

Autumn 2008–
Spring 2009
Volume 11 No. 1-2

Seminary Ridge Review



**Lutheran
Theological
Seminary at
Gettysburg**

Seminary Ridge Review

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The *Seminary Ridge Review* is published twice a year — Fall and Spring — by the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. The Rev. Dr. Brooks Schramm, Associate Professor of Biblical Studies, serves as editor.

ISSN 1526-0674

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Subscriptions free. Additional copies when available: nominal charge (\$10) per issue, including postage and handling. Write:

*SEMINARY RIDGE REVIEW
Lutheran Theological Seminary
61 Seminary Ridge
Gettysburg, PA 17325-1795*

Additional information is available on the *Seminary Ridge Review* web site: www.Ltsg.edu/srr

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The *Seminary Ridge Review* is a faculty publication intended as a theological round table for alumni, rostered church leaders and scholars. Its commitment is to offering perspectives highlighting the unique history and theology of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, eastern Lutheranism and the issues that emerge in the cross-currents of theological and cultural debates.

Churchly faithfulness, academic integrity and a feisty commitment to theological engagement characterize the journal's intent and editorial policies.

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FROM THE EDITOR:

With the publication of volume 11, the *Seminary Ridge Review* will catch up with its normal publication schedule, combining publication numbers 1 and 2 under one cover. Included in this Review is material that was generated mostly in 2008 by the Seminary's annual Martin Luther King Jr. Colloquy, the Luther Colloquy and Spring Convocation. Dr. Christianson's writing "Herman G. Stuempfle, Jr., Poet of the Lord" began as a narration accompanying an autumn 2008 hymn festival produced by Music, Gettysburg!

Watch later this fall for the redesign of the *Seminary Ridge Review* with an expanded scope of written and graphic forms of communication, and a return to its semi-annual publication schedule.

PRACTICES OF KING'S BELOVED COMMUNITY: TODAY'S DEMAND, TOMORROW'S HOPE

Martin Luther King Jr. Convocation
April 2, 2008

By Anne E. Streaty Wimberly

Introduction

A defining moment in history occurred in the sanctuary of the Mason Temple in Memphis, Tennessee on April 3, 1968, forty years ago tomorrow. The occasion was the last sermon preached by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This defining moment was followed by Dr. King's assassination in that same city on April 4, 1968, forty years ago on Friday. At the close of his apocalyptic sermon, King delivered on the eve of his assassination, he told the audience:

Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn't matter with me now. Because I've been to the mountaintop. And I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And he's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people will get to the promised land. And I'm, happy tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.¹

Every word, every phrase holds potent and heart-tugging meaning. But, I want to highlight two phrases as a way of entering our reflection together on "Practices of King's Beloved Community: Today's Demand, Tomorrow's Hope." The first phrase is: "Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead."² The second phrase is: "I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain and I've looked over. And I've seen the promised land."³

¹ Martin Luther King, Jr., "I See the Promised Land," in James Melvin Washington, ed., *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King Jr.* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1991; copyright 1986 by Coretta Scott King), 279-286; 286.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

The importance of the first phrase lies in the fact that Dr. King was a social realist. He saw clearly, felt deeply, and knew personally the struggles to overcome the stinging dehumanizing impact of systems of exploitation and oppression on people within and beyond our nation. Indeed, his realism prompted him to write in 1958, twenty years before his final address that struggle often leaves us standing amid the surging murmur of life's restless sea."⁴

However, the second phrase is immensely significant because it points both to King's religious core and to the center of his life's mission. Dr. King was a man of fervent religious faith. This faith included his knowing deeply and profoundly a living personal God who, to use King's words, is able to transform "the fatigue of despair into the buoyancy of hope."⁵ And, it was this God he chose and sought to serve. Moreover, for King, God's unmistakable love gave purpose and direction for a future of promise or hope. Indeed, the hope that was to emerge out of struggle—the hope for the future King envisioned and strove for across the years of his ministry was the creation of the Beloved Community. He envisioned an earthly "promised land" that he variously called the "city of peace and happiness,"⁶ "city of freedom,"⁷ "higher synthesis,"⁸ "kingdom of brotherhood,"⁹ "world-wide fellowship,"¹⁰ "symphony of brotherhood,"¹¹ and "a new world."¹² For him, the creation of the Beloved Community demanded faith, hope, and "an all-embracing and unconditional love for all. . . ."¹³ This is the "promised land" he saw even on that night before his death. And, this is the "promised land" that still stands as a challenge and a hope today.

My intent in this presentation is to invite us to take a hard look at the necessity today for the Beloved Community that King envisioned. As further background for this hard look, I will invite us to retrace King's unfolding vision of the Beloved Community. We will then consider the nature of three key practices—faith, hope, and love in the creation of the Beloved Community. Finally, I will share some implications of King's perspectives on these practices for today.

⁴ King, "Pilgrimage of Nonviolence," in Washington, *A Testament of Hope*, 35-40; 40. The article written by King is actually a restatement of Chapter 6 in Martin Luther King Jr., *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958). It also appeared in *Christian Century* 77 (April 13, 1960) 439-41.

⁵ King, "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," in Washington, *A Testament of Hope*, 40.

⁶ King, "Going Forward by Going Backward," in Washington, *A Testament of Hope*, 160.

⁷ King, "Where Do We Go From Here?" in Washington, *A Testament of Hope*, 252.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 250.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ King, "A Time to Break Silence," in Washington, *A Testament of Hope*, 242.

¹¹ King, "Love, Law, and Civil Disobedience," in Washington, *A Testament of Hope*, 52.

¹² King, "The Vision of a World Made New," in Clayborne Carson, Senior ed., *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Vol 6: *Advocate of the Social Gospel, September 1948-March 1963* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 181-183; 182-183.

¹³ King, "A Time to Break Silence," in Washington, *A Testament of Hope*, 242.

Retracing King's Vision Of The Beloved Community

The formation of King's vision of the Beloved Community is evident in the early days of his ministry. After the call of this young Black preacher with a Ph.D. degree early March 1954 to fill the pulpit at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, a Black church in Montgomery, Alabama, he returned in April to meet with the church's pulpit committee. On April 4, 1954, he preached a sermon there entitled "Going Forward by Going Backward." In it, he posed the problem that "through our scientific genius we have made of the world a neighborhood, but . . . have failed to make of it a brotherhood."¹⁴ He continued: "If our civilization is to go forward today, we must go back and pick up those precious values we have left behind. And unless we go backward to rediscover . . . moral and spiritual values, we will certainly not move forward to the city of peace and happiness."¹⁵ In this early instance in his ministry, King offers descriptive images and metaphors for what he later calls the Beloved Community.

On September 9, 1954, King spoke on the theme, "The Vision of a World Made New" at the annual meeting of the Women's Convention Auxiliary of the National Baptist Convention. In addressing this theme set forth by the Auxiliary, King presented the vision of John while imprisoned on the Isle of Patmos. This vision was of a New Jerusalem, a possible new world and a new social order coming into being by God to replace the perfunctory ceremonialism, the tragic gulfs between poverty and wealth, and political domination and exploitation of Old Jerusalem.¹⁶ King viewed the new world and social order envisioned by John as a real, of justice, brotherhood and light. He applied John's vision to the contemporary world and our standing between two worlds—one of the old order in the form of colonialism, imperialism, domination and exploitation in parts of the world and segregation on the national scale that are passing away.¹⁷ In an important way, these thoughts of King, like those in the sermon at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church provide a glimpse of his vision of the Beloved Community that was to be identified by him in 1957.

The groaning and right of Black people for justice and equality for what daily we experienced of a separate and unequal existence gave rise to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. With the birth of the SCLC in January 1957 and King's election as its first president came his hope for non-violent action to address the realities of racism. Indeed, the non-violent resistance he proposed was embraced as a way of moving forward even in the face of fire hoses, billy clubs, being spat upon, and imprisonment in the struggle to make concrete the words of this country's Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to

¹⁴ King, "Going Forward by Going Backward," Sermon at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, in Carson, *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Vol 6, 159-163; 159.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 160.

¹⁶ King, "The Vision of a World Made New," in Carson, *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Vol 6, 182-183; King, "A Time to Break Silence," in Washington, *A Testament of Hope*, 243.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."¹⁸ King considered non-violent action as the pathway to what he called the creation of "the beloved Community in America, where brotherhood is a reality."¹⁹ In this first concrete conception of the vision, King's view emphasized an integrated society defined by "genuine intergroup and interpersonal living."²⁰ King made another clear reference to his vision of the Beloved Community in the April 1957 article in *Phylon* entitled "Facing the Challenge of a New Age." In that article, his vision centered on reconciliation and redemption as intended qualities and outcomes of the Beloved Community. In this conception of the Beloved Community, King also presented a contrasting view of tragic bitterness as the aftermath of violence.²¹

By the time of his April 21, 1957 Easter sermon at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, King had experienced the bombing of his home, arrests in the wake of the Montgomery bus boycotts, and ongoing threats. He had seen the brutal responses to non-violent resistance as well as the power of this Gandhian mode of pressing toward justice. He was aware of the threat of atomic warfare, hydrogen bombs, and worldwide injustice. Consequently, in that Easter sermon, King described the need for an existence brought about by love, "the most durable power in the world," and lived out by three "spiritual forces—faith, hope, and love that we might also call "spiritual practices." He did not use the term, the Beloved Community. However, his description of it was unmistakable as he highlighted faith, hope, and the primacy of love over these two as being ultimately real, as giving life meaning, and as practices leading to the affirmation of the hymnist's message:

In Christ there is no east or west
In *Him* no north or south.
But one great brotherhood of love
Throughout the whole wide world.²²

Although the early foreshadowing of the Beloved Community in King's ministry tended toward the world as the communal context of the vision, a major part of King's ministry centered on bringing the Beloved Community to reality in this nation. King saw the creation of the Beloved Community as part of the necessary task of healing the soul of America that had been fractured

¹⁸ "The Declaration of Independence of the Thirteen Colonies, In Congress, July 4, 1776, 1.

¹⁹ Reference to this first articulation of the vision of the beloved community appears in Kenneth L. Smith and Ira G. Zepp, Jr., *Search for the Beloved Community: The Thinking of Martin Luther King Jr.* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1998), 130. Their reference is taken from Francis L. Broderick and August Meier, eds., *Negro Protest Thought in the Twentieth Century* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1965), 272.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ King, "Facing the Challenge of a New Age," *Phylon* 18 (April 1957) 30.

²² See King, "Questions that Easter Answers," in Carson, *The Papers of Martin Luther King Jr.*, Vol 6, 283-292.

by racial hatred, discrimination and brutality against Black people. This dream was eloquently delivered in his well-known August 28, 1963 address delivered before the Lincoln Memorial at the March on Washington, D.C. for Civil Rights. Although he did not identify the Beloved Community by name, he described the fulness of the equality and inclusivity that must be formed to make America a great nation and that will allow freedom to ring.²³ But, his vision was to extend again beyond the national borders. In 1967, a decade after he gave the name, the Beloved Community, to his vision, he wrote in his book, *The Trumpet of Conscience*, that "Our loyalties must transcend our race, our tribe, our class, and our nation ..."²⁴

Yet, the more poignant reference to the global meaning of the Beloved Community was proclaimed by King on April 4, 1967, exactly one year to the day before his assassination. On that day, he spoke to a meeting of Concerned Clergy and Laity at Riverside Church in New York City. His global vision of the Beloved Community was set within what he viewed as an agonizing mandate of conscience to speak against the continuation of the Vietnam War. In addition, he pointed to his awareness of a global revolt against old systems of exploitation and oppression out of which new systems of justice and equality were being born. He spoke of those who had urged him not to share his conscience and those who questioned his resolve to do so. His reply in the opening moments of his address was that "the inquirers have not really known me, my commitment or my calling. Indeed, their questions suggest that they do not know the world in which they live."²⁵ In that address, he referred to himself as "a citizen of the world."²⁶ And, importantly, he returned to the metaphor of the struggle for "a new world" that appeared in his 1954 address to the Women's Convention Auxiliary of the National Baptist Convention.²⁷

King was under no illusion of moving toward and achieving easily the creation of the Beloved Community. In the April 4, 1967 address, he made clear that the struggle to bring his vision to fruition would be long and bitter. But, he forthrightly raised the questions: "Shall we say the odds are too great? Shall we. . . [say] the struggle is too hard?"²⁸ The tenacious commitment of King to be a "drum major" for justice and the dawning of the Beloved Community, the questions posed by him in 1967, alongside the twin realities of struggle and hope conveyed by him in his final sermon set before us much to ponder. Certainly, King's words, "Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead," ring as loudly and clearly today as they did forty years ago. The daily news

²³ See King, "I Have a Dream," in Washington, *A Testament of Hope*, 217-220.

²⁴ King, *The Trumpet of Conscience* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1967; copyright 1967 by Martin Luther King Jr.), 68.

²⁵ King, "A Time to Break Silence," in Washington, *A Testament of Hope*, 232.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 238.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 243.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

reports of the democratic presidential nomination is but one reminder of this truth. The economic turmoil in our land seems to thicken by the day. Inequalities still exist. Our present multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-faith society challenges us. The Iraq War remains as a storm that will not pass. Violent political conflicts or incidences of civil unrest are occurring in countries in Africa, in the Americas to our South, in Asia and the Pacific region, in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, and in the Middle East and Near East. Poverty continues as a national and global issue. Food emergencies exist in 35 countries worldwide. Homelessness that includes the phenomenon of street children is global, alarming, and escalating. The sustainability of planet earth is called into question by an environmental crisis. And, to add to this, Ronald Stone's summary of the multi-faith global community heightens the challenge.²⁹ He states:

In the emerging twenty-first century, people on a crowded planet rise up to destroy each other in the name of parochial religious identities. Through the middle latitudes, from North Africa through the Middle East to Indonesia, Islam is involved in a religious struggle of modernist versus fundamentalist, Muslim versus Christian, Jew versus Muslim, Hindu versus Muslim, and Muslim versus Buddhist. In Europe, we see Protestant versus Catholic, Catholic versus Orthodox, Orthodox versus Muslim. China, the most populous country in the world, still represses most religious expression or insists on relegating it in the name of old-fashioned Maoism. In the few places of the earth still not subject to Western technology, aggressive Christian missionaries seek out unbaptized peoples to bring them within the Western Christian orbit, [while destroying] their culture. . . .³⁰

And, in this country, denominationalism erupts into factionalism in the form of heated words about and between evangelical and liberal Christians. In the face of all of these very real and difficult current-day circumstances, I want to suggest that King's search for the Beloved Community was not simply a vision for his day, but an urgent mandate for our day. Moreover, King's message of hope *can* and *must* be embraced by us today. Specifically, the three spiritual practices—faith, hope, and love about which King preached on Easter in 1957 and lived over the course of his ministry are practices for us to carry out for the sake of making real the Beloved Community in today's and tomorrow's world. It is to these practices that I now turn.

²⁹ See: "Global Focus Site Directory, http://www.flashpoints.info/FlashPoints_home.html; FAONewsroom, "Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations," <http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2004/44327/index.html>; Graca Machel, *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children* (United Nations and UNICEF Report, 1996); Anup Shah, "Causes of Poverty: Poverty Facts and Stats," <http://www.globalissues.org/TradeRelated/Facts.asp>; Casa Alianza, "Exploitation of Children – A Worldwide Outrage," "Street Children – A Worldwide Problem," September 2000, www.hiltonfoundation.org/16-pdf3.pdf, and Evgenia Berezina, "Street Children: Victimization and Abuse of Street Children Worldwide," www.yapi.org/rpstreetchildren.pdf.

³⁰ Ronald H. Stone, "Introduction: Contemporary Resistance Ethics," in Ronald H. Stone, ed., *Resistance and Theological Ethics* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 3-4.

Practices of The Beloved Community

In his ministry, King's references to and his own practices of faith and hope with a priority on love, mirror the message of Paul in I Corinthians 13:13—"And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love." It is important to note, as well, that King highlighted the importance of practices. He made clear that what we profess, we must put into practice.³¹ He also cautioned against talk that could be construed as empty words with no practical meaning.³² For him, there was something personally lost if the central and generating force of the Beloved Community was not practiced. In fact, we glean from him that the practices of faith, hope, and love are actions that we must intentionally and repeatedly engage in ways that become ingrained in our very being. And, because these practices embody as well as foster or cultivate a way of being in relation to God and others, after the pattern of Jesus Christ, they are rightly called Christian practices or spiritual practices.

The kind of practices toward which King pointed is akin, in fact, to Craig Dykstra's and Dorothy Bass' description of Christian practice as "a sustained, cooperative pattern of human activity that is big enough, rich enough, and complex enough to address some fundamental feature of human existence."³³ How, then, do we describe the bigness, richness, and complexity of the practices of faith, hope, and love as King understood them? What do they have to say for Christian practices today that can help to create and model the Beloved Community? In what follows, some attention will be given to answers to the questions.

The Practice of Faith

From King's written self-reflections, sermons, and addresses I have gleaned at least four actions comprising the practice of faith. First, from King's perspective, faith begins with arriving at a security of knowledge about God. An example of King's articulation of the nature of this action appears in his essay, "A Testament of Hope," that was published posthumously.³⁴ King's faith is revealed in that essay as an active faith in God's love and God's design for goodness to reign and not fail. It was an optimist's faith. What King teaches us is that, for the cause

³¹ King, "Love in Action, I" in Carson, *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Vol 6, 406. The Roman numeral, I, appears in the reproduction of the sermon as a means of identifying it as on—perhaps the first—of several sermons on love.

³² King, "Facing the Challenge of a New Age," in Washington, *A Testament of Hope*, 140.

³³ Craig R. Dykstra and Dorothy C. Bass, "A Theological Understanding of Christian Practices," in M. Volf and D. C. Bass, eds., *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 22.

³⁴ King, "A Testament of Hope," in Washington, *A Testament of Hope*, 313-328.

of the Beloved Community, faith in God gives strength beyond comprehension even in the face of imprisonment, days and nights filled with frustration and sorrow, and experiences of hatred and the potential of danger from adversaries. His honest self-reflection reveals that, with this faith, it is possible to falter. Real human feelings will surface. Yet, faith makes possible a profound sense of security in knowing God loves us.³⁵ This faith allows us to continue on.

We also learn from King that this kind of faith in God extends to an embrace of God who is on the side of truth and justice and who demonstrates that side in the person of Jesus. Because of this faith, we can call on the name of Jesus Christ. For King, this is the faith that makes possible our going through the tension and suffering that inevitably comes in the struggle for justice.³⁶

In the sermon, "Three Dimensions of a Complete Life," appearing in his book, *Strength to Love*, King gives advice about the formation of the practice of faith. In the struggle for justice, he says:

I would urge you to give priority to [a] search for God. Allow his spirit to permeate your being. To meet the difficulties and challenges of life, you will need Him. Before the ship of your life reaches its last harbor, there will be long, drawn-out storms, howling and justling winds, and tempestuous seas that make the heart stand still. If you do not have a deep and patient faith in God, you will be powerless to face the delays, disappointments and vicissitudes that inevitably come . . . But with [God], we are able to rise from tension-packed valleys to the sublime heights of inner peace, and find radiant stars of hope against the nocturnal bosom of life's most depressing nights.³⁷

King also makes the point in his 1954 sermon, "A Religion of Doing," that faith in God is ultimately validated in action and when it is not, our lives become as a "sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal" [as noted in I Corinthians 13:1].³⁸

Second, from King's perspective, faith in action is the embrace of an unmovable belief in the capacity of humans to do right and to overcome blunders. King clearly asserts that this activity or practice of faith does not negate the barriers and the very real flaws inherent in racism, poverty, militarism, and materialism.³⁹ But, this activity of faith opens within us the view that

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 314.

³⁶ King, "The Current Crisis in Race Relations," in Washington, *A Testament of Hope*, 88.

³⁷ King, "Three Dimensions of a Complete Life," in Martin Luther King, Jr., *Strength to Love* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 92. The sermon, based on an audio recording, appears in Carson, *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Vol 6, 395-405.

³⁸ King, "A Religion of Doing," in Carson, *The Papers of Martin Luther King Jr.*, Vol 6, 171.

³⁹ See King, "A Testament of Hope," in Washington, *A Testament of Hope*, 314-315.

there is a difference humans can make. He calls it the “audacity to believe.” He states:

I have the audacity to believe that people everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality, and freedom for their spirits. I believe that what self-centered men have torn down, other centered men can build up. . . I still believe that one day mankind will bow before the altars of God and be crowned triumphant over war and bloodshed, and non-violent redemptive goodwill will proclaim the rule of the land.⁴⁰

Third, faith in action involves reaching toward the future because of faith *in* that future.

For King, this activity or practice centers on the belief that the future holds potential for something real and meaningful. What is conveyed by him is a deep faith in the future that makes possible what he describes as the ability to move out, adjourn the councils of despair, and bring “new light in the dark chambers of pessimism.”⁴¹ This kind of faith, King said, made it possible for young students to sing, “We shall overcome, deep in my heart, I do believe, we shall overcome.”⁴²

Fourth, central to King’s understanding of faith in action is one’s motivation and choice. In his February 1960 sermon, “The Three Dimensions of a Complete Life,” King highlighted that we are motivated to continue on in the struggle for the cause of a new world in the face of tremendous odds because of the faith we have that what we are doing is right. Moreover, we are enabled to go on because we believe that what we are doing is not simply right, but is in line with God’s purpose for our lives and the lives of others found in the Great Commandment—To love God with all our heart, soul, and mind and our neighbor, who is everyone, as ourselves.⁴³

Importantly, King stresses that in matters of faith, a choice must be made. In the final analysis, it is up to us to choose faith in the eternal God, whose purpose does not change. It is up to us to choose faith that leads to hope. For King, this faith allows us to choose to commit ourselves to the cause of the Beloved Community, whatever the cost. In fact, he said: “The choice is ours, and though we might prefer it otherwise, we *must* choose in this crucial moment of human history.”⁴⁴ Perhaps we should ask ourselves: Is this crucial moment

⁴⁰ King, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1967).

⁴¹ King, “Love, Law, and Civil Disobedience,” in Washington, *A Testament of Hope*, 52.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ See King, “The Three Dimensions of a Complete Life,” in Martin Luther King, Jr., *Strength to Love*. The sermon, based on an audio recording, is also found in Carson, *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Vol 6, 396.

⁴⁴ King, “A Time to Break Silence,” in Washington, *A Testament of Hope*, 243.

of human history, in fact, now in 2008? What is our choice?

King draws on modern psychology to affirm “that vital religious faith is unequaled in its resources to make life worth living. The church holds before us this fact—confirmed in the lives of Paul, Augustine, John Wesley, Tolstoy, Schweitzer in Africa—that you can be more than a conqueror, and that can be what you choose to make it.”⁴⁵

The Practice of Hope

King views hope as activity allowing us to have vitality that “keeps life moving.” It is not simply an action or practice, but a quality of being that helps us go on in spite of difficult life realities, deferred dreams, and blasted hopes, or even when dreams turn into nightmares brought about by poverty, oppression, victimization, and death.⁴⁶ King also gives attention to what is hoped for in the creation of the Beloved Community. He sums it up with the words of Arnold Toynbee that “the first hope . . . must be the hope that love is going to have the last word.”⁴⁷ However, from King’s perspective, the highest hope is that which we place in Christ who “reminds us that we can be better than we are and who gives us the bases for placing value on human worth and dignity.”⁴⁸ According to King, when we have hope, we connect with the One who does not throw us out as orphans or leave us alone in our struggles.⁴⁹ This hope in Christ leads to our living without fear and worry about the future.⁵⁰ With this hope, we are enabled to continue on even if friends desert us or if, in the final analysis, civilization crumbles.⁵¹

The Practice of Love

A key tenet of King is that the practice of love is both a prerequisite for and the central way of living in the Beloved Community. As indicated earlier, his attention to the centrality of love mirrors the highest distinction given to love in comparison to faith and hope in I Cor 13:13. However, it is important to say that King’s explication of the practice of love was influenced greatly by Paul Ramsey and Anders Nygren, according to Kenneth Smith and Ira

⁴⁵ King, “Life Is What You Make It,” in Carson, *The Papers of Martin Luther King Jr.*, Vol 6, 86.

⁴⁶ See King, “A Christmas Sermon on Peace,” in Washington, *A Testament of Hope*, 257.

⁴⁷ King, “A Time to Break Silence,” in Washington, *A Testament of Hope*, 243.

⁴⁸ Martin Luther King, Jr., “Christ Our Starting Point,” in Carson, *The Papers of Martin Luther King Jr.*, Vol 6, 353.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² See Kenneth L. Smith and Ira G. Zepp Jr., *Search for the Beloved Community: The Thinking of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1998), 62-66.

Zepp who traced the thinking of King in their book, *Search for the Beloved Community*.⁵² King drew from their differentiation between eros, a sort of “aesthetic romantic love”; “philia,” a reciprocal love and intimate affection and friendship between friends; and “agape love,” an overflowing, selfless love which seeks nothing in return and comes from the love of God operating in the human heart.⁵³

King highlighted the primacy of agape love and lifted up the necessity of practicing it in every act of non-violent resistance and in the ongoing struggle to create the Beloved Community. Indeed, throughout his ministry, sermons, addresses, and essays, King repeatedly accentuates the centrality of the love ethic found in agape love and the practice of it in Christian life. For him, the practice of agape love leads to peace. This practice appropriately stems from and moves forward on our belief in “the sacredness of all human life and that every man is somebody because he is a child of God.”⁵⁴

King envisioned an inclusive Beloved Community. He connected this emphasis on inclusivity with agape love. He made clear that the practice of agape love that flows from God’s love is not limited to a particular race, color, nation, class, religion, looks, size, or age. Moreover, from his perspective, in practice, inclusive love is “a transforming power that can lift a whole community to new horizons of fair play, good will and justice.”⁵⁵ It is not meek or weak. Rather it is “something strong and that organizes itself into powerful direct action.”⁵⁶ To this extent, the activity of love on which King focused is not associated with the practice of nonresistance, or passivity and complacency. Rather, for King, love *in action* is carried out in nonviolent resistance that moves toward a clearly defined end—justice—in a variety of directions over the course of time.⁵⁷

In the struggle to create the Beloved Community, King was forthright in insisting that our practice of love should be carried out and sustained on the basis of our call to it by Jesus, which includes a call to love our enemies.⁵⁸ As though anticipating the question, “How, then, do we make this practice of loving our enemies concrete?”, King prepared a handwritten outline and sermon that appear in his 1963 book, *Strength to Love*. King proposed four practices:

- Practice self-reflection that includes looking squarely at our own propensity toward hatred of another and reckoning with our own behaviors that may create enmity

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ See King, “A Christmas Sermon on Peace,” in Washington, *A Testament of Hope*, 255.

⁵⁵ King, “Walk for Freedom,” in Washington, *A Testament of Hope*, 83.

⁵⁶ See Kenneth B. Clark, “Interview,” in Washington, *A Testament of Hope*, 335.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 335-336.

⁵⁸ See King, “Loving Your Enemies,” in *Strength to Love*, 41; also, “Loving Your Enemies,” Handwritten Outline, in Carson, *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Vol 6, 126-128; “Loving Your Enemies,” Sermon Delivered at the Detroit Council of Churches, Noon Lenten Services, in Carson, *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Vol 6, 422.

⁵⁹ King, “Loving Your Enemies,” Handwritten Outline, 127.

between us and others.⁵⁹

- Practice forgiveness. From King's perspective, this does not mean ignoring the wrongdoing of another. Rather, it means releasing from ourselves the burden of the wrong-doing and the mental block it creates that impedes the formation of hate and the view of the other as enemy. The release of this burden opens the way for love to emerge and reconciliation or a new beginning to be created.⁶⁰
- Practice seeing the good in the enemy.⁶¹ This practice calls us to look beneath the surface of another and see within what King called our "enemy-neighbor," knowing that a vicious or evil act does not fully represent all the enemy-neighbor is.⁶²
- Practice refraining from defeating or humiliating the enemy-neighbor, but rather practice winning the enemy-neighbor's friendship and understanding.⁶³ King clearly states, however, that "this would not follow with all-out war between nations. This deals with enmity between individuals."⁶⁴

It is noteworthy that we find ideas similar to King's in the 1996 book of Nancey Murphy and George Ellis entitled *On the Moral Nature of the Universe*. In it, they propose that central to the nature of forgiveness is giving up resentment, letting go of hate, which for them, is part of a broader theme of self-sacrifice embodied in the idea of *kenosis*. They include a helpful note that is Kingian in nature: Forgiveness frees us from being "hostage to the past, letting it hold us in bondage. . . ."⁶⁵

The critical point that King continually made was that an all-embracing and unconditional love for all is the greatest practice in creating the Beloved Community. He emphasized over and over again that the practice of this love extends to everyone. He also made clear that the only testing point for knowing whether we have real genuine love is our love for our enemy. If we fail at this love, we cannot claim our expression of Christian love. We test it by our ability to

⁶⁰ King, *Strength to Love*, 42.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 43; King, "Loving Your Enemies," Handwritten Outline, 128.

⁶² King, *Strength to Love*, 43.

⁶³ King, "Loving Your Enemies," Handwritten Outline, 128; King, *Strength to Love*, 43-44.

⁶⁴ King, "Loving Your Enemies," Handwritten Outline, 128; King, "Loving Your Enemies," Sermon Delivered at the Detroit Council of Churches' Noon Lenten Series, in Carson, *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Vol 6, 423-424.

⁶⁵ See George F. R. Ellis, "Afterward: Exploring the Unique Role of Forgiveness," in Raymond G. Helmick, S.J., and Rodney L. Peterson, eds., *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religion, Public Policy and Conflict Transformation* (Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 2001), 395-410; 405.

⁶⁶ King, "Levels of Love," in Carson, *The Papers of Martin Luther King Jr.*, Vol 6, 443-444.

love our enemy.⁶⁶

King goes on to say: "And so, this is what we have before us as Christians."⁶⁷ Moreover, as though to drive home the special quality of love, he paraphrased I Corinthians 13:1-3 in his 1962 sermon, "Levels of Love":

And so you may be able to speak well, you may rise to the eloquence of articulate speech, but if you have not love, you are become as a sounding brass or the tinkling cymbal. You may have the gift of prophecy so that you may break into the storehouse of nature and bring out many insights that . . . [you] never knew were there. You may have all knowledge so that you build great universities. You may have endless degrees. But, if you have not love, it means nothing. Yes, you may give your gifts and your goods to feed the poor. You may rise high in philanthropy, but if you have not love, your gifts have been given in vain. Yes, you may give your body to be burned, and you may die the death of a martyr. You may have your blood spilt, and it will become a symbol of honor for generations yet unborn. But, if you have not love, your blood was spilt in vain. We must come to see that it is possible to be self-centered in our self-sacrifice and self-righteous in our self-denial. We may be generous in order to feed our ego. We may be pious in order to feed our pride. And so without love, spiritual pride becomes a reality in our life, and even martyrdom becomes egotism.⁶⁸

In sum, for King, there is a pivotal requirement of the practices of faith, hope, and love in the creation and expression of the Beloved Community without which the future of our world may well be called into question. But love the greatest of these is love.

A Perspective on King's Practices for Today

There is no question that we are living in a time of great challenge, peril, discord, human rivalry, racial ethnic and religious conflict, and struggle to maintain planet earth. We may say that the issues of our day are too big to tackle or that there is something surprising and immensely disappointing or even discouraging about the seeming continuation and deepening of the very situations the movement led by King set out to confront. It was hoped that the Era of Martin Luther King Jr., the drum major for justice, would usher in a new reality of brotherhood and sisterhood. And, in a real way, the intent of the assassin's bullet was to kill the dreamer and the dream. Yes, there have been undeniable "strides toward freedom" in spite of that intent. But, the battle is far from won. The significance of King's provocative message about the necessary practices of faith, hope, and love and his death in the throes of his own practice of them lies in the poignant reminder that each generation, it seems, must embrace and risk practicing the message anew.

Sharon Welch's uses of the term, "dangerous memories," is a helpful one. In her article on the

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 444.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 444.

Beloved Community, she builds on Johann Baptist Metz' use of the term to describe the role of the Christian tradition in bearing "a dangerous message of freedom," that draws us into a critique of the way things are and leads us to political action.⁶⁹ My own thoughts are that the central message of faith, hope, and love about which the Apostle Paul wrote in I Corinthians 13:13 functions as a "dangerous memories" because, on the one hand, it has the potential to threaten or call into question ways of living and acting that run counter to God's purpose for our lives. On the other hand, it holds the potential for freedom because it evokes thoughts we have not yet considered and actions and a direction in life we see as both possible and necessary.

These same practices of faith, hope, and love that King embraced, lived and taught from the Christian tradition and taught may be appropriately regarded as "dangerous memories" insofar as they invite us to consider critically not simply the hallmarks of his religiosity, but what constitutes our own and what God is now calling us to be and do. But, it is more than a critique of our personal selves. As "dangerous messages," the practices of faith, hope, and love set forth by King summon in us both a social critique and the connection of our self critique with what is occurring in our world to which our personal self has contributed. There is risk involved, for if we are honest, we will find much that we have done or not done and must now do to create the Beloved Community.

Plumming the "dangerous memories" for what they have to say for us and our place and actions in the world today is really about addressing the story of our relationships that begins with our families and extends in concentric circles to those beyond our immediate environment. Plumming the "dangerous memories" of faith, hope, and love, means entering into story-sharing with those around us in our age of "broken villages." We must create this time for story. We must teach our children so that our children's children will learn and heed the biblical message of faith, hope and love appropriated by King that is so needed in creating and sustaining the Beloved Community. But, we must not simply teach it, we must live it out and practice the message ourselves.

