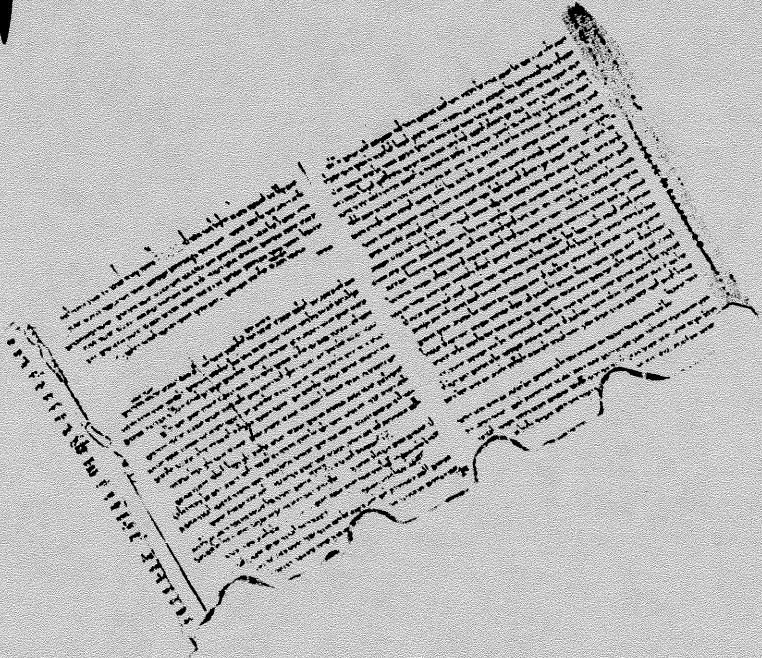




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Editor: Pres. Wilhelm W. Petersen
Managing Editor: W. W. Petersen
Book Review Editor: J. B. Madson

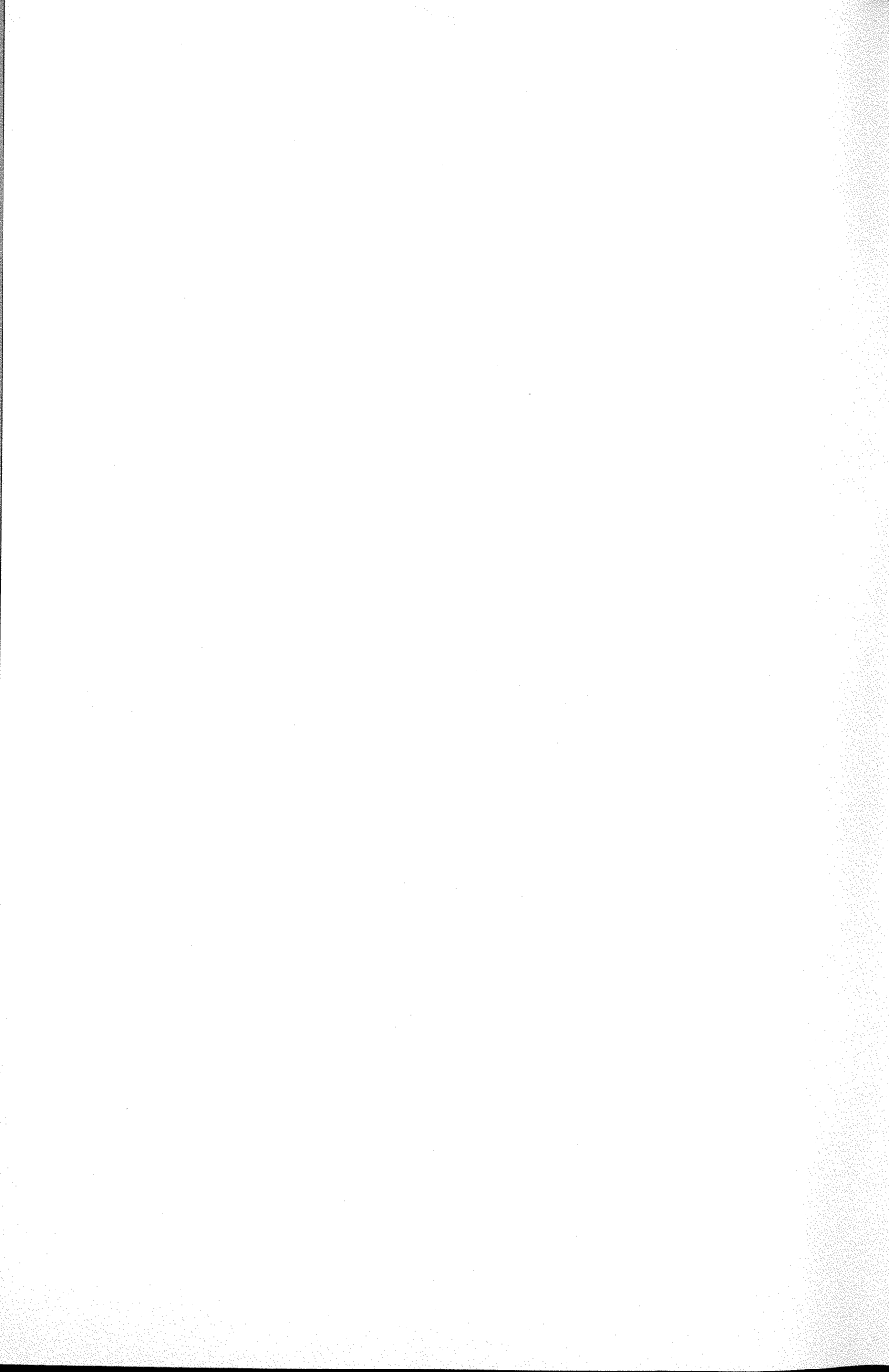
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CONFESSIONAL ADDRESS FOR THE COMMUNION SERVICE
AT THE GENERAL PASTORAL CONFERENCE
OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

September 24, 1986

Text: "For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me, ye, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel!" (I Cor. 9:16)

Before coming to the Holy Sacrament, the Apostle Paul tells us that we are to examine ourselves. He says, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup" (I Cor. 11:28). It therefore behooves us to take a good square look at our own hearts, our minds, our lives and see from the light of God's holy Word how much we need this sacrament, how desperately we need the forgiveness of sins. Only when we have done this shall we be able to truly experience the peace and joy from knowing that the blood of Jesus was shed for us also.

Our text teaches us about the proper spirit of humility which should be that of a minister of the Gospel. The Apostle Paul is saying that even though he is a preacher of the Gospel he has nothing to glory of. He is showing us that deep humility which he clearly confesses in so many places.

Now if the Apostle had wanted to boast he could well have done so. He, himself, writes that he had all the credentials and more than other ministers of the Gospel. We read, "Are they Hebrews?

So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. Are they ministers of Christ? I am more; in labors more abundant ..." (2 Cor. 11:22-23). But he also states at the same time "I speak foolishly."

No, Paul recognized his own great sinfulness. By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit he describes the total corruption of the human nature in the first chapters of Romans. He writes, "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, back-biters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things ..." (Romans 1:29-30). And then he confesses that even as a child of God he still carries with him the Old Adam, the sinful flesh which clings to the Christian as long as he lives. "Oh wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24). "The good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Romans 7:19). "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh" (Galatians 5:17).

Thus the law of God has made Paul divest himself of all self-righteousness and become a very humble person. Even though he is a great apostle he claims no glory for himself. He could not forget his past when he was an enemy of the church of God. "I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am" (I Cor. 15:9-10). He calls himself "the chief of sinners." He says, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18).

Thus we see how the Apostle Paul finds nothing of which to glory, nothing of which to boast in

himself even though he is a minister of the Gospel. He states in our text, "For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of."

Before we come to this Holy Supper we need to have the same conviction about ourselves. We need to humble ourselves before God, acknowledge our own sinful pride, and plead for mercy. Luther says that if Paul, Peter, David, and other excellent persons were not safe against the monster of pride how are we miserable men going to fare to whom this pitch clings so tenaciously. He also says that when this pest of pride slips into the church it is impossible to tell how harmful it is.

A minister can perhaps be tempted to pride more easily than others. His very office lends itself to that attitude. He is a leader. He stands in the public eye. He stands before his audience and passes judgment on their sins. How easy to feel superior to those poor souls with whose vile sins he is familiar. He is a representative of God. He speaks the very words of God. He forgives others their sins. Is he therefore not a high and holy person? Some ministers have more gifts than others. They are more eloquent in their sermons. The people praise them. What a temptation to fall into pride! Some have larger congregations, larger budgets, bigger salaries. Pride can easily enter in. On the other hand, some may take pride in their poverty, glorying in the fact that "they never had very much." Some are better scholars than others. They have read more books. They can understand theological issues with a greater depth than others. Pride enters in. Again, others may pride themselves in the fact that they are not scholars. I have often heard pastors say, "Well, I am no theologian." Some are elected to various boards and offices and may find glory in them. The old may pride themselves in that they

have more wisdom than the young. The young, on the other hand, may take pride in this that they are more aware of what is going on in the world than those who are old.

Yes, ministers are tempted by Satan to the sin of pride and let's face it, we yield to that temptation. There is pride in our hearts. Sinful pride. As soon as we deny it and say, "No, I am a humble man," then we are priding ourselves in our humility. Humility is such an elusive virtue that "It is gone if it but look upon itself."

Sinful pride was the sin that brought Adam and Eve to fall. They wanted to be equal with God. The evil angels no doubt fell for the same reason. And so today. In the world and in the church pride is the root of all sin. Proud world leaders send millions of innocent people to their deaths because they want to uphold their position and honor. In the church there are quarrels in congregations, in synods; there are party factions, there are schisms, in many cases because of pride. One party insists upon its way rather than yielding and listening to others.

Therefore, before we come to the Lord's Table this evening, let us acknowledge our sinful pride. Let us confess it sincerely before God. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession says, "that contrition is the genuine terror of a conscience that feels God's wrath against sin and is sorry that it has sinned" (AP. Art. XII, 29).

May the Lord, therefore, through His Word work such sorrow over sin, such true contrition in our hearts. Only then shall we appreciate what the dear Saviour has done for us. Only then can we have the spirit of the great Apostle who said,

"Though I preach the Gospel I have nothing to glory of."

But thanks be to God the Apostle Paul goes on in our text and tells us how he must preach the Gospel. "For necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel."

And so woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel to you this evening.

Let us turn our eyes to our Lord Jesus Christ and see the examples of His great humility and then remember that He takes your place in fulfilling this aspect of the Law. See the example of His lowly birth. He is born in lowly Bethlehem, not in proud Jerusalem. In a cattle stall, not in a palace. He grows up in despised Nazareth. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46). He chooses as His disciples, not the proud in heart, but lowly fishermen and tax collectors. He acquires no earthly goods. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head" (Matthew 7:20). He invites the poor and lowly to come to Him. He eats with them so that his accusers say, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" (Luke 15:2). He enters Jerusalem for His passion, meek and lowly, sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. Thus Jesus' great humility makes up for our pride. In His active obedience, His perfectly humble heart keeps God's law, so that our pride is atoned for. Dr. C.F.W. Walther puts it so beautifully in one of his Christmas sermons when he says that Christ was born in a stable in order that we might have a mansion in heaven. He was wrapped in swaddling clothes in order that we might be clothed in the garment of His perfect righteousness. He becomes

our brother in order to make us children of the heavenly Father. He became a citizen of earth, that we might become citizens of heaven. He gives Himself into death, that we might have eternal life.

His final great act of humility is so strikingly described by the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Philippians. He "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:7,8). Yes, this sums it all up. He left his high home in heaven. He took upon Himself the human nature. He laid aside the use of His mighty power. And even went to a terrible death for us upon the cross. There was the greatest act of His humility. He suffered, bled, and died to pay for our sins.

Now there is for you and me the forgiveness of all our sins. It has been won for us by the perfect life and innocent suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is conveyed to us and bestowed upon us through the blessed means of grace. This evening He gives you His very Body and Blood together with the bread and wine for the forgiveness of your sins. He not only assures you of such forgiveness but actually bestows it upon you.

Has pride entered your heart so that you felt that you were just a little better than your brother? Come to the altar and receive forgiveness for your sins. Has a proud heart caused you to mistreat any member of your family? Have you used harsh words instead of loving words? Anger instead of patience? Are you ashamed of some of the things you have said or emotions you have

displayed? Come to the altar and receive the very Body and Blood of Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. For the time you slammed the door and stalked out of the room. For the times you felt like cursing instead of blessing. For the times you hurt the ones you love. Come now to the altar and receive His total pardon and grace. Have you cast a lustful eye at an attractive woman? Have you secretly cherished the very pronography that you condemn? Yes, you controlled it, but it was there. Here in this Sacrament Christ says, "I forgive you." Have you neglected His words, your prayers, your duty? Yes, the eternal punishment for all your sins was laid upon Christ and now you and I are free. The gracious forgiveness of all your sins is yours. Come to the altar and receive it!

