

“FOLLOW ME”

Matthew 4:12-23

Epiphany 3 A

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Rev. Dr. Steven E. Albertin

We all like to be chosen. It makes our day when someone says they want us.

I have a vivid memory from my childhood that I want to forget. I must have been about six or seven years old. The kids from the neighborhood used to gather in an empty lot next to our house to play softball. Part of the routine included choosing teams. I used to hate this ritual, standing there while the big kids on the block picked their teams, afraid that I was going to be the last one picked. It happened too often. Often no one wanted me because I was not very good. I was determined that I would not be the last one left standing. I worked hard and practiced and practiced. It worked. After a few years my skills had so increased that I was one of the first ones picked.

It does not change as we get older. There are surely many here this morning who have gone through a job interview for a position that you really wanted. You worked hard for this opportunity. You carefully edited your resume. You rehearsed your interview technique. You wanted them to choose you. It was exhilarating when they did. It was devastating when they did not.

It has become increasingly popular to portray Jesus as the

consummate leader and the ultimate coach. He knew how to get things done. He knew how to lead an organization. Like a successful coach and dynamic leader, Jesus did not just accept anyone on his team. He did not just want names on a roster or entries on church membership directory. He wanted disciples, players who could contribute to the success of his team. If you really wanted to be His disciple, you have got to be willing to work at it. You must be committed. You must pray, worship, study the Bible, serve in the church and develop your skills. You must show that you are worthy of a place on the team.

However, a careful look at the New Testament and today's Gospel reveals something very different.

Jesus never accepted volunteers. There were no tryouts. There was no "disciple combine" at the dome in Jerusalem. They were no stop watches and tape measures to calculate your competence. No one timed your 40-yard dash or measured your vertical leap. None of this mattered to Jesus. He chose his disciples without regard for their qualifications. He chose you just because he wanted you on his team. In fact, the only qualification seemed to be that you were not qualified. Jesus often picked from the bottom of the barrel, unsophisticated, rough-on-the-edges sorts of folk, like the uneducated working class fishermen in today's Gospel. Other times it even included people of suspect moral character, like tax collectors and women of tainted reputation. Jesus recruits folk with blisters on their hands, dirt under their fingernails and skeletons in the closet. These were people with holes in their hearts convinced that no one of any importance would ever choose them.

This is no way to put together a winning team. In a world where leaders are always looking for the best and the brightest, Jesus seems like a fool.

Jesus' invitation must have come as a shock. Here was a sensationally popular rabbi and a man of God who wanted them on his team. When Jesus said to them, "Follow me!" it was stunning affirmation, a unexpected compliment, an incredible announcement of good news. Not only the world but even God had repeatedly called the value of their lives into question. Now Jesus in defiance of both dares to value them . . . unconditionally!

No wonder Jesus ended up on a cross, dead and defunct! But God was determined to get His way with the world and its fishermen. Willing to have dirt on his face and a tainted reputation, "On the third day" God raised Jesus from the dead and continued to turn this world up-side-down and inside-out.

That same blessed fate God offers to us. When we are left off the team, when we are embarrassed and want to hide in the back of the room, when we are ashamed of our lives and what we have done to others, when we question what we are doing with our lives and feel that we are going nowhere, Jesus comes to seek us out. He takes the initiative. Even though we are sure that no one would ever bother with us, Jesus wants us on his team. He says even to us bumbling, stumbling fishermen, "Follow me."

When we feel odd and out of place, like the ugly duckling that everyone wants to ignore, Jesus says, "Come to my table and eat and drink. I have reserved for you the place of honor at my table."

When we are so ashamed that we want to run and hide convinced that no one would ever want us, Jesus says, "Your sins are forgiven, all of them."

How can we refuse an offer like that? How could we not follow him? Remaining at the sea shore tending our nets eking out an existence in the "same old same old" is no longer an option. Following Jesus, re-born by His good word and daring to live

differently, we do odd things like gathering on Sunday mornings to show our dirty underwear, trotting out for all to see our sins and misdeeds. The followers of Jesus do not need to hide the truth and pretend to be what we are not. We can afford to come clean about our sins because we know that here no sin big enough to get us kicked off the team.

In the midst of crowded schedules we still find enough time to listen to wounded friend, to run an errand for a crippled stranger, to wipe away the tears of a grieving neighbor, and to share the faith with our bewildered children.

In a world obsessed with “What’s in it for me?” where everyone is pressured to do only what is expedient, convenient and popular, we follow Jesus freely, fearlessly and dare to go “against the grain.” We do what is right, true and just, regardless of the cost.

On that day at the seashore those fishermen left behind their old way of life. They became part of a movement and spread a message that turned the world up-side down and inside out. Jesus called them. They followed Him. So can we!

[FollowMe \(PDF\)](#)

Setting the Foundation: How Distinguishing God’s Law and

God's Gospel brings Jesus' Full Benefits to Bear on Real Lives in the Real World.

Opening remarks by Jerome Burce at a Crossings Seminar 23
January 2011

+ In Nomine Jesu +

My job in these next 45 minutes or so is to get you suspecting that your trip here today was probably worth it. We want you, after all, to be in a good frame of mind when we move on to the better part of the evening, the one that features Two Buck Chuck and the *gemuetlichkeit* he helps to induce among relative strangers. Better still, we want you to wake up tomorrow with your loins happily girded for a day-long slog through some exercises in what, for pastors at least, might be described as remedial hermeneutics. We aim, that is, to fix what should have been taught in seminaries and parish Bible classes and probably wasn't; or if it was it may have been forgotten; the thing to be fixed being both the principle and the process by which you extract what St. Peter calls the pure milk of the Word from a crusty old Biblical text. This pure milk is something fresh and rich and sweet, designed by the Spirit to nourish the inner babe of those crusty old Christians who sit there on Sunday with the glassy stare that says "I expect to be bored and to go home unchanged, untouched, by the living Word of God."

We aim to prove tomorrow that we at Crossings can help you do better with the Word of God than you've been doing, or were taught to do. My aim tonight is to demonstrate that there's some

substance to this boast, if that's what it is, a boast; and that come tomorrow we won't be wasting your time.

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I speak of boasting. So does St. Paul, many times. It's one of his favorite themes, in fact. The word is *καυχῆμα* in Greek, *καυχᾶσθαι* or *καυχῆσθαι* are forms of it too. In one or other of the forms it pops up at least 50 times in Paul's letters, even more if you count Ephesians and 2 Timothy as letters Paul wrote. So to get us properly started this evening—properly grounded, as we like to say in Crossings—I offer you a classic instance of it. It will serve more or less as our text for the evening. 1 Corinthians 1, beginning at verse 26:

26 Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, 29 so that no one [no "flesh", no *sarx* in the Greek] might boast in the presence of God. 30 He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31 in order that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in [or of] the Lord.'

Or as Philip Melanchthon, Luther's remarkable colleague, will put it 1500 years later, let the glory go to Christ. That, says Melanchthon, is one of two prongs of the testing device that a person should use to find out if what she's hearing peddled as God's core message to us human beings is in fact the core message and not something else. By core message I mean the message that God wants people finally to hear and to hang their

hearts on to the exclusion of all other messages, including the other messages that come at us relentlessly from none other than God. In church talk, of course, the standard term for the core message is Gospel, Gospel as in the great joy that the angel “good-newsed” to those shepherds abiding in the field, and when they heard it, all those other messages they’d listened to for years—yes, messages from God; messages transmitted via polite society and doubtless in their own conversation around the campfire, true messages, not false; messages about the gross, disgusting, dirty, sinful, going-nowhere no-hopers they truly were—all *these* messages melt away in an instant and are remembered by these shepherds no more; and in rushing off to see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto them, the only thing they can hear is the new and out-of-nowhere message that the messenger has brought, “unto *you* is born this day a Savior,” this spoken against the background of a sky filled with heavenly messengers who are boasting the way Paul will later boast of God *in* Christ, God through Christ, God on account of Christ. God-in-the-baby. That’s who gets the glory that night, and nobody else. After all, who or what except this baby could pull off the true astonishment of Christmas night, and no, it’s not the sky filled with angels; rather, it’s that little knot of dirty shepherds clustered around Almighty God lying in a manger, and in the presence of God in this form, this person, they are not chattering with fear and waiting to die. Instead they’re cooing, they’re going “ooh” and “ah”, they’re feeling suddenly alive as if for the first time; and as they stand there not a person in the place is bothered by their stink, least of all the baby, or to be precise, God in the baby. If he smells it at all it’s only in his capacity as Odor-Eater par excellence, the one born to absorb their stench and to kill it in his own dying to their everlasting sweet-smelling benefit.

If only the Church in its own angelic mission were as single-

minded about the message it delivers to shepherds and their ilk today. It isn't. It never has been. Else Paul would not have written letters, or Melanchthon an Apology, his long and brilliant defense of the Augsburg Confession.

It's in the Apology, Article 4, that Melanchthon sets out and then repeats, over and over, that two-pronged test of his for real deal Gospel. Ed Schroeder, famously among his students, referred to it invariably as the double dipstick test. He still does. Dipstick prong one: again, Christ gets the glory—the boasting is of him, his deeds, his heart, above all the deeds done and the heart exhibited in his death on the cross.

Dipstick prong two: you know it's real deal Gospel when it comforts the troubled conscience; when, that is, somebody who somehow grasps, however strongly or weakly, that she's in major trouble with God is led by what she hears to gasp with relief and after that to cry or shout or sing with joy. "Not to worry," says the messenger, "you've got Christ: his birth, his cross, his grave, his Easter; and with this Christ and all his deeds you get to be right now, in God's evaluation, everything Christ is and you are not: wise and righteous and holy and forever free from the devil's claws, and here I'm paraphrasing Paul, of course. Christ and Christ alone as the measure of you, your worth, and your future with God. That's what his deeds have accomplished. So fear not—that's how real deal Gospellers always begin. Don't be afraid. Unto *you* is given this day in whatever corner of the world you inhabit a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. Cheer up. Trust Jesus. Yes, and then start bragging your head off: bragging, that is, about this Jesus and the astonishing way he delivers the goods that comfort you and all others like you at the very point where comfort is needed most and there's nowhere else to find it.

Again, the double dipstick. a) Christ is our brag, to coin a

phrase, and b) on his account our every fear is gone.

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Which brings us to the present pity. Melanchthon and his two-prong test are hardly known in the church today, and that includes vast swathes of the Lutheran church. If I asked colleagues in my ELCA conference about it I would get blank stares; and I can't imagine there's a call committee anywhere that refers to it when they send off their spies to check out the preaching of the people on the call list.

No wonder then that real deal Gospel is in short supply, certainly in American churches. What we hear instead is partial-deal Gospel of the sort that ruled at Corinth, or else there's other gospel, un-gospel, a message that with the slightest poking turns out to be not good news but horrible news, the kind that in Galatia set Paul's teeth on edge.

There is, I think, a difference between the two, partial-Gospel and un-Gospel, and to judge by the tones St. Paul adopts in addressing each it seems he thinks so too. With the Corinthians he's gently corrective, more or less. At Galatia he's ready to tear some heads off. For what it's worth, this will greatly astonish the average U.S. Lutheran parishioner the minute you point out that given a choice between a Corinthian or a Galatian for a neighbor they'd pick the Galatian any day of the week—so very much better behaved, don't you know, no raucous communion parties, no husbands sneaking off at night to keep the local streetwalkers in business. Galatians are cleaner too. They take baths and keep kosher. I'll bet their lawns are trimly mowed.

That said, would it trouble our average Lutheran parishioner to hear the Galatian neighbor, in a chat across the fence, describing baths and kosher and the trimly mowed lawn as a precondition for being a Christian, or in Melanchthon's sharper

terms, for enjoying Christ and his benefits? Among the people I serve it would; and if the neighbor pushed the point they'd start tasting some of Paul's bile themselves. I'd like to think—just a gut feeling, no hard evidence—that the same would be true in most U.S. Lutheran congregations, ELCA and LCMS, Wisconsin Synod too; though in each instance the question to be asked would be whether something has taken the place of circumcision—acquiescence to doctrine; no drinking, no dancing; speaking in tongues; lately the blessing of gay unions, whether for or against—this, that, or the other as essential step one on the path toward enjoying God's favor and rightly wearing the Christian label. That's the Galatian un-gospel. Lutherans, I think, are not there as a rule.

