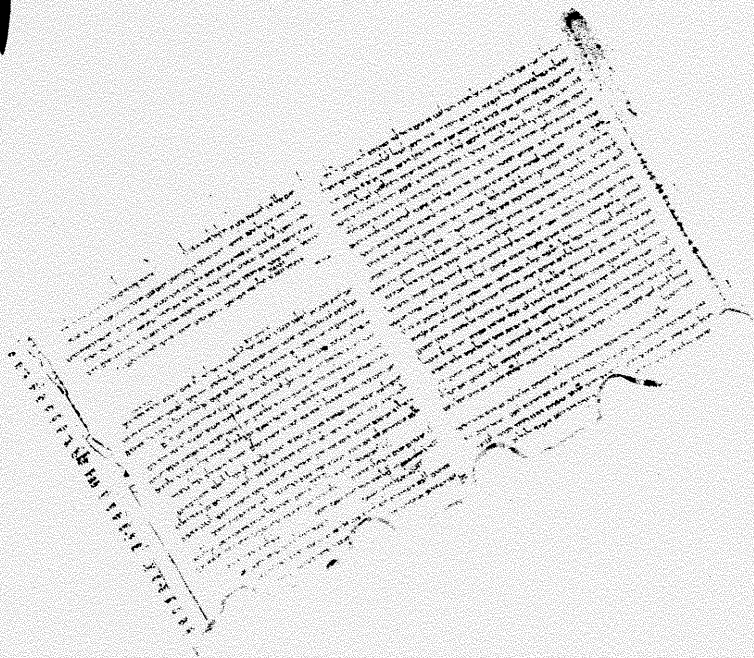


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## FAITH ACTIVE IN LOVE

Galatians 5, 6

A Study Commissioned by the Doctrinal  
Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

by N. S. Tjernagel  
Rochester, New York

### I. THE LOVE COMMANDMENT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

2 Peter 1, 3-11

The words of St. Peter recorded in this text are a marvelously complete little homily. In them the whole counsel of God is expressed in clear words of instruction and admonition.

The Gospel is taught in a message that tells us what His divine power has given us through the knowledge of him that has called us. These gifts are: life and godliness, glory and virtue, exceeding great and precious promises. We have become partakers of the divine nature, we have escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust, we have been purged of our old sins, and we have gained entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The Law is taught us in words that urge that since we have these gifts which are ours through our

calling and election that we live in all diligence in a will and desire to show the appropriate fruits of our faith, namely virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity (love).

Those whose love is thus demonstrated are assured that: If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Those whose love is not revealed through their faith are warned that: He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

The apostolic admonition, therefore, urges those whose love has fallen short of their faith to give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things ye shall never fail.

St. Peter finally returns to the Gospel promise of his initial words to say that: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I can think of nothing that would add to the clarity and the completeness of these words of St. Peter. Yet I think we need to give careful attention to them because it seems to me that there is a negligence of emphasis of the Christian love which God refers to as the fulfilling of the law. I am afraid that in our determination to give the Gospel the emphasis it deserves we have neglected the role and the practice of the law in the counsel of God. A number of factors which will be detailed in these pages makes it seem necessary to raise the question as to whether there has been a "barrenness" in our "knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" and

whether we have been rendered "blind" in an orthodoxy that lacks the essential love that is the character of an active faith.

What Peter teaches us about Christian love is amply documented in the entire New Testament. The material that follows in part I of this study will look first at the Synoptic Gospels, then at the Gospel and the Epistles of John, and finally at the Epistles of St. Paul.

### *The Synoptic Gospels*

As an opening for this study it occurred to me that it would be instructive to make a quantitative tally of the frequency of Jesus' words referring to the law, and the frequency of His words referring purely to the Gospel. My tally of the Synoptic Gospels revealed that in the verses quoting Jesus directly the Law-Gospel ratio was as follows: Matthew, 3.5 to 1; Mark, 2 to 1; and Luke, 2.8 to 1. These figures in no way raise a question as to the fact that the Gospel, not the law, shows the way to salvation. What our figures do show is that Jesus considered the law, and obedience to it, a matter of very great importance.

The Old Testament gave the moral law to the children of God in a tidy package summarized in precisely Ten Commandments. While the New Testament in no case repeals or negates any of the moral law in the Decalog, Jesus teaching of the law reduces it quite simply to one single commandment. He says: A new commandment I give unto you. That ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye also love one another (John 13, 34). No longer was the law to be limited to specified enumerated commandments. Henceforth all of the law was to be encompassed and included in one single love commandment.

This is borne out in Jesus' exposition of the Great Commandment. The story, in Mark 12, 28-34, recounts Jesus answer to a question of a Scribe: Which is the first commandment of all? Jesus responds in the familiar words: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; this is the first commandment. And the second is like, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Several things are worthy of note here. The first is the demand that we love God. The Scriptures often call for love for our neighbor. Only rarely, as here, are we specifically called on to love God. References to our relationship to God usually call for faith, honor, knowledge, obedience, or similar expressions of fealty. In the second place we should observe that in the conversation with the scribe there was a single question. The response is given in two parts that are like, or equal to each other. It is not a single question answered in two parts, the first outranking the second in importance. Love for one's neighbor is not secondary to love for God. It is included in it. Whoever loves God loves his neighbor. Jesus makes this clear when He says: There is none other commandment (note the singular) greater than these (the two parts of a single commandment). His words define one commandment, not two.

The version of this account in Matthew 22, 34-40, describes the questioner as a lawyer. Jesus' answer is, for all practical purposes, the same as that indicated above. There is added, however, Jesus' statement that: On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. As we saw in the Marcan example, Jesus is employing two phrases to give a single definition of the Great Commandment. He is saying that the entire content of the law and the prophets is summarized in this single commandment.

The version in Luke differs in that in this Gospel (Luke 10, 25-37) the definition is given by a lawyer rather than by Jesus Himself. The significant departure in Luke is the connection of this conversation with the parable of the Good Samaritan. Jesus' purpose is to enlarge the scope of love to make it include those who would normally be thought to have the least call on our love. It is made to include everyone who needs help regardless of personal relationship, and whatever his race, social status, or national origin.

But Jesus' concept of love goes even farther than this. He adds the dimension of love for our enemies, a measure of love that is not demanded in the Old Testament. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you (Matthew 5, 45). And note well the words of the following verse: That ye may be the children of your Father, which is in heaven. This is true Christian love, a love that is heavenly, because its source is love for God.

A similar admonition in Luke 6, 27-37 ends with the words: Love your enemies, and do good, and lend hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest; for He is kind unto the unthankful and the evil. Those, in other words, who have this kind of love are truly the children of God. They love, not in obedience to a command, but because they are Christians, because they are the children of the Highest. Like the fig tree, so often referred to by Jesus, they bear figs because they are fig trees, not because they have been commanded to bear figs. Love is simply the Christian's total response to God. Love is the determinative principle of the Christian's relationship to all his fellow human beings.

Love shapes sinners in the likeness of God and gives substance to Luther's urging that we be "Christs" to our neighbors. True love has the objective of service. It never expects a recompense. Love is its own reward.

The evangelist Matthew deals with Christian love as expressed in the Great Commandment as an explication or summary of the law and the prophets. Luke treats it as a guide for Christian conduct. The climactic instruction in Christian love, however, is found in Matthew's account of the last judgment (Matthew 25, 31-46). It is a surprising, if not an astonishing, account. The Gospels give us a consistent portrayal of a salvation that is to be received as a gift of God. It is to be received in faith by sinners who offer no merit of good works to make them worthy of salvation. Yet, in spite of all this, here is Jesus making a division between believers and unbelievers on the basis of the love they have shown to their neighbors. It is as though Jesus were responding to the words of James: Faith, if it have not works, is dead, being alone (James 2, 17). And this is exactly the basis on which Jesus is making the final judgment. He is sifting out the dead faith. Though the word 'love' is not used in this Matthew passage, it is love in its highest sense of a response to God's love that is the mark and identifying character of the believers who are saved through faith in the redemptive merit of Jesus Christ.

There is no reference to a love for God. Jesus is saying that those who have fed the hungry, given drink to the thirsty, taken in the stranger, clothed the naked, and visited the sick and those in prison have thereby shown their love to their Father in heaven. Their acts of love have manifested both their faith in Him and a consequent love



for Him. They are translated to the kingdom prepared for them from the beginning of the world. The redemptive death of Jesus has opened the door to that kingdom. Their love life as Christians has demonstrated their faith in their Savior, Jesus Christ.

The emphasis in the Gospel of Luke is on Jesus' personal ministry to the poor and afflicted. We see Jesus expounding the prophecy of Isaiah and saying: The Spirit of the Lord is come upon me because he hath annointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty the bruised (Luke 4, 18).

When the disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus to inquire whether He was in truth He that should come, the Savior responded: Go your way and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached (Luke 7, 22). In this Gospel we have many references to Jesus' praise of almsgiving. The story of the rich man and Lazarus is found only in Luke as is also the instruction for one who wishes to give a dinner: When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just (Luke 14, 12-14). Here, surely, is an echo of Matthew's account of the last judgment. Similar reminders may be seen in Luke's account of Christian love portrayed in the Acts of the Apostles.

## *The Gospel and Epistles of John*

The Gospel of John displayed a marked difference from the Synoptic Gospels in the tally of verses in which Jesus makes reference to Law and Gospel. Jesus' words recorded by John refer to the Gospel twice as often as to the Law in contrast to an opposite finding in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. These Gospels are primarily concerned about the events of Jesus' life, while John was primarily concerned about the words and instruction of the Savior. We will remember that John was often called the Apostle of Love, the disciple whose love for Christ was strong enough to risk the peril of standing at the foot of the cross.

In spite of John's primary concern about the message of the Gospel, his concern for Christian love is everywhere tenderly exemplified as in the sentence: Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another (1 John 4, 11), and in the words: If ye love me, keep my commandments (John 14, 15). It may seem most remarkable that John never includes in his Gospel a direct command to love God or Christ. His sense of a true love for God is, nevertheless, frequently expressed in admonitions to love the children of God for the sake of the love of Jesus.

One has only to read the farewell messages of Jesus to His disciples in chapters 13-17 of John's Gospel to see how fully and totally the words of Jesus are permeated by love. Recalling His love for them Jesus obligates His disciples to a service of love in His behalf and for the benefit of all men.

The 'new commandment' of which Jesus speaks in John 13, 34, makes love the whole and all-inclusive characteristic of the Christian faith and life. It is a simple command that encompasses all the commandments in this one word: That ye love one another:

as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. And this love, as Jesus says in the following (35) verse will identify you in the world, as it also identifies us at the last judgment: By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, that ye also love one another. That there would be no place for vanity or self-righteousness in their Christian love life was made clear by Jesus' words: You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain (John 15, 16).

The High Priestly Prayer of Jesus in John 17 calls on God to unite the disciples with Him in the same love that unites the Father and the Son. I have declared unto them Thy name and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them (John 17, 26). Faith and love would thus become inseparable, the one flowing from the other in a perfect unity of substance and purpose.

### *The Epistles of St. Paul*

We have seen the love command of Jesus as it is portrayed by the four evangelists. The love ethic of St. Paul is completely consistent with the words of the four Gospels, yet its source and point of departure is different. Paul is the preacher of the cross. His emphasis is on Jesus Christ, and him crucified (1 Cor. 2, 2). This fact introduces a new and heightened concept of Christian love. The Apostle sees a new man arising from the shared death and crucifixion of the Savior. Justification points to the creation of a new man, dead and arisen in the Lord Jesus. We become the heirs and recipients of Christ's righteousness through a new birth that gives us the Christlike character of the crucified and risen Lord.

St. Paul recognizes fully the significance of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the children of God. He says: The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us (Rom. 5, 5). Thus God and the Holy Ghost are both seen at work through Christ in transforming us into the nature of Christ and motivating us toward the love of Christ.

