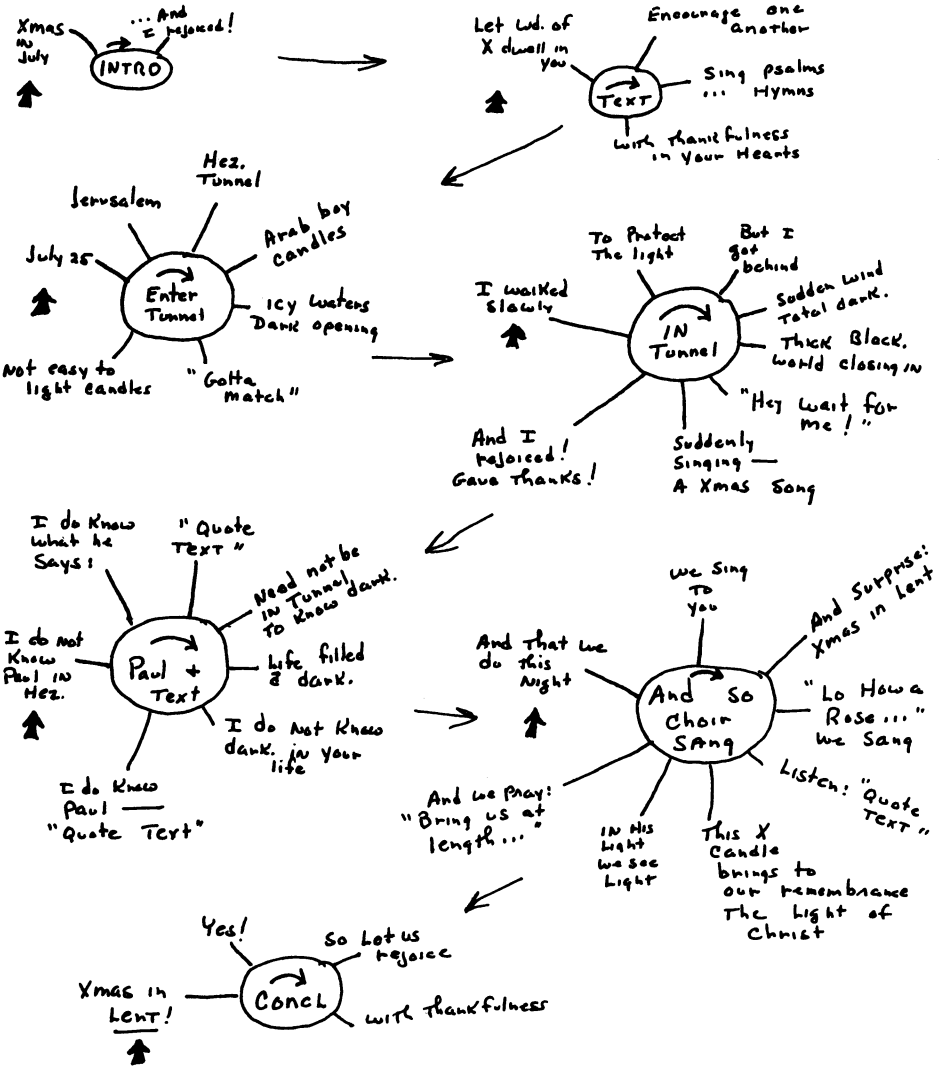


The story was begging for immediate development: a clear idea of what we want the story to accomplish, setting, time and place, character development, the conflict or problem to be resolved, development of the plot or main action, and a quick resolution. And so I gave that my full attention:



Thought had to be given to the location of that story in the sermon and how it would connect to the central thought and to the other "clusterings." Development had to be given to the central idea or point of the sermon which I had left in an unfinished state.

And of course, somehow I had to get the hearer into the sermon (not to say anything of the preacher), and thought had to be given as to how I would conclude the sermon. The final outline looked like this:



As you can see, once the central idea or goal has been determined, one simply allows ideas and concepts and explanations or stories to "cluster" around the central theme or thought. As one continues the "clustering" process, those ideas and thoughts take on a sense of direction or flow. The preacher simply needs to trace or connect that direction or flow and in that tracing a picture or a road map begins to emerge. It is important to understand that "clustering" is shorthand for the right side of the brain that offers a variety of options, not all of which need find their way into the finished product. To be sure, this is a simplistic explanation for a very complex idea. As Rico describes it, "clustering" is a self-organizing process. As you spill out seemingly random words and phrases around a center, you begin to see patterns forming until a moment comes—characterized by an "aha!" feeling—when you suddenly sense a focus for writing the manuscript. She notes that this moment is similar to watching clouds, and seeing just clouds; then, in a sudden moment of recognition you see a horse or a duck or Lincoln's profile. It is a moment of pattern recognition. The emotional surge of good feeling that accompanies this moment allows you to begin writing the sermon and will serve you well in the delivery of the sermon.

Step 2: Writing the Sermon Manuscript

Students of homiletics frequently ask how long before they no longer have to write out a sermon manuscript. For me the answer to that question is: Never! Of course there is much debate over this. To be sure there will be those occasions when the preacher has no time to prepare a manuscript: funerals, weddings, etc. But such occasions should be the exception, not the rule. One should never use lack of time as an excuse for inadequate preparation of the main sermon for the week. Some preachers feel that the manuscript is too confining, too rigid, and doesn't allow for flexibility or creativity. I suppose there is some truth to that. One could allow the manuscript to become that. I, however, have never found the preparation of a manuscript confining and rigid. In fact, just the opposite seems to hold true. What I find, and all too often, is that preachers who do not write out a manuscript tend to ramble, saying much about nothing, and little that is new or refreshing or creative. Now that is confinement and rigidity of the worse sort, not only for the preacher, but worse for those who must hear that pious prattle week after week. Granted, that may just be my own bias, but I think not.

For me, the manuscript is an essential tool in the task of sermon preparation; it is not a tool for sermon delivery. It is an instrument that should only rarely see the light of day outside the preacher's study, and surely never in the pulpit! Its purpose is to provide the preacher a more objective look at his/her interpretation of the biblical message for people today. It is through the process of writing that the preacher is able to put down ideas in a more systematic, orderly, and concrete way. Each idea and concept can be carefully weighed. Each thought and expression can be carefully chosen. Every sentence is a loaded sentence. Every word is used for special purpose. That is not to say that such words and sentences and ideas and concepts

are now frozen in concrete. Indeed not! The manuscript is not for the recording of ideas, but for the reflection and evaluation of thoughts. The manuscript is an exercise, a practice in words, a detailed sketch, much like the artist who creates a detailed cartoon of what will eventually become the final product. It allows you, the artist, to play with concepts and ideas and words and color. It is here that the dialogical process begins as preacher and manuscript engage in mutual conversation, a dialogue that is to continue and develop into mutual conversation between preacher and people. I contend that without the manuscript, or at least without a detailed "expanded" outline, there will be no mutual conversation, but only rambling monologue. If for no other reason, the preacher needs to write a manuscript just to estimate the length of the sermon. Without that objective instrument staring us in the face, we preachers are poor judges of lapsed time, as our people will readily confirm. For this preacher, two single-spaced pages are more than adequate for a twelve minute sermon. (To those of you preaching twenty minutes: don't kid yourselves. Few people are listening, and then only if you are very, very good. The fact is that television has shortened the average adult attention span. Every twelve minutes there's a commercial break!)

Step 3: Reading It with People in Mind

As stated earlier, the remaining steps for sermon delivery are rather obvious and can all take place in about an hour or two on a quiet Saturday evening or early Sunday morning. It is important for the preacher to leave some time, if possible a day or two, between the writing of the manuscript and preparing it for delivery. Like a good wine, the sermon needs to age. Step 3 requires four or five careful readings of the manuscript and the close examination of the relationship between the manuscript and the outline. It is a good idea to have the written outline or "cluster" sketches in one hand and the manuscript in the other. Ask yourself: How do they fit together? What is the relationship between your ideas and thoughts, and the words and phrases that are on paper. How do they relate to one another in a given paragraph? How do they tie that paragraph together into one clear thought? Or do they? In other words, engage in a three-way conversation between the manuscript, the outline, and you as preacher. This is not an exercise in rote memorization. That will only get you into trouble and create problems for your hearer as well. The sermon is not oral interpretation or a recitation of literature. It is an event which engages preacher and hearer in mutual conversation. So, this step is a time of reflection, of mediation, of thinking through your own thought processes and how you can express those thoughts into words that convey meaning for the people to whom you have been called to preach. Again, play with the words, the phrases, the ideas, the concepts. Have fun! A word of caution: this is not the time for major revisions. The temptation is to constantly improve on the sermon. Avoid the temptation. Some improvement will naturally happen. Let it happen. This, however, is not the time for major revision; it is a time of preparation and for making ready.

Step 4: Memorize the Outline

If there is one thing you do rote memorize, it is the outline. Memorize, however, is the wrong word for this process. It is taking a snapshot of the outline. One way to do this is to write out the outline or to recreate the "clusters" several times, and then, on a blank sheet of paper, do it one last time from memory. I have discovered that there is something to the writing process that helps to imprint the words or "clusters" in my memory. That is the way I learned to memorize everything from the catechism to German poetry to Greek "vocabs." Perhaps you've discovered that too. It works. With the outline well in hand, you are now ready to proceed to Step 5.

Step 5: Dry Run It!

Not all preachers "dry run" their sermons by going to the darkened church on a Saturday night and preaching the sermon aloud, without the benefit of people. This preacher used to do just that, and I must say, for a long time, that was a very useful process. It gave me the kind of confidence I needed to get through the next day. And you may discover that this will be a helpful step for you too, especially if you have never before preached without notes or manuscript. That's kind of scary! At least, it is the first time you do it. So, go to the darkened church and "dry run it." No longer is it necessary for me to go to the darkened church on the night before, but I still "dry run it." I sit back in the quiet of my study, close my eyes, and mentally transport myself to that darkened church. I imagine the people there. I can even imagine where some of them are sitting, for they claim a certain pew as their very own as if they've paid a tax on it. And then I begin to preach, with manuscript in hand. I preach it, oh, not aloud, but in the quiet of my mind. Once in awhile I have to catch a glimpse of that manuscript which is not yet quite in hand, but then I close my eyes again and continue to preach. And while I preach, I begin to listen to those words, how they sound and how they communicate and how they feel. I think through such things as how I want to look or where I want to stand or how I want to move. Some people would call that staging, and perhaps it is. That is not a dirty word in my book. I give careful attention to words and action, position and movement, feeling and sense. These are very important things. At times I'll back up the tape and run it again, just to see how it sounds, how it feels, how it looks, how it "plays." Too theatrical for you? I hope not, for I see it as the necessary staging for the high drama of preaching, not so that the preacher looks good, but so that the gospel can be presented well. And then, one more time. Only this time, the manuscript is laid aside, and this preacher, with eyes closed, goes from beginning to end, nonstop . . . and then for a good night's sleep!

Keep on remembering the hearer.

Step 6: Forget It!

I am serious about this step: forget the sermon. The preacher who is constantly putting finishing touches on the sermon making last minute changes or pacing up and down the sacristy floor memorizing key phrases and important lines is in trouble. An occasional memory lapse will happen to the best of preachers; don't encourage it by over preparation. Experienced communicators will leave at least a two or three hour space between a last time look at the manuscript and the actual delivery, and they use that time to relax! You must too! The time before the service is not a time for going over the sermon, but for relaxing, for friendly conversation, for a cup of coffee, and even for some prayer and meditation. Try it!

Step 7: Risk It!

This is, perhaps, the most difficult step of all. For too long, too many of us have become locked into one way of preaching, and one way only. It takes a lot of courage to break free from those old patterns. But for the sake of God's people, risk it. Ah, but there's that old problem again: we think not of the people, but of the preacher. Caemmerer once said that if preachers want to deliver the sermon to the people, they have to be thinking about them, and every step of the way. And for the most part most preachers do that, until it comes to this point. For many preachers, delivery preparation is not so much "keep on remembering the hearer" but "start remembering the sermon," or worse, "start worrying about how this will all come off," and we retreat to our old patterns. Well, take a risk! Begin in small steps. Perhaps start with a children's sermon, with no notes or manuscript. There seems to be less risk there, which may say something about the value of children's sermons (a subject for a future article). But, risk it! Risk telling a story in your sermon without the use or benefit of notes or manuscript. A well written story is easy to tell. Risk it! And then try the whole sermon. Step out of the pulpit (which is an archaic piece of furniture, anyway, designed before the public address system!) and preach. Risk it!

Preaching, without the use or benefit of notes or manuscript: a forgotten art or lost skill? I suspect both. But an art that can be remembered; a skill that can be acquired. Ah, but a word of warning: once you try it, you can never go back to the old and the true and the tried. For the sake of your people . . . and for the sake of the gospel . . . you won't want to!

The Word Must Be Proclaimed: Luther on Ministry

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Luther's doctrine of the ministry[1] cannot be divorced from his doctrine of the church. The two are integrally related, for, according to Luther, the ministry exists *for the sake of* the Christian community. In the Smalcald Articles Luther provides a short, yet striking, definition of the church: "Holy believers and sheep who hear the voice of their Shepherd."[2] The church is, therefore, never merely a building or an institution, but a community of faithful people.[3] That community is created by the Holy Spirit through the Word.

The intimate relationship between the church and the Word explains the necessity of the public ministry. "Now, wherever you hear or see this word preached, believed, professed, and lived," Luther maintains,

> do not doubt that the true *ecclesia sancta catholica,* "a Christian holy people" must be there, even though their number is very small . . . for God's word cannot be without God's people, and conversely, God's people cannot be without God's word. Otherwise, who would preach or hear it preached, if there were no people of God? And what could or would God's people believe, if there were no word of God?[4]

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[1]A number of useful studies of Luther's doctrine of the ministry have appeared. Among those studies note especially: Wilhelm Brunotte, *Das geistliche Amt bei Luther* (Berlin, 1959); Robert H. Fischer, "Another Look at Luther's Doctrine of the Ministry," *Lutheran Quarterly* 18 (1966), 260–71; Brian Gerrish, "Priesthood and Ministry in the Theology of Luther," *Church History* 34 (1965), 404–22; Lowell C. Green, "Change in Luther's Doctrine of the Ministry," *Lutheran Quarterly* 18 (1966), 173–83; Gert Haendler, *Luther on Ministerial Office & Congregational Function,* ed. by Eric W. Gritsch and tr. by Ruth C. Gritsch (Philadelphia, 1981); Hellmut Lieberg, *Amt und Ordination bei Luther und Melanchthon* (Göttingen, 1962), and James H. Pragman, *Traditions of Ministry* (St. Louis, 1983).

[2]*Book of Concord,* ed. Theodore Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959), Smalcald Articles, Part III, Article XII, 315.

[3]*Book of Concord,* Large Catechism, Creed, p. 417.

[4]"On the Councils and the Church" (1539), *Luther's Works* 41:150.

The church exists wherever the Word is preached, for the Holy Spirit creates faith and the community of the faithful through the Word. Normally, that Word is proclaimed publicly by ordained pastors:

> Now wherever you find these offices or officers, you may be assured that the holy Christian people are there; for the church cannot be without these bishops, pastors, preachers, priests; and conversely, they cannot be without the church. Both must be together.[5]

The Holy Spirit, the Word, and the church are all interrelated, and they necessitate the ministry. Luther views the ministry as the channel whereby the means of grace—the spoken and the sacramental Word—are ordinarily preached and celebrated within the community. The ministry is, therefore, an instrument of God's continuing saving activity. There can be no loftier view of the public, ordained ministry as far as the Reformer is concerned.

One of the interesting scholarly debates regarding Luther's doctrine of the ministry has focused on the relationship between the ordained and the universal priesthood.[6] While some students of Luther assert that he elevated the ordained ministry over the laity, others maintain that Luther derives the ordained ministry from the universal priesthood. It should be recognized that Luther's thought cannot be used to justify either a highly sacramental view of the ordained ministry or a radical anticlericalism.

Luther was an ardent proponent of the priesthood of all believers. He argued that there is ultimately only one ministry, that of Word and sacraments, which is the responsibility and privilege of all baptized believers. In 1523 Luther wrote his formative treatise "Concerning the Ministry," which he dedicated to the people of Prague, the heirs of John Hus and of the Bohemian reform movement. In the treatise Luther makes the following assertion:

> There is no other Word of God than that which is given all Christians to proclaim. There is no other baptism than the one which any Christian can bestow. There is no other remembrance of the Lord's Supper than that which any Christian can observe and which Christ has instituted. There is no other kind of sin than that which any Christian can bind or loose. There is no other sacrifice than of the body of every Christian. No one but a Christian can pray. No one but a Christian may judge of doctrine. These make the priestly and royal office.[7]

This ministry of proclamation, of celebration, of forgiveness, of sacrifice, of prayer and of judgment thus belongs to all the people of God. "Indeed, all Christians are priests, and all priests are Christians," Luther emphasizes.[8] And again: "One is born to be priest, one becomes a minister."[9] Citing 1 Peter 2:9 in support of his doctrine of the universal priesthood, he points specifically to baptism as the means whereby people are consecrated to this priesthood.[10]

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[5]"On the Councils and the Church," *LW* 41:164.

[6]Cf. particularly the works of Brunotte, Haendler, and Lieberg.

[7]"Concerning the Ministry" (1523) *LW* 40:34–35.

[8]"Concerning the Ministry," *LW* 40:19.

[9]"Concerning the Ministry," *LW* 40:18.

[10]"To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate" (1520), *LW* 44:127.