Plumming the "dangerous memories" of faith, hope, and love also means entering into stories of suffering and hope with the stranger. This suggests our entry into a new kind of journey to which we become so committed, that we are willing to say, "Done made my vow to the Lord, and I will not turn back. I shall go, I will go to see what the end will be." Today, this journey promises to open us to see, welcome and celebrate the global village that is here among us and through which we may discover what W.R. Rodgers refers to as the strange richness of our own plural identity and that, in the other, we are really looking for and finding ourselves.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ See Sharon Welch, "The Beloved Community," *Spirituality Today* 40 (Winter 1988 Supplement) 10-29. The article is part of the Conference Proceedings, "For the Trumpet Shall Sound: Protest, Prayer, and Prophecy," Aquinas Center of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, October 26-30, 1988. See www.spiritualitytoday.org/spir2day/884053welch.html.

⁷⁰ See Geraldine Smyth, O.P., "Brokenness, Forgiveness, Healing, and Peace in Ireland," in Raymond G. Helmick, S.J. and Rodney L. Petersen, eds, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religion, Public Policy & Conflict Transformation* (Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 2001), 329-359; 331.

When we plum the “dangerous memories” of faith, hope and love, we may also begin to see, seize, or create opportunities to engage in forms of non-violent resistance that include and move beyond those imagined and used in King’s era. Demonstrations by marchers for justice, peace, and environmental sustainability are one example. If the Beloved Community based on faith, hope, and love is to become a reality, then we will find new, dedicated, and successful nonviolent ways to call attention to and reverse the disproportionate representation of Black people among the poor and jobless, without health care, and who are incarcerated. We will find ways of duplicating the bold experiment of Palestinian and Jewish youth to live and go to school together for a period of time. We will build on the models used by organized groups for Jewish Christian dialogue who offer bold opportunities for learning, cooperative action, and reconciliation. We will form more international coalitions of churches to engage in the struggle for global justice and more local congregations to work to empower people through housing, educational, and health supports. Our seminaries will dare to dissolve the walls of classrooms so that what happens in community touches what happens in seminary and what happens in seminary reaches into church and community.

Each of us may offer what we know is happening or what we ourselves are doing. But, so much more is needed. The “dangerous memories” of faith, hope and love challenge us to look for the inequities, hear the cries of the needy, and step forward as 21st Century “drum majors” in bold ways to demand that “justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.”⁷¹ Martin Luther King Jr. challenges people in his era of turmoil to choose to practice faith, hope and love. “The choice is ours,” he said, “and though we might prefer it otherwise, we *must* choose in this crucial moment of human history.” That crucial moment is now!

The point I want to make here is that the evocative power of the “dangerous memories” of King’s views of faith, hope, and love has the potential of bringing to our minds and hearts an imagination of what we must be and do to contribute to the creation of the Beloved Community. At the same time, we recognize that the challenges of our day will demand actions on multiple levels and tracks and drawing from a wide range of interests and competencies in order for the light of hope to shine for tomorrow. A part of the “dangerous memory” of King’s insistence on the practices of faith, hope, and love is that it is, after all, God who calls us and Jesus who goes before us as the model. It is up to us to choose to respond to this calling and commit ourselves to imitate the example set by Jesus. King’s questions remind us that today’s demand and tomorrow’s hope for the creation of the Beloved Community are in our hands and we must choose to put our hands to work. “The choice is ours,” he says to us today, “and though we might prefer it otherwise, we *must* choose in this crucial moment of human history.”⁷² What is our choice?

⁷¹ King spoke these words of the prophet Amos in his final sermon. See King, “I See the Promised Land,” in Washington, *A Testament of Hope*, 282.

⁷² King, “A Time to Break Silence,” 243.

PASTORAL THEOLOGY IN LUTHER'S TRADITION: A RE-MEMBERING

By J. Paul Balas

In the mid-1950's, Theodore G. Tappert, who was at the time Professor of Church History at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, compiled, edited, and translated a book which was in no small way a precursor to the recent publication, *Luther's Spirituality*, by our own Philip and Peter Krey. The title of Tappert's volume was *Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel*. In his introduction to that volume he wrote: "Martin Luther...is usually thought of as a world-shaking figure who defied papacy and empire to introduce a reformation in the teaching, worship, organization, and life of the Church and to leave a lasting impression on Western Civilization. It is sometimes forgotten that he was also—and above all else—a pastor and shepherd of souls. It is therefore well to remind ourselves that the Reformation began in Germany when Luther became concerned about his own parishioners who believed that if they had purchased letters of indulgence they were sure of their salvation. And just as Luther's public activity of reform began in this pastoral concern, so the life of the Reformer ended in a pastoral ministry. In January, 1546, in the dead of winter, sixty-three-year-old Martin Luther traveled to his birthplace, Eisleben, to reconcile the quarreling Counts of Mansfield. After long and painful negotiations the noblemen were reconciled, and on the following day, Luther died. Between these two pastoral acts—the one that marked the beginning of the Reformation and the one that closed the Reformer's life—lay a rich lifetime of pastoral activity. The spiritual counsel that Luther offered to contemporaries...was not simply the application of external techniques. It was part and parcel of his theology."¹

I would like to take Tappert's conclusion one step further. Not only would I agree that Luther's spiritual counsel, his care for souls, "was part and parcel of his theology," I would focus that statement even more, and say that Luther's practice of the care of souls was rooted in his *pastoral* theology, in his theological understanding of how and why a baptized Christian functions in the office of the ministry, and is therefore an expression of that very distinct theological understanding.

On this basis then, what I would like to do in our time together this morning is to take a look at Luther's pastoral theology, to talk about how the care of souls—pastoral care—fits into that theology, and then say a few things about what that all may have to say to our life and ministry as a reforming movement within the church catholic today. Let me begin with a story.

¹ Theodore G. Tappert, *Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), 14.

Eric Gritsch found the story in a book titled, *Little Journeys with Martin Luther*, written at the beginning of the 20th century by W. N. Harley.² The story goes something like this: It seems that Martin Luther had re-appeared in southeastern Pennsylvania in the early 20th century, and being Martin Luther, had requested admission to the ministerial role/roster of the General Synod. The synod, being a synod, required that Luther meet with its candidacy committee. After questioning Brother Martin about a variety of subjects ranging from millennialism to membership in secret societies, the examiners turned to Luther's pastoral theology, to his theological understanding of the office of the ministry. When it became obvious that there were some radical theological differences on the subject between Luther and the members of the candidacy committee as well as among the committee members themselves, the committee chair called a halt to the conversation. He then addressed Luther with the intent of directing Martin to leave so the committee could deliberate and decide upon his candidacy in executive session, and then notify him of their decision early the next day. "I hope, Brother Martin, that you'll lose no sleep over these differences," said the chair. Luther retorted angrily. "You take the most diligent care on every occasion to be slippery and pliant of speech. Is that the behavior of a faithful pastor and theologian? Tend to your decision; I've made mine." Luther then turned and stormed out of the room, slamming the door behind him. "Nothing lost there," said one of the committee members. "We couldn't have accepted him anyway. He's got too many heretical views about the office of the ministry. He's saved us an unpleasant task. Thank God."

Luther's pastoral theology—his theological understanding of the office of the ministry—begins with the word "office." The ministry is to Luther first and foremost an office. That sounds simple enough... until you begin to unpack the meaning and implications of the word. Eric Gritsch gives us some perspective here also.³ The German word used by Luther, *Amt*, that we English speakers translate as "office" or more specifically in ecumenical discourse as "office of the ministry," comes from the Celtic word for "vassal," originally *ambactus* in Latin, shortened to *Amt* in German. The word refers to a person publicly put in charge of a piece of land by a feudal landlord. In turn for having been given specific public work to do and a specific public place at which to do it, the vassal paid public homage to and publicly served the landlord. Luther gives his own theological twist to this term.

For Luther, an office is part and parcel of God's continual activity as creator in the world. It is part and parcel of how the creator maintains social order and fights against social chaos among human beings in the creation. To have an office, for Luther, is to have a God-given social/institutional/public role or position in God's world, and to perform the work, accomplish the tasks, carry out the duties, and demonstrate the behaviors publicly connected to

² Gert Haendler, *Luther on Ministerial Office and Congregational Function* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 9-13.

³ *Ibid.*, 11.

and associated with that role or position. For Luther, all humans, as creatures of God, baptized or not, Christian and non-Christian, have at least one, and more often than not, more than one office. There are offices associated with occupations: prince, shoemaker, barber, cook, soldier, homemaker, charmaid, merchant, farmer, pastor, etc. There are offices associated with domestic life: father, mother, son, daughter, aunt, uncle, grandmother, grandfather. For Luther, all humans are office holders (*Amtstraeger*). Each and every human creature on earth serves in one or more offices—in socially derived and institutionally designated positions and roles that have socially-defined tasks, duties, and responsibilities assigned to them. For Luther, this is a socially foundational and institutionally identifiable (public) way in which God works as creator to order and care for the creation.

Luther uses another term, closely related to *Amt* to further describe God's creative activity in human society. The German word is *Stand*. It's sometimes translated as "office" also, but more commonly as "estate" or "station." The term, *Stand*, has a different focus and coloring than *Amt*. Given my very limited skills at German, I would use the words "status," "rank," or "standing" to translate *Stand*. *Stand*, the way Luther often uses it, is something I think of when I am told to "know my place," or when I am trying to figure out my position in a given pecking order, like I had to do when I was a new faculty member or a newly ordained pastor. For Luther, every office also has standing or rank associated with it. That is pretty obvious in the military. But mothers have social rank also, as do children, teachers, physicians, accountants, senators, janitors, and pastors. Luther understood both office and rank as integral and necessary parts, as "official" aspects, of God's ordering of human life in the creation. For Luther all human creatures live out their life in one or more offices, and each office has status or rank.⁴

For Luther, both office, and rank or position, are smaller components within an even larger set of ordering structures of the human world instituted and sustained by God the creator. These larger structures are called "hierarchies" or "governments" by Luther. Like the smaller organizing pieces, the hierarchies are put in place by God's creative will and work, and through them, as through the offices and ranks, God carries out the divine will and purposes in the world. Luther names three hierarchies: the secular government; the household; and the institutional church. Translating these into 21st-century language we might keep secular government and the institutional church, but we could broaden the family to include more of the economy. In our world, the political hierarchy would include the nation, state, legislatures, police, military, and the like. The economic hierarchy might include the educational system, parents, merchants, corporations, stock sellers, buyers, and holders,

⁴ Edward Cranz, *Luther's Thought on Justice, Law, and Society* (Mifflintown, PA: Sigler Press, 1998), 153-159; Donald R. Heiges, *The Christian's Calling* (Philadelphia: Board of Publication of the ULCA, 1958), 49-50; Gustaf Wingren, *Luther on Vocation* (Philadelphia: Muhlenburg Press, 1957), 1-10.

producers and consumers, and the like. The religious hierarchy could include the organized church, and rostered and lay people in their various institutionally assigned roles. And as strange, or even as foreign, as this may sound to us today, Luther saw these three great social/institutional systems, including their various offices, ranks, and polities as the instruments, as the means, through which God's Creator Spirit works to maintain order, justice, morality, productivity, and peace in the creation.⁵ Luther also gave the hierarchies/governments and the offices within them a special status or standing. He called them "divine, natural, and temporal," indicating their origin in the Creator and a standing or status that deals with worldly affairs.⁶

In contrast, and significantly, Luther posited a second and parallel status or estate, this one reserved especially for baptized Christians as individuals, and for the church as God's people gathered around the gospel, as the priesthood of all believers. The name he gave it was "the spiritual estate, (*geistlicher Stand*)," spiritual in this case referring to life lived before God in contrast to life lived before the world or life lived among women and men. It is an estate that is distinct from "the temporal estate" (*weltlicher Stand*) on the one hand, and yet exists simultaneously alongside of it on the other.⁷

So in the theological understanding of Brother Martin, we, as baptized Christians, and the church as the community of saints, live in two worlds simultaneously, in effect holding dual citizenship under the same sovereign. On the one hand, on God's left hand, we have an earthly status as do all human beings. We are God's creatures, citizens of the world, of the temporal estate, living along with the rest of humanity in relationship with other human beings and with the rest of creation in and through offices and institutions established by God's creative spirit as means, as instruments, through which the forces of disorderly chaos are held back and forces of preservative creativity are unleashed and nourished.

On the other hand, on God's right hand, at the same time that we are citizens of the world and are subject to its offices and institutions, we also have a spiritual status, a life before God. Remaining God's creatures, we are simultaneously God's children, received into the communion of saints through baptism. Born of water and the spirit and nurtured in the word, we are members of the community of the word, the body of Christ, and as such, our citizenship is not only in this world; our citizenship is also in heaven.

This is so because, for Luther, the God revealed as savior in Jesus Christ is always and ever, at one and the same time, the God who creates. The God of law and gospel, of judgment and love, of responsibility and forgiveness is always and ever at the same time the God of created order, a God who uses created means through which to accomplish both his creative and his redemptive work.

⁵ Cranz, 159-178; Heiges, 51; Wingren, 10-37.

⁶ LW 41:177.

⁷ Cranz, 138, 153 ff.

Luther called these means “the masks of God,” *larvae dei* in Latin. Rooted in the Hebrew scriptural tradition, he believed that no human could ever relate directly to God, but that God always relates indirectly to humans, using created means, instruments, masks. In the temporal realm these masks include the three great worldly institutions (the state, the household/economy, the institutional church) and the myriad of offices that are part and parcel of institutional life. All humans, including Christians, participate in this world, and all, Luther believed, are aware, if only in some minimal way, of the hidden/masked God who is behind it.⁸

Baptized Christians, however, have that additional status, that dual citizenship. Creatures of the earth, they also are children of the spiritual estate; they live simultaneously in a parallel world, a realm in which they know God not only as creator, but also as judge, redeemer and sanctifier. In the spiritual realm, their status before God is established, not as it is in the earthly realm, by active and responsible participation in the orders and offices of creation, but instead by passive surrender in faith to God’s judgment, love, and forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

But here, too, in the spiritual realm, the God who redeems and sanctifies as well as creates, uses means, masks, instruments of creation, to reveal himself and his redemptive loving/judging relationship to individuals. It starts with a word, the Word, a human being, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, crucified, dead, and buried. God’s Word becomes flesh. It continues through the earthly body of the Christ, raised from the dead, through words about that Christ, through water, bread and wine “used according to God’s command and connected to God’s word;” through human interactions, in and through which God’s word of law and gospel is mediated.⁹ They are all, all of them, God’s masks, God’s instrumental use of the things of creation in the service of redemption and sanctification.

And God uses one distinct office, one instrument of creation, a “mask” instituted and owned by Christ himself, by which and through which God’s redemptive and sanctifying Word, in all of its many forms, establishes and nourishes the church. And that office, that essential element of orderly role in the creation, that mask in which and through which the redemptive and sanctifying Word of God is publicly/officially made present, is the Office of the Ministry.

So, then, the office of the ministry is fundamentally an office, a public position in life, in and before the world, in and through which a specified work is done. As an office, as part of God’s orderly/public way of accomplishing things in the creation, this office is no different than any other office. An office is an office. And yet Luther gives the office “spiritual” and not “worldly” status/standing. How and why does he do that?

⁸ Heiges, 52. See also Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther’s Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 213.

⁹ Martin Luther, “The Large Catechism,” in *The Book of Concord*, Theodore G. Tappert, ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 348.

Luther understands the office of the ministry to be a “spiritual” office not because it is an office. All offices are worldly constructs in his scheme of things. The office’s spiritual status is not because the human in the office has an indelible mark, or a special gift from the Holy Spirit or because s/he is essentially more holy than other humans. S/he has not and is not. The office of the ministry has “spiritual status” in God’s scheme of things for two reasons: first because of the occupant/owner of the office—who is Christ; and second because of the purpose of the office and the work to be done in and through it—which is Christ’s work.

Luther puts it this way: “For we must be sure of this, that baptism does not belong to us but to Christ, that the gospel does not belong to us, but to Christ, that the office of preaching does not belong to us but to Christ, that the sacrament (of the Lord’s supper) does not belong to us, but to Christ, that the keys, or forgiveness and retention of sins, do not belong to us but to Christ. In summary, the offices and sacraments do not belong to us but to Christ, for he has ordained all this and left it behind as a legacy in the church to be exercised and used to the end of the world; and he does not lie or deceive us.”¹⁰

To repeat again, the temporal office of the ministry has spiritual status because it is Christ’s office; it has spiritual status because of its purpose and because of the unique and foundational redemptive work, Christ’s work, to be done in and through it.

In addition, and very important for Luther, the office of the ministry has spiritual status because it is *the* office through which the spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit, works, through the preached word, to produce faith. Again, Luther: “The Holy Spirit through the Word is sent into the hearts of believers..., through the spoken Word we receive fire and light, by which we are made new and different, and by which a new judgment, new sensations, and new drives arise in us. This change and new judgment are not the work of human reason or power; they are the gift of the Holy Spirit, who comes with the preached Word, purifies our hearts by faith, and produces spiritual motivation in us.”¹¹ “For where Christ is not preached, there is no Holy Spirit.”¹² “The Holy Spirit gives people faith in Christ and thus sanctifies them.”¹³ “Nothing should rightly be called spiritual except the inward life of faith in the heart, where the Spirit rules.”¹⁴

Philip Melancthon summarizes Luther’s thought on the matter in Article V of the Augsburg Confession. After having held up the importance of faith as it relates to justification in the pre-

¹⁰ LW 38:200.

¹¹ LW 26:375.

¹² *The Large Catechism*, in Tappert, 416.

¹³ LW 41:45.

¹⁴ LW 28:17; translation from Cranx, 156.

vious article, he writes this: "To obtain such faith, God instituted the office of the ministry, that is, provided the Gospel and the sacraments. Through these, as through means, he gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith, when and where he pleases, in those who hear the Gospel."¹⁵

I can't help but interject a story here about how the rubber of this teaching of Luther's hits the proverbial road in real life. Seven years ago, my wife Shelby, now an ELCA pastor, then an intern, joined her supervisor and the chair of her internship committee at the Seminary's Intern Matching Workshop to interview candidates for the upcoming year. In one of the interviews, her committee chair asked this standard question of the student interviewee, "Why would you want to come to our site to do your internship?" The student answered, "I'm open to going wherever the Holy Spirit sends me." To this, my wife replied, "I'm afraid that Bill Avery has a lot more to do with where you go on internship than the Holy Spirit!" "Well," replied the student, "If I believed that I wouldn't be in seminary." I'll let you figure out how Luther's theology of the Holy Spirit was at work in Shelby's statement, which I judge, was right on target! Incidentally, for those of you who might not be aware, Bill Avery has directed the internship program here for at least 25 years.

The proclamation of the Gospel is the central and foundational work to be done by those called to serve in the office of the ministry. Luther says it rather bluntly: "Thus there remains nothing for the office of the ministry or the office of preaching other than this single work, namely, to bestow or to present the gospel which Christ commanded to be preached."¹⁶

That is pretty straight-forward, pretty clear. And, one would think, quite easy to grasp. But experience often proves otherwise. Here is another story. It was over 25 years ago that my bishop asked me to make a presentation at a joint Lutheran-Episcopal conclave which was being held in my synod as a part of the Lutheran-Episcopal dialogue that would eventually result in the pulpit/altar/and ordained ministry sharing that the two denominations now enjoy. I was, as the Lutheran representative, to make a presentation on the place and importance of "the gospel" within Lutheranism, and an Episcopalian representative was to make a presentation on "the episcopacy" with the same expectations. The lectures would be followed by a time for questions, and that followed by time for sharing and fellowship around cookies, coffee, and punch. My presentation was for the most part plain, boiler-plate, Lutheran theology. So I was taken aback a bit by the first question that came from one of the priests in attendance. "When you talk about the gospel," he said, "what gospel are you referring to?" Wanting to reply appropriately, I asked him if he could clarify his question for me. "What gospel are you referring to," he said, "Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John?" Later, as I stood sharing coffee and cookies with a combined group of Lutherans and

¹⁵ *The Augsburg Confession*, in Tappert, 31.

¹⁶ LW 38:198.

Episcopalians, one of the priests said to a very highly placed Lutheran synod official who was with us, "Well, what did you think of J's presentation on the Gospel?" The official answered, "I knew the gospel was important; but I never thought it was *that* important."

For Luther, the office of the ministry is the *sine qua non* office of the church: no office, no gospel; no gospel, no Holy Spirit to work faith; no faith, no church. "The church comes into being because God's word is spoken," Luther writes. "The church does not constitute the word, but is constituted by the word. A sure sign, by which we may know where the church is, is the word of God."¹⁷

Significantly, Martin also believed deeply that the work of the office, the preaching of the Word, as law and gospel, was both a privilege and a responsibility to be shared by all baptized members in a given congregation. He based this on the New Testament teaching about the priesthood of all believers. Here is what he says: "All Christians are truly of the spiritual estate, and there is no difference among them except that of office. Paul says... that we are all one body, yet every member has its own work by which it serves the others. This is because we all have one baptism, one gospel, one faith, and all Christians are alike; for baptism, gospel, and faith alone make us a spiritual and a Christian people... As far as that goes, we are all consecrated priests through baptism, as St. Peter says... 'You are a royal priesthood and a priestly realm.'"¹⁸

And yet, Luther made a distinction between what Brian Gerrish calls, "the common priesthood and the special ministry," the latter being the office of the ministry.¹⁹ And the way Luther understood this distinction, and the way in which he applied it in the choosing of persons to fill the office of ministry was, I judge, remarkably consistent with his understanding of both the spiritual and the temporal realms, and of how God uses orderly means and earthly instruments, to accomplish his will in both. Listen to Luther: "Whoever comes out of the water of baptism can boast that he is already a consecrated priest... although of course it is not seemly that just anybody should exercise such office. Because we are all priests of equal standing, no one must push himself forward and take it upon himself, without our consent and election, to do that for which we all have equal authority. For no one dare take upon himself what is common to all without the authority and consent of the community. 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."²⁰ The pastor is called, like every other baptized Christian, to serve the gospel and the neighbor. What differs is not one's

¹⁷ LW 36:145.

¹⁸ LW 44:127.

¹⁹ Brian A. Gerrish, "Priesthood and Ministry in the Theology of Luther," *Church History* 34/4 (1965) 404-422; 405.

standing before God but one's office and work in the world. The pastor's work in the world is done in and through the office of the ministry. Other Christians do theirs through other offices. "For ordaining should consist of, and be understood as, calling to and entrusting with, the office of the ministry."²¹

Luther not only made a distinction between the common priesthood (the priesthood of all believers) and the special ministry (the office of the ministry), he also made a sharp distinction between the divine office of the ministry and the very finite and sinful persons called to fill that office, and he asked that his congregations do the same. "Distinguish between the office and the person," writes Luther. "Consider the fact that he possesses the office of the ministry which is not his, but Christ's office... A pastor does not produce the gospel and by means of his preaching or his office his word does not become the gospel. He only offers and bestows the gospel through his preaching... our baptism should properly be called a presenting or bestowing of the baptism of Christ, just as our sermon is a presenting of the word of God... similarly... the bread (is the) Lord's bread... We do nothing more than administer... For our faith and the sacrament(s) must not be based on the person.... Offices and sacraments always remain in the church; persons are daily subject to change. As long as we call and induct into the offices persons who can administer them, then the offices will surely continue to be exercised. The horse has been bridled and saddled; if you place on it even a naked lad who can ride, the horse will proceed as well as if the emperor or the pope were riding it."²²

That, as I understand it and am able to present it in the time and space allowed, is Luther's pastoral theology, his theological understanding of the office of the ministry. And I strongly believe, as I stated at the beginning of this presentation, that Luther's practice of the care of souls was rooted in his pastoral theology, in his theological understanding of how and why a baptized Christian functions in the office of the ministry. Pastoral care, as we more commonly call it, is care of the soul, spiritual care, care of the person in his or her life before God. It is for Luther, as it should be for those of us who honor Luther's tradition, a ministry of the word, a ministry of the gospel, a ministry by which and through which the Holy Spirit works to give faith, to nurture faith, and to strengthen faith, faith that firmly places us in God's loving and forgiving hands, untrammeling our reason and unfettering our judgment, freeing us from self-justification and self-indulgence so that we might serve our neighbor and build up God's world. Pastoral Care could be considered a distinctive ministry, in that it is often conducted with an individual or a family or other small group in contrast to preaching and the sacraments, which are normally conducted before and on behalf of a congregation. It could also be considered distinctive in that Luther strongly encouraged the

²⁰ LW 44:129.

²¹ LW 38:197.

²² LW 38:201.

laity to care for each other's souls, to hear each other's confessions, to pronounce God's forgiveness of each other's sins, and to join in mutual conversation and consolation in, with, and under the gospel.²³

This is in contrast to what Luther said about preaching and the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, which he judged were best conducted publicly, that is, through and by a person institutionally called to the office of the ministry. He made exceptions for lay preaching and baptism, suggesting that laity perform these ministries when the occasion called for it because of their necessity for the community of faith. He did not include the Lord's supper under this rubric, giving three reasons: first, that the Lord's Supper is by its very nature a public/institutional act of the church requiring the presence of one publicly/institutionally called and ordained to the office of the ministry; secondly, the Lord's Supper is not absolutely necessary for salvation; and thirdly, he judged that to administer the Lord's Supper apart from public worship would be schismatic.²⁴

This brings us to the second part of this presentation's title, "A Re-membering," and I will do my best to be short and to the point with the comments I make here. What we have been doing for the last forty minutes or so is in a very real sense a re-membering. I have hyphenated the word purposefully because I use it as a double entendre; it has two meanings. On the one hand I have remembered, I have brought to my mind, and hopefully to your minds, something of the past; something of the past, I also hope, we consider to be of value.

On the other hand, this presentation has been an attempt at re-membering, re-membering in the sense of restoring to some sense of wholeness something that has been, or is in danger of being, dismembered, pulled to pieces. Let me explain. As I reflect on my observations and experiences serving in the office of the ministry for very close to 38 years, and as I reflect on my current observations and experiences in working with and relating as a consultant to ordained women and men, individually and in groups, on behalf of the synod in which I live, I have come to the conclusion that the office of the ministry in our own faith community, the ELCA, has been and is in the process of undergoing a dismemberment, being pulled apart. The root of this dismemberment, it seems to me, is a growing de-emphasis on the word, especially the preached word, the gospel, as the *raison d'etre* of the office of the ministry, and its replacement with three other activities deemed to be as or more essential and foundational. Those activities are ministry as therapy (making people feel better), ministry as social transformation (working to bring justice into the social and interpersonal lives of people), and ministry as leadership (tending to the needs of the church as institution).

²³ *The Large Catechism*, in Tappert, 458; LW 36:86-88.

²⁴ Gerrish, 417.

Now, these three things are all important, extremely important, and they are certainly valid areas for service to the neighbor, both by Christians and by non-Christians. And that is a great part of my point. One does not have to be a Christian, let alone a Christian pastor, publicly called to the office of the ministry, to do these things, and to do them well. But they cannot be the focus of the office of the ministry without doing damage to, even dismembering, the office.

When I see pastors viewing their pastoral care primarily from the viewpoint of therapeutic counseling, when I read, all through the literature coming out of the institutional church, and hear pastors talking about “transformational ministries” that have little or nothing to do with the gospel-based transformation “by the renewal of your minds” that St. Paul writes about, and when I see the phrase “mission leaders” emphasizing activities designed to increase a congregation’s market share of people and resources, and when I sense that pastors are being both pressured and tempted to make these the measure of their ministry, I begin to be concerned about the integrity of the church’s office of the ministry. It is all really a matter of emphasis, a matter of the basis on which one does what she/he does, a matter of faith becoming active in love, or love and the activities of love being a pre-requisite for and a measure of faithfulness in the office.

Luther said it this way: “[A pastor] does great and mighty works for the world. He informs and instructs the various estates on how they are to conduct themselves outwardly in their several offices and estates, so that they may do what is right in the sight of God. Every day he can comfort and advise those who are troubled, calm difficulties, relieve troubled consciences, help maintain peace and remove differences, and countless other works of this kind. For a pastor confirms, strengthens, and helps to sustain authority of every kind, and temporal peace generally. He checks the rebellious, teaches obedience, morals, discipline, and honor; instructs fathers, mothers, children, and servants in their duties; in a word, he gives direction to all the temporal estates and offices. Of all the good things a pastor does, *these are, to be sure, the least...*A true pastor serves God...By his work and word there are maintained in this world the kingdom of God, the name and honor and glory of God, the true knowledge of God, the right faith and understanding of Christ, the fruits of the suffering and blood and death of Christ, the gifts and works and power of the Holy Spirit, the true and saving use of baptism and the sacrament, the right and true teaching of the gospel, the right way of disciplining and crucifying the body, and much more....This...is not his own doing; it is accomplished by his office and his word. These are the immeasurable and unspeakable works and miracles of the preaching office. In a word, if we would praise God to the uttermost, we must praise his word and preaching; for the office and the word are his.”²⁵

²⁵ LW 46:227, 228, emphasis mine. See also LW 41:145-147.

HERMAN G. STUEMPFLE, JR., POET OF THE LORD

By Gerald Christianson

Herman Gustav Stuempfle, Jr. began writing hymns in 1976 as an avocation, but only after his retirement as president of Gettysburg Seminary in 1989 did he enter fully upon a fourth career. Among all these careers—pastor, professor, president, poet—there was really only one, preacher; and as preacher, a poet of the Lord.

We should have seen it coming, this outpouring of hymn texts from a man now well into his sixties who could have spent his retirement years on the golf course or near the shore. It was there to see in his sermons, even in his daily communications as an administrator, but especially in the vignettes that he delivered at commencement, and that provided graduating seniors with a dozen different metaphors for parish ministry (now contained in a special little book, *Images for Ministry: Reflections of a Seminary President*, published in 1995). Like many great works of art or poetry, however, we must wait until the talent is ready to reveal itself in a full flowering. Only then can we say, “Yes, that’s it. It’s been there all along. Why didn’t we see it before?”

Preaching and sacraments were the center of worship for Herm, and worship was the center of his spirituality, as was the poetry that flowed from it. “Like many of his sermons,” Mark Oldenburg observed, “most of his texts begin with a Biblical story and then connect it with present-day life.” Consequently, these same texts often focus on a Sunday Gospel, especially those in need of a good hymn. So one could begin an acquaintance with Herm’s hymns, as we affectionately call them, in a manner he would most appreciate, by following his work through the church year.

His texts are not simply instructional or didactic, however. We often hear intimacy (“We Come to You for Healing, Lord,” *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, #617) and thanksgiving (“For All the Faithful Women,” ELW, #419), but we also hear, to paraphrase John Spangler, devotion and delight, sorrow and wonder, dancing and jubilation. In his last years some of his texts, by his own admission, became more narrative, even ballad-like, such as in the tender “To Bethlehem Two Strangers Came.”

In all this, his aim, simplification of larger things, even a purposeful naïveté, came from a fertile imagination that reflected the character of the man himself: a gentle spirit with a pleasant smile, unassuming confidence, subtle humor, and quiet passion for justice. What stands out for me is another side of Herm, a side deeply in touch with personal struggle,

public strife, and tragedy. "I try to hold law and gospel in tension," he once remarked, reflecting the thesis of his early book, *Preaching Law and Gospel* (1978), and one of his editors added that Herm raised "questions that are only whispered in church."

Consider the line, "Where sirens scream through flaming nights" (from *ELW*, #700), a contemporary lament for the way things are just down the street in Gettysburg or right here in the human heart "where anger festers . . . and strikes with cruel hand." For all this, "we come from desert places, deepest thirst unsatisfied" (from *ELW*, #331), and await absolution from "Christ, the song of love incarnate" (from *ELW*, #845).

If these instincts are right, the role of the poet or artist is to give expression to those longings, those wordless sighs Paul speaks of in Romans 8 when "the whole creation groans in travail" awaiting "the glorious liberty of the children of God." But had we honestly known the whole of Herm Stuempfle? Not important now how he came to plumb the depths, as well as the heights, of human experience—whether in his own life or by long and personal engagement with the one whom he describes in "O Christ, your heart, compassionate, bore every human pain" (from *ELW*, #722). Let it only be said, to adapt words addressed to the departed John Kennedy, "Herman, we hardly knew ye."

Singer of the Spirit's Song

What shaped Herm's gift that allowed him to turn out 550 texts, four volumes of them published by GIA Publications, and a remarkable eight texts in the new *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnal*, more than many another contemporary? Beginning in 1989 and continuing until the year before his death, that's roughly two to three a month for eighteen years.

First, and above all, Herm was the singer of the Spirit's song, dedicated to creating hymnody because in his own words, "it is one of the Spirit's gracious and irrepressible gifts to the church in every age, including our own. What is new in every generation calls forth new song."

Second, his life-long engagement with scripture, especially as a preacher, shaped his choice of themes and stories, as well as his use of metaphor and evocative language.

Third, he loved to sing, especially to sing hymns. In an interview with the Hymn Society of America to which he had just been inducted, and published shortly after his death, Herm quoted Randall Sensmeier who set several of his texts to music: "Hymns are the sung testimony to God's mighty acts of grace and judgment, attaining their fullest expression in Jesus Christ."

Experience, nevertheless, preceded theory. As a boy in his father's church in Hughesville, Pennsylvania, Herm learned to appreciate two very different traditions: the sometimes sentimental, but personal, heart-on-sleeve evangelical hymns associated with Sunday school

and prayer services, and the sometimes impersonal but solid, four-square traditional hymns and chorales of the Sunday morning liturgy.