Paul's overwhelming concern about Christian love is perhaps nowhere better illustrated than in Galatians 5, 6, where he speaks of faith working in, or active in, love. The Holy Spirit creates faith in us. We demonstrate our faith through love. As in Philippians 2, 1-4, Paul is constantly saying that Christians should conduct themselves in accordance with what they are. He reminds the Thessalonians that ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another (1 Thess. 4, 9). As Christians who have been the beneficiaries of the reconciling love of Christ, Paul urges the Philippians that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all judgment (Phil. 1, 9). He similarly challenges the Thessalonians to acts of love saying: Now our Lord himself, and God, even your Father, which hath loved us and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work (2 Thess. 2, 16, 17).

The prayer of St. Paul in behalf of the Ephesians (3, 17-19) asks that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith, that they remain rooted and grounded in love, that they may know the love of Christ and be filled with all the fulness of God. These words plainly show us that love is the activity of faith. By the grace of God we become Christians. By the same grace we become Christ-like in our faith and love because we have put on the Christ who suffered and died for us.

St. Paul's instruction in the doctrine of justification declares that the Christ has given us the righteousness of God and that it has become ours through faith created in us by the Holy Spirit. We thus have a new life that is revealed in us as we walk by faith (2 Cor. 5, 7); that is, in accordance with our faith. We now live in faith's obedience (Rom. 1, 5), in faith's work (1 Thess. 1,3), in faith's love (1 Thess. 3, 6), and in a newness of life (Rom. 6, 4). We now live in a total and happy submission to the will of God in Christ Jesus (1 Thess. 5, 13). We are no longer bound to an outward obedience to a condified law. We do indeed the works of the law, but only because through Christ and His passion we have surrendered our whole life to him. Through Christ we have kept the law so that now St. Paul can say: Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another has fulfilled the law (Rom. 13, 8). Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom 13, 10). Those who have come to faith have surrendered themselves, in all relationships, to the single motivation of love. Faith has become active in love (Gal. 5, 6). Through Jesus Christ the believer has become a new creation (Gal. 5, 15 RSV).

## II. THE LOVE LIFE OF ORTHODOX LUTHERANS

### *Faith and Good Works: The Post Reformation Debate*

The earth had scarcely settled in the grave of the great Reformer, Martin Luther, after his burial on February 22, 1546, before a time of troubles began for Lutherans and Lutheranism. In the year after Luther's death, Imperial forces defeated the Lutheran princes and made a shambles of Lutheran political power in Germany. Duke John Frederick,

the Elector of Saxony, and his ally Philip of Hesse, were captured and imprisoned. Hostile forces took over the city of Wittenberg and the university faculty fled from that former fortress of Lutheran orthodoxy.

The Augsburg Interim was imposed on the Lutherans by imperial edict in 1548. Protests by outraged Lutherans led to some modifications which were incorporated in the Leipzig Interim, issued later in the year. The essential tragedy for Lutheranism, however, was that the religious movement, born and nurtured at Wittenberg, was left without a home base and a worthy leader. The crisis faced by Lutheranism under the Augsburg and Leipzig Interims had revealed a weakness in Philip Melanchthon, the logical successor in leadership to Luther, which was nothing short of a betrayal of the fundamental theological principles of the Lutheran faith.

The vacuum of competent Lutheran leadership was to be the more serious because it soon became clear that, his victory over the Lutherans in 1546 notwithstanding, Emperor Charles had overplayed his hand in attempting to follow up his military victory by demanding a religious conformity in all of Germany. Added to religious protests against the Interim was a general restlessness that forced Charles to call the Diet of Augsburg of 1555, convened under the authority of the Emperor's brother Ferdinand, to smoothe the waters of German political life. The well-known outcome of the Diet of 1555 was the Peace of Augsburg which left the German princes free to determine the religious future of their own territories. In the following year Charles V abandoned his efforts to resolve the vexatious problems that had harassed him for so long. He abdicated his imperial office and retired to the seclusion of a monastery in Spain.

The Lutherans were now free to carry on where they had left off when Luther died without the intolerable restrictions and inhibitions of the Augsburg and Leipzig Interims. But the university of Wittenberg was no longer a rallying point for Lutheran orthodoxy. Melanchthon, far from being a source of strength and doctrinal stability, had been the primary occasion for the doctrinal deviations and the schismatic conflict under the Interims, and was not in a position to support orthodoxy in the bitter strift that was to continue until the adoption of the Formula of Concord in 1577 and the Book of Concord in 1580.

For the purposes of this paper we are concerned with only one of the many issues that disturbed orthodox Lutheranism from 1546 to 1577. That question is remembered as Majorism, from the name of George Major, a preacher and professor at Wittenberg for nearly ten years after 1536. The problem of Majorism had been anticipated by Melanchthon as early as 1535 when he published his well received Loci dedicated to King Henry VIII of England. In that book, in so many other ways a faithful representation of Lutheran doctrine, Melanchthon introduced, and later cultivated, the phrase: "Good works are necessary for salvation." It was his opinion that though good works do not in themselves merit salvation, yet, since they must necessarily follow faith as a fruit of faith, that therefore they may be said to be necessary to, and a causal factor in salvation.

Two of Melanchthon's colleagues on the faculty, Amsdorf and Cordatus, promptly condemned their fellow teacher's views. Another young man at the university, Caspar Cruciger, a pupil of Melanchthon's, supported his teacher's heresy. When Martin Luther became aware of the quarrel he quashed it in no uncertain terms. He said: "This is the very theology

of Erasmus, nor can anything be more opposed to our doctrine." Later he added that though good works are an "effect necessarily following justification" he rejected the statement that "new obedience is necessary to salvation." Melanchthon was extremely unhappy about this rebuke, but he refrained from further use of this phraseology. He was not convinced that he had been in error because after Luther's death he said he had abandoned his expression only because it was subject to misunderstanding by the papists.

Melanchthon's disciples, however, emerged with a new boldness after Luther's death and did not employ the cautionary reservations of their former teacher. George Major renewed the debate during the Interims of 1548 and publicly proclaimed:

I do confess that I have hitherto taught, and still teach, and henceforth will teach all my life that good works are necessary to salvation. And I declare publicly with clear and plain words that no one is saved with evil works, and also, that no one is saved without good works. Furthermore I say, let him who teaches otherwise, even though an angel from heaven, be accursed.

Amsdorf responded: "Whoever teaches and preaches these words is a Pelagian, a Mameluke (a fighting slave of the pope), and a denier of Christ." Others were equally emphatic in rejection of Major's error.

Unfortunately, however, Nicholas Amsdorf went so far in his denunciation of Major's error as to err in the opposite direction by saying, with considerable support from others, that good works are detrimental and injurious to salvation. In a tract published in 1559 Amsdorf said:



"That this proposition; 'Good works are injurious to salvation' is a correct, true, Christian proposition, taught and preached by Sts. Paul and Luther." (A detailed discussion of the Majoristic controversy may be found in the historical introduction of Concordia Triglotta, Sections 142-150).

### *The Social Gospel*

I have belabored the deviations of George Major and Nicholas Amsdorf because I believe that our own Lutheran orthodoxy, struggling against the errors of Majorism, and Synergism in contemporary Christendom, has come perilously near to Amsdorf's view that good works are detrimental to salvation. This tendency, in my opinion, is illustrated by an obsessive fear that participation in extensive and organized humanitarian activity by Christians in general and the Church in particular threatens a subversion of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and brings with it the heinous indictment of purveying a social gospel. Our fears have reached a point at which Christians believe that the collective good works of the organized Church are detrimental to the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. When public and private humanitarianism is advocated amongst us the cry goes up: "This is the social gospel: the task of the Church is solely to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, not to minister to the material needs of men."

I am convinced that the time has come for serious self-examination, and to ask ourselves whether we are living in the blindness of the barren orthodoxy of which Peter speaks in his Second Epistle (quoted in full at the beginning of this study).

The theological perversions referred to as the Social Gospel had its origins in the late 19th century and was, of course, the product of liberal

theological thought. Washington Gladden, its founder, had scant respect for the authority and integrity of Holy Scripture. The movement ran its course approximately from the publication of Gladden's first work in 1870 to the publication of Theology for the Social Gospel, by Walter Rauschenbusch in 1917. By the 1930's neo-orthodoxy had sapped the vitality of the Social Gospel movement, and by 1940 it had ceased to be a discrete movement with a tenable and a coherent sense of direction. While it flourished it had an incalculable effect on social legislation and raised immeasurably the social concerns of the American electorate.

Its error, theologically, was its emphasis on a social redemption at the expense of a vital concern for the salvation of the eternal souls of men. It was no "Gospel" at all; certainly it was not the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Gladden said: "The individual is only saved when he is put into a right relationship to the community in which he lives, and the establishment of those right relations among men is the very work that Christ came to do." He was wrong, of course. Christ came into the world to reconcile us to God, not to our fellow men.

Richard T. Ely, another influential spokesman for the movement, was just as far from truth when he wrote: "Christianity is primarily concerned with this world, and it is the mission of Christianity to bring to pass a kingdom of righteousness . . ." This secularization of the Christian Gospel, the emphasis on a worldly rather than a heavenly kingdom of God was totally unacceptable to Bible and Gospel oriented Christians. To them the Gospel is the promise of eternal salvation, not a program for temporal rehabilitation.

The Social Gospel movement eventually encountered a larger and more effective opposition

when it turned to socialism for the solution of national problems and the enlargement of human life. Rauschenbusch explicitly opted for socialism when he said: "We believe in replacing the competitive system of production and distribution by a system in which not only the production of wealth, but its distribution shall be social." Later writers were to be even more forceful in demands for the overthrow of capitalism and the creation of a socialistic regime in America.

In the course of actual events the collapse of the Social Gospel movement was hastened by the legislation of the early twentieth century. The threat of socialism was averted by remedial enactments which brought monopolies under control, assured the rights of labor and continued with the dramatic and salutary social legislation of the last two generations.

The trauma and the tragedy have been this: Christians who are properly moved by a primary concern for the spiritual redemption of mankind and have rejected the Social Gospel movement's concern for a social regeneration of humanity have overreacted in panic proportions and now feel that any espousal of social and humanitarian causes is tantamount to acceptance of socialistic views and the neglect of the redemptive role of Jesus Christ, the Savior. This panic reaction has been the origin of a spirit that has kept church doors closed to black Americans, has opposed civil rights and poverty legislation, and has turned a deaf ear to the pleas of millions of disadvantaged citizens and has shut out of our hearts humane concerns in these and many other areas that ought to motivate orthodox Lutherans above all others.

## *Our Stewardship and Our Faith*

We recognize that Christian love and humanitarian concerns are not commodities capable of precise measurement. Just as we cannot see and evaluate the faith of another, so there is no way we can either quantify the degree or the extent of a believer's love for others. We do have a commandment of God which says: Thou shalt love thy neighbor. No standards are set down for the measurement of the full realization of that command. Yet, some tentative yardsticks are at hand.

Our response to God's love is partially reflected in our gifts to the missionary and educational undertakings of our Synod. The published data (Annual Report, 1972) for the year 1971 shows a total membership of 17,426 souls, and reveals that their total contribution to the Synod was \$314,335. That comes out to a per capita contribution of \$18.00\* for each baptized member. \*The figure for contributions per baptized member is used here rather than that per communicant so as to be able to relate our contributions to national and state income statistics. A great many wonderful things were achieved for us and for others through a judicious expenditure of those funds. However, when we measure those gifts in relation to our national per capita income of \$3,000 to \$5,000, varying from state to state, our gifts of love pale into an absurd insignificance. It is like picking up a check for \$25.00 in a fine restaurant and leaving a waiter's tip of from ten to fifteen cents! Does this really represent the degree of our love for a Christ who gave His life for us?

It is true that our people give considerably more for the support of their home congregations. But are these gifts of love given in behalf

of others without expectation of return for ourselves? These gifts are our payment for the maintenance of our own churches and parsonages. Luther said we ought to give more for the support of a Gospel ministry among others than for ourselves because we already have the Gospel; they do not.