And now He has called us to proclaim this same forgiveness to others! I must preach the Gospel, says Paul. Necessity is laid upon me. Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel! We have the grandest news that this world has ever heard. After seeing how we have been forgiven, can we hide this from others? May this Holy Supper not only refresh our souls tonight, but give us renewed zeal to go out and preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified, so that our dear members and other souls may rejoice with us. In Jesus name. Amen.

-- Rev. George M. Orvick, President
Evangelical Lutheran Synod

THE THEOLOGICAL BASIS
OF THE NEW LUTHERAN CHURCH (ELCA)

Dr. Darold Beekmann, bishop of the ALC's Southwestern Minnesota District, gave these reasons for a new Lutheran church: 1) Our people have asked for it. 2) We are simply bringing our national and regional church structures in line with where our people already are. 3) We already are united in Christ. 4) We may be bearing the burden of answered prayer. 5) We need to make a more unified witness. 6) We can be more effective in our mission partnership. 7) Bigger will not by itself be better--but efforts are being made to break down bigness into units that are more accessible. 8) We will be enriched by each other's traditions and practices. 9) Finally, this can be an occasion for renewal throughout our new church.

Lutheran Standard, May 2, 1986

So why not? If doctrinal unity is not a prerequisite for church fellowship, then there is no reason why churches with diverse doctrines should not enter into an organic union.

Perhaps a little history would be helpful to put this into perspective. As you know, the three participating churches in this merger are the ALC, LCA, and AELC. The present ALC came into existence in 1960 and consists of approximately 2.3 million members. The LCA came into being in 1962 as a result of a merger of the Augustana Lutheran Church, the United Lutheran Church, the Suomi Synod, and the American Evangelical Lutheran Church and consists of 2.9 million members. The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches was organized in 1976 and consists of pastors and congregations

who left the LCMS because of doctrinal controversy and has 111,000 members. The new merger will consist of 5.4 million members.

On September 8, 1982 these three church bodies held conventions at which delegates overwhelmingly adopted resolutions to join in forming a new Lutheran church. At the same time, each of the three churches agreed to accept the recommendations of the Committee on Lutheran Unity that a 70 member commission be formed to shape this new church. This 70 member commission was to consist of 31 from the LCA, 31 from the ALC, and 8 from the AELC. There was to be equal representation of lay members and pastors, at least 40% women, and at least one-sixth from ethnic/racial groups, and at least two each of Afro-Americans, Hispanic, Asian, and Native Americans. Prior to the September vote it had been agreed that an LCA layman, Dr. William Kinnison, president of the Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio would chair the commission, and that Dr. Arnold Mickelson, secretary of the ALC, would serve as its full-time coordinator.

This 70 member commission is known as the CNLC, the Commission for the New Lutheran Church. The first meeting of the commission was held in Madison, Wisconsin on September 27-29, 1982 and subsequently has met twice a year in various cities throughout the U.S. The tenth, and last meeting, was held on June 23-25, 1986 in Seattle. The crucial calendar for the new church, according to the March 21, 1986 issue of the Lutheran Standard, is as follows:

SPRING 1986: Conventions of ALC districts and LCA and AELC synods review the constitution, bylaws, and continuing resolutions for the new church and offer responses on proposals of the CNLC.

JUNE 23-26, 1986: The CNLC holds its 10th and final meeting in Seattle to study responses from conventions as well as those from individuals and congregations. It will consider proposed revisions to complete its report for the ALC, LCA, and AELC churchwide conventions.

AUGUST 23-29, 1986: One thousand delegates gather in Minneapolis for the ALC general convention. Similar convention schedules are being followed by the LCA and AELC, to permit joint action on August 26-28 regarding new church proposals. Any change will need to be negotiated during the course of the three conventions for action on common documents. If agreement cannot be reached, the process will be delayed. If proposals for the new church are approved, ALC delegates will vote on recommending them to ALC congregations.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1986 - February 28, 1987: Churchwide referendum for ALC congregations on prospect of a new church. Two-thirds of the congregations voting on the issue must approve if the ALC is to become part of the new church.

APRIL 28 - May 3, 1987: Concluding conventions of the three church bodies and the constituting convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to be held in Columbus, Ohio.

LATE SPRING AND EARLY SUMMER 1987: Constituting conventions of synods and organizations of national church council, boards, and commissions.

LATE SUMMER AND EARLY FALL 1987:

Organizations of nine regions with joint planning by synods and national structure.

JANUARY 1, 1988: Starting date for functioning of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

At its first meeting the Commission created two task forces: the Task Force on Theology, consisting of 21 people and chaired by Dr. Fred Meuser (ALC) and the Task Force on Society with 18 members and chaired by Dr. Robert Marshall (LCA). Two additional task forces were established at the second meeting of the CNLC in Chicago, February 7-11, 1983; namely, the Task Force on Purpose and Task Force on New Church Designs.

Upon agreeing that the Commission would meet two or three times a year it also resolved that any report to be shared with the three participating churches must be approved by three-fourths majority of the CNLC members present, and that it would invite all those churches and ecumenical organizations with which any of the participating church bodies were associated to send an observer to future meetings of the CNLC. Dr. Samuel Nafzger was appointed by President Bohlmann to be the official observer of the LCMS.

At its third meeting in Louisville in September 1983, much of the time was spent reviewing the work of the four task forces. The reports were accepted as "working documents," not as final statements on issues. At this meeting the Commission voted not to write a new confession of faith for the emerging church stating that such a confession was unnecessary since there was already doctrinal agreement. The Task Force on Theology had reported that "it is neither necessary nor

appropriate to produce a new confession of faith. The three churches which have committed themselves to join in forming a new Lutheran church know themselves already to be one in the faith. They have expressed their unity in the faith by extending hands of fellowship to one another. Their decision to form a new Lutheran church is a further expression of their oneness of faith. The faith in which we unite is the historic faith of the church, rooted and grounded in God's revelation as recorded in the sacred Scriptures and affirmed and confessed in the ancient creeds and the Lutheran confessional writings.... A new confession of faith may be necessary to give witness to oneness in faith when churches of different denominations with different confessional heritages unite. Neither situation confronts the three Lutheran churches in their union."

On the basis of this report the Constitution Preamble as adopted on September 24, 1985, reads as follows:

Convinced that the Holy Spirit has led us to unite as one church in the name of Christ, we the American Lutheran Church, the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, and the Lutheran Church in America give thanks to God for the faith we share together. Acknowledging that we are already one in faith and believing that the Holy Spirit is ever leading us toward unity in the household of God, we form a new church by adopting this constitution. (Lutheran Standard, November 1, 1985, p. 29)

The Commission was satisfied that the decision to form a new church had already been made and that therefore whatever disagreements in doctrine that

existed would have to be lived with, but it was not interested in getting bogged down with a lengthy discussion of theology and doctrine. Yes, something would have to be said about the sensitive role of Scripture and the troublesome question of ministry, but this was as close as the Commission would get to substantive discussion of theology, at least at this point. What was more important to the Commission was the task of putting the "new" church together. This they did by accepting the proposal of the Task Force on New Church Designs, that eleven design task forces be established to deal with such issues as ecumenical and interfaith relationships, the church's global mission, the church and education, the church in society, communication and interpretation, and of course pensions, health, and insurance benefits. Even these issues proved to be quite controversial. The chairman of the Commission severely criticized the Commission as "nit-picking pedants." Even Bishop Crumley acknowledged later, "The LCA, the ALC, and the AELC are more different than we had supposed. Certain traditions have been deeply ingrained." With such disagreement on peripheral matters one can understand their reluctance in getting involved in theological issues.

It should be said here that some of the "theologians" were displeased with this attitude toward theology and doctrine. Carl Braaten authored a book entitled THE NEW CHURCH DEBATE in which he made available the theological lectures studied and debated at a colloquium sponsored by the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC). This was held February 6-11, 1983, with approximately 400 in attendance. In his introduction Braaten says this about The Place of Theology:

Robert Benne voiced his suspicion of the notion that theology in the church can make

a difference. Many of us who planned and participated in this colloquium were often tempted to embrace such a cynical notion. It leads to theological paralysis. Why do the hard work of theology if it makes no difference at all? In a planning session, I do recall Robert Jenson averring that from his experience, he has reason to doubt that a theological discussion of the issues will make a dent on the bureaucratic mentality that now has a stranglehold on the church. But, in spite of all that, he is willing to give it his best shot. Along came Gerhard Forde to heap coals on the fires of suspicion already burning in the hearts and minds of many lay people and pastors in the church. In an address entitled "The Place of Theology in the Church," Forde of Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary charted the demise of theology in the church and the rise of bureaucratic procedures that pay lip service to theology without taking it seriously. Many people were irritated by the truth, and accused the speaker, who happens to be a theologian, of making a self-serving analysis of the sickness in the church. No doubt Forde's prophecy was out-of-joint with the times. p. 12

Continuing, Dr. Braaten writes:

The fate of the church is now in the hands of those who are drafting the constitution and design of the New Lutheran Church. As this volume goes to press we have received some preliminary proposals from the task forces at work under the Commission on the New Lutheran Church. It is too early to offer a definite appraisal; everything

is in a state of flux. The process itself has become political; words or positions are put forth that are calculated to appeal to the majority and to cause the least offense to the minorities. What happens to truth? It will be put to a vote, and right or wrong the majority will win The work of the Commission is facing some unrealistic deadlines, placing in jeopardy the place and function of serious theology in the entire process of shaping a new church body for the future. It was our hope that the colloquim at LSTC could serve as a theological catalyst in a special way for the members of the Commission on the New Lutheran Church, the majority of whom were simply unqualified for their responsibility, if knowledge of theology is considered an important criterion. (The New Church Debate, pp. 12-13)

In the Spring 1981 issue of Dialog, Richard Neuhaus pointedly asked: "But what does this merger proposal have to do with achieving theological agreement? Indeed, what does it have to do with theology?" And in his own paper, Forum Letter (May 27, 1983, p. 8), Neuhaus quoted Carl Braaten: "Theologians in the Lutheran churches are basically moonlighters. Bureaucrats run the budget and decide what kind of theology, if any, they want. As often as not they will find theology on the periphery of the church's life to say the things they want said." Neuhaus then warns against the managerial model of the church as "an organization pushing religion as McDonalds is an organization pushing hamburgers." (Sept. 23, 1983, p. 2)

Now back to the Commission. It knew that it would have to say something about the controversial doctrine of Scripture. In September 1983 the CNLC did adopt a summary paragraph regarding the Word of God and Scripture. This paragraph was further

refined by a subcommittee prior to the February 1984 meeting in Minneapolis. At its February 1985 meeting another wording was offered. The final wording in the constitution as adopted September 24, 1985, reads as follows:

The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world. This Church accepts the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith, and life.

Noticeably absent from this statement is the word "inerrant" or "infallible." This is deliberate and the Task Force on Theology explains why:

We share the concern of those who use such terms as inerrant and infallible to underscore the Scriptures as God's sufficient and reliable message to us. We affirm that God's Holy Spirit is speaking to us through the Scriptures, that the Scriptures are sufficient and reliable for bringing us the truth of our salvation, and that they present the standard for Christian faith and life. Nevertheless, the words inerrant and infallible can be understood in ways that lead to interpretations of the Scriptures that are contrary to what the Scriptures are and what they teach. These terms can be used in a way that implies a precision alien to the minds of the authors of

the Scriptures and their own use of the Scriptures. These terms can be used to divert attention from the message of salvation and the instruction of righteousness which are key themes of the Scriptures. They may encourage artificial harmonizations rather than serious wrestling with the implication of scriptural statements which may seem to disagree. They may lead people to think that if there is one proven error in the Bible, however minor, its whole teaching is subject to doubt. Therefore, we recommend that the words inerrant and infallible not be included. (p. 4)

This is quite a departure, especially for the ALC, since the Minneapolis Theses has a strong statement on Scripture.

The synods signatory to these Articles of Agreement accept without exception all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as a whole, and in all their parts, as the divinely inspired, revealed, and inerrant Word of God, and submit to this as the only infallible authority in all matters of faith and life. (Documents of Lutheran Unity in America, R. C. Wolf, p. 146)

William Torkelson, religious news writer for the Minneapolis Star and Tribune, wrote in a recent issue: "The proposed 'confession of faith' for the new church was hammered out earlier and revised in accord with suggestions from the grass roots. Some conservative evangelicals had sought to have the Scriptures described as inerrant (without error), but lost out."