We're much more Corinthian, not some of us but all of us. To one degree or another, lesser or greater, we're sold on semi-Gospel too. As at Corinth, what gives us away is the bragging that goes on as we continue endlessly to sort ourselves out in factions and parties. He belongs to Walther, she to Schmucker, and I, of course, belong to Christ. (Thank God I went to Seminex, you know.) In comparison with that other crowd we're wiser and smarter, we're better justified in our reading of God's will and truth, we're better dosed by the Holy Spirit, we're free of the chains that hold them down—doctrinal rigidity, say, or captivation to the zeitgeist. More specifically, we worship better, we believe better, we do mission better, we do church better (whatever that phrase means), we rock at peace and justice where they do not. Unlike them we'll never vote Republican, or is that Democrat? We're the real Lutherans, the real Christians, the real God-fearers, the genuine followers of Jesus. *Et cetera ad nauseum*, the point being that what we habitually hold up before others (to say nothing of ourselves) as our defining characteristic and therefore our pride and glory (Melanchthon's dipstick, prong 1) is not Christ—Christ *per se*,

that is—but something else. At best it's our particular spin on Christ. More often we join hordes of other Christians and Christian congregations in thumping our chests over things that have nothing intrinsically to do with the death and resurrection of the Son of God. So we're the friendly church, the liturgical church, the Bible-believing church, the Missouri Synod church—or not, thank God. We're the rainbow church—or not, thank God. Or if we live in Minnesota we're the church of shy polite people who don't like to brag except about not bragging.

Trifles like these do nothing, dipstick prong 2, for a person who has serious questions about his or her standing with God. She wants to know, for example, why she got terminal cancer, or what that cancer may mean. At this point our own attitudes, stances, affiliations, predilections and all the rest of it are worth spit. Christ will soothe and satisfy, and only Christ; God for her in Christ, dramatically, irrevocably; God in Christ upending the message of God against her in her cancer. She hears that message, you know, and though it's a true message—she senses that—she hardly ever finds anyone with the nerve and honesty to confirm what she's hearing. What this person requires above all right now in a church, any church, are people stuffed through and through with real deal Gospel and therefore waving the Jesus flag, people filling her ears with their bragging about Christ, the way football players will brag when the team captain has the ball five yards from the end zone and the touchdown is certain. But how can this happen when the people around her are trained by force of habit to brag about trifles, and only trifles? When was the last time you heard one parishioner tell another parishioner not to be afraid because Jesus is Lord? If that should happen, by the way, in Bitzko Bible Church, then God be praised.

This forces a second question. Why the addiction in our churches to trifling boasts in lieu of the Jesus brag? Melancthon's

blunt answer, scattered here and there throughout Apology 4, is that real-deal Gospel isn't for everybody. Truth be told, there are lots of folks who want nothing to do with it. It's not, as we'd say these days, their cup of tea.

Smug hypocrites. That's Melanchthon's pet term for these people. That's in the Tappert translation of 1959. The Kolb/Wengert translation of 2000 reads "complacent hypocrites." I like "smug" better. It speaks to the self-satisfaction that's at the heart of their addiction to semi-gospel.

"Their addiction," I said. I need to be honest. It's my addiction too.

The smug hypocrite is that healthy, well-fed person with a nice car, a nice house, a nice job, and a pretty nice wife who puts up him with nicely enough, a bit of money in the bank, that too, who is pretty sure he doesn't need Jesus; not all of Jesus, that's for sure. He and God are getting along just fine, he thinks, God keeping his distance and from that distance noticing as God ought to, as God indeed is obliged to, how he, the smug hypocrite, is pretty dang good. Morally good, aesthetically good, good in spirit as well; a good dad, a good employee, a pretty good husband, and a good, good pal and neighbor. *And* he contributes to the community, with gusto. He deserves at least a B+ on the heavenly report card. And the goodies, the bennies. He deserves them too.

We live in a land of smug hypocrites. America teems with them. Smug hypocrisy is the cornerstone of our national religion. To suggest that we of all people should need a Christ to be crucified for us is an insult.

God grant that I'm wrong, but I'm pretty sure I can spot some serious struggles with smug hypocrisy going on in the pews I preach toward on Sundays. I'll bet you can too. It's not that we

don't have any use for Jesus. It's rather that we can do without the full package of benefits he offers. The forgiveness of sins, for example, seems a bit on the extreme side. I may not be perfect, but surely it's over the top to call me a sinner, and mean it.

Certainly that's the attitude outside the church among the great pool of people that congregations with survival on their minds are trying to attract. You too will have noticed, perhaps, how the word "sin" has fallen into disrepute in everyday secular conversation, so much so that the daily paper I read will surround it with quotation marks whenever it appears there, which isn't very often. God is doubtless not amused by this, but then the paper's business is to please not God but the readers it depends on for its own survival, and canny editors are well aware that sin as a concept doesn't fly any more, at least not in America; not among a people so adoring of the self, that they defy anyone, Almighty God included, to suggest that the "pretty good" of their self-evaluation is not yet good enough. Why seek forgiveness when a fatal lack of righteousness is not among their felt needs, so called? So if they turn at all to churches and to the Christ those churches embody it will be for other and lesser things, a need for which they do feel: friendship; direction; a sense of greater purpose; some help in moving beyond pretty good to very good or even really, really good, so I can feel extremely good about myself and expect God's greater blessing for having honored him and gotten better. There are contradictions in the logic here, of course, but then illogic is to hypocrisy as wood is to fire. Do the hypocrites notice it? Not at all. They're much too busy being smug.

Back then to recruiting congregations, faced with the challenge of bringing such people through their doors. The word is "pander." We wave those lesser flags—the friendliness, the worship style, the groups to join, the mission trips to go on,

the spiffy building, the sociopolitical stance we happen to fancy and underwrite in our prayers, our causes, in the twists we apply to our reading of the Bible. The message, boiled down, is simple: "Come brag with us. We-all feel great about ourselves and you will too."

Parenthetically: I'd love some day to drive past a massive modern cruciform edifice with a sign that says "Take Up Your Cross Community Church." "Losers' Lutheran" would tickle me too. I'm not holding my breath.

Back on track: Once through the doors and staying for a spell the newcomers are sure to hear "Amazing Grace" sung often and with gusto. Face it, it's America. And when the last measure dies mercifully away what they'll hear about is something else, taught in preaching and steady practice, a hoary old message of grace not amazing but rather enabling. That's what Melanchthon confronted in the 16th century, and Paul before him in the 1st. By Melanchthon's time the theory had been honed and refined into something roughly like the following. God who demands an awful lot of us is nice enough to give us a big hand toward achieving it. For one thing he sends Jesus to plug the hole to hell so you don't fall in it. Then he gives you the Church with its sacraments for every day maintenance and repairs and a dose of pep besides. That way you can knuckle down to the job of turning the scoundrel you are into the saint you've got to be if you want to get to heaven. For that you need to tot up merits to cancel out your demerits, and if that takes longer than a lifetime then God is nice enough to give you purgatory to fry the rubbish out of you. And being really, really gracious he also authorizes the Church to transfer the excess merits of the super-good to your balance sheet, assuming, that is, that you jump through specified hoops, like heading off to slaughter Saracens so that Grandma can go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land and slice some years of purgatory from *her* future. Etc.

We are not so rococo in our Christian worldview these days. For sure we Protestants have shucked that excess of saintly merits and purgatory. Even so, we've left the Holy Spirit having still to pry our collective fingers from the underlying principle. Old Adam's principle, Melanchthon would say, and Luther says it all the more. In a word, it's up to you. With some help from God and his grace that enables, but still, it's up to you. Could be that God's grace gives you a vastly higher leg up than Aquinas imagined, could be the step remaining measures two inches instead of two miles, but still it's up to you. Up to you to accept Jesus as personal Lord and Savior. Up to you, after you've done that, not to fornicate or play cards. Up to you to avoid doctrinal error. Up to you to dodge the devil's clutches or to bring heaven to earth through your dedication to peace and justice. Up to you, post-Jesus, to save yourselves or save the world, or maybe both. Here I can't help but think of that pious left-leaning lay person who led the devotion some 20 years ago at a Lutheran meeting of sorts in Connecticut. The text was Matthew 25, the sheep and the goats. She made sure we got the point that we had better feed the hungry and clothe the naked, or else we were toast. Up to you. I went home that day feeling smug because I knew I knew the Gospel so much better than she did, bennies for me. (We hypocrites will latch onto anything to puff ourselves up.) Did anybody at that devotion go home with a throbbing conscience? May it be the Holy Spirit pushed him sometime later into the arms of Christ where he belonged.

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Time out amid the torrent of words for a quick recap of what they amount to so far.

1. Christ for us *in toto* is God's core message.
2. There's a test, the double dipstick, to check for that message. a) Is Christ our sole brag? b) Is the troubled

conscience soothed?

3. American Christians, ourselves included, insist like Paul's Corinthians on having other things to brag about.

4. Melanchthon puts his finger on the attitude behind this. He calls it smug hypocrisy.

5. We continue in 21st American church life to pander to the hypocrites, both inside our doors and beyond them.

6. The platform for our pandering is a theory, as old as Adam, of enabling grace and the cardinal principle it supports, namely, It's Up To You.

On we go.

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In Apology 4 Melanchthon attributes the staying power of "enabling grace"—my term, not his— as official church teaching in large part to a faulty reading of the Scriptures. We in the Crossings enterprise join others, mostly Lutheran, in arguing that bad Bible-reading remains a major culprit in the endurance of "up-to-you" as de facto doctrine in the Church, most every church, and almost every congregation.

In the Bible, says Melanchthon, are two prevailing threads running through and through from beginning to end, two core themes, or "chief doctrines" (Tappert) or "main topics" (Kolb/Wengert) into which "all Scripture should be divided" (Ap. 4:5). One is the Law and the other the Gospel, though there we're following Luther. Melanchthon prefers to say "the promises."

So what's the difference? Most of you, I'm sure, are like pigs with mud in your joy and familiarity with the distinction, but let's rehearse it anyway against the backdrop of the discussion so far.

God's law lays out what we must do for God. God's promises lay

out what God will do for us.

The law, not content with good or better, demands the best. The promises, no less content with good or better, deliver the best in such a way that the only thing to say is "thank you."

The law binds, the promises release. The law chafes, the promises soothe. The law puts us and God on opposing sides. The promises put God astoundingly on our side. The law calls on us to account for ourselves. The promises show us Christ with holes in his hands and side accounting for us, and accounting all the more for his own outrageous nerve in daring to bring us home.

In other words, the law forces us to state our accomplishments, to write out the resume, to unroll the curriculum vitae. It forces us, that is, to brag. Then it leaves us writhing with shame or bristling with anger as God observes how pathetic we are.

By stark contrast the promises unroll the vitae of Christ, known otherwise as the book of life, and they show us where our names are written, some columns to the left or right of the one that names those Bethlehem shepherds. Showing this, they leave us bragging with the angels about the glory of God in the highest, who for Jesus' sake delights in us beyond all understanding.

Would you like all this in its briefest form? Here goes. The law says "It's up to you." The Gospel says "It's up to Christ. Completely."

Comes the crucial observation. These two messages, both from God, God the one and only, are not complementary. They're antithetical. Few passages show that antithesis more vividly than our present text from Corinthians with its echo of the Magnificat and the Song of Hannah that preceded that. God shames the wise and strong, God brings to nothing things that are.