*The Kersten Study*

A significant measure of the love life of orthodox Lutherans is available in the small volume, The Lutheran Ethic, (Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1970) by Lawrence F. Kersten. The subtitle of the book is "The Impact of Religion on Laymen and Clergy." It describes the results of a statistical study made in the Tri-County area surrounding Detroit. The study has catalogued lay and clergy responses separately. It was predictably found that among the four Lutheran denominations taken into account the responses ranged from a high in orthodoxy for the Wisconsin Synod, and then in descending order for the Missouri Synod, the American Lutheran Church, and the Lutheran Church in America. The following table illustrates this trend:

(Figures are given in percentages) WIS MO ALC LCA

The Bible is God's Word and all it says is true.	Agreeing:	100	74	19	10
The account of Adam and Eve falling into sinfulness is true, not a legend or myth.	Agreeing:	100	80	28	17
A Child is sinful at birth.	Agreeing:	100	96	74	67
Only those who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior can go to heaven:	Agreeing:	100	84	52	43

A Lutheran can accept a view of evolution of man from lower forms of animals as quite possible.

Disagreeing: 100 81 22 22

The responses of the orthodox wing of Lutheranism to the questions above are most gratifying. We must be deeply concerned, however, by responses to questions which sought information about attitudes of love and concern for others. What emerges from the Kersten study is the appalling conclusion that the clergy who responded in terms of the clearest biblical orthodoxy tended to reflect the least sensitivity to the needs and the welfare of their neighbors. It appears that the least developed Christian love life is the accompaniment of the highest degree of orthodoxy. This shocking conclusion is borne out in the table which follows:

(Figures are in percentages)

	WIS	MO	ALC	LCA
I would be willing to pay more taxes so that low-income families could get low-rent housing.	33	61	69	87
Agreeing:				
It is important for a Lutheran to work for social justice.	13	59	70	67
Agreeing:				
Both individuals and church members should work actively for civil rights of all races even if it means peaceful picketing and demonstration.	0	36	67	83
Agreeing:				

We should start bombing Viet Nam with everything we have and get the war over with.

Agreeing: 43 28 17 9

The Clergy should stick to religion and not concern themselves with social, economic and political problems.

Agreeing: 67 21 6 6

All Lutheran congregations should contribute to the support of certain forms of ministry in the city such as skid row people, hospitals, the aged, and youth.

Disagreeing: 50 10 7 7

The sampling of WELS members included in the tallies in these tables was small. The responses are confirmed, however, by the use of the same questions on a smaller scale in an ELS group. The responses corresponded almost exactly. They must highlight our concern over a barrenness of orthodoxy that appears not to bear the fruit of love and concern for those whom Jesus calls our neighbors.

It is almost beyond belief that those who have the Word of God in its truth and purity should appear to be the least willing to assist in the alleviation of poverty, the pursuit of social justice, and ministries to the sick, to the aged, and to youth.

## *The Unequal Yoke*

In recent years many Evangelicals, or Fundamentalists, within modern Protestantism have been taking note of the tensions between personal religion and social engagement. Few have been more articulate than C. F. Henry, the dean of contemporary Evangelicals, who has pursued the problem since 1947. He has referred to a conservative 'right' that "sponsors a mere 'law and order' culture in which an authentic note of the Gospel can be lacking." (Fides et Historia, Spring, 1972). He has deplored the Fundamentalist reaction to the social gospel as a social withdrawal and an "uncritical defense of the capitalist status quo" (p. 7). It is his view that "biblical Christianity ought to be distinctly involved in social concerns rather than characterized by absence and withdrawal" (p. 8). He properly warns, however, that: "It is not enough to declare and work for social justice; the Gospel is indispensably part of their task. But may the crucified and risen Jesus help us so that, while the call to social justice is not all that we need to sound, we may declare and work for nothing less" (p. 10).

The leaders of the recently formed Conference on Faith and History have also showed a vital evangelical concern for an appropriate expression and activity of Christian love. Prominent among them is Dr. John Warwick Montgomery, well known to many members of the ELS for his eloquent testimony to the historical veracity of the Holy Scriptures. He is the general editor of a series of books in process of publication under the heading, Evangelical Perspectives. One of the books in that series is The Unequal Yoke (Lippincott, 1970) by Richard V. Pierard, a member of the Baptist General Conference, and presently Professor of History at Indiana State University, Terra Haute, Indiana. In a forward to this volume Dr. Montgomery says:



Across the centuries the Christian Church has faced two perennial challenges: the maintenance of a pure testimony; and the application of revealed truth to the total life of man. Though these two tasks interlock (since application of truth is impossible if truth is lost, and truth without application stands self-condemned) theology has devoted itself now to one, now to the other, and the cause of Christ has suffered from the imbalance . . . At the liberal end of the political spectrum efforts to become 'relevant' have succeeded so well that the church has become indistinguishable from the ideological and societal evils she is supposed to combat. Among the Fundamentalists, in contrast, God's revealed truth often serves as a wall to block the church off from the live issues and challenges of a world in crisis (p. 5).

The author of The Unequal Yoke is concerned about the linking of theological conservatism with a social, political, and economic conservatism. He views the joining of the two as an "unholy alliance" that threatens the very fabric of conservative theology. There is evidence enough in numerous studies to substantiate the fact that the two are indeed frequent bedfellows. One example is sufficiently demonstrative of the general rule. A Purdue sociologist surveyed 700 clergymen of the American Baptist Convention during the 1964 presidential campaign. Sixty-nine percent of those who labeled themselves Fundamentalists voted for Goldwater. Goldwater adherents among those who considered themselves conservatives was fifty-one percent, neo-orthodox eleven percent, and liberal theologians five percent. One political conservative in the same

campaign made the solemn observation that a true Christian had no choice but to vote for Goldwater.

Dr. Pierard believes that the evangelical church has "tied itself to the status quo of contemporary middle class America and traded its prophetic ministry for a pottage of public acclaim and economic well-being" (p. 19). He does not find the spirit of Christian love in a political conservatism that is more concerned about property rights than human rights, and that gives its uncritical benediction to a laissez faire capitalism. Prof. Pierard condemns:

a political conservatism that has traditionally stressed individual initiative and the related values of prudence, diligence, thrift, self-reliance, and industry and (believes that) one is rewarded for virtue and hard work and punished for vice and indolence. Thus (as this philosophy goes) the government has no responsibility for meeting the physical needs of its citizens or rectifying seeming social and economic injustices (p. 58).

Contrary to this posture of laissez faire conservatism our Savior proclaimed a Gospel promising everlasting salvation and accompanied that message with a constant concern for the poor, the sick, sufferers from physical handicaps, prisoners, and the lowly. He made disciples of peasants and made Himself the sacrifice for all humanity. Prof. Pierard adds:

"The Church was founded to spread the Gospel throughout the world and to communicate the human concerns of the Son of God. One of the earliest actions of the Church at Jerusalem was to make formal provision for caring for the physical needs

of widows. The Macedonian Churches sent financial assistance to the impoverished in Palestine. Pure religion was defined as ministering to orphans and widows, and the faith of a person who did nothing to care for the bodily needs of his brethren was labeled as dead (James 1, 27; 2, 15-17). In subsequent centuries Christians were in the forefront of meeting human needs by founding hospitals, orphanages, and schools, and intervening to moderate the harshness of political and social structures" (p. 27, 28).

In Pre-Civil War America, however, a gradual deterioration of social concern was to transform much of the church into a shell of self-righteous self-satisfaction. Slavery was accepted and defended. The church washed its hands of the massive urban growth with all its attendant problems. Protestant congregations retreated from the unpleasantness of the inner city and pious Christians shook their heads in pious despair and moved to the suburbs.

Orthodox preachers engaged themselves in a new warfare against Darwin, Marx, and the Modernists. Attention was focussed on personal vice --alcoholic beverages, smoking, the theatre, prostitution, gambling, card playing-- while social sins --slums, poverty, political corruption, fraudulent business practices, monopolies, hazardous working conditions, adulteration of foods-- was deliberately ignored or overlooked (p. 30).

The great evangelists, Dwight L. Moody, Billy Sunday, and others were subsidized by men of wealth who ignored the roots and reality of poverty in saying "I never knew a man who put on Christ first in his life who wasn't successful" (p. 31). "A New York Times columnist asserted that Billy Sunday was

supported by well-to-do men as a public measure, as a means of keeping the lower classes quiet (p. 32)."

Pierard's book goes on to describe the many parasites that have fed on organized Christianity to pervert Christian love and to justify their own social and political postures. Among many of these, described in detail, are the militant anti-Communists who do not recognize the elementary truth that the best defense against Communism is the elimination of the poverty and the social and economic oppression which has been the feeding ground of Communism since the failure of Marxism in the Revolutions of 1848.

The whole point of Pierard's book, as it is the point of this paper, is that evangelical Christianity, and, we would add, orthodox Lutheranism, must return to the elemental posture of love for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and in Him, a love for all of our neighbors.

Love was the basis for Christ's redemptive sacrifice. Expressions of love in action was the accompaniment of all His preaching. Our proclamation of the Gospel is a proclamation of the love of God. It cannot be proclaimed without its correlative love for man. No one can see the purity of the faith that is in us. The children of the world can only see our outpouring of love. They are not likely to be influenced by a Gospel preaching that does not manifest the love that Jesus was talking about when He said: By their fruits shall ye know them.

## *The Testimony of Two Public Servants*

The inadequacy and failure of the love life of orthodox Christians in the United States has been a matter of concern for the distinguished Congressman John B. Anderson, of Illinois. In a fine book Between Two Worlds (Zondervan, 1970) there is an eloquent plea for a revitalization of the evangelical love witness of true believers. He reminds us that:

Time and again, during His short stay of thirty-three years on this earth, our Lord demonstrated His positive stand on issues of the day. He was constantly aware of both the spiritual and the physical needs of all those to whom he ministered. I believe that He likewise expects those who are called by His name to show the same concern and to live and act decisively on the problems of our time (Foreword).

Congressman Anderson burst into national prominence during the civil rights movement of the 1960's. It was his vote in the Committee on Rules and his speech on the floor of the House of Representatives in 1968 that were generally regarded as turning the tide in favor of fair housing legislation.

He has consistently deplored the fact that it has been the liberal wing of American Protestantism that has spoken most "cohesively and dramatically" in presenting their ideas to the government. He has regretted the attitude of evangelicals who are so preoccupied with salvation, and so little concerned about the expression of a Gospel oriented love as to have been impotent in affecting the "current happenings in our society" (p. 39).

Congressman Anderson is in full accord with Dr. Pierard's denunciation of the "unholy alliance" between orthodoxy and social and political conservatism. He earnestly believes that the time has come to break through this "uncritical alignment of religious and political conservatism." He says further:

One can cling to orthodox Christianity without denying the right of the poor to be clothed and fed, or the right of minorities to their civil rights, or that there is a proper role for government to assume in fighting poverty and protecting human rights. In fact, I would reverse the statement to say that it is difficult for me to believe that a Christian cannot be concerned and compassionate about these problems (p. 14.)

Faith in action needs to become our motto, and we need to become sensitized to our proper role in ministering to the needs of our fellowmen. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6, 2), (p. 148).

We have been reacting against the Social Gospel. As an excuse for a non-contributing role we cling tenaciously to an exceedingly individualist heritage. We do suffer from withdrawal symptoms. We do still have an essentially negative approach to the very real problems of many of our neighbors (p. 148).

Congressman Anderson is summarizing the main theme of this paper and using the Bible Text on which it is based when he says:

The Apostle Peter in 2 Peter 1, 5-7, summarizes the fruit of the new nature imparted to us by Christ when we trust in Him: virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity.

Let us, in Peter's words, be diligent in communicating by our deeds that we intend to be faithful to the task that our Savior has entrusted to us (p. 161).

Senator Mark D. Hatfield of Oregon is another public servant who is concerned about the love life of American Christians. His book: Conflict and Conscience, (Word Books, Waco, Texas, 1971) is a solemn and urgent appeal to all who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior to mobilize the power of love in a radical redirection of the thinking of orthodox Christians. He decries:

a silent majority in our land who wrap their Bibles in the American flag, who believe that conservative politics is the necessary by-product of orthodox Christianity, who equate patriotism with the belief in national self-righteousness, and who regard political dissent as a mark of infidelity to the faith (p. 23).