His own evangelical insights and the abuses which accompanied the privileged status of the medieval clergy led Luther to elevate all Christians to the spiritual estate and to claim total spiritual equality within the Christian community. His doctrine of the priesthood of all believers was one of the most revolutionary, most popular and, at the same time, most challenged aspects of Luther's thought during his lifetime. It remains one the gems of the Reformation heritage. The questions arises, however, whether Luther sought to denigrate the ordained priesthood and to challenge its necessity by promoting the priesthood of all believers. By no means! Luther had a deep appreciation for the pastoral office and considered it to be of the essence for the church's life. Yet, if the universal priesthood and the ordained clergy are so integrally related and ultimately share the same ministry, what distinguishes them and what necessitates the latter?

There is a persistent continuity in Luther's thought concerning the ministry.[11] He never abrogates his understanding of the Christians' calling as priests, nor does he imply that the existence and the functioning of the public ministry releases the community of priests from their priestly functions and responsibilities. In fact, because of their baptismal call, Christians are expected to be witnesses of the gospel in the circumstances of daily life, in case of emergency, and when the Gospel is compromised. Luther gives specific examples: if no other Christian is present, a believer must share the gospel publicly; or if, as in Luther's time, the gospel is neglected or rejected, any Christian must stand up and correct erring preachers, for "need breaks all laws and has none."[12]

The Reformer recognizes, however, that while all have the priestly office and priestly rights, not all of the faithful have the authority to exercise that office publicly under normal circumstances. Luther makes this point particularly in "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church":

> Let everyone, therefore, who knows himself to be a Christian be assured of this, that we are all equally priests, that is to say, we have the same power in respect to the Word and the sacraments. However, no one may make use of this power except by the consent of the community or by the call of a superior. (For what is the common property of all, no individual may arrogate to himself, unless he is called).[13]

Luther's doctrine of the church, his focus on the community, and a concern for good order cause him to argue that the public exercise of the priestly functions should be in the hands of properly chosen and properly designated individuals.[14]

The public exercise of the priestly office, then, is the crucial factor which distinguishes the ordained from the universal priesthood, according to Luther. Thus the difference between the pastor and the layperson is not one of calling (*Stand*) but of office (*Amt*).

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[11]Cf. the careful analysis of Haendler who also argues for a basic continuity in Luther's position.

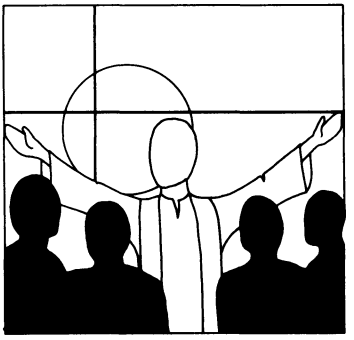
[12]"That a Christian Assembly or Congregation Has the Right and Power to Judge all Teaching and to Call, Appoint, and Dismiss Teachers, Established and Proven by Scripture" (1523), *LW* 39:310–311.

[13]"The Babylonian Captivity of the Church" (1520), *LW* 36:116.

[14]"Concerning the Ministry," *LW* 40:34.

Luther clearly explicates his position in the treatise "To the Christian Nobility":

> It follows from this argument that there is no true, basic difference between laymen and priests, princes and bishops, between religious and secular, except for the sake of office and work, but not for the sake of status. They are all of the spiritual estate, all are truly priests, bishops, and popes. But they do not all have the same work to do.[15]



Pastors are simply officeholders. Like other believers, ordained persons are consecrated priests through their baptism, but are then also chosen to fill particular offices within the community. These offices are necessary because practicality and good order dictate that not all the people of God will be able to carry out publicly the necessary ministerial functions. Thus the very existence and health of the community necessitate the ordained ministry:

> Second, since a Christian congregation neither should nor could exist without God's word, it clearly follows from the previous [argument] that it nevertheless must have teachers and preachers who administer the word.[16]

This explains why Luther considered the public ministry to be a mark of the church, together with the Word, the sacraments, the office of the keys, worship, and the bearing of the cross.[17]

It is evident that in Luther's thinking the ordained ministry is closely related to and emanates from the priesthood of all believers. The pastor is viewed as the chosen representative of the community. However, Luther does not derive the ordained ministry solely from the universal priesthood but also from the institution of Christ. The Reformer cites Eph 4:8–12 and points out that Christ has given particular gifts to the people of God for the work of ministry. Among those gifts is the gift of pastors. Because they are necessary for the welfare of the church, Christ will continue to provide such gifts to the church until the end of the world.[18] To emphasize the divinely instituted nature of the ordained ministry Luther included it in the "holy orders" or "religious institutions" which God has established for the welfare of all of society.

> But the holy orders and true religious institutions established by God are these three: the office of priest, the estate of marriage, the civil government. All who are engaged in the clerical office or ministry of the Word are in a holy, proper, good and God-pleasing order and estate, such as those who

[15] "To the Christian Nobility," *LW* 44:129.

[16] "The Right and Power to Call," *LW* 39:309.

[17] "On the Councils and the Church," *LW* 41:148–165.

[18] "On the Councils and the Church," *LW* 41:154–55.

> preach, administer sacraments, supervise the common chest, sextons and messengers or servants who serve such persons. These are engaged in works which are altogether holy in God['s] sight.[19]

The authority of the ordained ministry is derived both from the universal priesthood and from Christ's institution. Thus pastors are not only the representatives of the community but also always representatives of Christ. This implies that they are servants of both and have a direct relationship with both.

Pastors must seek to be faithful servants of God and of God's people.

During the early years of the Reformation Luther tended to side with evangelical congregations in their conflicts with priests who remained loyal to the Bishop of Rome. As the Reformation movement progressed, and especially during the Peasants' War, Luther tended to support pastors against congregations who, in his opinion, usurped authority which was not theirs.[20] It must be maintained, however, that Luther consistently respected the authority and responsibilities of both the universal priesthood and the ordained ministry. He always viewed the public ministry as a lofty calling which must be deeply respected and faithfully supported by the community of believers. Pastors must seek to be faithful servants of God and of God's people, and if they cannot do both the will of God and the will of the people they must be obedient to God's will as it is revealed in the Word. At the same time, the people have the responsibility to judge the preaching and teaching of the pastors, which implies that they also have the right of discipline and dismissal.[21] Both universal priests and ordained priests were consistently called to be faithful to the gospel, and Luther did not hesitate to confront both the clergy and the laity with this responsibility—also as they related to one another. Luther thus gives neither the universal priesthood nor the ordained ministry arbitrary or unlimited power. Rather, he prefers to emphasize the intimate relationship between them and to clarify their lofty responsibilities as servants of God.

While unusual circumstances may require the individual Christian to perform ministerial functions in public, in normal circumstances a call by a congregation or another ecclesiastical authority is required before one may assume the office of pastor.[22] Luther emphasizes the public call. Such a call provides concrete assurance to individuals whenever they experience vocational doubts or if their call is challenged. Individuals who have received a public call have concrete, identifiable proof that they have been chosen for their lofty office. Such a

[19]"Confession Concerning Christ's Supper" (1528), *LW* 37:364.

[20]Cf. Haendler's examination of specific situations.

[21]"To the Christian Nobility," *LW* 44:135.

[22]Cf. footnote #14 and the discussion related to it.

public affirmation was always extremely important and comforting to Luther during his own ministry. Whenever he was challenged or criticized during his career, and whenever he experienced his inner spiritual struggles (*Anfechtungen*), Luther could find assurance in the fact that he had not sought his office or usurped it but that he was called and compelled to pursue it. "For I would surely in the long run break down and despair under the great and heavy burdens which lay upon me," Luther confessed, "if I had begun this task by sneaking into the work without being called and commanded to do it."[23] Such assurance is necessary for every pastor, asserted Luther.

> Therefore we who are in the ministry of the Word have this comfort, that we have a heavenly and holy office; being legitimately called to this, we prevail over all the gates of hell (Matt 16:18). On the other hand it is dreadful when the conscience says: "You have done this without a call!"[24]

Much attention has been focused on Luther's claim that the community (*Gemeinde*) has the right to call its pastors. It should be remembered, however, that Luther did not intend to introduce a new form of ecclesiastical polity, namely, congregationalism. Luther continued to support the episcopacy and assumed that the evangelicals would eventually have bishops. This did, in fact, happen, also in Germany. The refusal of contemporary bishops to join the evangelical movement and to provide evangelical congregations with pastors compelled Luther to find a means of providing for an evangelical ministry. The call of the community became that means.[25] Luther did not seek to eliminate the bishops from the call process, as long as they did not oppose the gospel and as long as they sought the welfare of the church. The Reformer did stipulate, of course, that bishops must confirm the choice of the congregation. If a bishop refuses such confirmation, even though the congregation has acted properly and for the sake of the gospel, the called person may rightfully serve as pastor even without the bishop's approval.[26] The rights and obligations of the community were, therefore, carefully safeguarded by Luther, and the traditional authority of the bishop was curbed significantly. The community's right and power to call its pastors were affirmed.

Because he was convinced that the public ministry was absolutely necessary for the welfare of the church, Luther suggested that in case of an emergency even the civil authorities could provide the church with pastors.[27] Luther always envisioned governmental action only in case of emergency. He never sought or recommended the domination of the church by the government. Luther looked to the civil authorities for assistance since they, too, were members of the church, baptized priests, and leading members of the community with substantial power and resources.[28]

The call, then, is the means whereby the community chooses one of its members—

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[23]*WA* 30III, 522.

[24]"Lectures on Galatians" (1535), *LW* 26:20.

[25]Cf. "The Right and Power to Call," *LW* 39:301–314.

[26]"The Right and Power to Call," *LW* 39:312.

[27]"The Right and Power to Call," *LW* 39:312.

[28]Cf. "To the Christian Nobility," *LW* 44:115–217, especially 127–33.

one of its fellow priests—to exercise the functions and responsibilities of the priesthood publicly. It is a crucial step in the establishment and continuation of the public ministry, and it is important both to the community and to the called pastor. The community chooses and thus fulfills its responsibility in assuring the public preaching of the Word, and the called person receives assurance and comfort through the community's call, which is also God's call.

While the call was essential in Luther's thinking, ordination was not. He views it merely as "a certain rite by which the church chooses its preachers" or as a "certain rite whereby one is called to the ministry of the church."[29] Ordination confirms what has already occurred in the call. There is no room in Luther's theology for a sacramental view of ordination, and he also rejects the lofty implications of such a view for the status and privileges of the clergy. "Of this sacrament the church of Christ knows nothing; it is an invention of the church of the pope," asserts Luther. "Not only is there nowhere any promise of grace attached to it, but there is not a single word said about it in the whole New Testament."[30] The clerical domination of the church and other abuses which had resulted because of the medieval understanding of ordination were strongly condemned by Luther.[31] The Reformer views the ordained ministry in terms of service, not in terms of power.

Luther also emphasized that ordination does not impart an indelible character which distinguishes the clergy from the laity and makes them priests for life. Luther's dismissal of this notion is decisive and reflects his polemical spirit in 1520:

> For that fiction of an "indelible character" has long since become a laughingstock. I admit that the pope imparts this "character," but Christ knows nothing of it; and a priest who is consecrated with it becomes the life-long servant and captive, not of Christ, but of the pope, as is the case nowadays.[32]

By taking this position Luther indicated his functional view of the public ministry and asserted that an ordained person can cease to be a priest, either voluntarily or by means of ecclesiastical discipline.[33]

The preaching of the gospel is the primary task of the pastor.

[29] "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," *LW* 36:113, 116. Luther did eventually formulate an ordination rite but did not make it binding on the evangelical churches. Cf. "The Ordination of Ministers of the Word" (1539), *LW* 53:122–126.

[30] "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," *LW* 36:106–107.

[31] "The Babylonian Captivity," *LW* 36:112.

[32] "The Babylonian Captivity," *LW* 36:117. The notion of the ***character indelibilis*** was officially proclaimed by the church in 1439 and reaffirmed by the Council of Trent in 1563. It defended the position that once a person is ordained that individual is a priest for life.

[33] "The Babylonian Captivity," *LW* 36:117.

As has been indicated, the Reformer did not seek to abolish the episcopacy. Even though the bishops in Germany did not join the evangelical cause, Luther retained an appreciation for the episcopal office and envisioned its continuation. Of course, he did seek to reform the episcopacy on the basis of biblical and historical models. In the Smalcald Articles he argues for the equality of all bishops, rejects all claims of superiority on the part of the papacy, and notes that Christ is the sole head of the episcopacy. The equality of the apostles and of bishops in the early church is cited in support of his contention. Bishops are unified, not by their allegiance to the papacy, but through a "unity of doctrine, faith, sacraments, prayer, works of love, etc."[34] While they are able to ordain and participate in the call process, they must heed the wishes of the congregation, if those wishes are reasonable and appropriate.[35] The ultimate responsibility of bishops is to foster the preaching of God's Word and to defend the gospel. If they fail to fulfill this responsibility their authority must be rejected and Christ must be obeyed rather than the bishops.[36]

Conclusion

Luther's doctrine of the ministry is an important element of his reformation theology because it is integrally related to his doctrines of justification, of the Word, and of the church. Although he reacted negatively to the hierarchical, privileged priesthood of the medieval church, he had a deep respect for the ordained ministry and was convinced of its necessity. The Reformer viewed the public ministry in functional terms as the office of the Word. The public proclamation of God's Word and the various related ministerial functions constitute the particular responsibilities of the clergy. Although these functions ultimately belong to the whole Christian community, practicality and good order necessitate the selection of individuals from the community who are entrusted with the public exercise of those functions. Pastors are chosen by means of the call, and ordination is simply the public, liturgical affirmation of the community's call. As pastors pursue their vocation and fulfill their responsibilities, they are representatives both of the universal priesthood and of Christ, who has instituted the public ministry. As a channel whereby the means of grace are shared with the people, the ordained ministry is essential for the well-being of the church and must be recognized as a mark of the church. Because the preaching of the gospel is the primary task of the pastor, the ministry is the greatest of all vocations.

Luther by no means answers all the questions contemporary discussions of the doctrine of the ministry have raised or may still raise. In typical fashion he does, however, focus the church's attention on the heart of the matter. The public ministry today, as in the sixteenth century, exists ultimately because the Word must be proclaimed for the sake of humanity and the rest of God's wondrous creation. The ministry is a divine instrument of grace within and beyond Christ's church.

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[34]*Book of Concord,* Smalcald Articles, Part II, Article IV, 300.

[35]"The Right and Power to Call," *LW* 39:312.

[36]"The Right and Power to Call," *LW* 39:309.

Call, Covenant, and Community: The Story of Abraham and Sarah[1]

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Abraham and Sarah are the father and mother of us all. That fact alone might justify our interest in them, but we are also intrigued by their blind venture into an unknown land, their miraculous conception of a child at a ripe old age, and the heroic character of their faith and life. They were also fallible and, as we say today, vulnerable. Abraham, "the knight of faith" (Kierkegaard), passed his wife off into Pharaoh's harem in order to save his own neck and did not flinch at the favorable change in economic fortunes that resulted; Sarah laughed in disbelief when God got serious about giving them a son, Isaac, whose name itself means laughter; and both Abraham and Sarah appear opportunistic and mean-spirited in the two incidents with Hagar (Genesis 16 and 21). Yet, these fallible and vulnerable people could also be called "perfect," they circumcised the members of their household on the very day the divine order was first given, and Abraham's daring courage at the near sacrifice of Isaac has inspired artists, poets, theologians, and musicians for nearly 4,000 years.

Their adventures began, according to the quaint biblical chronology, when they were already 75 and 65 years old. Sarai and

[1]An earlier version of this essay was delivered at the Third Interfaith Conference on Biblical Studies, on May 5, 1987, in Portland, Oregon. I publish it in honor of John H. Tietjen, whose leadership in Jewish-Christian dialogue was recognized in 1983, when the St. Louis Chapter of the American Jewish Committee presented him with their annual Micah award.

[2]The "great nation" is probably only a reworking of the old promise of many descendants. According to this promissory tradition the descendants would be as numerous as the dust (Gen 13:16) or the stars (Gen 15:5; 22:17; 26:4).

Abram were sent to the land of Canaan with the promise that God would make them a great nation,[2] with an outstanding reputation (Gen 12:1–2). The person who recorded these words, probably during the reign of Solomon, had already experienced their fulfillment. Under David and Solomon, Israel achieved its greatest territorial limits, with sovereign-vassal relationships to a number of Syro-Palestinian states, and with an image that left even the queen of Sheba breathless.

With the promises all fulfilled, the only thing remaining for the children of Abram and Sarai to do in the early monarchy was to be a blessing to all the families of the earth (Gen 12:3).[3] Hans Walter Wolff has found this vocation illustrated in subsequent stories in Genesis and Exodus, when Abraham makes unflagging intercessions for those who are perishing in Sodom, when Isaac shows readiness for peaceful agreement with the Philistines, when Jacob provides effective material aid for Laban and the Arameans, when Joseph's wise rule brings blessings to Egypt, and when the Israelites, via their worship at Sinai, bring about a blessing for Egypt.[4] The task of Abram and Sarai, according to Gen 12:3, is still to be completed by imperial Israel, to whom this text was addressed in the tenth century B.C.E.—and by all subsequent readers of this account who want to make the story of Abram and Sarai their own. Abram and Sarai illustrate the consistent biblical point that election is always to service and responsibility, and never to privilege.

Genesis 20 even gives Abraham the calling of a prophet. In this role he is not a social critic like an Amos, but rather an intercessor, whose prayers bring renewed wholeness to the household of the Philistine Abimelech.

Covenant

Three major covenant traditions play a role in the Hebrew Scriptures. First, there is the covenant God made with Israel at Sinai, a covenant which first appears prominently in seventh century biblical accounts (Deuteronomy; Jeremiah). The author of Deuteronomy saw this covenant as a fulfillment of the covenant made with Israel's ancestors like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He believed that Israel, by obeying this covenant, would discover that the LORD would remain true to the promises made in the ancestral covenant (Deut 7:6–12). In fact, the deity's faithfulness to the ancestral covenant would be caused by Israel's obedience of the Sinai covenant.