Fourth, he harbored an appreciation for the word and writing that lasted even beyond the days when he no longer could write poetry. In our last conversation, I quoted the phrase, "April is the cruelest month," to explain why each year my wife and I abandon the north from February to May. I said it was from Chaucer. He said, look it up. It's T.S. Eliot. I think he gave me the assignment not to correct my ignorance as much as to linger over an irony. What for me was the promise of spring, was for him—though the final month was March, not April—the promise of eternity.

Two friends and I were with Herm at an Orioles baseball game when he told us about his diagnosis of ALS, Lou Gehrig's disease. I, for one, went immediately into denial. Since then I've read "How Small Our Span of Life, O God," one of his best poems (ELW, #636). It brought to light another of those ironies that the pastor in him would appreciate. Right up to the end, Herm had to minister to us, rather than the other way around. And in these hymns, the singer of the Spirit's song ministers to us still.

God's Troubadour

John Spangler has reminded us that several ingredients converged in Gettysburg itself to make the soil ready for Herman Stuempfle the poet. Here are present other writers at work in the same craft, Mark Oldenburg among them; a musical guild of composers and arrangers—Steve Folkemer, for instance; commissions for special occasions from churches such as St. James enlisting nationally-recognized composers to set his texts, such as Donald Busarow, David Cherwin, Nancy Galbraith, and our own graduate Michael Martine; but especially performers and performance opportunities in his home congregation, Christ Lutheran, and, above all, the Stuempfle Hymn Festivals created by Music, Gettysburg!

I was gratified that his official obituary listed the launching of Music, Gettysburg! as one of the achievements of his presidency. Herm helped get it started while still in office, and immediately upon retirement became an active member of the steering committee and chair of its Christmas Offering.

Yet Herm's gift for writing a good hymn was his own. What makes a good hymn—that is, in addition to a good tune, the kind that carries us away even when singing a not-so-good text? Herm's criteria, not surprisingly, were the same for hymn texts as they were for sermons. He brought these criteria with him into retirement and into poetry-writing from the days when he taught seminary students the art of homiletics: (1) Does the new text speak, with adequate concreteness and expansiveness of the ordered universe that God called "good"? (2) Does the text plumb the tragic depths of human life, the personal and commu-

nal dislocations under which we suffer and for which we are, in some measure, responsible? (3) Does the text proclaim clearly and powerfully the graciousness of the God who in Christ bore our sin and pain on the cross, and who carries us faithfully through life even unto death?

Eighty years after the Hughesville boy heard a solid Lutheran chorale or sang a Sunday school song, and after some 550 texts of his own, these standards never left him.

Among those whom he admired for upholding the best in the craft, one could mention Fred Pratt Green in the twentieth century, but I think a better comparison, especially to his enormous output, is Isaac Watts (he of "I Know that My Redeemer Lives" and as many as 700 others). Watts literally gave voice to English-singing Protestants in the eighteenth century. Herm was neither soloist nor composer, but like Watts his talent was true, his ear keen, his heart strong and his gospel sure.

Poets of an even earlier age may have handed down the legend of the troubadour who was humiliated by his peers because he had nothing to bring to the festival in honor of the Virgin Mary—no wealth from his merchandise, no produce from his field, no tome from his teaching, no craft from his lathe. That night, when the feasting was over and crowd dispersed and gone home, the troubadour crept into the cathedral and by the light of a single candle offered the virgin's statue the one thing he had, his song. When he had sung, so the story goes, the virgin bowed to him. Today we bow to Herman Stuempfle, and so will generations yet to come.

Commemoration of Isaac Watts, hymn writer
November 25, 2008

THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON RELIGION: HAS RELIGION BECOME JUST ANOTHER HUMAN TECHNIQUE?

By Franz Foltz and Frederick Foltz

Technology

Just about everyone recognizes the great contributions and challenges that science and technology have made on society. Yet scholars, both secular and religious, have chosen to write numerous volumes on the role science plays while largely ignoring the impact of technology. They often toss off remarks about technology being critical to economic and social progress, but confine further observation to its being good, bad, or neutral.

If technology is so vital, then studying it would seem prudent. We manage best that which we understand. This is especially critical if groundbreakers in the field, such as Jacques Ellul, Ivan Illich, or Leo Marx are correct. They believe we have become so immersed in and dependent on an all-pervasive, ubiquitous technology that fundamental change has become more and more difficult. It is not that they are anti-technology, but rather that they attempt to raise our awareness of a dark side that is usually ignored. It is of interest to the Church that the first two write from a Christian perspective.

All three claim that the assumption of technology as neutral fails to appreciate the modern situation. That worked when technology referred to hard devices, such as tools and machines, used to aid humans in their labor. But today it also includes the techniques we routinely use in most of our problem solving. People have obviously always utilized complex and involved methods for achieving their goals. Techniques are methods that operate mechanically and systematically. A good example is a standardized surgical procedure that is used in operation rooms throughout the world shortly after they are discovered to be efficient. All three of these scholars believe these characterize our "technological society."

Ellul¹ believes modern technology has become so prevalent that it shapes the environment to enable it to operate more efficiently. Striving for absolute efficiency, it ignores anything that does not conform to its standards. Illich² agrees a qualitative change takes place when technology crosses a line. Although he does not exactly locate that line, he believes we can observe the loss in the quality of life. He examines the diminution of qualities that traditionally were regarded as essential to our humanity. Leo Marx³ believes that line was crossed in the 19th

¹ Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society* (New York: Vintage, 1964), xxv.

² Ivan Illich, "Tantalizing Needs" in *Toward a History of Needs* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1977), 93-109.

³ Marx, Leo, "Does Improved Technology Mean Progress?", *Technology Review* 71 (January 1987) 33-41.

century when we began to understand all human progress from a technological perspective. Progress became no longer the process of bettering society but rather simply the creation of new technology. Technology became an end in itself as newness rather than improvement became the norm for judging progress. Consequently, he felt the community lost its ability to question if a new technology is really an improvement or just something new to be marketed.

The automobile serves as an easy example of this technological dominance. When our society chose to make the car our primary form of transportation, we then began a restructuring that led to highways, strip malls, the proliferation of gas stations and garages, the creation of fast-food restaurants and the expansion of the suburbs. The car did not actively force society in this direction, but it simply performs more efficiently on interstates lined with an abundance of gas stations. Once this huge, complex infrastructure is put into place it becomes very difficult to move in another direction. The resulting situation almost makes it impossible to decide to travel by any other manner other than the car.

The dominance of technology goes beyond the physical, however. John Kennedy at the 1962 Yale commencement claimed most social problems are now technical and administrative. Because solutions are beyond the ability of ordinary people, he promised to gather the experts who will provide the answers. One of those experts, Robert McNamara, was confident “every problem could be solved” by technocratic means. That has come to mean finding the one appropriate technique for every task.

It is also pretty easy to see the reductionism that takes place in this environment. Because technology operates mechanically, it reduces everything to that which fits its criterion. All life becomes a human problem to be solved. Meaning is found in mechanical and systematic metaphors rather than human models. All value becomes instrumental as a tool or means to solve the problem.

Especially of relevance for religion, all is analyzed in terms of present structure rather than historical process in this situation. Everything is broken down into parts that can be examined and managed, rather than considered as an unwieldy, messy historical entity. Because technology has difficulty with the contingent and mysterious, the value of the past is greatly diminished and the role of tradition becomes more and more irrelevant.

Perhaps it is even more obvious that progress is measured by technological newness. As community becomes just a group of individuals, common purpose is relegated to providing the wealth necessary for maintaining the “good life.” Everything becomes a consumer good as technology focuses on what it can supply, the satisfaction of individual needs and wants. It can readily offer a great variety of consumer options that grant power, control, pleasure, and convenience. However, it cannot deal easily with community issues or qualitative values which are degraded to irrelevance.

⁴ George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1984), 142.

Christianity

It is hard to disagree with George Lindbeck's⁴ very general definition of religion as a kind of cultural medium that shapes the entirety of life and thought. If religion by nature looks at life as a whole or a totality, it would seem to resist the dominance, reductionism, and consumerism of technology. In this context the all-pervasive dominance of technology could be regarded as one of Paul's principalities and powers, a force that controls humans, leading them to do what they do not want to do. The search for the one appropriate efficient technique for every task could be considered naïve. It works in surgery but is inadequate dealing with ambiguous religious and social issues.

Most would also agree with Paul Tillich⁵ that religion wrestles with the ultimate concerns of humanity. If so, technological reductionism becomes not so much an abridgement as a perversion or corruption of religion. Christianity can certainly be examined in terms of its structure, but breaking it down into parts does not enable us to understand its full nature. Like music, art, sex, education, and personal relationships its essence is only captured in the mystery of the totality. It can be studied in terms of its contemporary forms, but its historical dimension is essential to its significance. Tradition is critical. In fact, our study found those communities who respected their tradition were most resistant to being manipulated by powerful, modern technology.

Religion also opposes being presented as a commodity to be purchased by the individual. The faith can also be analyzed in terms of how it satisfies individual needs and wants; however its basic teachings insist the individual finds her or himself in community. The true self is found in appropriate relationships with God and other people. That includes pursuing the common purpose defined in Jesus' picture of the Kingdom of God.

The tension between religion as a means to the individual's ends and religion as an end which God provides has been evident throughout Church history. It is discerned in the use of Christianity's earliest name, "The Way." Jesus Christ can be proclaimed a means, the way or avenue to God.⁶ But "the way" is even more frequently used as a common biblical metaphor for describing characteristics, such as "the way of God" or "the way of humans." In this sense it is an end in itself as the way of the Christian life.⁷

A classic form of the tension is observed in the Reformation conflict between Luther's justification by grace through faith (alone) and the Roman Catholic salvation by works of the law. Luther reported he came to his position by moving from thinking human righteousness is a

⁵ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol 1, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973).

⁶ See John 14:4-6.

⁷ See Acts 9:2, 19:9, 23, 22:4, 24: 14, 22.

means to please God so we can get what we desire to seeing it is instead a relationship in which God's righteousness covers human limitations. Righteousness is a relationship not a means to an end. The Christian faith never becomes simply a means to my goals. There is always a tension between what I want and can do over against what God offers and does for me. God remains a subject to be met in awe and worship.

We question if this conflict is significantly different in the modern age, whether Christianity has stood up to the onslaught of powerful modern technology. It will confine itself pretty much to the Christian religion and First World Western society. It will not deal with how the Church has used technological devices but rather examples of the ways technique has influenced basic religious teaching and practice.

Our analysis will divide these examples into what we believe are positive and negative changes, making the judgment on the extent they conform to traditional Christian or modern technological standards. Those on the negative side present the faith as simply another technique available for satisfying human desire.

In order to determine how much technological dominance, reductionism, and commercialism have influenced the modern Church, we shall ask 1) whether technique has become so all-encompassing that religious practice is evaluated by technological standards (Ellul), 2) what are the qualities of life lost when the modern Church allows technology to regulate its ways (Illich), and 3) how much a consumer mentality has perverted religious practice (Marx).

Positive Examples

The Church's present emphasis on practice rather than theology might reflect Technology's pervasiveness. If society is trained to evaluate everything instrumentally, we naturally tend to judge religion on how well it satisfies human need and desire. Many welcome this emphasis on practical results, believing it makes religion more relevant to everyday life and distills out superstitious elements. We found three positive examples of religion as technique.

The first example includes the activist movements that use Christianity as a political means for building a better society. They go beyond proclaiming the faith as a method for living the spiritual life to prescribing it as specific and rigid technique to be learned and practiced appropriately.

A good example is Martin Luther King's understanding of love as a program of nonviolence that will lead to the beloved community in international as well as interpersonal relationships. Love here is not simply a description of the life in the beloved community. It is also the means to achieve that community, a means for achieving God's will in history.

Certainly love has always been portrayed as a method for achieving harmony throughout Church history. However, never before has it been broken down into principles and steps that must be learned and practiced with rigorous discipline if it is to achieve its purpose. Never

before have people been trained so extensively in following the proper procedures in using love as a tool against an aggressor. Loving your enemy is not just an attitude; it is a very specific program. Success depends on training adherents how to abide by the principles by strictly following the rules and procedures.

The King Center Website includes very methodical steps, such as gathering information, educating a team of people devoted to finding solutions, negotiating peacefully, taking action using peaceful tactics such as peaceful demonstrations, letter-writing, and petition campaigns. The final step is reconciliation that includes showing all involved the benefits of changing, not what they will give up by changing.⁸ Similar principles and steps are being taught and practiced by a number of peace movements.

The same use of religion as a teachable technique was found in the Liberation Theology that was especially popular in South America a few decades ago. The priests involved offered Bible study as a means to empower the people. They met in small groups to discuss their parishioners' immediate needs, and then searched the scriptures for inspiration and solutions. People were encouraged to use political action to overcome their poverty. The Roman Catholic Church suppressed the movement charging it focused on what humans wanted rather than on what God offered. She reacted to the political aspects of the movement, arguing it gave "humanitarian good works" priority over "saving souls."

The same charges can be made against all the special interest movements so prominent in recent decades. The groups supporting black, feminist, gay and lesbian, family values do theology from a particular perspective can be accused of being too utilitarian and self-serving. No matter how you evaluate these movements, you have to acknowledge they clearly interpret the tradition in an instrumental manner. They make practical application a priority and present faith as a specific technique.

A second largely positive modern trend is found in modern spirituality which judges Christian practice according to health and wellness standards. Spirituality has become a means to a healthy life, bringing the body and soul back in touch with the natural rhythms of life. This is quite different than the mysticism of the past whose goal was primarily to establish unity with an other-worldly divine. Wellness was defined as unification with the divine, spiritual rather than physical health, and often destroyed rather than promoted physical well-being.

In a rather strange twist, modern spirituality often uses electronic technology to return to the natural rhythms. Brother David⁹ champions gratitude and thanksgiving as essential to the healthy life. He ministers primarily through a sophisticated Website that offers electronic exercises. His most popular involves lighting cyber-candles to express appreciation for those who have played

⁸ Can be found at <http://www.thekingcenter.org/prog/non/awayoflife.html>.

⁹ See his website at <http://www.gratefulness.org/index.htm>.

important roles in your life. In fact, a wide range of Internet Churches attempt to rediscover community using everything from cyber retreats into nature to avatars worshipping in a cyber nave.

When a survey taken by the Willow Creek¹⁰ found a quarter of its membership felt they were stalled in their spiritual life; the mega-church offered “a next step *tool*” for correcting this. “Tool” seems an odd term to use in correcting “spiritual growth” defined as “increasing love for God and others”. However, we found it used frequently by churches, probably because solutions are associated with technology in the modern environment.

The third example is seen in the emerging nature of the Christian community. Stephen Ellingson¹¹ describes mega-churches as “communities of interest” in contrast to the mainline “communities of memory”. These giant congregations are organized around small self-interest groups. Efforts are made to bring together those of similar life situations such as young parents or single fathers, mourners or newlyweds, businessmen or artists. These special interest groups then study the scriptures and tradition in terms of their own needs and interests. In contrast, the mainline churches are losing members with their emphasis on participating in the ritual and tradition of corporate communities that value their past.

Ellingson observes this redefines the faith in individual and therapeutic terms. He worries that this reduces the faith to a set of principles that make the individual happy or fulfilled. Success in terms of personal problem solving is elevated above being faithful to God and his teachings.

Even a cursory examination finds many mainline churches also emphasize common interest of interest. Many church communities resemble 12 step programs. Similar people gather to support one another in solving their common problems. Primary is a systematic program with well-defined “how to do it” steps. Traditional 12 step programs, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, acknowledge the need for the help of a higher power, but see no need to define this. God’s nature takes a back seat to the program. That trend is reflected in some church groups.

The positive examples above reflect a modern development toward instrumental thinking in which things are judged in terms of their efficient ability to solve human problems. We label the three “more positive” because they do not necessarily pervert or corrupt the tradition. Rather they selectively pick and choose the parts they need and want. Even many mainline churches attempt to offer a number of options for her members who are encouraged to customize their religion. The most sophisticated cyber church we examined offered the worshiper a choice of everything from the architecture to the music to the type of sermon to the recipient of the offering they desired or needed at the time, but all of the choices fell within the tradition.

¹⁰ See <http://www.willowcreek.org>.

¹¹ Stephen Ellingson, *The Megachurch and the Mainline: Remaking Religious Tradition in the Twenty-First Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

Problematic Examples

We also found other examples that we deem more problematic. These move from a customized to a consumer mode. The customer's interests become the dominating factor. Technique as described by Ellul, Ilich, and Marx becomes the standard. These pretty much abandon traditional community, emphasizing one-on-one approaches to sell their product. Evangelism become unashamedly marketing.

The perfect example is Scientology which unabashedly uses technical terms and devices. Its teachings are even called "techniques" and are advertised as enabling an adherent to reach his or her potential by overcoming the limits of the body. The ultimate goal is to gain control over MEST (matter, energy, space, and time), much as our technology is used to overcome natural human limitations.

The religion is acknowledged to be a self improvement program which is pursued primarily by using pseudo-scientific devices called E-meters, sort of spiritual lie detectors. Members are hooked up to these E-meters in auditing sessions where they are asked questions designed to reveal the lies by which they live. This supposedly clears them of engrams or psychic scars. Devotees progress on well ordered steps until they become operating thetans able to control their environment. Secret knowledge is offered which enables participants to move from doubt to affluence to power. Well actually, nothing is offered; all is purchased as this is clearly a consumer religion which sells its products complete with celebrity endorsements.

Everything is tailored to individual need. Tradition is pretty much given up even to the point of abandoning any particular concept of God. Proponents assert "If it is true for you, it is true".

However, religion comes close to being regarded solely as a technique in some more traditional Christian communities as well. Their practices appear to go over the line by focusing all on what the customer wants. Religion's mystery is at human command and understood as a tool for solving human problems.

Many of these openly reject tradition, operating without the hindrance of past history, just like modern technology. Claiming to be restorative rather than reforming churches, they declare tradition has been corrupted since the first century. Their churches offer a return to the charismas and offices given to the first Christians by Jesus. These include prophesy defined as direct communication from God. Ministers will often speak of receiving "words of knowledge", meaning God is giving them direct instructions. Richard Roberts can report the Lord told him to pray over thousands of prayer cloths and then to tell his listeners they could use these tools for a miracle. Or his father, Oral, could claim God told him he would die if his listeners did not come through with millions of dollars. Without norm or foundation these groups easily fall prey to manipulation.

The three more problematic programs we examined seemed to go over the line in treating religion as a technique that individuals can use to solve their problems.

The first example is “The Power of Positive Thinking” school. The founder of the movement was Norman Vincent Peale¹² who interpreted faith as giving the confidence to pursue and achieve personal goals. It continues through Robert Schuller, pastor of the Crystal Cathedral,¹³ who calls for a modern reformation which will focus on self-esteem rather than justification by grace through faith. He acknowledges this is a modification of the tradition, but believes our times call for leaving behind negative thinking. The traditional confession of sin is a relic of past needs. Now the Church should emphasize the positive. His programs include “Possibility Living” and “Course of Miracles” that emphasize human self-esteem rather than God’s grace.

The most popular contemporary advocate is Joel Osteen,¹⁴ who admits he gives hope and encouragement to the individual at the expense of ignoring prophetic perspective on society. He counsels his supporters to look back and say “I done good” rather than confessing their sins. His message of self-esteem permeates his sermons which are built around the slogan “All things are possible with God”. They champion various techniques for making this happen, such as “expectation” which is said to “get God’s attention”.

Most people agree that thinking positively is usually a very helpful attitude. Yet there seems to be a dangerous denial of reality in making this the one and only technique for the healthy spiritual life. The prohibition against any negative thinking, confession, and even cross falls right into technology’s degradation of anything that does fit into its system.

A second and even more problematic example is “The Plan for Salvation” which is presented as the God-given technique for getting into heaven. If you enter Richard Roberts’ Website¹⁵ you will find a series of “how to” pamphlets. One is entitled “If You Need to be Saved, Do These Things.” It then outlines a very systematic process which culminates in a recitation of the “Prayer for Salvation.” This has become the essential technique for being saved.

For several decades college students were often confronted with this plan by members of Billy Bright’s Campus Crusade¹⁶. They are asked to follow very simple well defined steps as the way to know God personally. These began with believing God loves you and offers a wonderful plan for your life. The second step is believing we have lost that plan because of our sin. The third is accepting that Jesus now corrects this, making salvation again available. This belief is then expressed as the fourth step which involves using a specific kind of prayer that invites God into our lives. Bright’s Website claims, “If this prayer expresses the desire of your heart, then you can pray this prayer right now and Christ will come into your life, as He promised”.

¹² Norman Vincent Peale, *The Power of Positive Thinking*, (New York: Ballantine Books; re-issue edition, August 1, 1996).

¹³ See <http://www.crystalcathedral.org/>.

¹⁴ See http://joelosteen.lakewood.cc/site/PageServer?pagename=JOM_homepage.

¹⁵ See <http://www.orm.cc/>.

¹⁶ See <http://www.ccci.org/>.

The very mechanical and automatic nature of the process is intentional. All is reduced down to the essentials, the quick and easy way to get things done. It is efficient and to the point. As Ellul observed when technology becomes all-encompassing it aims for the one and only efficient technique.

A third example is "The Prosperity Gospel." Its proponents claim Jesus wants us all to be successful. To this end he supposedly promises to solve any problem we have whether health, family, financial, or career. Relevant to our study, the promise is contingent on the believer following well laid out techniques which are described as laws of God's creation.

The traditional role of the Church as a community that is entered through baptism, nourished by sacrament, and working together as the Body of Christ on earth is pretty much ignored. One-on-one replaces community. The individual receives worldly success and wealth here and now. The televangelist refers constantly to passages about God promising to answer prayer when two or three agree with one another. There is no recognition that these passages refer traditionally to the quorum necessary for a prayer service, making it two or three people for Church in contrast to ten men for the synagogue.

Richard Roberts carries this to the extreme when he offers signed contracts to activate miracles. The one for his "Plant a Seed" reads "As you plant your seed, I join my faith with yours for God to multiply it back to you in the way you need it most" and then it is signed like any other legal contract with "Richard Roberts." His "Prayer Request" agreement reads "When I receive your prayer request I will hold your name and needs in my hands and pray". Again this is signed as if an official legal agreement. His third special tool is the "Prayer Cloth" on which he has written his signed promise that he has already prayed over it and on its return will touch it as a point of contact between the buyer, Roberts, and God. "only" way to overcome debt. Roberts plays the role assigned to the expert in technology, the one who really has control of what is going on.

Malachi 3 has become the central text in this program. Benny Hinn¹⁷ reads this passage about tithing as if it is directed to Christian individuals rather than to the Old Testament community. The promises made to the Hebrews as a people are read as promises made to every individual. If you fulfill the conditions, you will automatically 1) have revival, 2) experience great prosperity, 3) find your enemies are unable to touch you, 4) have secure finances, 5) receive protection for your family, 6) be a great witness of power and blessings to the nations, 7) and be used by God for his glory. When exegeting this text, Hinn claims this is the only way to overcome debt.

¹⁷ See <http://www.bennyhinn.org>.

This very involved and rather specious interpretation of the ancient text is based on a commonly used device, seed money. Hinn asserts “seed money” is based on God’s law of creation. All is waiting for you in a heavenly storehouse. However, like any bank account it must be claimed in order for it to be available for your use. The “seed money” technique releases these blessings. “Seed money” is to be given to the ministry that feeds you spiritually. Hinn makes clear this might not be your local church that probably is dead and stipulates if it is his ministry, your offering must come to him.

This automated technique is seen even more crassly in Kenneth Copeland’s¹⁸ long tract “Law of Prosperity.” It too speaks of your actions establishing a bank account in heaven that can be used if, and only if, you claim it. He illustrates this by reporting his father tithed but remained poor throughout his life, because he never understood that he needed to claim his account. It was waiting for him, but he missed an essential step in the systematic process. There is a specific technique for the release of God’s blessing. Again the program simply ignores the bulk of tradition that proclaims “Blessed are the poor.”

A miracle is no longer a sign of God’s presence, but rather a tool or technique which the believer can control if he or she knows the laws by which it works. It almost becomes a device to which God gives the key. Crassly put, if you rub the lamp correctly, the genie is forced to grant you three wishes. It is so easy to manipulate God’s supernatural power that people are told to “Expect your miracle.” Miracle becomes magic as televangelists sell prayer cloths which are to be laid on the afflicted and Cabbalists sell red strings to ward off the evil eye. Miracle operates as mechanically as a machine.

All three of these problematic examples either ignore or fundamentally modify Christian tradition. We came to see loss of tradition as the critical issue in dealing with technology judiciously. It provides the balance needed to resist being overwhelmed by technology’s power.

Conclusion: Religion is not technique

Our examples demonstrate that a good deal of modern American Christianity reflects the standards of the technological society. We posed three questions to chart how far this reflection goes.

First, has technique become so all-encompassing that religious practice is evaluated by technological standards? Our three positive examples certainly demonstrate concern for clarity, pragmatic results, and relevance to everyday life, but they do not surrender fundamental Christian principles. The three problematic ones, on the other hand, go over a line to the place where these principles are lost. Religion becomes just another technique under human control.

¹⁸ See <http://www.kcm.org/>.

Secular critics believe religion should be judged in this manner. The militant atheists, such as Samuel Harris,¹⁹ believe this judgment reveals religion no longer serves human ends and should be abolished. It divides rather than unites people in our dangerous modern global society.

Second, what qualities of life are lost if the modern Church allows technology to regulate its ways? We found the loss of tradition was most critical. Obviously different churches emphasize different parts of the tradition. We were not concerned to evaluate these preferences, but rather to see tradition as a check on modern practice. At its worst, this leads to the loss of the particularity of the God who appeared in history. Christianity has always insisted on faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Father of Jesus Christ. God is not a concept that can be manipulated but a person to be met in awe and worship.

Lost too are the messiness, complexity, and contingency that define history and impose human limitations. We think to lose these is to lose touch with reality. Religion now is portrayed as a machine with mechanical laws rather than relationships that are personal, human, and historical.

In the problematic examples there is also a loss of community and with it common purpose. They focused on the individual, emphasizing one-to-one relationships where the experts provide the techniques that enable the lay person to control God by controlling the laws he placed in the creation and revealed in the scriptures.

The Augsburg Confession defines Church as the community of believers gathered around Word and Sacrament. These three, community, word, and sacrament, provide the setting and source for a dynamic faith that enables people to be productive and creative in an uncertain world. Our three problematic examples reduce faith to something the individual can manage and control rather than a mystery in which she lives and moves. They are not satisfied with the authority of the scriptures referring to the Bible as a library that serves as a standard for evaluating diverse contemporary spiritual insights. Instead they seek the one and only technique so that the Bible becomes a guidebook or instruction manual providing solutions to human problems. They are no longer satisfied with the Word as the ordinary speech that God and people speak to one another, ordinary words that change lives, such as "God loves you" or "I forgive you." They want direct communication from God telling people exactly what they are supposed to do. Sadly, the "words of knowledge" too often have to do with the amount of money to be given to the speaker.

¹⁹ Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 2004).

Third, has Christianity adopted a consumer mentality that has perverted the pursuit of faith's purposes? Again the problematic examples presented the faith as a commodity. They sold religion as a consumer product in which the buyer determines what he or she wants. They peddle pleasure and ignore sacrifice. We observed the movement from positive to problematic involved the move from a customized to a consumer religion. The problems with this view seem fairly obvious. Historically, the protestant movement began with a questioning of the ability of an individual to buy their salvation.

It is probably safe to say the contemporary church is not conscious of how much it reflects the values of the technological society. Unlike the Amish who deliberately evaluate each new technology, the church as well as society as a whole simply accepts technology without any conscious thought. We need to realize that when we debate technology we are always addressing our visions of the future and not simply clinging to the past. Religion always responds to the society in which it is found. It can outright reject the society's values, transform them, conform to them or itself be transformed into something different. Technological choices matter. In order to make intelligent choices and to use technology appropriately we need to acknowledge its importance and to study its characteristics. The church cannot afford to ignore technology. Otherwise, religion will become just another technique.

BUT LET JUSTICE ROLL ALONG LIKE THE COURSE OF THE SUN AND RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE AN EVERFLOWING NILE¹

By Briant Bohleke

Justice, law, and religion in ancient Egypt provide formidable venues for research and may seem daunting and inaccessible to those who are more accustomed to studying Old Testament law and the Decalogue. The literature pertaining to Hebrew law and the dispensing of justice in ancient Israel are more extensive, and there are certainly more potential researchers who have some knowledge of Biblical Hebrew than the seemingly inexplicable ancient Egyptian. It is perhaps for these reasons as well as our own cultural bias towards our direct religious antecedents that ancient Egypt is too often colored by and contrasted negatively with the “more enlightened” civilization of neighboring Israel.

The impression many of the last few generations have of law and justice in ancient Egypt most likely comes from Yul Brenner in *The Ten Commandments*² or other religious sagas of similar dramatic—yet certainly not historically accurate ilk. Otherwise, one may have read about Egypt here and there in the Bible and come to the opinion of wanton injustice meted out to foreigners captive in a xenophobic land that is punished for its tyrannical arrogance or ignorance. From the perspective of the preserved documents, however, most moderns certainly harbor a skewed perspective of the concept and practice of justice in ancient Egypt.

For Egyptians justice existed before there were people even around to talk about it. When the Creator god appeared from the formless and dimensionless abyss, his daughter Ma'at is sometimes stated to have existed contemporaneously.³ So the universe came into being already with an order to it and instructions on how it should be run: there is a rationale for

¹ This paper was originally given as a lecture at the Spring Convocation series titled *Thou Shalt (Not): Lutheran Perspective(s) on the Decalogue in Public Discourse*, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, on April 22, 2008. It has been modified for publication. The author has used *Ma'at* for the name of the goddess when she has clearly been intended, and an italicized, usually lower case *ma'at* (actual transcription: *m₃:t*) when the concept is discussed, although this to an Egyptian would be an artificial and “irrational” distinction.

² Paramount Pictures (1956); Cecil B. DeMille, director.

³ For example, in the creation myths summarized in Erik Hornung, *Idea into Image: Essays on Ancient Egyptian Thought* (New York, NY: Timkin Publishers, Inc., 1992), 132, 134.

the mechanical movements of the sky, seasonal changes on the earth, but especially for human and divine motivations, thoughts, actions, relations, and morals that are “right” or “wrong.” The word *ma’at* is a cultural concept and does not have a single or accurate English equivalent, but its various translations are “Truth,” “Justice,” “Right,” or “The way things ought to be.”⁴ There is no cultural relativism—though Egyptians allowed for copious wiggle room: the universe was created with a divine plan in mind to ensure its continued existence and smooth running, and if anyone is bad/evil (*isf.t*) or commits a crime (*bt.*) or an abomination (*bw.t*), s/he throws grit into the cogs of the divine armillary and threatens to stop its continued movement and thus shuts it down, re-creating chaos and the primeval abyss of undifferentiated nothingness. Life is a daily struggle on the personal and cosmic plane.⁵

Ma’at is a public and shared concept of unwritten justice embedded in creation and society, not a law code: it is neither a strict enumerated directive like the Ten Commandments nor a collection of rules like the Code of Hammurabi. It is more like our innate “American sense” of what is right and what is wrong and how we should conduct ourselves, how we should live our lives, and how we should treat others. If pharaoh and his people abide by *ma’at*, the universe will continue humming along steadily; if they abandon *ma’at* and thus do evil, everything will go wrong and be out of kilter. The consequence of the breakdown of the process is not predicated on punishment for wrongdoing so much as a regretful “I told you so!” after the consequence is experienced. Imagine teaching inquisitive children and honestly caring about their safety. A wise adult filled with experience and sage advice about cause and effect and how things “go” with the world is in the kitchen. Little hands reach for the gas stove and the adult blurts out, “Don’t put your hands near the flame because you’ll get burned!” The concern is practical advice, but also carries with it an implied love for the children’s safety. Now imagine spying sly grins as a few want to test authority and question the veracity of the adult’s claim. In a second, one wayward child does: a yowl pierces the air, tears flow, and the authority figure receives that angry look of combined shock and bitter reproach that accuses *him* (or *her!*) of punishing the child with vengeful pain. But the adult did not. S/he had instead told the victim of the spiteful action how things *are* (= fire burns), and when the child went against the good advice and loving concern, the offender suffered the consequences. But with *ma’at*, the truth is more than just

⁴For a sample of various translations, see the venerable yet still authoritative *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, Vol. 2, Adolf Erman and Hermann Grapow, eds. (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1926-1950), 12,12-23,5. Two excellent examples of the extensive literature on *ma’at* will have to suffice: Hornung, *Idea into Image*, 131-145, and *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, Vol. 3, Wolfgang Helck and Eberhard Otto, eds (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1980), cols. 1110-1119 (entry in German).

⁵For “evil,” “crime,” and “abomination” in a legal context, see Andrea G. McDowell, *Jurisdiction in the Workmen’s Community of Deir el-Medīna* ([Egyptologische uitgaven 5]; Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1990), 26-28, and also in the general and cosmic sense in *Wörterbuch* Vol. 1, 129,8-13 (*isf.t*); 483,12-484,11 (*bt.*); 453,6-454,7 (*bw.t*) and *Wörterbuch*, Belegstellen I, 23, 78, and 74 respectively.

good advice. It is the way the creator god consciously created things to work *correctly*, and he is making the “source code” open for creation to see. Go with the flow of that source code, and justice and order will prevail against injustice and chaos.

