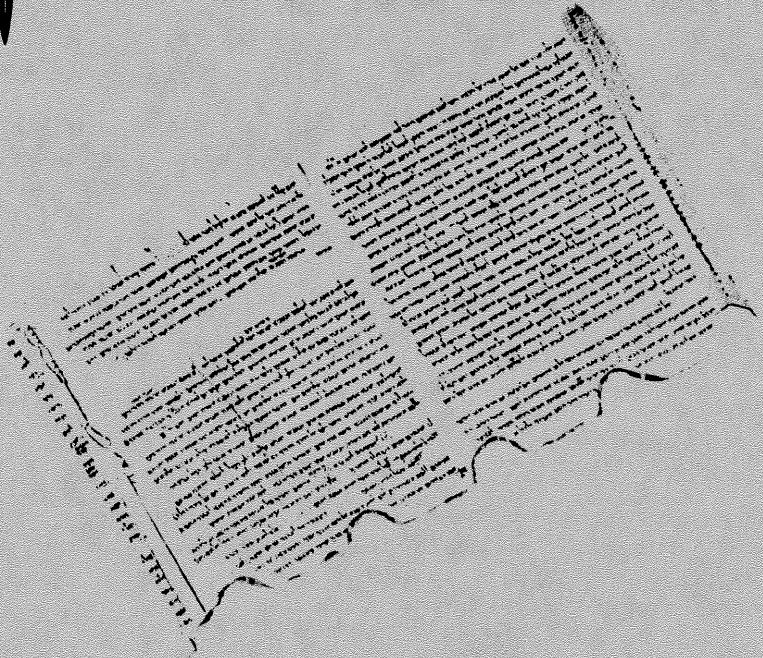


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FOREWORD

In this issue of the Quarterly we are pleased to bring our readers the 1986 Reformation Lectures, jointly sponsored by Bethany Lutheran College and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. These lectures were delivered on October 29-30, 1986, in Mankato, Minnesota.

The lecturer was Dr. George R. Kraus, Professor of Pastoral Theology and Director of Vicarage at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. Dr. Kraus aptly describes Luther's devotional life, a model that every undershepherd should seek to emulate. The reader will readily recognize Luther's well-known dictum: ORATIO, MEDITATIO, TENTATIO FACIUNT THEOLOGUM (prayer, meditation, and trial make the theologian). Dr. Kraus adds one more dimension, LECTIO (study), which also characterizes the Reformer. The reader will also appreciate the major insights, so clearly enunciated by the lecturer, with which Luther conducted the office as shepherd of souls.

The two reactors were Armin J. Panning, President of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin, where he also teaches New Testament, and Erling T. Teigen, Chaplain and Professor of Religion and Philosophy at Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minnesota.

We also take this opportunity to wish our readers a blessed Christmas and a truly happy and healthy New Year in the Name of the Christ Child in whom alone we have lasting peace and joy.

-- WWP

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | <u>Page</u> |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| REFORMATION LECTURES | |
| I. LECTURE I | |
| Luther's Devotional Life . . . | 1 |
| II. LECTURE II | |
| Luther, Shepherd of Souls . . | 23 |
| III. FOOTNOTES | 56 |
| REACTORS | |
| IV. Armin J. Panning | 61 |
| V. Erling Teigen | 70 |

REFORMATION LECTURES 1986

Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary
Bethany Lutheran College
Mankato, Minnesota

LUTHER, SHEPHERD OF SOULS

Dr. George R. Kraus
Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, Indiana



LECTURE I

LUTHER'S DEVOTIONAL LIFE

1. The topic assigned to me by your committee was **LUTHER, THE PASTOR**. I took it upon myself to change the title to **LUTHER, THE SHEPHERD OF SOULS**. This was not done for literary reasons. Rather, it was renamed for the sake of those shepherds at work in the vineyard of Christ in our time and our cultural milieu; and with them the subtle but meaningful shift in emphasis should find a comfortable acceptance. The title **shepherd** conveys a warm, intimate and, especially, Biblical understanding of the office of the ministry. For the shepherd of God's people the close, sometimes tragic, often exciting, frequently joyful and even boring occasions of pastoral care can never be captured in the pages of any paper or book on the pastoral ministry. It was with love, affection and appreciation for the working undershepherds of God's local congregations that this paper was prepared and is now presented. In the church militant God's called, working servants always face the tension between the academic study and discussion of God's Word and the application of the inspired, inerrant text to the lives of God's people. It is the "working" pastor who comprehends what that tension means--by his personal study of God's Word, his prayers, his counsel with God's saints, and his sleepless nights. Perhaps Martin Luther said it best with his *Oratio, Tentatio, Meditatio*. Only here does God mold, hammer and file his called servants into effective spokesmen and soul-shepherds under the Risen Lord.

2. Luther was such a shepherd of souls. No one can read this giant of the faith and come away with the impression of a cold, academic --albeit, orthodox-- theologian. Here was a shepherd of souls. Here was a man of God, an undershepherd of souls. Here was a man of God, an undershepherd of Christ, who shared anger, pain, sorrow, joy, frustration with and over Christ's redeemed people; he dealt with the problems they encountered in their lives and church. He never, never avoided them.

3. The topic of pastoral ministry is germane to the Lutheran church today; it cannot be avoided, ignored. Pastoral practice is under scrutiny and debate. Sociology and psychology have slowly but surely set models for pastoral practice across the broad scope of Christendom. The Biblical perspective has eroded over the last decade or so. This is no attempt at denigrating the gains and contributions of those two secular disciplines; they have contributed excellent insights into the nature of man, but it is a call to the church of the Reformation to remember its pastoral office and its Biblical dimensions --to remain faithful to the high calling of this divine office as our Lord instituted it. Listen to the comments of one observer of the pastoral scene, Bruce Larramore:

Most of us view this trend with mixed emotions. On the one hand we sense the great potential in a scientific study of man.... Undoubtedly the new insights of psychology can help us in these areas. On the other hand, the rapid growth of the psychological sciences and professions may be viewed as an encroachment on the ministry of the church. We sense a veiled threat (or sometimes obvious) to the authority of the Scriptures, the reality of the supernatural and the role of the Christian ministry.¹

4. It can be no secret that the loss of Biblical authority for ministering to distressed souls is a major factor in the new, secular models for pastoral care. The concerned minister must find his mentor, his model, his authenticity somewhere. If God's Word is dead, ineffective, outdated, then some other guide, some other "golden calf" will be cast. The Lutheran Church needs to maintain its Biblical basis and model for soul-shepherding. The topic: LUTHER, THE SHEPHERD OF SOULS, addresses that issue. The pastoral ministry is --the writer of this paper maintains-- the queen of all theology; it is in the office of pastor, in the pastoral ministry, that all the disciplines of theology come together and serve God's kingdom, God's people. Martin Luther, theologian, professor, husband, father, musician, friend, pastor, shepherd has something to teach the church of our day on this vital subject. The church that bears his name had better heed the counsel of her greatest pastor.

5. We will survey our topic under two headings: LUTHER'S DEVOTIONAL LIFE AND LUTHER, SHEPHERD OF SOULS. The first deals with the formation and development of the man himself --the "raw material," if you will, with which God molds and shapes His servant. There are, of course, many factors that enter into the making of a minister of the Gospel; and this applies to Luther as to any pastor in our pulpits today, but the Biblical image of a pastor is at the center of the discussion. We shall limit ourselves to several aspects of Luther's devotional life that seem --to this writer at least-- crucial in making Luther the man of faith and ministry he was. We shall consider Luther's devotional life under the four headings: lectio, oratio, tentatio, and meditatio. Three are from his own pen and the fourth from mine; one can legitimately assert that the term lectio properly fits under

Luther's concept of meditatio. With this I have no argument, but for the purpose of this paper, however, I will make a distinction. I trust my theological mentor from Wittenberg would approve.

LUTHER'S DEVOTIONAL LIFE

6. And in the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus arose and went out and departed to a lonely place, and was praying there. Mark 1:35

7. More than one materialist has claimed we are what we eat and no more. If a man has that view of life, it is not difficult to determine the direction he will take in this world. Now, if one believes life is determined by the Word of God and its use; then life, its purposes, its goals, its relationships can be plotted with a rather high degree of accuracy. Luther's devotional life forms and sets the attitudes, the aims, the very personality of the man. What he reads, how he prays, the subject matter of his meditation, the manner in which he endures stress and trial, describes the way in which he shepherds souls.

LECTIO, THE MAN OF SCRIPTURE

8. When you come, bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments. 2 Timothy 4:13

9. Luther, as friend and foe alike will affirm, was a man of Holy Writ. No one can deny that this open, committed, passionate pastor-professor planted both "theological feet" in the Word of God. His adversaries may have argued with his interpretation and application, but they never questioned his commitment to the Book that he maintained is

Deus loquens, God speaking. They may have condemned his sole reliance on the Book for his catholic faith, but it was the Holy Scriptures alone that made Luther the pastor he was, the reformer he was. The burden of the term lectio in this instance stresses Luther the pastoral theologian, the intellectual conception and definition of the office of the ministry. Listen to his own words on the source and norm of his faith and pastoral theology:

"Both natures are simply there (in the Sacrament of the Altar) in their entirety, and it is truly said: 'This man is God; this God is man.' Even though philosophy cannot grasp this, faith grasps it nonetheless. And the authority of God's Word is greater than the capacity of our intellect to grasp it."²

Is there any question here as to where Luther goes for authority and direction in his faith and ministry? In the last sentence of the quotation reason, stubbornness and humanism all fall before the cutting edge of God's Word. This authority of God's Word guided Luther in his private devotional life as well as pastoral practice. There was no other strength or source for his faith and ministry. When God's Word spoke, it was enough --for parishioner and pastor.

"He who is unwilling to believe the words of God need not demand anything further from me. So I do enough if I prove that it is not contrary to God's Word, but consistent with Scripture."³

For we have before us the clear text and the plain words of Christ: "Take, eat; this is my body, which is given for you..." These are the words on which we take our stand.

They are so simply and clearly stated that even they, our adversaries, must confess that it is difficult to interpret them otherwise. Yet they pass these clear words by and follow their own thoughts, making darkness for themselves in the midst of the bright light.⁴

So, the authority and perspicuity of God's Word were formative for the child of Christ, the theological professor, and the shepherd of God's people. One is compelled to comment on the current pastoral scene where the authoritative use of the Bible is condemned as manipulation, inhibiting a parishioner's freedom, and stifling his natural, healthy urges. Luther would be beside himself in the face of such non-biblical advice. This Biblical authority applied to both his private devotional life and his pastoral practice.

10. Yet authority and clarity were not the only aspect of the Word. The Word of God was always beneficial. Hear Luther on this understanding of the use of Holy Writ:

"Hearing and handling the Word is always good and useful. For although the Word does not always strike home, our heart nonetheless remembers what it has heard and perhaps in an hour and at a time when we need it will begin really to understand it and feel its power and comfort. In like manner, embers which have lain under the ashes for a while will start burning again and give fire when one stirs them up and blows on them. Therefore the Word should not be considered powerless. One should not think that it has been preached in vain. Neither should another word be sought in case fruit does not appear immediately."⁵

The word brings, conveys God's blessings. As Luther or the Lutheran pastor today proclaims the Good News Sunday after Sunday, it is not "new" to the older Christian in the sense of brand new, never heard before. And while the proclamation is a consistent reminder of God's great act of redemption, it is equally important to remember this Good News is the power of God; it is beneficial to those hearing it --every time. It is effective, dynamic, the Means of His Grace. So Luther the pastor worked on the basis of the power, the benefit of the Word. The Word confronted, condemned, called, comforted and changed people. The Word is always effective. This applied to the Reverend Dr. Luther as it did to Peter, the Master Barber.