The second covenant, the one God made with David (2 Sam 23; cf. 2 Sam 7; Ps 89), contained the promise that David's descendants would always occupy the royal throne in Jerusalem. This covenant and the territorial expansion of the land of Israel under David and Solomon are seen to be fulfillments of the third covenant, that had been made with Abraham according to Genesis 15. The description of the land promised to Abraham in Genesis 15 corresponds geo-

[3] "By you shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12–36* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1981), 151–52, presents a strong case for a reflexive translation: "And all the families of the earth are to bless themselves in you." He, too, insists that the promise made to Israel's ancestors reaches its goal only when it includes all the families of the earth, though his translation does not emphasize so clearly the agent-role of Israel in extending this blessing to others. Cf. Gen 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; Ps 72:17.

[4] Hans Walter Wolff, "The Kerygma of the Yahwist," *Interpretation* 20 (1966): 131–58.

graphically with that of tenth century, imperial Israel.[5]

Regardless of the supposed relationship between Genesis 15 and the royal theology of the tenth century, Genesis 15 contains two incidents that have great importance for Jewish-Christian dialogue, and which often find Jews and Christians opting for different, though not incompatible interpretations.

As the chapter opens, Abram has apparently decided to adopt his servant Eliezer of Damascus as his heir, since he and Sarai remain childless. The LORD, however, vetoes this proposal and, instead, takes Abram outside to look at the stars. Abram had trouble believing in the possibility of a single son, but the LORD promised that the descendants of Abram and Sarai would actually be uncountable, just like the stars. Abram's response is straightforward and expressed in well-known Hebrew vocabulary—and it is the center of much controversy.

In the New Testament Paul uses this incident with Abram to explicate how a person is justified by faith, without deeds of the law. Since Abram shows his faith before he was circumcised in Genesis 17, he was reckoned to be righteous "without the works of the law," that is, without circumcision. This fits in well with Paul's well-known argument that Gentiles may become heirs of the promise through faith in Christ, without needing to first become Jews and undertake the burden of the law. Obviously, Paul's interpretation plays an important role in his own and subsequent Christian theology, but it is not directly relevant to understanding Gen 15:6 in its original context. It is important to note, nevertheless, that Paul constantly struggles with the question of how Gentiles may be included among the heirs of Abraham. While later Christian theologians have often raised the opposite question, of the enduring validity of the covenant made with Abraham and Sarah, Paul wrestles more with how righteousness becomes available to *Gentiles,* and he believes that finally they and all Israel will be saved.

Even read in its own context, the passage about Abram's faith and righteousness in Gen 15:6 is open to more than one interpretation. The Jewish commentator Benno Jacob notes, "Righteousness is a claim to recognition and reward, earned by his [Abram's] conduct. . . . God leaves neither good will nor thought unrewarded."[6] Ephraim A. Speiser translated the verse: "He put his trust in Yahweh, who accounted it to his merit."[7] I take this interpretation to be a relatively standard Jewish understanding of this verse.

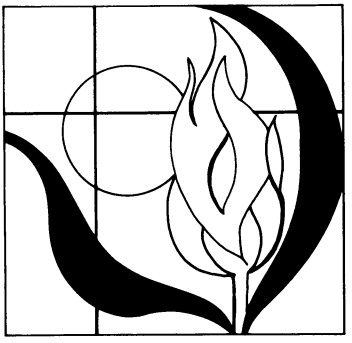
Gerhard von Rad, on the other hand, ascribes another definition to "righteousness" and so comes up with a different interpretation. In his judgment, a person is righteousness who lives according to the requirements of a relationship. In a relationship created by God's promise, the proper human response

[5]"I give you this land from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates" (v. 18). This geographical horizon and the antiquity of the rite described in vv. 7–18 suggest to me a tenth century *origin* for this passage, though those who detect a later, even deuteronomistic hand in the *present shape* of the passage may also be correct.

[6]*The First Book of the Bible Genesis,* trans. Ernest I. Jacob and Walter Jacob (New York: KTAV), 100.

[7]*Genesis,* Anchor Bible 1 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1964), 110. Cf. the similar translation and interpretation in W. Gunther Plaut, *The Torah Genesis* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1974), 146.

is trust, and a trusting person is called righteous. Belief is an act of trust, a consent to God's plan in history.[8] Von Rad takes faith as a proper and necessary response, but not as merit that entails reward.



The ambiguity of the pronouns in the second half of Gen 15:6 permits a third credible interpretation. Abram's belief in the LORD is followed by a sentence that is usually translated: he (the LORD) reckoned this to him (Abram) as righteousness (or he [the LORD] reckoned this to Abram as merit). Recently, Manfred Oeming proposed that the two halves of the verse are parallel: Abram believed the LORD; aye, he (Abram) reckoned the LORD's repetition of the promise of an heir as proof of the divine grace. Abram reckoned the repetition and expansion of the divine promise as righteousness on the LORD's part.[9]

I suspect that these alternate proposals represent more than divergent philological insights. That is, if one contrasts the standard Jewish reading with that of the Lutheran Von Rad, one discovers that the different interpretations flow from different conclusions or presuppositions about the make-up of the faith of Israel. On the Jewish side, talk of merit and reward; on the Christian side, talk of faith (or trust) as appropriate behavior. I hope that such divergences can be used, in the spirit of dialogue, as a way for one person better to understand the religious convictions of the other, not as a way to label one view right and the other view wrong.

The Covenant of Pieces

The second half of Genesis 15 deals explicitly with covenant and with the promise of land rather than with the promise of descendants. Abram asks the LORD to reassure him that he will get the land. In response, the LORD asks him to assemble a number of animals—a heifer, a female goat, a ram—plus a turtledove and a pigeon. Abram then cut the animals in two pieces and arranged the two halves of each animal opposite each other. Later, after Abram fell into a deep sleep, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between the cut up animal pieces. On that day—and in that way—the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I give this land."

The meaning of this strange rite is not provided though Jer 34:18–19 may provide a parallel. Jeremiah criticized a group of people who made a covenant to release their debt slaves when Jerusalem was being besieged by the Babylonian army. When the siege was lifted, these people reneged on their promise and took their slaves back. What intrigues us is the ritual by which this

[8] *Genesis* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), 180.

[9] "Ist Genesis 15:6 ein Beleg für die Anrechnung des Glaubens zur Gerechtigkeit?" *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 95 (1983): 182–97.

covenant was made in the first place. Jeremiah refers to a calf which they cut in two and passed between, and he announces a divine word of judgment: "I will make [those people] like the calf which they cut in two and passed between its parts." Scholars have concluded that the men making this covenant had invoked a curse upon themselves when they made the agreement: Just as they had cut a calf in two, so they should be cut in two if they violated the agreement. One of the Sefire Treaties from the eighth century contains a similar self-imprecation: "As this calf is cut up, thus Mati'el and his nobles shall be cut up" (ANET 660).[10]

Returning to Genesis 15, we can now explain the mysterious rite by which the covenant with Abram was made. During this rite Abram is fast asleep—a deep sleep like that which befell Adam settled upon him. During his sleep a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between the pieces. The fire pot and the torch seem to be symbols for the LORD. Fire, flame, and smoke frequently accompany his theophanies in the Hebrew Scriptures.

The LORD is the one who passes between the cut up animals, and he is the one who invokes a self-imprecation on himself. Thus the LORD seems to offer Abram the following sign to assure him of the promise of the land: May I—the LORD!—be cut in pieces if I ever renege on the promise of the land![11] The deity invokes upon himself a curse to underline the surety of his promise. Abram was given the kind of sign for which he had asked: "O LORD God, how am I to know that I shall possess the land?"

A Christian may find in this self-imprecation a symbol parallel to that which he or she finds in the cross. Among the many meanings assigned to the crucifixion is the idea that it is God's way of making his promise to humankind more sure, more reliable, more credible. In asking people to believe, God says: "I am willing to do anything to make my promise credible. I will invoke a curse on my son if that will help people believe in me." Understood in this way, the cross has a function much like the ritual used in the covenant with Abram. In both cases God invokes upon himself a curse in order to make his promise more believable to his sons and daughters. While I would not expect my Jewish sisters and brothers to accept this meaning of the cross, I would hope that they could accept the continuity I have proposed between Genesis 15 and the crucifixion. The mutual gain might be substantial. Jews might see this interpretation of the cross as logically consistent with the way God made his promises to Abram and Sarai sure; Christians might see that the way God guarantees his promises in his revelation to them primarily repeats and underscores the types of promises the LORD made to Israel through Abram and Sarai.

The Covenant in Genesis 17

A second account of the covenant with Abram and Sarai appears in Genesis 17. This

[10]Cf. the excellent study of this ceremony by M. Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 90 (1970): 184–203.

[11]This is indeed a bold anthropomorphism though not unknown elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. Note the implied self-imprecation in the oath formula "I lift up my hand to heaven and swear, As I live for ever" (Deut 32:40).

covenant displays the characteristic vocabulary and style associated with the document called the Priestly writing. I would date this document to the period of Israel's exile.[12] This account makes the promise of the land and the covenant itself "everlasting" or "eternal." To mark the new status assigned to the patriarch and the matriarch they are assigned new names: Abram becomes Abraham, and Sarai becomes Sarah. Even the deity marks this new epoch with a shift in his self-designation. Up until now he has called himself Elohim (God); now he reveals his name as El-Shaddai, traditionally translated as God Almighty, but perhaps better understood as El of the Cosmic Mountain.

In this account Abram and Sarai are addressed as sojourners, *gerim*; perhaps we could render this word as "aliens" or "exiles." As aliens and exiles Abraham and Sarah are recipients of the covenant promise. Hence all future aliens and exiles, all future have-nots, can identify with them.

The way in which Sarah participates fully in this chapter is also important for both Jews and Christians today as we strive to be more inclusive in our language. God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah will be her name. I will bless her, and I will also give through her a son to you. Yes, I will bless her and she will become nations. Kings of peoples will come from her" (Gen 17:15–16).

The everlasting covenant announced in Genesis 17 is crucial for Jews and Christians. To the original audience in exile it offered assurance that the destruction of the temple and the loss of the land were not the end of God's relationship with his people. That relationship was based on an everlasting covenant, much like the everlasting covenant made with Noah. The word behind that covenant was the same word by which God created the world. Israel in exile, therefore, could hope for restoration to the land and to their former worship life. That hope would become reality when God would remember his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, just as he had at the time of the Exodus from Egypt (Exod 6:5).

Genesis 17 is particularly important for Christians to hear for we have typically talked of old covenant and new covenant, Old Testament and New Testament, and sometimes given the impression—or actually stated—that the New has superseded the Old. It is foolish to ask how long an everlasting covenant will endure. It will last as long as the God who made it lasts, that is, forever. This God promises to take the people of Abraham and Sarah and be their God (17:8). He is the one who promises them the land as an everlasting possession. The rite of circumcision symbolizes one's membership in this covenant. This covenant itself is unilateral, nonconditional.

For Paul, Abraham was the father of those who have faith *even when he was uncircumcised.* For the Hebrew Scriptures, Abraham and Sarah were the parents of all the faithful, and Abraham and his sons bore circumcision as a sign of their relationship with God. In fact, circumcision was available beyond the ethnic boundaries of Israel. Abraham circumcised the slaves born in his house and those acquired by money in addition to his son Ishmael. Abraham, *the cir-*

[12]See Ralph W. Klein, *Israel in Exile* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), chapter 6, "When Memory is Hope: The Response to Exile in P."

cumcised, was the father of all those who believed!

Leviticus 26 is an alternate account of this priestly version of the covenant with Abraham. It envisages a time when the land will be devastated and when it will enjoy its Sabbaths. Those who survive the attack on the land will while away their time in exile. When Israel repents, however, the LORD promises that he will restore them to the land: "I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and I will remember my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land" (v. 42). And again: "I will for their sake remember the covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God" (v. 45).

The Community

The call of Abraham and the covenants with Abraham and Sarah have as their goal the establishment of a people called Israel. So we read of a great nation in Gen 12:2 and of descendants as numerous as the stars in Gen 15:5. Genesis 17 speaks of a covenant between God and the ancestral pair that applied as well and equally to all their descendants. Exodus 6 adds: I take you for my people and I will be your God (v. 7).

Abraham and Sarah were promised the land forever, but the only land to which they ever held title was the cave and the field where their graves were to be located. When Sarah died, the narrative pauses to report detailed transactions with Ephron the Hittite that led to Abraham becoming a land holder for the first time (Genesis 23). Apart from ownership of this grave, Abraham and Sarah were sojourners, aliens, and exiles. Later stories report how not only Sarah, but also Abraham, Rebekah, Isaac, Leah, and Jacob found their separate ways to this grave. They were gathered to their people, on their own piece of land. They were a community in death as well as in life.

Deuteronomy reports a covenant that Moses established in the plains of Moab, shortly before his own death. Moses invited Israel to enter the "sworn covenant" of the LORD so that God could establish them on that day as his people, his community, as he promised and as he had sworn to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Israel throughout history is understood to be part of this covenant in the plains of Moab, for this covenant is made not only with those who were present, "but with him who is not here with us this day as well as with him who stands here with us this day before the LORD our God" (Deut 29:15). The community of Israel extends horizontally during any period and vertically throughout human history.

The community emphasis in the Abraham tradition comes out clearly when the patriarch rescues Lot from the five invading Mesopotamian kings (Genesis 14), and when Abram refuses to take any booty from the battle for himself.

The Jewish and Christian emphasis on the whole people of God could not be more clearly expressed than in Abraham's famous prayer for the people of Sodom in Genesis 18. Who could forget his bargaining with the LORD, beseeching him to spare the wicked Cities of the Plain if they should contain 50, 45, 40, 30, 20, or, finally, 10 righteous persons? Should not the judge of all the earth do mišpāṭ (right)?

Community solidarity . . . God remembered Abraham by sending *Lot* away from the

cities of the plain (Gen 19:29). The God who would remember Israel in Egypt, who promised to remember Noah by making the rainbow a reminder to himself, and whose memory of his everlasting covenant would be the trigger to restore Israel after the exile—that God is the one who remembered Abraham by sparing his nephew Lot. Abraham and Lot are bound together in community.

Community solidarity . . . Centuries later, when the Northern Kingdom was threatened by the war machine of the Aramean Hazael, the LORD was gracious to Israel and had compassion on them and turned toward them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He would not destroy them (2 Kgs 13:23).

Community solidarity . . . Before he died Abraham gave all he had to Isaac, but to the "sons of his old age," the children from his concubines, he gave generous gifts as he sent them away to the east, where they could not endanger Isaac in the land. Then he breathed his last in a good old age, an old man, and full of years. He was gathered to his people. Isaac and Ishmael, Jew and Arab, buried him in the cave of Machpelah, with Sarah his wife (Gen 25:5–10).

Israel understood *and* understands itself as the people of the God of Abraham (Ps 47:10). For both Jews and Gentiles Abraham and Sarah are our common parents (Rom 4:16). The prophet of the exile addressed the people as "the offspring of Abraham, who loves me" (Isa 41:8), and the the LORD himself told these offspring: "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God." (Isa 41:10). Later the same prophet exclaims: "Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for when he was but one I called him, and I blessed him and made him many" (Isa 51:2). Abraham's transformation from one person to many people would be repeated as the problems of exile were resolved—such was the promise. The lineage back to one man, or one couple, establishes the unity of all Israel, of all the people of God.

When mothers or fathers told the stories of Abraham and Sarah to children as they tucked them into bed, before he biblical epic was ever written down, they were not only telling the story of the ancestral generation. They were telling the children their own story; they were telling our story. We are all called; we are all bound to God by covenantal promises. We are all part of the community of the people of the God of Sarah and Abraham.

One of my favorite morning prayers makes us all latterday Abrahams and Sarahs. It reads as follows: "Lord, God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us."

A Eucharistic prayer in the Lutheran tradition confesses: "You, God, have filled all creation with light and life; heaven and earth are full of your glory. Through Abraham and Sarah you promised to bless all nations. You rescued Israel, your chosen people."

In the context of Jewish Christian dialogue, one can only add, "And let **all** the people say, 'Amen.' "

Historical Criticism and Confessional Commitment

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Disagreement about historical criticism as a valid tool of biblical interpretation was a major component of the theological ferment that led to the split inside The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) in the 1960s and 1970s. Rigid conservatives in the LCMS regarded the use of Historical Criticism as destructive of the faith, a threat to the authority of the Scriptures and a betrayal of confessionally committed Lutheranism. The majority of the Concordia Seminary faculty used and defended historical criticism on the ground that it was consonant with confessional Lutheran theology. President John H. Tietjen was put out of office for his defense of the faculty. On the occasion of the merger of Christ Seminary-Seminex into seminaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, it is appropriate to honor Tietjen's defense of the faculty by discussing the relationship between historical criticism and the Lutheran Confessional principle.

Historical Prologue

Historical criticism was introduced at Concordia Seminary long before John Tietjen assumed the office of president in September, 1969. Two members of the faculty, Martin H. Scharlemann (Professor of New Testament) and Horace H. Hummel (Instructor of Old Testament), formally introduced the method into the faculty of Concordia Seminary in a paper entitled "Notes on the Valid Use of the Historico-Critical Method" (7 February 1958). Scharlemann later reprinted the paper and distributed it to the faculty again in 1963.

Historical Criticism remains a *bête noire* for the LCMS down to the present. In recent years The Lutheran Council in the USA (LCUSA) became the forum for the discussion. The on-going discussion resulted in a series of LCUSA documents after the firing of the Concordia Seminary faculty in 1974. *The Confession Making Process* [LCUSA, 1975]

included articles by Ralph Bohlmann and John Reumann under the identical title: "Is Writing Confessions Possible Only Where Scripture Speaks?" Three years later *The Function of Doctrine and Theology in Light of the Unity of the Church* (LCUSA, 1978) included articles on the relation of Historical Criticism and the hermeneutics of the Lutheran Confessions by Robert Preus and Duane Priebe. A sharp division of opinion between the LCMS and the other member churches of LCUSA is clearly documented.