That's law. God goes out of God's way to choose the weak and the foolish and make them into what they are not. That's Gospel. The law is God's finger in our chest, pushing us back and shoving us down. It always accuses, as Melanchthon famously puts it. The Gospel in complete contrast is the hand of God in Christ grabbing the wrist of drowning Peter and pulling him up, and toward him.

That's not to say that everyone wants Christ to pull them up. Too many of us are still sold on the notion that we'll make it to the shore on our own, thank you very much, though granted with Jesus walking beside to provide rest breaks along the way. That much we'll take from him by way of his benefits, again enabling grace, though please, not saving grace; because the aim remains to find ourselves at length on the beach thumping our chests in concert with lots of other braggarts who made it too. Problem is, the beach is posted. "No bragging allowed," the sign says. And below in smaller letters, "Depart from me you evildoers." Again, the finger in the chest, shoving us down, pushing us away.

And that's the pickle that churches and preachers threaten people with when they don't divide the Scriptures into its antithetical themes; when instead they commingle law and promise and present the Word of God as if it were a single message. Whenever that happens the law wins out, as it does in a fairly recent discussion of Matthew by a megachurch pastor who blithely asserts that the key to unlocking Matthew is 22:37-40. That's where Jesus shoves Moses' double-barreled love commandment down the throat of a hostile Sadducee—"eat *this* and live, if you can." On Tuesday morning I will show you why this fellow is utterly mistaken, and on exegetical as well as theological grounds. In the meantime pity the poor people who read him and believe him. Pity too the poor Lutherans whose churches trumpet the Great Commission *and* the Great Commandment as their reason

for existence. They're left to sit or stand there on Sunday morning facing a God who tells them that they aren't existing well enough. No bragging about your mission trips, he says, or your soup kitchens. I won't stand for it.

And some other things that happen when law and Gospel are commingled.

First, the law gets mocked and diminished. This happens because without the Gospel as distinct, alternative, and subsequent word, people can't bear to listen to the law in its full majesty and lofty expectation. Moses' face has got to be veiled, as Paul will write in his second letter to the Corinthian crowd. How come? Because in the gut I know that I cannot love the LORD my God nor even my neighbor to the degree that God expects; so I ask him, for example, what the rules are for divorcing my wife, Mark 10, assuming that if God were really good as in realistic there have got to be those rule; and I bridle at Jesus' rejoinder that no, there aren't any except as they apply to my hardness of heart and serve to expose it. At which point, of course, almost all America these days stops listening; and the church in response starts to mumble about how God didn't really mean it after all. "He can't be *that* hard on us, you know."

Second, commingling the two messages leaves the Gospel mocked and diminished. For example, the Gospel promises peace. It asserts that God has made his peace with us already and irrevocably in the death of Christ. Now this is precisely the kind of assertion that has got to be pure and untainted if it's to mean what it says. The slightest hint of "it's still up to you" will ruin it. Think about that. If something is still up to me I'm not at peace, I can't be, not until I know that the thing resting on my neck has been achieved to the satisfaction of the person who put it there, in this case God, or so I'm being told. Jeremiah rants about the wretches who "treat the wounds of my

people carelessly, saying peace, peace, when there is no peace" (8:11). That's the wretch I am if as preacher my account of Christ and his benefits includes even a speck of commingled "up to you."

Third. Law and Gospel commingled diminishes Christ. We've touched on this already. It turns him from Savior and Lord into friend and helper, the enabler of people who are stuck to one degree or another with saving themselves. It reduces him to Maintenance Jesus, the guy who fixes and softens the current up-to-you system. By contrast the Gospel promises not Maintenance Jesus, but Revolutionary Jesus, the Son of God who overthrows up-to-you as the operating principle of life and replaces it with God-for-us, for all of us. We'll hear more about that one too on Tuesday if I don't run out of time.

Fourth: God per se gets mocked and diminished when Law and Gospel are commingled. You've all heard it said, "I can't believe in a God who would. . . ." Not that my believing or not believing does anything to change the facts about God and what God does or doesn't do—who am I kidding? Still, this not believing does something to me. It turns me into the ultimate rebel, one who dares to fashion his own image of God according to my own liking. In America, the land of rebels, we've turned God into Mr. Nicey, Nicey. He wouldn't hurt a fly because good gods don't swat flies. Or smug and stiff-necked sinners—he wouldn't swat them either.

Instead he coddles them. He gives them space to strut their stuff and sow their oats, both tame and wild. Like an eager, pathetic, neglected spouse, he leaps at our beck and call, known otherwise as prayer, and he suffers our contempt and abuse if he doesn't. Far be it from us, on the other hand, to think on him with any regularity or the slightest affection. In churches it's somewhat better, I suppose, but even in churches, even in our own churches, we hear too often of a positive God who acts

always and only in ways that we like or desire. "What is God doing in your lives," asks the ELCA churchwide rep at the local synod assembly, and as the delegates chat about this around their tables not a one dares or even thinks to suggest that God is busy killing me so that God in his mercy beyond all thought can make me alive with Christ. We just don't talk like that anymore. It's as if in our churches we've forgotten how.

And here, I submit, is what comes of that. More and more God is scorned as an ineffective and abject fool, by no means good or strong or fierce enough to insist on genuine righteousness or to rescue us from evil, above all the evil that festers within. As for Christ, is he not becoming the greater fool who died in vain, no benefit of any present use to us accruing from his crucifixion? "I don't know what to do with Good Friday," says a colleague in my neck of the woods. "I don't believe that business of atonement. It smacks of child abuse." She says this blithely, and she counts on God, I think, to nod his approval. So do other pastors as seen on TV, the ones who prattle winsomely of the Bible's tips for self-improvement and God's will to see you prosper. On the stage behind them is nary a cross lest the would-be braggarts they're talking to should see it and be annoyed.

Fifth and final consequence of commingling law and gospel: God who is not mocked and will not suffer braggarts declares that we are toast.

+ + +

We 40-some souls who are here tonight are going to spend the next 36 hours in large part on the art of distinguishing law and gospel and dividing Scriptural texts into those great themes with a view to seeing how the Holy Spirit is working through those texts on people today, starting with ourselves, both to

kill and to make alive.

In this work we do let all boasting be of Christ, the one who authorizes us to work on this not only for our own sakes, or for the congregations we belong or preach to, but for the wider Church as well, and indeed for the world. Already that sounds more than overweening, as if we're stuffed far too full of ourselves; but if it's Christ who stuffs us, then by all means lets think and talk big. Remember that in the kingdom, or shall I say the operating system, where the controlling principles are God-for-Us and Up-to-Christ—in that system enormous things come of a tiny seed, and that's what this Crossings venture is, nothing more.

The overriding aim in what we do together is to practice talking about Christ and his benefits in such a way that a) we don't underplay them, b) that people listening might be able to say "I get it." "I hear" they say, "how Christ brings everything that's required to spring me from the particular pickle I happen to be in.'

For example: I've talked at length so far about a problem afflicting churches from Paul's day to ours. People brag and puff themselves up over trifles, and in doing so they disrespect Christ to say nothing of each other.

What's the reason for this behavior? Answer: their hearts are fixed on the age-old system that runs the world. They happen to like it for now. They believe they can beat it for now. I called the system "It's Up to You."

Comes the problem, the real problem. God hates bragging. He shuts braggarts up by shaming them and tearing them down. That in turn enrages them and leaves them loathing God.

So how is Christ precisely what these braggarts need? The text's

answer: he became for them exactly what they are not: wise, and just, and holy, and free. Let's think that through: what does Jesus do, above all in and through his crucifixion, that the braggarts don't and can't do? Answer: he shuts up about himself and stays that way. "Like a lamb before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." (Is. 53). 100 years ago Albert Schweitzer tried to figure out the puzzle of the so-called Messianic secret in Mark, where Jesus is forever telling people to say nothing about him and what he's doing for them. Why is this? Schweitzer came up with a silly answer, the details of which I don't altogether recall. The real reason is that Jesus doesn't brag. Not about himself he doesn't. And in the context of his ministry he doesn't let other people brag about him either. How else can he be for the braggarts what the braggarts are not? Silent, that is. Modest and humble, the Son of Man who has nowhere to lay his head. And in the end he doesn't prove he's the Messiah by coming down from the cross, that is, he doesn't brag his way out of being reduced for the sake of braggarts to the nothing all braggarts are headed for. Instead he dares to let himself be destroyed by that fearsome combination of God's anger at the braggarts and the braggarts' frustration with the God they can't impress, all of it directed squarely at him. Does he vaunt his daring or the courage and prowess that attend it? Not at all, nor does he think to. This above all is why Christ is the wisdom and righteousness that we braggarts are not. It's why God raises Christ from the dead with authority to resurrect the braggarts too and to sanctify and redeem them from their own folly on the one hand and from God's disgust on the other. At this point the Holy Spirit takes over and starts bragging about Christ to us, and the brag is that he did all this *for* us to give us a future beyond the nothing we're headed to, a future when our mouths will flap like crazy along with shepherds and angels, and everything that spills from them will be all about him and the God who sent him to death for our

sins and who raised him for our justification.

And there's more. With that death and resurrection as a fact of history we now we have something else to pin our hearts to, not "Up-To-Us" but instead "Up-To- Christ-and-Only-Christ."

In other words, suddenly there's a new faith-engine inside, and it drives a new kind of behavior of the sort we find in Paul and Melanchthon and countless others before and since. Suddenly the future is now, and we're bragging already about Christ, not because we have to or else, as one last Up-To-You hurdle that must be jumped, but rather because we want to, our new hearts driving us into the Jesus brag, so to speak.

The Jesus brag. That's a bunch of unafraid if teary mourners singing their lungs out at a braggart's funeral. Torn down, he was, by age and disease, God's standard anti-braggart suppression devices. Yet the mourners sing anyway with confidence and joy because all the words in their mouths are about Jesus *for* the braggart.

The Jesus brag. That's one of you looking at a wretched, pathetic piece of human flotsam: the business failed, the marriage broke, the cancer struck, the kid went to jail, the bank foreclosed last week on the family home; God help her, a rapist attacked. So their eyes are dazed, the tears welling; they reek of shame. The things they bragged about are gone and the voice inside screams "you are nothing."

You get at that point to look in their eyes, and you say to them, echoing Paul, again to the Corinthians: "All things are yours, whether Paul, Apollos, Cephas, the world, life, death, the present, the future, all are yours—not will be yours; are yours, right now, underscore that; all are yours—for you are Christ's and Christ is God's.

Say it like you mean it because it's absolutely true. You've got God's promise on that.

And in your saying add nothing on. Don't say, "if you believe this." For pity's sake don't say, "if you really believe this." Sure, objectively a promise, even God's promise, is worthless if it isn't trusted. But the moment you demand this trust you commingle the law's up-to-you with the Gospel's up-to-Christ and you ruin the promise.

So instead, you simply put the promise out there; and trusting yourself in that other great promise of the Spirit Christ sends, you wait for the Word of God most gracious to create the faith it seeks.

You'll know when it happens because eyes will start to shine. I've seen it myself from time to time, most recently a month or two ago. You've seen it too, I should think.

That's one great consequence of keeping God's Law and God's Gospel properly distinguished and the benefits of Jesus laid out in full. It's a gift wonderful to behold.

And another such gift is the sight that will fill our own sore eyes when as pastors or fellow members of Christian congregations we do as St. Paul does in the opening verses of the Corinthian correspondence. There he describes them not as they are in themselves, silly, fractious, puffed up, overweening, and in so many ways unpleasant. Instead, looking through the lens of Christ for them—that's the Promise—he calls them saints, and he means it, and he dares to love them. That too is the Jesus brag.

God grant us all Paul's joyful faith that trusts the promise, and boasts in the Lord, and by daring to see that which is not brings it into being.

+ + +

With that I've said my piece. Let's get to work with vigor and joy.

+ Soli Deo Gloria +

[SettingtheFoundation \(PDF\)](#)

“How He Did It”

A Sermon for the Third Sunday after Epiphany, January 23, 2011.
Belleville, the Conference of the Crossings Community.

Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.

INI

Way to go, NRSV. You turned Promise into law!

Jesus emphatically did **not** say he would make **them** do something. He said **he** would do something.

When you use the verb “make” in a construction that has the form “make + person + action,” as in “make you fish,” it has the meaning of *forcing* someone to do something.

But Jesus did not mean he would *force* them to fish for people. His emphasis here was on the great work he *himself* was about to do. He would turn those fish-fishers into *halieis* (fishers) *anthropon* (of people). Just as he had turned water into wine. Just as his father had made people from clay. Jesus would be the

agent in the transforming of these peasants into apostles.

Simon and Andrew were *halieis*, fishers. But they were fishers of fish. They were hard workers. Jesus promised that *he . . . would make them . . .* into fishers of people!

So, does the rest of Matthew bear this out? *Did* he make them into people-catchers?

The promise stands here at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Where is the fulfillment? Where but in Matthew 28:19, where he deputizes Simon and Andrew and company.

*Therefore! . . . Go **make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, etc., etc.*

There they stood: fishers of people. Ready to go.

In chapter 28 he says "Go." In chapter 4 he had said "Come." Actually, "*deute opiso mou*." And every word is important.

I think "*deute*" in this context is like "Come on!" or "Let's go." Fred Danker's *Concise Lexicon* (available from Amazon for \$43.47 plus shipping), tells us there is an implication of peremptoriness, immediacy. In other words, Jesus is not asking whether they would like to give some thought to possibly being his followers. He's telling them: "Move it!"

The Duna language of Lake Kopyago in Papua New Guinea has a dandy word for this: "*Ngoae!*" It sounds kind of like the grunt of effort you make when you rise from the ground to begin a long walk. We'd all be sitting around, some having a smoke and some sharpening their axes on a stone from the creek. One person would say "*Ngoae!*" and we'd all get up and go. "*Deute*" means something like that, best I can tell.

And “*opiso mou*,” that’s the same thing Jesus said to Simon when he tried to block the road to crucifixion. “Get behind me, Satan!” is how we remember it—but what he said was “*opiso mou*.” “Behind me.” Not only physically, but also vocationally. We’re not voting on this.

For the sake of symmetry, may I give you another Duna word? “*Ma!*” “*Go!*”

The trip from chapter 4 to chapter 28 is the process by which they got from “*Ngoae*” to “*Ma!*”

From candidacy to commencement.

From “Come, get behind me” to “Get going; I’m right behind you.”

Jesus said, “Come on, let’s go, follow me, and I will turn you into fishers of people.” Three years later, after all that had taken place in between, Jesus gave “people-fishers” their charge: “Get to work! Throw out your nets! Don’t worry, I’ll be with you. At last you are what I promised to make you!”

Everything between, let us regard as meat on this sandwich. The question is: If between chapter 4 and 28 Jesus turned Simon and Andrew and others into “people-catchers,” just how did he do it? What made it happen?

Did he do it by setting out the requirements and a timetable, and asking them to work on it? Did he sit them down and teach them how to obey the law, how to teach it to others? Did he train them? Was a good education about the law what they needed to become people-catchers?

Certainly, Jesus saw wrongdoing and spoke out against it. Like, didn’t he tell them not to call their brothers mean names? (Simon! Andrew! Are you listening to me??) Could they take that rule and work out a better way of relating, like, according to a

“golden rule”? And, when they had gotten really, really good at it themselves, then maybe they would qualify to teach others, or perhaps to sit in judgment on others?

[Level one, for you Crossings people. Elementary legalism. First Aid.]

Or was the problem more complicated? Was it when Jesus delved into people’s hearts and exposed their weak faith and false love that Simon and Andrew took notes? Did they learn from Jesus how to spot a hypocrite? How to be sincere? When he said they should love the Lord their God with all their heart and soul and mind, and all their might, did they ask him for examples of best practices, so they could work on it?

[Level two. Advanced legalism. Second aid.]

Or was the problem still deeper? Oh, yes. More fundamental.

Matthew tells us John the Baptist said people were “living in darkness,” quoting Isaiah 9. “Living in the shadow of death.” But read the bit that comes just before that, in which he defines the darkness before dispelling it.

When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter—should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? To the Torah and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn. Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land; when they are famished, they will become enraged and, looking upward, will curse their king and their God. Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness.

Not to fear and love and trust in God, is to live without light.

To be blind. *Not to call upon* God in your distress, when you are hungry—is to be without light and life.

Jesus would fix that in Jerusalem, where he would *become* the distressed and hungry One. And when they went to kill him, he was going to . . . *not save himself*. He was going to *let God deliver him*. And . . . God would! [Level 3. Gospelism. Third Aid.]

When his followers saw that, when they got that, which still took time, it didn't happen overnight, the light went on and the life came back into them, and then they were ready to go. To bring the *world* into a kingdom where people in their distress know they can call upon their God, and he will deliver, because they are his people, and he loves them. That was why Jesus wanted people-catchers in the first place. Not to bring people into line, but to bring people into life.

...

When Simon and Andrew matriculated by the lakeside, they had no idea how low Jesus would take them in order to make them *halieis anthropon*. When they did get an inkling, they tried to divert Jesus onto another path. They did not want Jesus to go to Jerusalem. He would surely get killed there, and they might too, and they didn't sign up for that. They would rather fish for fish, if it came to that. When Jesus wanted to go even to Bethany near Jerusalem, Thomas said, and not with enthusiasm, "Let us also go, so we can die with him."

I wish there were time to examine each pericope in Matthew, and explain how it fits into this curriculum. Trust me, there is almost no sign, before chapter 28, that those disciples were ready for commissioning. Apart from their sticking with him. And they even blew that, at the end.

True, he did send them on internship in chapter 10. His strict instructions are recorded, but apparently their report cards were unremarkable. In chapter 16, Peter's "confession of faith" is followed immediately by his little rebellion. By chapter 26 Jesus bleakly tells them they will all fall away.

So why, days later, could Jesus go ahead with commencement exercises?

Because of what *he* had done. He had given them himself. His body. His blood. First, at a table in the upper room. Then, on a cross outside the city. He gave them everything he had left, although they were not worthy of it. Then he called them together and sent them out people-catchers.

Their apostleship, like that of the apostle Paul, had everything to do with God's grace. Grace and apostleship. "Love to the loveless shown, that they might lovely be." Faithfulness shown to the faithless, mercy to the unmerciful, God . . . to the godless, who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. *Ngoae*.

...

Mission . . . is not . . . duty, an obligation tied on our backs by a Lord who wants to squeeze blood from turnips. It says here not "duty" but "*deute*," as in "*ngoae*," "come on, let's go." "Deute" calls us and then sends us, the way Jesus sent the Gadarene demoniac, to "go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you."

Amen.

[HowHeDidIt \(PDF\)](#)

Cancel any Celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the 95 Theses.

Colleagues,

Shortly before Christmas, the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, (the New York Times of Germany) published an article by Jochen Teuffel, a pastor from the Lutheran church in Bavaria, recommending that the plans already underway for church-wide/nation-wide celebration of the 500th anniversary of Luther's posting the 95 Thesis—October 31, 2017—be canceled. Why? Lutheran church life today in Germany is NOT at all what Luther had in mind. So what's to celebrate?

If anything, German Lutherans should scrub any public hoopla and get busy in-house with re-reforming their own church life. "Physician, heal thyself." Which is not far, come to think of it, from the very first of Luther's ninety-five theses: "When our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, said 'Repent,' He called for the entire life of believers to be one of repentance." So "celebrate" the 500th anniversary of October 31, 1517 with "fruit worthy of repentance" (Matt. 3:8). There are still 6 years to figure out how do do that. Ditto for Lutherans around the world. Ditto for North American Lutherans.

Marie and I met Jochen in 2004 in Hong Kong. We were on our way to a mission gig in Singapore and stopped in HK to visit dear (and now departed) Crossings-colleague Jim Rimbach, OT prof at the Lutheran seminary there. Jim put me into one of his classes

as guest lecturer: “tell ’em about the Crossings paradigm for Bible study.” Jochen’s wife Nara (from Nagaland in far northeastern India) was one of the students in the class. Meeting her led to meeting Jochen, which led to continuing conversation, which led to your receiving his FAZ article for today’s ThTh posting. Marie and I translated it; Jochen approves of the English words we put into his mouth.

Peace and joy!

Ed Schroeder

That’s Not What Luther Meant

Protestant worship in Germany today is no longer oriented to Christ, but toward a trivial idea of freedom. The Reformation anniversary celebration might just as well be canceled.

by Jochen Teuffel

In six years (2017) the five-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation will be celebrated in Germany big time. As a warm-up to the event, already in the year 2008, a “Luther Decade” was declared with distinct themes for each year up to 2017. We can see parallels in the case of veterans’ societies, or family reunions: where the past is celebrated with great pomp, things in the present are pretty much passé with any serious activity because the membership is dwindling and the goldy-oldies are just that.

The swan song of the German “Volkskirche” will be the basso continuo for the Luther Decade before we then on October 31, 2017, in Wittenberg put on our performance, a de facto farce, for in this city where the church is disappearing – barely one percent of the populace goes to church on Sunday – here in

public view we are going to remember a Reformation event that grounded the identity of the church. The fact that this stage performance can even be put on is thanks to this year's Luther Decade theme, "Reformation and Freedom." In the religious mentality of today's German protestantism the one thing to remember about the Reformation is liberation from churchly control. That was already articulated by Hegel: "The fundamental substance of the Reformation is this, that humans are by nature created to be free."

Freedom for Christ's Sake

When you speak of the Reformation as an event of freedom, today's German citizens, despite their distance from the church, pay attention. Indeed, the Reformation in Germany did shatter the medieval Corpus Christianum into two different confessions of faith. The previously existing "sacral" unity of church and society was itself the product of a very questionable form of collective Christianization. In the early middle ages the masses were "converted" by following the lead of their tribal chiefs. For more than 1000 years in Europe there was no way to be a citizen without also being a member of the church. Public conformity to the rules of Christianity was in force. One "had to" believe, go to confession, go to mass and submit to church discipline.

It was the Reformation message of justification by faith alone that divested these human requirements within the church of their supposed necessity for salvation. And that, over the long haul, promoted the formation of modern notions of freedom as a right in human society. However, "Christian Freedom" as Martin Luther proposed, was not at all about freedom in civil society nor about do-it-yourself religion. According to Luther the thoroughly sinful human has no birthright to genuine freedom. Humans also have no native right to stand in freedom before the

triune God. Whoever declares himself to be free on his own resources in reality has the devil on his back. True freedom is a Gospel-promised freedom “for Christ’s sake,” a freedom to be believed over and over again. The only place where such Gospel freedom arises is where we are united to Christ’s paschal mystery in word and sacrament, which alone liberates us from human rules and regulations. The apostle Paul said it this way: “Whether the world or life or death or the present or the future – all belong to you, and you belong to Christ.”

When the collective memory of German society always comes with the bias of the forced hegemony of a hierarchical church, the Gospel dialectics of freedom don’t have a chance. Instead, German folk protestants nowadays, with no conscience qualms, bypass any connection with churchly community and claim Luther as their ancestor in deciding for themselves about religion. In the process they replace the faith that comes by promise with a subjective faith-like consciousness that acknowledges no external authority: the faith that I know to be true for myself I will not allow anyone else to determine for me. Justification by faith for Christ’s sake is trivialized. It becomes a confidence in life that needs no liturgy. It draws its intellectual support from a notion that God himself creates such freedom.

When people misunderstand justification of sinners by faith alone as something humans can work out for themselves, and not as something God does, they can then with a supposed good conscience emancipate themselves from any connection to Christian fellowship. What they can think through for themselves does not need communal reinforcement. Self-evidently they can dispense with public worship as well.

Thus protestants are so free that with a good conscience they can prescribe for themselves a (literally) a-social religiosity.