11. The Reformer centered his ministry and his personal faith in the inerrant Word of Christ. He did not have one personal faith life, a private devotional life and another professional, ministerial, pastoral life. The word "integrity" is a word with high marks in every culture, every time; and what does this honored concept mean? This writer would suggest that integrity is the gap, the space, between what a person says and what he does, what he is. Obviously one wishes to have the gap non-existent. In short, what I say is what I do is what I am. Now sin has destroyed that identity between word and deed; only the Son of God possesses absolute integrity. We, as redeemed sinners, are in the process of narrowing that integrity gap with the help of the Holy Spirit; some are more successful than others. Only Judgment Day will see it completely eliminated.

12. The purpose of this comment is to point to Luther's own integrity gap. He was always striving to be what he said and to say what the Word says. Luther is an excellent example of a Christian

pastor who is outside the pulpit what he is inside it. Luther, in his dealing with people, presented them with the imperatives of the living Word of God. In this he was consistent with himself. He did not confront them with moral, spiritual options and then exclude himself. Yet one must remember that Luther based and lived all we have said on the written revelation of God, the Holy Bible. Listen to the Reformer:

"Peter Lombard" was a very diligent man with a superior mind. He wrote many excellent things. He would really have been a great doctor of the church if he had given himself wholly and truly to the Holy Scriptures, but he confuses the Scriptures with many useless questions.⁶

What Peter Lombard should have done, Martin Luther did. He was a man of the Scriptures. Luther's private devotional life and his pastoral practice give credence to the claim that Luther was a man of the Written Word. Who has not been excited and profited in his faith life by studying Luther's exegetical material? Both layman and clergyman profit from his deep insights and simple explanation. Listen to his advice to Peter and Master Barber, on the use of Scripture.

First, when I feel that I have become cool and joyless in prayer because of other tasks or thoughts (for the flesh and the devil always impede and obstruct prayer), I take my little Psalter, hurry to my room, or, if it be the day and hour for it, to the church where a congregation is assembled and, as time permits, I say quietly to myself and word-for-word the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and, if I have time, some words of Christ or Paul, or some Psalms, just as a child might do.⁷

Luther falls back on the Scriptures for his personal faith and devotional life. The Psalmist's words were Luther's words: "I will meditate on Thy precepts, and regard Thy ways. I shall delight in Thy statutes; I shall not forget Thy word." (Ps. 119:15,16) The advice to Master Peter was applied to the self; there was no double standard for the Reformer. He was a man to whom the word lectio applied --reading, studying, believing Scripture. He was a pastor who preached: Do what I say, not what I do! It needs to be noted again that some would prefer to keep the centrality of Scripture under Luther's own word, meditatio. While this is a valid and acceptable criticism, the writer of this paper still pleads for a distinction. Since the assigned topic is Luther, the Shepherd of Souls, the writer would like to make a distinction --no matter how fine the lines-- between the lectio --the intellectual study and grasp of the Word, and the meditatio -- the in-depth consideration, meditation, and application of the text to his personal life and calling. I trust the reader will continue to indulge me in this request.

ORATIO: A MAN OF PRAYER

13. Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For every one who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened. Matthew 7:7,8
14. Yet searching the Holy Writ was not the sole activity of the Wittenberg professor in his devotional life. He was not an "ivory tower" academician. Prayer was his natural response to the Good News. God's comment to Ananias concerning the former persecutor of the church fits Luther:

"Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying." (Ac. 9:11). Luther was such a man of prayer; his personal history and writing demonstrate this fact. The LARGE CATECHISM gives clear evidence:

Consequently nothing is so necessary as to call upon God incessantly and drum into his ears our prayer that he may give, preserve, and increase in us faith and obedience to the Ten Commandments.⁸

Luther but reflected the Word or Christ in Paul's letter to the church at Thessalonica: "Pray without ceasing." (1 Th. 5:17). His need for and confidence in prayer as his own daily breath is exemplified in his own writing on this very subject:

To begin with, two things are necessary so that a prayer is good and so that it is heard. First, we must have a promise or a pledge from God. We must reflect on this promise and remind God of it, and in that way be emboldened to pray with confidence.⁹

Luther did not consider his ministry apart from prayer --whether in his private life or public. Luther's well-publicized two hours a day in prayer --his private devotion-- are as well known to his followers as Patrick Henry's "Give me liberty or give me death!" to American patriots. Consider several prayers of the Reformer concerning his own ministry:

Dear God, I have begun to preach, and to teach the people. It is hard. If it offends here and there, may no harm be done. Since you have commanded me to preach your word, I will not stop. If it fails, it fails for you. If it succeeds, it succeeds for you and me. Amen.

You know how unworthy I am to fill so great and important an office. Were it not for your counsel, I would have failed long ago. Therefore, I call upon you for guidance. Gladly will I give my heart and voice to this work. I want to teach the people. I want always to seek and study in your word, and eagerly to meditate upon it. Use me as your instrument. Lord, do not forsake me. If I were alone, I would ruin everything. Amen.¹⁰

I would trust a pastor like that, and so would you. I would open my heart to him, and so would you. Here Pastor Luther opens his heart to God and confesses his fears, his evaluation of his own talents, his hopes, his desires. Prayer is the ministry's daily breath just as much as it is the Christian's. Oratio was no superficial motto for Luther, no bumper sticker theology on "The family that prays together stays together"; it was a perception of the Christian's life, a way to ministering to people and ministering to himself.

15. Often we only consider the prayer life of Luther from its doctrinal and even polemical implications. That is unfortunate; Luther practiced prayer before he lectured on it or defended it. He wrestled with God in prayer over his own "Anfechtung," his anxiety. He was a Jacob at the Jabbok before he was a systematician or teacher. Prayer is not a means of grace; it is a response to the thankful heart for the gift of grace. It is also the cry of the troubled heart. This presentation desires to show Luther at prayer, not simply lecturing on prayer. It is in dealing with the ultimates of life that we see the man for what he is. Listen to one of the Reformer's prayers on death:

O most precious God and Father, in preference to thousands of others you have given me so many priceless gifts. If it is your will, I would gladly use these gifts to serve your little flock. Let your divine and fatherly will be done, so that whether I live or die, your name be praised through me. Amen.¹¹

Here the man presents his trust in the heavenly Father. He deals with the ultimate of his own life, his personal death. He has written several prayers concerning his own death, and the death of other Christians. His prayer life was "for real"; it was not an exercise in liturgical pomposity or verbosity. He presents the depth and power of prayer in his excellent commentary on Jacob's prayer for his barren wife, Rebecca, in Ge. 25:21. It is a chapter every Lutheran pastor must read; it presents the anxiety, the fear, the hope, the expectation, the determination, the confidence of a godly man's prayer. It is a "must"! One brief quote we consider:

The Hebrew verb ATAR is very emphatic; for it is a special verb of praying and means "to pray importunately and beyond measure," in such a way that by knocking and importuning in a vexatious manner we annoy God. We call it "to prevail upon."If He still delays, you should nevertheless not stop praying but should say: "I shall not cease, and I shall not stop knocking; but I shall cry out and knock until the end of my life."¹²

Here is no cold, classroom lecturer distributing theological theses to the unlearned; here is a man who lived the anxiety of Isaac, who knew what it was to ask, seek and knock with all the pressures of the world, flesh and satan upon him. We can

learn about oratio from such a man of God, and we can see our own ministry bracketed and adorned with petitions, intercessions, thanksgivings, and praise. God grant our church such men!

16. Furthermore, Luther believed in the efficacy of the need for prayer in all areas of human endeavor. It was not that he considered prayer only for spiritual matters. Prayer was applicable to every problem and endeavor of man. Luther was not a myopic churchman who was unconcerned about economics, kings, education and the like. For him prayer belonged in the pastor's heart for all sorts and conditions of man. Listen to his comments on 1 Tm:

We must pray: "I am indeed unworthy to ask. But I consider not my insignificance but your greatness." It is a shame to pray to God for a mere pittance. From the greatness of the gifts the confidence to ask for great things grows. He gave His Son. Our petitions --peace in the world, wisdom for magistrates-- are far inferior to prayer for eternal life and remission of sins...These postulations are properly intercessions. We correctly apply them to our enemies...who do not seem worthy of our praying for them.¹³

Luther does not advocate the Christian pray only for spiritual matters. Even his enemies are the object of his intercessions and supplications.

17. No matter which volume of Luther's works one peruses, the subject and need for prayer is in evidence. It is not that one searches for quotes on the pastor at prayer; rather it is a matter of which quotes does one want? Listen to the Reformer's comments on John 14:13,14:

Therefore wherever there is a Christian, there is none other than the Holy Spirit, who does nothing but pray without ceasing. Even though one does not move one's lips and form words continuously, one's heart nonetheless does beat incessantly, and, like the pulse and the heart in the body, it beats with sighs such as these: "Oh, dear Father, please let Thy name be hal- lowed, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done among us and everyone!" And when blows fall, when temptations thicken, and adver- sity presses harder, then such sighing prayers become more fervent and also find words. A Christian without prayer is just as impossible as a living person without a pulse. The pulse is never motionless; it moves and beats constantly, whether one is asleep or something else keeps one from being aware of it.¹⁴

Need one elaborate more on Luther's understanding of the value for a regular prayer life --for pastor or parishioner? The church is painfully aware today of the term "burn-out"; it is the newer word for "nervous breakdown" or "mental fatigue." There is another term for it the church ought to remember --spiritual bankruptcy. The appalling lack of a proper devotional and prayer life among the clergy is no secret. Oratio is not high on the agenda of far too many clergemen, even our own; it was for Luther. Today's shepherd of souls had better seize this command and gift of God; his ministry depends on it. Oratio is not a luxury; it is part of the warp and woof of the divine office, not just the layman's calling. Luther reminds his followers of the primacy of prayer:

Therefore Christ wants to say here:
"When you believe in Me and have received
the spirit by which the heart is assured

of the grace of God (Christ had said above: "He who has seen Me has seen the Father."), then you will certainly be constrained to pray." For prayer is the true work characteristic only of Christians.¹⁵

Would anyone doubt that Luther intended this for shepherd and parishioner alike?

TENTATIO: A MAN OF TRIAL

18. As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. James 5:10

19. Tentatio places the ministry in the world that is, not the world of textbook, candle, cassock and bell. Most of you have met some of the great soldiers of the cross from some mission station around the world, or a seminary classroom, or a local parish. They have always impressed us because of their whole aura of being a "little Christ" (to use Luther's term) in the real world. I have known such men and so have you. It is not unusual that they are men who have endured much; they have not complained, whined, or grumbled about how life and God treats them. They do not spend their time looking for a call worthy of their great talents. The darkest places, the loneliest outposts, the avoided corners of the vineyard are their places of service. Not always, but often they are underpaid, overlooked, and --on occasion-- are even an embarrassment to the church. Surely they understand tentatio; they are impressive examples of living a theology of the cross. They know what it is like to live their orthodox Lutheran theology in a world of chaos and darkness. It is this concept that Luther himself lived and

preached. Tentatio is the anvil on which the shepherd of souls --the hot, fired "iron"-- is hammered and tempered into one of God's committed and skilled workmen.