Professor Kurt Marquart who has been observing the discussion on Scripture in the new church has

diagnosed the situation well. Conceding that there had been some improvement in the wording, as reflected in the Statement of Faith in the constitution so that even some conservatives feel a little better about it, yet they really have no reason for much hope and he explains why. In an article in the March 1986 issue of Affirm, he has an article entitled When Better is Worse. Noting that the conservatives rejoiced that the Commission adopted more traditional language about Scripture in the constitution, he writes:

When looser, less orthodox language about Scripture is replaced by stricter, more orthodox language in a church constitution, is that not a welcome improvement? Not necessarily. It depends on the situation.

Case A: Two basically orthodox churches unite, and a constitutional paragraph about Scripture is proposed. The language is found to contain loopholes to accommodate unorthodox views. The challenge is faced, and the official language tightened to exclude the unorthodox views. This clearly represented a gain for honest churchmanship.

But consider Case B: Two or more basically liberal or doctrinally indifferent churches merge, and develop a statement about Scripture. Its language is very permissive, in order to accommodate the unorthodox views held by the faculties of all participating seminaries. In order to prevent grassroots disquiet and defections on the issue, the merging churches thereupon adopt more traditional language about Scripture, even though the seminary faculties will continue exactly as before. In this

case honest churchmanship would have been served by formulations which openly reflect the liberal theologies of the seminaries.

Marquart concludes: "Since all the participating seminaries are thoroughly addicted to historical criticism, a change here would require a collective Damascus Road experience of unprecedented proportions. (Concordia Seminary in St. Louis was retrieved not by conversion but by separation). What the efforts of the conservatives will really amount to therefore, as so often in church history, is simply improved public relations for the liberal establishment. The conservatives get their constitutional language, and the liberals get to interpret it in the seminaries and publications of the church, while continuing to teach just as they please."

DOCTRINAL PLURALISM

Allowing for an errant Scripture leaves the door wide open to doctrinal pluralism. We have seen how the Lutheran-Catholic dialogers have left room for pluralism in the doctrine of justification, the heart and center of Lutheran theology. The chief defect of the Lutheran/Roman Catholic statement is that it fails to settle the issue: is justification forgiveness or also renewal? Lutheran theology sees justification as complete in Christ. Roman Catholic theology persists in seeing it as a process within the individual, thus confusing sanctification with justification. For Lutherans grace is God's gracious attitude to the sinner for the sake of Christ. For Catholics, grace is infused into the sinner and hence is a spiritual development. Since it is viewed as a process, it is impossible that it

could ever be an accomplished act before God. Lutherans also hold that grace works in believers, but that justification of the sinner is brought to total completion in Christ. Justification is a completed reality.

George Lindbeck, a member of the US Lutheran/R. C. Dialogue, wrote an analysis of the 1983 report of the Dialogue. In his preliminary comments, he observes that those who proposed the American Dialogue back in 1964 were persuaded "that our churches, though widely separated on many issues, did share the same basic conviction that salvation through Jesus Christ is a free gift received in faith." But then he goes on to discuss the problem: "Turning now to Reformation criticism of the Roman Catholic approach, the major problem with the latter is that it makes transformation of the sinner by inherent grace the condition for God's acceptance or forgiveness." He summarizes by saying, "the Reformation doctrine stresses the performative power of God's external word, while the traditional Catholic doctrine emphasizes the transformative power of inward grace."

Lindbeck is certain, though, that Luther would approve of the dialog because at the very time he declared the pope to be the Antichrist, he also insisted that if only the pope would allow freedom to preach the gospel of justification by faith apart from the works of the law he would gladly kiss the papal foot. "It is not my business," writes Lindbeck, "to evaluate whether the Catholic position in this document is compatible with past dogmas, and especially with Trent." "Both sides need to treat each other's concerns and ways of interpreting Scripture with greater respect and willingness to learn than has been done in the past."

In other words, according to Lindbeck, both positions can live together in the same church. However, we would do well to remember that Rome has not changed its official position which was spelled out at Trent in no uncertain terms: "If anyone says that men are justified, either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ, or by the sole remission of sins, to the exclusion of the grace and charity which is poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Ghost and is inherent in them, let him be anathema. If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in divine mercy, which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that it is this confidence alone that justifies us, let him be anathema." (Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, Session VI, Canons 11, 12)

Carl Braaten disagrees with Lindbeck. Writing in the Autumn Dialog 1984, he maintains "the problem is that Lutherans do not even have consensus among themselves. They showed this at Helsinki when they were unable to agree on a statement on justification, although an international team of theologians had been years at work preparing one." "The real issue," says Braaten, "has been evaded."

Let Luther speak for himself on justification: "Nothing in this article can be given up or compromised, even if heaven and earth and things temporal should be destroyed. For as St. Peter says, 'There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved' (Acts 4:12). 'And with his stripes we are healed' (Isa. 53:5). On this article rests all that we teach and practice against the pope, the devil, and the world. Therefore we must be quite certain and have no doubts about it. Otherwise all is lost, and the pope, the devil, and all our adversaries will gain the

victory." SA II, Art. 1, par. 5. And again:
"As I often warned, therefore, the doctrine of
justification must be learned diligently. In it
are included all the other doctrines of our faith
and if it is sound, all others are sound as well."
(LW 26, 263)

FELLOWSHIP

The ELCA will continue to work for fellowship with other Christian denominations without insisting on full doctrinal agreement. You have no doubt read about the exchange of letters between Bishop Crumley and the Pope, as reported by the media. In their letters they speak of advances that have been made in repairing the breach between the two churches. The Pope suggested aiming "at the start of the next century as a special time for seeking full unity in Christ." Crumley noted that old differences now often are seen "as complementary rather than conflicting." Here are some excerpts of the correspondence:

Crumley: "If the convergences that have grown so much in the last 20 years continue at the same pace in the next such period then we will find that unity between us what we are so sure God intended." "We have been heartened by the growing understanding of our common faith and we have been encouraged at the theological convergence that is developing between Lutheran and Roman Catholics." "We have come to see together that even when diversity exists between us in the expression of faith, there is a growing sense of oneness at the center in Jesus Christ as Savior."

Pope John Paul: "Dialogue has made us increasingly aware of how close we are to each other in the heart of the gospel but we

still experience anguish because full unity has not been achieved. Divisions among Christians obscure the face of Christ, making it more difficult for the world to believe. . . . And when members of the same family belong to separated communions, they must live in hope and work for the unity that should exist. . . . And as all of us, Christians of many communities, approach the 21st century, perhaps we can see this time as a new occasion of grace. Another stage of history unfolding before us offers opportunities to leave behind the vestiges of hostility and misunderstanding."

A spokesman for the US/R.C. bishops said at a news conference that the letters "embody the great hopes that are rising in the hearts of our people." And in Geneva, Switzerland, Gunnar Staalset, general secretary of the LWF hailed the letters as "another mark on our continuing path to unity." Following the decision of the three churches to merge, Bishop Will Herzfeld (AELC) was quoted in the August 30, 1986 Minneapolis Star and Tribune as saying, "This is the first critical step in uniting Lutherans with the entire Christian community."

In the Winter issue Dialog 1986, there is an interesting article by Peter Bastien addressed to Bishop David Preus in which he expresses grave and serious questions about the recommendation of the Lutheran-Reformed Dialogue. He identifies himself as an ardent ecumenist--and gives examples to prove it--but he also wants to be confessional. The first question he asks is: "Are we still to be a Confessional Church and, if so, what more does that mean?" He refers to the study guide

which states that "confessionalism must be revised so that there can be fellowship." Then he asks, "How does one do that without making the Confessions outmoded historical documents that we honor and respect, but no longer require subscription to? Is the hidden agenda an end to explicit confessional subscription?" Referring to the study guide again he quotes the Reformed attitude toward the confessional issues raised in the Book of Concord, "The disagreement was not just over the issues of the Reformation, but whether such issues were still important." And "if they are no longer important, then what is the point of being a Confessional Church?" he asks. Bastien concludes by saying, "I fear for the health and solidity of our Confessionalism despite the comforting words of "An Invitation to Action" and the study guide because I live in the real world, not in the polite world of ecumenical diplomacy. Up here in New England it is not at all unusual to run into Reformed (mostly UCC) clergy who think of themselves as 'post-Christians' and who openly disdain the entire doctrinal basis of Confessional Christianity. We often kid them that there is only a piece of tissue paper separating them from the Unitarians. But if they are in my pulpit, the time for kidding is over."

The second question Bastien addresses is: "If the doctrine of the real presence can mean anything we want it to, does it mean anything at all?" "I wonder how much we are giving away when we declare that the sacramental union of the Body and Blood of Christ in, with, and under the species of bread and wine is mere quibbling over mode of presence and, therefore, ultimately an adiaphoron. Or to put it another way: Are the bread and wine extraneous in the Eucharist? According to the study guide, for Calvinists the contact of the Body and Blood of

Christ with the believer is separate from the believer's contact with the eucharistic bread and wine. So Luther's idea that we 'eat Christ' is thrown aside for the Reformed, generic yet unique, reception in our hearts of the real spiritual presence of Jesus. What happens to the Sacrament as a pledge of the Incarnation? Do we simply give way before the Calvinistic rationalism that the ascended Christ cannot be two places at once? Do we settle for some vague 'heart' of the sacrament's meaning for us? I always thought that the mode of presence of Christ was the heart of the matter. Holy Communion is not a seance; it is the real presence, i.e., real contact, of the Precious Body and Blood of Christ in, with, and under bread and wine, given me to eat for the forgiveness of sins. You're giving away too much."

The January 20th, 1984, issue of the Lutheran Standard reported that "theological dialogues with the Reformed, Roman Catholic, and Episcopal churches indicate that the ALC should, if those bodies agree, enter into altar and pulpit fellowship, which is the official sharing of Holy Communion and willingness to full spiritual, if not structural union." Actually, Bishop Preus is calling for a repudiation of the ALC's official position embodied in the Minneapolis Thesis. This official position rejects all unionism and syncretism and insists on the rule "Lutheran pulpits for Lutheran pastors only and Lutheran altars for Lutheran communicants only." The ALC's Articles of Union (1958) reaffirmed the 1925 Minneapolis Thesis. The ALC refused to enter into altar and pulpit fellowship with the Episcopal, Reformed, and Roman Catholic churches in 1925 for scriptural reasons. But today they are ready to enter altar and pulpit fellowship with the UCC which has adopted a non-Trinitarian Statement of Faith which even Unitarians find acceptable.

Perhaps you recall that the Episcopal Church at its Seattle convention in 1967 declared all heresy an anachronism and adopted a resolution allowing such liberal bishops as James Pike to deny the Trinity. Today Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong publicly attacked the deity of Christ and says that there is no absolute truth in religious matters. In a sermon which was preached on October 31, 1982, at the inauguration service of interim shared eucharistic fellowship between Lutherans and Episcopalians in New Jersey, the Bishop said:

Every doctrine of infallibility . . . whether of the papacy, or of the Scriptures, or of any sacred tradition, or of any individual experience . . . will inevitably have to be forgotten . . .

Christianity for the first time in its 2,000 year history is floating free in a sea of relativity, unable to maintain any of its traditional authority claims.

The Ecumenical Movement on deep levels symbolizes this relativity . . .

The church of the future will have to learn to embrace relativity as a virtue and to dismiss certainty as a vice . . .

The ecumenical journey will carry modern Christians to a fearful, anxious future, where all will be forced to lay down narrow claims and to embrace the openness of this new day. When the Christians of the world can do this, then perhaps in that larger community of faith, worshippers and believers will include the Jews, the Muslims, the Buddhists, the Hindus. They will come, I trust, with equal claims to being children of the one God equally created in that God's

image, equally loved and sought in that God's plan for salvation This is the vision to which the ecumenical movement ultimately points the church. (This sermon was printed in the June, 1983 issue of The Christian Century and the above quotes were printed in the Christmas 1983 issue of Affirm.)

LIBERATION THEOLOGY

In the ELCA it will be difficult at times to determine just what the mission of the church is. Is it to save souls or to save society? In 1983 William Lazareth heartily commended "the church's recent struggle for an inclusive mission that encompasses both evangelism and social justice, both eternal salvation and historical liberation" and he urged upon the merging churches "an inclusive mission of salvation and liberation" (The New Church Debate, pp. 22 & 34). And the April 5, 1985 issue of the Lutheran Standard quotes the Commission approvingly when it says, "We seek to respond as stewards of God's gifts, seeking to work together effectively in this church in the service of the gospel of justification and for causes of justice in the world."