Senator Hatfield is particularly concerned about a barren and loveless orthodoxy that is no less heterodox than the false teachings of liberal theologians. A proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ which does not carry with it the response of Christian love is something less than the whole counsel of God. He says:

Our responsibility is to bear witness to the love of God through Christ. This is a mission of peace and we are under the call of God to fulfill it. In this task we must not be bound by rigid categories of what is a spiritual mission and what is social action. We cannot build a barrier between theological issues and social questions. We must not make the mistake of believing that the Good News we

proclaim has no relevance to our attitudes and actions as well as personal problems in our homes, our nation and our world . . . Christ calls us to express our love through all that we do (p. 45, 46).

The Senator reminds us of Christ's healing ministry, a healing of sin and the healing of a wide variety of human and purely physical infirmities. As He departed this life He promised His disciples: "Greater things than I have done, you shall do. Keep my commandments if you love me" (John 14: 12, 15.) Senator Hatfield continues:

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead guarantees our life after death. God has given us victory over death and fear of what lies beyond the grave. Our faith, then, is secure. Our eternal destiny is established. So now, because of this love dynamic of Christ, we can turn our efforts and our creative energies to the revolutionizing of our world -- to the alleviating of human suffering and the work of God on earth. That is the potential. But we have fallen far short. We have painted Jesus Christ as a respectable, stand-pat establishmentarian, defending the status quo, instead of recognizing Him as the greatest political, social, economic, and spiritual revolutionary the world has ever known.

The direction and purpose of our lives must be centered in the Person of Jesus Christ . . . The demonstration of compassion is the proclamation of one's convictions; we speak not only by what we say, but by what we do.



This is the story the Good Samaritan tells us. Our mission is to be dispersed into society, living forth God's message of compassion and reconciliation (p. 135, 136).

Please permit one more example of the failure of our Christian love life and the barrenness of much of our testimony and faith as Christians. I am referring to a brief item that might have been written by any one of many of us. It appeared in one of our orthodox Lutheran publications; it might have appeared in one of many others. I am not pointing a finger of self-righteous scorn at either the author or the publisher of the article. I only wish to highlight an attitude that has been common to all too many of us. The occasion for this short essay was the presidential campaign of 1972. Portions of the quoted material are underlined. My comments follow.

The extravagant campaign speeches of presidential candidates express the hope that has found lodging in the minds of many Americans -- we can become a perfect society. Now I heard many of the campaign speeches referred to, and while I would concede that some of the campaign promises were extravagant, I heard none that promised a future perfect society. Even when promises were unrealistic they pointed toward what is the God-given duty of every government, the responsibility for improving the conditions and the quality of life of its citizens.

No more poverty, no more slums, no more disadvantaged children, no more unpaid hospital bills, no more malnutrition, no more unwanted children, no more polluted streams, no more unrehabilitated criminals, no more injustice, no more blood and

treasure expended on wars in distant lands. It would be naive to think that any of the evils here enumerated would ever disappear absolutely. But we have God's command, stated either positively or negatively in the Ten Commandments, that we strive toward the goals of eliminating every one of the evils listed. The candidates were offering programs which they believed would ameliorate the ills of society. What in Heaven's Name is wrong with that? That is exactly what Christ was demanding when He said: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." It seems to me that any rejection of the humane ideals of those who would remedy social ills is a cynical rejection of the commands of God Himself, and a prime example of a barren orthodoxy. How can professing Christians ridicule acts of love conformed to acts and words of our own Savior?

After a brief paragraph referring to the utopian dreams of the English poet Shelley, the author goes on to say: It's much more serious when the architects of our society and when national legislators demand that utopian ideals be fulfilled, seemingly disregarding the cost to a nation -- physically, economically, morally, spiritually. Then it's time for some Christian realism like the following. It will be a sad day for us all when our government ceases to be motivated by a humanitarian idealism. Let us look at the author's examples of Christian realism.

Which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost? Certainly we shall count the cost of building a tower or any other building that is convenient for us. Where the question is one of serving a neighbor in distress, preserving a life, or saving a soul, we have no divine instruction to count the cost. The Good Samaritan did not count the cost. He simply

said: "Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee" (Luke 10, 35).

Ye have the poor always with you. We simply cannot imagine a more monstrous perversion of Jesus' words than this. The managers of the sweatshops of the industrial revolution in England used those words to justify their terrible inhumanity to a brutalized work force. Our own American captains of industry used Jesus' words in the sense that our author uses them to justify the tyranny of labor that existed before the formation of labor unions. Yes, sin, and with it poverty, will always be with us. But we shall always recognize it for what it is, a consequence of sin. True Christians will deplore both sin and its consequences, and will remember Jesus' many expressions commending almsgiving and concern for the poor. If the love of Christ is in us at all we will not only feed the hungry and minister to the sick, we will also strive to eliminate the causes of poverty and illness.

Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. Sure they will. But while we remain in the world, we shall be the Church Militant. We shall be active in our conflict with evil men and seducers. The love of Christ will be our motivation for relieving the victims of the evils and seductions of the world we live in.

Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars. Indeed we will, and continuing in the Church Militant we shall oppose the vices and the hatreds that beget wars. Filled with a love for Christ we shall lend all aid possible to the victims of war and oppression.

The author of our little essay concludes with the words: This is wholesome reflection for a campaign year or any other year. We consider it an unwholesome example of Prof. Pierard's remarks about the "unholy alliance" between orthodox Christianity and political and economic conservatism. We think it is an unwholesome example of that barrenness and unfruitfulness in the knowledge of Jesus Christ to which Peter refers in 2 Peter 1, 8.

### *Conclusion*

It has been said that a barren and fruitless orthodoxy is, of all things, the worst and most dangerous heresy. I confess that I, and, I believe, others who have been counted among orthodox Lutherans have all too often been guilty of the sinful vanity of boasting of our possession of God's unadulterated Word. We have said that we teach God's Word in its truth and purity. We say that we tolerate no error in the public doctrine of the church.

While, in a purely formal sense, these assertions may be true, I believe that we have, in actual practice, ~~dimished~~ the power of the Gospel by our generally ~~consistent~~ failure to demonstrate that love and concern for our neighbors which is the characteristic of a true faith. To the degree that our lives and our words have not reflected the purest outpouring of love to others, to that degree, I say, our orthodoxy must appear tainted and suspect before the throne of God in heaven.

In forty years of association with conservative Lutherans I have only rarely seen a disposition toward self-examination or self-censure. We have felt that all is well with us because we have

formally confessed the truth. Occasionally someone has said: "Oh, we ought to give more for missions," a form of self-reproach that has contented us in the rather smug concession that, "after all, we're not perfect."

We have permitted the Old Adam in us to fasten on the social gospel movement, with its unquestionable evils, as an excuse for withdrawal from our practical responsibilities as Christians. It has been a comfortable rationalization for failure to involve ourselves in issues and undertakings in which we should have been involved.

The games we have preferred to play have been an incessant sniping at heterodoxy, especially as it has cast us in a role of righteous superiority over our erring brethren. Our challenging of doctrinal error has been a necessary and God-pleasing task. The pity is that our conflict with error has left us quite insensitized to the beam that is in our own eye. We can hardly expect Saints Peter and Paul to lavish much praise on us in view of the withdrawal syndrome that has kept us from the 'activity' of faith, the faith-engendered love that is the true product and outcome of faith.

It requires only a casual glance at our past to recognize that orthodox Lutherans have not been in the forefront of the great humanitarian movements of the past. We held our peace during the debates over abolition before the Civil War, and many of us have opposed civil rights legislation in our own time. We held our peace while the laboring masses in America sought redress of grievances in a labor union movement which we and our conservative brothers accepted only because we had to.

And how much have we done, individually or corporately; to what degree have we supported efforts to alleviate poverty and to remove the causes of poverty in a land richly endowed with abundance of natural resources?

Whatever response we may make to any of these illustrations of our shortcomings as Christians in action, I am sure that no one will be prepared to say that orthodox Lutherans have been outstanding in their humane contribution toward the welfare of all our neighbors.

The Christian faith which we profess should have made us outstanding. It should have, but it has not. We who have had the Gospel of Jesus Christ in its infinite richness should have been an example to the world. Gracious expressions of love and bold and magnanimous ventures in the promotion of human welfare should have characterized our relationships to the world. We should have been as much concerned about the welfare of others as believers were in the first three centuries of the Christian era. Remember how the church grew as pagans caught the spirit of love in the Gospel preached to them by their friends and neighbors who professed the Christian faith. Romans often remarked about how much those people loved one another. The growth of the early church was dependent on more than the presence of true Apostolic doctrine. There was a doctrine there that bore the appropriate fruits of faith, that is, a love for the totality of the humanity of man, sin, physical distress and all.

We may, indeed we do, have the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ among us. Yet, we must sadly confess, in spite of our possession of pure doctrine the growth of the church is being hindered because we who are capable of bringing others to faith are

not filled with the overpowering love that burned in the hearts of the early Christians.

At a time when Lutheran Orthodoxy is the possession of a diminishing remnant of the church, I believe that strong and purposeful Christians must rise to the task of a radical regeneration of the love life of orthodox Lutherans. We need more than evangelization programs. We need an inner revival of both love and knowledge.

There are only a few of us left who still believe God's Word infallibly transmitted to us in the Holy Scriptures. Who will restore a vitality to the church if we fail in the task God has given us, as a faithful remnant, to do? Only God's love can move us to love. Only the love of a God Who gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3, 16).

Jesus, the Evangelists, Peter, and Paul all warn us of the barrenness of a faith that does not bring full and unfeigned love to all men in every condition of life.

Jesus our Savior stands beckoning to us at the portals of heaven:

Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger and ye took me in:

Naked and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me: I was in prison and ye came to me.

Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these by brethren, ye have done it unto me (Matthew 25, 34-36, 40).

(March 15, 1973. Revised Issue February 1, 1974)

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"Thomas Arnold, of Rugby, said: 'The distinction between Christianity and all other systems of religion consists largely in this, that in these other, men are found seeking after God, while Christianity is God seeking after men.'"

.....

"There is no reason why any Lutheran in view of the new isma and vagaries of our times should think of revising the creed and doctrinal attitude of his Church, but there is every reason why he should cling to the heritage of sound, pure doctrine and excellent evangelical church polities that have been bequeathed upon him by a great past. To repeat the words of Mark Hopkins with a slight change of phraseology: If in the chaos of wrecked beliefs and tottering churches the Lutheran Church too should have to be junked, there would ensue a worse than Egyptian darkness."  
-- W.H.T. Dau in What is Lutheranism, pp. 209, 221, Vergilius Ferm, ed.



## THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS\*

It is a rather dangerous thing ever to say that one particular doctrine of the Scripture has been ignored or has not been given as great an emphasis as it should have in the life of the Church. When one makes that sort of a bald assertion he is likely to come upon someone who has not ignored that particular doctrine. Christian doctrine is rich and has many facets, and one can easily focus on one doctrine for a time and then shift attention to another without doing an injustice to the whole body of God's teaching.

Having said that, we wonder if it is not the case that some doctrines are allowed to slumber a little bit too long sometimes. At this time, we wonder especially about the doctrine of the Universal Priesthood.

The Universal Priesthood, or the Priesthood of all believers, played a most important role in the Reformation. We might go so far as to say that while the central theme of the Reformation was justification by faith without the deeds of the law, the real catalyst and the real provocation for the Reformation in a practical way came in Luther's exposition of the Universal Priesthood. One would

\* Prepared for Central Pastoral Conference, ELS, December, 1973.

suspect that had justification by faith been the only theme, had that been as far as Luther was prepared to go, the Roman Church could easily have ignored him and eventually swallowed him up. A superficial examination of the history of Roman theology shows that at various times just about every variety of belief has been held, more or less legitimately, within the Church of Rome. And only when the basic authority of the church has been directly threatened has the church lashed out to combat the error.

The power structure of the Roman Church could not tolerate Luther because Luther proposed something that threatened her basic authority. It was Luther's promulgation through his writings, of the priesthood of all believers, not just in theological circles, but among the laymen as well that offered the provocation for the Roman Church to "deal" with him.