The Egyptian universe was thus created by god as inherently *good* and inhabited by children (= humans) made of “god stuff;” therefore, people themselves had to go *wrong* somewhere along the line. In Mesopotamia, in contrast, the Creation Epic relates that the rebellious mother of all the gods (Tiamat) was vanquished and her body parts fashioned into the visible cosmos. The council of gods wanted to create humankind for the “relief” of the gods and decided that one god must perish for this to happen. The victim was the mother goddess’ consort who had been the ringleader of her rebellion. This god, Kingu, was knifed and from his blood-drops sprang humankind.⁶ The implication here is significant: humankind is born from the life-blood of a duplicitous and condemned god; in other words, we are already tainted by guilt and sin from the beginning, a genesis which more easily explains the shortcomings of observable human nature.

In one of the Egyptian Coffin Texts, a corpus of prayers inscribed onto the sides of coffins of private individuals starting around 2100 BCE,⁷ the creator god lists the four good deeds that he performed when he had formed the universe. Among these the creator makes two astounding assertions: that he created all humankind as *equals* and allowed the humble to benefit as much as the great; and that it was he who forbade humankind to do wrong, adding “It is their hearts that disobey what I have said.”⁸ Thus, it is of their own volition that people work against the order of things and do wrong. Free will exists, and temptation is fermented in each heart, not through a divinely constructed trap to which mortals easily succumb.

Along a similar vein is the story titled *The Destruction of Mankind*. Set in the time when the creator god was king of both humans and gods, the tale relates how humans plotted against

⁶ “Epic of Creation (Enūma Eliš),” trans Benjamin R. Foster, in *The Context of Scripture, Vol. 1: Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*, William W. Hallo, ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 390-402. See especially Tablet VI (400-402).

⁷ The corpus of Coffin Texts are gathered in the monumental work *The Egyptian Coffin Texts*, Vols. 1-7, Adriaan de Buck and Alan H. Gardiner, eds. (Oriental Institute Publications XXXIV, XLIX, LXIV, LXVII, LXXIII, LXXXI, LXXXVII) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935-1961) with a competent translation in *The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts*, Vols. 1-3, trans Raymond O. Faulkner ([Modern Egyptology Series]; Warminster, England: Aris & Phillips, 1973-1978), 167-169 [Spell 1130].

⁸ Spell 1130, de Buck, *Egyptian Coffin Texts 7*, 461-471; trans in Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature, Vol. I: The Old and Middle Kingdom* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1973), 131-133, and more recently by James P. Allen, in Hallo, *Context of Scripture*, Vol. 1, 26-27. It must be noted that the extant examples of this spell are not plentiful and may indicate that its sentiments were not commonly advocated. Neither translator notes that the Egyptian *nhḏ.n=i* does not mean “I did not order them to...” but has the semantic force of “I forbade them to...”

the creator when he had grown old. The creator summoned his divine advisors secretly to tell them in frustration that he just might nix all of creation and return to the abyss. He added that he will hold off slaying humankind until he has heard what his council has to say, pointing out to them that humankind is fleeing to the desert out of fear of what he might do to it. The council advised that the creator send down the goddess of love and partying (she drank a lot of beer), and she commenced slaying those who had taken refuge in the desert, diminishing the number of rebels. However, she was so proficient at her task that the creator had a change of heart and told his staff to make fresh beer and mix it with crushed ochre, a red stone, to make it look like blood. He had it poured out into the fields of Egypt before the wrathful goddess woke the next morning, and as she waded in the pools of fake blood, she saw herself in the reflection, drank the so-called blood, got drunk, and came back to the creator very happy, having forgotten her mission.⁹

One can see a connection with other myths of the ancient Near East in which the theme of human wickedness arouses divine wrath and results in a partial destruction of humankind.¹⁰ In Egypt, however, where the annual flood is life-giving, it was the large pool of liquid that *saved* humankind from total annihilation.

Moving from the realm of myth and gods to the world of the imperfect human race, the reader can now take a look at how justice was interpreted and practiced, and the remainder of the paper shall limit itself to some examples that relate to the Decalogue.

Commandments I (“You shall have no other gods before me...”) and II (“You shall not make graven images...”) were not a problem in Egypt till the Christian era. In pharaonic times images and multiple deities were considered orthodox, the first being especially helpful in a society in which illiteracy ran high.

The Egyptian week consisted of ten days, with the ninth and tenth being days of rest to do whatever one had to do.¹¹ To soften such a tough work schedule, there were many holidays peppered throughout the year, and sacred celebrations and plain revelry were often the order of these days, so Commandment IV to honor the Sabbath would have been heartily received but was not culturally significant, as it was for Israel. In Egypt, no reverence was called for to honor the creator’s labors with rest. Instead, the primeval creation on “the first

⁹ English translation and commentary is available in Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol. 2, 197-199 and by the same scholar in Hallo, *Context of Scripture*, Vol. 1, 36-37. For the entire myth of the Heavenly Cow, see Erik Hornung, *Der Ägyptische Mythos von der Himmelskuh: eine Ätiologie des Unvollkommenen* ((Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 46); Freiburg, Switzerland: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982).

¹⁰ The story of Utnapishtim in (The Epic of) *Gilgamesh*, trans Benjamin R. Foster in Hallo, *Context of Scripture*, Vol. 1, (458-460) as well as the family of Noah in the Flood Story (Genesis 6:5-9:19).

¹¹ This at least was the schedule as recorded for the tomb builders at Deir el-Medina. In order to eke out a living, other less fortunate laborers may not have any regularly-scheduled rest days. All Egyptians did share festival days to celebrate and propagate their culture and religion. For some of the reasons for further absences from work, see Morris Bierbrier, *The Tomb-Builders of the Pharaohs* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1984), 52-54.

day” was reenacted daily at sunrise with the encircling sun illuminating and creating the world anew before “dying” beneath the horizon and fighting the forces of darkness and evil to be reborn anew, triumphantly and with regenerated youth each dawn.¹²

The remaining seven commandments were pertinent to *ma'at* in some variation.

A public discourse of sorts existed in the Egyptian genre known as wisdom literature or instruction literature, which was couched in terms of a father's advice to his son. Ranging from practical advice for ascending administrative ranks to more profound wisdom on how to conduct oneself spiritually, wisdom literature, like the Decalogue, was formulated in affirmative and negative imperatives:

Don't be evil, kindness is good...
 Do justice...
 Calm the weeper, don't oppress the widow,
 Don't expel a man from his father's property,
 Don't reduce noblemen of their possessions.
 Beware of punishing wrongfully,
 Do not kill...¹³
 People's schemes do not prevail,
 G-d's command is what prevails;
 [...]
 Keep to the truth, don't exceed it...
 Do not malign anyone, Great or small, ...¹⁴

That this advice was meant as something by which to live is illustrated in tomb biographies, a genre of inscriptions intended to show that the deceased was a just person on earth and that his or her soul should be tended to by the living. It also indicated that this righteous person would continue to be an effective friend and advocate to have in the netherworld, where justice and law courts existed.¹⁵ The majority of the biographies found in the public parts of tombs are formulaic with a touch now and then of unique individualism. It is with

¹² The assurance of this cycle, employing *ma'at* in the practice of everyday living and daily ritual, runs deeply throughout Egyptian religion.

¹³ The Instruction to King Merikare; *Die Lehre für König Merikare*, compiled by Wolfgang Helck ([Kleine ägyptische Texte]; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1977), 20, 27. The current author has slightly modified the quote for the sake of clarity from the English translation in Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol. I, 99 line 36 to 100 lines 46-47. The instructor is the king's royal father and predecessor, probably Kheti, whose name is partially lost in a critical lacuna at the beginning of the instruction.

¹⁴ The Instruction of Ptahhotep; Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol. I, 65 (from Maxims 6 and 8). Ptah-hotep held the title of vizier, making him the highest civilian official and answerable only to the king.

¹⁵ Egyptians enjoyed taking each other to court, and this desire continued into the next world, where the settlement of disputes needed to continue. The living could be accused and become a defendant in a court in the netherworld *in absentia*.

the nearly universal formulas, however, that we are interested. In the public discourse between the deceased and the visitor, the merits accomplished on earth are couched often as “I always did such-and-such...” or “I never did such-and-such...” The majority of examples always draw at least a parallel to Commandment V:

I respected my father; I pleased my mother.¹⁶

Claims of feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing to those who had none, rescuing the widow from oppression, the weak from the strong, the poor from their degraded state, and being a parent to an orphan abound. A hint of Commandments III and IX comes across in a tomb biography from around 2300 BCE:

I have done justice for (god)
[...]
I spoke truly, I did right,
I spoke fairly, I repeated (a report) fairly,...¹⁷

And the overall concept of *ma'at* is expressed by the shortlines of an inscription from “only” 300 years later:

I did not follow after evil for which men are hated.
I am one who loves what is good, who hates what is evil...¹⁸

It is apparent that law and life in the beyond are an extension of the laws of the living, so it is beneficial to look at the judicial system that affected the typical Egyptian. Complaints or accusations could be brought to a single community official, or, when more serious charges warranted it, to a board of higher officials, or in the case of crimes against the state, to the pharaoh or his representative the vizier, who was the highest civil official in the land. His responsibilities were many and included the positions roughly equivalent to our Chief Justice and U.S. Attorney General. The vizier had his own office buildings around the country, one being still extant in the modern tourist trap of Karnak, namely the temple of Ma'at, known to have been a place for the administration of justice.¹⁹

¹⁶ This is a common formula found with variants. The current example is from an inscription in the tomb of Nefer-seshem-re, called Sheshi, translated in Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol. 1, 17 line 3.

¹⁷ Tomb inscription of Nefer-seshem-re, called Sheshi, modified slightly for clarity from the translation in Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, vol. 1, 17 line 1.

¹⁸ Stela of the Treasurer Tjetji (British Museum 614) in Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol. 1, 92 line 8.

¹⁹ McDowell, *Jurisdiction*, 1-2, 196 and *infra*; *Lexikon*, Vol. 6, cols. 1227-1235.

For the commoner the local court was the main recourse to justice. Called the *qenbet*, it consisted of a group of local men of whom the community thought highly. Membership was fluid and probably changed depending on the circumstances of the charges as well as who was available at the time. Meeting in the open air and in the presence of community members who wished to witness the proceedings, the *qenbet* most likely depended on what is called *hp*, (plural *hp.w*), “local laws,” “traditions,” or “commonly held customs.”²⁰

It is a significant observation on Egyptian culture and its justice system that people are not declared innocent or guilty; in fact, there are no technical words for such concepts. Instead, one is right or wrong in respect to *ma'at*.²¹ And one can be said to have committed an abomination worthy of death, although that does not necessarily lead to execution any more than saying “That creep ought to receive the death penalty!” means obligatory capital punishment in the United States.²²

The most well documented window on the justice system comes from the community now known as Deir el-Medina, which is located on the west bank of the Nile at Luxor and is easily accessible to tourists. The small middle-class community flourished for a few hundred years around 1200 BCE, and the workmen and their families who lived there are responsible for hewing out and decorating the tombs in the Valley of the Kings, including Tut's tomb among many others.²³ Because their work was so important, their scribes kept records of who worked on what and when. These records would be jotted down on limestone flakes that lie in abundance in that region, and used as the ancient equivalent of Post-It™ notes. Among them are records of the local *qenbet*-court of the community, and one notes that a woman who has stolen a copper chisel is in the wrong and told that her crime is worthy of death. This seems like an awfully stern penalty for such a theft. The reason the community rails against her probably lies in her having taken *two* oaths in the name of god that she neither stole the chisel nor was hiding it. When it was found buried in her house, she was proven wrong on both counts and it appears that she took the god's name “in vain” by swearing two false oaths. Her punishment is unrecorded, but her name disappears from the community's records.²⁴

²⁰ For pertinent studies on the word *hp*, see McDowell, *Jurisdiction*, 236 note 5. For the writing and translations of the word, see the *Wörterbuch*, Vol. 2, 488,6-489,1.

²¹ McDowell, *Jurisdiction*, 23-25, 166; Hornung, *Idea into Image*, 141.

²² In fact, one accuser in the case recorded on Ostrakon Nash 1 proclaims the guilty defendant worthy of death, but if capital punishment were to be meted out, it could only be in a court in which the vizier presides, and only the king himself could order the sentence to be carried out. See below for the specifics of this case of grand theft and lying as well as McDowell, *Jurisdiction*, 224.

²³ Easily accessible and readable studies of this town in English include Bierbrier, *Tomb-Builders*, and John Romer, *Ancient Lives: the Story of the Pharaoh's Tombmakers* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1984).

²⁴ The woman is named Heria, and her case is preserved on the *recto* and *verso* of Ostrakon Nash 1, published in Jaroslav erný and Alan H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Ostraca*, Vol. 1 (Oxford, Griffith Institute, 1957), 14 and Pls. XLVI and XLVI A, while a partial translation and synopsis of the case can be found in Bierbrier, *Tomb-Builders*, 104, 106-107.

There is another known lawsuit in which the plaintiff brings a case against a group of two men and a woman, accusing them of slandering him. The troika had claimed that the man had cursed the king, thus putting him in deep trouble, but when they were confronted in court, having to swear in the name of a god that what they had said was the truth, they retracted their false claim and insisted they had heard nothing! As punishment, they were caned 100 times each for bearing false witness, in effect for having taken a god's name in vain.²⁵

The more the records of Deir el-Medina are closely probed, the more problematical a clear interpretation of Egyptian justice becomes. Perhaps this is due to the Western concept of clear divisions that often do not occur in ancient Egypt; in other words, though one may search for them, there are probably no real distinctions between various types of offenses against *ma'at*: for example, ones which transgress against so-called laws—whether civil or criminal, petty or felony infractions—and those which merely violate unwritten custom. Instead, we get the distinct impression of a public dialog everywhere: advertising even domestic or private matters allows the results of any ensuing lawsuit to be publicly aired so communal pressure can be applied to the one in the wrong and force him or her to reform and comply with community standards.²⁶

The draftsman Neferabu, who was a craftsman living in Deir el-Medina, left an inscribed, flat-faced stone, called a stela—which contains an amazing penitential hymn:

I am a man who swore falsely by (the god) Ptah, lord of *Ma'at*,
 And he made me see darkness by day.
 I will declare his might to the fool and the wise,
 To the small and great:
 Beware of Ptah, Lord of *Ma'at*!
 Behold, he does not overlook anyone's deed.
 Refrain from uttering Ptah's name falsely,
 Lo, he who utters it falsely, see, he fails.
 He caused me to be as the dogs of the street,
 While I was in his hand;
 He made men and gods observe me,

²⁵ Ostrakon Cairo 25556 – Transcription in Jaroslav Černý, *Ostraca Hiératiques*, Vol. 1 (Cairo: L'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1935), 21-22, Pl. 44*, trans and commentary in German in Schafik Allam, *Hieratische Ostraka und Papyri aus der Ramessidenzeit* (Tübingen: Im Selbstverlag des Herausgebers, 1973), 61-63 (#30), and updated translation and commentary in English in McDowell, *Jurisdiction*, 251-253.

²⁶ For example, the raucous cases involving infidelity cited below; see also McDowell, *Jurisdiction*, 117, 137-138.

When I was a man who sinned against his lord.
 Righteous was Ptah, lord of *Ma'at*, toward me,
 When he taught me a lesson!
 Be merciful to me, look on me in mercy!²⁷

The reader hears what is, in effect, a bit of wisdom literature attempting to educate the foolish as well as the wise. All can learn from Neferabu's punishment for swearing falsely, especially those who had seen him wallowing helplessly in the filthy streets!

The Egyptian oath calls down divine verification by linking the truth of the god's existence with the truth of one's statement, which is why we believers today should not swear, namely, because anything we say cannot be as certain as our G-d's existence! And Neferabu is telling the reader that when one bears false witness through lies, the god in whom s/he swears *does* act against wrongdoing. The god struck him blind, humiliated him by allowing the community to see his condition and deride him, and so he became a visual example of breaking a sworn oath and deviating from *ma'at*. He has learned his lesson and begs for mercy. The existence of Neferabu's stela does indicate a partial restitution from the fall from grace, but the ominous final line may imply that Ptah had not fully forgiven him by restoring his eyesight.

Another distinctive contribution concerning economic and relational justice in the public realm is the use of oracle. Communities, including Deir el-Medina, had small temples which harbored the local deity. The image of the god or goddess would be paraded on a palanquin borne by priests in public every so often and swarmed by the local population seeking this "saint's" advice on personal matters or for a judgment.²⁸ From the extant evidence, contentious issues raised before this divine "circuit court judge" centered on the inheritance and ownership of real estate and the theft of portable possessions—thus, matters of coveting and stealing. Yes or no questions would be written on potsherds or limestone flakes, and the god would favor one answer or another by nodding assent, swaying from side to side for equivocation, or moving backwards showing rejection. An example of such a public lawsuit is, "Did so-and-so steal my 12 linen garments?" There are a couple astounding aspects of this and the *qenbet*-court's method of justice, the first being that anyone rich or poor, male or female had access to fair judgment.²⁹

²⁷ Stela British Museum EA 589; trans in Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol. 2, 109-110; photo of the stela in Bierbrier, *Tomb-Builders*, 99 illustration 71.

²⁸ At Deir el-Medina, the "patron saint" was the deified King Amenhotep I (reigned approximately 1514-1493 BCE), who was probably responsible for originally organizing the workman's community. For depictions and a history of his cult, see Jaroslav Černý, "Le Culte d'Amenophis 1^{er} chez les Ouvriers de la Nécropole Thébaine," *Bulletin de L'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale* 27 (1927) 159-203, Pls. I-IX, and the same author "Egyptian Oracles," in Richard A. Parker, *A Saite Oracle Papyrus from Thebes in the Brooklyn Museum* (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1962), 41-43.

²⁹ McDowell, *Jurisdiction*, 109-110, 114-115, 133-135; Černý, "Egyptian Oracles," 46.

The modern western mind might attribute the oracular answers to conscious and cynical physical manipulation of the divine statue, but with the pole bearers not the same people all the time, it would be difficult to fake any coherent agenda. Instead, the volunteer priests, selected for monthly duty from all the male community members, would have let themselves fall into a trance or stupor, and their swaying or subconscious movements would eventually synchronize as they “felt the spirit” (in which they certainly believed), coming, unbeknownst to them, to an emotional and group consensus.³⁰

Actual manipulation of the statue would have been noticed because the lay priests were community and family members, and secrets would have been found out soon enough, compromising the efficacy and believability of the oracle. Further, community support for the phenomenon of the oracle would have collapsed long ago if injustice had itself pervaded the local deity's decisions. Egyptians were all too aware that human tampering might trump the god's will: manipulation of an oracle was most likely punishable in ancient Egypt.³¹

In essence, an oracle could allow communal feelings to prevail in the guise of a universally accepted and respected medium, and to the end of its recorded history, ancient Egypt could count on the steady *ma'at* of its oracles more than its administration and justice system, the members of whom might stray from *ma'at* during troubled times.

In many religions, including Christianity and ancient Egyptian, the final arbiter of justice is the god who will judge all humans after death to determine who is worthy of an eternal afterlife. For Egypt this god is Osiris, who had been murdered by his brother Seth and avenged by his wife Isis and son Horus.³² Though resurrected, Osiris remained in the netherworld as its ruler because that is where the final judgment of everyone must occur. So, the supplicant in effect is funneled into the “final oracle” instead of the other way around!

The well-known funerary accessory modernly titled the Book of the Dead consisted of a collection of prayers and vignettes written on a scroll accompanying the mummy to ensure a safe navigation on the dangerous paths through the netherworld to the Hall of Judgment. The hall itself contains a large set of scales on which the heart of the deceased is measured against the feather of *ma'at*. Seated at the end of the hall is Osiris, who welcomes the deceased into the netherworld if his or her heart is true and has led a moral and righteous

³⁰ McDowell, *Jurisdiction*, 108 fn 3. Even today in Egypt, when a procession accompanies the deceased from the hospital to the cemetery, the mourners may collectively stop, feeling the direction is “not right,” before proceeding by an alternative route. For a similar anecdote, see Černý, “Egyptian Oracles,” 44.

³¹ McDowell, *Jurisdiction*, 110-111, and Černý, “Egyptian Oracles,” 44.

³² Alluded to in all Egyptian religious texts; however, the narrative version is preserved in Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride*, John Gwyn Griffiths, ed. (Cardiff, Wales: University of Wales Press, 1970). Myths in ancient Egypt are almost never fully narrated stories as they are in Greek and other mythologies.

life according to the tenets of *ma'at*. Before exoneration, however, the deceased must recite what is known as the “Negative Confession,” in which Osiris and 42 other judges are told that the deceased never committed such-and-such an infraction.³³

The judgment scene is often depicted on papyrus (Spell 125), and is accompanied by textual claims of “innocence”—if one can use such a word—which combined to make the contents of the papyrus be carried out magically. The introduction to this prayer even states that the speech of denial is intended to purge guilt and sin from the bearer of the Book and restore purity.³⁴

Most Egyptologists and biblical scholars enjoy pointing out that this prayer does not constitute a moral proclamation, but is more a denial used to drain the deceased of any offenses so they do not spill out to testify against the deceased at the final judgment. In other words, it is not a moral code so much as a contrivance.

In any case, before (dis)agreeing with these interpretations, the reader should look at some of the claims of BD 125 that pertain to the directives in the Decalogue:

- I have *not*:
- (Commandment III)
 - ...blasphemed a god
 - ...cursed a god
- (Commandment VI)
 - ...killed people
 - ...ordered to kill (people)
- (Commandment VII)
 - ...committed adultery
 - ...fornicated nor defiled myself
- (Commandment VIII)
 - ...stolen
 - ...robbed
 - ...robbed the poor
 - ...begun a day by exacting more than my due
- (Commandment IX)
 - ...told lies
 - ...maligned a servant to his master

³³ *The Egyptian Book of the Dead: The Book of Going Forth by Day: Being the Papyrus of Ani*, trans Raymond O. Faulkner (San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 1994), Plates 30-31 and p. 167.

³⁴ Faulkner, *Book of the Dead*, 115-116, 167. Of course, one must bear in mind the connotations of the English words translating the Egyptian, on the one hand, as opposed to the uses of the culturally and religiously loaded English words in modern Christianity and Judaism.

(Commandment X)

...coveted

...increased nor reduced the measure

...added to the weight of the balance

and

...been deaf to *ma'at*

...and so on.³⁵

Many of the sins that the deceased denies having committed are the opposite of the advice with which Egyptian wisdom literature tells the reader to run his life and also contrary to what the tomb inscriptions note the righteous inhabitant had done in life. There is, of course, a consistent logic to the communally held norms of justice.

At the end of the Negative Confession—that extended prayer for ensuring being judged “in the right”—there are instructions for how to employ these prayers effectively. Most experts used to think that these instructions were intended only for the dead, but now this has shifted to a realization that they are meant to be used also while the reader is still alive. As in mystery cults and secret rites groups like the Masons today, rituals of going through death and rebirth signify initiation into the mysteries. In the case of the Book of the Dead, experiencing the ritual and mysteries on earth helps insure that the possessor of the Book attains the same successful initiation after death. In life, the practitioner temporarily attains godhead.³⁶

If the modern Western mind judges the Egyptians too harshly and accepts that their faith should be seen as shallow contrivances to counter sin through expedient proclamations not indicative of a moral code, an advocate can counter in the ancients' defense that the description in the instructions for the use of BD 125 and other spells are little different from novenas that are published in today's newspapers to effect a positive, magical outcome to a dilemma. And many Protestants who attend Lutheran services are used to having their own sins expediently dissolved because the faith believes that as a called and ordained minister

³⁵ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol. 2, 124-127; *The Book of the Dead or Going Forth by Day: Ideas of the Ancient Egyptians Concerning the Hereafter as Expressed in Their Own Terms*, trans Thomas George Allen [Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 37]; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 97-99.

³⁶ The ritual may not only have been “performed” by the deceased in the Netherworld but done by him/her in life or by a living substitute for the deceased; see Edward F. Wente, “Mysticism in Pharaonic Egypt?,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 41 (1982) 161-179. Note that on p. 178 the author's statement “...it would also have been possible for the religious Egyptian to bring the future into this present, so that the realities of death and movement into the netherworld with attendant rebirth could have been genuinely experienced in this life now without reference to the limitations imposed by the barriers of human time” oddly parallels proleptic Christian theological statements and the “realized eschatology” of the “inbreaking of the future of God, but we must understand this future itself as the dynamic basis of its becoming present.” (Wolffhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2, [Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1994], 329.)

of the church of Christ, a pastor is empowered by Jesus to declare tidily and without equivocation the entire forgiveness of all the confessor's sins.³⁷ Perhaps future scholars who reconstruct 21st century religious beliefs will accuse us simplistic "moderns" of what the future critic deems shallow contrivances because the skeptic does not understand the complex web of interlocking beliefs that undergird succinct Lutheran surface proclamations.

The last example of a *very* public Egyptian dialogue on justice concerns that civilization's take on Commandment VII. It appears that adultery was not in most instances seen as a crime so much as a breach of trust, fidelity, or marriage contract that allows one partner to divorce the other before roaming. There is an uncanny similarity towards adultery between the attitudes of Egyptian culture and current U.S. law.

A number of ancient written documents relate to the matter of infidelity in Egypt, and the most startling will be examined in the following lines. All the preserved documents are from around 1200 BCE³⁸ and most likely typify other cases if not, indeed, human nature in any culture. All of the cases are preserved on papyri, which indicates that the documents are more official than those on potsherds or limestone flakes and were intended to be stored in an archive.

The first report may never have become a court case and the outcome is unknown.³⁹ A young man became engaged to a woman and decided for some reason not to move in with her immediately to "stake his claim" officially. After spending the night at his own parents' house, he went to visit his fiancée first thing in the morning only to find her in bed with another man. Shocked, he ran into town frantically seeking officials to take action as he blurted out his accusations. Instead of assisting him, the town officials beat him with rods. This injury added to insult is perplexing. Were they chastising him for not staying with his fiancée that night and making her his wife, or were they punishing him for being lax in his attentions to the point where his fiancée sought solace in someone else's arms? Perhaps the town elders may not have believed such scandalous charges, or thought the young man was maligning his fiancée and the accused man, who, by the way, just happened to be the son of a powerful community member. This would imply that justice was skewed socially to the economic and financial elite.

Another powerful community member came to the defense of the aggrieved and inquired as to why there was no immediate investigation of the charges and why the accuser was being punished—potentially for bearing false witness—without a trial. The chastened offi-

³⁷ For example, the text in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2006), 212.

³⁸ There were not more cases of adultery at this time—the coincidence stems from them being from the most well-preserved era of Deir el-Medina documentation. If other eras and locations preserved their history as well as the workmen's community, there would most likely be a plethora of documents attesting cases of adultery.

³⁹ Papyrus Deir el-Medina 27; Schafik Allam, *Hieratische Ostraka*, 301-302 (#272), *Tafelteil*, 98-99; and comments in McDowell, *Jurisdiction*, 67, 115.

cials did bring the accused paramour to court and forced him to swear an oath that he would not sleep with the woman again. He soon broke *that* oath and wound up getting the faithless fiancée pregnant. Hauled into court *again*, he had to swear another oath not to see her, and this time he seems to have honored the oath now that there would be another mouth to feed. Note, by the way, the lack of actual punishment in this and many court cases. One is left with the impression that if the infraction was against the community and not the state, communal pressure was the only punishment allowed (besides beatings) and often was insufficient to reform a defiant or determined guilty party.

But does the above case really involve adultery if the young man had given the engagement gift to his intended but then left her alone for the evening? That question may have played a role in the officials' reaction to the accuser, perhaps their way of saying that he himself was in the wrong for his blunder. The following cases proffer, however, unequivocal acts of adultery.

The author of another work preserved on papyrus⁴⁰ accused the powerfully placed but utterly sociopathic chief royal tomb builder of serious felony charges: grand theft of materials from multiple royal burials in the Valley of the Kings and the Valley of the Queens, misuse of government workers for his private projects, and exposing that the chief had slept with three married women as well as the daughter of one of them, who was enjoyed as well by the chief's son! It is probably the serious theft from the state that led to the chief's undoing and disappearance while any charges of adultery may have been added to magnify the deprecation of his character. Then again, some scholars have suggested that it was the chief's high position of responsibility that made these acts of debauchery an illegal abuse of power.⁴¹

This supposition has some corroborating evidence in the Turin Indictment Papyrus, a formal report documenting an official's long-term embezzlement of grain as well as the additional charges of him having slept with two married women and causing the miscarriage of another.⁴² The appearance of the adultery charges here add credence to the supposition that they are more than the icing on the cake and instead represent real, punishable offenses for a temple official.

Finally, the Turin Strike Papyrus—which is also the earliest documentation of laborers performing a work stoppage—records a colleague's accusations of two fellow tomb builders stealing stone from in front of a royal tomb and an ox from a temple, as well as the seemingly now standard accusation of their seduction of three married women of the workmen's

⁴⁰ Papyrus Salt 124 (British Museum 10055); Jaroslav Černý, "Papyrus Salt 124," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 15 (1929) 243-258, Pls. xlii-xlvi, especially the adultery charges on *recto* 1,19; 2,2-4 (Pl. xlili). A photo of the *recto* of P Salt 124 can be seen in Bierbrier, *Tomb-Builders*, 108, illustration 76.

⁴¹ McDowell, *Jurisdiction*, 207-211.

⁴² Papyrus Turin 1887 *recto* 1,5-6 and *verso* 3,1; *Rameside Administrative Documents*, Alan H. Gardiner, ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), 74, lines 11-14, and 81, line 11; T. Eric Peet, "A Historical Document of Rameside Age," *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 10 (1924) 116-127.

village.⁴³ But this time the charges did not impress the authorities enough for them to act on them or the other more serious charges of theft because the two workmen appear in much later documents unscathed by the accuser's attempts to eliminate them.

Because of the lowly status of the two accused workmen, if they were innocent of the major charges of theft, the accusations of adultery may have been brushed aside as private affairs against which the court could not act, especially if the women had consented.

Whether the matter was adultery or covetousness, a wise listener would harken to the advice of Egyptian wisdom literature, which advised against yielding to the possibility of tempting seductions and risking ruin, advice that would have benefitted modern-day political leaders:

If you desire to preserve friendship in a home into which you enter,...
Beware of approaching the women,
For no good comes to a place where this is done...;
A thousand men are turned aside from what is good for them.
A little moment, the semblance of a dream,
And death reaches you because of knowing them...
The heart should thrust (desire) away.
As for him who fails by reason of lusting after them,
no plan of his will succeed.⁴⁴

Around 734 BCE, a Kushite king invaded Egypt to return it to religious orthodoxy and eliminate Libyan regional rulers, whose tribal traditions had split Egypt for centuries into multiple kingdoms. The Kushite, King Piye, inscribed on his giant stela of victory that he bound himself to strict, traditional morality when vanquishing his enemies, whom he considered pretenders to the throne:

Now his majesty (= King Piye) proceeded to the house of (his subdued enemy) the kinglet Nimlot. He went through all the rooms of the place...Nimlot presented the royal wives and royal daughters to him. They saluted his majesty in the manner of women, while his majesty did not direct his gaze at them.⁴⁵

⁴³ William Edgerton, "The Strikes in Ramses III's Twenty-Ninth Year," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 10 (1951) 141; Gardiner, *Ramesside*, xiv-xvii, 57 line 6 to 58 line 6 (recto 4,1-16a).

⁴⁴ Maxim 18 of "The Maxims of Ptahhotpe," in *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An anthology of Stories, Instructions, and Poetry*, new edition, trans R. O. Faulkner, Edward F. Wente, Jr., and William Kelly Simpson (New Haven, CT & London: Yale University Press, 1973), 166. Translation slightly modified for clarity by the current author.

⁴⁵ The Victory Stela of King Piye. I have slightly modified the translation for the reader from Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol. 3, 73; a comprehensive treatment of this major historical document can be found in Nicolas-Christophe Grimal, *La Stèle Triomphale de Pi(ankhy) au Musée du Caire, JE 48862 et 47086-47089* ([Mémoires Publiés par les Membres de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire 105]; Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1981).

The Kushite king was not snubbing the royal women of his opponent but was refraining from gawking and thus avoiding any appearance of lusting after and coveting his recently conquered subject's wives. In this way he possesses a superior, unabased *ma'at* and represents a perfect role model for anyone assuming to be the true king of Egypt and representative of the gods.

More than 1,300 years previous to King Piye, a royal treasurer summed up a point of justice that rings so true for the aspirations of today's global market, the giving of assistance as an altruistic act of justice instead of seeking exploitation and selfish advantage over the downtrodden:

I nourished (my town) in years of misery.
Though hundreds were in straits because of it,
I did not seize a man's daughter,
Nor did I seize his field.⁴⁶

For true justice—*ma'at*—to exist, the Egyptian had to work constantly at preserving the order of right and good. Maintaining “order” was never, however, without forgiveness, mercy, and consideration for extenuating circumstances when judging and carrying out punishment. As members of a highly social society, Egyptians paid great heed to the ameliorating effects of publicly-aired community opinion, and no one of good reputation would desire for his or her name to suffer and his or her final resting place to be neglected, condemning the deceased to an eternal damnation of sorts.⁴⁷

Egyptian parallels of the Decalogue did not define the community as the Decalogue did Israel, but the two shared a fundamental appreciation of human dignity that, although a gift from god intended for every person, is sometimes forgotten by the high and mighty, who recklessly consider themselves exempt from or above the laws they administer.

In a story about King Khufu (Greek Cheops)—the builder of the Great Pyramid whose memory for unknown reasons was treated with subtle contempt by later generations of Egyptians—the pharaoh requests that an elderly magician make an arduous trip to visit and entertain him.⁴⁸ The king is so impressed by reports that the magician is able to restore life

⁴⁶ Stela of the Treasurer Iti of Imyotru (Cairo 2001); translation slightly modified for clarity from Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol. 1, 88-89.