Studies in Lutheran Hermeneutics, edited by John Reumann in collaboration with Samuel Nafzger and Harold Ditmanson, put into the public forum a series of papers and discussions held under the aegis of LCUSA in an attempt to reach a Lutheran consensus on the use of Historical Criticism (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979. The articles are by leading scholars from all branches of American Lutheranism). The attempt did not succeed, though the effort expended was immense. In that volume John Reumann gave a masterful summary of the process and the outcome on pp. 1–76; he expresses the conviction that there is more agreement than is at first recognized. His final summation suggests that all Lutherans seek to hear the Scriptures in their historical specificity; but there is still massive fear and division betweens the LCMS and other Lutherans. His words deserve precise citation:

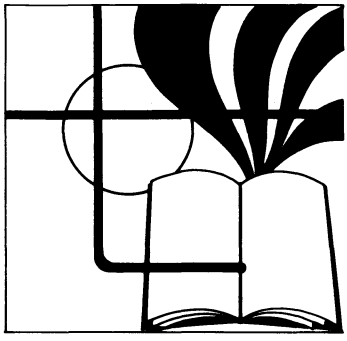
> Yet there remains a terrific fear on the one side [LCMS] that the distinctive emphases of Lutheran confessional theology will be undermined or set aside, and on the other [ALC, LCA] that confessionalism will blind Lutherans to what Scripture itself says [p. 56].

The next stage came in 1981. President Ralph Bohlmann of the LCMS transmitted to LCUSA a resolution adopted by the LCMS at its 54th convention (*LCMS Convention Proceedings,* 1981, Resolution 3–20). The resolution was occasioned by a paper by Prof. John Reumann of the Philadelphia Seminary of the LCA, "The Augsburg Confession in the Light of Biblical Interpretation." Presented to an international theological convocation sponsored by the LWF-related Ecumenical Institute of Strasbourg, it was published by the LWF (*LWF Report* 9 [1980] 3–34). The LCMS resolution passed severe judgment on Reumann's essay when it stated that it "argues that the whole traditional Christology, from Nicaea and Chalcedon to Art. III of the Augsburg Confession, is un-Biblical and untenable in the light of modern historical-critical scholarship." The LCMS requested LCUSA to place on the agenda of its Studies Department "as a matter of urgency a thorough discussion of the far-reaching implications of historical criticism, as practiced in U.S. Lutheranism." The resolution implied that the use of Historical Criticism raised questions in three areas of concern, spelled out in the laconic language of a formal resolution:

a) The central, Christological-Trinitarian core of the Gospel;
b) The very possibility (*sic*) of confessional subscription;
c) The preamble of the LCUSA constitution, with the reference to the Lutheran Confessions as a pure exposition of the Word of God.

After some six years of study the LCUSA Department of Studies responded to the referral by releasing a document entitled *Statement on Historical Criticism.* First

published in duplicated form, it appeared as a handsome pamphlet in the summer of 1987—though the date nowhere appears in the publication itself. The opening paragraph reads as follows: "In November 1986 the Lutheran Council in the U.S.A. acted to transmit a completed statement on historical criticism to the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod as a response to its referral 'To ask LCUSA to study implications of Historical Criticism' and that this document be made available for general distribution."



The LCUSA document does not respond directly to each of the LCMS concerns. Rather it is a "progress report" (my term) which formulates the points on which there was agreement after the six-year long discussion, while making clear that consensus was not reached. It summarizes differences on the significance and implications of calling the Scriptures "Word of God," on the definition of historical criticism, the distinction between the magisterial and ministerial use of reason, and the distinction between the causative and normative authority of Scripture. The terminology shows how much the LCMS participants were able to impose the Aristotelian categories of post-Reformation Lutheran Orthodoxy on the discussion, though these categories are no longer in general use. Here is a case of Master Reason's pernicious skewing of the discussion. A return to the less philosophical categories of Luther and the earlier Lutheran Confessions might have helped overcome the division. The report makes abundantly clear that the differences can only be resolved by continuing discussion and warns "against the caricaturing of the divergent viewpoints" (p. 6).

The LCUSA document also points out that Lutherans at times use the same words or phrases with differing nuances; the resultant ambiguity of language has often led to mutual misunderstanding. The words of President Bohlmann of the LCMS, writing shortly after the 1981 LCMS convention, illustrate the problem well.

> We will continually need to emphasize the complete truthfulness and authority of the Bible as the rule and norm of our preaching, teaching, and confession of the Gospel, in all its articles. We must therefore resist both a liberal historical-critical approach to Holy Scripture that treats the Bible precisely like any other ancient book instead of regarding it as God's book, as well as a fundamentalistic approach that treats the Bible as an end in itself rather than as God's instrument for giving and preserving the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ ["From the President. Goals for the LCMS: I. Confession," *The Lutheran Witness* (December, 1981), 18].

President Bohlmann's language is, to say the least, imprecise. It implies that there is a non-liberal use of the historical-critical ap-

proach; it also passes judgment on a fundamentalist approach that would be rejected by most American Evangelicals. Many Lutherans outside of the LCMS would certainly hold that they too reject and do not use a "liberal historical-critical approach," though they do use historical criticism in the service of the gospel.

Historical Criticism as Confessional Exegesis

The LCUSA document does not discuss the relation of confessional subscription and historical-critical interpretation. My article presents one Lutheran historical critic's mode of correlating confessional identity with critical exegesis. It argues that Historical Criticism is a legitimate and useful response to a central impetus in the confessions, is congruent with the confessions, and carries forward the "Archimedean" theological point of departure of the confessions. One despairs of making a fresh contribution to this subject; but it is important to restate the conviction that historical criticism is not only "possible" within the framework of confessional commitment, but even commendable and, in the present age, a fitting living out of the theological posture of the confessions. Historical Criticism is *confessionally* responsible exegesis today.

1. Historical criticism is a legitimate contemporary method of carrying out the confessional impulse to ground theological discourse in biblical texts.

The confessions present themselves as an exegetical argument; they interpret the Bible and do not mean to go beyond it. They base their argument on the historical sense of the texts, and so point us to the task of recovering that historical, i.e. original, sense. (They do not consider whether such recovery is possible, the dilemma much modern hermeneutical theory addresses.) The Confessions arose out of a crisis of ecclesial obedience occasioned by the reading of the Scriptures. Luther was, after all, a professor of Bible, and Melanchthon, though a layman called to the chair of Greek and Latin, wrote commentaries. In our day historical criticism, rigorously applied, is still the best means to recover the historical meaning of a biblical text.

The Confessions view themselves with proper modesty in contrast to the Scriptures. The self-evaluation of the *Formula of Concord* (*Rule and Norm* 2; *Ep., Rule 8*) makes that clear. Holy Scripture is preeminent as the only pure and clear fountain, the only true norm; all other documents take second place and dare not be placed on a level with the Scriptures. They are only a witness as to how the doctrine of the Apostles was preserved in later times. Thus the Confessions are exemplary, helpful, useful texts, but dare not bind the Scriptures. The Confessions are to be read in the light of the Scriptures, not the reverse. There is only one *norma normans.*

2. The Confessions present us with a theological presupposition for biblical interpretation, no matter what method is used, but do not prescribe a method.

The Confessions do not view the Bible as all of one piece, of equal validity everywhere. There is a center, to use Luther's phrase, a *punctum mathematicum,* from which the whole of the Bible is to be interpreted. (Cf.

A. E. Buchrucker, "Die regula atque norma in der Theologie Luthers," *NZSystTh* 10 [1968] 131-69.) That center can be described in various ways, captioned in a number of shorthand phrases: the *iustificatio impiorum* (justification of the ungodly), the promise, what "magnifies Christ" or "makes him necessary," the distinction between law and promise, etc. (cf. *Ap.* 4.52) In contrast to the promise (or grace, etc.) the Confessions place the law of Moses on a level with human tradition (*CA* 26.5). In a doctoral examination, Luther asked a student, Nikolaus Medler, to defend the following thesis: "If our opponents urge the Scriptures against Christ, then we must urge Christ against the Scriptures" (*WA* 39.1.47.19f). He also urged people to "take (i.e. appropriate) Christ from the Scriptures, since there is nothing more to find in them" (*de servo arbitrio, WA* 18, 606, 29). He argued that the Ten Commandments were words for Israel, but did not pertain to him at all; indeed, he would accept them, he said, only if they agreed with sound reason or natural law ("How Christians Should Regard Moses" [Sermon of 1525], *AE* 35.164–72).

Melanchthon's argumentation is consistent with this view. Article 4 of the *Apology* is essentially an exegetical debate. James 2:20–26 is a clear passage, so far as the words are concerned. Romans 3:21–31 is also. But in the light of the gospel, James is unclear, Romans clear. Why? Romans advances the honor of Christ, makes him necessary, and makes the glory of God clear. Thus there is a principle in Melanchthon and Luther that puts the Scripture under judgment. Luther's strictures on Esther, James, Hebrews, Jude and the Apocalypse are well known and do not require elucidation here. In short, the Confessions (and Luther) justify, demand, and practice *Sachkritik,* content criticism of the Bible.

Luther shows how this central concern for the Gospel is used in discussing errors in the Bible. Matthew credits a citation from Zechariah 11:13 to Jeremiah in Matt 27:9. Luther calls it a *levis error,* a slight mistake [*WA* 23, 642, 23ff.]. Luther notes the confusion about the number of women who went to the tomb on Easter morning and says it is impossible to work out a coherent narrative from the four Gospels. On that level they are *omnia inmixta* (completely confused). But Luther goes on to say that when one turns to the meaning of the Easter gospel, then such difficulties fade into obscurity. His comments are a model that shows how this priority of gospel over historical detail is the key to the understanding of the Bible. Interpretation that is theologically tied to the centrality of the gospel works without fear of historical inquiry.

3. Historical Criticism is a valid contemporary response to the Confessions' demand for an historical and grammatical reading of the texts.

The Confessions reject any reading of the Bible that does not give precedence to the grammatical and historical sense of the words. They appeal to the meaning the words have. They cite classical Greek authors to justify their understanding of Greek words. They reject reliance on allegorical or tropological senses. This demand for an historical reading is clear in Luther. In his "Preface" to the Prophet Isaiah Luther said that before one read past the first verse of the text, the interpreter ought to know the geography, history, social conditions, etc. not only of

Palestine in the days of the prophet, but also of the countries around Palestine whose rulers and peoples affected the southern kingdom. Matthias Flacius Illyricus, the writer of the first manual of biblical interpretation (the *Clavis scripturae of* 1567), called for understanding the words of a text in the sense they would have for their original hearers, a truly historical insight (altera pars, col. 82). In short, the Lutheran reformers demanded an historical interpretation. Were Luther alive today, he would practice historical criticism, the logical outcome of the requirements he placed on an interpreter.

Luther's insight today leads to the use of historical method in biblical interpretation. It leads inevitably to critical reading, whether acknowledged or unacknowledged, precisely because interpreters take the words of the biblical text so seriously. All of the lexical tools used today (BAGD, TDNT, TDOT, BDB, etc.) are based on the critical principles of analogy and correlation. Therefore, although a lexicon does not enable one to determine "what an author meant" (we cannot peer into the mind of a writer), one can say with confidence what contemporaneous readers or hearers probably understood the words to mean. Luther's demand for an historical reading also implies that it is a legitimate task of biblical scholarship to write the history of what happened, as nearly as can be ascertained. Responsible hearing of the texts leads to a responsible reconstruction of the events. To do that requires the reading, interpretation, and use of relevant extra-biblical texts, the drawing in and interpretation of the archaeological record, and the comparing of biblical texts with one another and to what is known from extra-biblical sources. One must therefore also pass critical judgments on the reliability and adequacy of what is reported in biblical and extra-biblical sources. Such historical reconstructions are not a threat to the Bible's message or authority.

4. Lutherans are bound to the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures, contained in a Bible whose boundaries are nowhere defined.

The Lutheran Confessions contain no list of canonical books, though other confessions were debating the matter in the sixteenth century. The non-participation in this ecclesiastical debate is comprehensible only when one recalls the Lutheran conviction that the gospel, not the Bible, is the source and locus of certainty for the faithful. The Lutheran Confessions have an undefined canon. Yet between 1545 and 1577 the Council of Trent issued a normative list of biblical books for Western Catholicism, the second Helvetic Confession did the same for the Swiss Reformation, and the Westminster assembly for English Protestants. Lutherans did not erect the same hard and fast boundaries to the Bible. Historical Criticism in a Lutheran context is therefore not embarrassed when it uses extra-biblical materials in its work.

Luther preached on Old Testament apocryphal books, and included them in his (first complete) German Bible of 1534. He expressed serious doubts about the canonical status of Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation in his prefaces to the New Testament books and did not list them in the table of contents of his first German New Testament of 1522 (a practice he continued down to the 1545 German Bible, the last he personally

edited). Yet he printed these books and did not seek to prevent others from using them.

This (intentional) Lutheran fuzziness about the canon has profound significance. Lutherans find their certainty in the promise of God, because in it they see God as he really is, gracious and forgiving. Certainty rests in the gracious character of God's promise. Faith is certain, even in the face of insecurity about historical facts, or when it recognizes lack of precision in matters historical or geographical, or when extra-biblical material seems to fill in or correct the biblical narrative. Certainty (*certitudo*) does not rest on security (*securitas*), the freedom from all worry or care. (See the outstanding essay "Gewißheit—nicht Sicherheit" by Julius Schniewind, in *Zur Erneuerung des Christenstandes* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1966] 33–44.) The certainty of faith does not rest on the insecurity of historical research.

That insight has primary significance for biblical studies. Faith does not rest on the historian's research or writing ability or on some historical reconstruction. Historical Criticism does not have the task of providing proof that the Bible is "believable," of showing that what the Bible says about "heavenly things" can be trusted because it is accurate about "earthly things." Careful historical criticism points faith to its proper object, the gospel and the Lord; faith's object is not the data of historical reconstruction. But Historical Criticism does make clear where faith's vulnerability lies.

Lutherans have a canon that is fuzzy at the edges. They also do not have a canon in which all documents have the same level of authority. Luther, Professor of Old Testament that he was, could nonetheless speak of the Law of Moses, indeed of the Ten Commandments, as words that were normative for Old Israel (to whom they were spoken), but not relevant to him at all. Biblical books are judged by their proclamation of the gospel (*was Christum treibet*). Non-biblical texts are useful as they help us to understand the Bible and clarify the gospel. Thus the fear that the use of non-biblical texts for comparative studies will somehow destroy the *sola scriptura* principle in Lutheranism is unfounded. *Sola scriptura* is an authority principle, not a hermeneutical one.

5. The Confessions claim that their doctrine derives its authority not from itself, but from the interpretation of the Scriptures and the Gospel they proclaim. Therefore the Scriptures are not bound by the Confessions, but left free to supplement, extend, or even correct them. Therefore any interpretive method is to be judged by its appropriateness to its object, the Scriptures, and not by confessional statements per se.

It was one of the glories of the Reformation that it drew its convictions from a fresh hearing of the Bible. The Reformers listened to the Bible directly, even when it spoke against the tradition of the (contemporaneous Western) church! That is the principle of authority that Lutherans expressed in the watchword *sola scriptura*. The Lutheran Confessions respect the tradition of the church; indeed they claim to recover *from the Scriptures* the pure tradition on the basis of which they speak against the (contemporary) church without being presumptuous or arrogant. Therefore Nils Dahl expresses for Lutherans a necessary consequent of their confessional commitment when he says:

> The Lutheran Church has a legitimate existence only as it gives biblical research its freedom. It can grant that freedom only at the price of at the same time risking its own existence and being ready to submit to correction its teachings recorded in the Confessions [Nils Dahl, "The Lutheran Exegete and the Confessions of his Church," *Lutheran World* 6 (1959/60) 6].

That is no lightly held conviction. Such corrections may be of very light matters, as pointing out that *Apology* 4.88 is wrong when it understands *orthotomein* in 2 Tim 2:15 to mean making a correct distinction between law and gospel when it more likely stresses the fidelity of the interpreter to correct conduct. Exegetes may also point out that *Apology* 4.22 does not correctly interpret Gal 3:24 when it understands the law as the schoolmaster that leads us to Christ (*nomos* as *paidagogos*), while *FC,* SD 5.24 is more congruent with Paul when it says *lex semper accusat.* Reumann is in the best Reformation tradition when he subjects the understanding of *diakaiosyne theou* in the confessions to the light of contemporary biblical interpretation. The confessional principle itself demands it.

In fact, the doctrine of the Confessions is always subject to revision on the basis of a more precise or accurate rereading of the Bible. Unless that principle is consistently maintained, the Confessions cease to be what they claim to be, a statement of what particular Lutherans at a given point in history understand the Scriptures to say. If that is lost, the Scripture principle of Lutheranism is lost. Leonhard Goppelt argued that the Scriptures themselves can be described more often than not as the restatement of a past tradition for a new situation ("Bible Study," *The Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church* 1: 243). So it is with the Confessions. One may criticize or correct them at a given point in history because one is committed to them as a true exposition of the Word of God. In the name of the Word of God, the gospel or the Bible, the witness of the Scriptures must be brought to bear on the formulations of the Confessions. Reumann does just that when he asks how modern biblical studies affect the confession in the Confessions. He asks how the biblical witness to Christ, not given in ontological, philosophical categories, is to be related to the use of the (philosophically conditioned) categories of classical Christology (Nicene or Chalcedonian). The New Testament has an incredible variety of thought patterns, literary forms, and linguistic expressions in its christological passages. How does one reflect the fact that much of New Testament Christology is given in hymns? How does the Christology of the Confessions or contemporary systematic theology reflect the apocalyptic significance of the title "Son of Man" (when apocalyptic is unknown, unappreciated or misunderstood in both the fourth and sixteenth centuries)?