Reporting on the LSTC, Braaten commented on an article by Kathleen Hurty entitled "Embodying the Gospel in an Inclusive Church." Under the caption Holistic Mission, he writes:

The mission of the church is to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God in Jesus Christ to the whole world until the end of time. This mission has universal scope; today it is commonly called holistic. The mission is God's bridge to a

world that has not reached its fulfillment, and it proceeds from the nature of the church as an all-inclusive fellowship. Jesus' ministry of the kingdom showed signs of breaking into every dimension of life— healing physical illness, exorcising spirits, feeding the hungry, speaking out against corrupt public officials and religious authorities, and caring for poor and neglected people. So also correspondingly the church is to be a Christ-like medium of the power and effects of the kingdom of God in this world, bringing its mission into the openness of world history, placing it on the front lines of struggle for the hearts of people, including everything going on in the political, social, and economic realms of human life. This means that the goals and aims of the church for the outside world must begin to be modeled in its own interior life." Then referring to Hurty's topic, "Embodying the Gospel in an Inclusive Church," Braaten summarized by saying that "she called for an inclusive church, challenging the new church to embody in its very structures and procedures signs of reconciliation in the midst of the humanity-dividing issues such as sexism, racism, classism, and others. In her final words she said, 'We are asking the commission on the New Lutheran Church to be the midwives, helping us to bring to birth a new and inclusive church.'" (The New Church Debate, p. 10)

Elizabeth Bettenhausen, associate professor of social ethics and theology at Boston University, has long been an advocate of social justice. Speaking on the topic "Missionary Structures and World Struggles," she reveals her social gospel

colors. "The issue is painfully obvious: the New Lutheran Church will be predominantly a reflection of the white, rich, privileged strata of the First World. The problem is: How can rich Christians be servants to the poor of the world? How can North American Christians be mobilized to be an instrument of God's mission to nations condemned to fear, poverty, oppression, and hopelessness? How can a church embedded in structures of domination participate in genuinely liberating movements around the world? It is perhaps the most challenging question facing the next generation of Lutherans in the U.S." Pointing out that Lutherans have confessionally been strong on justification, she feels that they (Lutherans) "have classically betrayed a weakness in the area of sanctification. The doctrine of sanctification has been a problem for Lutherans generally; and when it became the strong suit of Lutheran pietism, it was individualistically conceived. May not the doctrine of sanctification be intended as something more than an index of Pilgrim's Progress to the Promised Land, and become instead a summons to the church as a whole to engage in the struggles of people for liberation and justice? If so, sanctification would become much more objective than subjective, more world-centered than self-centered." (The New Church Debate, pp. 155-168)

Responding to all of this, Lowel Almen in the November 1, 1985, Lutheran Standard editorial opinion, writes:

But what is emerging is staffing that inevitably will shift central attention from global mission and new congregations in the U.S.--as well as education, social services, and congregational life--to issues of society. Rather than calling the new

church either the ELC in the U.S.A. or Lutheran Church in the U.S.A., perhaps we should name it what it might become: Lutheran Church of the Latest Social Issue or Lutheran Church of the Present Movement.

In the May 3, 1985 issue of the Standard, Almen calls attention to the current laundry list which includes justice for women, gay and lesbian issues, urban issues, pension concerns, economic issues, and peace-war probing issues and concludes by saying, "these will reinforce the impression that the ALC and its partners in the prospect of a new church are moving farther down the road to becoming little more than the ecclesiastical wing of the Democratic party."

Speaking of gay and lesbian issues, the April 1986 issue of The Concord, which is a newsletter of Lutherans Concerned/North America and is dedicated to a Christian ministry for Lesbian and Gay Understanding, reports on plans for Assembly '86 scheduled to meet in North Hollywood, California July 17-20. Dr. Elizabeth Bettenhausen is scheduled to be the keynote speaker. The Eucharist is to be celebrated twice during the four-day meeting. The masthead explains the purpose of Lutherans Concerned: "Lutherans Concerned is a society of gay, lesbian, and non-gay Christians that is working to foster within our church a climate of understanding, justice, and reconciliation among all women and men, regardless of their affectional preferences. We seek to unite gay Lutherans and their non-gay supporters for education and affirmation, thus extending our church's healing ministry to all in a spirit of truth and justice. We seek to encourage our church to face honestly and forthrightly the questions and needs of gay people,

both those within the church and those who have left because of their church's failure to understand them. We seek to work with the church in proclaiming the Christian gospel of joy and love to women and men everywhere."

The Newsletter reports on the Reconciled in Christ program among the gay society:

Reconciled in Christ is a program of Lutherans Concerned/North America which seeks to identify Lutheran congregations engaged in ministry inclusive of lesbian and gay people. Reconciled in Christ (RIC) congregations affirm that:

- . gay and lesbian people share with all others the worth which comes from being individuals created by God;
- . gay and lesbian people are welcome within the membership of their congregation upon making the same affirmation of faith that all other people make; and
- . as members of (an RIC) congregation, gay and lesbian people are expected and encouraged to share in the sacramental and general life of their church.

It also reports a Lutheran gay alumni association formed at St. Olaf College (SOLGA) and states its purpose "to bring together gay grads of the Lutheran liberal arts college." SOLGA members will also keep administrators of the Northfield, Minnesota college informed of issues that affect gay students, as well as to provide an outlet for social activities.

The same issue of Concord approves of Bishop Lowell Erdahl of the American Lutheran Church who

has questioned conservatives' use of the Bible in attacking homosexuality. It also approves of an article by Father Andrew Greeley, which is critical of those who say that AIDS is a punishment sent by God. Father Greeley writes, "To those cheerful souls who claim that AIDS is a punishment of God on the sin of sodomy, I respectfully respond that such a God is not the God I know."

MINISTRY

Another sensitive issue is the doctrine of the ministry. Nafzger reports that more time has been devoted by the Commission to the discussion of this topic than to any other single issue. Almost half of the original report of the Task Force on Theology was devoted to questions pertaining to ministry, such as the relation of "the office of the ministry" to "the ministry of all believers"; the particular character and responsibilities of the ordained ministry; the function of the "oversight" of congregations and ministers; the status of ministries other than the pastoral office; and teaching authority in the church. Braaten says that "the doctrine of the ministry constitutes the chief obstacle in the way of reconciling and reuniting the divided bodies of world Christianity." Bishop David Preus observed that "there are going to be winners and losers on this one."

Following discussion of the Task Force on Theology report, the CNLC appointed a committee to study the relationship between "specific ministry" and "general ministry" and asked for a research paper on the nature and function of the office of bishop. After more discussion at the February 1984 meeting of the Commission, the following recommendations were adopted for submission to the

churches: that the new church 1) "recognize and affirm persons who seek to carry out their baptismal vocation in the public realm or in support services within the church and implement this through the appropriate rite"; 2) "call some persons who have been recognized for their gifts, prepared and certified to two forms of specific (or public) ministry"; 3) "have an office of oversight"; and 4) "use the title 'bishop' for the office of oversight."

Deferred by the February CNLC meeting to its June meeting was the question of representation of ordained and commissioned to delegate assemblies and on board and commissions of the new church. This issue has not been resolved. Strongly favoring a category of "commissioned ministers" are representatives from the AELC, which has a large number of parochial school teachers. Other CNLC representatives express concern regarding the term "commissioned ministry" holding that its use for some laity and not others might lead to the creation of "classes" or "layers" of lay Christians. There seems to be little opposition to the use of the term "bishop" to the office of oversight.

The unresolved issue is over the role of Christian day school teachers in the ministry of the church. The LCA has strongly opposed their inclusion in the public ministry of the church, but the AELC has argued for their inclusion. The presently proposed "solution" is that for the first six years of the new church all who have a specially recognized status of ministry will retain that status, but only ordained pastors will be added to the public ministry roster. It remains to be seen how this whole matter will be resolved, but for the time it is a burning issue and could conceivably be a stumbling block to the merger. Sam Nafzger

seems to think that the position of the new church on the doctrine of the ministry will be essentially that of the Missouri Synod.

It is obvious that there are deep and serious differences between the doctrinal stance of our synods and that which is emerging in the ELCA. Nafzger is probably right when he says "doctrinally speaking, Lutherans in this country today are farther apart than at any time in this century." It is very obvious that this new church is based on a weak foundation that allows for doctrinal pluralism, almost anything goes. The editor of our Lutheran Sentinel summed it up well in the April 1986 issue in these words: "The new church allows for the ministry of those who do not teach that Jesus is the only way to heaven. Professors and ministers will be accepted in ELCA who teach that sincere followers of non-Christian religions may also get to heaven. The effect of this teaching is to lose the primary purpose of Christian missions. As a result their mission efforts tend to shift more toward social welfare programs, thus becoming sociological rather than evangelical."

It deeply saddens us to see much of Lutheranism today making this ultra-liberal direction. But it should also serve as a solemn warning to all of us to hold fast to our doctrinal heritage. We see what happens when churchmen begin to barter away the truth. The roots of the ELS go back to 1917 when the Norwegian Synod, together with two other Norwegian Lutheran church bodies, the United and Hauge synods, merged on the basis of an ambiguous union document, known as Opjør or the Madison Settlement. This merger document allowed two forms of election and also attributed to natural man the synergistic error of having a "sense of responsibility in relation to the acceptance or rejection

of grace." (Wolf, p. 234) The new church body which emerged from that union was the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America (NLCA), now a part of the present ALC, one of the merging churches in the ELCA. The lesson is: When doctrinal error is allowed in a church body it will in time affect the very source of doctrine itself, the Holy Scripture, and that opens the door to doctrinal pluralism which not only dishonors God but robs souls of the certainty of salvation. How we need to heed the biblical directive: "Buy the truth, and sell it not" (Prov. 23:42) and sing with new fervor,

"God's Word is our great heritage
And shall be ours forever;
To spread its light from age to age
Shall be our chief endeavor;
Through life it guides our way,
In death it is our stay;
Lord, grant, while worlds endure,
We keep its teachings pure,
Throughout all generations!"

-- Hymn 283

-- Wilhelm W. Petersen

Copies of the November 1, 1985 issue of the Lutheran Standard which contains the Constitution Preamble, Confession of Faith, and Statement of Purpose may be obtained from Augsburg Publishing House, 426 South 5th Street, Box 1209, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55440 at 50 cents per copy.

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JUSTIFIED BY WORKS

An Exegesis of James 2:14-26
by Pastor David C. Thompson

1 James said, "You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone" (ὁρᾶτε ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος καὶ οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως μόνον). Paul said, "For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law" (Rom. 3:28: λογιζόμεθα γὰρ δικαιοῦσθαι πίστει ἄνθρωπον χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου). Unfortunately, the verses in themselves present us with an apparently logical contradiction. There's no way to get around it. And so the task before us (and, no doubt, one of the main purposes of this assignment) is to attempt adequately to explain the verses and context of James 2:14-26 without compromising the confessional Lutheran view of justification while at the same time upholding the canonicity of James. The assignment becomes even more difficult when one considers that James includes works in his discussion of salvation and justification while our Lutheran Confessions state: "We believe, teach, and confess that good works should be completely excluded from a discussion of the article of man's salvation as well as from the article of our justification before God" (F.C. Ep. IV:7, Tappert).

This presentation was made to the General Pastoral Conference of the ELS held at King of Grace Lutheran Church, Golden Valley, Minnesota, September 24, 1986

2 As for the canonicity of James, that is beyond the realm of this paper. It should be understood, however, that the Lutheran Confessions assume and imply its canonicity (Tappert, 44:23; 141:244-256; et. al), a premise which this paper will accept. And so, the question is not, Is James Canonical? but, How can James 2:14-26 be explained from a confessional basis?

3 *Verse 14: What benefit¹ is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no works? Can that² faith save³ him?⁴*

4 The following discussion by James is said to be the first theological controversy of significance in the New Testament church.⁵ Somehow in the early days of the Jerusalem church, though there is no direct reference to such in the other epistles or the book of Acts, some had come to depreciate works of faith, perhaps unknowingly, to the extent that they were not necessary in any sense. It is not known among whom or why the error arose, although it is imaginable that Jewish converts to Christianity who had once been enslaved by Pharisaic work righteousness and the Tradition of the Elders were now overreacting just as some had done at the time of the Reformation in response to the Roman Catholic enslavement.⁶

5 James very directly confronts this error by means of two rhetorical questions and thereby points out that the benefit of final salvation hoped for by those who misunderstood and misapplied the "faith alone" doctrine is non-existent.