⁴⁷ Being forgotten would yield non-existence, whereas an evil human being, an “enemy of Re,” would suffer daily eradication, for example, in the “place of destruction” or any number of other hellish locales in the netherworld; Hornung, *Idea into Image*, 98-103.

⁴⁸ Papyrus Westcar (Papyrus Berlin 3033); the tale sometimes titled “King Khufu and the Magician” in *Three Tales of Wonder*, Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol. 1, 219 (translation modified for clarity).

to a creature whose head is cut off that he incautiously blurts out for a prisoner to be brought and beheaded. The horrified magician retorts, "Oh no, not to a human, ...my lord, for doing such is forbidden to the sacred cattle (= a pun on the word for humankind)!" Thus the king is chastised for not being the good shepherd whose first charge is to uphold and never trivialize universal justice, even in the case of a condemned man. Unlike the stark and strict code of Fate to which Greek gods are subject and powerless to alter,⁴⁹ *Ma'at* contains mercy enough to deflect and improve fate, which is malleable (like Egyptian law). *Ma'at* is meant, like our G-d's gift of the Decalogue, to uplift, instruct, and better humankind with fairness and love, not to condemn it.

⁴⁹ One participant in the Convocation pointed out that Aeschylus' *The Eumenides* offers an instance of Fate being averted and malleable. This, of course, is an exception to the rule that can be attributed to the playwright's production having taken place in Athens, where underscoring the wisdom and civilized justice of the city's patron goddess Athena would certainly flatter the audience and perhaps win Aeschylus first prize in the drama competition. Subsequent Greek philosophers adhere to the traditional concept of fate.

‘WRATH AGAINST THE UNRIGHTEOUS’

THE PLACE OF LUTHER’S *LECTURES ON ROMANS* IN HIS UNDERSTANDING OF JUDAISM

By Leonard M. Hummel

Introduction

What? More about Luther and the Jews? Has not enough been said and done already? So it might seem. Yet, even after the Evangelical Lutheran Caucus of America (ELCA) Declaration from the 1994 General Assembly which repudiated Luther’s anti-Jewish remarks, even after the related adoption by the ELCA Church Council in 1998 of Guidelines for Jewish-Christian relations, a number of questions still remain about Luther’s understanding of Judaism and the consequences of that understanding for Jewish-Christian relations. For example, referencing Luther’s understanding, Richard Koenig wrote in 1999 “of what I believe is the most pressing theological problem facing the Christian church in our day—the theological relation of Christianity to Judaism. We seem to be on the horns of a dilemma. We either affirm Christianity’s distinctiveness and declare Judaism obsolete or suppress Christianity’s claim to uniqueness of what God did in Christ in order to affirm Judaism.”¹ Unhappy on these horns, Koenig calls for the establishment of a task force “to draw up a study document on Christianity’s relation to Judaism . . . [which] would do its work in consultation with the Consultative Panel on Lutheran/Jewish Relations attached to the Department of Ecumenical Affairs and the Bishops’ Committee on Theological and Ethical Concerns.”² Accordingly, Lutheran and Jewish scholars met at Gustavus Adolphus College in Saint Peter, Minnesota, in the spring of 2001 to discuss “Theological Issues in Jewish-Christian Relations.” Out of those discussions, the questions about Luther’s particular influence on those broader themes remain.

¹ Richard Koenig, “God and Covenant after the Holocaust: a Response,” *Lutheran Partners* (September/October 1999) 4

² *Ibid.*

But how could such questions remain in light of the many books, articles and conferences on Luther and the Jews? For there certainly have been many. Thus in 1997, *Dialog* hosted an issue titled "Luther and the Jews," although only two articles focused on Luther and the Jews. In one of these articles, "Luther, Judaism, and Cultural Tolerance,"³ James Nestigen related a familiar telling of the history: that there was in Luther's early writings a period of "friendliness" toward the Jews, characterized most clearly in his 1523 treatise, but that his later works are "more in keeping with the standards of the late middle ages."⁴ Referencing Heiko Oberman's work, Nestigen also offers a familiar list to account for Luther's later invectives: his poor health, his apocalyptic ruminations, and the alleged proselytizing of Christians by Jews.

Nestigen's unique contribution to understanding the relationship between Luther and the Jews is signified by the third item in his article's title, the force of contemporary "Cultural Tolerance" in evaluating that relationship. Such tolerance, he seems to say, can be as oppressive as intolerance: "If all are equally right, assertions to being the one, true, and only are always going to be below the table if not below the belt."⁵ For Nestigen, therefore, it is no surprise that Luther asserts that Christianity is "one, true, and only" over and against not only the Jews but any people who asserted otherwise. So while Nestigen deplors Luther's anti-Jewish remarks, he argues that "the fact that the issue is exegetical-theological... has to qualify them."⁶

Like Nestigen, in his article, "Luther as Missiologist to the Jews,"⁷ Dean M. Apel bemoans and repudiates Luther's later attacks on the Jews. However, building on the writings of the Swedish theologian Ingemar Öberg, Apel claims:

The contextual anti-Semitism during Luther's day goes a long way to explain his seven point program in *On the Jews and Their Lies* (1543). It is not surprising that Luther would follow his own culture's anti-Semitism and would express himself so. What is surprising is Luther's warmer stance to the Jews in the years leading up to 1543.⁸

³ James Nestigen, "Luther, Judaism, and Cultural Tolerance," *Dialog* 35 (Summer 1996) 166-173.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 167-168.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 171. Luther, of course was persistently wrathful toward "assertionless Christianity," and one is reminded of his lambasting Erasmus for his promoting such a non-faith.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 173.

⁷ Dean M. Apel, "Luther as Missiologist to the Jews," *Dialog* 35 (Summer 1996) 174-180.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 175.

According to this reading, Luther turns cold toward the Jews when they, unresponsive to the gospel, apparently both try to convert Christians to Judaism and to influence the rise of "legalistic" Christians. Again, like Nestigen, Apel claims that Luther's motivation was theological: "Luther thought he had a problem with Jews not because their blood was Jewish but because they scorned the grace which their own God offered them through the true Messiah Jesus Christ."⁹

At the risk of oversimplification, Nestigen and Apel seem to say the following: early on, Luther had a fondness for the Jewish people, but later lost that fondness. Never, however, did he have any positive regard for their religion. That is, his problem was theological and, therefore, understandable, if not excusable.

But that Luther's problem *is* theological is the problem which Koenig believes must be now addressed at greater length and in greater depth: "Behind Luther's rhetoric and recommendations which we deplored lies what was, and for many still is, a firmly held, wholly negative construal of Christianity's relation to Judaism. Our unprecedented repudiation of Luther's rhetoric now requires that we revisit the underlying theological construct . . ."¹⁰

To contribute to such a "revisitation," I examine in this article the relationship between Luther's *Lectures on Romans*, delivered early in his career and his subsequent remarks about Judaism and the Jewish people. I propose that in those lectures, Luther judges Judaism to be both the prototype for and the living reminder of unrighteous religion that merits the wrath of God. Luther's early call for tolerance of and solidarity with the Jews is made in the context of his denigration of their religion. I then demonstrate that Luther's negative assessment of Judaism persists in both his more "tolerant" writings of the 1520's and in his more polemical writings against the Jews of the mid 1530's until 1546. I conclude by noting the implications of the persistent anti-Judaism in Luther's theology, and the pitfalls and promises of Luther's theology for current Lutheran-Jewish dialogue.

Lectures on Romans

In his *Lectures on the Psalter* (1513-1515), McGrath maintains that Luther followed the tradition of the *Via Moderna* in maintaining that humility of faith (*humilitas fidei*) is the precondition for justification; that is to say, a pact (*pactum*) between the human being and God is required for right relationship. In his *Lectures on Romans* (1515-1516), Luther effected a decisive shift away from the claim that one could achieve righteousness by fulfilling such a

⁹ *Ibid.*, 180.

¹⁰ Koenig, "God and Covenant after the Holocaust: a Response," 4.

pact. Here, he maintained that a person is passive in this right relationship with God. That is to say, to be justified, one no longer acts but instead is acted upon by God. Additionally, Luther asserted that any teaching is ineluctably Pelagian in which one may achieve a right relationship with God by doing what is in oneself (*facere quod in se est*).¹¹ Luther himself writes, “Therefore, we must be taught a righteousness that comes completely from the outside and is foreign.”¹²

In his *Lectures on Romans*, Luther laid the foundation for his lifelong battle against righteousness achieved by doing what is in oneself. In doing so, he also laid the foundation for his lifelong wrath against the religion that he believed typified such self-righteousness: Judaism.

Judaism as Unrighteous Religion

In the marginal gloss to Summary of Chapter One of Romans, Luther summarizes the main theme of the epistle—righteousness by faith. In doing so, he indicts the Jews for their unrighteousness:

The whole purpose and intention of the apostle in this epistle is to break down all righteousness and wisdom of our own . . . For in the presence of God this is not the way that a person becomes righteous by doing works of righteousness (as the foolish Jews, Gentiles, and all other self-righteous people proudly think).¹³

Here, and in certain other passages in his lectures, Luther does not single out the Jews as being self-righteous and sinful. Commentators such as Wilhelm Maurer contend that Luther thereby proclaims a “solidarity in sin” among Christians and Jews. However, a close reading of the lectures reveals that Luther judged the sinfulness of Jews to be the prototype for all other sinfulness. Thus in his commentary on Paul’s second chapter in which the apostle speaks of God’s righteous wrath toward all sinners, Luther observed: “[Paul] refutes the faults of the Jews, saying that as far as their guilt is concerned they are the same as the Gentiles and *in a certain respect even worse*.”¹⁴ Luther defined this guilt as self-righteousness and continues:

*With this sickness the Jews are afflicted more widely than the Gentiles . . . All heretics and hypocrites imitate them, and so do those who are at the present time lawyers and priests, and those who have claims against one another.*¹⁵

¹¹ Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, Vol 1: *The Beginnings to the Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 6.

¹² *Lectures on Romans*, LW 25:136.

¹³ LW 25:3.

¹⁴ LW 25:15. Emphasis mine.

¹⁵ LW 25:16. Emphasis mine.

Here Luther portrayed the religion of the Jews as not only the prototype for, but also as the living reminder of unrighteousness that merits the wrath of God. Here, he also singles them out from among all peoples as particularly guilty and more often in error.

About Rom 3:10, which references Psalm 14:1-2, including the passage, *None is righteous, no, not one*, Luther writes, "And thus it is manifest that *this psalm is to be understood primarily of the Jews*. For the Law was not given to the Gentiles, therefore it does not speak of them, at least not in the first place."¹⁶ Hence, I believe that Apel is mistaken when he claims that in Luther's lecture, "the Jews are not special in their misunderstanding of justification by faith."¹⁷ Rather, I believe that Luther's schema here may be more accurately summarized this way: all people are sinful, but some people—the Jews—are more typically sinful than others.

Regarding the religion of the Jews as being unrighteous, Luther denigrates the status of the Jews themselves. Referencing Rom 2:28, *For he is not a real Jew who is one outwardly*, Luther comments, "With this statement he excludes every kind of righteousness according to the letter as being insufficient." About Rom 9:6, *For not all who are descended from Israel*, he writes: "This passage is opposed to the presumptuousness of the Jews and as a commendation of grace, for the destruction of all haughty trust in righteousness and good works."¹⁸ Regarding Rom 2:29, *But he is a Jew who is one inwardly*, Luther contends that, by "a Jew," Paul meant: "...the inward man on the basis of faith in Christ, of the faith of Abraham, and this is the real circumcision..."¹⁹ He continues:

What good is it if someone is a Jew before men but not before God? For such a Jew is not a Jew, and such a circumcision is not a circumcision, as it was stated above . . . Therefore they are truly such as teach that one should not commit adultery and yet commit adultery, steal, and murder. That the Jews have been of this type is apparent in many passages.²⁰

Luther then notes that the Jews observed their ceremonial laws and yet "did not think it a defilement to kill Christ by will and word because they did not kill Him by the work of their own hands."²¹ Here Luther not only regards those who obey the Law as not being real Jews but, echoing others, accuses them of being ultimately responsible for the murder of Christ.

¹⁶ LW 25:29. Emphasis mine.

¹⁷ Apel, "Luther as Missiologist to the Jews," 175.

¹⁸ LW 25:384.

¹⁹ LW 25:23-24.

²⁰ LW 25:24.

²¹ *Ibid.*

Luther contends that the Jews try to justify themselves not only by observing the law but also by boasting in their election. Because the Jews arrogate God's concern for themselves exclusively, they are contemptuous of the rest of humanity.

The Jews wanted God to act in such a way that He would bestow the good on the Jews only and the evil on the Gentiles only, as if because they were the seed of Abraham, they should automatically be like Abraham in merits. Thus the Jews always strive to make of God a judge who considers the persons.²²

Of course, the Jews have been and still are elect. However, for their sinful pride in claiming that election, God has rejected them.

The Jews: Simultaneously Elect and Rejected

In various passages in Romans, Paul struggles with the meaning of the relationship between Jews and Gentiles after Christ had come. In his *Lectures on Romans*, Luther struggles with the same issue. In some of those passages, he affirms the election of the Jews. Thus, in reference to Rom 3:4, he writes "*He has not rejected His people*, that is, because of their unfaithfulness."²³ In his summary to Chapter 9, he writes: "The Apostle grieves over the obstinacy of the Jews; he shows that the Jews have not been deprived of the promise of the fathers."²⁴ Referencing Rom 3:3, he writes, "If someone should object: 'It is nothing that "the oracles of God were entrusted to them," for they made them of no effect and useless to themselves,' the reply is, 'This is not a detriment. It is sufficient that they remained effective for some of them!'"²⁵

Yet Luther does not affirm the continued election of the Jewish people where Paul most clearly did so (and where Luther's colleague, Justas Jonas also will do so). On Rom 11:29: "*For the gifts of God are irrevocable*," Luther makes the following comments:

This is a remarkable statement. For the counsel of God is not changed by either the merits or demerits of anyone. For He does not repent of the gifts and calling which He has promised, because the Jews are now unworthy of them and you [Gentile Christians] are worthy.²⁶

²² LW 25:182.

²³ LW 25:26. Emphasis mine.

²⁴ LW 25:79.

²⁵ LW 25:25.

²⁶ LW 25:432.

Luther's comment is itself a remarkable statement. Luther inexplicably broadens the recipients of election and thereby includes Paul's Christian audience. Furthermore, as God elects these Christians, God rejects the Jews. Luther makes a similar claim about Rom 9:5-7:

All these points argue that predestination and the certainty of our election, and not the righteousness of man's will, are the cause of our salvation. For if the people were not saved who had such advantages as these, and those who did not have them were saved, it is clear that election, and not their righteousness, saved them.²⁷

In other passages Luther maintains that the Jews are elect but also that they are rejected. Commenting on Rom 3:3, "*Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God?*" he writes, "And there he shows how the Israel of the flesh, which at the same time is both the Israel of the promise and election and the Israel of the flesh, obtained the fulfillment, but Israel which is only of the flesh and only according to the seed did not obtain it at all."²⁸ As noted, Luther sometimes asserts that the promise of God to Israel is still theirs, while, in other passages, Luther asserts that the promise has expired: "It is as if he [Paul] were saying that although they [the Jews] *had the promise, and it was not imparted to them,*"²⁹ and "For all Jews received the promises, although not all received the fulfillment."³⁰

As noted before, Luther regards the Jews as the prototype of sinful persons for trying to justify themselves because of their election.

For the Jews were most unwilling to hear that *they had been cast away*. Hence they even wished to cast Christ down headlong . . . For because of this they felt that they had been cast off even more than the Gentiles and were regarded as unworthy, which was an intolerable thing for them who were so proud and boastful concerning the blood of the fathers and the righteousness of the Law.³¹

The Jews are elect, but, because they trust in that election, they are rejected:

For this is the entire extent of the wrath of the Jews and the main reason for their unbelief, that the Gentiles, whom they did not think worthy . . . seem to be vaunting themselves because of the promises which have been revealed to them, *while the Jews are rejected*, although they want to be the only people of God.³²

Luther here indicts the Jews with an old charge: because of their religion, they hate Gentiles in general and Christians in particular.

²⁷ LW 25:80.

²⁸ LW 25:208.

²⁹ LW 25:80. Emphasis mine.

³⁰ LW 25:207.

³¹ LW 25:93. Emphasis mine.

³² LW 25:93-94. Emphasis mine.

Luther displays in his *Lectures on Romans* the dialectical thinking that characterized his subsequent theology in proclaiming that Christians are “justified and sinful at the same time.” Here, Luther further manifests this dialectical thinking in maintaining that the Jews are elect and rejected at the same time: “As regards the Gospel... God hates them, and for this reason so do the apostle and all who are of God... yet they are beloved *for the sake of their forefathers*... because they, too, are friends.”³³ Wilhelm Maurer has commented on the simultaneous election and rejection of the Jews in Luther's *Lectures*: “Thus the Jews stand under the wrath of God and under God's judgment of rejection, and no person can and should overcome it. However the steadfast promise of Grace is pronounced over them and through the return of Christ all Israel will be saved and will follow him. The condition of tension must be maintained.”³⁴

Maurer's assertion does not seem to be quite accurate, for Luther clearly envisions an end to this tension. Thus, Luther writes on Rom 11:1: “But now, in order that God might demonstrate that He will not reject His people, He has taken up even that man who had lost hope proving thereby how firm His predestination and election is.”³⁵ Commenting Rom 3:3, *What if some were unfaithful?* Luther claims that these elect people may yet find fulfillment of the promises made to them: “For all of them received the oracles and promises of God, and to this day they are still awaiting the promises of this kind concerning the sending of Christ.”³⁶ In order to end the interim tension between the election and rejection of the Jews, Luther calls for missions to convert and save them.

Missions for Conversion: Salvation for the Jews

About Rom 11:25, Luther writes: “On the basis of this text it is commonly accepted that the Jews at the end of the world will return to the faith, although the text is so obscure that unless one is willing to follow the authority of the fathers who explain the apostle in this way, no one would seem to be convinced of this purely on the basis of the text.”³⁷ Luther interprets this verse and the following verse, “*And so All Israel shall be saved,*” to mean that the Jews will convert before the second coming. He further observes, “Christ has not yet come to the Jews, but He will come, namely, at the Last day, as the writers cited above show.

³³ LW 25:431-32.

³⁴ Wilhelm Maurer, “Die Zeit der Reformation,” in *Kirche und Synagoge: Handbuch zur Geschichte von Christen und Juden*, Vol. 1, K. H. Rengstorf and S. von Kortzfleisch, eds (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett, 1968), 384. Translation mine.

³⁵ LW 25:421.

³⁶ LW 25:208.

³⁷ LW 25:429.

Thus it is necessary that we interpret the apostle as speaking of the mystical coming of Christ to the Jews... For this entire text has the purpose of persuading his people to return."³⁸ Thus, Luther reads this Pauline passage, which itself makes no mention of Jewish conversion to Christianity but only proclaims that God will save this people, as a call for missions to the Jewish people. Thus, his commentary on Rom 9:2 reads: "the whole order of the text indicates that he is speaking with most fervent zeal about their salvation. For he wants to bring Christ to them."³⁹

Luther maintains that the return of Christ will include the conversion of Israel; Christ has not yet come to Israel, but he will. In the last days, driven by hunger for the Word, many will convert. About Rom 9:27, he comments: "He speaks with great constancy, because he will also call some out of Israel."⁴⁰ Eric Gritsch notes that the seeds for toleration of the Jews are found here but that this toleration is only the first step toward conversion: "For a while, it seemed that [Luther] could live with Paul's view that the 'hardening' of Israel was a divine mystery..."⁴¹

Luther believes that all previous and concurrent attempts to convert the Jews have been destined to fail because, "Boldly they heap blasphemous insults upon them, when they ought to have compassion on them and fear the same punishments for themselves.... They wish to convert the Jews by force and curses, but God will resist them."⁴² Yet, while Luther calls for toleration, he also praises Paul's harsh words toward the Jews as appropriate means of mission: "although he himself [Paul] was a Jew, yet he says nothing but evil and condemnatory things about them, and even though he was not a Gentile, yet he predicates nothing but glorious and enriching things about them;... he also does it in order that the Jews through this might be provoked to jealousy so that he might gain a double fruit for his ministry."⁴³ Though he repeatedly chides Christians for bringing misery and exile to the Jews, he also claims that their misery and exile are signs of divine wrath: "This is plainly manifest in the Jews, because although they progress in their unbelief, yet they are oppressed in many other ways."⁴⁴ As Luther himself in 1523 will call for mission to the Jews marked by toleration, in 1543 he will call for a "sharp mercy" toward the Jews in order to drive some of them to Christ. Both of these evangelical responses are predicted in Luther's *Lectures on Romans*, and are predicated on the denigration of Judaism contained in them.

³⁸ LW 25:430-31.

³⁹ LW 25:379.

⁴⁰ LW 25:85.

⁴¹ Eric W. Gritsch, *Martin, God's Court Jester: Luther in Retrospect* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 133.

⁴² LW 25:428-29.

⁴³ LW 25:427.

⁴⁴ LW 25:232.

1523

Luther's essay, *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew*, is frequently cited as an example of his tolerance toward the Jews. Here, Luther states that he hopes that the Jews will first acknowledge Jesus as Messiah and later as divine. If dealt with in a friendly fashion, Luther believes that perhaps some would become true Jews and return to the faith of their fathers, the prophets and the patriarchs.⁴⁵ However, while such a mission holds out hope for the Jews, it also implicitly denigrates their religion. Referencing Luther's 1523 tract, Ehrlich writes, "He [Luther] had never cared for Judaism, and for the Jews as human beings only if they accepted conversion to his doctrine of Christianity."⁴⁶ Oberman maintains much the same thing, "Luther's critique of Judaism as a religion is just as uncompromising in 1523 as it is in the later years: Christianity and Judaism are mutually exclusive; Reformation does not imply salvation for Jews...God has granted an adjournment of the tribunal—just this once."⁴⁷

One may add to Oberman's remarks that Luther displays the same regard for Judaism as he did in his *Lectures on Romans*. Thus, it seems to me that Apel's comment, "[W]hat is remarkable in this period is Luther's more inviting stance toward the Jews,"⁴⁸ is misleading, for there really is nothing surprising about it. Luther simply details the kindly mission to save the Jews from Judaism, which he had earlier envisioned.

1523-1537

Three years after calling for missions to the Jews, Luther himself practiced what he had preached. According to Gritsch,

Three rabbis visited Luther and discussed the messianic passage in Jeremiah 23:6. The rabbis refused to apply the passage to Jesus. In a sermon preached later on the same text, Luther said, "They did not stick to the text but tried to escape from it"; the encounter, according to Luther's recollection, ended with the expressed hope for mutual conversion.⁴⁹

It was both Luther's continued failure to convert the Jews and his fears that the Jews themselves were attempting to convert Christians that fueled a new stage in Luther's relationships

⁴⁵ LW 25:429-30.

⁴⁶ Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich, "Luther and the Jews," in *Luther, Lutheranism, and the Jews*, Jean Halpérin and Arne Sovik, eds. (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 1984), 39.

⁴⁷ Heiko A. Oberman, *The Roots of Anti-Semitism: In the Age of Renaissance and Reformation*, trans. James I. Porter (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 111.

⁴⁸ Apel, "Luther as Missiologist to the Jews," 176.

⁴⁹ Gritsch, *Martin, God's Court Jester*, 135.

with the Jewish people. The people of the law remained not only “enemies of the Gospel” by refusing to convert but were, he believed, the source of active opposition to the gospel.⁵⁰ Though legalistic interpretation of the Scriptures was a force against which Luther had struggled throughout his career, he was convinced in the 1530’s that legalistic Christians were themselves directly under Jewish influence. Just as Luther in his *Lectures on Romans* called all heretics “imitators of the Jews,” so here he called these Sabbatarians “apes of the Jews.”⁵¹

In his letter to Count Wolfgang Schlick zu Falkenau entitled *Against the Sabbatarians*, Luther directed his anger less toward legalistic Christianity than he did toward the Jews whom he believed were its instigators. As he did earlier in his *Lectures on Romans*, so here Luther sees the Jews as the source of all legalistic religion. As he did in those Lectures, so here he claims that the current exile and misery of the Jews are the punishments of the wrathful God for their unbelief: “They [the Jews] must and will reply that this is due to their sins.”⁵²

According to Ehrlich, Luther believed that “[i]f he cannot convert the Jews, he may take comfort at the thought that the prophets achieved just as little...They can be despaired of with a clean conscience.”⁵³ About Luther’s attacks on the Jews during the 1530’s, he writes: “This does not mean any change in his theology, his basic positions, but he now finds himself in a new historical situation, since established Protestant churches have come into being.”⁵⁴ Ehrlich continues:

At bottom Luther was probably puzzled rather than disappointed to find that the Jews would not seize the chance offered them. When he once (on 12 April 1539) looked at a Hebrew book dealing with prayers and feast days of the Jews, apparently a prayer book for the holidays, his only comment is: “They understand nothing of God’s grace, or of the righteousness of faith, of God’s mercy for the sake of Christ; they do not understand that faith in Christ makes men just, devout and blessed. Of all this they know less than nothing...” The assessment of Judaism is not new; it is found twenty years earlier in the commentary on Romans.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Ehrlich writes, “We have, however, no sources informing us of the true historical facts; more particularly, we know little about the active participation of the Jews in the formation of the Christian sect in question” in his article “Luther and the Jews,” 39-40. The degree to which Luther’s belief in Jewish missions to Christians may itself be a function of his belief that those who do not believe in the Gospel must inevitably and actively oppose the Gospel is a subject that warrants further study.

⁵¹ As quoted in Eric W. Gritsch’s “Luther and the Jews: Toward a Judgment of History,” in *Stepping-Stones to Further Jewish-Lutheran Relationships: Key Lutheran Statements*, Harold H. Ditmanson, ed. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1990), 109.

⁵² *Against the Sabbatarians: Letter to a Good Friend, 1538*. LW 47:67.

⁵³ Ehrlich, “Luther and the Jews,” 40.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

1543-1546

"The immediate occasion for Luther's notorious anti-Jewish tract *Von den Juden und ihren Lügen* ('Of [sic] the Jews and Their Lies') (1543) was a pamphlet probably written by a Jew and criticizing Luther's letter against the Sabbatarians."⁵⁶ What Luther produced marked the beginning of his final fulminations against Judaism. Yet what Luther produced was not new. Rather, the tract was a product of the anti-Judaism earlier proclaimed in his *Lectures on Romans*, but unfettered from the constraints of toleration by which he had bound himself during the period of missions.

Luther begins the essay with these words: "I had made up my mind to write no more either about the Jews or against them."⁵⁷ Luther claims that the continued reports of Jewish proselytizing have compelled him to compose this treatise. As he did not only in *Against the Sabbatarians* but also in his *Lectures on Romans*, he charges that "[t]hey [the Jews] have failed to learn any lesson from the terrible distress that has been theirs for over fourteen hundred years in exile...For such ruthless wrath of God is sufficient evidence that they assuredly have erred and gone astray."⁵⁸ He charges them here as he did in 1515-1516, with the primal sin of self-righteousness: "No one can take away from them their pride concerning their blood and their descent from Israel."⁵⁹ As he did in his earlier exegesis, so here too Luther notes how many righteous persons in the Hebrew Scriptures are the common ancestors of Gentiles as well as the Jews.⁶⁰ He repeats his earlier charges that circumcision is of no avail to the Jews; indeed, "we note here again how the Jews provoke God's anger more and more..."⁶¹ He repeats the charge made in his earlier lecture that the Jews take pride in having received the Law; for which conceit they stand judged by God.⁶²

In the middle section of his essay, Luther cites texts from the Hebrew Scriptures to prove that Jesus is the Messiah. As he does so, he claims as he did in his *Lectures on Romans* that the Jews hate Christians for the grace God has extended to them: "They remain in their hearts our daily murderers and bloodthirsty enemies."⁶³ In the third section of this essay, Luther writes, "Since Jews have slandered the holiest of holy in Christendom, Jesus, Mary, and the Trinity, they should be deprived of Christian mercy."⁶⁴ Again, these charges are not new; they are found in his earlier exegesis of Romans.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Martin Luther, *On the Jews and Their Lies*, 1543. LW 47:137.

⁵⁸ LW 47:138.

⁵⁹ LW 47:141.

⁶⁰ LW 47:148.

⁶¹ LW 47:150.

⁶² LW 47:170-71.

⁶³ LW 47:218.

⁶⁴ LW 47:254.

In light of my above analysis, I am puzzled by Nestigen's remark that "there is no parallel in Luther's earlier work for the tone of some of his comments and the harshness of his recommendations for dealing with the Jews in *On the Jews and Their Lies* and *On the Ineffable Name*."⁶⁵ To be sure, I am not considering the latter work by Luther and, to be sure, parallels to both works may be lacking in his 1523 treatise. However, parallels certainly abound in one of his earlier works—in his 1515-1516 *Lectures on Romans*.

Luther concludes his essay with this attack: "From all this we Christians see—for the Jews cannot see it—what terrible wrath of God these people have incurred and still incur without ceasing, what a fire is gleaming and glowing there."⁶⁶ It is out of evangelical hope that Luther calls for Christians to exercise a "sharp mercy to see whether we might save at least a few from the glowing flames."⁶⁷ Luther then offers his infamous seven points of "sincere advice," and then concludes, "May Christ, our dear Lord, convert them mercifully and preserve us steadfastly and immovably in the knowledge of him, which is eternal life. Amen."⁶⁸

Johannes Brosseder argues that Luther does maintain some hope for conversion of the Jews even when he forswears that he is done with them:

The fundamental matter here must be seen to be that for Luther the immediate approach of the Last Judgment was understood—that in the end-time no signs were visible which announced the conversion of the Jews in toto.... Luther claims that it is not possible to convert all the Jews, one must be content with a small gathering.⁶⁹

That Luther changed his views on whether some Jews or all Jews or any Jews would convert does not mean that Luther ever changed his view of Judaism.

Although Luther had abandoned the hope of the final conversion of Israel, still it is doubtful if his position about the Judaism of that time would have turned out to have been essentially different if Luther had held fast to the hope in the conversion of all the Jews in the end-time. The theological presuppositions in the late Jewish-writings could have scarcely allowed an essentially different view of Judaism.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Nestigen, "Luther, Judaism, and Cultural Tolerance," 168.

⁶⁶ LW 47:267.

⁶⁷ LW 47:268.

⁶⁸ LW 47:306.

⁶⁹ Johannes Brosseder, *Luthers Stellung zu den Juden im Spiegel seiner Interpreten: Interpretation und Rezeption von Luthers Schriften und Ausserungen zum Judentum im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert vor allem im deutschsprachigen Raum* (München: Max Hueber Verlag, 1972), 378. Translation mine.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* Translation mine.

Oberman notes that a number of Luther's closest companions—Melanchthon, Osiander, Bullinger, and Jonas were appalled by his 1543 treatise.⁷¹ The eminent Rabbi Josel of Rosheim exclaimed, "Never before has a *Gelehrter*, a scholar, advocated such tyrannical and outrageous treatment of our poor people."⁷² Yet, though some of the treatment called for toward the Jewish people was new, the assessment of the religion of the people was not. Luther denigrates the religion of the Jews in both his 1515-1516 *Lectures on Romans* and also in this 1543 essay.

After he finished *On the Jews and their Lies*, Luther wrote two further essays (*On the Ineffable Name*⁷³ and *The Last Words of David*⁷⁴) in which he repeated many of its charges. His attacks on Judaism persisted until his death. For example, he was dismayed that authorities in Eisleben had not acted on the "sincere advice" he had preferred in 1543. Accordingly, Luther concluded his sermon there on February 15, 1546—three days before his death—by again calling for a sharp mercy toward the Jew, which combined an evangelical hope for Jewish conversion with a disparagement of their religion; thus, if they do not turn to Christ, "we should neither tolerate nor suffer their presence in our midst."⁷⁵ Thus, in the final words of his final public address, Luther adjudged Judaism just as he had in his earliest writings—the prototype for and living reminder of unrighteous religion which merited God's wrath. Now, however, because the Jewish people had retained their unrighteous religion, they merited the wrath of Luther and all Christians.

Conclusion

In this article, I have argued that though Luther changed his mind about how Christians should treat Jews, he did not change his mind about the religion of the Jews. In both his earliest writings such as his 1515-1516 *Lectures on Romans* and also in his final sermon, Luther taught that Judaism was a self-righteous religion and therefore opposed to Christian faith in God's work in Christ as the source of righteousness. From beginning to end, he viewed the Jews as a people to whom a promise had been delivered but who were now under the wrath of God for rejecting the fulfillment of that promise in Jesus Christ. And until the end, Luther hoped that a few Jews would respond to this promise. However, at the very

⁷¹ Oberman, *The Roots of Anti-Semitism*, 47ff.

⁷² LW 47:135.

⁷³ Gerhard Falk, *The Jew in Christian Theology: Martin Luther's Anti-Jewish "Vom Schem Hamphoras," Previously Unpublished in English, and Other Milestones in Church Doctrine Concerning Judaism* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 1992).

⁷⁴ LW 15:265-352.

⁷⁵ Quoted in Oberman, *The Roots of Anti-Semitism*, 113.

end, he had no hope in the efficacy of missions marked by tolerance but rather hoped only that a sharp mercy, which he had also endorsed in those lectures, might drive a tiny remnant to Christ.