20. Tentatio was mentioned at the end of the above section on prayer; it rears its head again and again. While Tentatio includes simple temptation to evil, we will limit ourselves to one aspect of the concept. Tentatio is not a foreign experience today for the clergyman or many other Christians as well. Perhaps the German word Angst or the modern expressions tension, stress, pressure, anxiety convey it more clearly to our contemporary ears. Theology is above all practical. Luther's experience under tentatio was not a phenomenon of the middle ages; today tentatio is alive, well and operating in the Lutheran Church --overtime. Searching for the pastor of souls in Luther demands that the church bring his experience and ministry to our time and our place. It is of interest and concern to this writer that the church has not done well in preparing men for the tentatio of life in the congregation. In our legitimate concern for doctrinal and professional excellence, it seems that the man in his environment at times has suffered loss. I have personally known four young Lutheran clergymen who have taken their own lives. The assaults of the Evil One will never fail to target the undershepherd. Listen to the teacher:

If I were to write of the burdens that a preacher must bear and endure, as I know them and myself experienced, I would frighten everybody away from the ministry. For a devout, God-fearing preacher must be so minded that there is nothing he desires more than Christ, his Lord and Saviour, and the eternal life to come, so that even though he lose this life and all else,

Christ would still say to him: Come unto me; you have been my beloved, faithful servant.¹⁶

Luther pursued no goal of a theology of glory. Heaven is a future event, not present. The battle of life went on for Luther and goes on for his followers today. Luther was the one who threw the ink bottle at the devil, remember? I like that kind of pastor. He was under no illusion; being a Christian and a pastor was not an inoculation against the assaults of the Evil One. It is through the trials and temptations of life that the shepherd of souls grows and develops as a true Seelsorger (curate of souls).

21. While our paper centers on the man Luther and his writings, perhaps a statement by the great British poet, Robert Browning, would encapsulate Luther's concept of tentatio:

When the fight begins within himself,
a man's worth something. God stoops o'er
his head, Satan looks up between his feet
--both tug-- he's left, himself, i' the
middle; the soul wakes and grows. Prolong
that battle through his life! Never leave
growing till the life to come.

Even a brief survey of the life of Luther impresses the reader with the man's struggles that would have overwhelmed a lesser man. The stress under which Luther lived and worked does not allow one to classify him as a "9 to 5" worker. He fought battles on the one side against Rome and on the other against the enthusiasts, plus opposition among his friends and supporters. He claimed somewhere that he was well able to take care of himself against his enemies, but God help him with his friends. Even his trusted lieutenant, Melanchthon, proved false. Secular princes as well were after his life. Every

theologian of every stripe, every "ne'er-do-well clergyman" and every "crack-pot reformer" was out to use Luther as his foil and stepping stone. It is no wonder the man wrote of his own tentatio:

I have suffered very great temptations. They exhausted my whole body. I could hardly draw my breath. And no man could console me. Everyone to whom I complained said: We know nothing of this temptation. Therefore I said: Am I, then, the only one to suffer this spirit of sadness?¹⁷

22. One must make the connection between Luther's experience and the clergy of our day. They are no different; they suffer no more or less than Luther. Nervous break-down, "burn out," mental fatigue are all related to stress, tentatio. One way Luther dealt with this phenomenon was with a strong, disciplined devotional life. He centered on the Word and prayer. Tentatio became a plus, not a minus. Tentatio was not a collapse of will, of nerve, of energy, of commitment. It became a stepping stone to greater service. Luther's steel was tempered by tentatio, not softened or broken.

MEDITATIO: A MAN OF CONTEMPLATION

23. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight,
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Psalm 19:14

24. The word meditatio, as indicated, can be included with our previous discussion of lectio. Yet this paper would like to stress the in-depth concentration of the man on the promises and acts of God. Here is a rather extensive quote from Luther:

At night always carry in your heart something from Holy Scriptures to bed with you, meditate upon it like a ruminant animal, and go softly to sleep; but this must not be too much, rather a little that may be well pondered and understood, that you may find a remnant of it in your mind when you rise in the morning. And in all one's study of the Holy Scriptures one must always despair of one's own ability and labors but only pray God with fear and humility for understanding. Therefore, when you approach the Bible, first lift up your eyes and heart to Christ in heaven and in a brief supplication implore his grace; which must also be done often during one's reading in order that you may think and say: Lord, grant that I may rightly understand this, but even more that I may perform it, but above all things guard against desiring to study the Scriptures only in order to know and understand them (for I believe that you are not such stupid scholars as to seek honor, gain, or glory thereby), or even to be able to teach others. Your purpose must be adequately sure, for even here empty vainglory may likely be concealed and hidden. Rather you must seek absolutely nothing but the glory of God, in such spirit that your one thought is: Behold, dearest Lord Jesus, if this study be not to thy glory, let me not understand a syllable of it; but grant unto me, a poor sinner, as much as in thy sight shall be to thy glory.¹⁸

25. Here Luther warns against the sheer academic, scholarly use of the Word of God. All of us would agree. Orthodoxy that becomes an academic exercise in the science of theology is of little

value to the pastor or the parishioner or to God. It is for this reason I decided to stress a difference between meditatio and lectio. No one would accuse Luther of having a mere intellectual grasp of Scripture; it is for that reason the emphasis needs to be made. The Psalmist reminds us clearly: "O how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day. I have more insight than all my teachers, for Thy testimonies are my meditation." (Ps 119:97,99) Luther practiced what he preached. He was no mere intellectual giant working through theological formulas; he was a shepherd of souls who believed what he learned and applied the doctrine to his own life first. He lived what he confessed; he immersed himself in the Word of God. It was his daily food. Here is a healthy lack of the abstract, pompous jargon of much modern theology. The farmer, the housewife, the pastor can understand and absorb what Luther writes. The Reformer was able to write from heart to heart; in short, he had what we desire to inculcate in every seminary student --a pastoral heart! This comes from the man of God who indeed **meditates, contemplates, mulls over** the living Word. Like the taster of fine wines, he savors every drop, he rejoices in every discovery and gives thanks for every promise. We listen to a brief quote from Luther on an in-depth, contemplative use of the Word:

Let all Christians exercise themselves in the Catechism daily...Let them continue to read and teach, to learn and **meditate and ponder**. Let them never stop until they have proved by experience that they have taught the devil to death and have become wiser than God himself and all his saints.¹⁹

26. Meditatio is not a popular phenomenon in the western church. In the pagan world around God's people, Transcendental Meditation, Hindu yoga

and other contemplative philosophies are purchased in every book shop and practiced. It is to be lamented that our modern technological society has influenced in a negative way the church's perception of meditation, the in-depth pondering of the Word of God. No, Christian meditation is not the intense study of one's navel; it is not centering in and on the self. It is the concentration of the saint-sinner on the objective words, promises and activities of God in Christ.

27. In pastoring, shepherding people, one quickly observes that analytic psychology spends a good deal of time and effort in analyzing the human factor. While the need to understand the self under the searching light of His Word is necessary, it is the ultimate goal of ministry to focus the sinner on the extra nos, objective atonement, on all the acts and promises of God. It is the contention of this writer that pastoral practice needs to recapture Luther on this sensitive issue. God's saints need to reflect on His Word for themselves and the church's tasks.

28. Our age has spawned an entire culture devoted to "navel-gazing." Libraries and book stores are replete with volumes on searching for the inner being, the "real you." Christian meditation is primarily a concentration of the person and acts of Jesus Christ. The God "out there" calls to our souls, the God in the Word. Pastoral practice demands the Seelsorger call the parishioner's attention to the alien righteousness, the objective promises, the God-centered plans and acts for and in our world. Luther understood this. We close this section with a quote from the Reformer:

If we want to walk safely, let us accept that which the Word prescribes and which God Himself wants us to know. Other matters,

which are not revealed in the Word, let us disregard. For what business of mine is it, or how can I find out, what God did before the world was made?²⁰

There is much to learn from the sixteenth-century scholar in these quotes. We live in the scientific age. Man must know "how" and "why," though often he is frustrated in his attempt to seek the answers to both. The technocratic society has spawned a generation of "weighers" and "measurers" and few "reflectors" and "meditators." The wholesale import of eastern pagan religions and mystics indicates our western bankruptcy in this area of life. Martin Luther would teach us something here. Will we, can we learn from him?

29. We, as analytic western theologians, are uncomfortable with these thoughts; I believe I previously used the term "navel-gazing." Indeed, God deliver us from the curse of mystical pantheism! But in our desire to stress the extra nos of the Blessed Trinity and His Word, let us not close our hearts to the genuine act of godly meditation and reflection as practiced by the man from Wittenberg, King David, Solomon and other saints of God. The wine taster savors the aroma, the flavor, the bouquet of the beverage. Do God's promises expect less from us? Let us join the thinker from Saxony and answer with a simple "Amen!"

LECTURE II

LUTHER, THE SHEPHERD OF SOULS

30. While one cannot claim for Luther a normal pastorate in a congregation as we define that office in modern America, one quickly ascertains from his life and work that he was a shepherd of souls, par excellence! He was one to whom this writer would ascribe the term: A Renaissance Pastor, that is, one who was competent to all areas of the ministry. Luther was indeed a "man for all seasons"; he was widely read and interested in all areas of human concern. In modern psychology he would fit the mold of neither "a person-oriented" pastor nor "a goal-oriented" pastor; he was both/and. As I read through sections of Luther in preparing for this paper, I was quickly impressed with his Biblical understanding of the Christian's life. There was no area of pastoral care with which he was unfamiliar or with which he felt uncomfortable. He was a shepherd of souls because he was a theologian of the Word; he was a theologian of the Word because he was a shepherd of souls. Luther never divorced faith from life. It was, I believe, one of the reasons why his enemies felt he was crude, worldly, even unspiritual. He was no Manichaeism, appealing to the purely spiritual and totally unearthly. Life and faith were interrelated; the theologian from Wittenberg perceived God's people through the eyes of Christ --a commendable perspective for pastors of our day.

31. We consider some aspects of that ministry to men. It is the intention of this paper to note some of the major insights with which Luther conducted the office of shepherd of souls. We consider nine such insights. The number is arbitrary; surely other men would find more, some,

perhaps, insist on less. Yet these insights will present a striking, clear picture of the man who could debate with an Erasmus and drink beer with Peter the Master Barber.

INSIGHT ONE: JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

32. Nevertheless, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.
Galatians 2:16

33. Luther perceived man through the eyes of justifying faith. To him there was no ministry to souls apart from this central doctrine of the Scriptures. Justification by Faith is the central issue around which Luther built his whole ministry. The importance of this doctrine, not only to the life of the sinner but also to the Christian faith, must always be emphasized, whether one is speaking of Luther or the faith itself. To the novice in the ministry or the student in first-year homiletics, the reiteration of this Biblical teaching may seem as if the pastor is "carrying coals to Newcastle"; after all, the people know all this. But it is not so. Unless this doctrine is taught, retaught, and emphasized, there is the real danger of losing it, confusing it or ignoring it.

34. The Gospel is not preached in the pulpit Sunday after Sunday in order to bring something brand new to God's people; it is proclaimed because "it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes." (Ro. 1:16). When it is proclaimed, it works on human hearts, unbelievers' and believers'. Justification by faith is not one of the many truths

of Scripture; it is the central teaching of the Word of God. It is --as the reformers entitled it-- the MATERIAL PRINCIPLE, the heart of the Bible. It is the central theme of the Christian faith. Without it there is no Christian faith. All other doctrines gather around this splendid light from above. Listen to His Word:

Being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed.