Whoever does religion “solo” with no need to go to church is seen as a model for protestant freedom. So it is no surprise that for Sunday services in Germany on average less than four percent of church members are there and – contrary to Reformation intentions – most often with no Lord’s Supper celebrated. And when children are baptized it is a loving event just for the family. If doing your own thing in religion becomes the standard for church life, then the primary concerns can be nothing more than esthetics (for the educated) and entertainment (for the masses).

At best then, in times when crises arise and self-religious coping fails, then the church may be needed – at least at the graveside – for pastoral comfort. However, when it comes to money, there protestant freedom stops. Despite all disconnect from formal religion, the German protestant must pay financial tribute to his own “Church of Freedom” (Wolfgang Huber). In place of freewill offerings, the church exacts a donation in the form of church tax as public legal requirement. The only way to avoid that is by the formal legal process of “Kirchenaustritt” (leaving the church) before secular authorities.

Today’s German protestantism operates with a neo-Platonic world view, understanding the church as a service agency for special needs. That has very little in common with the church of the Reformation. When all is said and done, the reformers of the sixteenth century sought primarily to reform the church according to the Gospel, from top to bottom. They had no notion of a do-it-yourself religion emancipated from the church. That is what Luther said in the Large Catechism, that the Holy Spirit “first leads us into His holy congregation, and places us in the bosom of the church, whereby He preaches to us and brings us to Christ.” The church is “the mother that begets and bears every Christian through the Word of God.”

Do-It-Yourself Religion as Dogma

According to Luther, being a Christian is possible only in the living community of the church. Consequently the constitutions of the Lutheran territorial churches in Germany are juridically explicit about their corporate connection to Christ. Lutheran pastors in their ordination vow commit themselves faithfully to “carry out the office entrusted to them in obedience to God, and also teach in purity the Gospel of Jesus Christ as it is given in the Holy Scriptures and witnessed to in the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.” Yet in practice this communal formal commitment is sacrificed to the ideology of do-it-yourself religion. So pastors can say both in church publications and from the pulpit, in all self-confidence, that Jesus’ death on the cross is not a message of salvation, and no one in church leadership will take any action against such de facto violation of the church’s constitution.

As long as people misunderstand the church to be an ideological enterprise, based on an idea that God exists, accompanied by certain religious convictions, they cannot even comprehend what the Reformation was all about. If the protestant church in Germany were honest to itself, the Reformation celebration in 2017 would have to be canceled as a church event. That’s the only way to avoid a tragic self-dramatization of do-it-yourself religion – sadly, costumed in clerical vestments.

That would not have to mean an end for any Reformation celebration in the year 2017 at all. After all, there are congregations in the territorial churches, independent churches, and pietist communities which have remained true to the Reformation heritage. Even the Roman Catholic church itself is taking something from the accents of the Reformation. Rome’s liturgical renewal in the last century is focused on community with Christ. Yes, there are distinct doctrines in the Roman

church which protestant Christians cannot appropriate. Even so, with its authoritative teaching centering on Christ the Roman Catholic church is much closer to the Reformation than is any do-it-yourself protestantism.

Ecclesia semper reformanda – the church always needs reforming in order to remain true to the Gospel. Needed is a complete reform of the church moving toward the congregation as the church's primary locale, without payment of church tax being the criterion for church membership. Apart from such full-scale reform, the so-called Volkskirche [church of the people] will evaporate into pagan civil religion. Then we might have in our churches a helluva good time – but any real life will have come to an end.

Jochen Teuffel currently serves as pastor in the Lutheran congregation in Vöhringen just south of Ulm in the state of Bavaria, Germany. Last year he published the book entitled, "Mission as Witness to the Name: An Ideological Criticism of Religious Matters."

German original in the FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, Wednesday, December 15, 2010, Nr. 292, page 33.

Those "Solas" in Lutheran Theology

Colleagues,

There's a group of Lutheran clergy holding regular meetings—"tell it not in Gath"—here in St. Louis. Half are from

the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, the other half from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. I'm not involved in those gatherings, but I did get invited—by the LCMS chair—to be a guest at the last meeting a couple of months ago.

The speaker for the event was Dr. Gerald Kieschnick, recently dis-elected from his presidential office at this summer's convention of the LCMS. With only throw-away lines about his move into unemployment, Kieschnick addressed the topic of the future of Lutheranism. He focused our attention on the three "solas" ["sola" in Latin = "only," or "alone"] of classical Lutheranism: sola fide, sola gratia, sola scriptura. Salvation by faith alone and by grace alone. Authority is scripture alone.

At the end there were questions and comments. After a few had been made, one came from me. And when it was all over, I went home and sent him this email. Today I pass it on to you.

Peace and joy! Ed Schroeder

Dear Jerry,

You doubtless guessed that I had my own answer to my question to you at the LCMS/ELCA pastors gathering this noon. I think I said something like this: Although the three solas are what we Lutherans always have said, and the folks on all sides of the divides within the LCMS and ELCA affirm all the solas, that doesn't bridge the gaps. So you got dis-elected this summer for not being Lutheran enough—as John the Steadfast was—with YOUR three solas. And in the ELCA there now is Word Alone, CORE, NALC, etc.—all of them convinced that the ELCA is not Lutheran enough with its three solas. So what do we do?

Here's my thought.

1. We need to remember that in the Book of Concord only one sola ever gets mentioned. Sola fide. There is no debate on the sola gratia nor on the sola scriptura when the Lutheran Confessors are wrestling with the Roman theologians at Augsburg. In fact the RC response to Augsburg (The Confutation) does more hyping of sola gratia and much more scripture-quoting than the Augsburg Confession does. It's only the sola fide in the Augsburg Confession that the RC theologians can't tolerate. It is the hot potato—as we see when Melanchthon addresses it directly in Apology IV. [And here he starts out with a (first ever?) proposal for a “Lutheran” hermeneutic for reading the Bible.] Sola scriptura has consensus between the two conflicting parties. No debate there. But THE issue is: HOW you read the Bible, with what lenses? So that's where Melanchthon starts in Apology IV. If you don't read the Bible with the proper lenses, you'll never get to the “sola fide.”
2. I think the same is always true in every serious controversy within church history. It's always the sola fide. That's what's dividing Missouri now, also the ELCA. But no one is saying that out loud, so far as I know. If for no other reason than that all sides recite the “sola fide” mantra as their own. So there can't be any disagreement there, they would say. But what is the “fide” in sola fide? That is where the parties separate.
3. Granted, the RC critics of the AC wanted to scrub the “sola” but that was because they had a non-Biblical notion of the “fide.” Melanchthon often label it “fides historica”—believing that the facts of the faith are true, they really happened—when he addresses the topic in the Apology to the AC. “That's not what the word ‘faith’ means in the NT,” he says. That's true today in USA Lutheranism. The super-purists in the ELCA and in the ones unhappy with you in the LCMS are afflicted/infected with “fides

historica.” Though they would dispute that, I’m sure, that is a valid diagnosis.

4. Which brings into focus just what the object of faith is in Christian faith. You spoke of that (though not directly linked to what I’m saying here) when you spoke about the “satis est” this noon [“satis est” in Latin, “it is enough, it suffices”]. When we understand faith to be “trust” – but not trust in the fides historica sense (=trusting that all the historical statements in the Bible are true)–namely, trust in Christ’s promise of forgiveness for sinners, then you bump into the Confessors’ statement about “satis est.” That promise-trusting is all it takes, that suffices, to make someone 100% Christian.
5. Faith, as the Confessors insist in their “sola fide” formula, is ALWAYS a faith that trusts this promise. And the only way that this promise gets transferred from first century Palestine to us today is via Gospel-preaching and Sacraments administered. [There is an implicit “sola” about that too. ONLY through these media does the promise get passed to people–in oral or ritual format, as RC theologian William Burrows likes to say.] These media are the carriers (the pipeline) for the promise. That is why they are “satis est.” They suffice, they are all it takes, to get the promise offered to folks, and when trusted, that’s all it takes to make Christ’s promise come true for me and you.
6. The fight about your “loose” Lutheranism in your denomination (for over half of my life my denomination too) and the fight about the gay issue in the ELCA is “fides historica” vs. “sola fide.” For sola fide in the AC always means faith-in-the-promise. And that always raises the “satis est” question. Is “faith-in-the-promise” ENOUGH to transform a sinner into God’s fully beloved child? If that is so, and it is, then what is sufficient (satis) to

get the promise to people? The media of grace—Word and sacrament. And here in the Confessors' language (and Luther's too) "Word" [Word of God] never means Bible. When referring to the Bible the 16th century Lutherans regularly said Heilige Schrift or Die Bibel. When they said "Wort Gottes" they were always talking about the proclaimed word of the Gospel. Wort Gottes = God's promise, God's Gospel, the Good News from God. The Bible is never included in any list of the "means of grace" in the Book of Concord. Even when Luther expands those means to five in his paragraph on "The Gospel" in the Smalcald Articles, the Bible is not one of them.

7. There may well be no "rescue" for Lutheranism in the USA. We may all have squandered our inheritance, and as Luther sometimes said: "God is moving the Platzregen of the promise to other places [Tanzania, Ethiopia, Mainland China] and departing from us in judgment." We may be facing (a phrase from Amos) "a famine of the Word of God," where Wort Gottes means what the Reformers meant when they used that term. If there is to be any attempt on our part to cope with the famine and possibly turn things around, it will (as always in church history) be with fresh articulations of the Promise, offered orally and ritually, and then promise-hearers responding with trust to that offer.

Peace and Joy!

Ed Schroeder

A Lutheran Missiology: God's Promise the Cornerstone

Colleagues,

One of the Christmas gifts that came my way was the complete text of Jukka Kaariainen's just-completed doctoral dissertation. The topic line above is what it's all about. The full title: *Missio Shaped by Promissio: Lutheran Missiology Confronts the Challenge of Religious Pluralism*.

I've been a "distant" advisor for Jukka as he navigated the grad school labyrinth at Fordham University in New York to get the degree just a few months ago. To convince the professors at one of the leading Jesuit universities in the world to accept his arch-Lutheran dissertation proposal was itself a bit of a coup. And then when he took on two of the "big names" in Roman Catholic mission theology today—Karl Rahner and Jacques Dupuis—and with winsome argument sought to show them a "more excellent way"—well, that was real chutzpah. And when his RC committee at Fordham not only accepted his dissertation but after the oral examination give him kudos besides, that was something else.

I'm overjoyed because it is the first—so far as I know—detailed proposal for a Lutheran theology of mission that takes the "Gospel is a Promise" as its starting point—and then runs with it, not only in dialog with RC heavyweights, but also onto the ramparts to encounter the "sea of faiths," the world religions encompassing our planet.

There are 337 pages, so I can't give you all of them. Jukka has given his OK to my showing you the pages copied below, namely, the introductory first pages and the one-page abstract of his

whole project appended at the end.

In the final years of his work on the dissertation Jukka has been town-and-gown pastor in Princeton, New Jersey. With his “union card” now in hand Jukka has been called by the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission as theology prof at China Lutheran Seminary in Hsinchu, Taiwan. Jukka’s parents were Finnish missionaries to Taiwan. He was born there. Besides that mysterious native language of Finland, Jukka also speaks Mandarin. If Taiwan hasn’t yet had its Platzregen of promissio-theology, it can expect a sauna-soaking soon.

Should you wish to reach Jukka by email to follow up on this ThTh posting or other matters, he can be reached at: *(removed for security reasons)* Oh, yes, one more thing. Jukka was a keynote presenter at last January’s Crossings conference. At that time he gave us a preview of what all he was confecting in the dissertation. You can find it on the Crossings website . Click on CONFERENCE. Click on PAPERS. Click on 2010. Scroll down to his name.

Peace and Joy!