I have also indicated that Luther's negative assessment of Judaism derives from his understanding that righteousness is *attributed* to persons by God rather than being *obtained* by persons from God. Eric Gritsch writes:

[T]he study of Luther's handling of the question of the relationship between the gospel and Israel suggests that Luther's anti-Semitism was anchored in his perception of human sin, which pits righteousness of self against God's righteousness manifested in Jesus Christ...Despite pioneering theological insights into the universality of God's love in Christ, Luther turned the "good news" of this love into "bad news" for the Jews.⁷⁶

Of course, Luther is not alone in the history of Christian thought in disparaging Judaism. Mark Edwards contends that Luther's anti-Judaism has Pauline roots: "[T]hroughout, the history of Christian Jewish relations, has been to consign the Jewish religion to the status of 'has-been.' Judaism is seen as a religion of 'law' that has now been superseded by a religion revealed through Christ.... Christianity was born out of, but also in opposition to, Judaism."⁷⁷ With such deep roots in Christian thought, one might conclude that anti-Judaism is unavoidable in Christianity.

Yet, there were Evangelicals in Luther's own time who disagreed with his understanding of the relationship of Israel and the gospel. Luther's close friend Justus Jonas reacted negatively to Luther's attacks on Judaism. Ehrlich writes, "Oberman has shown that the attitude of Justus Jonas represents a legitimate alternative, born of the Reformation, to Luther's concepts."⁷⁸ Jonas held fast to the Pauline image from Rom 11:17, wherein Christians are described as a branch grafted onto the tree of Israel, as an image of respect for the religion of the Jewish people: "Unlike Luther, Jonas sees an inner link between Jews and Christians, a road along which Luther is not prepared to follow him."⁷⁹ Thus despite Nestigen's assertion that tolerance is a markedly modern concept, which should not be imposed on Luther's time, Oberman remarks, "The difference between Jonas and Luther described here is not something read back into the sources after the fact and in the light of modern historical experience."⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Gritsch, *Martin, God's Court Jester*, 144-45.

⁷⁷ Mark U. Edwards, Jr., "Toward an Understanding of Luther's Attacks on the Jews," in *Luther, Lutheranism, and the Jews*, Jean Halpérin and Arne Sovik, eds. (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 1984), 28-29.

⁷⁸ Ehrlich, "Luther and the Jews," 41.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Oberman, *The Roots of Anti-Semitism*, 49.

In conclusion, I would like to sketch a number of observations derived from my analysis above, which I believe are relevant to Jewish-Christian relations. I anticipate enlarging and revising this sketch through conversation with others.

Do Christians and Jews Share a “Solidarity in Sin”? Yes and No.

According to Maurer, Oberman, and perhaps Nestigen, Luther proposes that Christians and Jews share something which should chasten the former and thereby restrain them from persecuting the latter, and which, because it does so to the former, may bring some relief from worry to the latter. That shared something is a “solidarity in sin.”

But as I have indicated, Luther believes that Christians and Jews are sinful in different ways. Insofar as Christians acknowledge their sinfulness and trust the promise that God has reckoned them righteous, they are reckoned righteous (although they are still sinful). Jews can only be reckoned as righteous only insofar as they (through God’s will) come to trust in their election through the gospel promise of Christ. Jews who claim their election as Jews are unrighteous. In fact, for Luther, their unbelief and unrighteousness is prototypical of all unrighteousness and sin. Christians do not share with Jews their designation as prototypically sinful.

In his recent book on Luther, Bernhard Lohse provides an analysis of the sinful function of Judaism in Luther’s theology, which helps illustrate this point. Lohse comments, “What should also be kept in mind is that the picture he drew of legalism of Jewish religion so well suited his polemic against works-righteousness that ‘the Jews’ were simply a cipher for one who justifies oneself.”⁸¹ The word that Lohse employs—“cipher” or in German “*chiffre*”—again reveals that the sinfulness of Christians and Jews is not a completely solid thing. Just as a cipher signifies something predetermined by the structure of a code, so, in the “code” of Luther’s theology, the term “Jew” signifies sinfulness. On the other hand, in that code, the term “Christian” may signify either sinfulness or righteousness. Accordingly, in Luther’s schema, a Christian could and should confess something like, “I am as much a Jew—that is, a sinner – as any Jew.” However, in this schema, a Jew could not claim, “I am as much a Christian – that is, a sinner who is also deemed righteous by God—as any Christian.”

⁸¹ Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther’s Theology: Its Historical and Systematic Development*, trans. and ed. Roy A. Harrisville (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999), 345.

In a sense, Luther's theology is not anti-Semitic. In another sense it is. In all senses, his theology is anti-Judaic. And worse, this anti-Judaism has been and may still be a "tinder of sin" for some kinds of anti-Semitism.

On the one hand, it may be said that Luther was not an anti-Semite. That is, he had no special wrath for the Jewish people as a people, because every people—Jew and Gentile—is unrighteous. On the other hand, it may be said that Luther was an anti-Semite. That is, he easily and, it seems, inevitably turned wrathful against this people—as this particular people—when they did not turn to the righteousness of God in Christ. For Luther, when the Jews did not convert, then it was not just their religion, Judaism, which was the problem, but their being Jewish.

Gritsch rightly observes that, in Luther's time, "no great effort was made to convert Luther's [anti-Jewish] rhetoric into action."⁸² Nevertheless, the anti-Judaism of Luther resulted in seven points of "severe mercy," which, if it had been converted into action, would have inflicted untold pain and suffering on the Jewish people. It is doubtful that they would have suffered any less pain and suffering knowing that that severe mercy had been directed at them not from their being viewed as racially or ethnically Jewish, but for their being seen as Jews faithful to Judaism.

Luther's anti-Judaism, in fact, did later contribute to the pain and suffering of Jews when Hitler and those German Lutheran Bishops who aligned with Hitler cited Luther. Of course, the Nazis cited lots of persons, and all of their interpretations of these citations were not equally valid. But Luther's writings about the Jews, fueled by his anti-Judaism, provided some easy fodder for Nazi anti-Semitism. To be sure, the Holocaust cannot be hung on Luther. And some of his remarks do bear an affinity with the anti-Semitism of his time. Still, I do not believe it adequate to claim that his anti-Jewish remarks were "more in keeping with the standards of the late middle ages" as Nestigen⁸³ asserts, or easily attributed to "contextual anti-Semitism" as Apel⁸⁴ asserts. Actually, Luther's response to the Jews seems motivated by theological understanding that civil authority should preserve the public (in this case, from the Jews). That is, he believes that God's left hand of temporal authority should be used to restore order over chaos. Luther's anti-Jewish remarks seem quite rooted in his theology about that left hand.

What of God's right hand? Were Luther's later anti-Jewish remarks also informed by his understanding of the gospel? I believe they were. Consider this observation by Apel, "Luther thought he had a problem with Jews not because their blood was Jewish but

⁸² Gritsch, "Luther and the Jews," 115.

⁸³ Nestigen, "Luther, Judaism, and Cultural Tolerance."

⁸⁴ Apel, "Luther as Missiologist to the Jews," 175.

because they scorned the grace which their own God offered them through the true Messiah Jesus Christ."⁸⁵ But did the Jews "scorn" the gospel or did they only seem to, to Luther? (and to Apel?) We know very little about how the Jews responded to Luther's preaching and teaching, but it seems likely that, in his last days, Luther, who could conceive unbelief only to be a rebellion against God, could therefore only regard Jews who did not believe as enemies of the gospel. Therefore, while Luther may not have been the father of anti-Semitism, he did add to the history of Christian thought a uniquely "Evangelical" rationale for abandoning toleration for and bringing suffering upon the Jewish people when they remain faithful to Judaism. It is hard to determine the influence of that rationale on the history of the persecution of the Jews. But Luther's rationale did contribute to that persecution, and, it appears to me, has the potential to do so again.

Justification by faith is the source of the problem of Luther's anti-Judaism. Justification by faith is the solution to that problem.

Koenig's goal for revisiting the theological constructs which underlay Luther's anti-Judaism is "to affirm what we feel in our hearts: that in the inscrutable workings of the one God Jews and Christians are bound together in special acts of God's mercy and grace for as long as God permits history to continue."⁸⁶

Does Luther's underlying theological construct—justification by faith—permit Koenig to arrive at such an affirmation? As I have argued in this paper, Luther's use of justification by faith is precisely the plumb line that leads him to conclude that Jews and Christians are *not* bound together in God's mercy and grace. Does that therefore mean that justification by faith is only a problem for Jewish-Christian relations? I do not think so. Certainly Justus Jonas used the gospel not to disparage the Jews or Judaism, but to argue that Jews and Christians had a kind of "solidarity in salvation." There are Evangelicals today who also would disagree with Luther using Luther's claims that we should not concern ourselves with the hidden will of God.

Luther succumbed to the evil of anti-Semitism through a theological failure of nerve. He so desperately tried to communicate God's unconditional love for Israel as well as for the people of God called "Christians" that he could not stop moving from the proclamation of divine mercy to conclusions about God's wrath. Suddenly the usual proper distinctions [between the hidden and revealed God] so brilliantly maintained with great theological sagacity in the midst of storm and

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 180.

⁸⁶ Koenig, "God and Covenant after the Holocaust: a Response," 4.

stress, disappeared from Luther's vision. When faced with what he considered self-righteous Jewish stubbornness in the matter of conversion, Luther no longer let God be God. Instead he got all caught up in answers he himself so stubbornly had warned against. One *can* know the hidden God with regard to his plans for the Jews: God had rejected them and is in favor of their rejection in the world he created!⁸⁷

Finally, it is not the gospel or the doctrine of justification by faith that produces the anti-Judaism of Luther, but Luther's use of the gospel and the doctrine of justification by faith as types of religion superior to Judaism. In the words of Walter Holsten: "Where Christian ideology rather than the gospel predominates, antisemitism [sic] is a virtually inevitable consequence; it may often remain latent for a long time; potentially it always exists."⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Gritsch, "Luther and the Jews," 115-16.

⁸⁸ Quoted in Ehrlich, "Luther and the Jews," 46.

LUTHER AND THE CARE OF SOULS: PASTORAL THEOLOGY AND SPIRITUAL LIFE IN THE LUTHERAN TRADITION

By Philip D. Krey

I am so honored to contribute this essay with Dr. J. Paul Balas and with my brother, Dr. Peter Krey, in this colloquy as we celebrate the recent publication of the volume, *Luther's Spirituality*, in the Classics of Western Spirituality Series by Paulist Press.¹

Luther's pastoral theology is a theology for the care of souls in the broadest sense. In the explanation to the first article of the Creed, "I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth," Luther writes: "I believe that God has created me together with all that exists. God has given me and still preserves my body and soul: eyes, ears, and all limbs and senses; reason and all mental faculties." Luther continues by confessing that God provides house,... spouse and children,... along with all the necessities and nourishment for this body and life.² The catechism's explanation to the fourth petition of the Lord's prayer for "daily bread" is just as comprehensive in its identification of our spiritual and physical needs: "Everything included in the necessities of and nourishment for our bodies, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, farm, fields, livestock, money, property, *and* upright spouse, upright children, upright members of the household, upright and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, decency, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors and the like."³

In his treatise on the Lord's Supper Luther defines "spiritual" as "nothing else than what is done in us and by us through the Spirit and faith whether the object with which we are dealing is physical or spiritual. Thus spirit consists in the use, not in the object." "Luther therefore lays down the rule that where Scripture contrasts flesh with spirit, it cannot refer to

¹ I will make frequent and substantial citations from the volume, Philip D. Krey and Peter D. Krey, *Luther's Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 2007). Hereafter referred to as *LS*.

² *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2006), 1162.

³ *Ibid.*, 1164.

Christ's flesh, but refers to fleshiness, or the fleshy mind."⁴ Luther makes these Pauline distinctions in relation to the bodily presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper, but for our purposes we can see it as a pastoral affirmation for the whole body and the body politic in faith and not a denial of the goodness of the body and its physical, and psychological needs. In fact, salvation for Luther as also in the Scripture has both an eternal and a secular dimension. We are citizens of heaven and citizens of this world God has created good, and thus we need to consider the health of the soul, the body, and the commonweal. In this essay the last section will be the longest, because I feel our understanding of public spirituality as Lutherans needs attention.

A Spirituality of Word and Sacrament

Fundamental to Luther's theology of pastoral care is the proclamation of the incarnation of Jesus Christ and his cross that announces forgiveness and acceptance by our being made righteous. As Oswald Bayer notes in his recent work, *Theology the Lutheran Way*, quoting Luther's treatise on the Lord's Supper, "One must recognize the humble human form of his glory that becomes physical and that can be touched (1 John 1:1), but the glory of our God is precisely that for our sakes he comes down to the very depths, into human flesh, into the bread, into our mouth, and into our heart."⁵ It is for our sake and for our salvation that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Thus, in our physical and spiritual needs we cling to a God who communicates with us in the "physical words of Christ's promise and 'illuminates' us through the breaking of the bread." The good news for us then communicated from the triune God is essentially sensory and material...⁶ As we are embodied creatures God's presence is communicated to us in forgiveness and acceptance in an embodied form. This forgiveness opens the future for salvation for health and wellbeing.

Thus, we hear and share with one another when in need an embodied word for forgiveness and healing. In the face of suffering we do not have to ask the question "Why" as if the hidden or naked God will reveal the mysteries of the onset of disease, mental illness or social and structural crises.⁷ God is with us in Christ Jesus and is made present in the Word proclaimed and the sacraments made visible and tangible for us. In community we hear a consoling word for our consciences, receive the bread and wine physically and spiritually, and

⁴ See "That These Words of Christ, 'This is my body,' etc., Still Stand Firm against the Fanatics," *Word and Sacrament* 3, ed. Robert H. Fischer in Helmut Lehmann and Jaroslav Pelikan (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; St Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955-1986), Vol. 37, p. 7. Hereafter referred to as LW.

⁵ "That These Words of Christ, 'This is my body,' etc., (1527 LW 37:72). Cited in Oswald Bayer, *Theology The Lutheran Way*, ed. and trans. Jeffrey G. Silcock and Mark C. Mattes, Lutheran Quarterly Books (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2007), 46.

⁶ Bayer, 46, 47.

⁷ Bayer, 48.

live in the world out of our baptismal vocation freed by the cross and resurrection of Christ for others. In other words, forgiveness and acceptance is carried forward and relieves stress, resentment, anger and the need for revenge. Indeed, it leads to productivity, psychological and communal health, and wellbeing. The old confirmation curriculum called it "Free to Be!"

Even as by the power of the Holy Spirit, the words "This is my body, This is my blood given and shed for you..." accomplish in us what they proclaim, so also the prayer "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us," helps us to see that God turns to us in favor and because of this we turn to our neighbor in mercy and acceptance. In this way we are free to be who we are called to be and live out our baptismal calling in the world without undue anxiety. Anxiety, bodily, and spiritual challenges will afflict us, and we may well need pastoral and professional help to deal with them, but we call upon God in prayer because as Luther asserts hope can only be proven in affliction and thus hope makes us secure.⁸ We also pray in hope because we are commanded to do so, and God has promised to listen and help. As the psalmist says, "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me" (50:15).

The Christian is baptized into this cruciform way of living. To describe this baptismal calling Luther preached a sermon on the "Cross and Suffering" in 1530 when he was in the Coburg Castle. According to the sermon, Christians must suffer; however, the cross they carry cannot be self-selected but is given to them by the devil and the world. They recognize the unsurpassed gift that Christ has become theirs in his suffering and serving. Thus Christ's suffering is so powerful that "it fills heaven and earth and tears apart the power and might of the devil, hell, death, and sin." When one's suffering and affliction is at its worst, if one can think on Christ, God, who is faithful, comes to help, as God has helped God's own from the beginning of the world. To explain this, Luther invokes the legend of St. Christopher, a story by which simple people can have an example of the Christian life and how it should be lived. When one puts Christ, the dear child, on one's back, one must either carry him all the way through the water or drown. As in one's baptism Christopher sinks, but he has a tree on which to cling, which is the promise that Christ will do something special with our suffering. It is not good to drown, Luther says. Through our baptisms we are raised again by God in Christ. In the world are trials and tribulations, but through the resurrected Christ one has freedom. "In our drowning," says Luther, "we have the tree to which we can cling against the waves, namely, the word, and the fine, strong promises that we shall not be overwhelmed by the waves."⁹

Luther makes the same point about God's seeing us when we are down, in his commentary

⁸ *LS*, 63.

⁹ *LS*, 151.

on the *Magnificat*: “Even as God is called the creator and the almighty because the world was created out of nothing so also God’s work continues unchanged. From now to the end of time God will make what is insignificant, despised, suffering, and dead into something valuable, honorable, blessed and alive. On the other hand, everything that is valuable, honorable, blessed, and living God will make to be nothing, worthless, despised, suffering, and dying. No creature can make something out of nothing. Therefore, God’s eyes peer only into the depths, not to the heights, as Daniel says in chapter 3:55 (Vulgate): ‘You sit upon the cherubim and behold the depths’; in Psalm 138:6: ‘For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly; but the haughty he perceives from far away.’ Similarly Psalm 113:5f: ‘Who is like our God, who sits on high and nevertheless sees below on the lowly in heaven and on earth.’ Because God is the most high with nothing above, God cannot look above or alongside and since nothing is God’s equal, of necessity, God must look within and below, and the farther you are below, the better God sees you.”¹⁰ As Timothy Wengert writes in the preface to *Luther’s Spirituality*, “The theology of the cross, is defined as God’s revelation in precisely the last place anyone would reasonably look, that is, in the gracious, faith-creating promise of the Crucified.”¹¹

The Community as Body of Christ

The believing community is also the crucified and resurrected body of Christ and serves in healing and pastoral care (1 Cor 12:27): “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” As one can see in Luther’s Letters of Consolation, he encourages that one hear the good Gospel of Christ from one another. We console one another with the Word of God, we pray for one another, visit, cook for, and serve one another when we are ill or in any kind of need. He writes to a despondent George Spenlein, an Augustinian Hermit, “I would gladly know how things are with your soul... Therefore, my dear brother, learn Christ, specifically, the Crucified. Learn to sing to him and in your despair at yourself to say to him, ‘You, Lord, are my righteousness; I, on the other hand, am your sin. You have taken upon yourself what is mine and given me a present what is yours. You took upon yourself what you were not and gave me the gift of what I was not.’ Watch out for yourself that you do not strive for such purity that you do not even see yourself as a sinner, nor even want to be one. For Christ dwells only in sinners.”¹²

¹⁰ *LS*, 94-95.

¹¹ *LS*, xv.

¹² *LS*, 4.

In Luther's Letters of Consolation, his spirituality is Christocentric. To be consoled in adversity one must "Know Christ and him crucified."¹³ It is a matter of delivering God's mercy through the Word that brings death and new life. In his commentary on Psalm 118 Luther writes ... "We should learn the rule that, whenever in the Psalter and the holy scripture the saints deal with God concerning comfort and help in their need, eternal life and the resurrection of the dead are involved. All such texts belong to the doctrine of the resurrection and eternal life, in fact, to the whole third article of the creed with its doctrines of the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection and everlasting life."¹⁴

This word of Christ and him crucified is proclaimed from the scriptures, from the pulpit, in baptism and the Lord's Supper materially, and in mutual consolation among believers for our healing. In addition, as Luther notes frequently, this word is a "mundwort" not a "federwort." It is heard through the ears and in hearing deeply via the inward ear. We are addressed by words that are effective in our hearing. How important then it is for those of us who are preachers to make sure that our sermons are not so story-like, or autobiographical, that they lack the "for you" power of Luther's insight in both the word and the sacrament, and we lose the healing power of the preached moment and its pastoral effectiveness. In the Lord's Supper the words are prescribed for us, and our parishioners come and cling to the words and chew on Christ's presence given and shed for them in their external balm. When God is the subject of our sentences, the preached word and the word of grace we proclaim to one another have the same external healing effect as the word of forgiveness for troubled consciences. These words of promise are heard by the inward ear with deep hearing for the experience of forgiveness, new insight into relationships, and for the sake of the world.

As we visit the bedsides of persons in the hospital, nursing homes, and their homes providing pastoral care, how important it is for us to address those suffering with the word of grace that addresses them not to provide reasons why they are suffering but to acknowledge that the incarnate and crucified Lord is with them and to fill their ears with scripture, prayer, and consolation, the psalms, hymns, and the proclamation of the Lord's Supper, and prayer. These are the tools in the pastor's or lay minister's kit to use after one has taken the individual's spiritual temperature asking them how it is with their soul, as Luther asks his friend, George.

¹³ See Letter to Spenlein and Wengert preface in *LS*, xv.

¹⁴ *LS*, 215.

Judgment is Behind us and not Ahead of us

I find that Luther's understanding of the judgment is also salutary for pastoral care. In other words he has a healthy eschatology for pastoral care. "For the earth and all its fullness are the Lord's" (1 Cor 10:26, Ps 24:1, Ps 50:12). The Judgment has occurred. We no longer need to worry about God punishing us for our failings or asking someone in the hospital why they are there for their sins. The baptized does not need to live in the terror of judgment as Luther himself did as a monk. One of the significant achievements in Luther's early religious breakthrough was to shift apocalyptic spirituality away from the late-medieval focus on the fearful symmetry of the last judgment to which all earthly pilgrimages were tending: the Judging Christ, seated on the tympanum of many medieval cathedrals, with the twenty-four elders seated around and the good and the damned rising or falling to either side, terrified the young Luther. This late-medieval apocalyptic view of a judging Christ collected around it attendant attempts at religious appeasement. Dr. Jane Strohl suggests that this understanding of judgment produced a context for clerical malpractice for Luther.¹⁵

In his commentary on the Apocalypse Luther points instead to the cross and resurrection as the judgment pointing to the crucified Christ and centering the drama of the last judgment on the crucifixion/resurrection event. He follows a Johannine understanding of the crucifixion/resurrection/ascension and last judgment as one event and we are baptized into his death and resurrection. See John 3:12-21, and John 12:31, 32: "Now is the judgment of this world." To live without the fear of judgment and to live knowing that it is the crucified who meets us in the end is to live in freedom. 1 Cor. 3:17: "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."

A Reform of Monastic Spirituality

In the Letter to Spenlein, Luther also immediately turns George away from himself to his neighbor. For Luther the spiritual life of the baptized is in community. Here the one who is welcomed forgiven and healed by Christ is challenged to welcome others who are in sin or error and to make their sins one's own. We truly bear one another's burdens. "Empty yourself (Phil 2:7); forget who you are and be like one of them, so that you bear them up."

He writes the letter to George Spenlein as a monk. Luther used the best of monasticism to shape the Lutheran spiritual tradition, but he was also critical of some of its core values. In 1530 he writes to Jerome Weller who suffers from depression affirming the value of community, "Flee solitude in any way you can, for [the devil] can best lie in wait and capture you when you are alone... Whenever the devil vexes you with these thoughts, seek the company

¹⁵ *LS*, xxiii.

of others, or drink more, joke, make nonsense, or engage in some other form of merriment. Sometimes one must drink more, play, or make nonsense and even commit some sin in defiance and contempt of the devil in order not to give him an opportunity to make us scrupulous about trifles."¹⁶

In a Table Talk: "The papists and Anabaptists teach that, if you wish to know Christ and keep your heart pure, then make it your preference to be alone. Do not wish to relate to people, but separate yourself, like a Nicolaitan brother. This idea is a devilish counsel that fights against the first and second tables [of the Ten Commandments]. The first table requires faith and awe, which in the other commandments is to be preached and glorified for the people and be proclaimed among the people. We are not to be fleeing and crawling into corners, but socializing with others. Thus the second table teaches us to benefit the neighbor, with whom we are to associate and not isolate ourselves. So [isolation] militates against marriage, the household, statecraft, and the life of Christ, who did not always want to be alone. His life was filled with what most resembles a riot, for the people were always crowding around Christ. He was never alone, except when he prayed. So away with those who teach, 'Be glad to remain alone, and your heart will be pure.'¹⁷"

Luther also adapts monastic spirituality as the Word of God is read in prayer, meditation, and spiritual attack (*oratio, meditatio, tentatio*). We pray over the words of scripture, we meditate on them, that is, reading them aloud—sometimes repeating them and experiencing them with all our senses. They become like music to us changing us with their physical effects on us, only in the word of God it is God speaking. As Oswald Bayer writes, "[T]he affects ... including the senses, the emotions, the imagination, the memory, and the desires, are not primarily the affects of the believer or of the unbeliever, but the affects produced by the word of God ... a God who speaks through sensory means."¹⁸ As Luther writes, "This is the touchstone that teaches you not only to know and understand, but also to experience how right, how true, how sweet, how lovely, how mighty, how comforting God's Word is, wisdom beyond all wisdom." Bayer continues, "[T]he scriptures are not simply printed words (*lese wort*) to be read off a page but life-giving words that stimulate our senses and emotions, our memory and imagination, our heart and desires. He says that the Holy Scriptures are not ... mere literature; they are words of life, intended not for speculation and fantasy but for life and action (*lebe wort*)."¹⁹

¹⁶ *LS*, 8, 9.

¹⁷ *LS*, 18.

¹⁸ Bayer, 62, 63; see also 67.

¹⁹ Bayer, 63; see also *LS*, 119.

Dwelling in the Word brings anxiety and spiritual attacks. As Luther notes in his commentary on Psalm 118, "I must always suffer, but I am always comforted."²⁰ He continues, however: "Note the great art of and wisdom of faith. It does not run back and forth in the face of trouble. It does not fill everyone's ears with complaints, nor does it curse and scold its enemies. It also does not complain against God by asking, 'Why does God do this to me? Why not to others who are worse than I am?' Faith does not despair of God who sends trouble. Faith does not consider God angry or an enemy, as the flesh, the world, and the devil strongly suggest. Faith rises above all this and sees God's fatherly heart behind God's unfriendly face. Faith sees the sun shining through these thick, dark clouds and this gloomy weather. Faith dares to call from the heart on God, who assigns it destruction and who looks upon it with a sour face."²¹

A Catechetical or Devotional Spirituality

Scholars have argued that there is a democratization and a secularization of monastic movements in the late medieval period.²² Monastic movements like the mendicants moved out of the monasteries to work as evangelicals in the towns and cities of Europe and were in less hierarchical organization. Luther's reform of spirituality is part of that movement in that in part he relocates monastic spiritual disciplines from the monastery to the home. The Christian home is the place where dear parents teach their dear children the catechism, namely, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and its meaning, and the sacraments. This is possible with the attendant vernacularization of the reading of the scriptures, prayer, and meditation. In fact the formerly monastic theological enterprise of prayer, meditation, and spiritual struggle is now a part of the way one believes and behaves as a baptized Christian in everyday life.

Luther's barber, Master Peter Beskendorf, asks him how he should pray. Luther teaches him not only how to pray but the fundamentals of the faith. "And if you happen to be a parent, this is a time that you should not forget yourself or your children and workers. Rather, pray earnestly that the dear Father, who placed you in the honor of his name and office also wants you to be called and honored as father and mother, will bestow upon you grace and blessing to ... nourish your spouse, child, and worker in a godly and Christian way, give you wisdom and strength to bring them up well and give them a good heart and will to follow and be obedient to your will."²³

²⁰ *LS*, 208.

²¹ *LS*, 209.

²² See Bernard McGinn, "The Changing Shape of Late Medieval Mysticism," *Church History* 65/2 (June 1996) 198.

²³ *LS*, 227.

As he teaches his barber how to pray the fourth petition: "Give us this day our daily bread," Luther commends: "Say, 'Ah, dear Lord God and Father, give your blessings also for these bodily needs of our daily lives. Graciously give us lovely peace; guard us from war and unrest. Give our dear emperor skill and victory over his enemies; give him wisdom and knowledge that he may rule his earthly realm peacefully and most blissfully. Give all kings, rulers, and lords good will and counsel to keep their land and people in tranquility and justice. Especially help and lead the dear sovereign of our country (named...) under whose guard and protection you preserve us, so that he might rule securely and blessedly, protected from all evil, lying tongues, and unfaithful people. Give all subjects the grace to serve faithfully and to be obedient. Give all estates, burghers and peasants, a way to become righteous, and let them show each other love and faithfulness. Graciously give good weather and fruitful harvest. I commend to you also house, land, wife and child. Help me to oversee them well and nourish and raise them in a Christian way. Deter and direct the destroyer and all evil angels who wish to hinder and harm us in these things. Amen.'"²⁴ This of course was also suggested by Luther as the meaning of the fourth commandment, as we will see.

A Public Spirituality and Secular Salvation

For Luther, however, the household cannot be pious without order in society provided by good government. Commenting on the meaning of the fourth commandment, he writes in "A Simple Way to Pray:" "Next, I thank the rich and goodly Creator for myself and the whole world, that in this commandment God founded and sustained the reproduction and survival of the human species, that is, of households, and states. For without these two institutions or authorities the world could not exist for a year, since without worldly government there is no peace, and where there is no peace there can be no households, and where there are no households, there children can neither be begotten nor brought up, and the estate of a mother and father would have to cease completely. So this commandment concerns, keeps, and preserves both household life and city life...."²⁵ This is quite different from a common American perspective that holds that the nuclear family is the center of things and family values will lead to order and peace in society. For Luther it is the other way around. Good government makes it possible for families to thrive.

In his commentary on Psalm 82 Luther offers three primary roles for good government. Of course we must remember that we cannot transfer everything from his late-medieval context to our own, but it is instructive for us to hear what he had to say. Luther did not hold to a medieval tradition called political-Augustinianism which held that the church was

²⁴ *LS*, 219.

²⁵ *LS*, 226.

somehow superior to the secular government. It has its parallel in the modern notion that the government can do nothing right—it has only limited value—and the faith-based and the private sector can do things much more efficiently and effectively. On the contrary, Luther sided with another tradition that believed that secular rulers had their own divine ordinance. In Psalm 82 he describes three virtues of good government.

The first role of government is to provide justice in the land and to restrain the wicked. In fact as I noted earlier, Luther notes that it is hard to be the church when there is no justice in the land. Luther had a profound fear as did most of his contemporaries of anarchy. But a good ruler makes it possible for the pastor's vocation to be possible and what a calling it is. He writes: "... [W]ithout the prince's protection and support, the pastor could not abide."²⁶ For the pastor provides the following role. It is worth citing: "... [M]y pastor, who does not glitter, is practicing the virtue that increases the reign of God, fills heaven with saints, harrows hell, robs the devil, wards off death, restrains sin, teaches and comforts all according to their stations in life, upholds peace and unity, raises fine young persons, and plants all kinds of virtue in the people. In short, the pastor creates a new world – not a temporary house, but an eternal and beautiful paradise in which God is pleased to dwell."²⁷ It is the pastor who should hold the government accountable for failing to perform its proper functions. In fact, if the pastor does not hold governing authorities accountable the pastor is being lazy or irresponsible. Luther writes in the commentary on Psalm 82: "... [R]eprimanding rulers is not seditious, provided it is done in the way here described, namely by the office to which God committed that duty, and through God's word spoken publicly, boldly, and honestly. Reprimanding rulers in this way is rather, a praiseworthy, noble, and rare virtue, and a particularly great service to God, as the psalm here proves. It is far more seditious for a preacher not to rebuke the sins of the rulers, for then the people become angry and sullen. Thus [the preacher] strengthens the wickedness of the tyrants, becomes a partaker in it, and bears responsibility for it, and God might become angry and send rebellion to plague them. On the other hand, when both the lords and the people are reprimanded equally, as the prophets did, neither side can blame the other, and they have to bear with one another, be satisfied, and be at peace with one another."²⁸

The second virtue of the prince, according to Luther, is to "help the poor, the orphans, and the widows to have justice and to defend their cause. ... for when a prince, Lord, or city has good laws and customs and everything is regulated and in order and when order is kept by people in all ranks, occupations, trades, businesses, services, and works, it is not said, 'The people are without laws.' Where there are no regulations, the poor, widows, and orphans are trodden down, because there is not a peasant so low that he cannot practice extortion.

²⁶ *LS*, 29.

²⁷ *LS*, 29.

²⁸ *LS*, 27.

This is equally true of buying, selling, inheriting, lending, paying, borrowing, and the like; it is only a matter of getting the better of another, robbing, stealing, and cheating one another. This happens most of all to the poor, the widows, and the orphans.²⁹ Luther obviously had no penchant for a laissez-faire capitalist and non-regulatory style of governing. In addition he strongly urges a prince to turn the whole of the realm into a “hospital” so that all will experience justice in it as opposed to selective charity. He writes, “This lord is providing this hospital for the many who are not beggars and do not become beggars. Assisting someone not to become a beggar is just as much a good work, virtue, and almsgiving as giving to one who has already become a beggar...”³⁰

Thus, the church proclaims the Gospel and God’s righteousness that produces free citizens of the world who serve charitably. Faith is the primary category for the church. The church uses persuasion to accomplish its mission of salvation and proclaims the one true faith. The government, which includes persons of all faiths, must necessarily compromise for the good of the whole. The human gift of reason is the primary category for government. When the government is unjust or tyrannical the church protests, demonstrates, and advocates. The government legislates as a result of reason and compromise among a plurality of religious traditions. When the government is unjust, the church is called to stand over and against the government especially through the church’s public leaders. If the church has the authority to rule in the public sector, the Lutheran fear is that tyranny results because the church tends not to compromise its values. Since the church cannot tax the people, its responsibility to the public is for charity. The government is to be held accountable for justice because it has the resources to provide schools, work, healthcare, security, and peace.