Romans 3:24,25

35. Luther believed this and preached it. Luther stressed Justification in his dealing with people. He was no inflexible idealist seeking to make people perfectly holy in their lives with some worldly philosophy or their good works and ways. He knew that no effort on man's part could ever justify the sinner before the righteous Judge. Only trust in the objective atonement earned by Christ was the blessed entrance into the presence of a forgiving God. He taught and applied this cardinal doctrine to the lives of the people. It was fundamental to all his pastoral practice. It simply cannot be stated enough; Luther could not possibly conceive of a pastoral practice not centered on, and flowing from, Justification by Faith. We read his own words:

For, as I have said, these two things make Christian righteousness perfect: The first is faith in the heart, which is a divinely granted gift and which formally believes in Christ; the second is that God

reckons this imperfect faith as a perfect righteousness for the sake of Christ, His Son, who suffered for the sins of the world and in whom I begin to believe. On account of this faith in Christ, God does not see the sin that still remains in me.²¹

Luther based his whole pastoral practice on this clear teaching of the Word. All teachings of the Scriptures, all application of these teachings to the lives of people grew out of this central doctrine, this material principle of the Reformation. Insight One: Justification by Faith! This applied to both the parishioner in his need and the pastor in his application of the Word of God. This doctrine is the life of the church; it is the source of all the church believes and does --also in pastoral practice. We hear Luther speak:

The doctrine is the head and the cornerstone. It alone begets, nourishes, builds, preserves, and defends the church of God; and without it the church of God cannot exist for one hour....For no one who does not hold this article --or, to use Paul's expression, this "sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1)-- is able to teach aright in the church or successfully to resist any adversary....This is the heel of the Seed that opposes the old serpent and crushes its head. That is why Satan, in turn, cannot but persecute it.²²

It was Luther's springboard to shepherding souls. He always perceived God's people as justified people, reconciled people, people accepted by God for the sake of Christ. This imprinted itself on all Luther's pastoral practice. No less can be claimed for shepherding souls today. Justification by faith is the basis for all pastoral theology and practice in the year 1540 and 2040.

36. Perhaps this insight might be concluded with a quote from Luther's LARGE CATECHISM, THE FIFTH PETITION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER. It demonstrates how Luther placed Justification at the very center of faith, life, change, improvement, hope:

But the point here is for us to recognize and accept this forgiveness. For the flesh in which we daily live is of such a nature that it does not trust and believe God and is constantly aroused by evil desires and devices, so that we sin daily in word and deed, in acts of commission and omission. Thus our conscience becomes restless; it fears God's wrath and displeasure, and so it loses the comfort and confidence of the Gospel. Therefore it is necessary constantly to turn to this petition for the comfort that will restore our conscience.²³

Note how the Reformer ties all life to justification by faith. Here in the doctrine of prayer, Luther brings the Christian back again to the basic, fundamental teaching, the doctrine of Justification by Faith in Christ. That's a view of ministry to inculcate into the hearts of men preparing for this high calling in any age, ours included! One can do no better.

INSIGHT TWO: SAINT AND SINNER

37. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin. Romans 7:24,25

38. A second crucial insight Luther supplies for pastoral ministry is the clear perception of the Christian as simul justus et peccator, at-the-same-time-saint-and-sinner. Luther did not look upon his fellow believers and parishioners as sinless saints. It was one of his great discoveries in the Reformation that God's people continue as sinners even while they are declared saints by Christ. How much agony in the world has been caused by Christian idealists, pietists, trying to force God's people to become perfectionists and "super-saints"! Luther lived in the real world, the real church, and he worked with real people, whether a Pope's legate or a Wittenberg servant. He learned from Scripture to look at people through the eyes of Christ and see the simul justus et peccator. Listen to the professor-pastor from Wittenberg:

The church is indeed holy, but it is a sinner at the same time. Therefore it believes in the forgiveness of sins and prays: "Forgive us our debts" (Mt. 6:12) and "For this every saint will pray to Thee" (Ps. 32:6). Therefore we are not said to be holy formally, as a wall is said to be white because of its inherent whiteness. Our inherent holiness is not enough. Therefore Christ is our entire holiness.²⁴

and

We are righteous, not as though we had no sin --for we have need of the prayer "Forgive us our trespasses" every moment-- but because the sins we do have are not imputed but forgiven because of our faith in Christ. For Christ is the Fountain and the Source of this righteousness. For when sinners, as those bitten in the desert by serpents, look at Him, at this brazen

serpent, when they firmly hold that Christ paid the penalty of their sin in His body and that God will receive us for His sake, they are justified, that is, their sins are not imputed to them, but they are accounted righteous. In fact, they truly are righteous because their sins no longer lie on them but on Christ, according to the word of John: "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."²⁵

In the above quotes Martin Luther focuses on his understanding of the-same-time-sinner-saint. This was basic to his understanding of the pastoral ministry. If Luther, or a pastor today, views his parishioners as saints-and-sinners, this will greatly affect his goals, his satisfaction and his effectiveness in ministry. It is British historian and writer, Paul Johnson, in his secular book, MODERN TIMES, who has demonstrated the demonic violence and chaos the idealists of our world have wrought, whether a Lenin or a Jim Jones. The church has not escaped this burden either. Extreme pietism has made its mark on the church of Christ. Surely the failure to uphold the simul justus et peccator teaching of Holy Writ has led to religious idealism of the worst kind. Yet that is a topic for another paper.

39. Luther was no idealist expecting to find luminous haloes around the heads of God's people. It seems to this writer that even a cursory reading of Luther --say his Table Talks-- demonstrates that Luther always looked at people as simultaneous saints and sinners. There is the touch of reality and the identification with the actual world in Luther's comments. Luther is always down-to-earth. In the role of shepherd he knew God's people --he dealt with them as they were --simul justus et

peccator. The church of our day still needs to posit the question to its clergy: How do you, pastor, view your individual members? Simul justus et peccator? Truly this insight of the Wittenberg monk has been a blessing often ignored in the church that bears his name.

INSIGHT THREE: CLEAR COMMUNICATION

40. But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ. Ephesians 4:15

41. This insight is one not often heard; at least this writer has not encountered this truth expressed clearly. But if one reads Luther --as a theologian or a pastor-- one is quickly struck by the man's ability to communicate on any level. To read contemporary theologians is often an exercise in futility and frustration. Pity the poor student struggling through an assignment in Tillich or Barth. It is not simply their theology that is unacceptable; their communication rating is exceedingly low. It is not so with the Reformer. Hans and Maria or Eddie and Georgette can pick up almost any volume of Luther's and understand it! Luther writes:

I spoke about this to Bucer in Gotha and suggested that he and Osiander should refrain from erudite preaching...Christ could have taught in a profound way but he wished to deliver his message with the utmost simplicity in order that the common people might understand. Good God, there are sixteen-year-old girls, women, old men, and farmers in church, and they can't understand lofty matters!...Accordingly he's the best preacher who can teach in

a plain, childlike, popular, and simple way....Some day I'll write a book against artful preachers.²⁶

42. One ought note the gift of this man in promoting the art of communication. Modern homiletics lays great stress on this needed art, clear, simple communication. The most orthodox sermon in the world is worth little if the people cannot understand it. One of Luther's gifts in shepherding people was his gift of communicating clearly and simply. Blest be the people of God who have for their pastor such a man! While our paper is not on the homiletical style of Luther the preacher, one cannot miss this master in the pulpit as he shepherds people with the proclaimed Word.

43. Communication is still a key word in the present world. Family psychologists tell us that poor communication between husband and wife is the cause of many a broken marriage. One is forced to consider the same statement in regard to pulpit and pew. As a professor of homiletics I can tell you I "rant and rave" in class about the dire need for simple, clear, honest communication. Luther is one good model. Read him, any book, any sermon, any lecture, any debate. He is understood by farmer and professor. The Elector of Saxony or the town butcher always got the message. Hear the master communicator:

I see that the ambition of preachers is growing. It will create very great mischief in the churches, for it makes men want to preach lofty things in order to merit praise and gain the favor of those who boast of a superficial knowledge. Meanwhile they neglect the simple and plain people. A sincere preacher must consider the young people, the

servants and maids in the church, those who lack education.²⁷

The goal of conveying clear, simple meaning from preacher to parishioner must demand a high priority rating in training pastors today. How many problems and heartaches in congregations have been caused by the lack of clarity, the absence of simplicity, is known but to God. The Reformer's insight on communication deserves the praise and emulation of the church in this century. Double-speak is not a topic found only in science fiction; it is alive and well in the sermons and theologies of our day. Luther is an example for the theological student and the experienced preacher.

INSIGHT FOUR: THE SUPREMACY OF THE WORD

44. The sum of Thy word is truth, and every one of Thy righteous ordinances is everlasting.
Psalm 119:160

45. Luther believed in applying the Word to any and all pastoral problems. At the beginning of this paper we mentioned the psychological and sociological models for ministry so evident in western Christendom today. The applications and imperatives of the Word of God are no longer the foundation blocks for pastoral practice across the board. This was touched upon above. In fact, the use of the Bible as a source for correction, reproof, edification, reconciliation and the like is under attack and often lampooned within the church as well as without. Luther would be under severe attack today by many modern psychologists and trendy sociologists, not to mention certain "Lutheran theologians" and contemporary interpreters of God's Word.

46. He was not only simple and direct in his pastoral activities; he was also pre-eminently Biblical. The application of God's Word to the believer and his life is the business of the pastor. While psychology and sociology offer insights and helps, it is the correct use of Law and Gospel that forms the proper basis and practice of pastoral care. As an example, here is a quotation that shows Luther shepherding not only his gravely ill daughter but also himself:

Afterward, he said to his daughter, who was lying in bed, "Dear Magdalene, my little daughter, you would be glad to stay here with me, your father. Are you also glad to go to your Father in heaven?" The sick girl replied, "Yes, dear Father, as God wills." The father said, "You dear little girl!" [Then he turned away from her and said,] "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak [Mt. 26:41]. I love her very much. If this flesh is so strong, what must the spirit be?"...I am angry with myself that I'm unable to rejoice from my heart and be thankful to God, though I do at times sing a little song and thank God. Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's [Ro. 14:18].²⁸

The quote presents a clear picture of Luther's manner of pastoring. Note how Luther deals with his daughter--realistically and Scripturally. For Luther the comfort, the advice, the analysis of a pastoral situation is found in God's Word, not the secular disciplines, whatever they may be. Today in a number of college courses one can find classes and studies on death and dying. Yet in these studies and text books one will look in vain for the comfort of the Resurrection. The topic of "beyond the grave" is not even considered. Pray God the Lutheran church will never change from its

belief and practice of confronting the dying with the hope of the resurrected Christ.

47. As one reads Luther's letters to various and sundry people, there is no doubt that he considers the Scriptures as the source, the guide for confronting and comforting God's people. Luther refers readily, easily to God's promises, God's warnings in his epistles. This topic is no minor matter for the Lutheran church of this century. It deserves to be placed high on the agenda of seminary training.