Ed Schroeder

Introduction: In Search of a Lutheran Missional Hermeneutic

Statement of the Problem and Background to the Question

The term “Lutheran missiology” is viewed by many as an oxymoron. Historically, ever since Gustav Warneck’s (the founding father of modern missiology) stinging critique of Martin Luther for lacking a theology and awareness of mission, conventional wisdom has dictated: to the extent that Lutheran theology derives its

impetus and motivation from Luther, to that extent it will be missiologically weak and inadequate. In other words, Lutheran theology provides no real resources for a contemporary, relevant Christian missiology and engagement with the world religions and religious pluralism. The late David Bosch agreed with the main thrust of Warneck's critique of Luther, claiming: "We miss in the Reformation not only missionary action 'but even the idea of missions, in the sense in which we understand them today.'"

Beginning with Karl Holl in 1928 and Werner Elert in 1931, a school of Luther scholars arose, opposing and rebuffing Warneck's criticism of Luther's theology, claiming that to judge Luther's theology as lacking a missionary vision "is to misunderstand the basic thrust of [his] theology and ministry." Warneck anachronistically imposed a very particular, nineteenth century understanding of mission upon the Reformers. Describing missionary outreach in terms of organized missionary societies sending career missionaries to foreign lands, he judged the Reformers "guilty for not having subscribed to a definition of mission which did not even exist in their own time." While historically speaking it is true that the Reformation resulted in very little missionary outreach, the real issue and question is whether this is due to historical context or to theological deficiency. It is one thing to say that Luther and other Reformers viewed their main theological challenge as reforming the existing Church rather than mission outreach; it is quite another to charge their theology with missiological deficiency.

In contrast to Warneck's pessimistic assessment of Luther's theology, I agree with and wish to develop an argument in support of James Scherer's contention that "For Luther, mission is always pre-eminently the work of the triune God – *MISSIO DEI* – and its goal and outcome is the coming of the kingdom of God... [T]he rich but untested potential of Luther and the Reformation for mission practice comes down to the present, not as

definitive guidance, but certainly as inspiration and challenge for missiology today. It becomes a calculable 'benchmark' for testing today's missiological axioms." Among Lutheran theologians, Richard Bliese has issued a call for Lutheran missiology to move from "reactive reform" to "innovative initiative." It is the modest, yet ambitious, goal of this project to make a contribution toward such an innovative, missiological initiative.

In addition to the question of whether or not Lutheran theology has missiological potential and, if so, what resources it has to offer, this project will also address a second, closely related question: In light of the *MISSIO DEI* (mission of God), how should the Church's mission be properly understood, in terms of its distinctive shape, content, and emphases? This project will answer these two questions by interrelating them, using four distinctive resources from the confessional Lutheran tradition in addressing both questions: 1) the Gospel as promise; 2) the law-Gospel distinction; 3) a theology of grace as promise of mercy realized; and 4) a theology of the cross utilizing the hiddenness of God.

An introductory remark on terminology is in order before proceeding further. The creedal Christian tradition, as expressed in the classic Christological and Trinitarian dogmas, has always recognized the sin/grace dialectic as a central theme of Scripture. The confessional Lutheran tradition further nuances this classic dialectic, offering the terminology of law and promise (Gospel) as a more precise formulation of this dialectic. A Lutheran terminology seeks to avoid the connotations of the classic "nature/grace" paradigm, whereby grace can potentially be viewed as something quantifiable which fulfills sinful or defective human nature. In seeking to avoid views of grace as either quantifiable or internally enhancing human nature, a confessional Lutheran perspective views grace as

fundamentally relational reality, offer, and external word of surprising mercy.

While contemporary missiology is a multifaceted discipline, embracing many concerns and emphases such as evangelization, inculturation, the promotion of justice, liberation, and peace, and interreligious dialogue, I believe that mission as *MISSIO DEI* is the prevailing, dominant paradigm for missiology today. While it can be variously interpreted, its key features include emphasizing the Trinitarian origin of mission, God's *SHALOM* as the final, eschatological reign of peace and justice, and the Christian/human participation in that reign. Karl Barth, with his 1932 essay entitled "Theology and Mission," inaugurated contemporary Protestant reflection on mission as *MISSIO DEI* by grounding the theological foundation of mission in the doctrine of the Trinity. Theologically, mission came to be seen as a divine activity and attribute, originating from God himself, rather than the Church's activity. Francis Oborji clarifies the ecclesiological ramifications of this affirmation:

"Mission is not primarily an activity of the church but an attribute of God. The church is the movement of God toward the world. The church is an instrument of mission. The church exists because there is *MISSIO DEI*, and not the contrary."

While the phrase *MISSIO DEI* has been widely accepted and used by virtually all mission theologians, its actual meaning and content is vigorously contested. Wilhelm Richebacher describes the current quagmire: "It seems that everyone reads into and out of this 'container definition' whatever he or she needs... Is such a term of any use at all, if it does not help us establish a clear single interpretation of the central concept? Should we give up this formula altogether...?" The title of his article bluntly asks: "*MISSIO DEI*: the Basis for Mission Theology, or a Wrong Path?"

While I believe MISSIO DEI to be a helpful category, the very “structure of Lutheranism” (Werner Elert) would insist that this term requires nuancing: Does God have one or two missions to the world? This question directs us to the nature of the Gospel as giving Christian mission a distinctively dual or “duplex” shape (Ed Schroeder). A confessional Lutheran contribution to understanding the MISSIO DEI insists that the divine mission is BIVOCAL. The triune God, rather than saying and doing only one thing, has a dual mission: God’s mission always manifests itself in the dual form of judgment AND salvation, of condemnation AND forgiveness, of wrath AND promised mercy. These dual missions roughly correspond to the Lutheran dialectic of law and promise (Gospel), respectively. While these missions are complementary, with the first clearly serving the second, they are also in dialectical tension. In other words: MISSIO DEI is shaped by PROMISSIO DEI, or the promise of God is the secret to mission. Such is the Lutheran claim.

Barth’s immense influence is evident in the fact that most of the missiological discussion surrounding MISSIO DEI assumes God’s mission to be largely UNITARY, that God is doing and saying basically one thing (God’s loving salvation universally present). Most contemporary missiologies arising from the basis of MISSIO DEI, whether employing a “nature/grace” hermeneutic (traditional Roman Catholic theology) or a “sin/grace” hermeneutic (traditional Reformed theology), end up talking about the Gospel and grace in such a way that it SEEMS that God has only one word to say, a word of loving grace. Lutherans find this problematic as addressing only half of the story, half of revelation, half of what needs to be confessed, trusted, and proclaimed.

Confessional Lutheran theology insists that, to the extent that the first mission of divine judgment is ignored or marginalized, or to the extent that the two missions are conflated under one

rubric, to that extent the divine mission as a whole is misconstrued. This project will demonstrate how a clear understanding of the divine, dual mission, expressed in terms of wrath and promise, law and Gospel, leads to a nuanced, dialectical relationship between mission as proclamation and dialogue.

Viewing the Gospel as promise is gaining some appreciation beyond Lutheran circles. For example, Roman Catholic theologian William R. Burrows notes:

“The Gospel is not a new law, not even a new law of love, nor is it a social program. The Gospel of the New Covenant is, rather, an intensification and realization of the dominant theme of the Gospel of both Testaments – God is a God of promises. Concretely, God promises to save his people, and in Jesus we Christians believe we have the clearest revelation, indeed, the accomplishment of that promise, in the paschal mystery of Jesus of Nazareth – his TRANSITUS or passage from life through death to new life as he becomes the sender of the Holy Spirit, who is the inner witness to us that our sins indeed are forgiven and the first fruits of the realization that God’s promises to us will be fulfilled.”

This project’s view of the MISSIO DEI, stated in terms of an “economy of salvation,” will draw from the work of Oswald Bayer, Robert Bertram, Robert Kolb, Gerhard Forde, Edward Schroeder, and other confessional Lutheran theologians. As an alternative to the prevailing missiological models, an “economy of salvation” model situates itself between and contrasts itself with an uncritical acceptance of the salvation history model (epitomized by fellow Lutherans who see no need for missiological renewal and vision), on the one hand, and the inclusive pluralist model of Jacques Dupuis, on the other.

A constructive Lutheran critique insists that an insufficient view of the nature of the Gospel as promise, articulated and preserved by the law/Gospel distinction, leads to an insufficient theology of grace, one which marginalizes the centrality of the promise of mercy in Christ and therefore overly optimistically views the saving grace of God as operative throughout the world religions. Rather than a notion of the Gospel and grace which leads to a view of interreligious dialogue as a conversation between those already belonging to the reign of God, attributed to the power of the grace of Christ and the work of the Spirit (Dupuis), a Lutheran proposal insists that an interreligious dialogue, employing the Gospel promise of "loving mercy" in Christ and a theology of the cross utilizing the hiddenness of God, is both more faithful to the broad Christian tradition and Scriptures as well as more honest to our lived experience, accurately reflecting both commonality and difference of religious experience.

By articulating four Lutheran resources (the Gospel as promise, the law/Gospel distinction, a theology of grace as promise of loving mercy realized, and a theology of the cross utilizing the hiddenness of God) for constructing a nuanced, "economy of salvation" model of the *MISSIO DEI*, this project delineates how a particular view of the Gospel (as promise) undergirds a particular model of the *MISSIO DEI*, culminating in a very particular, dialectical relating of proclamation to interreligious dialogue.

The historical lineage of this approach can be traced from the confessional movement within late 16th century German Lutheran theology, through the Erlangen school in the mid-twentieth century (Werner Elert), to contemporary theologians such as Oswald Bayer (professor emeritus, University of Tübingen), the late Robert Bertram (Christ Seminary-Seminex, St. Louis), Robert Kolb (Concordia Seminary, St Louis, MO), Edward Schroeder

(professor emeritus, Christ Seminary-Seminex, St. Louis, MO), Carl Braaten (professor emeritus, The Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago), Richard Bliese, Gary Simpson, Patrick Keifert, and the late Gerhard Forde (Luther Seminary, St Paul, MN).

Dissertation Abstract

Contemporary missiology has been engaged with two central concerns: 1) how to relate the *MISSIO DEI*, the reign of God, and the church, and 2) given our global context of religious pluralism, what resources Christian theology has for building a constructive relationship with the religious other. These two concerns, while distinct, are intimately related and find their practical outworking in the important practice of interreligious dialogue.

Utilizing resources from Martin Luther's theology and the Lutheran confessional writings, this study offers an understanding of the Christian gospel as promise as key to addressing the above mentioned missiological challenges. In its construction of a confessional Lutheran missiology, it critically retrieves and constructively reappropriates four resources from the Lutheran tradition: the gospel as promise, the law/gospel distinction, a theology of grace as promise of mercy fulfilled, and a theology of the cross utilizing the hiddenness of God. The law of God as accusing, yet webbing humanity to its Creator; the gospel as the comforting promise of vulnerable, loving mercy, and the hiddenness of God as elusively mystifying form the overarching framework within which a contemporary Lutheran missiology seeks to engage the religious other by dialectically relating gospel proclamation and dialogue.

Such a Lutheran view of “mission shaped by promise” constitutes an alternative voice within the contemporary missiological landscape, dominated by an understanding of grace as human nature fulfilled and an approach to the missiological task as identifying traces of divine grace and truth in the midst of interreligious work toward human peace and justice. While humbly receiving the deepest witness of its dialogue partner, such a Lutheran approach boldly offers the paradoxical revelation and hiddenness of God in the cross as a distinctively Christian contribution to an interreligious dialogue centered on the ambiguity and hiddenness of God in daily experience.

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60. “Gospel Reductionism: Some Theses for Comment and Discussion.” Two presentations at the Missouri Forward group of the LC–MS Northern Illinois District, River Forest and Broadview, IL, October 8-9, 1972.