To ask such questions out of the Scripture is no act of repudiation of the Lutheran Confessions, but a carrying out of their own intentions. To ask such questions is not a statement that the Confessions are not a true exposition of the word of God. No other formulation was both possible and orthodox in the fourth and sixteenth centuries. But that formulation is not the *only* possible way of stating the biblical doctrine of the gospel about Christ.

6. Finally, the Confessions use the Scriptures as a major authority in theology; Historical Criticism is a method whose presuppositions correspond to the character of the Scriptures.

The Scriptures witness to events in history in a particular place (or places), within a particular social and legal framework, in three different languages, recounted under different historical circumstances, presented in many different literary genres, written over more than a millennium, for many differing purposes. In short, the Bible was given in history in an historical manner, and recounts events in history. Unless the history is unreal, it can be studied, discussed, researched, and interpreted like all history—or it is not a history worth bothering about. Careful historical research will show how the writers interpret events to manifest the grace and glory of God. There is, to be sure, a kind of historical research that disallows God's participation in human history by definition. Lutherans who share the confessional commitment will not affirm that historical philosophy, even when doing a "Christology from below."

Rather, they will recognize that all historical work eventuates (at best) in what is more likely or what is possible. But, as J. Gresham Machen once wrote in a significant article, that is all faith needs ("History and Faith," *Princeton Theological Review* 13 [1915] 1–15).

Japanese Lutheran theologian Yoshiro Ishida distinguishes between theology that is custodial and theology that is martyrological ("Lutheran Contributions in Asia in Ecumenical Context," in *Christian Presence in Japan. Essays in Honor of William J. Danker* [Tokyo: Seibusha, 1981] 97–99). Custodial theology strives to keep the past pure and unchanged in the present, but fails to recognize that changing contemporary conditions mean that an unchanged past has in fact changed. Only as the past is reread in the light of the new situations and conditions of the present is the past preserved. Professor Ishida did not apply this insight directly to biblical interpretation, but he might have. The Lutheran Confessions are a good example of martyrological theology, theology ready to revise the tradition for the sake of the gospel. In its own way, that is what historical critical reading of the Bible in the church and for the church is all about, the retelling of the (biblical) tradition for the sake of the present. That underlay Reumann's article on modern biblical interpretation and the Augsburg Confession. It was one of the major points at issue in the LCMS controversy that led to Christ Seminary—Seminex and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches. John Tietjen recognized and defended Historical Criticism as necessary to martyrological theology; confessing the gospel calls all custodial theology into question, including the attempt to protect the Bible from historical research. It attempts to achieve security when certainty is given. This article seeks to provide a Lutheran basis for that defense by reaffirming the Lutheran tie between Bible, Confessions and the gospel. It shows how truly Lutheran John Tietjen was in his martyrological defense of his faculty colleagues.

Preaching Helps

Ash Wednesday—Fourth Sunday of Easter, Series B

Through the Wilderness

Especially in Mark's Gospel we find ourselves present at the struggle between the sovereignty of God and the demonic power of Satan. Not my struggle with my weight or my drinking problem or my language. Not giving up movies or cussing or candy. All that very personal stuff has its own significance, but Mark paints on a cosmic canvas, and this is the year of Mark, and we owe it to Mark to listen to his concerns, and see if we can hear God talking to us through him.

Mark points to Jesus, broken and forsaken on the cross, and declares to every human sufferer: "Here is the evidence that God is no stranger to suffering, that God suffers with you and in fact suffers for you. For you and for all, for the whole cosmos, for the world's release and healing."

Of course I understand that in this season of Lent and Easter we are listening also to John and Luke. And they have their own rhetoric and their own exquisite perspective. As much as possible we should try to let Mark be Mark and let John be John, attuning our ears to their accents.

For Luke, Good Friday exposes the spiritual poverty of humankind, while Easter means that Jesus by the generosity of God has become emperor more exalted and more gracious than any Caesar. And for John, Lent and Easter proclaim Jesus as the one who comes with his magical wounds, those emblems of eternal love, as divine answer to the deepest yearnings of the human heart.

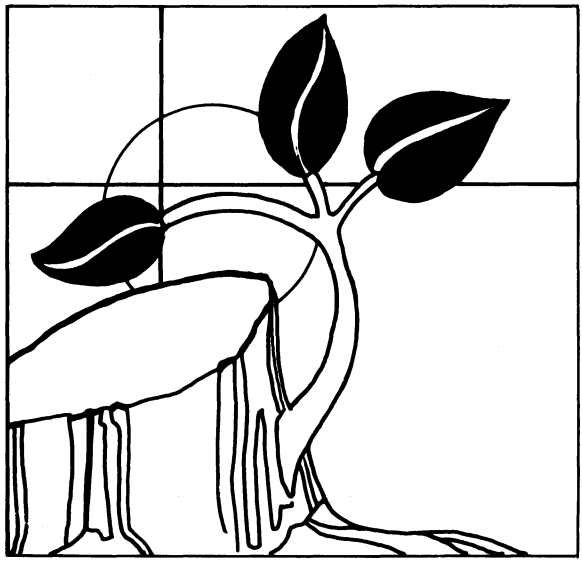
The offerings in this issue differ a bit from the pattern I have been trying to establish with the past two issues, but then this is a special issue offered as a tribute to John Tietjen. The contributors are all alums of Christ Seminary—Seminex. These women and men are listed with their year of graduation to signal the fact that most (all but two) of the classes of Seminex from 1974 till 1987 were able to be represented in this anthology. An

"anthology" is literally a "bouquet of flowers," and this bouquet is offered in salute to John Tietjen by these writers as representatives of all the classes of that strange and wonderful institution over which John presided as steward of the mysteries of God.

These writers and their classmates represent one of the clouds of witnesses to John's ministry and to the power of the great Mystery, who is Jesus Christ, Lord below and above (1 Timothy 3:16).

Grace to all you proclaimers of the Mystery in this most mysterious of all seasons.

Robert H. Smith
Preaching Helps Editor



Ash Wednesday
February 17, 1988

Psalm 51:1–13
Joel 2:12–19
2 Corinthians 5:20b–6:2
Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21

A FIRST READING

At the heart of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus addresses the new community about its piety (*dikaiosynē*), its practice of religion, its way of acting out righteousness, its mode of expressing the relationship of all-rightness granted by God. Do not practice your piety like actors on a stage, intent on making an impression on a human audience, or you will lose everything.

Joel 2:12–19. The prophets of old knew that ceremonies like fasting or ritual gestures like tearing one's garments were useless unless they were outward bodily expressions of movements deep in the inward parts. "Rend your hearts and not (only) your garments!"

The prophets also knew that rituals do not pressure God into a change of attitude. It is we who need changing. The good news is that God is already "gracious and merciful . . . abounding in steadfast love."

Just so, Paul in *2 Corinthians 5:20–6:2* definitely does not describe Jesus' dying or our believing as actions which change God's hostility into a sort of grudging acceptance of wayward humanity. Such a notion would be an affront to Paul and a sin against the doctrine of the Trinity. "God was in Christ." "All this," the whole reality of a new creation, the gift of fresh new life to people dead and ossified in sin, "is from God." "God was in Christ reconciling." God and Christ cannot be separated but are a single movement of grace reaching into the old world to make it new, embracing enemies to transform them into friends. RHS

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

Despite the fact that Joel (*2:12–19*) calls for a trumpet blast and Jesus warns against it (Matt 6:2), the First Lesson and the Gospel reading are remarkably in tune with each other, with the Second Lesson sounding its own complementary note of urgency. Taken all together, the three readings for Ash Wednesday trumpet a clarion call for the reorientation of our life around God and the grace of God.

The call of Joel ("Yahweh is God") to such repentance (2:12–13) comes within the context of a plague of locusts (1:4; 2:2), a time of great hardship and famine in Israel (1:7–12), somewhere late in the 5th century B.C.E., possibly during the reforms of Nehemiah. So impoverished were the people and so wasted were the animals that even the daily offerings in the House of the Lord were interrupted (1:13, 16).

Joel interprets the plague of locusts as a sign that "the Day of the Lord" (1:15; 2:1; cf. Amos 5:18; Isa 2:9–11) is coming. Therefore, paradoxically, the plague is a gracious call from God to the people to "return to the Lord" (2:12; cf. Amos 4:6–11; Deut 4:28–31; Jer 3:22), a summons to the people to appear before God and to throw themselves upon the mercy of God (2:13; cf. Ex 34:6–7).

The prophet offers instructions for a solemn assembly (2:15, 17). Of particular interest is the fact that absolutely all people, even nursing infants (Talk about inclusivity!) are to gather.

Joel reads the plague like handwriting on the wall. Public fasting, weeping, mourning, and solemn assembly are to be the liturgical signs of this return, and yet the real action is to take place within the people, as they individually rend their hearts and not simply their garments (2:13). At the core of any genuine return lies confidence in the faithfulness and compassion of the covenant God (2:17).

Paul, in 2 Cor 5:20b–6:2 agrees with Joel that turning to God needs to take place without

delay. "Now is the acceptable time" (6:2) for reconciliation with God, because God has already turned to us (reconciled us) in Christ (5:18), and now is our chance to be turned (be reconciled) to God (5:20).

In Paul's words, since God has already "made Christ who knew no sin to be sin" for us (Christ became an embodiment of human sinfulness—5:2; Gal 3:10–14) and since God has already turned toward us in grace through that action, we who know sin so deeply, ought to seize the moment and be reconciled ourselves to the Reconciler and (Wonder of wonders!) become "the righteousness of God" (5:21).

This Paul urges on the Corinthian Christians—not noted for their reconciling abilities—precisely so that they don't end up accepting Paul's message of God's grace "in vain." This Paul and his associates urge, not on their own authority, but precisely because they are "working together" with Christ (6:1). This they do with the precedent of the prophet Isaiah, whose words about a "time of favor" and "a day of salvation," Paul quotes freely to underline his own prophetic wisdom and commitment to pastoral urgency (6:2; Isa 49:8).

In Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21 Jesus speaks of almsgiving, praying, and fasting. His point is simple and repeated for effect: If the intended audience for these religious deeds is "your Father who is in heaven," then they will not be done in ways aimed at gathering other people's attention and praise. Do them quietly and in an unassuming manner. The rewards of doing them "as the hypocrites" (as public actors on a stage), of which enough examples always seem to be present, are so earthly and transitory that they can hardly be compared with the reward of the Father "who sees in secret."

Present in all three of these Ash Wednesday readings is an emphasis on our relationship with God. None of the Ash Wednesday texts focuses on particular sins. Even the references in the Gospel to hypocritical observances seem to focus more on the matter of one's personal orientation and motivation than on any specific sins. What's important, especially as we get ready to recall the story of Jesus' passion, is that our hearts are rightly turned toward God.

That righteousness begins with recognizing just how repentant (i.e. graciously turnable) God is. We are much wiser to focus our attention on the One who calls us to these things than to focus penitentially on some long list of particular sins. Our Lord Jesus who turned toward us in mercy and reconciled us to the Father is himself the strongest motivation for our Lenten journey.

If the dark clouds of some personal or national plague makes our reorientation toward God even more pressing than it might be otherwise, if the imposition of ashes and the reminder that as creatures of dust we don't have forever to return to God make this an even more urgent matter than it might be otherwise, or if our Lenten worship itself can somehow help us to focus less on religious observance and more on our reconciled relationship with God—then these things too can be signs for us that once again "God has had pity on His people" (Joel 2:18), "helped . . . on the day of salvation" (2 Cor 6:2), and rewarded us "from heaven" (Matt 6:1).

Helping others to find a way through this challenging maze is the task of the Ash Wednesday and Lenten preacher.

Gerald A. Miller ('74)
Messiah Lutheran Church
Fairview Park, Ohio

First Sunday in Lent February 21, 1988

Psalm 6
Genesis 22:1–18
Romans 8:31–39
Mark: 1:12–15

A FIRST READING

All three readings describe epic struggles: those of Abraham, of Jesus, and of God's people.

Jesus ascended from Jordan after the Spirit descended upon him, and "immediately the Spirit drove him out into the wilderness" to struggle with Satan (*Mark 1:12–15*). With the greatest economy of words Mark declares that Jesus, called and chosen by God, immediately faced a qualifying test at the hand of the terrible power concentrated in Satan.

At its end Mark is once again sparing with words but leaves readers in no doubt as to the outcome: Jesus "was with the wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him." Mark pictures Jesus as a new Adam, at peace with wild animals, at home with God's angels.

Paul in *Romans 8:31–39* graphically describes the struggle of the people of God. Complex and powerful forces threaten their lives and their faith: "tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword" (8:35), and if that is not enough he adds a second list of enemies: "death, life, angels, principalities, things present, things to come, powers, height, depth" (vv. 38–39). It is possible that the second list is based on ancient ideas that "principalities and powers" were angelic or divine beings, identified with stars and planets. Many ancients took their horoscope with absolute seriousness, for the heavenly bodies possess power, they thought, over life and death. All depends on their position in the sky (present or future position, their highest point and their lowest point). Paul simply declares that no earthly enemies (first list) and no enemies in the sky (second list) can "separate us from the love of Christ." "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us." RHS

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

"If "God be for us, who can be against us?" asks Paul. A quick answer from either Abraham or Jesus might be, "God." "God tested Abraham" begins the story of the near sacrifice of Isaac. What a cruel joke! Of Jesus Mark reports, "The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness." There for forty days, he was tempted by Satan. "God indeed tempts no one" is Luther's explanation to the Sixth Petition of the Lord's Prayer. What is going on in these lessons, where God himself tests Abraham and drives his own Son into a time of temptation by Satan and where Paul quotes Psalm 44, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long."

Genesis 22:1–18. A child was born to Abraham and Sarah by the power of the promising God. But now God commands Abraham to take Isaac, visible sign of God's promise, a child who brought laughter into the lives of an old man and his barren wife, and sacrifice him.

Abraham might have responded "With a friend like this, who needs enemies?" "Is God for me or against me?" God seemed to be in the process of doubling back on himself. At this point for Abraham, the focus of the promise could have become Isaac. After all, without Isaac, the promise could never have come to fruition. Or the focus of the promise could have become Abraham's ability to keep God on track. Abraham could have refused God's command in order to save God from contradiction, in order to assure God's consistency.

Instead, God calls and Abraham answers, "Here am I." God issues instructions, and Abraham rises early, makes the necessary preparations, gathers Isaac and two attendants, and sets out for the place of sacrifice. God's testing of Abraham is an invitation to faith. What follows is the awesome contradiction which God's gift of faith alone can solve.

Proceeding to do God's bidding, Abraham nevertheless seems Godforsaken and alone. No further word is heard from God all along the lonely way to the place of sacrifice. Yet Abraham worships God and trusts God. "God will provide a lamb," sounds like an evasive answer to Isaac's question about the sacrifice. Or

could it be that Abraham believed that the God who provided this child of promise in the first place would continue to provide?

We are privileged to have two points of view in this story, God's and Abraham's. We are not so fortunate for our own lives. Time and again God seems to double back on his promises. Time and again events in our world seem to contradict the notion of a good and gracious God. "Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword" do indeed seem to separate us from the love of God. Strange powers, beyond our control, end up controlling us, though we wish they would not. Even more tragically, the words and deeds of our own lives contradict the good and gracious will of God.

We are tempted to see God at work only in the birth and rescue of Isaac, only in promising situations, only in blessing and success. But God is present in the most difficult times when we cannot see him, in moments of hopelessness and forsakenness. Exactly then we are supported and surrounded by a God from whom there is no separation. God gave such a time to Abraham.

Abraham and Isaac walked together along the path toward the end of the promise, obeying a God who had contradicted himself. Yet as they walked in silence and as Abraham built an altar, it became clear that God's greatest gift to Abraham was not his child of promise, but God's presence visible through the eyes of faith. Faith led Abraham to sacrifice.

God, who asked Abraham to sacrifice his own son, "did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all," writes Paul. The knife poised over Isaac became the mallet poised to hammer the nails of Christ's cross. The God who spared Isaac did not spare his own Son. That is why all things are now given to us with him. Times of testing, times of tragedy, times of sacrifice, times of Godforsakenness are given to us to embrace, for in them we find God present. We who are in Christ Jesus find times of separation to be times of fellowship, times of Godforsakenness to be times of God's most awesome presence.

The Spirit of God led Jesus into the wilderness for testing that would continue throughout his life. When he uttered his cry of forsakenness from the cross, he was still addressing his Father. The wilderness of the cross, the ultimate contradiction to God's good and gracious will, became the eternal sign of God's goodness and grace. The faith of all who follow after is anchored there.

Now in all the wilderness of life God is present. In his first time of testing, Jesus found God present as angels ministered to him. It must have been as refreshing as when Elijah was fed by angels, as when the angel stayed Abraham's hand raised for sacrifice over Isaac. We, too, find refreshment in our times of tragedy, our times of Godforsakenness, our times of sacrifice. We are nourished with the bread of angels at the table which calls to our remembrance the sacrifice from which God "did not spare his own Son." With the words, "the body of Christ for you," Paul's question is answered as our Lord is present, and his sacrifice becomes the sign of faith. Truly, if God is for us, no one can be against us!

George M. Schelter ('74)
Pilgrim Lutheran Church
Indianapolis, Indiana

Second Sunday in Lent February 28, 1988

Psalm 115: 1, 9–18
Genesis 28:10–17 (18–22)
Romans 5:1–11
Mark 8:31–38

A FIRST READING

Caesarea Philippi (*Mark 8:27–38*) was a high point and a turning point, a moment of exhilaration and of sharp misunderstanding. Speaking for all, Peter confessed Jesus as "the Christ." But neither Peter nor any other was prepared to confess that it was only as the crucified that Jesus would be their way and their leader.