According to Köstlin, the first time that Luther publicly proclaimed the universal priesthood was in his sermon Von der Heiligen Messe, (preached between 1516-1518) (Köstlin, Julius. The Theology of Luther, Halle, 1883, translated 1897, Vol. I, p. 220). Later, in 1519, in a letter to Spalatin, Luther said, in response to a question concerning the duties of priests (according to Köstlin), that "the more he considers it, the less he is able to think of anything more than mere ceremonies. Moreover, the words of 1 Peter 2: 9 and Revelation 1: 6, according to which all Christians are priests, keep forcing themselves upon him. The priesthood, therefore, to which he and Spalatin belong appears to be distinguished from the rank of the laity by nothing except the special ministry, ministerium, i.e., the administering of the Word and Sacraments.

In everything else they are alike, if we take away the ceremonies and human ordinances." (Köstlin Vol. I, p. 262).

Later on Luther's severest attacks on the papacy came particularly in his opposition to its concept of the priesthood and the authority of the church. In 1522, Luther attacked the papacy on those grounds in his Address To The Christian Nobility, and from there on Luther refers to the universal priesthood, to 1 Peter 2: 9 and Revelation 1: 6, 5: 9, 10, and 20: 6 frequently. Finally, we find a thorough exposition in Luther's sermons on 1 Peter, preached in 1522 and published in 1523 as a commentary (American Edition, Vol. 30).

### THE OFFICE OF PRIESTS

On what basis did Luther proclaim his doctrine of the universal priesthood? There are several testimonies in the scripture which must be taken into account for an understanding of the universal priesthood: Exodus 19: 5, 6, Hebrews, the entire book, 1 Peter 2: 5 & 9, Revelation 1: 5, 6, 5: 9, 10 and 20: 6. Hebrews, especially chapters 4-10, deals with the priesthood of Christ. The others deal with the universal priesthood.

It is all too often assumed that the meaning of priest--priesthood ( in the O. T.,  
ιερευς--ιερατευμα in the New Testament and LXX) includes only, or primarily, the idea of sacrifice. But this idea does not altogether hold up. In Deuteronomy 33: 8-10, (from Moses' blessing of the 12 tribes) is found the blessing of Levi for the practice of the priesthood. There this order was established: (1) the possession of God's Revelation--the Torah; (2) the interpretation of the

Law -- The Word; and (3) sacrifice. These directions are specifically given to the tribe of Levi. Luther remarks: "He wants to say, 'May your priesthood and office be happy both in prayer and in teaching... Whatever he does in the ministry of the Word, make it prosper.'" (Am. Ed. 9: 305) One certainly gets the idea here that priesthood goes beyond sacrifice. Micah 3: 11 and other passages also speak of the priests as being more than sacrificers, namely, teachers as well. It might be true that as time went on, the most attention was paid to the sacrificial function, while the function of interpreting the Law was given over to the scribes and others. Nonetheless the function of teaching and the custody of revelation was never divinely removed from the priesthood.

In Exodus 19: 6 are words which are quite obviously at the root of Peter's and John's proclamation of a priesthood. God tells Moses to tell the people, "If you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine; and you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." What do these words mean? At that time Israel already had a divinely mandated priesthood in Aaron. It would seem that we can hardly understand these words to be anything else than a part of the Messianic hope, the Israelites were under the Gospel, not under the Law. While God established the Old Testament priesthood to make sacrifices on behalf of His people, to remind them of their sins and to show them an image of the Messianic hope, the promise was above that. As Paul points out in Galatians, the Law was given after the promise. And so the Israelites, even in the Old Testament, share in the personal priesthood of all believers. Some believe that the Exodus 19 passage had one meaning at the time it was written and another meaning for the N. T. writers,

who understood the words to mean, "If and only if you are obedient, you will be to me a kingdom of priests." "But," according to Manson, "the plain meaning was automatically excluded when an exclusive priestly caste was established in fact, and confirmed in its rights and privileges by the legislation of a priestly code." (Manson, T. W. Ministry and Priesthood: Christ's and Ours. London, 1958, p. 53). However, we would submit that the passage was to have precisely the same meaning for God's people in the Old Testament era as the words spoken by Peter and John had for the New Testament -- they are words of promise which flow out of the Gospel. They are God's covenant, just as the promise of the Messiah is God's covenant.

So far as the Old Testament concept of the priesthood is concerned, it does not appear to be tenable to understand the Old Testament priestly function as purely sacrificial. From the very institution of the priesthood in the Pentateuch -- both in Aaron's appointment as well as in the Levitical blessing in Deuteronomy 33: 8-10 -- it seems clear that the Old Testament includes a teaching and interpreting function as well as a sacrificial function. Luther so understood the function of the priesthood in his commentary on Deuteronomy 33: 10, and in fact, builds from there his concept of the universal priesthood as including both teaching and praying for others.

The priesthood of Christ as presented in Hebrews says nothing directly about the universal priesthood. But it is more than a little helpful in establishing the meaning of priesthood. In Hebrews 4-10, in the discussion of Jesus' priesthood, ἀρχιερεὺς and ἱερεὺς dominate the letter. While the writer of the letter is so apparently like Paul, it is strange that these terms, which occupy such a prominent place in Hebrews, are not once used by Paul.

Be that as it may, the letter to the Hebrews is a most thorough explication of the priesthood of Christ. The main points in the Hebrews discussion are: (1) Christ as high priest sacrifices Himself -- the perfect priest making the perfect offering (Hebrews 7: 26, 27, 9: 14, (: 11, 10: 10); (2) The sacrificial act takes place once. It is unique and unrepeatable. (7: 27, 9:24-28, 10:10-14); and (3) it is an internal priesthood, now exercised before God on behalf of God's people as mediator and intercessor (cp. 1 Timothy 2: 5, 6 and Romans 8: 34) Hebrews 6: 20, 7: 3, 17, 21, 24, 25, 28. The high-priestly office of Christ is based totally on the giving of Himself, giving up His body and blood in history. The sacrifice is perfect and its effect is for all time.

When believers are called priests by the Apostles, this fact must be particularly kept in mind then: **Being a Priest** after the pattern of Christ means giving up oneself. Luther sees this in the light of Romans 12: 1, "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." For example, in his treatise "On The True Mass and The Consecration of Priests," after citing Romans 12: 1, Luther says, "Now to make sacrifices to God is solely the office of the priests." (St. L. XIX: 1082)

In 1 Peter 2: 5, Peter sees the priests in that light. "You also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." *καρτερευσα* particularly refers to the office of the priesthood, both to its dignity and its function. Here sacrifices (*θυσιας*) are spiritual (*πνευματικος*), not material or physical. According to Luther this simply means that the Gospel is preached. He allegorizes and says, "He slaughters the calf (by preaching the Gospel),

namely, the carnal mind, the Old Adam." (American Edition, Vol. 30, p. 54) Certainly the function of the priest here in offering spiritual sacrifices is to pray -- a vertical relationship with God -- prayers of repentance and prayers for others, praise and thanksgiving. Those are the sacrifices that are of the individual and they are truly spiritual. The redeemed Christian is acceptable to God because God has declared him to be perfect, innocent and pleasing in His sight because of the merits of Christ. 1 Peter 2: 5, then, speaks of the vertical relationship which exists between God and His priests. There is established a direct relationship between each of God's people and God Himself. No longer does He have intermediaries through which the people must go for sacrifice. They go now direct to God because they are His priests.

1 Peter 2: 9 repeats the use of *ιερατευμα* but adds *βασιλειον* and connects that Royal priesthood with "chosen generation" *γενος εκλεκτον* "Holy Nation" *εθνος αγιον* and God's own people *λαος εις περιποίησιν*. The names given are taken from Exodus 19: 5 and Deuteronomy 7: 6. All of these terms are synonymous with "Christians." Luther says: "It would please me much if this word 'priest' were used as commonly as the term 'Christians' is applied to us." (30:63)

The *ιερατευμα* in 2: 9 includes all that it includes in 1 Peter 2: 5. It designates the priestly character of the Christian. But here, rather than the sacrificial character of the priestly office, *ιερατευμα* is emphasized in its ministerial aspect -- "that you should declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." KJV has "shew forth," but *εξαγγελητε* has more force than that -- to declare, to proclaim outward, to others, with others perceiving the proclamation.

Whether or not the Old Testament institution of the priesthood had included the idea of teaching or praying on behalf of others would make no difference. Here that function is specifically added to the priesthood of God's people. If 1 Peter 2: 5 denotes a vertical relationship between the people of God and Himself, in that the believers have direct relationship to God, then this use of ὑποτάσσεται calls attention to a horizontal relationship, a function which moves horizontally between men and men, on God's behalf.

In fact, Luther calls this latter the chief function of a priest. "A priest must be God's messenger and must have a command from God to proclaim His Word. You must, says Peter, exercise the chief function of a priest, that is to proclaim the wonderful deed God has performed for you to bring you out of darkness into the light. And your preaching should be done in such a way that one brother proclaims the mighty deed of God to the other... Thus you shall also teach other people how they too can come into such life." (Am. Ed. 30: 65). Before this, as well as in other places, Luther comments that it is impossible that Peter is addressing his words just to a clerical caste. He is addressing the words to all Christians. Just in case he is misunderstood, he adds, "Thus we see that the first and foremost duty we Christians should perform is to proclaim the wonderful deeds of God." (Am. Ed. 30: 65)

It seems inescapable then that included intrinsically in the life of God's people as priests is: (1) the establishment of a direct relationship with God in which there is no mediator between the believer and the Savior, and in which the Christian is to offer up to God the sacrifice of himself, and, at the same time, (2) the obligation to proclaim that work of God by which they have been made priests.



## MADE TO BE PRIESTS

Finally, there are the Revelation passages.

- 1: 5,6    Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.
- 5: 9,10    Thou wast slain and has redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth.
- 20: 6      Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

These passages add nothing new to what has been said about the function of the Royal priesthood. They do, however, say much about the way in which the appellation of priest comes to the Christian. Where in the 1 Peter passage, the office  $\kappa\rho\alpha\tau\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$  was spoken of, in these passages the simple appellation of the office holder ( $\kappa\rho\epsilon\upsilon\varsigma$ ) is used. The emphasis is not on the function nor on the privilege, but on the means by which the position is effected. 1: 5, 6: Christians are kings and priests because of God's love and the washing away of sin by the blood of Christ. Priests in

this sense are made by Christ, not, as Luther would say, "by being shaved." Likewise, 5: 9, 10: Christ has "made" them priests. And 20: 6, simply reiterates the simple fact that Christians ARE priests of God and of Christ.

When all of this is put together, the Scripture has made a very straight forward assertion. All Christians are priests before God, and there is no rank. They are made priests by the merits of Christ Himself. And their priesthood is not merely a name or a title, but it includes a function: they sacrifice -- themselves; they pray to God on their own behalf, but especially on behalf of others; and they furthermore have the teaching and proclaiming office of the priesthood. There is in the passages examined no qualification of those rights, privileges and responsibilities. No Christian can have taken away from himself, nor can he give away, his right to approach God directly in prayer, his immediate access to Christ as one of the priests under the great high priest, or his function -- proclaiming the Word to others. The Christian can neither usurp another's right in that area nor give it away.

We should add here a note about the relationship between Christ's priesthood and the universal priesthood. What is the relationship? In an exegetical examination of 1 Peter 2: 4-10, entitled The Elect and The Holy, which is more an exercise in Higher and Form Criticism, the author, John H. Elliott, makes his main point that there is no relationship between the priesthood of Christ which is explicated in Hebrews and the universal priesthood of 1 Peter and Revelation 1: 5 and 20. His grounds for saying that are, if I understand him correctly, that 1 Peter 2: 5, 9 uses  $\epsilon\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ , as the LXX does in its translation of Exodus 19: 6, while Hebrews does not once use  $\epsilon\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$  but

always λερευς or λερωουνη; and, furthermore, that Hebrews does not refer at all to Exodus 19: 6, but makes its comparison with the Levitical priesthood only. I think that there might be some validity to that formulation. The universal priesthood is not mentioned at all in Hebrews. Exodus 19: 6 clearly has nothing to do with the Levitical Priesthood. Indeed, it is after Exodus 19: 6 that the Levitical Priesthood is formally instituted. Exodus 19: 6 looks forward to the promise that will be fulfilled with the Messiah. It is prophetic and of course does have an immediate reality for God's people in their Messianic hope.