48. Luther always referred to the written Word when discussing any theological issue, pastoral or otherwise. Listen to his attack on Karlstadt in his treatise AGAINST THE HEAVENLY PROPHETS from 1524-5:

Beware where you do not hear God's word commanding or forbidding you so that you may not be led astray and pay no attention to it, even if Christ himself did it. Has not enough been said? We read: "Thy word is a lamp to my feet" (Ps. 119:105). The Word, the Word is to be followed, don't you hear? When one now holds before you how Christ has done it, speak up briskly: Very well, he has done it. Has he also taught and commanded it to be done? ...And if they cannot point to his Word, then say: Put it aside, let it be. That doesn't apply to me.²⁹

It is apparently clear that Luther based faith and practice on the written text. In this day "proof-texting" is frowned upon. The pastor or theologian who has the temerity to quote the written text for proof or practice can become an object

of scorn, called a legalist, an obscurantist, one who promotes a "paper pope." This was not Luther's way; he dealt with person and problem on the basis of the written text of God's Word. If I am not mistaken, Luther's Lord and our Lord Himself did not hesitate to quote the text. It is, we believe, Deus loquens, God speaking.

INSIGHT FIVE: HUMILITY AND OPENNESS

49. You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.
I Peter 5:5

50. Luther did not claim to know everything about Scripture; he was always willing to learn. In short, he was not doctrinaire. He demonstrated an approach to ministry and questions of casuistry that was open and eager to consider all angles. This does not imply Luther was a "situation ethics" pastor. He was not; he was solidly Scriptural, but he endeavored to consider all extenuating circumstances as he applied Scripture. Listen to him:

Jonas once claimed that he knew everything in the Holy Scriptures and was angry at me because I didn't let this claim pass unnoticed. But I know there are many things I don't know. I have preached for twenty-five years and still don't understand the verse, "He who through faith is righteous shall live" [Ro. 1:17].³⁰

Luther was not recanting from his stand on Justification by Faith with this remark to Melanchthon and Lauterbach nor was he saying: "I don't know anything; I'm just a simple-minded, ignorant clergyman!" He was demonstrating what every

faithful, intelligent undershepherd does. He was throwing pride out the window and leaving himself open to further instruction by the Holy Spirit.

51. As the supervisor of the vicarage program at Concordia Seminary, Fort Wayne, I can report to you that one of our ongoing problems is the vicar who in two short years has learned more theology than St. Paul and Martin Luther --all rolled into one-- and then goes out to confront pastors and "redeem and reform" them from their theological shortcomings. To borrow a few terms from Luther: May the Lord of the church deliver us from know-it-alls and wiseacres! Humility and openness to correction is a mark of a great pastor. Luther, for all his scholarliness and talent, was an example of humility and openness for any pastor of our sophisticated age.

52. We have read enough of Luther in debate, in confrontation, in dialogue to know he was no timid soul. He was not unsure of himself in the exposition of a text, the preaching of sermon or in argument with the opposition; but the learned doctor was a man of the people. "Blue-collar workers" were not avoided or despised. He loved them, fraternized with them, shouted at them, helped them, prayed for them. His comments on humility in his lectures on Titus give us a clue:

Therefore let a pastor or a bishop think as follows: "Although you occupy a superior place and have been endowed with better gifts, nevertheless the judgments of God are unsearchable (Ro. 11:33). It can happen that He looks down upon someone in a lowly place while you are in a high place, and yet the one in a lowly place pleases God more."³¹

Theological arrogance has no part in the make-up of

the Christian pastor. He, like Christ, must be a humble, loving, caring person.

INSIGHT SIX: CHRISTO-CENTRIC

53. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything. Colossians 1:18

54. To be Christo-centric for Luther was a given. No theology, whether pastoral or academic, was accepted and used by him if it was not Christo-centric. It seems almost superfluous to mention that Luther was Christo-centric in his theology, but it is necessary to emphasize that Luther was centered on the Christ as the very heart of all theology and practice. Today even so-called fundamentalists are not always Christo-centric; other doctrines, such as the Millennium, the Restoration of the Nation of Israel, or some other imagined truth may be their central article of faith. Listen to Luther on the Person of Jesus Christ:

Christ, he says, is the Son of God and of the woman. He was born under the Law on account of us sinners, to redeem us who were under the Law. In these words Paul has included both the Person and the work of Christ. The Person is made up of the divine and the human nature. He indicates this clearly when he says: "God sent forth His Son, born of woman." Therefore Christ is true God and true Man. Paul describes His work in these words: "Born under the law, to redeem those who were under the Law."³²

Imagine Luther dealing with a pastoral problem

outside of the person of Christ? It is impossible to conceive of Luther "pastoring" in such a way. The Lutheran Confessions also touch on this approach to ministry. In the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the confessors acknowledge that the article on Christ (Art. 3) stresses their understanding of this crucial doctrine--that Christ is the center of everything in the faith. From Him radiates all doctrine and practice of the holy faith. Let Luther speak for himself:

Christ is the man who brings forth something visible from that which is still invisible. Thus through Him heaven and earth were produced from that which was invisible and nothing and were rendered visible. And it is Christ the Lord, who was present at the time of creation of all things not as a mere spectator but as a coequal Creator and Worker, who still governs and preserves all and will continue to govern and preserve all until the end of the world. For He is the beginning, the middle, and the end of all creatures.³³

The language is clear, the meaning is strong, the intention is communicated without confusion or camouflage. Not just the holy faith, but the very universe centers on Him who created and redeemed all things. He is the ALPHA AND OMEGA, the End and the Beginning of everything, even pastoral practice! To state that Christ is the beginning, the middle, and the end of all creatures is not merely a statement on chronology or cosmology. It presents the Christ involved in the total life of the world and especially the church. Christians view everything from the Christo-centric point of view. It is a given for the church's shepherds.

INSIGHT SEVEN: SERVANTHOOD

55. If then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. John 13:14
56. Servanthood is not exactly a new concept for the practicing Christian, layman or clergyman. The Bible is filled with admonitions and examples to serve one another. Our Lord states it clearly:

Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for money.
Mark 10:43-45

No one would even dare to claim Luther's insight or ours can even approach our Lord's precious words, but one does note that Luther understood his Lord and stepped out on the path of servanthood and the primacy of the other in Christ. Listen to the Reformer's own words:

On the contrary, he has commanded that you be humble and serve your neighbor with [your higher rank or station]. For example, I am a preacher because God has given me the grace to be one, but he has also commanded me not to pride myself on this gift but rather to go down and serve every man that he may be saved, as Paul says in Ro. 15:2,3, "Let each of us please (not himself, but) his neighbor for his good, to edify him. For Christ did not please himself, etc."³⁴

While humility has been mentioned in a previous section, the accent here is on service. Humility does not remain a passive quality; in Christ it acts and moves and lifts up and seeks to serve the other. First Corinthians 13 is the perfect and ultimate commentary on love. It places the self and one's talents in Christ's hands and commits one's self to serve the other. This may be on the grand scale like the Reformation itself or on the simple, lowly scale as dealing with his gravely ill daughter.

57. I, for one, do not think it necessary to search Luther's life or writings to prove he was one committed to Christ and to servanthood. It is a given that Luther was not out to "milk the church" or deal with the secular state for financial gain or statues raised in his honor. Complaints and comments by Kate, his beloved wife, concerning his liberality and readiness to help others give ample indication of his indifference to worldly success and fame. Today our culture would say: "Luther could not be bought!" Servanthood is not only a topic for historical discussion on Luther, it is basic ingredient of the ministry in this day and age. Clergymen without it should not be clergymen. Men who enter the ministry with a hidden agenda of worldly success and high office are traitors to their high calling. Luther, in a sermon on the Gospel for the early Christmas service, writes:

The fourth item is love of one's neighbor and renunciation of self. The shepherds demonstrate this by leaving their sheep and by proceeding, not to the high and mighty lords in Jerusalem, not to the town councilors at Bethlehem, but to the lowly people in the stable. They present themselves to the lowly and

are ready and willing to serve and to do what was expected of them.³⁵

Servanthood tests the credibility of the clergyman, the shepherd of souls. It points to his authenticity and sincerity. It is the stamp of the servant, the disciple of Christ. It is, in the street language of today, "where the rubber hits the road"! I would attest that Martin Luther was no pontificating professor casting theological flowerets to his devotees; he lived with them and shared their yoke, their pain, their trouble. Any man who holds a certificate of ordination in the Lutheran Church today would do well to copy that Doctor of the church in servanthood as well as theology.

INSIGHT EIGHT: PREACHING AS SHEPHERDING

59. Luther's total dependence on the Word of God has already been stated. Yet here one is forced to take note of his dependence on the preached, proclaimed Word for pastoral care. In an age that has fallen back more and more on personal counseling, Luther's reliance on preaching for pastoring is refreshing. A walk through any seminary bookstore will quickly convince one of the rise and popularity of pastoral counseling. Nor should one neglect to peruse the average seminary catalogues; here, too, one notes the variety of courses offered on pastoral counseling.

60. Here one treads on thin ice, indeed. First, because to imply that pastoral counseling is in some way a highly suspect interloper on the scene of theology, is to give a false impression. It is not the attempt on the part of this paper to condemn counseling; surely Scripture is replete with illustrations and encouragement to give counseling to others. Yet, when counseling becomes

the cure-all, the major method of ministry, I believe we have digressed from the Reformation insistence on preaching as a major means for instructing and correcting.

61. Generally, preaching has stood the test of time in the Protestant church. The pulpit has been held in esteem by the church for centuries. At one time I believe THE LADIES HOME JOURNAL used to carry the sermon of the month. Can anyone today imagine such a magazine printing a sermon for its readers? While the pulpit has always had its detractors, it remained for our day to attack the pulpit from within the church. One contemporary homiletician makes the following comment on the rejection of preaching in the recent past:

After a generation of walking alone, the object of general ridicule and preoccupied in self-flagellation, preaching is again making new friends among other disciplines and renewing old acquaintances with biblical studies, literary criticism, and communication theory. The consumer posture is being abandoned and the discipline is again a producer.³⁶

If the writer, Mr. Fred Craddock, is correct, no wonder preaching as pastoral care has suffered from bad press.

62. Secondly, the shift to pastoral counseling and the loss of confidence in public preaching as a primary method of dealing with soul care has led to a further movement towards secular models of pastoring. Today the clinical psychologist and the psychiatrist have become accepted alternates or fellow workers in shepherding God's troubled people. Once again, lest misunderstanding take place, the secular disciplines are not ignored; but as antibiotics are not the cure-all for every

major and minor disease, so counseling is not the cure--all for all pastoral care. The Bible reminds the church that the proclaimed, preached Word is not anachronistic; it is the effective power of God touching the hearts of God's troubled people and assisting them in sorting out their lives and building wholesome personalities under Christ. The Author of our Bible has a word to say on the subject:

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work....preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. 2 Tm. 3:16,17

While the text cannot be limited to preaching only, the thrust of the quote carries a heavy implication for the public proclamation of the Word. The preaching-teaching ministry cannot simply be equated with one-on-one counseling sessions. We need both in ministry, but preaching has not been carrying its weight of late. If the church takes Romans 1:16 seriously (For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to every one who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek), then the church believes the proclaimed Gospel will impact lives in major as well as minor matters. The Gospel works; it is effective.

63. Preaching did not fare well in the decade of the sixties, nor even into the seventies. Street action, political power, and one-on-one counseling were the wave of the future. I remember listening to seminary students in New York City at the turn of the decade --from the sixties to the seventies-- informing me that the age of preaching

was over. The Gospel needed to be taken into the streets to confront poverty, racism, fascism, and, of course, right-wingers. Needless to say, communism and radical socialism were never included in the "isms." Spiritual concerns were hardly mentioned. It is indeed refreshing to note that preaching once again is hastening forward in the church to take its rightful place.