A millennium and a half before the disciples stared at Jesus of Nazareth and saw in him the Christ of God, Jacob slept at a certain place, once called Luz (*Genesis 28*). There Jacob dreamed, and in his dream he saw "a ladder set up on the earth and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it."

How can it be that God is connected to the earth at this strange place? And how can it be that God is connected to the earth through this strange Jesus with his cross? God has chosen to be so connected. But it is more than arbitrary decision. The Lord of history and creation cannot be tethered to Beersheba or to the acreage of Canaan. And the God of infinite creative love cannot be bound to our lust for power, our instinct for self-preservation, or our fear of being diminished through sharing and caring and loving.

Paul in *Romans 5* introduces three statements with the phrase, "We rejoice" (*kauchōmetha* = we rejoice or boast). It is easy to understand the first use: "We rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God" (v.2).

Harder is the second use: "We rejoice in our sufferings (v.3). Paul seems to have two reasons for that astonishing statement. In the first place we know that God stands beyond the suffering, waiting to receive us into glorious life. In the second place Paul sees that suffering has interesting and happy by-products like patience, character, and hope.

Finally (v.11) Paul writes that "we rejoice in God." But he does not stop there. It is important to see that he writes, "We rejoice in God through Jesus Christ." He died, and we are at peace with God through his blood, through his death. And he now lives, holding us fast. RHS

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

A unifying theme in these lessons is "finding more than you expect."

In John Updike's recent novel, *Roger's Version,* an ex-pastor, turned divinity professor, named Roger Lambert, finds himself walking through the slums of his city, seeing the grit and rubble of the neighborhood for the first time. "I even stopped on the pavement of this unsavory neighborhood to ponder more deeply that tall gingko with its gonglike golden color; there are few things which, *contemplated,* do not, like flimsy trap-doors, open under the weight of our *attention* into the bottomless pit below."

The characters in today's lessons share the experience. They expect the mundane and the predictable, but suddenly ordinary stuff breaks wide open to reveal a God who is passionately and compassionately involved in their lives.

In Genesis 28:10–17, Jacob is on the run, hoping to find refuge from his brother's wrath. It is not a glorious moment for him, sleeping on stone pillows in the desert. He probably hopes, at best, to save his neck. Suddenly, the trap door opens and Jacob encounters God face to face. More incredibly yet, God extends to Jacob, the run-away and cheat, the same covenant promise which God had made with Abraham and Isaac.

In Mark 8:31–38 the disciples seem to expect Jesus to be successful in mission, but prudently successful. They are, at this moment, like the religious preacher in J. D. Salinger's novel, *Franny and Zooey,* who tells his congregation,

> I don't want you to go away with the impression that there's any—you know—any inconveniences involved

> in the religious life. I mean a lot of people don't take it up just because they think it's going to involve a certain amount of nasty application and perseverance—you know what I mean?. . . As soon as we get out of chapel here, I hope you'll accept from me a little volume I've always admired . . . "God Is My Hobby."

Suddenly, with his rebuke to Peter, Jesus opens the trap door and reveals just how passionately he, as the Son of God, is committed to overcoming evil and the power of death. The disciples suddenly see both who their Lord is and also what their own pathway of discipleship must be.

In the case of both Jacob and the disciples of Jesus, not only did people find more of God than they expected, but they also discovered that God finds more ***in them*** than they expected. That is the underlying theme of these lessons and, certainly, the major Gospel message for this Lenten season. God finds more in us than we would expect. God takes us more seriously than we take ourselves. Like Jacob, we live life on the run, acutely aware of our shortcomings and vulnerabilities, hoping at best for safe passage, a little happiness, and few extra years to live. We think so little of ourselves that as individuals and societies, we treat one another as if we were of no worth. God, seeing us through loving and redeeming eyes, finds much more in us and offers much more to us than that. "While we were yet sinners," says St. Paul, "Christ died for us." Now, saved by God's grace, how much more will we live gracefully and follow the path of discipleship.

We speak of Lent as a journey and it certainly does seem to take a lifelong journey to discover the depth with which God loves us. No single illuminating event in our life appears to be adequate to convince us of God's passionate love. Like the disciples, we forget. We learn, but then get confused. We venture out in faith, but then grow afraid. The account of Jesus healing the blind man ***in stages,*** which directly precedes today's Gospel lesson in Mark, is a parallel of the way our faith matures and is clarified in stages.

Alan Jones, dean of Grace Episcopal Cathedral in San Francisco, proposed in one of his sermons that "Lent is the annual hunt for God. We are trying to see where God is and, if he exists at all, what he is up to."

Two factors vastly complicate this hunt. First, God is hidden in the mystery of the cross and the vulnerability of love. Secondly, we are terrified that if we actually find God it will be more than we can handle: at worst, we will be punished by God because of our sin, or, at best, God will deliver to us a terrifying call to freedom, responsibility, and loving others, none of which we feel up to. As before, however, we find more than we expect: a God who has been hunting for us in love.

John Schramm, former director of Holden Village, tells the story of a little boy who was walking by a big warehouse one day and noticed that the doors were open. Being naturally curious he walked in and found himself in an artist's studio, facing a huge block of white marble, some twelve feet long and eight feet wide. The little boy viewed this huge piece of marble in awe, wondering what it was. But there was no one in the studio and he simply left.

Some months later, the lad was walking by the same warehouse and, once again, saw that the doors were open. This time he entered and found the sculptor at work. But in place of the rectangle of marble, there now sat a huge and powerful lion, carved from the stone. The little boy viewed the transformation with awe and said, "Mister, how did you know there was a lion in that stone?" The sculptor smiled and said, "Ah when I first touched that stone, I saw this lion in my heart."

The lessons for today show us a God who, seeing us from the heart, sees incredibly more in us than we expect. God looks at us and says, "I see people of Spirit and faith." "I see bold

followers on the way." "I see my daughters and my sons."

Richard Jaech ('75)
Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church
Vancouver, Washington

Third Sunday in Lent March 6, 1988

Psalm 19:7–14
Exodus 20:1–17
1 Corinthians 1:22–25
John 2:13–22

A FIRST READING

Jesus acted violently, using "a whip of cords" to expel sheep and oxen and their sellers, overturning tables and scattering the coins of the money changers (*John 2:13–22*). Jesus' zeal leads him to act with vigor, and the zeal of the priests will lead them to react with an answering vigor. And in the clash Jesus will be consumed indeed.

The air was electric with violence and the possibility of murder, and at that precise moment Jesus prophesied his own resurrection: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up."

He spoke of the temple of his body (*ho naos tou sōmatos autou*), his flesh where God tabernacles in our midst (1:14), his earthly life which is Bethel and Jacob's Ladder (1:51), the place where God's people will worship in spirit and in truth (4:23). That new "temple" will be built only by a death and a resurrection. For this very reason he has come.

They asked him there in the courts of the temple, "What sign have you to show us?" Where are your credentials? Who or what gives you the right to act this way? As Paul says, "Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom" (*1 Corinthians 1:22–25*), and we are all one or the other.

Paul sighs and simply insists that the living Lord Jesus, with his cross, is "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24). In Jesus, crucified and resurrected, the whole energy of God and intelligence of God burst forth into the world to rescue the world from its own crazy schemings and its fatal abuse of power. RHS

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

It is possible, if simplistic, to group all religious people into two "camps," two basic understandings of the relationship between God and people. One camp sees life as an attempt to appease God's righteous indignation. The other perceives God as a parent who has taken the initiative to love us.

Such classifying reveals two ways of understanding God and so two ways of thinking about religion: loving God or wrathful judge, life based on the law or living within the embrace of the gospel. We can find these two understandings in today's Gospel.

Jesus cleared the temple, and that daring act did not do much to enhance his public image. He left the temple in shambles as he protested the people's profaning of the house of God. And the response of the people should not surprise us: "How dare you? Where do you come off, tearing up the holy place?" And he replied, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up."

For forty-six years they had been in the process of rebuilding the temple and still had not finished, and now along comes this one who claimed he could do it all in three days!

Preposterous! But the prophets had said that changes in the place of worship and in ways of worship would be part of messiah's task.

But this is not merely a pious protest profaning the temple. Not even a first step in cultic

reform. What Jesus intended was to establish the worship of God in spirit and in truth, the worship centered on the sacrifice of his own life.

"All right, folks, have I got a sign for you! Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up again!" He had offered marvelous signs that would put a televangelist to shame: healings, feedings, even raisings of dead people. But the biggie was yet to come: Jesus' own death and resurrection. And that would result in the new temple in which people would worship in spirit and truth.

But worship in spirit and in truth does not begin with my holiness. It does not begin with any human activity. It begins with God and it ends with God and it takes its heart from the God who, through this rabble-rousing, temple-cleansing Jesus, redeemed us. This worship revolves around the bare fact that our all-rightness is pure gift.

So our worship is not a matter of our acting and God's re-acting. It is rather a case of our re-acting in love and service, obedience and faith to God's acting in Christ. We worship not in an effort to become God's children, but because we already are God's children.

The temple has been cleansed. We worship in the glorious liberty of the children of God who bring our sacrifices of praise and service. Such worship is at the heart of Lenten renewal.

Robert A. Rimbo ('76)
St. James Lutheran Church
Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan

Fourth Sunday in Lent March 13, 1988

Psalm 27:1–9 (10–18)
Numbers 21:4–9
Ephesians 2:4–10
John 3:14–21

A FIRST READING

Jesus had spoken to Nicodemus about such heady matters as birth from above, entrance into the kingdom of God, and the unpredictable blowing of the Spirit (John 3:1–8). Nicodemus didn't get it. These are all very religious matters, and Jesus is astonished that a teacher should be so confused. Then he calls all those topics "earthly things" (v.12) and wonders how Nicodemus, or anyone like him, will possibly comprehend what he proceeds to call "heavenly things" (*ta epourania*).

In John's Gospel Jesus regularly speaks with one audience or another about all kinds of very spiritual and religious matters, things like rebirth, the bread of heaven, the light of the world, the resurrection and the life. But he never lets the conversation die until he has spoken of the highest topic of them all, and the one that is hardest to comprehend: his own dying.

And so here. "The heavenly things" are expounded in *John 3:14–21* as the lifting up of the Son of man, his own crucifixion, the moment when God out of unfathomable love "gave his only Son." He is on display there on the cross not for physical eyes only but especially for the eyes of faith. It is by lifting up our hearts to the one who is lifted up on the cross that we escape destruction and receive true life.

Ephesians 2:4–10 also ascribes the act of God in Christ to the impetuosity of divine love (v. 4), and that love has synonyms in the phrases "rich in mercy" and "grace." And that love is energetic and creative, remaking lives so that we simultaneously "sit" (v. 6) and "walk" (v. 10). We "sit with him in the heavenly places" (v. 6) and "walk" on the very ordinary earth in good works (v. 10). RHS

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

One of the challenges of this day is to lift up the sign of salvation without tripping over the

snakes. The story of the pesky fiery serpents and the salvific bronze one which comprises the First Lesson and is the point of reference for Jesus' passion prediction in the Gospel presents some problems for us. It's another one of those embarrassing evidences of divine retribution which litter the Bible (is God really twisted enough to sic rattlers on people?). We wonder what to do with the making of a "graven image" (what with the taste of gold dust still faint in Israel's mouth), and in serpentine form, yet (at least calves are kosher). The quasi-magical healing which is obtained by looking at the elevated reptile seems to smack of voodoo. Perhaps this is one of those lessons we will assign to a reader we know will mumble quickly through it so that we can get on with the familiar gospel strains of Ephesians 2 and John 3. But the preacher who is trying to let the Old Testament lessons suggest themes for proclamation must determine to tread on this adder, or better yet, somehow to lift it up.

"Lifting up" is the movement which is found as a recurring motif throughout the propers for the day (all three lessons, the psalm, and the offertory). But nowhere is the image more striking than in the wilderness story. Of all creatures, a *serpent* is lifted up as a sign of salvation! Even when we remember that the snake was regarded with some ambivalence in ancient times, as a token of fertility and healing as well as a symbol of cunning and evil, it cannot but strike us as ironic that the creature held up before the people as the effective visible representation of God's restoration is the same creature once cursed by God to bite the dust for its role in humanity's fall. Amazing!—that God is so brazen as to elevate the cursed serpent. But is it so surprising, when we consider that the same God deigned to stoop down to us, to slip into the skin of cursed humanity, to be elevated upon that cursed pole of the cross? That this God was so shameless as to endure that cross, "despising the shame," so that all who look to it might live? In each case, the sign of salvation is also a vivid reminder of the sin from which salvation is needed and the death which is sin's consequence.

Just such a brazen sign may be what is needed to attract the upward gaze of earthbound eyes. We, too, are creatures of the dust. Ash Wednesday rubbed our faces in that fact. What are the concerns and preoccupations which keep our eyes, like Israel's, turned toward the ground? What among our people corresponds to this people's anxiety over food and water, the lack of trust in God's provision, the grousing and complaining? Where are the fiery serpents of affliction which nip at our heels and keep us constantly looking down, on the watch? And when their poison hits our heart and reminds us, "We have sinned," in what ways do we experience the guilt which keeps our eyes downcast in shame? There is plenty to prevent people from looking up in hope and faith: preoccupation, fear, guilt. How then shall we say, and sign, the message of forgiveness and restoration which lifts them up? From the bowed head and knee of confession, will people look up when they hear that "Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us" and believe that they shall live? Will the lifting of bread and cup be an effective sign to communicate the life of the one who came not to condemn but to save, so that hearts are lifted up to give thanks?

There is more to the movement of "lifting up." According to the Ephesians passage, God has "raised us up with [Christ] and made us sit in the heavenly places." Recall that in the prophet Isaiah's vision of the heavenly scene, what do we find but *seraphim*—the same word for the "fiery serpents" in Numbers 21. How fascinating to visualize the suggestion that Isaiah is describing "winged serpents with human faces and hands" (Otto Kaiser), no belly-crawlers these but creatures of light soaring high above the throne, singing responsively their sibilant "Sssanctuss. . .!" Imagine: even representatives of this cursed genus find their place in the heavenly airspace. Surely, "how much more" must God be at work to elevate us

precious creatures of the dust to our place around the throne, cleansing us with the fire of forgiveness, lifting us up from the ashes and setting us with the royalty (Ps 113). God is "ever raising those of earth to thrones on high" (*LBW* 523). We are raised up with Christ. Although, like the Johannine Christ's, our elevation is a movement which includes both death and resurrection. It begins in baptism, as we are plunged beneath the dust into Christ's death, to emerge with him from that hole in the ground a new creation. Like Christ's, this movement may well elevate us penultimately upon a cross, as in suffering service we pour out our life with his for the sake of the world God loves. Yet like Christ's, our elevation ultimately takes us to the right hand of God.

Martin A. Seltz ('77)
Faith Lutheran Church
Livonia, Michigan

Fifth Sunday in Lent March 20, 1988

Psalm 51:11–16
Jeremiah 31:31–34
Hebrews 5:7–9
John 12:20–33

A FIRST READING

In *John 12:27* we have a Johannine echo of Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane (cf. Mark 14:34–36). The Johannine Jesus does *not* pray for rescue from the cross but embraces the cross as his tough but glorious assignment.

Hebrews 5:7–9 focuses on Jesus in the garden, where he "offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death." He was not spared, but "learned obedience through what he suffered" (*epathon/emathon*). He learned what obedience to God entails in a hostile world, and through sufferings was fully initiated into his dignity as high priest. Through agonies and toils, his earthly life ripened into a shining maturity enabling this priest to serve as incomparable resource. Through painful death he entered into the heavenly sanctuary and took his seat at the right hand of God.

Jeremiah (*31:31–34*), 600 years before the appearing of Jesus, prophesied that God would make a new covenant with the people. And the marks of that covenant would be universality, inwardness, and mercy. God will inscribe his will not in stone but in flesh and deposit the law not in a wooden ark but in human hearts. And on that day God will obliterate the memory of sin and cast the whole mountain of iniquities into the depths of the sea, lifting that awful burden from human life, raising human life into the life of God. RHS

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

"The hour has come!" John 12:20–33 marks the transition in Jesus' ministry from those times when the hour had not yet come (2:4) to the arrival of the hour (12:23). The cross and John's theology of the cross is "lifted up" for our consideration, as John now repeats many of the themes and metaphors that have characterized Jesus' story thus far: seeing Jesus (12:21), the hour (12:23,27), glorifying God (12:23,28), remaining or abiding (12:24), bearing fruit (12:24), loving or hating life in this world as distinguished from eternal life (12:25), serving Jesus and receiving honor from the Father (12:26), the name (12:28), judgment upon this world and its ruler (12:31), being lifted up (12:32), and noting this saying as a sign (12:33). Each one of these themes will now receive greater explanation and depth in the second half of the Gospel from the perspective of the cross, that "lifting up" of the incarnate Word.

A second feature which indicates that this lesson marks the transition to the arrival of the hour is the voice from heaven (12:28). The Fourth Gospel does not speak of a heavenly voice when Jesus met John the Baptist (1:29–34), nor does this Gospel narrate the Transfiguration. Now for the first time a voice from heaven shatters silence, thundering assurance for our sake. And it is needed now because the theme of faithfulness in the face of death has been introduced. Ironically, as the raising of Lazarus serves as the catalyst for Jesus' death (11:45–53), so too, it is the lifting up of the cross in all its terror that glorifies God and illuminates eternal life.

Eternal life is an appropriate theme not only for Easter, but also for Lent. Eternal life stems from a theology of the cross; it is not a triumphalistic, theology of glory after-thought which can only be tacked on at the time of resurrection once living and suffering and dying are all finished. The faithful life and activity of a follower of Jesus are a continual passing through death and thus are always the ever present experience of eternal life. If this were not so, Jesus could not say, "Where I am, there shall my servant be also." By virture of our baptism (born again or anew or from above 3:3–8), the imparting of God's gracious gift of faith, the hour of the lifting up of Christ and his drawing of us and all people to himself has arrived. To be with Jesus is to be lifted up as he was. To serve others faithfully and in so doing to glorify God is already to participate in the abundant life which God promises.