The third virtue for a ruler is to establish peace. Luther writes, “For where there is no government and wherever it is not honored, there can also be no peace. Where there is no peace, there can be no livelihood, and no one can keep one’s life and goods safe from another’s violence, theft, robbery, force, and wickedness. Thus, one will be much less able to teach God’s word and raise children in the fear and discipline of God” (Eph 6:4). He continues “Through peace we have our body and life, spouse and children, house and home, and all our limbs—hands, feet—eyes, health and freedom; and within these walls of peace we sit in safety. ‘Where there is peace there is almost heaven.’”³¹ Maintaining the peace is the noblest virtue of a governing authority. He concludes, “Even the Romans, the greatest warriors on earth, had a saying that to make war without necessity was to go fishing with a golden net; if it was lost, the fishing could not pay for it; if it caught anything, the cost

²⁹ *LS*, 29.

³⁰ *LS*, 30.

³¹ *LS*, 31.

was too much greater than the profit.³² One must not initiate a war or work for it; it comes unbidden all too soon. One must keep peace as long as one can, even if one must buy it with all the money that would be spent on the war or won by the war. Victory never makes up for what is lost by war.”³³

At the end of the commentary he identifies the prince as a secular savior doing an etymology customary for his time suggesting that the German word “Ritter” or “Knight” comes from “Retter”, that is, rescuer or savior: thus, a secular savior; thus, providing temporal health in the land so that homes can flourish in good care, so that churches and pastors can do their work for the care of souls, and so that there will be peace and justice in the land not for a few but for all.³⁴

Thus, as I suggested earlier Luther validated and made sharper the classical and catholic Augustinian role of temporal authority and secular vocations. In other words, he sided with the Aristotelian tradition that political vocations are good in and of themselves, making this clearer than Augustine had argued, but as many late-medieval scholars had already done. This is crucial for us to know at this point in history. I have become convinced that those communions like the Lutheran and other mainline ones that developed in the modern world and grew to depend upon society to establish them—those with roots in the Augustinian and European state church traditions must remain and thrive and be reformed because they expect the municipal, state, and federal structures to provide just services to their constituents rather than assume that they can create their own parallel holy institutions. There are some exceptions: Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Episcopal Hospitals, parochial schools and SMO’s, etc.³⁵ The faith-based sector still needs to model excellence, but it cannot accomplish the vocation of government to provide justice for all.

We have much to learn from the traditions that oppose and withdraw from society, but we need not be embarrassed by Luther’s witness that does not consider suffering or withdrawal as the primary Christian response to injustice. Nor can we withdraw to our homes and assume that an increase of privatization and family values will address the enormous dislocations in our society. The Lutheran tradition is more confident that advocacy, demonstration and mobilization of influence are effective in changing that which is perceived as unjust in the nation and the world. This relationship of church and society is crucial in this transitional period as governments are attempting to devolve their responsibilities on religious institutions without providing the resources to do so.

³² Suetonius, *Augustus*, 25.

³³ *LS*, 32.

³⁴ *LS*, 33.

³⁵ Such institutions can have parallel structures, but at best they are modeling and enabling the role of government in providing justice.

The churches in the reformation tradition cannot tolerate a failure of nerve in “secular salvation,” especially in the United States: a product of the moderate Enlightenment, largely patterned after the Roman Republic in its governmental structure and boldly proclaiming in the nation’s great seal Virgil’s claim “that a new order of centuries has begun.” That new order cannot be achieved privately, through business or families, or through charity, or through the church.

The modern world has not been opposed to our expressions of our faith, but has set it aside and forced it to become private and individual. In the postmodern world religion has come roaring back into the picture in a public way. In our culture and in the world an axial shift is occurring. All over the world many people are looking to faith and faith-based organizations for leadership to help solve the intractable problems of society like poverty, literacy, and the education of children. There is a revival of interest in the resources of religious traditions the world over. Those things that we had left to the government to do in the modern world (and I would submit modern enlightened governments largely succeeded), for a variety of reasons some now insist cannot be done in this way. Many, although not all, have lost faith in a government’s ability to administer social programs and to deliver education and to redistribute wealth through graduated taxation. Many are looking up again to the transcendent and not out to the secular and the public. We are in the midst of an axial shift due to the perceived failure of the secular order’s ability to address the perennial issues.

I would like to submit that the invitation for religion to move from the private realm (although worship has not been entirely private in the modern world) to public witness is healthy, but to assume that the Church or religious institutions can do a better job than secular agencies and the government is shortsighted from an historical perspective. We need to witness to a new kind of spirituality for a “secular salvation” while maintaining the proper meaning of salvation in worship and the life of the Church. This spirituality would strive for the common good, for the public welfare. This spirituality would resist arguments that privatization will produce a better society than public institutions unless the arguments in particular instances are absolutely convincing. With Paul (in Romans 13) it would teach and write that to be a Christian requires a civic piety that taxes are not an evil thing but that they need to be reformed such that they are graduated and fair. This is what good baptized citizens do: work for the benefit of their neighbors, sometimes until May of each year.

We are not resident aliens. Politicians who organize their campaigns around irresponsible cuts in taxes would be opposed publicly by church leaders. Those who argue that our taxes are our individual money would be reminded in stewardship visits that all that we have is God’s (Matt 22:15-22), and there is nothing that we have that we have not received (1 Cor. 4:7). It is simply not true that our social problems are intractable and impossible to address with the proper resources. We lack the will to address them with the proper skill and resources with which even the Samaritan helped the neighbor beaten up along the way. The church has failed to do its part in holding secular authorities accountable to their voca-

tions as opposed to their self-interest. We need to write and teach about norms that existed but a generation ago even in this country in relation to exorbitant wealth in the face of growing disparity of resources in this nation and around the world. We need to engage in truth telling about the injustices all around us.

At the same time, our advocacy for justice in the world makes it possible for the church to witness to its proper understanding of salvation, the freedom for which Christ has set us free – the freedom to live out our baptisms in faith anticipating the joy of the coming reign of God, the City of God that John the Seer beheld—and the freedom to live for others knowing that we are justified and have no need for self-justification. Free to put our shoulders to the most challenging issues within the church, like the task force on sexuality and inter-faith dialogue, knowing that God will preserve the church as God leads it in the world.

God also rules governments and holds rulers accountable for justice. The role of government is positively construed and not just as a restraining function. It is the responsibility of rulers to consider the commonweal and assure that the weak are protected from the strong and that all have peace, public education, work, health care, homes, and security for their families.

Thus, we have seen that Luther's theology includes a pastoral affirmation for the whole body and the body politic in faith and not a denial of the goodness of the body and its physical and psychological needs. In fact, salvation for Luther as also in the Scripture has both an eternal and a secular dimension. We are citizens of heaven and citizens of this world God has created good, and, thus, his theology effects the health of the soul, the body, and the commonweal.

LUTHER'S IN DEPTH THEOLOGY AND THEOLOGICAL THERAPY (USING SELF PSYCHOLOGY AND A LITTLE JUNG)

By Peter D. S. Krey

Introduction

In this lecture I will present Luther's theology and show how it turns out to be all about the care of souls, how it encourages us to care about the mentally distressed, how like Luther himself in his *Anfechtungen*, his episodes of spiritual conflict, delves into the depths, just like his theology delves into the depths, and thus his theology "lies at the heart of the care of souls, because the care of souls is at the heart of his theology," as Gerhard Ebeling puts it in a nutshell.¹ Howard J. Clinebell, Jr. writes, but without mentioning Luther, "The essential change force in any effective counseling relationship is the unearned freely given acceptance, which mediates divine grace."² Thus, in Lutheran language, it is justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith (CA Article IV) that Clinebell is placing at the heart of all counseling itself.

I will also show how Luther's theology enters the midst of life, his *coram-relationships*, the existential rapture that I find in "Freedom of a Christian," and finally, a Jungian analysis of what took place in Luther's *Anfechtung* of 1527—to preview the content, not the purpose of this lecture. My purpose is to move us away from being pastoral counselors that use a secular kind of psychology toward adopting a theologically informed counseling or therapy. To an extent secular healing may work for the body, but how can the inmost heart not have to be involved with Christ? I use the terms "theological counseling or therapy" to widen its scope beyond the ministry of the pastors, because we believe in the "priesthood of all believers." To be courageous, I can imagine a school or institute practicing and teaching a theological therapy derived from Luther. I am arguing that he provides Christianity with an in-depth theology that not only strengthens our counseling but brings spiritual growth for pastors and members of our congregations, for all our relationships.

¹ Gerhard Ebeling, *Luthers Seelsorge: an seinen Briefen Dargestellt* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1997). In German: *der theologische Grundzug der Seelsorge bei Luther* (449) and *der seelsorgerliche Grundzug von Luthers Theologie* (472).

² Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., *Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), 48.

I will present some of the basic features of Self Psychology in this lecture as well, because a comparative analysis of Self Psychology with Luther's theology will show his theology to be in-depth. I also chose Self Psychology, as developed by Heinz Kohut and Ernest S. Wolf (among others), because it is more relational than what they call the "classical Freudian drive-and-defense psychology,"³ and therefore it is more helpful for our theological purposes.

Self Psychology stresses empathy, defining it as vicarious introspection, where the understanding by the therapist is explained to the counselee, and then interpreted in accordance with a theory. This psychoanalytic approach developed directly from issues encountered in therapy,⁴ much like Luther, whose theology developed out of the most difficult issues experienced and faced in life. By means of a comparative analysis of Self Psychology and Luther's theology, I believe Luther's in-depth dimension will stand out in bold relief.

Robert Goeser, my late mentor, used to say that Luther's theology was concrete,⁵ occasional,⁶ performative,⁷ and relational.⁸ I hope to convince you that it is also therapeutic.

Compassionate Empathy

Many a "letter of spiritual counsel," to use the title of Theodore Tappert's fine volume,⁹ can be read as a case study, where Luther exhibits a phenomenal capacity for empathy (*Einfühlungsvermögen*) for the depressed, the suicidal, and the dying. He even empathizes with women grieving and hurting over miscarriages. Luther had suggested that Bugenhagen include such a consolation in one of his writings, but he could not handle the topic, so Luther wrote a consolation himself, which Bugenhagen attached to his writing.¹⁰

³ Heinz Kohut and Ernest S. Wolf, "Disorders of the Self and their Treatment: an Outline," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 59 (1978) 414.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 413.

⁵ *Concrete* can be understood in all the nuances, instances, properties together, none of which are abstracted away. Thus Luther does not speak of the Spirit abstractly, but as the concrete Spirit, the Word, enfleshed, embodied.

⁶ *Occasional*: Luther always writes addressing a specific crisis, issue, or situation at hand. A letter can be a good example of occasional writing.

⁷ *Performative*: The Word in powerful speech-act promises and commands, makes reality reflect what it says, brings into existence what it proclaims. Think of Luther's language of address!

⁸ *Relational*: Persons do not have their being in themselves but receive it from the outside and the also have their being for others, in the coram-relations.

⁹ Theodore G. Tappert, *The Library of Christian Classics*, Vol. XVIII, *Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1955).

¹⁰ LW 43:245. For Luther's "Comfort for Women Who Have Had a Miscarriage," see LW 43:247-250. (WA 53, (202) 205-208). Even today women find that there is no language to talk about miscarriages. See "A Secret Planet of Pain, where No Words are Quite Right," *The Science Times* Section in the *New York Times* (10/21/2008), D-5.

Luther's compassionate empathy and ours in our counseling, is received by grace, and is like that stressed in Self Psychology. Such empathy includes understanding and explanation,¹¹ and would use interpretation from Luther's theology in terms of incremental experiences of justification by grace on a person's way to a gracious birth of his or her New Being, the renewed self in Christ.

The Internal Dimension

I am convinced that Luther has an in-depth theology. While writing my dissertation, *Sword of the Spirit, Sword of Iron*, I very much confirmed my thesis that Luther carved out an internal realm of freedom. He speaks of an inward living faith, an internal church, a spiritual, internal Christianity; an internal mass, where Christ is worshiped in spirit and truth; internal communion, the internal word, the internal teacher, the internal person.¹² For example, immersed in the inner life, Luther allots almost all of the first 19 sections (3-19) of his popular version of the "Freedom of the Christian" (found in our book, pages 69-90) exploring the internal dynamics of the inner person, the next six for the outward person or the body; and the last four, for their outward economic relations.¹³ I believe it is possible to situate what the sociologist, Robert Bellah, called the deep self and the social, extensive self,¹⁴ into this internal realm charted by Luther. An in-depth theology, therefore is more comprehensive, holistic, and relational, than the narrow intra-psychoic scope of an in-depth psychology, but also, includes it.

A Theological Concept of the Unconscious

I believe that Luther had a theological concept of the unconscious. Luther's "Fourteen Consolations for Those who Labor and Are Heavy Laden" (1519) is astonishingly perceptive. He wrote it for the Elector Frederick the Wise, after the Elector had returned very sick from the Imperial Diet in Spain, where Charles V had been elected the emperor.¹⁵ Tell me if you do not think that Luther was aware of the unconscious, a theological unconscious, if you will!

¹¹ Ernest S. Wolf, *Treating the Self: Elements of a Clinical Self Psychology* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1988), 99-100.

¹² Peter Krey, *The Sword of the Spirit, the Sword of Iron: Word of God, Scripture, Gospel, and Law in Luther's Most Often Published Pamphlets (1520-1525)*, (PhD. Dissertation, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA, 2001), 320-322.

¹³ Philip D. W. Krey and Peter D. S. Krey, trans. and eds, *Luther's Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 2007), 267, n. 9. Hereafter, *LS*. (This is "our book," often referred to in this lecture.)

¹⁴ The concepts of the deep and extensive selves come from a course by Prof. Robert N. Bellah in the Sociology of Religion at the University of California at Berkeley, Spring Semester, 1996.

¹⁵ LW 42:119.

He argues that God shelters us from knowing and feeling all the evils that are inside us, even our innermost evils. One symptom of evil is nothing in comparison to a thousand evils hidden from us by God. "Although these evils are deeply hidden, they bear fruit that is clearly seen."¹⁶ On the blessing side of the consolations, Luther says: "To have faith is to have the Word and truth of God's self, the Maker of all. If all these blessings in their fullness were revealed to the soul, it would in a moment break free of the body, because of its exceeding abundance of sweet pleasure,"¹⁷ and "[s]ince this life of ours cannot bear to have [the fullness of these blessings] revealed, God mercifully keeps them hidden from us...."¹⁸ (Even the soul, "the king's daughter," as Luther describes the soul, "all glorious within; her clothing of wrought gold,"¹⁹ is sheltered from our sight.) Yet, you see how only a few evils and blessings that our conscious mind can sustain are available to us, and to plummet into the abyss on the left or receive rapture on high, on the right, would possibly explain an early 16th century manic-depressive experience. Thus, according to Luther, God mercifully shelters us so that we stay in our right minds. (In a Jungian sense of the unconscious, ever more of it would have to become conscious, in order to grow and mature. Here Luther is referring to onslaughts of the unconscious that the psyche has not been able to integrate.)

Self Psychology in a Nutshell

Self Psychology was worked out by the psychoanalyst, Heinz Kohut (1971), whose "unique achievement [it is]," writes Ernest S. Wolf, "to have developed the 'subjective' point of view into a comprehensive psychology."²⁰ Kohut argued that Freudian psycho-analysis was not reaching a number of persons suffering from self-disturbances and even causing misdiagnoses and therapeutic failures. The self and selfobjects, or selfobject experiences, are the dynamic center of his Self Psychology. Roughly, selfobject experiences²¹ are intra-psychic

¹⁶ LW 42:127. Also see p. 133 in this volume. Luther writes, "Until now we have seen in all the evils we endure only the divine goodness which is so great and so near to us that all of the countless evils which surround and tightly imprison us in this life, only a few—and even these not all the time—are permitted to assail us....Is it not a miracle to be struck only now and then by one of the countless blows aimed at us? It is indeed a blessing not to be struck by all. It is a miracle to be struck by but a few." I believe that these kinds of statements point to Luther's version of the unconscious.

¹⁷ LW 42:147. (For the Latin text of the "Fourteen Consolations," see WA 6, (99) 104-134).

¹⁸ *Ibid.* I substituted "God's self" for "God himself."

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Ernest Wolf, *Treating the Self: Elements of a Clinical Self Psychology*, 24, n. 3.

²¹ "Precisely defined, a selfobject is neither a self nor an object, but the subjective aspect of a self-sustaining function performed by a relationship of self to objects who by their presence or activity evoke and maintain the self and the experience of selfhood. As such, the selfobject relationship refers to an intrapsychic experience and does not describe an interpersonal relationship between the self and other objects." Wolf, *Treating the Self*, 184.

and strengthen the core of the personality, i.e., the self.²² According to Kohut, the self had a bi-polar structure, “one pole for mirroring (for ambition and acceptance), the other for merger and idealizing (for values and ideals). A tension arc stretches between these poles, because the poles (the one of acceptance and affirmation for mirroring and the second for merger with a perfect ideal for idealizing) push and pull the self in different directions.... Along the tension arc are arrayed the inborn talents and acquired skills.” The action agenda issues out of the tension arc between these poles in the self. That is metaphorically speaking, according to Ernest Wolf in *Treating the Self*.²³

What Kohut and Wolf call the nuclear self, Luther calls the inmost heart. For Luther, the heart is the center of the responsible self, according to Prof. Robert Goesser.

Perhaps you already sense how merger with a perfect ideal in idealizing and acceptance and affirmation in mirroring and the tension arc of the action agenda makes Lutheran ears tingle. Idealizing brings to mind Christ’s marriage with the soul in “Freedom of a Christian” and Augustine’s dictum, “Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee.” Mirroring brings to mind experiences of grace, accepting being accepted. Self Psychology argues that the self is at issue rather than its action: its cohesion, vigor, and harmony as opposed to its fragmentation, enfeeblement, and disorganization. Has anybody counted how many times Luther stresses the gracious change of the person via faith over works in the “Freedom of a Christian”? Note that Self Psychology deals with the weakness or strength of selves over what they do, their action agenda. In Luther’s language, they separate the person from works. Selfobject experiences strengthen the weak self and internalize and repair a person’s self-structure. The unconscious structure of the self, (which I believe is a narrative structure), needs to become conscious to the self, according to Kohut.²⁴

Christ's Mandate to Care for the Suffering

Why should the priesthood of all believers, the church itself care about people suffering with weak and enfeebled selves or with damaged self structures? Why should we care about people who are psychotic, bi-polar, or those who have personality and behavioral disorders? Healing such suffering people—who certainly also make us suffer, was part of what Jesus did in one encounter after another in the New Testament.

²² Other definitions include “an independent center of initiative and recipient of impressions,” (Ibid., 182) and “the center of an individual’s psychological universe,” but essentially unknowable. Heinz Kohut, *The Restoration of the Self* (Madison, Connecticut: International Universities Press, Inc., 1977), 310-311.

²³ Wolf, *Treating the Self*, 50.

²⁴ Heinz Kohut, *The Restoration of the Self*, 210-211: “when thinking only in terms of knowledge—then the unconscious becomes conscious—does not fill in the structure of the self and restore it.” The point is “to make conscious the unconscious structure—[underlying] the conscious self experience.”

Thus, Luther writes, "Our Lord Jesus has left us a commandment, which applies equally to all Christians, namely,... that we are to render works of mercy [Luke 6:36] to those that are afflicted and in a state of calamity, and that we are to visit the sick, try to free the captive, and do similar things for our neighbors so that the evils of the present may be somewhat lessened."²⁵

You hear an echo of Jesus' inaugural there (Luke 4:18-19). Then Luther writes to Frederick the Wise: "Your Lordship has been stricken by a grave illness [and] Christ is also sick in you. I cannot pretend that I do not hear the voice of Christ calling to me out of your body and flesh, 'Look, I am sick.' Such evils as sickness and the like are borne not by us Christians, but by Christ himself, our Lord and Savior, in whom we live and who plainly testifies in the Gospel, 'What you have done for the least of these, you have done for me' [Matt 25:40]."²⁶ Thus, those who suffer mental distress, who have lost their minds and have sustained injuries to their souls, have the voice of Christ crying out to us in the same way.

An Autobiographical Note

In my ministry in St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Coney Island, mentally challenged people filled my Bible study, and I had to take one person after another to the Coney Island Hospital, because they were decompensating and experiencing another episode of their mental disturbance. We also rented our facilities to the South Beach Psychiatric Clinic from Staten Island, and I believe our church could have been called, St. Paul's Psychiatric Lutheran Church in those days. In our inner-city conference held in Manhattan on June 24th – 26th, 1985,²⁷ I invited the pastors to deal with some of our mentally challenged church members. It was an excruciating experience for me as I sat between them and they exhibited the sickness of their minds. But they pleaded with the pastors there not to give the last word over them to the psychiatric community.

I studied the way Jesus healed the demon-possessed in the Gospels and found it rewarding. A fine article by Paul W. Hollenbach, "Jesus, Demoniacs, and Public Authorities,"²⁸ shows how these mental disturbances could have been oblique political protests, e.g., to the possession of Judea and Galilee by Roman legions. Hence the demoniac called himself "Legion" and Jesus sends the 2,000-strong legion of evil spirits in him into the pigs and gives them leave to jump off a cliff and into the drink (Mark 5:1-20).

²⁵ LW 42: 122-123. For the Latin Text of "Fourteen Consolations," WA 6 (99) 104-134.

²⁶ LW 42:122.

²⁷ There my mentor, Pr. Leslie C. Schulz, D.D. of Cincinnati was the keynote speaker. See peterkrey.wordpress.com for my introduction of him.

²⁸ Paul W. Hollenbach, "Jesus, Demoniacs, and Public Authorities," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 49/4 (1981) 567-588.

We also need to understand that the word “house” in the New Testament is used to designate the soul as well as a dominion. Ched Meyers interprets Mark’s Gospel from the vantage point of binding the strongman so Jesus can plunder his “house.”²⁹ In our concern for the care of souls, we need to widen our scope from psychology to theology for the hope of healing persons such as the fellow who called himself Legion.

Self Psychology distinguishes between secondary and primary disturbances of the self, the ones that can be healed and the others that cannot.³⁰ That healing is impossible for those persons with primary disturbances is hard to accept. But even Luther says (and I paraphrase), some injuries to the soul are like scratches easily healed, others like a broken bone that will take some time; while others are like a broken back, from which one cannot recover.³¹

Luther encourages us to care about those who suffer in this way. In mental disturbances we have, in the words of Luther, “the misfortunes that assail... even our very mind, which after all is the main target of all evils and the one trysting place of sorrow and every evil.”³²

Luther’s *Anfechtung*: an Episode of Spiritual Conflict

Luther himself plummeted into the depths when he felt crushed in his spiritual conflict (*Anfechtung*) between Satan and Christ. Gerhard Ebeling spends 82 pages analyzing this *Anfechtung* from many different angles.³³ Here is a very brief account: this spiritual conflict lasted from the middle of 1527 until deep into 1528,³⁴ by far the worst of his life (365 and 409). The plague was rampaging in Wittenberg (starting late in July and climaxing early in November), but Luther refused to leave the souls who were sick and dying, who depended on his care, even when the Elector commanded him to flee to Jena with the rest of the faculty. Luther felt left alone because all the students fled as well, except that Bugenhagen and his family moved in with them (378). Imagine an empty Wittenberg University, like a ghastly gospel! Luther needed the company and support of his friends and students. His and Katie’s home, the Black Cloister, where he gave all his table talks, became a hospital filled

²⁹ Ched Meyers, *Binding the Strongman: a Political Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1988).

³⁰ Kohut and Wolf, “Disorders of the Self and their Treatment: an Outline,” 416.

³¹ I have not been able to relocate this source in Luther. Perhaps it was in Luther’s *Table Talks*. This is one example, however, of many for what Alexander S. Jensen calls “Luther’s intuitive use of psychological concepts.” See his article: “Martin Luther’s ‘sin boldly’ revisited: a fresh look at a controversial concept in the light of modern pastoral psychology” (undated but after 1996) on p. 1 of his sample article in the online journal, *Contact: Practical Theology and Pastoral Care*, www.contactpracticaltheology.org/sample_index.html.

³² LW 42:128.

³³ Ebeling, *Luthers Seelsorge*, 364-446. The following page numbers in this section refer to this book.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 426.

with the dying. The wife of the mayor, Tilo Dene, died almost in his arms.³⁵ George Rörer's wife, Hanna, had a miscarriage and died soon afterwards (378). The sack of Rome took place May 6th, but Luther writes about it July 13th. Then on August 16, 1527, Luther received the news that Leonhard Kaiser, a promising graduate freshly promulgated from Wittenberg was burned at the stake in Passau for his evangelical faith (390). "Why was he, Luther, himself not worthy of martyrdom?" was Luther's excruciating question to God. The letter is in Latin, but significantly, he writes this question in German (393). "Why was I not worthy to shed my blood" was also the first thing he said after awakening from unconsciousness (393). When Agricola sent his disturbed wife, Else, to join the Luthers for a change of atmosphere, Luther wrote that her sickness was more spiritual than physical (374). Else and Katie, too, argued that the Word of God did not concern them directly, but really the men who protected them (402). In a half joking tone, Luther said that they should know that precisely they also were addressed, when the Gospel was preached (402).

On July 6, 1527, the *Anfechtung* started by his life-strength draining out of him and his going unconscious (366, 372-373). Being held in the arms of Katie and his friends, he thought he would die. It seemed like Luther slipped down into the unsheltered abyss, where for weeks he felt like a ping-pong ball bouncing between death and hell. His limbs and his whole body shook and he felt as if the whole Christ was gone³⁶ (368 and 373). He felt like a rudderless ship tossed about in the floods and waves of a storm of despair and blasphemy (368 and 407-408). He said that Satan assaulted his person because he had not been able to prevent the gospel truth from being proclaimed (404), so Satan clobbered him with his fists. (One could say that Luther experienced a demonic spiritual *ad hominum*. [The *ad hominum* fallacy in thought attacks the person when the argument cannot be refuted.])

Even when the plague was being overcome, late in 1527 and students were returning, Luther felt hell within. Outside the world was again healthy, inside are the devil and all his angels, (he wrote). Outside the enemies plague us and inside (as weak and few as we are) the devil is among the children of light (403). Luther asked everyone in his letters to pray for him. Not that the *Anfechtung* would cease, but that Christ would not leave him. But his connection to Christ was by a gossamer thread and the devil had a chain and an anchor on his leg dragging him into the abyss (371 and 408).

³⁵ LW 43:115.

³⁶ I associate his allusion to the "whole Christ" with his passive righteousness in the experience of justification and to having Christ, in the sense of being in the power of Christ. Cf. what Paul Tillich says in "The Theology of Pastoral Care," page 4: "The power which makes acceptance possible is the resource of all pastoral care. It must be effective in him who helps and it must become effective in him who is helped...This means that both the pastor and the counselee...are under the power of something that transcends both of them. One can call this power the new creature or the New Being. The pastoral counselor can be of help only if he is grasped by this power." Clinebell, Jr., *Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling*, 306-307.

Luther finally recovered again late the next year, having once again received a gracious God and having had a first hand experience of the in-depth dimension, the in-depth theology, that from experience counted on the grace of Christ, whose strength was manifest in Luther's weakness that made the devil's victory a defeat. I will finally return to Luther's *Anfechtung* at the end and try to explain it with Carl Gustav Jung's psychological approach using the theory of opposites.

A Theology Facing the Issues of Life

Because theologians are tempted to ignore Luther's conviction that theology concerns these issues faced in the midst of life for the sake of life, he says, "Speculative theology belongs to the devil in hell."³⁷ And we also know his famous words about how one becomes a theologian, "Not grasping [material], reading, and speculation, but living, nay, dying and being damned, make a theologian."³⁸ How do you deal with being declared an outlaw of the empire and being excommunicated from the Holy Catholic Church? These kinds of experiences make his diabolical dialectic understandable in his commentary on Psalm 117: "The word shines in a dark place, indeed, a very dark place.... Ultimately, God cannot be God unless he becomes the devil beforehand; and we cannot come into heaven unless we've first gone to hell³⁹.... and the devil is not and does not become the devil without first being God."⁴⁰ And then, of course, what a vision! "God has built a great new heaven over those of us who believe, and it is called the heaven of grace!"⁴¹ Luther's in-depth theology issues not only into life, but directly into therapy.

Luther's Theology as *Seelsorge*, (Care of Souls)

There is a sense in which the gospel can be understood comprehensively from this care-of-the-soul perspective.⁴² Gerhard Ebeling argues that the care of souls or *Seelsorge* is at the heart and moves Luther's theology, and basically, his theology lies at the heart and moves us to the

³⁷ LW 42:x. See also Luther's *Table Talks*, LW 54:22, No. 153 and WAT 1:72, No. 153.

³⁸ WA 5:163.28f. (1519).

³⁹ "The only trouble with heaven is that you have to go through hell to get there!" I used to say and would add, Luther would say that. Then I translated his Psalm 117 and found that he really said it!

⁴⁰ LS, 142.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁴² For the "soul," we could substitute the Greek word, *psyche*, inner person, or self. If we assert that there is more to the Gospel than helping injured souls and people suffering from mental disturbances, then that's because we no longer see an earthly state as an individual soul writ large, the way antiquity did. We now understand that very different principles are involved in psychology as opposed to political science. For us the "house" as dominion and the "house" as the self seem completely separate.

care of souls,⁴³ because 1) his theology empowers it, 2) it connects us with Christ, 3) it makes us be at home in the Word of God, and 4) it gives us exercise in the care of souls, by a) informing our consciences,⁴⁴ b) having us take life seriously, and c) giving us an existence in prayer.

- 1) Even Luther's theology of the cross is concerned about the care of souls: "The cross is the word of comfort and the most certain sign by which to recognize that comfort."⁴⁵ Luther is thinking in terms of opposites. Resistance confirms that the gospel is afoot! Ebeling writes, "The care of souls is not a practical application of the theology of the cross, but the sole reason for its development."⁴⁶ Thus, rejoice, if you now completely despair of your own abilities. You are ready for the grace of God (Heidelberg Disputation Article 18).⁴⁷ You are now ready to live out of God's strength, rather than your own effort (Luther's explanation of Article III of the Creed).
- 2) Luther notes that Christ's life is bound up with our lives.⁴⁸ We are possessed and enlivened not by legions of evil spirits (Mark 5:1-20), but by the Holy Spirit. Luther writes: "Thus we should take comfort, those of us who believe in him, that we know we are not our own selves, but belong to him who died for us [Romans 14:7]. So that if we are sick we are not sick ourselves, and if we are healthy we are not healthy ourselves. Like a little sick unconscious child in crisis matters more to its parents, [Luther explains] our sickness touches the One to whom we belong much more than us."⁴⁹ So tightly are we bound up with Christ that we exclaim, "The One in us is greater than the one in the world" (1 John 4:4) and "Christ dwells only in sinners!"⁵⁰ That is vintage Luther.

⁴³ Ebeling, *Luthers Seelsorge*, 449. I had a great deal of difficulty translating: *der theologische Grundzug der Seelsorge bei Luther* and *der seelsorgerliche Grundzug von Luthers Theologie*.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 463. According to Ebeling, Luther uses the word "conscience" to show where and how a person is addressed by the gospel, and what kind of response is asked. "This aim certainly also applies to his words 'soul' or 'heart', which do not refer to parts of the human being, but in a strict sense to the person him or herself. Luther uses both of these expressions ['soul' and 'heart'] interchangeably with 'conscience,' and all three terms are derived from biblical usage, and converge related in intention" (463). Luther's care of souls is oriented to responsibility for the world and making the heart the center of the responsible self. (All translations of Ebeling are mine.)

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 457.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 456. Also, "[The cross], [o]nce honored as a relic, was now both the content of life and a life following the gospel."

⁴⁷ LW 31:40 and 51. Also in Timothy Lull, *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 31 and 42-43. WA 1:361, 22-24.

⁴⁸ The way Jacob was with Benjamin in Genesis 44:30.

⁴⁹ Ebeling, *Luthers Seelsorge*, 457.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 458.

3) "To live out of the Word of God," says Ebeling, in fact, is possible only to those rooted and at home in it.⁵¹ "They will not get into the rut of talking to themselves and certainly won't become speechless."⁵² "Scripture gives us the impulse to speak with fellow human beings and with God."⁵³

4.a) Luther made rescuing terrified consciences a driving force in the Reformation.⁵⁴ They are free and to be informed by the gospel, not to be coerced and violated.

To touch only one more point, 4.c) Ours is a prayer existence in a covenant of prayer, a *Gebetsverbund*, to use Ebeling's word in German, and he continues, "Luther's theology is a prayer theology."⁵⁵ The care of souls drives us into an existence of prayer and requires prayer to carry out.⁵⁶

What is Luther's experience of justification by grace through faith, Ebeling asks, if not his concern for a gracious God for himself and all believers, One who did not look down from the sky at them (like a monster) in the guise of a wrathful judge to terrify them? What was Luther's campaign against indulgences, if not the concern for the souls of those being misled and deceived?⁵⁷ Why did Luther burn the canon law along with the *Summa Angelica* (1486), the compendium for the care of souls for the outgoing 15th century,⁵⁸ if not because of their harrowing affect on the care of souls? "They murdered souls rather than saving them!," Luther exclaimed.⁵⁹ As Jane Strohl writes in the introduction to our book, "One could describe Luther's career as the mounting of a life-long pastoral malpractice suit against the church's authority at every level of the hierarchy."⁶⁰

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 460.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 426.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ I thank the Graduate Theological Union doctoral candidate, Pr. Dan Smith, for making me mindful of this point.

⁵⁵ Ebeling, *Luthers Seelsorge*, 441. "Three dimensions should here be noticed: the God-relatedness [of prayer], one's own heart being moved, and the involvement and participation of all believers [in one's prayer]."