6 There is nothing here that implies that James is attacking the belief that man merits righteousness by faith alone--so far. The only reference that can be drawn is that faith, if it has no

works, does not receive final salvation. There is a temptation at this point to assume that James has two different types of faith in mind in terms of content and object, that is, a faith which acknowledges in a general sense the existence of God and Jesus Christ versus one that acknowledges the true nature of God, the exact person and work of Christ, and the doctrines that directly relate to justification. But there is no evidence thus far that the faiths James speaks of are anything but those which acknowledge the truths revealed by the prophets and apostles, as will be borne out by verse 19. Faith "was not defective in its point of confidence" (Meyer, 87), but the lack of works reveal a false confidence. It was a faith in its entirety, but a faith of mouth and lips only.

7 Verses 15, 16: *If a brother or sister is without clothes⁷ and lacking⁸ food for the day, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace,⁹ keep warm and well fed," but you do not give¹⁰ to them what is necessary for their physical needs, what benefit is it?*

8 James now presents an example of charity which is rich in words but lacking in works, for mere words cannot clothe or feed. Apparently there were times in the life of the early New Testament church that Jewish Christians did not care for their own. Throughout the rest of the Christianized world there were similar occurrences, as can be seen from the division between the rich and poor in Corinth (1 Cor. 11:20-22) and the exhortation of Paul to the Galatians (Galatians 6:10): "Let us do good to all men, and especially to those of the household of faith." James charges the offenders with lack of compassion for the poor and promises them condemnation for their faith

without works even though it may have had all the other necessary ingredients of Christian faith. He illustrates the idea that faith necessarily is accompanied by works of love, otherwise it profits nothing (for the one professing to believe).

9 But what makes this passage most convincing is that a spiritual blessing ("Go in peace")⁹ is pronounced while a physical blessing is withheld. Talk is cheap. But when one in so many words says, "May God's love go with you, but you won't receive any from me," talk is much worse than cheap--it's blasphemous. How carelessly can similar phrases, such as "God bless you," be used today when one bids farewell to the poor and emotionally distressed as if he had fulfilled his godly responsibility to them and they would be better off because he, the faithful, had said those three magical words, when in reality it was just a show of "religiosity." Jesus condemns such lack of action in Matthew 25: "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat....I needed clothes and you did not clothe me..." (vv. 41f.).

10 *Verse 17: Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead by its very nature.*¹¹

11 This verse very vividly and emphatically states that without works faith is no faith at all. Surely in one sense it is called faith, but most properly it is no faith, just as one would say a corpse is not a person. And this faith which is outwardly inoperative is obviously inwardly dead, the emphasis being not so much that faith has no works and effects, but that its eternal nature (dead) is such that it most assuredly is incapable of producing works.

12 This leads to another interesting point.

Since faith is dead it follows that by these works is not meant something which must be added to faith, but something which must grow out of faith if it is alive. James indirectly is saying works are the fruit of faith, which will be helpful in understanding later verses.

13 But the most direct message from this verse is very adequately described in these words:

A man possessing such faith may be persuaded that he has true, living faith, he may know and understand all doctrines of the Bible, accept them as true, defend them against gainsayers, speak beautifully of Christ as the only Savior, yet if he has no works to show as a result of his faith, his faith is dead, lifeless, and therefore without power to save...Unless it sanctifies, unless it urges all to good works, faith is not God-given faith, not spiritual life, but merely another form of spiritual death, a faith in name only, without efficiency, without strength to justify, without power to save.
(Laetsch, 692F.)

14 *Verse 18: Indeed someone will say,¹² "You have faith and I have works. Show¹³ me your faith without works and I will show you my faith by my works."*

15 James clearly envisions one of his supporters picking up his argument against his opponent and adding a new dimension to it: works are a demonstration of living faith. "Faith is the substance and works are the characteristics of that substance" (Scaer, 89). The Confessions recognize

this aspect of this text when they state: "...the context [of James 2:14ff.] demonstrates that the works spoken of here are those that follow faith and show that it is not dead but living and active in the heart" (Ap. IV:246, Tappert 142). But what is the purpose of such proof? According to the verse it is that others might be convinced of the existence of living faith: "I will show you" (καὶ γὰρ σοὶ δείξω). James in writing this section obviously has in mind not only those who say works are not necessary but also those who show by their lack of works their false theology or dead faith. The examples given in verses 15 and 16 were probably taken from real life. And on the basis of such inactivity James has reason to reprove and spell out in very plain Greek that their faith is also a dead faith. It is a relief, in one sense, to know that Christians today, and especially pastors who observe dead faith all too often, have a right and a responsibility to approach and admonish those who will whole-heartedly profess and agree with everything taught in the Catechism and who apparently receive grace through Word and Sacrament but who never left a finger to help a fellow Christian in need, show love and compassion in any way, or perform other good works which naturally flow from faith.

16 Verse 19: *You believe that "God is one"?¹⁴
You do well! Even the demons believe and shudder.*

17 Once again, the Christian faith is being referred to here. The abbreviated credal confession, "God is One," distinguishes the revealed religion of the Old Testament (and its fulfillment now begun in the New Testament) not merely from crass heathenism, but also from false doctrines within the early Christian church. The thrust of

James in this verse is that a Christian creed without corresponding Christian works will save neither devil nor man. The problem is not the confession, as can be said of many an Old Testament but apostate Jew, but the life of the professed believer.

18 One mistake often made with this verse is to assume that the one being castigated is guilty of having only an intellectual assent to the existence of God, because after all, they would say, that is the best that demons can have (with whom he is being compared). But the demons' belief about God includes more than the fact that he exists, and it is more than just intellectual. It is a very thorough understanding of the attributes of God, the person and work of Jesus Christ, and a heartfelt conviction that it is true (cf. Mk. 1:24; 3:11; 5:1-13). A mere intellectual belief in God would hardly create a shuddering demon. A "Christian" faith may be very thorough, very moving and emotional, something he would die for because he is convinced of its absolute truth, but if it is dead as evidenced by its lack of expression, it will not attain for righteousness and salvation.

19 *Verse 20: Do you want to be shown,¹⁵ you¹⁶ vain and empty¹⁷ man, that faith without works is useless and accomplishes nothing?^{18, 19}*

20 With this verse James is introducing the coming proof from Scripture. It is the mark of a good debater to establish support for his position by appealing to ground common to both sides. It has already been shown that James' opponent did not lack commitment to the God's Word. But James also here, on the basis of his authority and conviction that he is absolutely right, reveals the

true nature of his opponent: he is "vain and empty," professing to have true, living faith when in fact it is a hollow faith which also lacks an understanding of the importance of works. In short, he is deficient in both life and doctrine. How frightening it is, and should be, to know that one little slip in doctrine can have such grave consequences. James is arguing against both the practice and belief of antinomianism. This calls for a careful examination of one's doctrine and life.

21 Verse 21: *Is²⁰ not our²¹ father Abraham declared righteous by works because²² he offered his son Isaac on the altar?*

22 Up to this point all that has been written by James presents no problems for the confessional Lutheran and his understanding of justification, faith and works. But with the commencement of this and the following verses, it may appear that, quite literally, "all hell has broken loose" and is about to engulf every sinner whether he has living faith or not.

23 There are two major questions that must be addressed here. First, what is meant by "justified" or "declared righteous?" There are basically three ways in which the term is understood. "Made righteous" is of course in agreement with Roman Catholic theology and not adverse to theology of even some (liberal) Protestants (such as Ropes, 221). Another proposal is to translate it "set forth as righteous" or "shown to be righteous" (Adamson, 128). But even though the term may not be translated in that manner, it is, nevertheless, many times given that explanation. The third possibility is to look at it in a strictly judicial sense, to be "declared righteous." This

is the common understanding of this word (among conservative Protestants) when it is found in the gospels and Paul's letters.

24 The first understanding mentioned above, "made righteous," is theological suicide and needs no further comment in this paper.²³ The translation, "shown to be righteous," is extremely tempting, for it would resolve all theological difficulties for the confessional Lutheran. The best support for this translation is found in verse 18, where works are described as a demonstration or proof of living faith, and obviously, then, a demonstration of the justification bestowed upon him by faith. This view of works and justification is well supported by other sections of Scripture (e.g., Lk. 7:40-50). Nevertheless, to translate δικαιοῶ here or any other place as "show to be righteous" is linguistic suicide. As Meyer correctly says, "Strictly taken, it is accordingly not correct to translate δικαιοῦν by 'prove to be righteous' or 'approve to be righteous,' as the ideas 'proving' and 'approving' according to their proper and strict meaning are not contained in it" (94, footnote 3).

25 Verse 23 clearly shows that justification in this verse should be treated in the forensic sense. There James quotes from Genesis 15:6: "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." James does not attempt to explain this quotation, but Paul does (Rom. 4:3-25; Gal. 3:6-14). One is therefore dependent upon Paul for the meaning of δικαίος (δικαιοσύνη) as it is used in Genesis 15:6, and he clearly demonstrates it has a forensic meaning. Δικαίος in Genesis 15:6 cannot have one meaning for Paul and another meaning for James--proper hermeneutics does not allow for such and the result would be a "relativizing" of Christian doctrine. Therefore, since James must

have the forensic meaning of justification in mind in verse 23, he could mean nothing else by it in verse 21 (and verses 24 and 25 as well) without a statement of clarification. Thus, there is no other way to interpret δικαιόω in verses 21, 24 and 25 than "declare righteous."

26 The real theological difficulty in this verse comes as a result of the addition of one small word: ἐκ ("by"). The second question which must be answered, then, is how one should understand "by works." The meaning of the preposition in this verse is limited to either "by means of" or "because of." On closer examination the former is in all probability the correct one. In verse 18 the same phrase is found, ἐκ τῶν ἔργων, which, when taken in context of the whole verse, must mean, "I will show you my faith by means of my works." When ἐκ is elsewhere used in the New Testament in connection with faith or works, the same can be said (cf. Rom. 3:20, 30; 4:2; Gal. 3:2, 22, 23, 25).²⁴

27 But no matter which way one translates the preposition, the inevitable conclusion is that a declaration of righteousness is somehow dependent upon works. Εκ will simply not allow any other possibilities. This, as mentioned in the opening sentences of the paper, appears to fly in the face of passages such as Romans 3:28: "For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law" (δικαιοῦσθαι πιστεὶ ἀνθρώπου χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου); Rom. 3:20: "Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by works" (ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ); Rom. 4:2: "If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works (Ἀβραάμ ἐξ ἔργων ἐδικαιώθη), he had something to boast about..."; and Gal. 5:4: "You who are trying to be justified by law (ἐν νόμῳ

δικαιωσθε) have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen from grace." Linguistically and contextually, so far, James seemingly contradicts Paul. But, interestingly enough, James will be shown to contradict himself in the same (limited) sense in verse 23. The most and the least that can be said on the basis of this verse and a limited context is that Abraham is declared righteous and holy by means of works because he offered up Isaac on the altar--because he obeyed God's command to proceed with sacrificing his only son.²⁵

28 Verse 22: *You can picture,²⁶ then, that faith was helping his works, and by works faith is brought to its goal.*

29 It is a relief to know that this verse more easily lends itself to a typical Lutheran understanding of faith, works, and justification. Not that James brings faith into the picture again as if to say, "But I don't want you to forget about the importance of faith in justification," or even, as it is tempting to think, "I want you to remember that his works justify only because they are fruits of faith;" (even this is contrary to the Confessions; see S.D. IV:27). These are not the sort of consequences one would expect from verse 21. Rather, the correct understanding of faith in this verse is that the faith of Abraham was not dead but operative.

30 The verb *συνηργει*²⁷ is difficult. It is the word from which our English "synergism" comes and would seem to automatically imply "cooperation." Up go the red flags! But no need. The word is used five times in the New Testament and in only one instance could it possibly mean "cooperate" (1 Cor. 6:16). In the other four instances (Mk. 16:20; 2 Cor. 6:1; Rom. 8:28; and here) it means

"work together," "help," "aid," "further," or "helper."²⁸ It is not as if faith and works must each add a part to justify like ingredients in a recipe. The faith of Abraham, since it was a living faith, "exercized an activity, namely, the activity which is helpful to works" (Meyer, 97).