But Christ's priesthood is in fact the cause of the universal priesthood. The priesthood of the believers does not come about in a nominal way, merely because Christ is called a priest. It is not a matter of the title being transferred from Him to us. Rather, the Universal Priesthood comes into effect as a result of Christ, the great High Priest, and His sacrifice. Rev. 1: 5 & 5: 9. In that sense the two are related.

It does, however, seem difficult and a little tenuous to establish the character or function of the Universal Priesthood from the Priesthood of Christ.

#### THE MINISTRY OF CHRISTIAN PRIESTS TODAY

There are some important applications to all this. A. C. Mueller, in The Ministry of the Christian Teacher, page 12, says, "Loeche gradually reduced the Universal Priesthood of believers to a point where it amounted to little more than the prerogative of direct access to God and the offering of intercession and thanksgiving. He

correspondingly magnified the ministry, taking it out of the hands of the people altogether, contending that it is an office that exists in its own right and runs parallel, so to say, with the church. This sets the clergy apart from the people, and deprives them of the right to call pastors and teachers."

One wonders if not many later orthodox Lutherans have fallen into this trap as well. The priesthood of all believers was tremendously important for the Reformation. While the Confessions refer to the Universal Priesthood, as such, only once (so far as I can tell) -- in the Smalcald Articles in "On the Power and Primacy of the Pope" (Parag. 70) -- Luther himself relied heavily on 1 Peter 2: 5 and 9 and Revelation 1: 6. In his Address to the Christian Nobility (1522) Luther relies on the doctrine of the universal priesthood for his assertion that the priesthood as practiced by Rome does not even exist. The whole rationale for the Reformation emphasis on the right of individual Christians relies on the Scriptural doctrine of the universal priesthood. Our own congregational form of church government, while the form itself is an adiaphoron, is fundamentally built on the fact of a universal priesthood and the idea that the ministry of the Word flows out of the universal priesthood.

In his essay, "That a Christian Assembly Has The Right to Call," Luther lists these functions of the Priesthood: (1) the proclamation of the Word. (2) Baptism -- which even women are allowed to administer in cases of necessity. (3) The administration of the Lord's Supper. (4) Absolution. (5) The rendering of sacrifice according to Romans 12: 1, 1 Peter 2: 5, i.e., the crucifixion of ones own flesh and the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. (6) Priestly intercession for others in

prayer. (7) Independent judgment of dogma in the light of the Holy Scriptures. (Köstlin p. 86)

Of such great importance does Luther find the doctrine of the universal priesthood to be. It is of utmost importance to Luther to prove to Emser, Alveld and, indeed, to Pope Leo himself in his De Libertate that there are not two classes of Christians, priests and laity. All, he says, are priests. And he asserts, again and again, that all are to function as priests, teaching each other, praying for each other, sacrificing oneself, i.e., his worldly lusts. He finally has to say in On the Misuse of the Mass, "Among all these varieties of priesthood, not more than two have been instituted by God. One was the outward priesthood of the Old Testament which is called Levitical, in which Aaron was the high priest. . . . The second priesthood is a Christian spiritual priesthood in which the High Priest is Christ alone, blessed, living and eternal; which is why his whole priesthood and everything in it is eternal, holy, and living." (Am. Ed. 36: 138)

So important, then, is this universal priesthood, that we can hardly afford to ignore it, or even to minimize it, by substituting for it a shallow understanding of priesthood that takes away from it all of its inherent power.

One might suspect that often times in contemporary Lutheranism -- orthodox and otherwise -- the public ministry has merely been substituted for the old Roman priesthood. And that is hardly an improvement. The universal priesthood is given to all Christians, none excepted. The public ministry, instituted by God Himself, is not a separate entity, parallel to the church or even to the universal priesthood, but it grows out of the universal

priesthood and has as its authority the Word of God which is common to all Christians.

It must not be forgotten, and I'm sure we won't allow ourselves to forget, at least while church and ministry are under discussion, that the public ministry exists jure divino. It is in itself a mandatum dei. For the most part, that is a discussion for another time and another place. But it is most important to remember here that both the universal priesthood and the ministry of the Word exist as creations of God's Word. But even so, the public ministry flows out of the universal priesthood, and has its authority from the Word alone. Thus the public ministry can no more usurp the rights and functions of the royal priesthood than can the royal priesthood usurp what has been assigned to the public ministry.

Some examples: We have always been very nervous about lay preaching. It might be unfortunate that the term lay preaching is used at all. All laymen should preach all the time. In fact, every time that a pastor preaches to his people, the whole congregation is preaching. But that is not as far as it goes. Every time a layman tells another the Gospel in absolution or in evangelism, he is preaching. A congregation may under unusual circumstances select one of its members who has not had seminary training to preach. Then, of course, he is of the public ministry, since he has been so designated by the universal priesthood there in that place. But that is not lay preaching. Lay preaching, as we have used the term, merely means the usurpation of the ministry of the Word in public.

But properly understood, the universal priesthood is not a usurpation of the public ministry, even though all laymen are commanded to preach the

Gospel. The universal priesthood is to exercise its inherent right to preach in the relationships it has with other human beings. The public ministry of the Word has its function on the public behalf. Paul's "Do everything decently and in order," (1 Cor. 14: 40) goes a long way. That is, to a large degree, the basis of the institution of the public ministry. But the public ministry and the universal priesthood do not contradict each other in any way.

It is not sufficient to say that all preaching and all proclaiming is done by the public ministry on behalf of the universal priesthood. The only aspect of their ministry of the Word that God's priests are by Scripture commanded and allowed to delegate is that which is done publicly, i.e. in public on the public behalf or in private on the public behalf. Thus the mandate of the great commission and of 1 Peter 2: 9 and of other N.T. examples remains a most important part of the individual Christian task.

This applies also to the other functions of the ministry of the Word. Baptism becomes primarily a function of the public ministry, since it is a mark of the Church, and is therefore administered by the public ministry on the public behalf. It can be said that when the minister baptizes, the whole church is baptizing. But no scripture militates against the administration of Baptism by another Christian in unusual circumstances.

The Lord's Supper, too, is a mark of the Church and includes in its very concept visible fellowship between Christians (1 Cor. 10). Therefore, it is normally exercised and administered under the auspices of the congregation and by the public ministry. But there is likewise no scripture

that militates against the administration of the Sacrament if circumstances should "demand" it in another context. The Sacrament's validity depends not on the administration of it, but on the power of the Word.

Absolution is included likewise in both spheres. On the one hand, it is the normal function of every Christian, as a possessor of the office of the keys to comfort his brother in Christ. This function is not given away and it is to be exercised. It is also the function of the public ministry, in its own sphere, to exercise the keys and to declare absolution to the body of Christians all at once and to the individual on behalf of his fellow believers. The public ministry is not permitted to usurp the authority of the individual in his exercise of the priesthood, nor is the individual priesthood to usurp the authority given to the ministry of the Word on the public behalf.

The prophetic and teaching aspect of the priesthood is likewise exercised both in the universal priesthood and in the public ministry of the Word. The universal priesthood is given the commission to "declare the glories of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1 Peter 2: 9) The same authority is given to the individual in the Great Commission. The privilege and responsibility of the individual cannot be delegated away, any more than the doing of good works can be delegated to a special committee of other Christians. Both good works and evangelizing are necessary fruits of true faith; they are irresistible necessities.



The work of evangelizing is also an integral part of the public ministry. For one thing, the very structure of our ecclesiastical organization places the chief responsibility for evangelizing on the pastor. The Apostles and their co-workers did not only preach to groups of people assembled for that purpose, but they sought out individuals. When the pastor engages in the work of evangelizing, he is carrying out both the function of the office of the public ministry and the function of his own personal office of the priesthood of all believers. Our practice of the universal priesthood is not especially lacking in that area. But where it is lacking is on the emphasis we have failed to place on the exercise of this function by those who are not in the public ministry. It is clear from 1 Peter 2: 9 that each individual Christian as a matter of course, because he is a Christian, is to declare to his fellow men the Gospel of forgiveness. Nothing is said about delegating that responsibility. It is moreover clear from Ephesians 4: 11, 12 that one of the functions of the public ministry (pastors and teachers) is to teach, train, instruct, outfit, equip the Christians to do the work of their ministry, the universal priesthood.

The universal priesthood has therefore most important implications for the ministry in the church today. It is perhaps easiest to go on functioning in terms of the medieval priesthood. It might be more efficient, just as dictatorship is more efficient. But that is not the sort of public ministry that is known in scripture. The overseeing aspect is there and cannot be ignored. But if and when that overseeing aspect comes into conflict with the universal priesthood, it simply cannot be allowed to take away the privileges and the functions of the universal priesthood which is a creation of God's Word. If the ministry of the Word

really flows out of the priesthood of all believers the former cannot be allowed to usurp the privileges and functions of the latter.

-- Erling T. Teigen

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All this is but a warning not to allow our theological thinking to be dominated by that which is popular or taken for granted in our own age: it may be true, but it certainly will not be the whole truth. As a late English theologian used to say, for every new book that we read, we should read two old books, to correct our perspective. We shall always remain children of our age -- if we did not, we should neither be able to understand it (let alone live in it) nor to reach it with the Gospel -- but if we are only children of our age, the timeless Gospel that we bring will be mangled and truncated, tailored and cut down to fit the wishes and whims of the time. If we are not constantly questioning the assumptions of our age, including current fashions of thought in the Church itself, our understanding of God's truth will certainly be lopsided, and perhaps corrupted altogether. ... -- Alan Cole, in The Body of Christ, (Vol. I. of Christian foundations), pp. 13f

## MINISTERING TO THE DYING\*

After this paper had been assigned to me, a brother wrote: "I realize, of course, that we have had papers on this subject before." However, the suggestion the brother made in his letter was that we approach this subject from the standpoint of the dying. An understanding of death is, of course, something nobody can achieve for another. But we can research the question, "What goes on in the mind of a person who knows he is dying?" I hope to be able to communicate a few ideas that will help us all in becoming ever keener in the difficult art of Ministering To The Dying.

The ministry to the dying is a special ministry only in so far as the pastor is, assumedly, dealing with a person whose illness is of such a nature and has come to such a stage that it can be observed, and where the attending physician has stated, that the case is terminal, or the man is dying.

Otherwise there is really no essential difference, since we are all sick unto death and the minister should always preach as a dying man to dying men. How often have we experienced that the person we least expected to die -- he/she looked so well the afternoon we visited -- was dead the morning after.

\*Prepared for General Pastoral Conference, ELS, January 15-17, 1974.

However, the fact that a person knows or suspects he/she is dying makes for a different situation, another ball game, so to speak. We need to consider what is our own attitude and frame of mind as ministers ministering to the dying as well as what is going on in the mind of the dying.

And so, let us begin with the minister. What is our thinking and attitude with regard to death and dying? We know we are living in a time and age that is desperately trying to conceal the fact of death and dying. We use all sorts of euphemisms for death. Morticians are skilled "make-up" artists to make the "dead" look pretty. Vast sums of money are spent for caskets and flowers and other trappings to try to cover up the fact of death, or to make it seem less horrible. In addition it might be pointed out that there is almost what one has called "a conspiracy of silence" regarding death. We live in a generation that just does not want to talk about it. A comedian made this statement: "When children hear of grandfather's death, they ask, 'Who shot him?' -- That's how unreal death has become in this generation.

Dr. Shelley N. Chou, head of the Department of Neurosurgery at the University of Minnesota, is quoted as saying: "Death denial, although it has always been with us, is a unique trait of Western Civilization." He also stated it is not encountered in the Orient where people regard themselves as part of nature. (Fatalism)

A study of America's attitudes toward death conducted by Clifford D. Simak, staff writer for the Minneapolis Tribune, stated:

For many years Americans have denied death by refusing to talk or even think of it. If you did not talk about it, maybe it would go away.