One note of caution. This text does not, nor do any of the passion narratives for that matter, glorify suffering. It does not advocate that pain, death, deprivation, and injustice are experiences that we are to desire, cultivate, or foster among ourselves. Faithfulness, service, the glory of God, and abundant, eternal life are the qualities and consequences of a life which "lifts up" the cross. What this lesson helps us "to see" is that from the perspective of God's faithfulness, demonstrated in the lifting up of Jesus on the cross, not even death can break the ever present relationship of eternal life which God has given, is giving and will give to us. Thus even our dying need not remain unproductive and fruitless. Affliction, suffering, injustice, discord, death are not merely obstacles through which or over which the faithful Christian must jump like so many hoops and barrels. Christ does not lift up and draw us to the cross in order to have us perform feats of faithful dexterity in the cosmic circus. The lifting up of the cross is the indication that "whoever lives and believes in me shall never die" (11:26).

The lifting up of the cross, the arrival of the hour, the ever present disclosure of the presence of God's eternal life is what gives us, to use Paul Tillich's phrase, "the courage to be." To lift up the cross is to lift up, live under, and participate in the faithfulness of God. It is faithfully, courageously, to respond to the chaos, bafflement, and threat around us not in terms of stoic resignation, but with service and acts of love. The cross does not promote a fatalistic determinism where passionless, apathetic resignation—a "grin and bear it" attitude—is the proper response. If we are to glorify the "Father" and not "Fate," then faith, not resignation, is our response—a "grain and bear it" attitude. Service and compassion are the characteristics of this faithfulness that, like the grain which dies, bears much fruit. The cross is the means by which we productively pass through and beyond death in order to witness to the love of God which now and always gives us life, abundantly and eternally.

Once we see or recognize that in the cross of Jesus eternal life is not just awaiting us beyond the grave, but that God already graces us with its presence and invites us to faithfully participate in it, then we, too, are involved in glorifying God. To glorify the name is to fervently pray and live "hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done." When God is glorified the Kingdom of God is believed, prayed, and lived into our present, actual existence. Eternal life becomes an activity and life-

style of eschatological participation, not just anticipation. When our insight concerning eternal life is drawn by the cross and from the cross, our old, warped, twisted, and broken covenants are rendered ineffective and irrelevant. We can now see, illumined by God's presence of eternal life, that "the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it." We can now productively participate, assured by God's voice echoing through time, in acts of love and service which actualize God's presence in our midst through drawing all people to God and thus glorifying God. We can now faithfully witness, encouraged by the one who was lifted up, that nothing can destroy or annihilate the relationship God has established with us. Indeed, if you will permit a personal comment, we can now remember, confronted always and again by the arrival of the hour, that we are not to resign ourselves to the fate of a dead stump, but acknowledging God's eternal vitality, faithfully nurture and serve God's green shoot.

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Sunday of the Passion March 27, 1988

Psalm 31:1–5, 9–16
Zechariah 9:9–10
Philippians 2:5–11
Mark 14:1–15:47, or
Mark 15:1–39

A FIRST READING

Mark 14:1–15:47 depicts an age-old clash of visions, a conflict of dreams and hopes. On the one side Jesus, nearly alone, attended only by a handful of patient women, guarded in his dying moments by a squad of Roman legionnaires, bored with the detail but still open to mysterious possibility. And on the other side Mark pictures a motley crew: priests anxious for the purity of God's name and God's temple, Pharisees intent on honoring God by sanctifying all of life and every day of life by their obedience to God's precise instructions, crowds pressured and played on by fact and rumor, by demagogues and statesmen, by pacifists and freedom-fighters, Pilate determined to write another chapter in the story of Rome's successful pacification of the east. Barabbas was one of the hard men of the day who had no room in his vision for sentimentality or softness. And Judas switched visions, while Peter and the others simply abandoned theirs.

Return to the beginning and read again his story. He began by announcing the fullness of time (*ho kairos*) and the nearness of the sovereignty of God (*hē basileia tou theou,* 1:14–15). Has his vision been frustrated or is it coming true? He called disciples, cleansed lepers, healed paralytics, gave sight to the blind, fed the hungry. But he also dared to forgive sins, break the sabbath, cast out demons, converse with pagans, contradict lawyers, and halt the sacrifices at the temple.

All the drama of the gospel comes to a head in the final chapters. And without changing his mind or altering his tactics one bit Jesus emerges triumphant. Not triumphant like a general with his chariots and bows. Not triumphant like a moralist with his list of do's and don'ts. Not triumphant like a priest or ascetic with rituals and yogas. But triumphant with new life given by God through resurrection and with the promise of a fresh start for disciples beginning from Galilee. Back to the same old stuff: healing and feeding and forgiving. And offering an alternative vision of human life under God. RHS

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS A

The main lessons for the Sunday of the Passion come across somewhat in the same way as does a newspaper article: first the snappy, inviting headline, then the synopsis of the article, followed by the details.

Zechariah proves the headline: "People rejoice as king rides into town; promises peace."

The great hymn from Philippians 2:5–11 beautifully summarizes the passion. Then comes the whole long story (Mark 14:1–15:47).

It is so long that there might not be much time for a homily. And if there is time, what does one say? Preaching on the passion is a little like saying a few words about life.

The preacher may, of course, focus on one part. But if the whole pericope is considered, what may strike us is the specificity—the awful and awe-full specificity. It is, first, specifically human. The lesson begins with the all-too-human plottings of the religious leaders. Then a woman touchingly and prophetically anoints the Christ and is rebuked for the waste of money; the good and bad of human nature. A meal among friends—what could be more human? In the garden, the best of intentions which go awry. A touch of violence explodes amid frustration. People force a verdict which their human, short-sighted wisdom tells them must be. One in authority attempts to bargain with life and finally gives in to public opinion. In all of this, we can so easily recognize our own humanity, ourselves. *We* stand condemned for these acts.

Next is revealed the specificity of death. This is the great stumbling block, still today—that Christ the Lord should have been tainted with the ugliness of death. Beaten. Spit upon. Mocked. Crucified. The death of our Savior is distasteful especially because it is described so painstakingly, so specifically. It's hard to think positively about that death, to approach it in an upbeat manner, because it reflects on us. Jesus Christ died for who he was, and for who we are—specifically, condemned sinners.

Finally, though, the passion account assures us of the specificity of our salvation. This terribly specific story of Jesus' death is the terribly specific announcement of our redemption. All of our flawed humanity is wrapped up, through God's grace, in this death of Jesus Christ, and as a result our sin (generic) and our sins (specific) no longer count against us. Each of us, specifically, is forgiven. So maybe preaching on this lesson *is* a little like saying a few words about life!

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PASTORAL REFLECTIONS B

In Philippians 2:5–11 Paul is asking us to imitate the humility of Christ. It sounds like such a good idea, but it goes against just about everything we do and strive for in life.

Imitating anything or anyone is not what we are here for. Part of what makes the teen years a challenge is the fact that that is when they are searching for their own specific identity. They must find out who they are. The sameness of their clothing would seem to contradict this, but they are out there trying to discover their uniqueness. And other age groups are no different. Everyone goes through phases of searching for or re-searching for their identity. During such times especially, no one wants to be told how to feel or act. So it is that calling people to imitate Jesus may be heard as a hindrance to finding the "real me."

To top if off, it's not the power or glory of Jesus but the humility we are being asked to imitate. Books and workshops and classes by the hundreds teach us to be assertive. Even theologies on how to get what we want and "de-

serve" abound. Being humble or pretending to be (imitating) doesn't really fit into our lives at all.

But something else that doesn't really fit into our lives has already happened to us. In Baptism we have become obedient to death, even death on a cross! We have been united with Christ in his death and resurrection. In that death and resurrection our old self dies and the new self arises. What we need each day is to let our baptism have its way in our life.

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Good Friday
April 1, 1988

Psalm 22:1–23
Isaiah 52:13–53:12
Hebrews 4:14–16, 5:7–9
John 18:1–19:42 or
John 19:17–30

A FIRST READING

Isaiah speaks of a Servant and Hebrews of a Priest, while *John 19:17–30* portrays the enthronement of the true King of the universe.

John wants readers to see that Jesus is not crushed and humbled by crucifixion but is mounting up to power. The cross is the first rung on the ladder to heaven, the first and most difficult step up to the throne. Indeed the crucifixion is enthronement, and in the light of the cross John would have us contemplate all power and all users of power.

Jesus is crucified at high noon (the sixth hour), with the sun at its zenith, and there is no darkness from noon till three shrouding this glorious moment. And on the cross Jesus does not speak of abandonment, nor does anyone mock or taunt him. He is king and his bearing is regal and all who approach him do so with reverence and respect.

John forces us to ponder the title: "King" (*basileus*). Pilate will not change it, and it is etched in the languages of power and of religion and of culture.

In his mounting up to heaven's ramparts, he bequeaths to earthlings a mysterious robe, seamless and woven throughout, for in him the world receives again its lost unity and connectedness and healing for all brokenness. Lest we miss the signal, John says it yet another way. By royal fiat Jesus binds mother and disciple, creating new community, new family, as a gift from the cross.

Tradition told of a drink given to Jesus at the cross, and the synoptic writers remember it as pity or as mockery. But not so John. Here it is a drink that King Jesus calls for, and not because he needs it but "to fulfill the Scripture."

When John is satisfied that readers will understand that Jesus reigns from the tree of the cross, he terminates the narrative. Jesus himself announces that our audience with him is at an end: "It is finished." His work in the world, the mission he came to accomplish, the love he came to bestow, the light he came to shed, the truth to tell, the life to create, the lost to gather—all that work given him by the Father is now "finished," brought to lip-smacking, awe-inspiring, satisfying conclusion. RHS

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

I suspect the texts surrounding the story of our Lord's crucifixion never have been particularly easy reading. It is difficult to handle their pungent condemnation of the human condition.

What an awful and overwhelming situation. I sometimes forget just how far humanity is willing to go in order to get what it wants. An innocent man is condemned in the name of protecting the religious establishment and cultural norms of the day. If only we could awaken from this nightmare. If only it were an April Fool's joke; a perverse prank devoid of deadly consequences. But Good Friday is not a dream. It is one of the dramas played out in the lives of the people who have "turned every one to their own way," like sheep who have gone astray. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ reveals the truth about humanity; that we are alienated from life. We are not able to create and sustain life. We destroy it, even when that life is born of God.

Human and divine goals are often in conflict. Much of what humanity holds dear is not all that important to God and in fact may be contrary to the will of God. The opposite is also true; that which is of God is often meaningless or even dangerous from our perspective.

Good Friday speaks of a strange and terrible conflict. Jesus' crucifixion is not the demise of just another creature, but the death of the Creator's Son. Jesus, through whom all things came to have life, gives up his own life for his brothers and sisters.

The suffering servant of Isaiah 52–53 embodies humility and obedience in stark contrast to many of the human characters in John's narrative. While others feed their ego and reinforce their status and position, the servant quietly accepts the injustices thrust upon him. While the privileged and elite demand the attention of the society, the Lord will raise up the poor and despised servant as the genuine ruler of the world. The servant, seen as weak and powerless, shall constitute the root and foundation of God's relationship to the people.

The servant is not pretty, or easy to look at. The servant's outward appearance will seem bruised and disfigured by the burdens borne on behalf of the beloved.

How easily we treat the servant as a leper, confining him to the grounds outside the walls of our reality. We want to keep tabs on him and control his access into our world. Our humanity will often allow us to cast shame and doubt upon the servant's humility. We can justify our reasons for shunning the servant's obedient lifestyle. Human nature has so much difficulty standing-in for another. We are not good at giving up our freedom or giving away part of our power for the sake of another.

John's account of Pilate's role in the last hours preceeding Jesus' death has always deeply touched me. Pilate's behavior is a tremendous example of the power of evil displacing justice and mercy, and snuffing out life. Pilate abdicated his responsibilities and set aside the high ideals of justice his culture valued. Pilate knew the charges against Jesus couldn't be defended, yet he was intimidated by the threat of blackmail. Pilate was the ultimate authority in the land, yet discovered he could not control the forces of evil surrounding this situation. Eventually, Pilate threw up his hands and acted to his own advantage.

The human capacity for justice, love, and mercy often yields to our capacities for injustice, hatred, and selfishness. Humanity stockpiles power, status, and creature comforts. God's nature is fundamentally different. God shares resources. While humanity is consumed with consumption, God is providing the true basic necessities for life. Jesus did not try pathetically to hold on to life. He "bowed his head and gave up his spirit," full of trust in God's strange ways.

As the people of God, we are called to imitate the suffering servanthood of Jesus Christ. We are to walk with Christ along the path to the place of the skull. We must look to Jesus Christ for the gifts of faithfulness and obedience so that we may give up our broken spirits and claim the redemptive death of Christ.

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The Resurrection of Our Lord April 3, 1988

Psalm 118:1–2, 15–24
Isaiah 25:6–9
1 Corinthians 15:19–28
Mark 16:1–8

A FIRST READING

Isaiah 25:6–9. Feasting and rejoicing on the great mountain of the Lord for all peoples, bar none. Spiritual blindness will give way to sight, and all tongues and families will mount together into the peace and presence of the Lord God. That great sovereign will eat up death, and will with tender hands wipe tears from all faces, remove all barriers, and hug in everlasting arms all the human family.

God's war on death is underway (*1 Cor 15:19–28*). He is even now busily subduing all things under the feet of Jesus, one enemy after another, and the last enemy to be destroyed is death. Then in the end the Son will even subject himself to God, and God will then be everything to everyone.

From the blazing visions of Isaiah and Paul to the final paragraph of Mark's Gospel seems a rude and jarring descent. Some pious second century Christians found Mark's ending too poor and flat for their taste and added verses (9–20) in an effort to make it sing a little. We are more modest and usually just substitute John's Easter story as richer and more meaty fare!

Mark sings, but he has his own song. The fear at the end (*ephobounto,* 16:8) is not cowardice but awe, and the fleeing of the women from the tomb, their running from the cemetery, is full of the ecstatic energy of those who have kissed death goodbye and are leaping back into the arms of life. At the beginning of the paragraph they were in the grip of hopelessness and despair but not at the end.

What happened between that beginning and that end is their and our encounter with good news. Not just an empty tomb, but an empty tomb interpreted by an angelic visitor. Verse 6 is the Easter Gospel. It is short but it is a great sermon. And verse 7 is another piece of great news; for it declares that those who had failed and forsaken are not written off but restored to lives of discipleship. RHS

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

It's the bottom of the 9th, the hometown team is down by 3 runs, there are 2 outs with nobody on base. Die-hard baseball fans, when questioned about their team's chances at winning have been known to say, "It's not over 'til it's over," or (in this writer's favorite phrase), "The opera's not over 'til the fat lady sings." That is to say, the outcome of a ballgame is not certain until the umpire calls the final out. That's the end of the game. In literary, rather than sporting terminology, one would say there is a closure, a finality to it all (although if it has been an important game it will live forever in the fan's memory). As Frank Kermode says, there is "a sense of an ending," a sense that the narration has been terminated, and a sense that in terminating, it has reached its goal and been completed.

Fortunately or unfortunately, we don't have that sense of an ending with Mark's Gospel. We seem to still be waiting for the fat lady (not Mary surely!!) to burst into the final aria. We're anticipating the umpire bellowing: "You're outta there." We're waiting for the credits to start rolling on the screen, or for the actors to take a curtain call, or for the words "Go in peace; serve the Lord." But it's missing from Mark 16.

How can Mark 16:8 be the ending of Mark's Gospel? Where are the post-resurrection appearances all the other evangelists tell us about? How can you preach an Easter sermon with that as the text? "They ran away and told not one thing to anybody, because they were afraid." The End??

To this preacher it seems that the obvious starting point for the sermon is the end. Start at the end, or the lack thereof, of Mark's Gospel. Certainly the question of the ending of Mark's Gospel is one that has mystified and excited exegetes for years. "Can a book end with *GAR*?" "When is an end not an end?" The literature is extensive, and fortunately can be helpful for the Easter preacher.

N. R. Peterson gives the preacher an excellent jumping-off point for dealing in a homiletical way with an exegetical problem. Regarding the ending of Mark's Gospel he says: "The text ends, but the readerly work, and perhaps even the literary work itself, goes on. The end of the text is not the end of the work when the narrator leaves unfinished business for the reader to complete, thoughtfully and imaginatively, not textually" (*Interpretation* 34 [1980]:153).

As the "readerly work" goes on, likewise there is "unfinished business" for those who sit in the pews. "The end of the text is not the end of the work." The witnessing work goes on for those who come after that angel and those frightened women. Obviously that earliest Christian community hiding behind locked doors (or so we read in John's Gospel) knew there was unfinished business and took the initiative and spread the Word. So also hearers today must not leave church on Easter morning, lock the doors (or roll the stone back in front of the empty tomb), and leave it at that. The non-ending lends itself to an evangelistic (appropriate word, wouldn't you say?) thrust in the sermon.

Another possibility would be to explore alternative endings. What if there really were a last page of Mark's Gospel that got lost somehow. What would it say? "They ran away and said nothing because they were scared out of their wits . . . but then they remembered what he had said to them while he was still with them, and then they told the disciples, and the disciples told others, and those told even more people." Or, "What if the women hadn't told anyone else?" Or, "What if the Risen Lord had appeared right then and there to calm the fears of the women, just as our Lord can calm our fears?"

Certainly on this day above and beyond all other days, the glorious resurrection message needs to come through loud and clear. Although the work is not yet finished, the closure not yet achieved, the curtain not yet lowered, the fat lady not yet singing, the ball game not yet over, there is no question about the final outcome. "The last enemy to be destroyed is death" (Second Lesson).