Mathesius, a pastoral contemporary of Luther, spoke on the subject of preaching as he perceived it in the wittenberg professor:

I came to Wittenberg for the first time in 1529 on Friday after Pentecost. (May 21) On the following Saturday I heard the great man preach at the vesper on the nature and power of Holy Baptism, interpreting St. Peter's text in Acts 2:38. For this I owe everlasting gratitude to God all the days of my pilgrimage.

I was going on twenty-five years and had heard many a monk and lay preacher in the papacy, but I had never heard mention of Holy Baptism, except in Bavaria, where the Anabaptists and fanatics spoke most shamefully of Baptism and Holy Communion. It did my heart good to take comfort at the first encounter (with Luther) in this essential and comforting article.³⁷

From the above it is obvious that proper sermons address the condition of man and point to God's answers and God's power for change and help.

64. Luther himself spoke rather highly of the art of preaching; listen to his last sermon in Eisleben 1546:

Oh, people say, what is that? (God speaking through His Word) After all,

there is preaching every day, often many times every day, so that we soon grow weary of it. What do we get out of it? All right, dear brother, if you don't want God to speak to you every day at home in your house and in your parish church, then be wise and look for something else.³⁸

Or listen to this excerpt from a funeral sermon in 1532:

So much we shall take up for now, in order that I may not overburden myself and you. You know that the greatest divine service is the preaching [of the Word of God], and not only the greatest divine service, but also the best we can have in every situation; but especially on these solemn occasions of sorrow [there is nothing better we can do than to preach].³⁹

The double thrust of Luther's quotes is easy to spot. Preaching is God speaking to the individual, not just the congregation; and it is the greatest divine service the clergyman can offer God's people. As one peruses Luther's sermons, one finds intimacy, warmth, reality. He speaks to the hearts of his people. It is not that Luther refused to counsel one-on-one. Even a cursory glance at his writings and life reveal a man open to everyone. Friend, foe, and pseudo-friend, all were able to confront the Wittenberg professor nose to nose.

65. But the claim must be made and held. Luther regarded the sermon as crucial to the worship of the church and for guiding the parishioner in his daily life. Need one quote more than the simple, short Catechism of Martin Luther?

Remember to keep the Sabbath day holy.
What does this mean? We should fear
and love God that we may not despise
preaching and His Word, but hold it
sacred and gladly hear and learn it.⁴⁰

Every confirmand has learned it, studied it. The very history of the Lutheran Church has been one of solid, orthodox, Biblical preaching. While it is not the subject of this paper, the question needs to be asked: How much counseling today is made necessary by a lack of good, Biblical preaching? Read several of Luther's sermons; he was not bashful, fearful, or abstract. He proclaimed the Word to the hearts of his people, to the problems they faced --in their language, their cultural milieu.

INSIGHT NINE: MINISTRY AND MARRIAGE

66. This final observation on Ministry and Marriage may raise a question or two; but as an observation, an insight, it is surely a valid one. Luther may not have written a whole book on the necessity of marriage for the ministry; but one cannot read Luther or read about Luther and miss the point. He was always finding analogies and comparisons in his family life with that in his ministry. Luther as husband, father, and provider also gives a valuable insight into serving as one of God's called ministers of the Word. This reality in the life and ministry of Martin Luther also played its part in developing the caretaker of souls.

67. We will make no attempt to search out and identify any pattern to this observation on the value of marriage for the ministry; rather we will present some general thoughts of Luther on this part of his development in ministry.

68. Luther's sense of humor with Kate, his wife, and his obvious respect and affection shine through his comments on the domestic scene. We will simply list some of the remarks, quoted in Bainton's *HERE I STAND*, that Luther made about his "Rib":

"I do not worry about debts, because when Katie pays one, another comes."

"My lord, Katie, greets you. She plants our fields, pastures and sells cows, etc. I have promised her 50 gulden if she finishes by Easter."

"To the rich lady of Zulsdorf, Mrs. Dr. Katherine Luther, who lives in the flesh in Wittenberg but in the spirit at Zulsdorf."

"My Katie is in all things so obliging and pleasing to me that I would not exchange my poverty for the riches of Croesus."

Luther once entitled St. Paul's Epistle to Galatians as: "My Katherine von Bora." This did trouble him and he made the comment: "I give more credit to Katherine than to Christ, who has done so much more for me."

Time does not permit us to quote more on his family life with children, relatives, and guests, but the point should be clear. Martin Luther hung diapers, dug in the garden, even argued with Katie, and willingly left the finances to her. All this reveals the measure of the man and the tides of life that helped in the formation of a great reformer, professor, theologian, and pastor.

69. The protestant parsonage came from Martin Luther, and this institution has influenced the ministry in no small way. Luther's short

discourses in his Table Talks are filled with comments on wives and children as well as a host of other non-theological topics such as "pigs, popes, pregnancies, politics, and proverbs."⁴¹

70. In this final comment, insight, or observation on Luther the family man, the friendly neighbor, the interested citizen, I simply wish to point out that Luther was no theologian removed from real life --any of it! He and his ministry were shaped in the crucible of daily life: carp from the fish pond, Hans' new tooth, a vase he intended for a wedding gift but deliberately hidden by Katie, as well as tracts and treatises on theological issues. It made for a shepherd of souls who was thoroughly believable, warm, exciting. When this shepherd spoke of life, he was living it, not theorizing about it.

71. So, there we have it --nine great insights into the pastorate as the professor-pastor from Wittenberg saw them, lived them. No, there is no claim that these nine are the only insights that made Luther the successful pastor of God's people that he was; but to this writer they are primary when he considers LUTHER THE SHEPHERD OF SOULS.

THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTRY: THE FORM OF SHEPHERDING

72. Then I will give you shepherds after My own heart, who will feed you on knowledge and understanding. Jeremiah 3:15

73. The office of the ministry is somewhat under a cloud today in Christendom. It is no secret that men are not entering seminaries wholesale to study for the ministry. Who, indeed, wants his son to study for the ministry when he can study for a

real profession --electrical engineer, physicist, chemist, doctor? I am reminded of a saying prevalent in my own years at preparatory school. "If your son can't make it on the farm or in a profession, send him to a Concordia to study for the ministry." The ministry is not a high priority profession for modern American Lutheranism, or for Protestantism and Romanism, for that matter. Luther faced the same problem for a variety of reasons. He knew the difficulty of getting qualified men to enter the holy ministry. He would understand the church's concern today for enough qualified men to serve in congregations and mission fields.

74. One must spend some time on Luther's view of the public office of the ministry and his thoughts on the importance of the divine office of the ministry. For Luther the doctrine of the public ministry was not a theological program and contract that a congregation developed in order to conduct the church's business efficiently. It was the office established by the Lord of the Church. Luther not only believed in the office; he respected it. As we bring our paper to a close, we need to spend some time with the Reverend Doctor on his views of the ministry, the pastorate. Let us listen to the father of our church:

75. However, we deal with a different matter when we speak of those who have an office in the Christian Church, such as minister, preacher, pastor, or curate. These are not priests in the sense that Scripture commonly speaks of priests. They became priests before they received their office, in fact, when they were baptized. Hence they are not priests because of their calling or office. The Scripture calls

them "servants" or "bishops," that is, overseers; the apostles speak of them as presbyters, that is, elders. The best, the most mature men, well-tried, learned, fit, and experienced, were chosen for this office. This is the reason why the term "prebyter" was used, for it means the same as "an old man."....Such people are to be chosen by the church only for the sake of the office.⁴²

76. Furthermore, Luther stresses how these men are chosen and designated for the office. It is not simply a personal choice whereby someone decides he will be a pastor and then sets himself up as one of God's chosen workmen. We read Luther's words on this call into ministry:

Such people are to be chosen by the church only for the sake of the office. They are to be separated from the common mass of Christians in the same way as in secular government, where certain people of the citizenry and municipality are chosen and appointed as master or judge ...Out of the multitude of Christians some must be selected who shall lead the others by virtue of the special gifts and aptitude which God gives them for the office.⁴³

Luther's words emphasize our own understanding of the high calling of the ministry. It is an office, not a quality, not a special caste of men. There is no "indelible character," no special marking, no extraordinary physical, mental or emotional characteristic required for this office. The ministry is a gift to the church, and God chooses the men He wants to serve in this high office.

77. Luther, furthermore, encourages all Christian families to encourage their sons to prepare for this special vocation. All education must first of all serve this office. It is no different in our day. The obligation of the church is to encourage all parents to encourage their sons to study for the office of the ministry. Listen to Luther's own words:

A true pastor thus contributes to the well-being of men in body and soul, in property and honor. But beyond that see how he also serves God and what glorious worship and sacrifice he renders. For by his work and word there are maintained in this world the kingdom of God, the name and honor and glory of God, the right faith and understanding of Christ, the fruits of the suffering and blood and death of Christ, and gifts and works and power of the Holy Spirit, the sure and saving use of baptism and the sacrament, the right and pure teaching of the gospel, the right way of disciplining and crucifying the body, and much more. Who can adequately praise any one of these things? And what more can still be said? How much he accomplishes by battling against the devil, the wisdom of this world, and the imagination of the flesh; how many victories he wins; how he puts down error and prevents heresy. For he must strive and fight against the gates of hell and overcome the devil.... These are the innumerable and unspeakable works and miracles of the preaching office.⁴⁴

The high honor and great expectation with which Luther held the office of the ministry is evident in the above quotation. For him the highest goal

of any education was to prepare a boy to become a pastor and shepherd of souls. In the first quotation, Luther speaks of the office of the ministry. He does not identify it with the priesthood of all believers, but terms it a function, a special office instituted by God. God wants competent men to hold this office. The best men are required for this office --to shepherd souls for Christ. For Luther not just anyone will do.

78. In the latter quotation Luther waxes bold and almost lyrical about the office. Every good thing in the kingdom comes through the office of the ministry according to this excerpt from his sermon on KEEPING CHILDREN IN SCHOOL. To which understanding one must contrast the modern perception of the ministry as a dull, low-paying, holier-than-thou calling for those unable to make it in the more demanding professions.

79. The church that bears his name will do well to heed his lyrical prose on the ministry. It is the church of Christ that should have the very best for its shepherds of souls. Yet ultimately Luther passes on all praise and honor to the One who established this office --God! "In a word," Luther says, "if we would praise God to the uttermost, we must praise his word and preaching; for the office and the word are his."⁴⁵

80. While Luther believed that the ministry was an office, not a special order or class of men, he rated that office highly and extended to it great honor. In 1523 he wrote a brief treatise supporting the right of every congregation to call a pastor. In that treatise he writes the following in respect to the office:

On the man who is ordained to the ministry the highest office in Christendom is conferred.⁴⁶

Today the church needs to proclaim loudly and clearly that important truth. It is the highest office in Christendom and should claim the best of the church's sons for that high calling.

81. To be a Shepherd of Souls is the apex of all callings. As I read Luther for this paper, I was drawn more and more to the man who loved people, loved them in Christ, bent all his magnificent energies and scholarship to making the church serve the people of God. How often we name Luther the Reformer, the Exegete, the Bible Scholar, the Translator, the Church Leader, and Apologist, the Dogmatician, the Teacher, The Seminary President, the Reconciler. For this Lutheran Clergyman and professor, whose labors and struggles attempt to match the giant steps of Luther, the warm and intimate title Shepherd of Souls ranks first when referring to Luther. The Reformer loved his Savior and therefore loved people; he cared for them and their souls. It shows in his sermons, his lectures, his Bible studies, in the repartee of his Table Talks --even when he scolds-- and in his family.