This is a defense mechanism, certainly. But why do we need the mechanism? Men whose professions have placed them in close contact with death and who have studied it say there are several reasons:

We have lost, in large part, our religious convictions and our believe in an afterlife; thus death becomes the great finality we try to banish from our minds.

We are drunk with affluence and success and have become a materialistic society; with all we have it galls us to think we cannot have life too, as long as we may want it.

The great advances in medical science have given us the reality of longer and healthier life; faced with actuality we tend to think medical science will enable us to hold off death indefinitely.

The cult of youth fostered by Madison Avenue has made us resent both old age and dying; becoming old is a sin and death is unthinkable in a world where youth is all important. (Minneapolis Tribune, 4-2-72)

We would add here the thought expressed by another writer, "Science and technology have contributed to an ever-increasing fear of destruction and therefore fear of death."

Many quotations might be furnished here to substantiate the above, but they are unnecessary,

since it is something we are familiar with. Why, then, do I mention it? Because it affects the attitude of everyone who has to deal with the terminally ill. We see it in the attitude of doctors. In a certain clinical study, nine out of ten doctors resented the idea that anyone should speak to his patients about dying. It is also reflected in the manner in which doctors deal with the patient that is dying, the attitude of the nurses and the whole procedure followed by hospitals in dealing with dying patients. This is an attitude of fear. The doctors, in a general way, fear the loss of reputation and the reaction of the family members. Nurses feel frustrated -- "there is nothing we can do"-- and they shy away from the emotional upset which is so often associated with the loss of a patient. And the same attitude of fear can affect the pastor in his ministry, with the result that we may not speak as frankly and forthrightly about death as we ought.

We quote again from the study conducted by Mr. Clifford Simak:

But the whole study may not only be denial; the institutionalized management of death has made us less aware of it and thus less able to handle it when it occurs.

To substantiate this point he quotes The Rev. Wm. Kenney, Executive Secretary for the archdiocese of St. Paul who also serves as chaplain of St. Mary's Hospital, who stated:

We have removed the harsh reality of death from the community. Fifty years ago the experience of death was more apparent. People quite frequently died at home and

there was a close experience of death for all involved. Today we die away from home . . .

Joseph Bailey, a writer for Cook Publishing, states in his book, The View From A Hearse:

One of my early memories is of being led into my grandmother's room in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, to give her a final kiss. 'She is dying,' I had been told, 'so be quiet and behave'. . . . The old lady was surrounded by her children and grandchildren. (She was in her bed, the one she had slept in for fifty years. She was surrounded by old familiar things. Things she loved.) In a few hours she died.

Forty years later my children were with their grandfather when he had his last heart attack. We gave him oxygen, called the doctor, and then the ambulance came. The men put grandpa on a stretcher, carried him out of the house, and that was the last his grandchildren saw of him.

Grandpa died alone, at night, after visiting hours. The mechanics of survival-- tubes, needles, oxygen system, electronic pacemaker-- were in him and on him and around him. . . His grandsons had no chance to give him a final kiss, to feel the pressure of his hand upon their heads.

Managing of death by specialists has become a characteristic of our age. This may be good technology, but it certainly creates problems for the pastor who is to minister to the dying. It brings up the whole gamut of questions related to the one question: When is the patient dying? In the face of which doctors shy away from making any

pronouncements and put the pastor who speaks about death and dying pretty much on the spot. For this reason pastors who have not prepared themselves well are pretty much affected by this attitude of fear about speaking about death. Young people today have not had much experience with death, because it is a less common experience in the home life. In 1920 out of 100,000 births 700 mothers died, generally at home; in 1967 only 28 out of 100,000, and at the hospital. Of infant mortality - - 1915 - 100 per thousand  
1940 - 47 per thousand  
1965 - 5.3 per thousand

Rather significant in that connection is the following quotation: "One of the reasons we deny death," said Dr. Robert Fulton, professor of sociology and director of the Center for Death Education and Research at the University of Minnesota, "is because the clergy has ceased to talk about it. The church of late years has been responding more to social issues."

It has also been pointed out that the fraud of spiritualists and the occult flourishes in a society that refuses to face the reality of death. Joseph Bayly states: (opus ibid) "When a civilization denies death, and hems its members in with cars and amusements, science and organ transplants, against the mystical elements of life that reach their zenith in death, we should not be surprised if young men and women create their own mystery through consciousness - expanding drugs and Eastern religions. Nor, perhaps, should we be surprised if the civilization has a high rate of mental illness and suicide."

A Dr. Brantner, in the department of sociology and psychology at the University of Minnesota, is quoted as saying:



The present popular concern with the occult is something more, however, than a grasping for assurance of a life beyond this life. It is a rediscovery and re-exploration of an impressive dimension of life and it takes form from the esoteric religions of the East because our Western churches, some time ago, ceased to talk of death and immortality, but placed their emphasis on things of this world, on social action.

These are some of the things, next to a thorough study of the Word of God, that a pastor must take into consideration when preparing to minister to the dying.

Now let us take a look at the person who is dying, or the terminally ill patient.

"What goes on in the mind of a terminally ill, or dying person?" This is the question asked of Dr. Elizabeth Kübler-Ross on the staff of Billings Hospital in Chicago by some seminary students who were making a research on the question of how to minister to the dying. This led to the establishment of a clinic for a study by interviewing patients with terminal illness, letting them tell exactly how they felt, what they were thinking about. (Pastor Paul Jecklin is one among us who participated in a series of seminars conducted by Dr. Kübler-Ross.) But first I propose to make a few observations.

First of all, consider the fact that the patient is affected by all those things which we have mentioned as part of the culture today and which is characteristic of its attitude towards death.

In most instances we as pastors are dealing with people who have been whisked away from home, perhaps in an ambulance with screaming siren. This can be a frightening experience. Or if they came in to the hospital under their own power they upon admission had to submit to a great number of tests and be thumped or stuck by many technicians, perhaps underwent radical surgery, and now the outcome is uncertain. Not much information is given, doctors come and go saying little, nurses are in and out with thermometers, blood pressure apparatus, -- maybe oxygen, -- tubes in the mouth, the nose and every other orifice in the body. Surrounded by tubes and machines and gadgets in unfamiliar surroundings away from friends and loved ones, who can come only at intervals, can be very frightening, since it is apparent this is a last-ditch effort. Modern medicine has steadily prolonged lives, slashed death rates, yet medical men have paid only slight attention to the problems they have thus inadvertently intensified -- dealing with the terminally ill.

Dr. R. Vander Bergh of Colorado General Hospital told a conference of medical men:

All of us have seen the patient who, slowly dying of a chronic and debilitating illness, has been placed in a room farthest from the center of the ward. The doctors drop in briefly during rounds, glance at his chart and leave almost immediately. (It is easier to read a meter than to deal with the patient.) The general attitude of the ward is, 'There's nothing we can do for him -- after all, he is dying anyway.'

A psychiatrist responded:

At death scenes doctors and nurses are frightened of families . . . Doctors feel accused because of being revealed as not being all-powerful -- they feel compelled to protect their own self-esteem.

A typical description was given in Look magazine some time ago regarding a person who was dying and her friend who was at her bedside. She said:

"When Eleanor opened her eyes for a moment and saw me sitting by the bed she reached toward me: I'm afraid' she whispered. I didn't know how to respond, so as soon as the day nurse came in I asked her advice. 'You had better ask the doctor' was her reply. The doctor did not come in that day, so I asked the night nurse. 'What can you say? You should ask the chaplain. Let him reassure her.' But Eleanor did not believe in the established church, or chaplains and the like. So that did not help me much. The resident on the floor passed by. I asked him. He said, 'You have to give her some supportive psychotherapy. Just tell her there is nothing to be afraid of.' But there was little satisfaction in that. Then when I did ask the doctor, he looked embarrassed and stammered, 'Tell her she isn't afraid. Tell her -- tell her she's apprehensive.'

"This attitude is as appalling to many physicians as it is to just about all ministers," says Dr. Kübler-Ross in her book, Death and Dying.

A nurse said, "There is something radically wrong with medical training. We have to change the whole way we think about death." Then she asked questions like the following:

Why are all so helpless? Why should the staff at the best hospitals be superbly trained to deal with every conceivable event except the final one? Why do the doctors stop coming? What are the facts of death?

Questions like these came under the scrutiny of the clinical study and seminars conducted by Dr. Kübler-Ross. "What are the facts of death?" is of primary concern to the pastor who is ministering to the dying.

We must recognize the fact of fear and anxiety, with its accompanying depression. We do well to remember the stages mentioned by Dr. Kübler-Ross which are characteristic in the case of a person who has learned he is dying: (1) Denial and isolation, (2) Anger, (3) Bargaining -- willing to give anything, do anything for assurance of longer life, (4) Depression, (5) Acceptance, (6) Hope.

As a rule, we as pastors do not really get with it, or learn of the terminal situation until stage four, the depression stage. It is for us to speak of the grace of God in sweetest measure and raise the hopes to the greatest life.

The temptation is to shy away from the subject of death, to speak in generalities, read something from Scripture without any particular application to the individual, have a prayer, and hasten away. This will not do, even though we know the Word of God is powerful and the Holy Spirit works through the Word. But we need to use that Word as a skilled workman uses his tools.

As pastors we must seek ways and means to get closer to the patients that are in the terminal stages, and help them as much as we can during their final hours. This can be a mutually gratifying experience. Not to shelter them from death, but to help them to be fearless of facing death.

Dr. Arnold Wald of the University of California states:

Too often there is a woeful lack of communication between patient and family when death is approaching. This is the very time when communication could be freer and more rewarding than ever before. It is a time when old emotional conflicts can be resolved. I've attended many patients who were dying, and knew it, but had no chance to discuss their fears with anyone. Many were glad of the opportunity to talk.

Dr. Charles Mayo, of the famed Mayo brothers, once said:

I hope when I die it will be quick.  
But if there is some delay, then I hope  
I will have someone I love with me --  
somebody to hold my hand.

This brings us to another fact of death and the dying - the dying want to talk about it. Does the patient know he/she is dying? Dr. Kubler-Ross in her book On Death and Dying states that most patients know about their terminal illness, whether they were explicitly told or not. We quote, p. 24:

It may not be a coincidence that one of the doctors best known for the total care of the dying patient, Cicely Saunders, started her work as a nurse and is now physician attending the terminally ill in a hospital

set-up especially designed for their care. She has confirmed that the majority of patients know of their impending death whether they have been told or not. She feels quite comfortable discussing the matter with them; and since she does not need denial, she is unlikely to meet much denial in her patients. If they do not wish to talk about it, she certainly respects their reticence. She emphasizes the importance of the doctor who can sit and listen. She confirms that most of her patients then take the opportunity to tell her (more often than the other way around) that they knew what was happening, resentment and fear being almost non-existent at the end.

Dr. Kübler-Ross tells of walking through one of the wards where she saw an old man reading a paper-back with the title, "Old Soldiers Never Die." She asked him if it did not scare him to read about things like death. He looked at her with anger and disgust as he said: "You must be one of those physicians who can only care for a patient as long as he is walking, but when it comes to the dying part, then they all shy away."

At another time she found a terminally ill woman who asked to talk with someone not involved in her treatments. She wanted to share with someone in the hospital that she knew that her days were numbered.

As pastors we can learn much from the above experiences. The pastor, above all people, at a time like this should be a good listener. This is a time for sympathetic listening. Dr. Saunders tells of a patient she once asked what he wanted to see in people who were looking after him. He

answered: "For someone to look as if they are trying to understand me." The knowledge that death impends may produce emotional as well as physical distress, but it can also be a time when people can be emotionally and psychologically most mature. It is our task to nurture them so they can be most mature.

Dr. Saunders relates an experience with a young woman who was dying of a malignant ovarian tumor. She looked forward to meeting her Lord Jesus Christ. She also knew her loved ones would be cared for. This, said the doctor, was not "euphoria due to drugs, but to the power of God Himself." Then Dr. Saunders asked, "Why do we so seldom see a person dying with such positive support?" That is a question that should never have to be asked with regard to anyone who has been under our pastoral care.