31 While it can be said that the faith of Abraham aided his works, it is also true that faith itself received by works its completion.²⁹ This is not to imply that works cause the completion of faith or have any sort of innate power capable of having an effect on faith, for, once again, the phrase ἐκ τῶν ἔργων is instrumental (see paragraph 26). For James, works and faith are so closely connected that only when faith produces works does faith become even more completely that which it is intended to be according to its very nature and destination. Good works are the completion and the final expression of faith. Or to look at it from another angle: Abraham's faith is completed by works only in the sense that it would have been incomplete (that is, dead) if he had been totally unwilling to offer up his son at the command of God. Living faith, then, is completed when it produces works. It is inconceivable to James that faith and works be separated, and yet he carefully and precisely describes their relationship to one another: living faith aids in the production of works and living faith is seen as completed in the production of works.³⁰

32 Verse 23: *And the Scripture was accomplished which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend.*

33 The use of the word "accomplished"³¹ here is a departure from the usual translation, "fulfilled." This is purposeful. The translation "fulfilled" when found next to "scripture" usually implies (and rightly so) that a prophetic prediction has come true. But there are a couple of reasons why this interpretation of the word should not be imported here. First, there is no indication in James 2, Genesis 15, or anywhere else in scripture that Genesis 15:6 is a prophecy which predicts that Abraham would sacrifice his son. This assumption seems to be made by a number of scholars simply for the reason that "scripture" and "fulfilled" are found next to each other. If Genesis 15:6 somehow contains a prophecy that would be fulfilled only at the offering of Abraham's son, it is certainly bizarre, hidden and supported nowhere else in scripture. Second, if "fulfilled" is to be taken in such a narrow sense, it makes for a very awkward understanding of the verse in James. Such a sense gives the impression, then, that either righteousness was not declared to Abraham at the time of Genesis 15:6 because it would not have been fulfilled until Genesis 22 when he offered his son, or that there are two fulfillments to this prophecy (one at the time it was first spoken and the other later in Genesis 22) and consequently two different declarations of righteousness for two different reasons during his earthly life. Meyer leans toward this: "The expressions ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην and ἐδικαιώθη are not regarded by James as equivalent, but according to his representation the former was imparted to Abraham purely on account of his faith (Ἐπίστευσεν), but the latter only when his faith was completed by works, thus on account of his works (ἐξ ἔργων), so that thereby the scripture was fulfilled" (99).

34 It is not necessary to understand πληρόω in such a narrow sense, nor is it necessary, then, to understand Genesis 15:6 as a prophecy. Rather, the justification of Abraham by faith at the time of Genesis 15:6 predicted (in a non-prophetic sense) that good works would follow. At the time of Genesis 15:6 Abraham was and could be called righteous. As a result of this righteousness by faith certain actions would be fulfilled or accomplished by Abraham which God had prepared beforehand for Abraham to complete (Eph. 2:10), one of which was the offering of his son on Mt. Moriah, and which, at the proper time, would be a natural result of Abraham being declared righteous by faith. Πληρόω in this sense simply means the natural consequences of the initial action.

35 This is also the message in Romans 6: the justification we receive through baptism is carried out in sanctification. Every time a Christian performs a good work he is fulfilling or carrying out his righteousness received by faith--he is fulfilling his baptismal covenant. Faith "fleshes" itself out in the life of the Christian.

36 The same can be said of the phrase "and he was called God's friend."³² God must assuredly called Abraham "friend" and received Abraham's friendship at the time Abraham believed, for what is friendship other than reconciliation? But friendship, if it is real and alive (as with faith), is naturally followed by acts of friendship on the part of both friends. If acts of friendship toward God had not taken place, more specifically, if Abraham had not offered his son, no real friendship would have been established, and thus also, no reconciliation and no justifica-

tion by faith. So the friendship passages in the Old Testament are also fulfilled in this obedience of Abraham. A loose but accurate paraphrase of this verse would be: "And the Scripture passages that claim that Abraham was declared righteous at the time he believed and was reconciled to God (events that happened early in his adult life) were carried out and accomplished when he offered up his only son--when he obeyed God."

37 There is one other important factor to stress in this verse. By quoting Genesis 15:6, James was confessing (and rightly assuming that his readers knew) that Abraham was declared fully righteous when he believed; nothing could have been added to his life to make him more righteous before God. "If James were teaching a doctrine of justification by works, especially as an antidote to antinomian perversion by Paul's theology of grace, he would have destroyed his own argument in quoting Gen. 15:6, which ascribes justification to faith and makes no mention of works. Clearly he was not so ignorant either of theological argument or of the Old Testament" (Scaer, 93). And so it appears that James, by quoting Genesis 15:6, contradicts what he said about justification in verse 21 (and what he will say about justification in the following two verses).

38 *Verse 24: You see³³ that a man is declared righteous³⁴ by works and not by faith alone.*

39 His readers should now be able to draw the conclusion that works along with faith bring to a person God's declaration of righteousness even though he just clearly admitted by quoting Genesis 15:6 that the declaration comes through faith alone, apart from works. The problems here

are the same ones found in verse 21 (see paragraphs 23-27). How does one solve this dilemma? There are several unsatisfactory explanations (some of which have already been discussed):

- 40 1. Δικαίω in James 2 means "show to be righteous" (see paragraph 24).
- 41 2. During Abraham's earthly life there are two declarations of righteousness for two different reasons: one when he relieved and one when he offered his son.
- 42 3. Works justify in that they are works of faith.
- 43 4. Δικαίω is not to be understood forensically, but as a process in the Roman Catholic sense, "makes righteous."
- 44 Explanations 2-4 are refuted by the Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, article III:

[St. Paul] says that Abraham was justified before God through faith alone for the sake of the Mediator without the addition of his own works, not only when he was first converted from idolatry and had no works, but also afterward when the Holy Spirit had renewed and adorned him with many resplendent good works....And St. Paul raises this question (Rom. 4:1): On what did the righteousness of Abraham before God, whereby he had a gracious God and was pleasing and acceptable to him to eternal life, rest? To this he answers: "To the one who does not work, but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness" (Rom. 4:5,6), and

David also says that salvation belongs solely to that person to whom God reckons righteousness without the addition of works.

From this it follows that although converted persons and believers possess the beginning of renewal, sanctification, love, virtues, and good works, these should and must not be drawn or mingled into the article of justification before God, in order to preserve the glory due to Christ, the redeemer, and because our new obedience is imperfect and impure, in order to supply tempted consciences with abiding comfort. (33-35, Tappert, 545).

- 45 5. James and Paul disagree on justification--the choice of liberal scholars.
- 46 6. James is not canonical--the unfortunate choice of some conservative scholars.
- 47 There is only one satisfying view of this dilemma which conflicts with neither scripture nor the Lutheran Confessions: the righteousness James is speaking of in verses 21, 24, and 25 is that which is declared upon the Christian on Judgment Day and is by works. This will be explained thoroughly in the Explanation, Summary, and Conclusion.
- 48 *Verse 25: But is not also, in the same way,³⁵ Rahab, the prostitute, declared righteous³⁶ by works because she gave lodging³⁷ to the messengers and sent them out another way?*
- 49 The contrast between Abraham and Rahab is striking: James goes from the Jew of Jews to the heathen of heathens.³⁸ Here is one who

was not only a "professional" sinner but also a Gentile (a Canaanite "dog") who was a woman (not a man). You cannot get any worse than that! With this description in mind, the purpose of James in using such an example becomes apparent. Abraham and Rahab cover the whole range of possibilities--from the best to the worst. And no matter what the background of the individual, the principle of a living, active faith is universal. Race, religion, upbringing, and past life are never an excuse for stagnant faith.

50 It may also be that James was anticipating and preparing the Jewish Christians for the inclusion of Gentiles into the Church, or that the issue had already surfaced³⁹ and the Jewish Christians needed instruction on the universality of God's grace and the priesthood of all believers. Rahab would serve this purpose very well. It is also interesting to note that both Abraham and Rahab are mentioned in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11 (:8-10, 13-19, 31). In both instances the blessings they received are attributed to their faith, but in such a way that their actions (Abraham's offering his son and Rahab's protecting the spies) are mentioned as demonstrations and direct by-products of their faith.⁴⁰

51 *Verse 26: For just as the body without breath is dead, so also faith without works is dead.*

52 James now brings to conclusion his dissertation on living faith versus dead faith and works versus no works by means of a very appropriate analogy. However, the analogy is not without a problem. Most translations translate πνεύματος "spirit," meaning the vital principle by which the body lives, either in a broad sense

so that it applies to man and all other living creatures (Gen. 6:17) or in a narrower sense in which it is the unique intellectual/moral entity that separates man from beast (1 Cor. 2:11; 5:5; 1 Kings 21:5). This translation is supported linguistically for the reason that πνεῦμα can be found to mean "breath" in only a few places in the New Testament (2 Thes. 2:8; Rev. 11:11; 13:15). The more common word for "breath" is πνοή, which is found only twice in the New Testament (Acts 2:12: "wind"; 17:25: "breath"). On the other hand, "spirit" does not make sense contextually. One of the main aspects of James 2:14-26 is that works are evidence of living faith. The analogy in this verse is arranged so that "body" corresponds to "faith" and "spirit" corresponds to "works." The comparison is incongruous in that works are the fruit and evidence of a living faith, not the source; whereas the spirit of man is the source of a living body, not the fruit and certainly not the evidence. For this reason "breath" is preferred by some commentators, for breathing is certainly concrete evidence of a living body just as works are concrete evidence of a living faith.

53 It may in fact be, however, that the points of comparison are not to be pressed. Whatever the case is, the fact remains that living faith and works are so intricately connected that if faith is void of works, it is dead, and thus no real faith, just as the body, if it is void of a spirit or breath, is nothing more than a corpse. It is James' hope that each person professing to be Christian will carefully examine his life in order to discern whether or not he is what he professes to be.

EXPLANATION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION

In order better to understand the assertion that James is referring to a righteousness declared by works on Judgment Day, it would be good to systematically state what James does and does not say. First, what James does not say:

1. Man is regenerated by works or faith plus works.
2. Man merits forgiveness and righteousness by works or faith plus works.
3. Man's propitiation is due in part to Christ and in part to his works.

What James does say:

1. Faith which has no works cannot save (vv. 14, 16).
2. Faith which has no works is dead faith (vv. 17, 26).
3. Works are a demonstration or proof of living faith (vv. 18, 20).
4. Living faith and works are inseparable (vv. 22, 26).
5. Works are the completion or natural result of living faith (v. 22f).
6. Man is declared righteous by works (vv. 21, 24, 25).
7. Man is declared totally, completely, and perfectly righteous by faith alone, apart from works (v. 23).

It is also helpful to understand one aspect of the larger context of James' letter, viz.,

that James in his letter is looking forward to final salvation and the judgment: "Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him" (1:12); "Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment" (2:12, 13);⁴¹ "There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy" (4:12); "Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. You, too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!" (5:7-9). From these verses it is clear that James is urging his readers to focus on and view their lives from the perspective of final salvation and the judgment.

But besides these considerations it is absolutely essential to show from scripture that man will be declared righteous by works at the judgment.

2 Corinthians 5:7-9:

We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad" (cf. Rev. 14:13).

Even though these verses do not mention a declared righteousness (or a declaration of condemnation), it is implied for the reason that the setting is the courtroom with the Judge presiding.

Interestingly enough, the best proof text for this justification at the judgment comes from the epistle to the Romans (2:15-13, 16):

But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God "will give to each person according to what he has done." To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor, and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; but glory, honor, and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For God does not show favoritism.

All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous...This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares. (NIV; Cf. 1 Cor. 3:11-15).

It cannot be made any more plain than that.⁴²

This does not negate justification by faith from beginning to end. It is only to say that when a Christian stands before God forgiven and completely righteous by faith alone (faith, which, while on earth produced works), what is God going to look at while the Christian is on trial, and what will God find? He won't find sin--that was removed through faith. He won't find imperfection--perfection was imputed through faith. The only things God will see are good works, works which were performed after he had been declared righteous by faith alone.

This is also how one must understand Matthew 25:31-46. Verse 34 reads: "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.'" What is this statement by the King other than a declaration of righteousness? Which is immediately followed by the reason for that declaration: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat...I needed clothes and you clothed me..." (v. 35f). Notice the similarity to James!

Is all this suggesting that the focus of justification is no longer Jesus Christ? On the contrary, Jesus is exalted, for the only reason that one stands before the King with nothing but good works is that all sins (including one's failure to perform enough good works) have been washed away in the blood of the Lamb. Furthermore, the good works by which one is declared righteous are those which were performed in view of his sacrifice and by his grace. Everything points back to Jesus Christ who alone is worthy of all honor.

Do the Lutheran Confessions agree? It may be safest to say that they do not disagree.

They are relatively silent on the subject of the happenings of the judgment except for what is contained in the Athanasian Creed: "At his coming all men shall rise with their bodies and give an account of their own deeds. Those who have done good will enter eternal life, and those who have done evil will be into everlasting fire." Other than that the Confessions simply acknowledge that "when eternal life is granted to works, it is granted to the justified" (Ap. IV: 372, Tappert; cf. Ap. IV: 244ff; 250ff. 372f.). It is never specifically stated that on Judgment Day God will declare Christians righteous by works.