1973

61. “Is There a Lutheran Hermeneutics?” From The Lively Function of the Gospel, in The Caemmerer Festschrift, St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1966, pp. 81-97. Later published in The Promising Tradition: A Reader in Law-Gospel Reconstructionist Theology, Edward H. Schroeder, ed., St. Louis, MO, 1973

62. “Family Ethos in the Light of the Reformation.” Family Relationships and the Church, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1970, later published in The Promising Tradition: A Reader in Law-Gospel Reconstructionist Theology, Edward Schroeder, ed., St. Louis, MO, 1973.

62a. The Promising Tradition: A Reader in Law-Gospel Reconstructionist Theology. Edward H. Schroeder, ed. First Edition. Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, Trinity VII, 1973.

Second Edition (expanded), Advent 1974.

63. **"Dear Christians Rejoice" Advent Hymn, Edward & Marie Schroeder, tr. n.d.**

64. "The Quality Life in Christian Perspective." Presentation to LC-MS Central IL District Pastoral Conference, May 7-8, 1973.

65. "What Lutherans Confess." A course for the Lay School of Theology, LC-MS Southeastern District, Jefferson, MD, September and November, 1973. [Repeated September and November, 1974 in Charlotte, NC.] [Repeated for Southeastern District, Rehoboth Beach, DE, October-November, 1975.] [Repeated for Washington North Circuit of the Southeastern District LC-MS, September-November, 1979.]

66. Critique of President Preus' "A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles." Presentation to LC-MS Northern IL District Pastoral Conference, October 16-17, 1973.

1974

67. "Matters of Life and Death" (High School Bible Class Course), St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1974.

68. **"Confession of Faith." Faithful to Our Calling, Faithful to Our Lord, vol. II, pp. 126-128.**

Volume I (same title) co-authored with Norm Habel, edited by the Faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Concordia Seminary, 1974. Personal faith statement in Vol. II.

69. "The Search for Certainty in America Today." Presentation at Lyceum Convocation, Concordia Teachers College, Seward, NE, April 22, 1974.

1975

70. "Seminex, One Year Later." Presentation to ELIM group, Ft. Wayne, IN, January 1975.

71. "Current Implications of the 'We Condemn' Statements in the Lutheran Confessions", Currents in Theology and Mission. Vol. 2:1 (Feb. 1975), pp. 5-9.

72. "Responsible Theological Education", In Touch, 2:6, February 1975, pp. 5-8. Reprinted in Seminar in Exile, 6:2, April 18, 1975, pp. 3-9.

73. ".....Now About the Risks Involved..." Interaction, Vol. 16:3 (March 1975). pp. 2-5.

74. "The Ministry of Forgiveness." Seven sessions for Adult Education, Webster Groves Presbyterian Church, April 27 – June 8, 1975. [One session repeated at Hope Presbyterian Church, Collinsville, IL, December 18, 1977.]

75. "Historical-Critical Method and Law-Gospel Reductionism." Series of Presentations to the Rochester Circuit of the Minnesota South District of the LC-MS, August 4-10, 1975.

76. "Death and Dying", Program of Education for Responsible Christian Action (PERCA), ELIM Division of Interpretation and Communication, 1975. Student Guide and Leader's Guide.

1976

77. "Current Ethical Problems and the New Testament." Five sessions for Seminex continuing education, Belleville, IL, January- February, 1976.

78. "Where on Earth are the Heavenly Places?" Interaction Vol. 17:2 (Feb. 1976) pp. 3 & 30.

79. "The Mis-Statement of the Preus Statement." Original ms. of

a later ELIM publication, possibly for an ELIM assembly, February 23, 1976.

80. "The Ministry of Forgiveness: Select Texts from Matthew's Gospel." Seven Adult Education sessions at Bonhomme Presbyterian Church, Chesterfield, MO, March 7 – April 11, 1976.

80a. "The Church and Power: The History of the Free Loser." Bethel Lutheran Bible Class, University City, MO, June 1976.

81. "Evangelization: A Lutheran Perspective." Presentation to the Adorers of the Precious Blood Sisters at Ruma, IL, July, 1976.

82. Report on Seminex. LC-MS Eastern District Convention, St. Bonaventure University, Olney, NY, June 25-27, 1976

83. "Whose Church Is It? – Receiving Women Pastors." 1976 ELIM Assembly (Abbreviated Text) August 19, 1976.

84. "The Ethics of the New Age." Six sessions at Webster Groves Presbyterian Church, April-May, 1976.[Recycled at Bethel Lutheran Church Bible Class, University City, MO, October 1976.]

85. "Luke's Gospel Through a Systematician's Lens." Currents in Theology and Mission, Vol. 3:6 (December 1976) pp. 337-346.

86. "Seminex:Exile-LoveIt.Don'tLeaveIt."Strivings, Vol.1:2(April,1977)

87. "The Lively Use of the Risen Lord in the Theology of the Cross." Presentation to the LC-MS California-Nevada District

Pastoral lConference, Modesto, CA, April 19-21, 1977.

88. "Encountering the Last Enemy." Seven sessions for the Webster Groves Presbyterian Church, Webster Groves, MO, April 24- June 5, 1977.

89. "Life in Freedom: A Study of Galatians." Bethel Lutheran Church Bible Class, June, 1977. [Repeated at Bonhomme Presbyterian Church, Chesterfield, MO, October-November 1977.

90. "Who Me?" The Lutheran Independent, Rev. Frank J. Leonard, ed., Issue #4 (September, 1977). [Recycled and revised as "'Legalism' in the AELC? How Could it Happen?" Missouri in Perspective, May 22, 1978, p.9.]

1978

91. "The Apostles Creed According to the Small Catechism of Luther." Presentation for Bethel Lutheran Church Bible Class, University City, MO, January 22, 1978.

92. "World Hunger and God's Mercy." Presentation at Bread for the World Seminar, St. Mary's Seminary, Perryville, MO, January 14, 1978.

93. Theological Evaluation of two manuals from Congregations Organizing for Mission Endeavor (COME – Herbert Mayer), 29 pp. February 10, 1978.

94. "We Live in Story." Presentation to Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Creve Coeur, MO, Sunday School Teachers, April 14, 1978.

95. "Using the Doctrine of Original Sin in Pastoral Care." Presentation to Kenneth Siess's CPE program at the University of Minnesota Hospitals, Minneapolis, MN, June 19-July 28, 1978.

1979

96. "The Augsburg Confession: A Six-Part Study Plan for Use in the Christian Congregation." Presented to St. John's Lutheran Church Bible Class, Ocean City, NJ, February-April 1979.

97. "Luther's Catechism(s) (Large and/or Small): A Six-Part

Study Plan for Use in the Christian Congregation." Note: Audience and venue unknown. 1979.

98. "Key Biblical Texts of the Reformers." Bethel Lutheran Church Bible Class, University City, MO, September-October, 1979.

99. "Using the Bible and the Resources of Faith in Hunger Advocacy." Bread for the World Seminar, Luther Memorial Church, Richmond Heights, MO, Oct. 3, 1979.

100. "Korean Seminex," The Christian Century, 96-41, December 12, 1979, pp. 1243-1245.

1980

101. "The Theology of the Cross in Some Lent/Easter Texts for A.D. 1980." Presentations at School for Ministry, Ann Arbor, MI, Feb. 3-4, 1980.

102. Letter to the Editor, "Ubi Ecclesia?" Response to articles in AELC Foreword Vol.1:10, January 1980. In AELC Foreword, February 1980.

103. "Theology of the Cross." Six presentations during Lent for Adult Education at Webster Groves Presbyterian Church, repeated at Bonhomme Presbyterian Church, Chesterfield, MO, 1980.

104. "What Lutherans Confess." Presentation at Bethel Lutheran Church Bible Class, University City, MO, June 8, 1980.

105. "Apocalypse Now." Together, 6:3, June 1980, pp. 8-10.

106. "Left Hand, Right Hand Kingdoms." AELC Foreword, Vol. 2:5, August 1980.

107. "The Word of God in the Lutheran Confessions." Presentation in Kalamazoo, MI, Lutheran / Episcopal / Roman Catholic

Dialogue, October 1, 1980.

108. "The Meaning and Function of Authority for Christian Ethics," Presentation at Eden Seminary, Festival of Scripture and Theology, in Panel Discussion on "Sources of Authority and Moral Responsibility." November 17, 1980.

109. Text Studies in Preaching Helps. Vol.7:2, March 1980. Vol.8:3, May 1981. Vol.9:2, March 1982. Vol.9:3, May 1982.

1981

110. "That's the Story of My Life." Seven Sessions for Senior High Class at Webster Groves Presbyterian Church, Webster Groves, MO, January-February 1981.

111. "The Third Article of the Creed." Four sessions, Bible Class at Atonement Lutheran Church, St. Louis, MO, October 1981.

112. Response to Lutheran Seminary Presidents and Deans. Seminex Faculty Forum, December 8, 1981.

1982

113. "Theology of the Cross and Theology in Context." Unknown venue, unknown audience. January 1982.

114. "Uncommon Ideas from Common Asian Christians." Concurrent presentations at First Presbyterian Church, Ferguson, MO; Bonhomme Presbyterian Church, Chesterfield, MO; and First Christian Church, Edwardsville, IL, April-May, 1982.

1983

114a. "Asian / African Theology." Seminex Syllabus. Spring Semester, 1983.

114b. "A response to Morris Inch's Presentation: An Evangelical Approach to Biblical Authority." In: The Covenant Quarterly:

Lutheran-Conservative Evangelical Dialogue, Vol.XLI:3, August 1983, pp.96-99.

1984

115. "Baptism and Confession." [Paper delivered at "Luther and Baptism" Convocation, Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, OH, November 1-2, 1983.] Trinity Seminary Review, Vol. 6, Number 1 (Spring 1984).

116. "Theological Reflections on Artificial Intelligence." Proceedings of the Institute for Theological Encounter with Science and Technology [ITEST] Conference, St. Louis, MO, 1984.

117. "Theological Perspectives on Max Beckmann: Christian" Presentation, St. Louis Art Museum. September 13, 1984.

118. The Miller Lectures, Valparaiso University, Oct. 23-24, 1984: "Luther and the Liberation of the Laity."

119. "Lessons for Westerners from African Christologies." Presentation at American Society of Missiology Conference, Princeton Theological Seminary, NY, June 23, 1984. [Revised and expanded in the item below.]

1985

120. "Lessons for Western Christians from Two African Christologies [Gabriel Setiloane and John Pobee]." Paper presented at Intl. Assn. For Mission Studies [IAMS] Conference, Harare, Zimbabwe, 1985. [Edited and reduced in the item below.]

121. "Lessons for Westerners from Setiloane's Christology", published in the Mission Studies of the IAMS conference in Harare, Zimbabwe, 1985. (Can't verify)

122. "Lutherans in Ecumenical Dialogue." Report (co-authored

with Donald Huber) on Lutheran-Conservative/Evangelical Dialogue, for Lutheran Council in the USA, Division of Theological Studies, February 1985.

123. "Presentation on Theses 3, 6, & 8." Lutheran Council in the USA "Free Conference on Reception," responding to Rahner/Fries's book, Unity of the churches—an actual possibility (Fortress Press, 1985). Techny, IL, April 16-18, 1985. [15pp.]

124. "Learning About South Africa." Focus on People in Mission, Partners in Mission, Vol. 8:3, September 21, 1985, p.4.

125. "End Time." Essay for English Synod Professional Workers Conference, October 8-10, 1985.

1986

126. "The Lord's Supper in the Dialogues – A Horizontal Look [at US Lutheran Dialogues with Episcopalians, Roman Catholics, and Reformed Theologians]." Prepared for Lutheran Council in the USA, January 10, 1986.

127. "Issues Confronting the ELCA." Presentation: American Lutheran Church Pastoral Conference, Medora, ND, September 8-9, 1986.

127a. "Pericopic Preaching – Crossings Style." Venue unknown. Nov. 13, 1986.

128. Lengthy letter to the Editor of Lutheran Perspective challenging editorial excoriating Pittsburgh DMS action at ELCA convention, November 24, 1986.

1987

129. "A Time for Confessing Is a Time for Liberating." Currents in Theology & Mission, 14:2 (April, 1987) pp. 85-93.