⁵⁶ For his book, *Luthers Seelsorge*, Ebeling made a magisterial study of Luther's ca 3,000 letters!

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 475.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *LS*, xxiii.

A Theology inside of Life

Gerhard Ebeling states that “[a]ccording to Luther, theology has its place essentially in the midst of life,⁶¹ which it illuminates completely for the sake of the “art of arts,” which entails one sorrow after another, one anger after another,⁶² and that art is: the care of souls. This heavy burden, however, is given us by Christ, the shepherd and bishop of our souls (1 Peter 2.25).⁶³ Luther says that we find it to be the Christophorus burden on our shoulders, having a secret blessing.⁶⁴ You cannot see reality through glory and success, but what God is doing is revealed to you through the cross and suffering.⁶⁵

This internal dimension is carved out by Christ’s making present the presence of God, while God is the One who makes present the presence of Christ,⁶⁶ as we also become Christs, really present to each other. Christ is within his Kingdom the internal teacher and healer in our hearts.⁶⁷ What is the word of God? It is when Christ is preached in accordance with the gospel, so that you hear your God speaking to you!⁶⁸ Luther would surely agree, if we extrapolated further saying, “Christ is the internal therapist in our hearts.” (The internal Counselor: that would be the Holy Spirit!) Thus, Luther says to Matthias Weller, “May [God] say all these things in your heart, which I hereby, speak in your ear.”⁶⁹ This power of God makes it possible for us to be present as selves before God, before ourselves, before others, and before the world (*coram deo, coram meipso, coram hominibus, et coram mundo*). Because “[t]rue theology is practical and its foundation is Christ....”⁷⁰ Luther’s theology is not theoretical needing application. It revolves concretely in the immediate concerns of life.

⁶¹ Ebeling, *Luthers Seelsorge*, 3f.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 46.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 46. St. Christopher’s story can be found in our book in the “Sermon at Coburg on Cross and Suffering,” 155-157.)

⁶⁵ See the Heidelberg Theses, Art. 20 and 21.

⁶⁶ Ebeling speaks about a “presence that makes one present” in *Luther: Einführung in sein Denken*, 227, and in R. A. Wilson’s translation, *Luther: an Introduction to His Thought*, 199, “the presence which makes its object present. And the presence which makes its object present is God alone.” Again I believe that Wilson’s translation is inadequate, unless “object” is understood psychologically. Ebeling writes, “Coram thinking [relates] not only in fellowship, as little as the face to face encounter cannot be excluded, but it is the present making of presence, i.e., God, upon which this thinking is directed,” 227. This line of thought also came to me from John Ellis Large, *The Church and Healing* (Cincinnati: a Forward Movement Miniature Book, 1959), 62, where he writes about “the divine infusion of the Presence.”

⁶⁷ [Christ] “teaches us inwardly in our hearts.” From “Freedom of a Christian,” in *LS*, 77.

⁶⁸ I paraphrased this citation. See *LS*, 72.

⁶⁹ *LS*, 12.

⁷⁰ LW 42:x. See also Luther’s *Table Talks*, LW 54:22, No. 153.

The more difficult our life becomes, the more effective Luther's theology is. (I learned that from Timothy Lull.) Luther's theology charts its course through the heart of life in its internal and external dimensions by means of his *coram*-relations. Here I am following Ebeling, who writes powerfully on this subject.⁷¹

The *Coram*-Relations

In the *coram*-relations, "[t]he truth of our very being experiences the event, the encounter of our becoming known [by God, by ourselves, by others, and by the world]."⁷² The four *coram*-relations, before God, before oneself, before others, and one's image in the world, transcend and have a wider scope than ego-states like the superego, the ego, and the id, which are only intra-psychic. The *coram*-relations would be analogous to them, however, for Luther's in-depth theology. Each *coram*-relation places the person in a forum of existence and evaluation, the *fora*, the plural of "*forum*," ranging from the internal over into the external dimension. For example, becoming a Christ is in part III of a "Freedom of a Christian, where Luther describes outward relations with others!

The Latin preposition "*coram*" means "before," but in Luther it is most often used in the Hebrew sense of "being before the face of," "existing in the eyes of," "in the sight of," either God, oneself, others, or the world.

Ebeling has an important chapter in his book, *Luther: An Introduction to his Thought*,⁷³ explaining these *coram*-relations as the heart of how Luther's theology opens directly into life-experience. *Coram deo* is one's existence in the eyes of God. How one is seen by God, how one lives before the face of God. Ebeling has a whole rhapsody of insights about what goes on in the face. If God's eyes go down, we know God disapproves of us and that constitutes our conscience. Is our conscience defined only by how others look at us? We can save face, lose face, fall on our face; someone can even turn his or her back on us. These four *coram*-relations take place in *fora*, (again plural of "*forum*"). They are not mutually exclusive relations, because the person is in all of them at one and the same time, *simul*, i.e., simultaneously. Sometimes one has to turn one's back on others, *coram hominibus*, to set one's face toward God, *coram-deo*. But to live *coram deo* is to respond to the needs of others, *coram hominibus*. For some people the *coram-hominibus* is determinative because of peer pressure, keeping up with the Jones's. We can let others define our existence. In

⁷¹ Ebeling, *Luther: An Introduction to his Thought*, R. A. Wilson, trans. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 192-209.

⁷² This is my translation. This sentence appears in the German edition on page 225: "*In der coram-Relation ist es begründet, dass das Sein als Erkenntwerden das geschehen seiner Wahrheit ist.*" R. A. Wilson's translation misses the event and the encounter involved in the truth of our existence. "It is because man exists in this *coram*-relationship that man only truly exists by being recognized." Ebeling, *Luther: An Introduction to his Thought*, 197; German: *Luther: Einführung in sein Denken*, 225.

⁷³ Ebeling, *Luther: An Introduction to his Thought*, 192-209.

this respect, those living in the eyes of God have an advantage. Importantly we also exist in our own eyes, *coram meipso*. For some of us this *forum* is very weak and our self-definition derives almost completely from our living in the eyes of others. Bismarck is said to have had a strong *coram-meipso*-self. Perhaps, when he introduced universal health coverage back in the 1800's and unemployment insurance or perhaps other legislation, the parliament would go off into a tirade of noisy protest. He would take out the newspaper and read it until the raucous was over and then continue with his speech. *Coram meipso* can be absorbed into *coram deo* as *coram hominibus* can be, in *coram mundo*.

Interestingly enough, we do not see and know ourselves the way God does. We are naked in the eyes of God, because God sees the heart. Self-knowledge follows after God's knowledge of us, takes time, and is difficult to attain. Hence, we learn to know ourselves fully, even as [by God] we have [already] been fully known (1 Cor. 13:12). In-depth therapy would therefore require a theological self-analysis and strict supervision to start. (That would require a real challenge for pastors. Now we mostly make referrals.) But these are the *coram*-relations, to which Ebeling relegates most of a rewarding chapter.⁷⁴ I submit that these *coram*-relationships, these *fora*, because of their spiritual and relational character, hold real promise for Luther's in-depth theology and therapy.

In other words, the *coram*-relations are more comprehensive, holistic, spiritual, and relational than just intra-psychic ego states, like the superego, ego, or the ego-ideal that do not even work out the structure of the self. Even the intra-psychic exploration of the self of Self Psychology does not integrate the deep self, the extensive, social self,⁷⁵ nor the kingdom within, where we live out our world self and our Christ self. Traversing the depth of the internal into the external, the *coram*-relationships feature whole persons in relation to their evaluative *fora*, where the gracious experience of justification does away with the self damage of judgment and condemnation and issues into recovery and wholeness, and that from one qualitatively higher level of existence to another. This internal dynamic described by Luther in the "Freedom of a Christian" entails strengthening of the self, indeed, the whole person.⁷⁶ These could be called Christobject experiences, because Christ is completely ours (*pro nobis*), always for us, and we are completely *extra nobis*, ecstatic in God, beside ourselves, outside ourselves, but always in God and God's love.⁷⁷ Our translation of "The Freedom of a Christian," i.e., the popular version of this pamphlet, makes the ascent and descent, higher integrations of our being, stand out in bold relief.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Ibid., 192-209.

⁷⁵ "As such, the self object relationship refers to an *intrapsychic* experience and does not describe the interpersonal relationship between the self and other objects." Wolf, *Treating the Self*, 53.

⁷⁶ Ebeling, *Luthers Seelsorge*, 359: Luther tells Justus Jonas, who just lost his son, that he "should take care to notice, that he will be strengthened in Christ."

⁷⁷ See the last paragraph of the "Freedom of a Christian," LS, 90.

⁷⁸ See sections 7-19 and 27.

Existential Rapture and Descent

In my analysis of the "Freedom of the Christian," I argue that there is an existential rapture in receiving the nobility of spirit. It proceeds from receiving the first-born-status in Christ,⁷⁹ to becoming royalty, then receiving priesthood, to being a Christ for others and finally entering into God through faith. The descent through the same levels of existence takes place via love, faith providing the strength for love, as faith becomes active in love. Like ascending through the magnitudes of stars from the sixth to the first, for example, this existential "promotion" correlates with the ascent and descent of the angels, which I will mention next.⁸⁰ Understanding the ascent through faith and the descent through love gives a whole new meaning to: "Lift up your hearts!" and Christ lifts us up as whole persons, "like the poor are lifted up from the dust heap to sit with princes" (Psalm 113:7-8), Christ lifts us up as whole persons, from the center of our responsible selves, as we are "changed from glory into glory, lost in wonder praise and love."⁸¹

When you read about "Jacob's Ladder" at the end of the "New Spirituality" section of our book, you will discover that Luther really introduces you to a new dimension of spirituality.⁸² The ascent and descent of the angels into the God in heaven coming down to the God on earth in Christ, takes place in the internal space that is beyond that space circumscribed by the deep self and the extensive, social, relational self. It deepens into the kingdom of heaven within you, out of which we express our selves in the world self and our Christ self, postulated by Luther.⁸³

⁷⁹ Ibid., 77.

⁸⁰ Peter Krey, *Sword of the Spirit, Sword of Iron*, 372-374. See also the third diagram under the subcategory "Ethics" in Peter Krey, "'Groundwork for a Metaphysic of Morals' and 'Freedom of a Christian': Kant and Luther" (May 13th 2002), peterkrey.wordpress.com.

⁸¹ From the hymn, "Love Divine all loves excelling." Our hymnals: *Lutheran Book of Worship*, #315, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, #631, last verse. Designated here is not only a spiritual high. Luther says, although these are spiritual possessions, "temporal goods are not thereby excluded." *LS*, 77. Thus you could be more helpful and crucial for people than the governor of your state and yet be outside that office. It is paradoxical, however: the higher your level, the deeper your service.

⁸² See *LS*, 172-181.

⁸³ To explain: the tension between the world self and Christ self, coming about because of the two kingdom theory, can never exclude love of neighbor, or allow for an autonomous law, excluding our life in God's sight. But some of our decisions and actions have to take place for the sake of our neighbors as world persons, while we cannot take them for our own self-interest as a Christ person.

Therapy and Active Listening

Now, counseling and therapy, theological or otherwise, is not a matter of giving advice. Skilled and disciplined, active listening is required.⁸⁴ I also believe that hearing the gospel is possible as well as preaching it.⁸⁵ In our listening with empathy, Christ the internal Word and therapist, can speak to the counselee's heart and enter it even while the theological therapist is listening.

Very roughly, when in a listening session we speak of transference feelings, those of the counselee for the therapist; and counter transference feelings, those of the therapist for the counselee, in the deepening relationship, a recapitulation of harmful experiences of the counselee can be worked through in incremental experiences of grace. These are usually painful, but a great deal of training is required for bringing up only what the counselee can handle in the strength of the acceptance and self knowledge of the therapist.

Recognizing and Providing Experiences of Grace

Because Luther's justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith is not only a doctrine for Luther but also an experience, he has many ways to express it, and it became the lightning flash, which spread a heaven of grace over an unreformed Christianity. "Those who hear the Word, become like the word, pure, good, and just."⁸⁶ That happens by grace. Using other language, God throws a marriage celebration between Christ and our soul, in which his holy and divine attributes are marvelously and graciously exchanged for our human, sinful, and corrupt ones. So forgiveness includes transformation. The New Testament is not only the book, but Christ's last will and testament, making us inherit his heavenly possessions.⁸⁷ Thus, the whole gospel is in the word "testament."

What Kohut called mirroring and idealizing self-object experiences, similarly resemble gracious experiences of acceptance. Because of Luther's experience of condemnation and justification he immersed himself into the inner life and with his capacity for empathy gained further access to it. Thus, his language of address, derived from the Scriptures, spoke directly into people's hearts and moved them. By mirroring self object experiences they received sweet-hearts, their hearts became sweet, for their gracious God. Luther also

⁸⁴ See "Positive 'I' Messages and Active Listening" and Les Schulz Keynote speaker of the 1985 Inner-City conference in Manhattan, N.Y. See www.peterkrey.wordpress.com.

⁸⁵ Perhaps via the internal word, listening the gospel becomes possible. "You may ask, 'Which is the word that gives such abundant grace and how shall I use it?' The answer: it is nothing but the preaching of Christ in accordance with the gospel, spoken in such a way that you hear your God speaking to you." "Freedom of a Christian," *LS*, 72.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 75, 268 n. 18.

⁸⁷ Krey, *The Sword of the Spirit, the Sword of Iron*, 395-399.

offered believers “the opportunity for merger with an idealized, omnipotent, self object,”⁸⁸ to use the language of Self Psychology for the marriage of Christ with the believer’s soul in “The Freedom of a Christian.”

What Kohut calls the nuclear self, Luther calls the inmost heart of the inner person. Self Psychology explains that someone’s nuclear self can be completely helpless and vulnerable while the inner self can be fierce and raging with many a narcissistic injury. In therapy the empathy of the therapist can lead that self to having empathy for his or her inmost self, nuclear self, i.e., *coram meipso*, bringing about recovery.

I believe there could be gracious Christ-selfobject experiences of accepting being accepted for mirror-hungry persons, and gracious experiences of merging with Christ in the marvelous exchange, for those whose idealizing pole of the self is weak, to use the model of Self Psychology. Because Luther gives the soul a word-faith structure⁸⁹ the internal Christ could pronounce a self structure back into existence or into its first existence, if it were diffuse, fragmented, dysfunctional, or disorganized. That is a spiritual frontier to be explored.

The Coincidence of Opposites

Let me end with Luther’s delight in placing opposites together.⁹⁰ The tension arc is so very interesting for Luther’s theology, because for him it does not only issue into the action agenda, but he places tension right into the self, the God-encountered-event-of-the-self in the union of opposites, human and divine, sovereign but slave, raptured but groaning in the spirit. We know the sinner and saint opposition best, in the formula *simul iustus et peccator*. Luther continually places opposites together in the “Freedom of a Christian,” and he insists that they are in us at one and the same time! Did you notice his putting together “confident despair” in George Spenlein’s letter in our book?⁹¹

This tension, which Luther brings directly into the self, is key to the dynamic growth of a person’s maturity in Christ, from human to divine. Luther enfolds believers inside his Christology. “For the Word of God comes, whenever it comes to change and renew the world,”⁹² but also “the Word of God comes, whenever it comes, to change and renew the person.”

⁸⁸ Kohut, *The Restoration of the Self*, 265.

⁸⁹ I believe that in Ebeling’s *Luthers Seelsorge*, I read his saying that for Luther the soul was “Wort-förmig.” But “Those who hear the word become like the word,” as just quoted from “The Freedom of a Christian,” in which Luther also writes: “as the word is so shall the soul be because of it.” *LS*, 75.

⁹⁰ From a static kind of logic, these opposites are viewed as crass contradictions. Luther states, “What is our teaching to unbelievers than a pack of contradictions?” Ebeling, *Luthers Seelsorge*, 460.

⁹¹ *LS*, 4.

⁹² From Luther’s *Bondage of the Will*, LW 33:52; WA 18:626.25-27, 31-32. What follows about the person I have extrapolated from this Luther citation.

To consider Luther's *Anfechtung* once more, now the opposing powers of Christ and the devil fight inside him. Carl Gustav Jung has a theory about the union of opposites required for differentiation and integration of the psyche.⁹³ (Note that when needed, Kohut sees no problem in complementing Self Psychology with the classical psychoanalytic approach,⁹⁴ when the (Freudian) guilty self needs to be treated along with [Self Psychology's] tragic self.)⁹⁵ Jung's opposites, which are relevant here, are the conscious and unconscious. The directedness of the conscious mind always has an opposite countering it in the unconscious.⁹⁶ "When the tension increases as a result of too great [a] one-sidedness, the counter tendency breaks through into consciousness, just at the moment when it is most important to maintain the conscious direction."⁹⁷ Jung is speaking of an unconscious balance where opposition in the unconscious accompanies the direction taken in the conscious.

Thus, using this theory of opposites, I believe Luther went too far into the direction of his Christ and the gospel in many ways without the support of his close companions, and then the devil broke through from his unconscious. When Luther found a more refined integration of justification by faith, as the one who proclaimed the pure gospel precisely because he was a most wretched sinner, the integration of these opposites brought back a gracious God.

Jung says that the tendencies of the conscious and unconscious are the two factors that make up the transcendent function⁹⁸ and it manifests as a quality of conjoined opposites.⁹⁹ The shuttling to and fro of arguments and affects (Luther felt like a ping pong ball, his whole self bouncing back and forth) represents the transcendent function of opposites. The confrontation of the two opposites, Jung continues, generates a tension charged with energy and creates a living third thing—not a logical stillbirth...but a movement out of the tension between opposites, a living birth that leads to a new level of being. So long as (the opposites) are kept apart, naturally for the sake of avoiding conflict, they do not function and remain inert.¹⁰⁰

⁹³ Joseph Campbell, ed., *The Portable Jung*, R. F. C. Hull, trans. (New York: Penguin Books, 1971), 273-300. The page numbers that follow are from this book. I thank Pr. Rod Seeger of Mill Valley, CA for making me aware of the usefulness of the integration of opposites, *simul iustus et peccator*, in therapy.

⁹⁴ Kohut, *The Restoration of the Self*, 279.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 206.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 276.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 279.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 298.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

The opposing powers, Christ and the devil, fought over Luther, until he received a new integration in a higher level of being in faith for a deeper level of service in love.

Jung seems to explain the engine of our growing and maturing into the stature of Christ. Gracious, while painful, Christ self experiences written about and lived by Luther, bring hope, I believe, alongside secular treatment, for those who also have primary disturbances of the self.

I know how far short I fell of developing a Lutheran therapy along the lines of Luther's in-depth theology. But really it needs to be worked out in the actual experience of doing theological therapy. Meanwhile practice such empathy in your Christian conversation with each other, that you rescue me from Luther's condemnation of my speculation.

2008 LUTHER COLLOQUY SERMON LECTIONARY 30/ PROPER 25, SERIES A TEXT: MATTHEW 22:34-46

By John Largen

I have a question to ask you this morning that might seem like a rather silly question for a pastor to be asking of loyal church-people in a place such as this on a day such as today. But here goes: Do you love God? Now please don't think this a question with a hidden agenda. Jesus today says a follower is to love God with all one's heart, soul, and mind. It's the greatest and first commandment, according to Jesus — something basic and primary. So, do you? Do you love God?

I've been asking myself that question all week, and I must confess that I've struggled with it. I would like to say "yes" without hesitation. But to tell you the truth, I don't usually give the question much thought. I serve God, I think, in fits and starts. I pray to God for guidance and strength and help, often on behalf of others. I worship God, study and talk about God quite a bit, think about the concept of God. I respect God, stand in awe of God, and marvel at God's amazing creation. But do I love God? The Bible tells us that God *is* love. And that "God so loved the world." But do I love God back? That little question has startled me this week. Jesus says, "This is the first and greatest of all commandments." I guess what I'm trying to say to you is that it hasn't always been first and greatest with me.

In a world filled with so much human woe, so much pain and brokenness, so much to do and fix, one would think the "first and greatest" commandment might be to simply make a difference in the world. Do something, anything, to help others. Jesus could have said the greatest and first was to "love thy neighbor." He does rank it right up there, but it isn't first.

God says, "Love me first." And so the defensive, rebellious side of me—the side of me that isn't, after all, loving God first with all my heart, soul, and mind—begins to question this commandment. Why does God need our love anyway? And to this depth and intensity? Come to think of it, if you actually command somebody to love, is it really and truly "love" at all? Is God like some big Cheshire Cat in the sky who wants to be adored and stroked, purring away in heaven from the loving admiration of all his earthly devotees? Why take time to love God with such total devotion when there's so much else to do and accomplish? Why doesn't Jesus advocate that we get on with the real business of saving the world? Answer these questions, please.

I ran across a quote some time ago from a man named Anthony Bloom, an Orthodox priest. In his book, *Beginning to Pray*, Father Bloom says that when we approach God and enter into God's presence in prayer, it is normally because "we want something *from* him, not *him* at all." He rightly asks, "Is that a relationship?"¹ Father Bloom exposes the content of many of my own prayers. "Help my friend get well... Give me the right words for this sermon... Feed those who are hungry... Shelter those who are homeless." Fine prayers perhaps. Nothing wrong with them. But they suggest God's main purpose is that of, well, errand boy. "Get me this; do that. Go here and there."

We seek God out, quite naturally, for a variety of reasons. But here's the question: Am I in love? Head over heels, swept away with heart, soul, and mind—all three? I've had a hard time answering that this week. Is my devotion to God usually just a means to some hoped-for end, no matter how noble? Anthony Bloom is right. I often want something *from* God, but not really *God* at all.

Loving God with all one's heart, soul, and mind will require something of us. It will require that we spend unhurried time alone with God regularly; ideally, each day. It was Dr. Luther who gave this simple advice to his barber and friend, Peter Beskendorf. "It's a good thing to let prayer be the first business of the morning, and the last at night," Luther said. Some of these daily prayer times may occasionally seem dry and useless. Even the great reformer confessed that he sometimes felt "cold and disinterested" in prayer.² And perhaps you and I *will* ask God for some things. Jesus does say, "Ask, seek, and knock" earlier in this same book of Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount. But we can go deeper than these requests.

So first, to love God with the *heart* means that we are giving God access to what matters most to us. We do not keep certain things for God, the One "from whom no secrets are hid" (according to one form of our Lutheran corporate confession). No secrets. Like a couple with a healthy marriage, we talk to God about what truly matters in our lives—not the surface or the superficial. We dare to go deep. I especially want to say to the seminarians here today: there's a lot going on in your heart—what you hope to do with your life; what the church might do to complicate what you hope to do with your life; for some of you, whom you might date and even wind up with as a partner; your misgivings now about parish life and faith and God. All of these are topics about your heart, and there is an internal conversation going on there *all the time* about these important things. God knows our hearts. But until we speak what is in them, and bring that to conscious thought in prayer, a true relationship of love cannot exist. Even though God knows our hearts before we even speak, God desires that we bring the desires of the heart into our prayers. Because God desires the real us.

¹ Anthony Bloom, *Beginning to Pray* (New York/Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1970), 29.

² Martin Luther, "A Simple Way to Pray," LW 43:193.

Second, to love God with the *soul* means that we entrust God to care for that part of ourselves that is most alive and most excites us. Conversely, it's also that place that most scares the pants off us—the place where our dreams and hopes come from; the place where we are called into ministry. Don't you find it interesting in the Bible that when God calls somebody to do something—Moses, Jonah, Sarah, Jeremiah—the initial tendency is to run the other way? Years ago, when a now-retired Southern Seminary president phoned me to come work on the seminary staff, my first reaction was to say, "Thanks, but no thanks. Not interested." Come to think of it, this was also my reaction when, more recently, I realized my wife was being called to teach at Gettysburg Seminary! Both of these "interruptions" turned out to be wonderful beyond imagining, but God's calling still terrifies the pants off of me on most days. The point is, to love God with your soul means to trust God in guiding you into God's own future, not one of your own devising.

One of the greatest lies we are told as young people is this: "John, you can be anything you want to be when you grow up. Heck, you can even grow up to be the President of the United States!" Well, no, you can't. It sounds good, I'll admit, but it's really a bald-faced lie we are told. If God blesses us with specific and unique gifts, I *cannot* grow up to be just anything at all. I do not have the gifts to be President of the United States and indeed will never have them. I will never be a concert pianist and would not have been one had I practiced all day/every day since I was a toddler. I could not have grown up to be just anything at all.

In fact, to pretend that's true is ultimately a denial of the God who has planted particular gifts in my 50-plus-year-old soul that can only be used in fairly well-defined ways. This does not mean we're all robots, of course, pre-destined at birth to follow a certain path. It does mean, though, that when we love God with all our soul we will determine to discover what our gifts are, offering them back to God for holy and specific use. This is God's "call" for all baptized people—loving God with our essence, our gifts, our very soul.

Heart, soul, and finally—to love God with the *mind* is perhaps the hardest of the three. The mind is where our creativity and imagination reside, but also judgment and darkness. To love God with the mind suggests that we will use intellect and insight to regularly ponder, to wonder, to ruminate upon the nature of God, to read about God in scripture and books and sit at the feet of men and women who are astute in the tradition and have much to pass on. To love God with the mind means that we will not "check" the mind at the door of the church, suspending the holy gifts of doubt and mystery. These are often biblical avenues that lead us to revelation and insight. Therefore, we should not fear questions and doubt. Frederick Buechner once said: "Doubts are the ants in the pants of faith. They keep it awake and moving."³ A serious search for truth—even to entertain heresy, a no-holds-barred wrestling with scripture and tradition—can be a way of loving God with your mind.

³ Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1973), 20.

(It might be part of the *tentatio* struggle that Professor Luther encouraged in young theologians).⁴ Some of the most convinced atheists I've ever known have become the most committed Christians I've ever known by being set free with encouragement to love God with their minds. It's on days such as today's Luther Colloquy that we are reminded: theological education *is* spiritual formation.

It's about a relationship. Jesus said to love God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. He calls this the first and greatest commandment. It's a tall order. You think God would settle for most of each? Some of all three? How about a bit of my heart, soul, and mind?

Here's a little maxim: The more we love another person, the more we see things from their point of view. It's the same with God. The more you and I love God, the more we see things from God's point of view. That is, we begin to see the neighbor more clearly.

Maybe that's why Jesus said loving neighbor—the second commandment—is “like” loving God.

Here's my best pastoral hunch: one will naturally do the second if seriously engaged in the first. But we must never forget the sequence. Nor the question: Do you love God?

⁴ Martin Luther, “Preface to the Wittenberg Edition of Luther's German Writings, 1539,” LW 34:285-288.

Book Review:

LOVE'S PURE LIGHT: CHRISTMAS CANDLELIGHT SERMONS AND SERVICE

By Mark William Radecke
(Lima, OH: CSS Publishing Company, 2008)

Reviewed by Gilson Waldkoenig

Love's Pure Light, the most recent book of sermons from the Rev. Dr. Mark William Radecke displays the highest standards of scholarly preaching, as well as exemplary literary merit. Those who preach and hear sermons on a regular basis will find an inspiring model of the craft in the pages of *Love's Pure Light*, while other readers who may not have high tolerance for sermons will find that with Radecke's book, "the medicine goes down in the most delightful way."

The volume collects sermons from several years of Susquehanna University's outstanding Christmas Vespers, which blends worship and the arts each December in the Weber Chapel of the Selinsgrove, PA campus. Mark Radecke is the university pastor and the preacher at the combination service and concert that draws a large crowd of university students, staff and local neighbors. Dr. Radecke's sermons are very intentionally accessible to those who may not come to church very often, but remarkably are intellectually enticing for the scholarly side of the Susquehanna community.

Scholarly preaching involves several layers of academic work. At the root is exegesis of biblical texts in the original languages and historical context. The depth and breadth of Dr. Radecke's years of biblical studies is apparent in *Love's Pure Light*. But having critically studied the ancient texts, the preacher's scholarly task does not end there.

The second level of work for the scholarly preacher is analysis of the contemporary situation. Social, economic, psychological, political and artistic perspectives frame the contemporary world for the scholarly preacher, and Dr. Radecke's sermons display stellar ability to draw in his "audience" not only through personal relationship but also profound understanding and evocative expression of the complexities of the contemporary world. Dr. Radecke thoughtfully interfaces the humanities and sciences into his sermons as he moves the biblical texts from their literary and historical context into earshot of the post-modern listener.

A third level of work is for the preacher to bring his or her interpretation of the text and context into critical conversation with the intellectual traditions of the Christian church. Dr. Radecke displays academic immersion in the history of Christian thought and practice, as his sermons evoke, support and challenge a range of Christian perspectives. As such, his sermons are useful to people of a variety of traditions within Christianity, and hospitable to any who are intellectually curious.

Love's Pure Light seamlessly ties the three levels of scholarly work together. The "naked eye" of those who might not be familiar with the distinct academic work of sermon preparation might not perceive the depth and breadth of classical disciplines involved. Moreover, the final product of a sermon is performative address to an assembly, carefully aimed to be persuasive and effective. As such the corners of scholarly work are tucked in, so to speak, so that the listener may be freed into the thoughts and reflection that the sermon offers. But for those who study the peculiar genre of preaching in its venerable roots and its contemporary innovations, there is a broad gulf between sermons that are scholarly and those that are not so crafted. Susquehanna University should be very proud to have one of the most effective scholarly preachers on the scene today.

Like *Love's Pure Light*, Dr. Radecke's other collections of sermons exhibit the same level of excellence in scholarly preaching: *In Many and Various Ways: Explorations in Sermonic Form* (1985), *In Christ a New Creation* (1986) and *God in Flesh Made Manifest* (1995). Dr. Radecke has for years been a model to which theological educators may point students to imbibe the fine art of preaching with classical rigor and contemporary effectiveness. With *Love's Pure Light* he has provided Christians with a volume of fresh, contemporary sermons that one may hand to acquaintances outside the church with the confidence that their literary merit and engaging wit will leave them with a delightful reading experience while getting them within earshot of the best of evangelical catholic preaching.

Book Review:

A FARMER FOR THE WORLD: A BIOGRAPHY OF RICHARD CLARENCE WAYBRIGHT

By Oscar F. Spicer
(Gettysburg, PA: Thomas Publications, 2009)

Reviewed by Frederick K. Wentz

This is a remarkable story and the title is not an exaggeration. Richard Waybright has been an Adams County dairyman all his life and has also been “A Farmer for the World.”

The most famous name among the influential people who have consulted with him is Boris Yeltsin in Moscow. But, besides Russia, he has been consulted for advice on farming, particularly dairy farming, by leadership figures in such places as Czechoslovakia, the Netherlands, China, Kazakhstan, and Liberia. Dick and his family have been a major factor in bringing attention to Adams County's agricultural life, and their Mason Dixon Farms draws a steady flow of visitors from many parts of the country and the world.

How did this come about? It's an interesting story and the author of this book, his close friend retired judge Oscar Spicer, has written it with a keen eye and, no doubt, a ready pen. He has also put a lot of his own knowledge and wisdom into the telling. It's an unusual biography because Spicer includes discussions of topics raised by Dick's life, often a history of that topic. But Dick's life and contributions to contemporary life worldwide come through clearly. It is a good read.

So, how did this come about? Dick was born in 1930 and raised on the family farm. He was educated in a one-room, one teacher school until entering Gettysburg High School. Many youngsters from that rural background had trouble competing alongside town dwellers with a better training milieu. But Dick excelled and was encouraged to head for Penn State College. As Dick puts it, it was assumed if one could escape the drudgery of farm life one certainly should. In fact he noted that “there was a popular expression to the effect that if you couldn't do anything else, at least you could farm.”

Dick Waybright believed that farmers deserved a better life, that providing food for a hungry world was important business, indeed, that if people worldwide had good food supply many of the failings and conflicts in human society would be mitigated. This became his strong calling, his vocation as a Christian, from high school days until a still-active present.

Accepted to Penn State, he turned that opportunity down to devote himself to dairy farming. That cost him his current girlfriend and disappointed some of his family and friends. Dick never regretted it. He was just that committed.

He was also just that capable. Supported by several generations of his family, he put himself to improving the dairy farm. He put in initiatives, innovation based on careful research on the spot, and efforts to make a contribution to the industry as a whole. He took leadership in Future Farmers of America and other public-serving associations. He wrote a chapter in a book your reviewer edited (*My Job and My Faith*, Abingdon, 1967) setting forth his commitment to responsible human cultivation of God's creation. It was a calling.

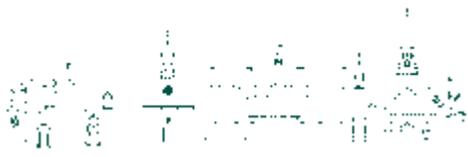
Dick introduced innovation after innovation in a cow barn and in cows, in uses of cow dung and enrichment of surrounding fields. This turns out to be highly interesting, even if you never thought to take interest in the insides of a cow barn or the insides of a cow!

His fame spread. People visited and picked up ideas from Mason Dixon Farms. When government leaders from Chile visited and then invited Dick to Chile, his suggestions made considerable observable improvement to milk production in that country. It was the beginning of numerous trips to other parts of the world. His experience-based knowledge made him useful in facing problems of food-production in ways that university professors could not match.

Author Spicer brings in explicit references to Dick's Christian faith in the last chapter entitled "Faith, Hope, and Charity As Well As Other Salutary Achievements..." I could have wished that this note could have been made earlier in the story and could have included more direct recognition of the role of St. James Lutheran Church, Gettysburg, in the family's life and in Dick's story.

Again, this is a good read. For clergy, great illustrations from the cow barn, even better ones from an inspiring life of lay ministry. Nearly anybody would find interesting reading.

The book is available at the Gettysburg Seminary Bookstore.



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