However, F. Pieper in his Christian Dogmatics nicely summarizes and confirms what is being submitted here about the Last Day declaration:

The norm of the judgment (norma iudicii), Scripture says, are the works of men. 2 Cor. 5:10: "According to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." But the righteous are judged only according to their good works because these are the proof of their faith in Christ; the evil works of the believers are not even on Judgment Day brought to light again because through the believer's justification they have been cast into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:19), that is, have been forgiven. This is also expressed in Matt. 25:34-40 by the fact that in the judgment of those on the right only good works and no evil works whatever are mentioned. (III, 540).

Since it has been demonstrated from scripture that Christians will be declared righteous by their works on Judgment Day, and since this is

not contrary to the scriptural or confessional teaching that a man from the instant he is born again until the moment he dies is justified by faith alone apart from works and thus able to stand before God on Judgment Day cleansed and righteous (in this sense the statement, "good works are necessary for salvation," is rejected), and since James in his epistle urges Christians to focus upon and view their lives from the perspective of final salvation and the judgment, and since James plainly says that a man is declared righteous by works and not by faith alone (a statement which one is forced to take at face value), therefore, James can only be referring to the justification by works that will be declared on the Judgment Day.

SOLI DEO GLORIA

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ENDNOTES

¹OPHELOS ("benefit), used only in verses 14, 16, and 1 Cor. 15:32, refers to salvation as can be seen from the context of the whole section.

²In these verses PISTIS is found both with and without the article. It has been suggested that without the article faith is personal and/or partial, and with the article generic, such as, "that kind of faith," "such faith" (NIV), or "that faith" (NASB). But it may very well be that the article has no special significance, but it is used because there is a resumption of the previous use of faith found in 1:3, 6, and 2:1.

³SŌSAI (aorist) is important in that it points to a one-time event, viz., the future salvation that takes place on Judgment Day. This is supported by the previous context: "Speak and act as those who are going to be judged..." (2:12). This point is extremely crucial in order to understand the more difficult verses of the text.

⁴AUTON implies, not that faith can't save, but, faith cannot save him whose faith is without works.

⁵It is generally stated by contemporary conservative scholars that James was the first of the epistles to be written. The more liberal scholars disagree (cf. Ropes, 49).

⁶See S.D. IV:3-7, 37ff. There is much truth in the Hegelian principle of thesis, antithesis, synthesis; but it is deadly to absolutize New Testament Christianity.

⁷GYMNOI: when the clothing can hardly be considered clothing.

⁸HYPARŌSIN and LEIPŌMENOI (both plural: the plural after singular subjects connected by Ē is in accord with the occasional usage of good Greek writers (Ropes, 206).

⁹HYPAGETE EV EIRENĒ: Scaer claims EIRENĒ was a formal part of the Christian synagogue worship, as it was also the standard greeting in N.T. epistles and used by Jesus after his resurrection. "The greeting, 'Go in peace' suggests that the clergy understood the theological implications of the atonement but did not comprehend what this meant in their behavior to others, especially the

poor" (89). Ropes states that it was merely a Jewish expression of farewell (206). Considering the context--the indictment against those who profess true religion by their words, but not with actions--Scaer's comments are more appropriate.

¹⁰The TIS (singular) before DOTE (plural) is treated as a kind of collective.

¹¹With the numerous ways in which KATA could be translated, it is certain from the context that KATH' HEAUTEN either qualifies PISTIS in the sense, "faith in itself" or "faith by its very nature," or that it intensifies NEKRA to which it is actually closer: "inwardly dead." In either case the emphasis is faith of this nature is totally lifeless, therefore totally unable to produce any sort of benefit.

¹²The first several words of this verse, ALL' EREI TIS, have boggled the minds of many commentators for years. It would seem most natural to take TIS as an objector: "But someone would object..." The problem then is that the objector most apparently is defending what James is defending--the necessity of works. Some have, therefore, attempted to assign SY to an opponent of James and KAGO to James and TIS is still an objector who is speaking for James (yes, this is extremely difficult to follow) and who is questioning whether or not James is denying that one is saved by faith, to which James replies in 18b (Meyer, 90). Besides being more confusing than a giant jigsaw puzzle, the objection suggested by this explanation is not clear from the words, would be an abrupt change of thought, and never fully answered by James' supposed response in 18b. It would be much simpler to understand TIS as a

proponent of James' assertions, if that can be done. This can be done very easily by understanding ALLA as something other than a strong adversative ("but," which is its most common usage). In 1 Cor. 3:2; 4:14; 9:2; Acts 19:2; Eph. 5:24; etc. al., ALLA is best translated emphatically, "certainly," "indeed," "in fact"; 1 Cor. 3:2: "I gave you mild, not solid, food, for you were not ready for it. Indeed [ALLA], you are still not ready" (NIV). Translating ALLA as "indeed" in James 2:18 allows TIS to be seen as a defender of James who carries on his discourse at least through the end of the passage, and possibly through verse 23. Cf. Adamson (124f., 135ff.) for a more detailed explanation.

¹³DEIKNYMI: "show," "point out," "make known," "demonstrate," "prove"; clearly illustrating that works are proof of living faith.

¹⁴Of the two places within the assigned text where variants are found, variants in this verse are somewhat significant. The United Bible Societies' New Testament has in the main text HEIS THEOS ESTIN ("There is one God"), but gives it only a "C" rating which "means there is considerable degree of doubt whether the text of the apparatus contains the superior reading" (UBS, xi), while the readings HEIS ESTIN HO THEOS and HO THEOS HEIS ESTIN ("God is One") are found in the apparatus. Metzger (681) prefers HEIS ESTIN HO THEOS but still gives it only a "C." His preference is based on the (valid) assumption that the reading HEIS THEOS ESTIN "can be suspected of having been assimilated to the style of Christian kerygma." Whereas HEIS ESTIN HO THEOS "is in conformity with the prevailing formula of Jewish orthodoxy." Behind Metzger's reasoning are the valid assumptions that the epistle of James was (one of) the earliest

writings of the N.T., and that James was thoroughly Jewish in religious thought and culture, and was writing to a Christian audience which was also thoroughly Jewish. Therefore, in all likelihood James would use a phrase to which his audience could relate and which would make more sense to them. The phrase "There is one God" would have more impact on and make more sense to Greek Christians converted from polytheism. But the phrase "God is One" corresponds to the familiar and much-used Jewish Shema found in Deut. 6:4: "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is One!" (NASB). The Shema was a credal expression for the Jew (NIDNTT, II, 720) and, no doubt, before the existence of the N.T. scriptures and early Christian creeds, for the early Jerusalem church as well. Early Jewish Christians still considered themselves to be true Jews (and so they were) who subscribed to the sacred writings of the prophets and who very likely continued to express their subscription by means of the Shema. "Worshiping Christians were still gathering as a synagogue (2:23) and their confession in their church services was still the Shema of the O.T." (Scaer, 29).

In other words, James was not merely saying "You believe there is only one God instead of many gods," but "You claim you hold to the true religion of Holy Scriptures in all its teachings and doctrines, including that the Messiah concealed therein is Jesus Christ."

¹⁵GNONAI: ingressive aorist.

¹⁶ intensifies the name by which he is described.

¹⁷KENOS has a variety of meanings: empty, without truth or power, vain, foolish, senseless.

From what has been and is being said of this man, KENOS suggests that his faith is a sham lacking true intrinsic worth, but also that he lacks an understanding of basic scriptural knowledge about works.

18ARGĒ (idle, unemployed, lazy, useless) is contracted from A-ERGĒS and therefore is used as a play on words here: a faith without works is "workless."

19A variant reading for ARGĒ is NEKRA. There is better support for ARGĒ though both in the end have essentially the same meaning. ARGĒ is perhaps re-emphasizing the fact that such a faith is dead (v. 17).

20EDIKAIŌTHĒ: aor. pass. ind. of DIKAIŌŌ. Here translated as a gnomic aorist for the reason that the justification referred to is that which takes place on the Last Day (see paragraphs 40-47, 55ff.) "A generally accepted fact or truth may be regarded as so fixed in its certainty or axiomatic in its character that it is described by the aorist, just as though it were an actual occurrence. For this idiom we commonly employ the generic present in English" (Dana and Mantey, 197; cf. Jn. 15:8; Gal. 5:24; Lk. 7:35).

21The personal pronoun HĒMŌN supports the view that James was writing to Jewish Christians.

22 A causal translation of the participle ANENEGKAS is preferred over a temporal for a very important reason. A temporal translation gives the impression that the justification spoken of here resulted at that time rather than some other time. In view of verse 23, the Lutheran understanding of justification, and the only proper way

in which justification in James 2 can be explained, it should not be translated temporally. The causal translation is justified in view of the fact that the righteousness in this verse is one given at the Judgment (see paragraphs 40-47, 55ff.).

²³See "The Doctrine of Justification" by Prof. Kurt Marquart (The 1977 Reformation Lectures, Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mankato, Minnesota), and "Luther and Justification" by Prof. Gottfried Hoffman (The 1983 Reformation Lectures, Bethany Luth. Theol. Sem., Mankato, Minn.).

²⁴In Romans and Galatians the prepositions EK and DIA appear to be interchangeable when used with "faith" and "works."

²⁵Even though Abraham is declared righteous by works (plural), only one is mentioned: offering his son. Keeping in mind that it has already been explained by James that works are a proof to others of living faith (v. 18) and that James' main objective of this verse was to present empirical proof to the opponent (v. 20), it would not be necessary to offer all kinds of examples if he could present one which would undeniably demonstrate living faith. It is safe to say that no greater example could be found in the whole Bible than the one in which a man who had been promised descendants beyond number through this son is asked to sacrifice this son.

²⁶BLEPEIS is a word which is perhaps passed over too quickly and even misunderstood. Linguistically, it very rarely, if ever, carries the idea "you understand with your mind," or "your reasoning abilities have led you to the conclusion

that..." That is what is meant many times when "you see" is used in English. But rather, James is attempting to say, "you can observe with your eyes from the picture drawn of Abraham by Moses in Genesis that faith..." In other words, and the context supports this (vv. 18, 20), James wanted his opponent to envision this empirical proof rather than perform deductive reasoning in his mind. "A picture paints a thousand words," seems to be what James is saying. If he had been asking his opponent to "see" in the sense "you now understand with your mind," he would have used HORATE as he does in verse 24 which lends itself much more readily to that sort of interpretation.

27SYNERGEI: impf. act. of SYNERGŌ.

28SYN has three basic meanings: "with," "together," and at times it intensifies the meaning of the word to which it is joined as is the case here (see Dana and Mantey, 111).

29ETELEIŌTHĒ: aor. pass. ind.

30Of course there are the sceptics who put little effort into seeing James in this light. Ropes says, "The difficulties which the [orthodox] commentators find are due partly to dogmatic prepossession, partly to their error in supposing that James was a subtle theologian who did not write his practical maxims and swift popular arguments until he had thought out the exact definitions, psychological distinctions, and profound and elusive relations involved in the subject" (221). Ropes, on the other hand, is guilty of atomizing scripture, i.e., assuming that it is not a cohesive whole. He especially fails to note that both James and his readers very well understood that Abraham was declared fully righteous

on earth through faith alone as can be seen by verse 23. As a result, Ropes concludes that James and Paul were opposed to each other.

³¹EPLERÖTHE: aor. pass. from PLEROO.

³²Abraham is mentioned as God's friend in 2 Chron. 20:7 and Is. 41:8.

³³HORATE: 2nd person plural. James leaves his opponent in the dust and once again addresses his audience.

³⁴DIKAIOUTAI: pres. pass. ind., to be read as a futuristic present: "This use of the present tense denotes an event which has not yet occurred, but which is regarded as so certain that in thought it may be contemplated as already coming to pass" (Dana and Mantey, 185).

³⁵HOMOIÖS signifies the similarity between what happened to Rahab and Abraham through their works, and by DE the diversity of the relation is indicated.

³⁶As in verse 21 EDIKAIÖTHE is a gnomic aorist (see footnote 20).

³⁷The participles UPODEXAMENE and EKBALOUSA are translated causally for the same reason ANENEGKAS is in verse 21 (see footnote 22).

³⁸The animosity and total repulsion of the Jews toward prostitutes was equaled only by tax-gatherers (cf. Jn. 8:1ff.; Lk. 7:36ff.; Matt. 21:31).

³⁹James was written very early, perhaps between 45-50 A.D.

⁴⁰Besides the praiseworthy position she had attained as a result of faith and works, tradition held that she married Joshua and was the ancestress of many high priests and prophets, including Jeremiah and Ezekiel. It is not impossible that she is the Rahab mentioned in Jesus' genealogy in Matthew (1:5).