And so, to return to the ball game metaphor, the unfinished business (of the church, of Easter worshipers) is like one of those marathon ball games (how's that for mixing metaphors?) that goes on until the wee hours of the morning, a game that one minute is being won by the hometown favorites, and the next minute seems surely to be lost. Just like the battle that goes on in our daily lives, the war between evil and good, going back and forth, back and forth, until that final ending, that ultimate victory won for us on the cross and secured for us by the empty tomb, the victory of life over death. As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.

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Second Sunday of Easter April 10, 1988

Psalm 148
Acts 3:13–15, 17–26
1 John 5:12–16
John 20:19–31

A FIRST READING

What irony. They (we?) had the choice: the Killer and the Author of Life (*archēgos tēs zōēs*), and they chose very badly. People are killers and God is a resurrecter, and the contrast could not be greater.

God is simply doing the divine thing by not smiting the smiters. Instead God offers time for repentance, time for people to step back into the orbit of life and life-giving. God is in movement toward the end of history and "times of refreshing," the renewal and re-creation of all things.

The world (*ho kosmos* = creation out of control and thumbing its nose at God and at life) really is overcome in the victory of faith.

Both Thomas' doubt and Thomas' faith are complicated matters. What he doubted was that Jesus had achieved triumph by means of wounds. What he came to believe was that the death of Jesus was the triumph of real life over real death. He did not simply doubt that there was such a thing as resurrection or that Jesus might have been raised. He did not ask simply to feel Jesus' bones or hear Jesus' vocal cords turning out sounds once again. He focused all attention exactly where John thinks it must center: on the wounds in hands and feet and heart.

Can the path to God really be through death, through sacrifice, through love? Finally Thomas comes to believe it and confesses Jesus, with wounds still gaping, that is to say with love intact, as "My Lord and my God." And that confession is a commitment to yield his own life to love. RHS

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

Who would play the role of Thomas if this post-resurrection drama were to be cast today? Kirk Douglas? Michael Douglas? Robert Redford? Jack Nicholson? Warren Beatty? How about William Hurt? Which could capture the intensity of the moment when, down on his knees (for what other position could he be in?), Thomas breathes, "My Lord and my God"? Whose posture and voice could portray the agony of such repentance and the joy of such proclamation? Who could create the drama of that moment when recognizing not only Jesus, but Jesus the Christ, the risen Lord? My vote goes for William Hurt.

No doubt William Hurt will not be available to play the role of Thomas in each of our worship services on the Second Sunday of Easter. Yet the cast and the elements for a drama are present in each of our congregations. Everyone of the hearers could play the role of Thomas. The liturgy provides the lines. The music sets the stage. The people are ready to worship. They are eager to see Jesus.

Central to each text for this Sunday is the theme of belief, belief in Jesus as the Christ. Peter calls people to repent, to turn to Jesus and to recognize him as the Christ, the Author of Life. In 1 John we are reminded that we who believe in the one who overcame the world can overcome the world. In the Gospel story Jesus comes back to the disciples that they might believe.

Our job as preacher is the same as that of the writers of the texts: to show Jesus to the people, to uncover his wounds, to make him alive before their very eyes, to reveal his presence before them. The people come to us this Sunday remembering the thrill and joy of last week's Easter celebration. Yet a week of work and toil has clouded their eyes. They come doubting God's presence, God's forgiveness, God's victory on their own lives. Our job is to let the presence of God wash over them, cleansing their eyes to see what the words of the lit-

urgy and Scripture beckon them to see:

> "God who is faithful and just will forgive and cleanse us. . .
> Power to become the children of God. . .
> In peace let us pray to the Lord. . .
> Holy God, mighty Lord. . .
> Given for you, shed for you. . .
> Keep you in his grace. . .
> Go in peace."

For the words beckon them to see Jesus Christ, the Author of Life who gave his own, Jesus Christ the Son of God who was wounded, Jesus Christ, Lord and God, giver of peace.

The words of the sermon will echo these words of the liturgy. The words will show, point to, hold before the people Jesus, wounded yet powerful, victorious. That is what all of us need to see. We need to see him who understands our failures during the week, our inability to rise above our doubts, our lapses and collapses. We need to see him who overcame all of that. We need to see him who came back to breathe peace and to give a time of refreshing to those who were fresh-out; like we are on Sunday mornings. We need to see him who came back to the disciples and so realize that surely he comes back to us to fill us up with his presence.

Thomas saw Jesus. He heard the words, "Peace be with you." He saw the wounds. Thomas saw *Jesus.* He fell to his knees for he was seeing Jesus, the risen Lord. Part and parcel of seeing Jesus is the response of knees bending, of repentance. The closer we are to being on our knees the more we see Jesus. That will be the response of the people as they see Jesus, who came by water and blood. For William Hurt they may have given a standing ovation. For Jesus they will all fall on their knees, hands open.

So what do we preach? We preach the drama of Jesus. We preach the Jesus we have seen, the Jesus who helped us make it through one more day. We preach the Jesus who makes it possible for believers to overcome the world. We preach Jesus who poured out his blood mingled with water and washed away our sin. We preach the Jesus whose presence brings times of refreshing.

All we need do is to let the people see Jesus, provide a place for them to kneel, serve them the Sacrament and breathe on them God's peace. Then by the power and moving of the Spirit they will go sure of God's presence, trusting God's forgiveness, and confident that they too can overcome the world.

Cheri Johnson ('83)
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Third Sunday of Easter April 17, 1988

Psalm 139:1–11
Acts 4:8–12
1 John 1:1–2:2
Luke 24:36–49

A FIRST READING

Acts 4:8–12. Jesus, raised from the dead to the right hand of God, is Lord and King, and like a good and gracious king dispenses gifts. And the gifts of the living Christ are life and well-being. In this Jesus of all people, there really and most certainly is salvation, life, healing, peace, joy. That truth seems unlikely, but Luke proclaims Jesus as champion gift-giver, as indispensable and incomparable gift-giver.

(On *1 John 1:1–2:2* see the October issue on St. John, Apostle and Evangelist.)

Luke 24:36–49 consists of two scenes: the first (36–43) focuses on the moment when Je-

sus stood among his disciples in Jerusalem, showing himself solid and alive after his passion. He volunteered his hands and feet to their doubting touch, and he took some fish and ate before them, restoring them to faith and fellowship by his appearing.

In the second scene (44–49) Jesus gives to his disciples a theological summary and marching orders. By his life, death and resurrection he has summed up the whole thrust of "the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms," the Torah and the Nebiim and the Kethubim, the whole of sacred Scripture.

And Scripture, the written encapsulation of the mind of God, is not a closed but a very open-ended book. Its unfathomable energies reach out to embrace "all nations, beginning from Jerusalem." Jesus has been enthroned and the proclamation of his installation as king of the universe must issue forth through the mouths of his witnesses. The beginning of their work as heralds of the king waits only on their investiture with "power (*dynamis*) from on high," namely the Holy Spirit to be poured out by the Christ on the fiftieth day. RHS

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

"You are witnesses of these things." Those words of Jesus are the key to understanding the texts for this Sunday. Both Peter and the writer of 1 John bear witness. But of what things and how are they and we to be witnesses?

The answers to those two questions lie in the Gospel text. In the passage preceding, Jesus reveals himself to two of the disciples at Emmaus. These two rush back to Jerusalem and relate their experience to the others. Even as they speak, Jesus enters the room and affirms that their words are true. Those gathered in the upper room have heard and now see the reality of the resurrection. But they disbelieve, not because of their faithlessness but because of their utter amazement. So Jesus must interpret for them what they have heard and seen.

Why? Because God intends to use these very men and women to carry on the work which Jesus had begun: the forgiveness of sins and new life in Christ's name. They are to become witnesses to the gospel, the good news which is a reality for them. These are the things to which they are witnesses: the death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ and the forgiveness of sins available to the repentant.

How are they to be witnesses? On their own? No, but by the power from on high, the Holy Spirit, which will clothe them soon. That happens on Pentecost. The Holy Spirit transforms these frightened disciples into bold witnesses. Having received that power, the life-giving power which makes all Christian work possible, they begin their work in Jerusalem. Only after that do they move out to Samaria, Greece, Rome, and the ends of the earth. Now they are truly witnesses of these things.

The First and Second Lessons provide examples of their witness. The first tells the story of Peter before the high council in Jerusalem. His arrest gives him the opportunity to relate the essentials of the Gospel to his captive audience. Both elements of Jesus' instruction are a part of Peter's witness. He begins by citing a credal formula concerning Jesus' death and resurrection (Acts 4:10). Then he proceeds to say that it is only through this one that salvation can be had.

The writer of 1 John states very clearly that he intends to share his community's experience of Jesus with the recipients of the letter. The language he uses is very "sensible." What we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes and touched with our hands—that is what he will proclaim to the readers. Why? So that the reader might have fellowship with them and in turn with God. His witness encourages communion among the believers and between the believers and God.

On this Third Sunday of Easter, Jesus' instruction applies to us as well. We experience

the message Sunday after Sunday in the hearing of the Word proclaimed and in the receiving of the Sacrament distributed. Just two weeks ago, we went to the tomb with the women only to find it empty. The good news of Jesus Christ is ours just as it was for those early disciples.

Therefore, we are witnesses of these things: witnesses who in the rite of Holy Baptism were claimed as God's own and anointed with the power of the Holy Spirit; witnesses right in our own neighborhoods and communities; witnesses to the things that God has done in our lives; witnesses to the fact that the very same thing is available to all people. God relies on us to carry out the message of his reconciling love demonstrated in Jesus the Christ.

What you have seen and heard and touched, bear witness to these things.

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Fourth Sunday of Easter April 24, 1988

Psalm 23
Acts 4:23–33
1 John 3:1–2
John 10:11–18

A FIRST READING

"Shepherd" (*poimēn*) means ruler or governor in the vocabulary of the ancient near east. In Jerusalem in the days of Jesus the official shepherds of the people were the priests and elders of the people, and men like Herod and Pilate. What a terrible thing that the shepherds of God's people "set themselves," shoulder to shoulder in awful solidarity, "against the Lord and against his Anointed" (*Acts 4:23–33*).

Under pressure, the disciples prayed and received God's Spirit. And it is absolutely typical of Luke that he defines the Spirit's bounty as the gift of boldness of speech, irrepressible and joyous speech, unguarded and incautious speech, the speech of free women and men.

From time immemorial people have sought good leaders, good rulers, for their tribes and villages, for their councils and cities. And with terrible regularity their leaders, whether they inherited leadership from their father or were thrust into leadership on the basis of charismatic endowment, began to use their power and their place for their own advantage. In *John 10* we hear the voice of the exalted Jesus crying out in pain at the mistreatment of all God's people in all tribes and nations from the foundation of the world: "All who came before me are thieves and robbers. . . . They came to steal and kill and destroy" (10:8,10).

But Jesus is that Good Shepherd of whom the peoples have dreamed from the beginning. Neither thief nor hireling, he cares everything for the sheep, and he lays down his life for the sheep.

He is by the will of God, the Great Shepherd not of the twelve only, not of Peter and Andrew and Nicodemus and Mary Magdalene only, but of all who in any time or place heed his voice. He will gather scattered peoples into oneness with God, that they may have life and have it more abundantly. RHS

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

After working through these lessons, I am tempted to go overboard with the image of Jesus, the "good model Shepherd," to spend nearly all of my pulpit time proclaiming the good news of the risen and living Shepherd who knows us Christians intimately, who calls

us by name, and who of his own volition laid down his life for us so that we might have life in abundance. I fear, however, that to succumb to this temptation is to show myself a bad shepherd (like those indicted by Jesus in John 10), because by focusing exclusively on the good Shepherd goodies, I may well ignore the challenge contained within these lessons.

These lessons challenge us to "speak of what we've seen and heard" (Acts 4:20), the way Peter and John did, to speak and enact the Easter message with boldness, in the face of whatever twentieth century Herods and Pilates may be arrayed against us. These lessons challenge us to be what God's calling makes us (God's own children), and to foreshadow what we will be in the future by being like Jesus (reflecting his glory, bearing witness to his cross) in the present. These lessons challenge us to "hear and heed the Shepherd's voice" by receiving from him the same charge he received from his Father, that charge being the new commandment to love one another.

In short, these lessons challenge us to do some shepherding of our own; to follow the Shepherd by imaging the Shepherd. The ideal end result: as not-of-the-fold sheep hear our voices, it's the Shepherd's voice they hear; as not-of-the-fold sheep come to know us, it's the Shepherd they come to know, until finally, the not-of-the-fold sheep are enfolded.

I can fairly easily come up with earthy, specific ways in which my calling resembles shepherding. Slightly more difficult is it to identify and articulate the ways in which my listeners' various callings resemble shepherding, or offer good opportunities for shepherding.

Similarly, I should be able to identify and articulate ways in which my listeners avoid shepherding, or refuse to shepherd altogether (just as we preachers are sometimes prone to do). I don't want to prove to my listeners that they're thieves and robbers. I simply want to point out, accurately and winsomely, that they can be and frequently are bad shepherds. For example, I know a registered nurse who never really comforts a patient or family badly needing comfort. I know a high school junior who, when surrounded by hostile, worldly wolves (other high school juniors), keeps his lips zipped, instead of proclaiming the Easter message boldly. I know young, upwardly-mobile professional types, who are more concerned about what they can make of themselves than they are about what God's calling makes them.

I know Christians who exhibit more love for self than they do love for others (cf. Ezekiel 34 on what makes for a truly bad shepherd). Small wonder, then, that the sheep are almost hopelessly scattered! That there are so many of them outside the fold! Surprisingly, this state of affairs doesn't seem to bother many of the presently enfolded sheep. They're not totally sure they want all of the not-of-the-fold sheep in the fold with them, anyway.

What, if anything, can wipe out our reluctance to be good shepherds? Only this: the truth that the good Shepherd laid down his life for us sheep, so that we might have life. Since the Shepherd (risen and living) is the source of each of our lives, we cannot lose our lives. Lay them down we can, or give them away we can, but no one and nothing can take them away from us, any more than the Shepherd's life can be taken away from him.

The Shepherd wants to use us to speak of what he's seen and heard. He wants us as the agents through whom he will enfold all of his sheep. And he gives us all the Spirit we'll need (the outpouring of the Spirit for bold speaking in Acts 4 is not confined to the disciples and apostles) for our shepherding work.

This side of heaven, the challenge presented by this week's lessons never can be fully met. But given the gospel and the Spirit, we surely can reflect Jesus' glory. We can be shepherds, and good ones at that.

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John Tietjen—Seminary Builder

William E. Lesher
President, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

It is a special privilege to write the presidential column in this expanded edition of *Currents* in honor of John Tietjen. Some of the essays in this volume have focused on the more dramatic events in John Tietjen's life associated with the courageous stands he took and the leadership role he played in the Concordia Controversy leading to the establishment of a Seminary-in-Exile. Unlike the other contributors to this edition, I was not a part of that period. I have, however, been an intimate part of the later and, in some ways, less dramatic part of John Tietjen's career, during which he can authentically be described as a Seminary Builder.

Since June 1980, John Tietjen has been planning and nurturing the process that was finally completed seven and a half years later on December 31, 1987—the full inclusion of Christ Seminary—Seminex into three other ELCA seminaries. It all began in June 1980 at a pre-arranged breakfast at a biennial meeting of the Association of Theological Schools in Denver, Colorado. The Jesuit School of Theology had just announced its intention to close its Chicago campus, leaving both classroom and housing space available at LSTC. Christ Seminary—Seminex had graduated the large classes of the first years of exiles and was faced with declining enrollments and difficult placement problems. Given these conditions, I proposed that we explore a way to combine our resources in Chicago. That set in motion a slow but persistent process, skillfully shaped in large measure by John Tietjen, that has resulted in the substantial strengthening of theological education in the Lutheran Church.

By October 1980, the Seminex Board had responded with an acceptance of the LSTC invitation "to consider the possibility of moving to its campus." By the fall of 1981, a plan was in place for faculty visits between our two schools, together with Wartburg Theological Seminary. In 1982, a schedule was developed to work out details of unification. Carefully nuanced proposals were exchanged that only partly veiled the fears of the separate parties: Christ Seminary—Seminex' concern that its special identity would be lost and LSTC's worry that funding would default. Early in 1983, a breakthrough came. At a particularly crucial meeting in February, the defensive, cautious spirit that had marked discussions gave way to a new openness. In a few hours, a rough plan for the deployment of Seminex resources to LSTC, Wartburg, and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary was drafted.

By September of that year, the great immigration was effected, and three theological programs were advanced with the infusion of

Seminex resources. At LSTC, the Master of Divinity program was broadened, Graduate Studies expanded, and many areas of seminary life were enriched, especially the area of church music. At Wartburg, the Hispanic Extension Program in Austin, Texas, was undergirded with CS-S library resources. At both Wartburg in Austin and PLTS, the academic program was strengthened with added faculty resources from Seminex.

Since these days of deployment, the plodding tasks of seminary building have been added to the roles of planning and process. Together with a small, creative staff, John Tietjen has crisscrossed the country, doing so often what he does so well—leading congregations in inspirational, gospel-centered worship, and maintaining the solid basis of spiritual and financial support for the deployed Seminex faculty. It only took a few months past the first audit to allay the fears of LSTC about finances. By that time, it was apparent that Christ Seminary—Seminex had found its deployed identity welcome to its constituency and compatible with the ambiance at LSTC.

Through it all, I have come to regard John Tietjen as a Spirit-led man. He is a planner without an Ultimate Plan. Rather, he moves from stage to stage, open to the new impulses and possibilities, ready always to re-plan when the Spirit's lead is clear. While he waits on the Spirit, he works the process and, even in the plodding tasks of seminary building, his strength seems to be regularly renewed, like the eagles'.

To all the other descriptions that will be used to honor his manifold ministry, I add from my particular perspective, the honorary designation, "Seminary Builder," to this Spirit-led person, John H. Tietjen.

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