82. One of my colleagues at the Fort Wayne seminary has made a sound observation on the requirements for the office of the ministry; I believe it is worth repeating: **A PASTOR HAS TO LOVE TEXTS AND LOVE PEOPLE.** Luther qualifies under both descriptions.

CONCLUSION

83. In his class on Sermon Theology I, this professor instructs the seminarians to prepare a proper conclusion for every sermon. An essay on Martin Luther, the shepherd of souls, may not qualify as a sermon; but for fitting conclusion, some deductions should be drawn from our several observations in the text.

Somewhere in the text it was indicated that one should not be overly interested in the historical Luther just for the sake of filling in the gaps, chronological and otherwise. There is a reason for the statement. Historical accuracy and pure doctrine are not ends in themselves for God's people. These goals serve the mandated function of reaching the world with the Good News of Jesus Christ and instructing God's people in the pure doctrine. The study of Luther is not an excursion into a theological museum where one can "Oh!" and "Ah!" The church and clergy that bear his name desire to learn from their most distinguished teacher, theologian and pastor as they seek to be faithful to their craft and calling.

84. The two topics assigned, LUTHER'S DEVOTIONAL LIFE and LUTHER, SHEPHERD OF SOULS, highlight our endeavors. For our own clergy in our time we would like to place their names in the titles: Rev. John Doe's Devotional Life and Rev. John Doe, Shepherd of Souls. The practices, the insights of Luther must be claimed by our church and our clergy today. Was there any doctrine or practice of application mentioned that is outdated, unbiblical, irrelevant? This writer feels there was not! Surely the Lutheran church of this century wants its clergy to be committed to those Latin subjects --in short, men driven by Lectio, Oratio, Meditatio, and Tantatio. In our own seminary's extension school the professor in charge seeks to keep his pulse on the wishes of the men across the nation. On the list of requests for courses the need for guidance in one's personal devotional life is number 3. It stands high on the list. In the Fort Wayne seminary an elective is offered in one quarter every year on the pastor's devotional life. It's prime mover and originator was Martin Luther.

85. The insights listed for the Shepherd of souls from Wittenberg are as valid today as in the

sixteenth century. The pastors in our congregations would do well to make sure those insights of Luther are preeminent in their own ministries: Justification by Faith, God's People as Saints and Sinners, Clear Communication, the Supremacy of the Word, Humility and Openness, Christo-centricity, Servanthood, Preaching as Shepherding, and Marriage and Ministry. Without doubt others will add to that list as they study Luther; with that this writer can have no argument. Suffice is to say that these are the observations that touch my heart and influence me as I seek to serve my Lord and my church. For the rest, I'll close with a collect from Luther on the office of the ministry:

Dear Father, I pray for myself and all the world. Keep us steadfast in your holy word, and do not take it from us because of our sin, laziness, and ungratefulness. Preserve us from divisive spirits and false teachers. Send true and right workers into your harvest, who will be devout pastors and preachers. Give us all grace that we may humbly hear, receive, and honor your word as your own, and heartily praise and thank you for it. Amen⁴⁷

To this prayer of Luther's I add my own "Thank you!" to the brethren for the opportunity to share a great father and shepherd of the church with you; and with reference to the subject matter presented, this follower of Luther would close with a hearty "Amen!" to the words and ministry of the Wittenberg Reformer, The Shepherd of Souls.

To God Alone the Glory!

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REACTOR

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In his introduction Doctor Kraus makes considerable effort to share with us his rationale for a change in the title from Luther, the Pastor to Luther, the Shepherd of Souls. It is entirely probable that his fine essay would have turned out much the same also under the other title. Nevertheless, hearing his reason gives us an insight into the essayist's outlook and approach to his subject. The change was made, he tells us, because the term shepherd "conveys a warm, intimate and, especially, Biblical understanding of the office of the ministry." The essay is replete with evidence of the author's "love, affection, and appreciation" for the parish ministry and the parish pastor. Nor are we left to infer that. He says it flat out: "The pastoral ministry is the Queen of all theology; it is in the office of pastor, in the pastoral ministry, that all of the disciplines of theology come together and serve God's kingdom, God's people."

I couldn't agree more! And, I should add, that is not merely a personal opinion. It is the rationale that prevails at the school which I represent. The opening two paragraphs of our catalog state:

The specific purpose of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary is to offer theological training for men who desire to enter the public ministry of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod or of churches within its

confessional fellowship. It is not established or maintained to serve merely or in part as a school of religion furnishing opportunity to anyone for specialized study in various fields of theology.

The Seminary carries out this purpose by training all of its students to preach and teach the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ and to carry out the pastoral ministrations of the public ministry in accordance with the Holy Scriptures as the verbally inspired and inerrant Word of God and in conscious agreement with the historical Confessions of the Lutheran Church. All of the theoretical and practical courses of the Seminary, as well as its vicarship program, are arranged to serve this purpose.

Luther, of course, was not the pastor of a congregation in the sense in which we generally tend to think of that office today. He was a professor, and hence the paper has special interest and value also for us who are not parish pastors, not out there "in the trenches" so to speak, but who work in a supporting role. It is both edifying and encouraging to see, with Professor Kraus' help, how admirably Luther in his role as university professor reflects the ideal of being a true shepherd of souls. The essayist begins with the formation and development of the man, what he calls the "raw material" and points out how that was shaped, under God, by Luther's devotional life.

I. Luther's Devotional Life

A. Lectio

We are all familiar with the Reformer's threefold division into oratio, tentatio, and meditatio. To this Professor Kraus proposes to add a fourth, lectio, which he concedes is close to meditatio, but with a difference. Under this heading he establishes in the primary spot the intellectual study and grasp of God's Word. It was this activity of lectio, a study and grasp of the Word, which determined for Luther his conception and definition of the office of the ministry. For him the office of the ministry rested squarely on the authority of the Word. But not only was that Word authoritative, both for Luther and his parishioners, it was also beneficial. In appropriate and compelling quotations from Luther the essayist points out that proper conduct of the public ministry rests on the conviction that in his office the pastor is working with a Word that is both powerful and beneficial.

In our day and age there is wholesale questioning of the authority of the Word -- and a Word that has no authority can have only the most limited ability to benefit its hearers. It is refreshing and above all encouraging and heartening to have our attention directed to that Word which empowered Luther's ministry and will do the same also for ours.

B. Oratio

But for Luther the study of Scripture was never simply an academic exercise. He became personally and intimately involved. That is evident from the Reformer's prayer life. Doctor Kraus states, "This presentation desires to show Luther at prayer,

not simply lecturing on prayer." In that goal he succeeds admirably. Through effective quotations Luther is shown to us in prayer for a sick daughter, for his parishioners, for kings and people in authority, even for Luther himself when he felt himself to be at death's door. In all of this the point is clearly made: "Oratio is not a luxury; it is part of the warp and woof of the divine office."

In this connection the essayist makes one of the most useful and practical applications of the paper when he prescribes prayer as the antidote to "burn out." He asserts, "The appalling lack of proper devotional and prayer life among the clergy is no secret." I might perhaps be a bit hesitant to make so sweeping an indictment of my colleagues, but I would confess that lack of myself and I would unreservedly grant that the performance of others, like my own, could be vastly improved and the personal wear and tear immeasurably reduced if I really followed the prayer pattern set by the Reformer. Doctor Kraus' graphic portrayal of Luther at prayer is a vivid reminder to all of us of "what peace we often forfeit...what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer."

C. Tentatio

The subject of "forfeited peace" and "needless pains," of course, gets us directly into the matter of tentatio, which under the definition of tension, stress, pressure, or anxiety the essay treats next. Consistent with his practical bent, the author related the matter under discussion to our own situation. He states:

One must make the connection between Luther's experience and the clergy of our

day. They are no different; they suffer no more nor less than Luther. Nervous break-down, "burn out," mental fatigue are all related to stress, tentatio. One way Luther dealt with this phenomenon was with a strong, disciplined devotional life. He centered on the Word and prayer. Tentatio became a plus, not a negative.

In this connection, however, the author challenges us to review our program as a proper preparation for stress. He contends that "the church has not done well in preparing men for the tentatio of life in the congregation. In our legitimate concern for doctrinal and professional excellence, it seems the man in his environment -- at times -- has suffered loss." That is surely a point which deserves discussion in our midst today, and, if it can be established, makes it incumbent upon us to alter our pattern in how we seek to help our colleagues in the ministry and how we train the next generation of parish pastors.

D. Meditatio

As previously indicated, lectio and meditatio are similar but with a difference. Whereas lectio is intensive, academic study of the Word, meditatio adds the ingredient of in-depth, contemplative use of the Word. The author is a bit defensive about that division -- I think unnecessarily so. The division is legitimate and valuable. Note again the practical application such a division yields. Recognizing the contemplative aspect of receiving the Word not only provides an antidote to the influx of eastern religions and philosophies cropping up in our land, but it provides also a needed balance against the analytic psychology

that confronts us on every hand. I particularly appreciated the observation:

Analytic psychology spends a good deal of time and effort in analyzing the human factor. While the need to understand the self under the searching light of his Word is necessary, it is the ultimate goal of ministry to focus the sinner on the extra nos, objective atonement, on all the acts and promises of God.

In the next section there will be more on both subjects: both the objective, alien righteousness the gospel offers, as well as a further caution against undue reliance on the inner, subjective aspects of psychology.

II. Luther, The Shepherd of Souls

Having looked at Luther the man, the "raw material," as that was shaped, under God, by his devotional life, Doctor Kraus now puts forth nine insights that dominated Luther's approach to his work. These insights made all of Luther's work truly pastoral, even though that was more as a university professor than the pastor of a congregation. The essay states that observation in corollary form: Luther "was a shepherd of souls because he was a theologian of the Word; he was a theologian of the Word because he was a shepherd of souls."

The author concedes that the choice of nine insights is arbitrary. There could have been more; some might have settled for fewer. I will confess that I was a bit surprised at the inclusion of the insight, MINISTRY and MARRIAGE. But he has put that insight into the ninth spot -- and I have no objection to its inclusion there.

We will not repeat all nine insights. You have heard the essay. But I would like to comment on a few of them. I appreciated the placement of JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH as INSIGHT ONE.

"Justification by faith is the central issue around which Luther built his whole ministry." It must remain so also in our ministries. Luther realized that "only trust in the objective atonement earned by Christ was the blessed entrance into the presence of a living God. He taught and applied this cardinal truth to the lives of the people. It was not only the chief doctrine of the Bible, it was central to all his dealings with the broken and harried lives of God's people.

"Broken and harried lives" leads right over into INSIGHT TWO. Luther's observation that the child of God remains at all times saint and sinner, simul justus et peccator, is, as the essayist observes, "one of the great discoveries (we might say 'rediscoveries') of the Reformation.

If we at all times kept that insight before us, we would be neither surprised nor shocked to see what havoc the devil, the world, or the flesh can still cause in and among the redeemed of God. And we would be the better equipped to deal evangelically with those under our charge.