⁴¹These two verses are extremely important since they immediately precede the assigned text and thus help in establishing the context of 2:14-26.

⁴²The Confessions agree that the occurrences in Romans 2:1ff. apply to the Christian as well as the heathen (Ap. IV: 252, 370).

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WHAT SHOULD BE THE PRESENTATION
OF THE DOCTRINAL MESSAGE
FOR OUR EVANGELISM WORK?

Upon seeing the title for this paper, your first response might rightly be, "I know the message of evangelism work is to be a presentation of Law and Gospel." That's pretty safe to say. Yet, as you know, that is usually easier said than done. Luther himself made a comment to the effect that whoever can rightly distinguish between law and gospel deserves to have the title of Doctor of Theology. Jesus had no difficulty in looking into the heart and determining what his hearers needed. We, however, must rely on what we know of mankind from Scripture (his natural depravity) and his confession. We also know that our work as evangelists is not only private, dealing with an individual, but also public, dealing with many people from various backgrounds, levels of understanding, and probably more important: various types of confusions of law and gospel.

We, as sinful humans, are prone to confusion as to what best to say and when. We are tempted to let our frustrations speak words that are not guided by God's Word, especially when we look at

This paper was delivered to the New Ulm Pastoral Conference on November 4, 1986, by the Rev. Marcus Bode. Reverend Bode is an instructor at Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School, New Ulm, Minnesota, where he teaches Religion, German, and Latin.

the relatively small numbers generated by our evangelism efforts as a church or as individuals. Because of our weakness we ask whether we are doing the right thing by always speaking law and gospel. We ask whether there may not be more effective ways to reach people, whether we can borrow approaches from other churches, whether we are too inbred and dogmatic, why some are reaching large numbers and we crank slowly away. On the other hand, it is easy for us to be mistrusted of anything that does not directly speak words of law and gospel and to say that it has no place in our programs of evangelism.

The temptation is there to lay out a guilt trip on ourselves and tell ourselves we are not doing the job. The flip-side temptation is also there: to pretend that we could not be doing the job better. We need to recognize the gospel for ourselves and see that the Lord has worked mightily in our faithful presentation of law and gospel and that the Lord will be there with us as we strive to better apply that message to each corporate or individual circumstance.

This paper is intended to be a doctrinal exposition of the message we are to present. Attempting to follow Augustine's adage (*Qui bene distinguitur, bene docet* -- Who distinguishes well, teaches well), this message will be contrasted to the church growth movement theories. It will also include an understanding and some cautions, so that we do not over-react to proper applications of law and gospel that are applied to current-day situations.

THE MESSAGE OF LAW AND GOSPEL

Even a cursory reading of the book of Acts

reveals instances of "repentance and faith" being preached for the first time to a variety of people. Since the message preached here publicly is no different from that preached privately (Ac 20:20), these examples can serve as guidelines for all situations in which evangelism might be done.

Acts chapter 2 displays St. Peter as the proclaimer of law and gospel to the crowd. After coming to a common footing with them and giving them a reason to listen, he proclaimed the law in v. 23 by saying, "you...put him to death by nailing him to the cross." He continued by proclaiming that this same Jesus had risen and concluded with an invitation to repent and be baptized.

That message did not change appreciably in Acts 3 when he healed the beggar at the Gate Beautiful. When he had generated a crowd, Peter accused them, "You killed the author of life" (v. 15). He proclaimed that the man had been healed by Jesus' name, the same name that wiped out their sins. They were to "repent" (v. 19).

Before the Sanhedrin in chapter 4, the message is even more curt, and it ends with an impassioned plea ("There is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.") rather than a specific encouragement to repent.

In speaking to Simon Magus in Samaria (chapter 8), Peter's message is predominantly law, but includes the gospel that what God gives to Christ is a gift. Repentance was forcefully encouraged.

To Aeneas in Lydda: his healing was accomplished only by a pronouncement that it was Jesus Christ who healed him (9:34). This caused all

those who saw him in Lydda and Joppa to turn to the Lord.

Peter's presentation in chapter 10 has little law. He recounts the facts of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection; but what stands out is the message that Gentiles are included among those with whom God is now at peace.

By chapter 13 (v. 5) we are told merely that they proclaimed "the word of God in the Jewish synagogues."

In Pisidian Antioch (chapter 13) St. Paul introduced Jesus as the promised Messiah and warned them not to become scoffers. Law and gospel were therefore evident.

In Philippi (chapter 16) we are not told of their specific message, but we may assume that it was unlike the others which are recorded elsewhere.

In 17:2 we are told that it was Paul's custom to go to the synagogue. His message went first of all to those to whom he could preach the hope of Israel.

After establishing the presence of an unknown god at Athens (17), St. Paul preached repentance and Christ's resurrection from the dead (29-31). Their rejection from that point is history.

After looking at the messages as they are recorded, we can safely say that law and gospel were the general tenor. The message of Jesus stood out. The law messages recorded in Acts may have been as strong as "You killed the Lord of Glory." The law may also have been merely a caution not to fall into the trap of scoffing at the

message of Jesus. But the law was only preparatory to preaching that Jesus is the Savior of the world. Where there was cause to speak the law, as with Simon (chapter 8), it was done forcefully. Where in humility the word was being received (Cornelius, chapter 10), the law played little more than an explanatory part. Only in chapter 2 do we see that numbers played a part. It is God's way of bringing his word to man that is of the utmost importance.

Our message is clear. Our judgment may vary as to the strength of the law necessary in a given circumstance, but Jesus' forgiveness and resurrection must be preached.

THE MESSAGE OF CHURCH GROWTH

There have been some excellent papers written about Church Growth recently. I cite the one by Robert Koester (Dakota-Montana Pastoral Conference - 1984) and one out of Missouri by Steve O. Scheiderer from Concordia Seminary. It is a 383 page report in partial fulfillment of his STM degree. If you want in-depth run-downs of church growth, they are there. I, however, will restrict my comments to the message of Church Growth.

The first message is the "harvest principle," so called because its proponents say the church is to reach with its message where it is most likely to gain the most numbers, where the harvest is plentiful. This is opposed to what they term the "search principle," where numerical results have little or no influence on where the gospel is preached. The basic difficulty with this harvest principle is that it takes Matthew 9:37 out of context. Jesus had proclaimed the fields white for the harvest. He looked up and saw a land

where the gospel had been proclaimed for centuries and now needed to hear the fulfillment of that gospel in Jesus Christ. The "harvest principle" forgets that evangelism is not just harvesting but planting and watering (1 Cor 3:6) as well. Church growth proponents claim that the Holy Spirit "warms the hearts before us into the hearts of people" where growth is the greatest--even before the gospel is ever preached! The church's message to the individual dare not be, "I think you are going to be more receptive to Jesus than other people are." The natural sinfulness has not been broached and the dead in sin is not made alive with this kind of gospel. Certainly, St. Paul went first to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but definitely not because they were to prove more receptive or because he thought he could gain more converts that way. Time and again that was not the case. The less likely to be receptive gentiles proved to be the more fertile field. And when bidden to come to Macedonia, St. Paul did not ask how many converts could be gained. The door was opened. That was where he went.

Probably some of you know better than I the answer to the question, "How do we as a church body set priorities as to which open door we go through first?" But I believe the answer lies in the passage, "You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone" (Lk 10:42). I don't believe we have Scriptural basis to deprive one area and concentrate on the other strictly on a numerical basis. And our message can't change: "We are here to give you Jesus, not because you are better or more receptive, but because you need him to save you from your sins." Since the Lord works mediately through us in our human reason, it is best that we commit all our efforts to him in prayer.

A second facet advocated by church growth proponents is the "Come to our church; it's fun; it's worshipful" message. They base the validation of this message on the Old Testament church being reflective of the Jewish community. They seem to believe that God thought it was necessary for them to gather. The joy they then experienced was that of "celebration." Without those large numbers, you could not possibly have a real celebration, because it would not meet the socio/psychological needs of congregants. Rather than see church as "two or three gathered together in my name," it is changed to a place of celebration. They forget that any joy the Hebrews had at these celebrations was to come from knowing their sins were forgiven. They close their eyes to our Savior in the upper room where he proclaimed that the celebration of the Lord's Supper lay in the blood of the "new covenant...shed for many for the remission of sins." Rather, they center on matching the kind of service to the size and complexion of the group served. The suggestion is there that if a church is not large enough to meet the needs of the community, it will never be large enough to meet the needs of the community. That's right, it is circular reasoning, arbitrary--and could the term legalistic be applied?

Our churches certainly need to be ready to minister to many kinds of people. But again, the message does not change. Each individual still needs law and gospel. We need to protect our doctrine of church as "...the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments administered according to the Gospel" (UAC VII). We can't afford to change our emphasis to "the place the youth like to worship": or "the place with the effective singles ministry."

Message 3: "Our church is the smart church. We know better how to serve you because we know better the needs of your community." Behavioral sciences are big. While few churches would publicly make science a god, the trend is around to let the behavioral sciences determine how God's word is to be applied. There are two difficulties to this approach: 1) Only Scripture should and can ultimately instruct the Christian on how to apply the gospel. 2) The gospel message can only become distorted when sociological facts cloud the ultimate spiritual need of mankind for a Savior.

Again, each individual needs law and gospel. The church which can preach God's word in its truth and purity and administer the sacraments rightly is the one that best serves the needs of its community.

These are merely a condensation and generalization of the message of church growth. Scheiderer cites 70 of an alleged 146 church growth "principles, hypotheses, price tags for growth, or keys." I have tried to give you a flavor of them. In the main, I think we can say that the message is man-made and not scriptural. These messages of church growth are not innocuous. They don't make us all things to all men, but they compromise our evangelism efforts.

A WORD OF UNDERSTANDING

Our bringing of law and gospel in our evangelism efforts does not exclude our concern for the individual's physical or emotional welfare. Our light needs to shine in the message of the Bread of Life. But our light is then also to

bring to light the fruits of faith in our lives as well (Mt 25:31-40); Ja 1:27; Lk 10:25-37). While we don't use the fruits of faith as the selling points of our church, we don't back off from offering to others those fruits in physical and emotional sustenance as we have opportunity. When we follow our Savior's commands to preach the gospel, we need not fear that the time we spend on establishing a friendship with the individual or sharing our time, efforts, and goods at the same time will be wasted.

FINAL CAUTIONS

The temptation is always there to let the Reformed doctrine of man creep into our evangelism efforts. That man has some good in him and is a worthwhile judge of what the gospel should be can only weaken our evangelism efforts and only lose souls. Our fears and doubts dare not rule. We dare not judge on the basis of numbers or people's likes and dislikes of our teaching. But we don't want to let others see that fear in action in other portions of our lives either. We trust that the Lord will provide as we spend our time, money, and selves on preaching that word. Let's not be afraid then to spend and act on confidence in a Lord risen to give us a new way of life.

BOOK REVIEW

Luther, the Reformer, The Story of the Man and His Career

James M. Kittelson, Augsburg, 1986. 334 pages.

This is a book whose time has come. It could not have been produced much earlier. The Luther research stimulated by the 500th anniversary of Luther's birth in 1983 completed the studies that have enabled James M. Kittelson to write a balanced review of the whole life of the great Reformer.

Roland Bainton's charming biography, Here I Stand, is the classic example of numerous studies that understandably focussed attention on the heroic and dramatic events of Luther's early life. Most biographers have given short shrift to the last years of Luther's life as though his work in those last years were best forgotten. Will Durant dismissed those years as a period of demented irrationality on Luther's part.

Recent books, especially the work of H. G. Haile and Mark U. Edwards, Jr., have demonstrated the high value of the writings and activities of Luther's last years. James Kittelson is the first scholar to profit from these studies to produce a balanced biography of the Reformer that does justice to his entire career. His book is a brief summary geared to lay readers in a simple and uncomplicated style of writing.

Yet, and for all of that, the author has done very well in producing a balanced biography that is a useful addition to existing studies of Luther's life. Readers will find a biography that has it all. No important element in our knowledge of Luther and his life is omitted. No important conclusion of recent scholarship has been ignored. The book is thoroughly up to date.

The author's objectives have been modest. The book is neither profound nor notable for distinguished literary style. The author proposes no scholarly breakthrough or new insight in Reformation historiography. Yet the author has rendered a signal service in presenting current knowledge about Luther and the Reformation in a digestible format for laymen who wish to have a reasonable understanding of Luther the man and his career as a Reformer.

We must await the definitive and comprehensive multi-volume biography of Martin Luther based on the meticulous researches of the 20th century. We must still await the time when our libraries will have a Luther biography worthy of the matchless excellence of the Weimar edition of Luther's works.

-- N. S. Tjernagel