Too often religious people have idealized the moment of dying to such an extent that, faced with the reality, they are unprepared. We must remember death is a fearful thing. The Bible speaks of it as the last and most terrible enemy we must face. It is reported that Pope John said: "My bags are packed. I am ready to leave." This is our task, to see that the people we minister to have their bags packed with the spiritual armament for the last great battle.

This does not mean, of course, that we can burst in upon a person and say: "Look friend, you are going to die and I am here to help you pack your bags." It may be the truth, and he may know it, but it certainly is not what he at this moment is eagerly waiting to hear. We must remember that here is a person who not only is subjected to the fears of being under strange circumstances surrounded with strange gadgets, impaled and pierced

with needles and tubes in many instances, but is also suffering from the loneliness of being that special patient for whom nothing more can be done than to "read the meters," "fluff-up the pillows," and "make him as comfortable as you can." He is also a person burdened with grief. Maybe this is a person who has had a very serious surgery with the removal of limbs or organs of the body and so may feel less of a man or a woman as a result. Then there is grief over leaving loved ones or friends, the loss of a job, and having to give up sports and pleasures which had given great joy. All of these are traumatic things and require a sympathetic ear.

To deal sympathetically and understandingly with the dying, start by contemplating the possibility of your own personal death. Remember the words of John Donne:

No man is an island, entire of itself;  
every man is a piece of the continent, a  
part of the main. If a clod be washed away  
by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as  
if a promontory were; as well as if a manor  
or thy friends, or of thine own were. Any  
man's death diminishes me, because I am in-  
volved in mankind. And therefore never send  
to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls  
for thee.

But a word of caution is in order. Be sympathetic, but not sentimental, and don't become obsessed with death. (Dorothy Stein told Ernest Hemingway: "You ceased to be a good writer when you became obsessed with sex and death.") We are present with a dying person, not to tear down but to build up.



Another fact of dying -- the dying person has been subjected in some measure to all the false hopes that are raised by modern science, technology, false religions, and the occult flourishing in our society. "Medical science has done so many wonderful things that with transplants, artificial organs and what not, maybe they can do something for me," is bound to be running through the minds of patient's. Then well-meaning friends or casual acquaintances come with various nostrums, reading of the stars, or references to faith healing and faith healers. You can be sure in some cases the whole ball of wax has been rolled up before this person. And with it the false hopes that they would not die or that the doctor might be mistaken. Certainly there is always the possibility that the diagnosis is wrong, or that there can be a complete turn about and the patient may recover. We can never deny that "hope" but we are there to build up a "living hope."

How then are the fatally ill to be helped to face the end? One person has put it in these words: "Help them die by trying to help them live." In other words let your conversation always lead up to the glories of eternal life. Speak freely about the diagnosis. It helps relieve tensions and anxieties. Talk about death and dying, but always leave the door open for hope. Give the assurance this is a battle we are going to fight together. Learn to know the patient. Does the patient know the nature of his illness? Talk about death if the patient indicates he wants to. He will welcome someone who is willing to talk about his illness or death but who allows him to keep his defenses as long as he needs them. The dialogue has to be terminated when the patient can no longer face the facts. Denial functions as a buffer.

Consider that another fact of dying is that it is only natural to be resentful of death. To be angry does not necessarily mean God has been turned away. Remember, Job said: "Let the day perish wherein I was born . . . Why did I not die at birth, come forth from the womb and expire?"

We will also need to probe to find the patient's spiritual strengths and his spiritual weaknesses. Play to the strengths he possesses and build up if there is a weakness apparent. For example, a person may have a very strong faith in the redemptive work of Christ. "Yes, Jesus died on the cross for me," but be very resentful of the way he is being treated by God. Then play to the strength, if God so loved you He would give His dearest and best in order that you might be His very own, could He possibly do anything to hurt you? Must it not all be according to His Word, "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you that expected end?"

To be prepared for death we must have a true philosophy of life. To understand life we must grapple with death's mysteries. The Psalmist said, "Lord make me to know mine end, and what is the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. Behold, Thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before Thee: verily, every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Surely every man walketh in a vain show; surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them. And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in Thee. Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the reproach of the foolish." (Psalm 39: 4-8)

"Thanatology," i.e., the study of dying, has become a big thing in many universities of our country. The new thanatology boys lay a great deal of stress on being natural about death. "Death" they say, "is a part of life. It is as natural to die as to breathe."

This sounds fine, but there is, in reality, a catch in it. I can breathe without anguish. I cannot die without anguish. I cannot see friends and loved ones die without anguish.

There is a distinctly, peculiarly Christian thanatology expressed by the Apostle Peter in these inspired words, written in I Peter 1: 3:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you . . .

Our Christian thanatology is this "living hope." It isn't like any other kind of hope. Some people are naturally optimistic, happily so. Optimism is an asset, but it is not our "living hope." If we have this living hope it is not because of the way the cookie crumbles for us, or because we have an invincibly happy constitution -- it is because we have died with Christ and have been raised with Christ."

Bismarck is reported to have said: "Without the hope of an after life this life is not even worth the effort of getting dressed in the morning." Freud is reported to have said: "The belief that death is the door to a better life is the

oldest, the strongest, and most insistent wish of mankind."

It is our task to make it a reality, not a mere wish - by preaching Christ and Him crucified. Jesus said, "I Am The Door, by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved." ---"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.--- "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

Knowing the patient's strengths and weaknesses, carefully select Scripture readings and hymns that will play to his strengths and will help to build up where he may be weak. We offer some examples: The story of David, when his infant son died and the news was brought to him as he was grieving, fasting, and praying. He arose, changed his behavior, saying: "I can go to him, but he cannot come to me." (2 Sam. 12: 15-23) This statement expresses the Christian hope.

Gen. 19: 2-26 -- Lot, fleeing from the doomed cities. So a dying person should be exhorted to look only ahead. Never look back with desire to remain in this world.

Exodus 14 -- Compare dying to Israel going through the Red Sea.

Numbers 14 -- Refer to the story of children of Israel when commanded to go in and conquer the land. They refused and rebelled; what a tragedy for them! Set the patient's eyes and desires upon that land flowing with milk and honey and yield to the Lord's commands.

Point out that they have been redeemed and chosen for life in heaven. The eternal peace, joy, security is their "expected end," the final consummation of all their struggles. Encourage them

patiently to hold out. It is better to suffer a little now than to suffer eternally in hell. Their Lord and Savior who has redeemed them with His holy precious blood will stand by them until the end. He has promised, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the ages." (Matthew 28:20) No matter how great our shortcomings, Jesus has covered them all. He had compassion and mercy. Refer to numerous Scripture passages that make this clear.

Hymn verses are always excellent material to use at sick beds. One that gives excellent opportunity to discuss sin and grace is Oswald Allen's Today Thy Mercy Calls Us, No. 279 in the Lutheran hymnal. (Be sure also to select Bible passages to prove the point in the hymn you wish to emphasize according to the need of the patient.)

For example:

"Today Thy mercy calls us to wash away our sin. However great our trespass, whatever we have been, etc.

What Scripture says about sin.

or: "The past shall be forgotten, a present joy be given. A future joy be promised a glorious crown in heaven.

What Scripture says about reconciliation, forgiveness, peace.

or: "O all embracing mercy, O ever open door  
We know one gate is open, One ear will  
hear our prayer."

What Scripture says about heaven.

We append a few suggested passages: (Some of my favorites are: Psalms 20; 27; 40: Romans 8: 18-39: 2 Cor. 5 & c.6: 1-3: Ephesians 1) Other suggestions divided as follows:

The soul speaking  
to God

I Thess. 5:9  
Hebrews 4:1  
Psalm 36:8  
Acts 14:22  
Isaiah 12:2  
Psalm 84:12  
Psalm 42:2  
Phil. 1:23

God speaking to  
the soul

Luke 12:32  
II Cor. 12:9  
Psalm 112:7  
Jeremiah 17:7  
Psalm 126:5  
Isaiah 49:10  
Isaiah 60:19  
Jeremiah 33:11

In conclusion I would point out that relatives may need to be coached in bedside manners lest their attitude of depression or hysterical tears undo everything you may have done in building up the patient and you have to rebuild again. That is why in our ministry we need constantly to point out that a true philosophy of death is an essential part of Christian living -- Christ came that men might have life and have it in fullness.

-- Hans A. Theiste

Seminar on Ministry to the Dying

Books for More Reading

(From revised edition of The View From a Hearse,  
by Joseph Bayly)

Alvarez, A. The Savage God (Suicide). London:  
Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971.

Bayly, Joseph. Psalms of My Life. Wheaton,  
Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1969.

Finch, S. M. and E. O. Poznanski. Adolescent  
Suicide. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C.  
Thomas, 1971.

Frankl, Viktor. Man's Search for Meaning. Bos-  
ton: Beacon, 1963.

Harris, Audrey. Why Did He Die? (Explaining  
death to a young child). Minneapolis:  
Lerner, 1965.

Howard, David M. How Come, God? Reflections from  
the Book of Job. Philadelphia: A.H. Holman, 1972.

Hunt, Gladys. The Christian Way to Death. Grand  
Rapids: Zondervan, 1971.

Kubler-Ross, Elizabeth. On Death and Dying. New  
York: Macmillan, 1969.

Lewis, C. S. A Grief Observed. New York:  
Seabury, 1963.

Lewis, C. S. The Problem of Pain. New York:  
Macmillan, 1943.

Rudolph, Erwin P. Goodbye, My Son. Grand Rapids:  
Zondervan, 1971.

Thielicke, Helmut. Death and Life. Philadelphia:  
Fortress, 1970.

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... The Romish Church makes divine things objects of sense, the ultra-Protestant principle would make them objects of the understanding, the Lutheran Church holds them as objects of faith. The Romish Church too much confounds the divine and the human, as for example, in the person of Christ, in Scripture, in the Church, in the Sacraments. Ultra-Protestantism separates them too much. The Evangelical Lutheran Church holds herself alike remote from confounding and from separating them, and maintains them as at once distinct in their essence, and inseparable in their union. -- (C. Porterfield Krauth, in The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology, p. 125



## BOOK REVIEW

A Pioneer Churchman, edited by Professor E. Clifford Nelson of St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota, and published for the Norwegian-American Association by Twayne Publishers, Inc., New York. Listed price: \$7.95, 265 pages, 1973.

The particular pioneer churchman is the Rev. J. W. C. Dietrichson, the first ordained Norwegian Lutheran pastor who came from Norway to work among the Norwegian immigrants, particularly in Wisconsin. We read the book with great interest, and we believe that others in our Synod and elsewhere, especially pastors, will likewise find the book fascinating.

Rev. Dietrichson settled in the Koshkonong area of Wisconsin and eventually got a congregation established there with its east and west branches, the parsonage located half way between. His work also included efforts to unite Norwegian Lutheran congregations in America into a synod. He is the one who formulated the constitution for the congregations at Koshkonong and also drew up a draft of a constitution for a church body. Both of these documents show that Rev. Dietrichson was smitten with the Gruntvigian error of placing the Apostles' Creed above the Scriptures. Rev. Dietrichson returned to Norway in 1850 and did not return. His successors in America purged out the Gruntvigian error.

It was a great task that was set before Pastor Dietrichson to bring order out of the chaos that existed among the early Norwegian settlers as regards church matters. Many sects had begun to work among them, even the Mormons. The difficulties he met with, both from within the congregations and from without, are graphically set forth. It is most interesting to read about these difficulties in the very words of Dietrichson, though in translation, of course. Rev. Dietrichson did not like to leave his beloved Norway, but he felt it was his call and duty to do this groundwork among his fellow countrymen in America, some of whom treated him very ill.

The two documents that make up the major part of the book were written in Norwegian by Rev. Dietrichson himself, and are given here in translation, one by Mr. Malcolm Rosholt of Rosholt, Wisconsin, and the other by Professor Harris Kaasa of Luther College. The documents are "The Travel Narrative" and "The Koshkonong Parish Journal." Those who are interested in the early history of Norwegian Lutheranism in America can scarcely do without this book.

-- Adolph M. Harstad