INSIGHT FOUR: THE SUPREMACY OF THE WORD makes a point that is especially valuable for our day in which the existentialist denies that there is anything like objective truth that is universally true for all men. And even if there were, he scoffs at the idea that it could be contained or conveyed in propositional statements. It is refreshing, therefore, to hear Doctor Kraus say right out loud that there is nothing wrong with "proof-texting." After citing a particularly telling quotation from "Luther's Against the

Heavenly Prophets, the essayist states:

It is apparently clear that Luther based faith and practice on the written text. In this day "proof-texting" is frowned upon. The pastor or theologian who has the temerity to quote the written text for proof or practice can become an object of scorn, called a legalist, an obscurantist, one who promotes a "paper pope." This was not Luther's way; he dealt with person and problem on the basis of the written text of God's word.

Our ministries will be the richer and more effective if we assign the Word that same high position and deal with our people in the same way.

Acknowledging the supremacy of the Word, as Luther did, puts us into a position of appreciating the thrust of INSIGHT EIGHT: PREACHING AS SHEPHERDING. It will not surprise us to hear that Luther's total dependence on the Word reflects surprise itself also in a dependence on the preached, proclaimed Word for pastoral care.

Although one is hesitant to say too much, lest he look like an ogre apposed to the care of individual souls, yet I would confess that I have for some time been concerned about the tremendous upsurge in counseling that has come to mark the parish ministry as we see it today. I have heard pastors tell me that they spend upwards of 20 to 30 hours per week in counseling. I have not had the courage to ask them, with their myriad other duties, how much time that leaves for the weekly sermon. It is refreshing to hear the essayist address that question. Although he is careful to grant the usefulness and legitimacy of counseling in our parish work, yet Doctor Kraus makes what

I consider to be a very defensible observation when he says:

When counseling becomes the cure-all, the major method of ministry, I believe we have digressed from the Reformation insistence on preaching as a major means for instructing and correcting.

It is a haunting question and one that deserves earnest reflection when the essayist asks, "How much counseling today is made necessary by a lack of good, Biblical preaching? If examination and introspection reveals to us that other things, no matter how good and useful in themselves, have been keeping us from doing our best preaching, then the essay has rendered a most useful service. For the essay not only alerts us to a potential problem, but it also suggests the solution.

It would be easy to say, and a superficial listening to the essay might almost suggest that the author is saying: the solution is to follow Luther's example. But the essayist doesn't really say that. I noted with appreciation that every section of the paper is introduced with a pertinent passage from Scripture. Although it is not done in exegetical form, yet everything the author says and cites from Luther's pen is really only an exposition of the Scripture which introduces the section. Doctor Kraus has driven us back to the Word. Therein lies hope and healing. He has challenged us and encouraged us to be the shepherds of souls that the Word makes us capable of being. For that we owe him our gratitude. I'm sure all of us join in saying, "Thank you for a stimulating and edifying presentation."

REACTOR

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Dr. Kraus has drawn a very clear picture of Dr. Luther's devotional life and the way that earnest and heartfelt piety worked itself out in Luther's view of the pastoral ministry. I have no quibble at all with the way our august lecturer has chosen to organize the material, nor with the basic premises he holds gave form and vitality to Luther's devotional and ministerial life. Nor do I find any substantive disagreement with the portrait Dr. Kraus has drawn of Luther.

In this essay in response to the lectures, I would like to approach the question before us from a slightly different perspective.

It might be considered rather odd that Luther never really occupied a pastoral position such as we know the office in our churches today. Even by the standards of the sixteenth century, Luther never served in a capacity which could be called that of a parish pastor. One who expects to find in the notes of Luther or of the history of his Reformation a systematic model for ministry would search in vain. Luther rather served his whole professional life as a Dr. of Theology, a teacher of the Church, a lecturer on the books of the Bible (and occasionally as a logic and rhetoric professor!). When asked by what authority he carried on the work of the Reformation, he would point to his call to the University and to his Dr. of Theology--never to anything else.

Where, then, does the notion of a pastoral Luther arise? While still at the Augustinian cloister, he was virtually forced by Dr. Staupitz to take his turn in the pulpit, a task with which he never felt comfortable, even though he was a striking success. Later, he came to serve as assistant to the ailing pastor of the City Church in Wittenberg and also a vacancy pastor before John Bugenhagen fortuitously, but apparently unexpectedly, accepted the call to be chief pastor. Luther continued until the end of his life to preach a great deal, not only at the City Church but also at the Castle or University Church.

It is from Luther's tremendous output of sermons, for one thing, that Luther's reputation as a pastor arises. For another thing, it is clear that Luther was the spiritual, pastoral leader of the reform movement. To him fell the mantle of leadership, though he never exercised any political, episcopal or administrative offices. But he was father confessor to many and was also one who could deliver the harshest castigation to those who departed from the spirit of the Reformation theology, its practice and church life. Above all, however, he was a teacher of the church. The one thing that Luther never was was an "administering pastor." (See Ernest Schwiebert, Luther and His Times, p. 629, CPH, 1950, for notes on the church organization and pastoral duties in Wittenberg.)

But I think that we need to look still elsewhere for the real nature of Luther's pastoral character and for a model to which Lutheran pastors and lay people can look. My inclination is to observe Dr. Kraus' shrewdly drawn list of nine insights, along with a multitude of others which could swell the number and ask what it is which binds them all together. Is there one set of principles which connects all of the particulars?

I would suggest that the starting point would be the fact that Luther had a very high view of the ministerial office. He regarded the ministerial office as the very institution of God. He would place it much higher than the modern protestant views which regard it as little more than a substitutionary office for the Universal Priesthood of all believers, or the so-called Übertragungstheorie which regards the ministry as little more than an extension of the universal priesthood and a fulfillment of 1 Corinthians 14:40, "Do all things decently and in order." For Luther, the ministerial office is in itself instituted, established and commanded by Christ himself. And thus the pastoral ministry does only that which is commanded by Christ. "Do you believe that my forgiveness is God's forgiveness?" Luther has the confessor ask the penitent in the catechism form for confession. And he makes it clear that the voice of the pastor who reads the holy words of consecration in the supper is really nothing less than the voice of Christ himself. For Luther the words of Jesus "He who hears you hears me" (Luke 10:16) tell in the most economical language possible the nature of the church's ministry.

Luther never, however, views the office as a lordly office. So conscious of his own sin and weakness is he, that neither he himself nor any pastor can regard himself as lord over the believers. Rather, he is the bond-servant, the slave, who waits on the master's table and serves the honored guests, distributing the entrée, the bread of life.

For Luther, that ministerial office exists for no other purpose than to distribute the salvation which has been won on the cross of Calvary. And therefore the Gospel is central for the ministry.

But to say only that the Gospel or even the doctrine of Justification is central to Luther's conception of and exercise of the ministry is not to have understood the depth of Luther's grasp of the biblical material at this point.

For one thing, one has to be prepared to come to grips with the doctrine of the Means of Grace. It is the Means of Grace, as God's powerful, efficacious Word, that gives the ultimate shape to the doctrine and practice of the ministry. The Means of Grace IS the Gospel. The Means of Grace ARE the preached-heard-read-studied(Lectio!) -meditated upon(Meditatio!) Word; it is individual absolution, the word of forgiveness imparted to individuals; it is Baptism, the powerful washing of regeneration; and it is the body and blood of the Holy Supper. For Luther this alone is the focus and form of the serving ministry. And should one wish to know what it is to be a pastor, Luther would simply point to the Means of Grace.

All of Luther's pastoral conception is focused there, in the holy gifts by which God wants to distribute the forgiveness of sins. Luther's exegetical, doctrinal and polemical writings all serve the one purpose of upholding, defending and honoring that core of the pastoral ministry. His liturgy and hymns focus on that Gottesdienst, the service of God to man through his called servants. The ministers simply stand in the place of Christ. The minister is the hand by which God serves his people.

Dr. Kraus rightly points out that for Luther the center of "pastoring" is preaching. That preaching, however, is not, in Luther, quite the same thing as the "art" of preaching as it is known today. In Luther, preaching in its broadest

sense includes not only oratory, but the administration of the sacraments and the absolving of the penitent. For Luther no pulpit speech is a sermon which does not absolve the hearers. And that is another principle--or another enunciation of the same principle--that the work of the pastor is to stand in the place of Christ himself and absolve, to forgive sins publicly and privately, corporately and individually.

I suspect that were Luther to evaluate us today, he would observe that we sometimes do just about everything but absolve. Who can look at Pastor Bob in sneakers, levis and red vest with his "I'm ok, your ok" theology and remember that this man stands in the place of God and forgives my sins, or at the most reverend Walt Street, whose first parish was in Lake Woebegone, Minnesota, shrewdly rushing around engaging contractors, designing buildings and stewardship programs and getting the best deal on mimeograph paper, the consummate money raiser and promoter, with a library low on homiletics, dogmatics and exegesis and high on church growth, and whose favorite periodical is Your Church -- who can look at him and then see him as the representative of Christ in the sacristy, in the confessional, or at the altar rail?

I would suggest that if we seek to understand the weakness and failings of the ministry in our own day, we must first return to the Reformation conception of the pastoral office as the dispenser of the powerful Means of Grace, the voice of Christ's own powerful absolution.

All, to be sure, would agree that the devotional life of pastors, teachers, professors and lay people alike, is sadly lacking. But can we expect

it to be any different when we have allowed private confession and individual absolution to fall into disuse, when we have neglected the very heart of pastoral practice? Are we the church which confesses, "It is taught among us that private absolution should be retained and not allowed to fall into disuse" (AC XI)? Or, "The custom has been retained among us of not administering the sacrament to those who have not previously been examined and absolved" (AC XXV)? Or, "The genuine sacraments, therefore, are Baptism, the Lord's Supper and absolution" (Apology, XIII)? Or, "Since Absolution or the power of the keys, which was instituted by Christ, is a consolation and help against sin and a bad conscience, confession and absolution should by no means be allowed to fall into disuse in the church..." (Smalcald Articles, III, VIII)?

Because Luther understood the centrality of absolution as the one essential for a sermon and as the one essential for pastoral practice, he had a high conception of what it was to be a pastor and he did a great deal to see that the pastors of the Reformation understood their office in that way.

Where the reality of the confessional and the powerful comfort of absolution have evaporated, it is not difficult to understand the loss of a sense of sin and the consequent loss of devotional piety. What fired the tremendous devotional piety of the Reformer and his high conception of the worship life of the Christians together was nothing less than his own sense of sin and unworthiness. He did not pray and study so hard in order to "get in touch with God," nor did he "get into the word" in order to improve the quality of his spiritual life. He did all of that because of his sense of sin and unworthiness and he knew where to find

the comfort of God's absolution.

And likewise, where the strength of the worship service (with the sermon as the powerful absolution, with the reminder of baptism which ought to be in each liturgical act, and with the Sacrament of the Altar central) is diluted, it is not difficult to see why the devotional life of pastor and people has weakened. The worship service with the Means of Grace at the center of spiritual life ought, must, be the pattern and the inspiration for the pastor and people in their daily devotional life. But where the worship service has become little more than a pep rally for the external church to whip up enthusiasm for the budget and calendar, how can we wonder that the devotional piety of Luther has come on hard times.

The individualistic and informal decades of the twentieth century have also taken a toll on both the public worship life and private devotion of the church. The demand has been for entertainment, for misdirected relevancy, for folksiness. So in the sermon the art of anecdote and illustration has replaced the art of exegesis and doctrinal instruction; the oratorical art of generating enthusiasm for the program has replaced the absolution of the sermon; the art of making people feel good about themselves has replaced the use of the law as the revealer of sin; and the art of creating a feeling of friendly fellowship has replaced the proclamation of the Christ for me as the righteousness which alone finds God's favor.

Christe eleison!