1988

129a. Six Lectures on Luther's Concept and Practice of Spirituality. Delivered twice: Center for Christian Research, Taipei, Taiwan; Chinese Church Research Center, Hong Kong. May 2-26, 1988.

1989

130. "Carl Graesser on Isaiah 42," Recorded/transcribed interview. March 29, 1989.

131. "Branch of Jesse" Anniv. Booklet (75th)- Bethel Lutheran Church (University City MO) June 25, 1989.

1990

132. "Korean Women Search for Silver Coin." The Christian Century. May 2, 1990. p 452f.

133. "Lutheran Theological Foundations for Social Ethics." LWF Documentation, No. 29, December 1990, pp.15-22.

1991

134. "Thankfulness: An Apostolic Afterthought?" Lutheran Woman Today (Sept. 1991), pp. 5-8.

135. "Laity in Ministry to the World: God's Secret Weapon for Reforming the Church and the World," Presentation to the Ministerial Association of Salt Lake City, Utah. March 4, 1991.

136. Translation of Elert's chapter on Freedom from The Christian Ethos

1992

137. "A Whole New Work: Lutheran Images of the People of God in

Creation." Presentation: St. Luke's Lutheran Church (Chicago) April 24, 1992.

138. "Christian Freedom, Its Grounds and Value for Christian Life at the Close of the 20th Century." Presentation at Kobe Theological Seminary, Japan, June 4, 1992.

1993

139. "Encountering the Hidden God." AREOPAGUS- A Living Encounter with Today's Religious World, Tao Fong Shan Christian Centre, Hong Kong, Pentecost 1993.

1994

140. "Relocating Authority: A Perennial Family Issue." The Changing Face of the Family, Adelaide, Australia, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Institute, 1994, DBI Study Booklet No. 20: 54- 58.

140a."The Ecclesiology of the Augsburg Confession and the Apology." Class-handout. Luther Seminary. Adelaide, Australia. March 10, 1994.

141. "Pastoral Theology in the Augsburg Confession." Presentation for South Australia District (LCA) Pastoral Conference at Greenock, South Australia, March 16, 1994.

142. Two presentations at LCA New South Wales District Pastors' Conference, March 17-18, 1994.

143. "Why I am a Lutheran." Presentation at Martin Luther Seminary, Lae, Papua New Guinea, April 27, 1994.

144. Crossings Presentations at Martin Luther Seminary, Lae, Papua New Guinea, April 16-30, 1994.

145. "Living the Faith in Exile: Clues from First Peter." Banquet Address at Lutherans for Life, Adelaide, Australia, May

28, 1994.

146. "A Case From AC 28 For Women in the Pastoral Office Today." Luther Seminary (Adelaide, Australia) Faculty Forum Presentation, June 1, 1994.

147. Open Letter to Seminarians at Luther Seminary, Adelaide, Australia, June 13, 1994.

148. "Who Suffers in the Trinity? Theopaschitism in Theology." Presentation at St. George's Episcopal Church, Adelaide, Australia, July 1, 1994.

149. "Luther's Catechism and the New Testament." Eleven sessions at an in-service seminar with LCA Pastors and Evangelists (Aborigines) under the open sky near Kiwirrkurra, Western Australia, July 11-14, 1994.

149a. "Bad News, Good News in the N.T." Guest Lecture in Rolf Mayer's class Biblical Foundations: New Testament." August 26, 1994.

150. Presentations at Luther Seminary Community Retreat, Luther Seminary, Adelaide, Australia, September 21, 1994.

151. "From the Murray to the Mississippi (and Vice Versa). A Sequel?" Luther Seminary (Adelaide, Australia) Faculty Forum, November 2, 1994.

151a. Fourteen one-page Bible studies, most likely for Lutheran Church of Australia publication, probably 1994.

1995

152. "Charismatic Pneumatology." A response to the charismatic movement at the Mekane Yesus Seminary, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 17, 1995.

153. "Tolerance, Yes. But Some Things God Tolerates Only So Long." One of several Bible Studies for PRISM (LCA publication for Sunday School teachers), 1995.

1996

154. **"A Forty-Day Journey through Lent–But Never Alone: Our Own Thorny Circle of Suffering and Christ's Breakthrough."** Lenten Devotional Booklet, Creative Communications for the Parish, St. Louis, Missouri, 1996.

155. "Today in the Church Year: The Presentation of the Infant Jesus in the Temple." Presentation for LMA Staff Study Session, February 2, 1996.

156. "God's two Diaconias in II Corinthians 3-6. A Paradigm for Medical Missions with a Lutheran Accent." Presentation at 2nd annual convention of Lutheran in Medical Missions. Concordia University, River Forest IL. March 8, 1996.

157. "Law-Gospel Lutheranism and the Theology of Michael Fox." A letter to Elmer Witt, Holden Village Director, April 5, 1996.

158. "It's Legalism, Nor Gnosticism." Forum Letter. September 1996. p 4f.

159. "Why Jesus?" Five day Seminar at Holden Village, Chelan, WA. Sept. 4-8, 1996.

159a. "Pluralism's Question to Christian Missions: Why Jesus At All? Clues for an Answer from St. Paul's 'two-ministries' Theology." [Two versions: second version says "...from St. Paul's economic theology."] Unknown venues, October 3 and 5, 1996.

160. "Being a Christian at the Voting Booth on Tuesday." Presentation for Adult Forum, St. Mark Lutheran Church, Belleville, IL, Nov. 3, 1996.

1997

161. "Luther's Commentary on the Third Article as a Clue to His Theology of Other Religions," Luther Research Congress, Heidelberg University, Germany, August 17- 23, 1997. Revised and published in Missio Apostolica, Journal of the Luth. Society for Missiology. VII:1 (May 1999) pp. 4-10.

1998

162. "Even Rome Can be Home, but Should today's Augsburg Catholics Long to Go There? Not Really." Response to May 1998 issue of Lutheran Forum.

1999

163. "The Care and Redemption of God's Creation." Also titled "God's Two Projects in the One World: Care and Redemption: Capitalizing on the Image of God as Ambidextrous: A Proposal for using Luther's Two Kingdoms Theology in Daily Life." An essay presented to the Lutheran Professional Church Workers Conference in St. Louis, Missouri, March 11, 1999.

164. "Pluralism's Question to Christian Missions: Why Jesus at All?" Currents in Theology and Mission, vol. 26, No. 3 (June, 1999): pp. 164-170.

165. A Presentation for the Seminar: "Outside the Church No Salvation", Revised & published in Missio Apostolica, Journal of the Lutheran Society for Missiology, VII:1 (May 1999): pp.4-10.

166. "Some Reflections on the Theology of Bishop I Wayan Mastra." A letter to Bishop Wayan Mastra, Seminyak, Bali, Indonesia, September 28, 1999.

2000

167. "The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel." Presentation @ Mekane Yesus Seminary, Addis Ababa. March 6-7, 2000. DUPLICATE OF 169 BELOW.

168. "Christological Difficulties at IAMS 10." An Evaluation of the International Association For Mission Studies Conference in Pretoria, South Africa, January 21-28, 2000.

169. "The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel." Guest Lecture at Mekane Yesus Seminary, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, March 6-7, 2000.

170. "Four Sessions on Lutheranism – Its Theology and Praxis – at Ladue Chapel." Ladue Chapel Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, MO, April-May 2000.

170a. "Christology." Lecture at some Episcopal venue, most likely in St. Louis? October 21, 2000.

2001

171. "Laity in Ministry to the World: God's Secret Weapon for Reforming the Church and the World." Presentation at Salt Lake Ministerial Association, Salt Lake City, Utah, (March 4, 1991). Printed in Crossings Newsletter, A Tribute Edition, 2001.

172. Rerun of "Why Jesus?" seminar, six sessions, Ladue Chapel Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, MO, February-March 2001.

173. "Mission: Inside Out." Three presentations to ELCA Region One Pastoral Conference, Empress Hotel, Victoria, B.C., Canada, April 23-26, 2001.

174. "Death and Dying: Faithful Perspectives." Presentation to Medical Professionals at Lutheran General Hospital, Park Ridge, IL, June 28, 2001.

175. "Martin Luther on Human Will, Human Freedom." Presentation to Rationalists Society of St. Louis, July 21, 2001.

176. "Discussion Theses" for Lutherans Concerned, St. Louis Chapter, August 12, 2001.

177. "Lutheran Missiology – An Oxymoron? Maybe Not – Especially, Not Now." Presentation at ELCA Mission "Faculty" Meeting, Rosemont, IL, September 21-22, 2001.

178. "The Workplace as Mission Field." Six sessions in Adult Education at Ladue Chapel Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, MO, September-October 2001.

179.

"ReformationResources:Law/PromiseHermeneuticsandtheGodlySecularityofSex." Presentation at the SW Minnesota Synod – ELCA Fall Theology Conference, Assisi Heights, Rochester, MN, Sept. 30-Oct. 3, 2001.

2002

180. "Making Sense of the Gospel in a Secular World." Presentation for Overseas Ministries Study Center, New Haven, CT, January 8, 2002.

181. "Spirituality in Proclamation." Three presentations at NW Ohio Synod (ELCA) Retreat, Sawmill Creek Resort, Huron, OH, January 15-17, 2002.

182. "Luther's Theology of Mission." Presentation at Overseas Ministries Study Center, New Haven, CT, March 2002.

183. Response to Maryknoll Mission Institute on "Christian Mission: What Can We Learn From Wisdom Traditions?" March 17, 2002.

184. "Rebirth, Regeneration." Handout for Bible Class at St. John's Episcopal Church, March 17, 2002.
185. "In A World Of Faiths, Why Jesus?" First Run of a Weeklong Course at Overseas Ministries Study Center, New Haven, CT, April 15-19, 2002.
186. "A Strange New Time – How Strange, Really? How New?" Presentation for A Workshop for Clergy and Laity, Acton Congregational Church, Acton, MA, April 24, 2002.
- 186a. "Luther's Theology of Mission. A presentation for the SALT consultation – 'Setting Agendas for Lutheran Theology,'" St. Louis MO April 26-28, 2002.
187. "Lutheran Hermeneutics and Homosexuality." Presentation to Lutheran Pastoral Conference, New Haven, CT, May 9, 2002.
188. **"Mosaic and Christic Ethos in the Gospel of John." Currents in Theology and Mission, Vol. 29:3 (June, 2002).**
189. **"Using Luther's Concept of *Deus absconditus* for Christian Mission to Muslims," Presentation at the International Luther Research Congress, Copenhagen, Denmark, August 4-9, 2002, Seminar: Luther's Writings on the Turks.**
- 189a. Response to Willingen II (2002), The 50th Anniversary Congress on "Missio Dei" [Latin for "God's Own Mission."] Thursday Theology #220, Aug. 29, 2002.
190. Response to "Mission and Evangelism: Definitions for Discussion." (ELCA) Lutheran Missiologists' Meeting, Chicago, September 6-7, 2002. Handwritten.
191. "In a World of Many Faiths, Why Jesus?" Four-session Adult Bible Class, Christ Lutheran Church, Webster Groves, MO, November, 2002.

192. "Why Jesus?" Two sessions for Bethel Lutheran Church Bible Class, University City, MO, December 22 & 29, 2002.

2003

193. "Some Thoughts on Mission Drawn from Luther and the Lutheran Confessions." Presentation at Aarhus University, Denmark, Conference on "The Role of Mission in the Future of Lutheran Theology," January 15-16, 2003.

194. "Law-Promise Hermeneutics, Lutheranism's Core Charism – For Every Context. Case Study: Mission Theology." Presentation to University of Aarhus, Denmark, Conference on The Future of Lutheran Theology: Charisms & Contexts. January 16-29, 2003.

195. "In a World of Faiths, Why Jesus?" Four Sessions, Mission Colloquium with Victor Raj and LC-MS Mission Personnel, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, January-February 2003. Repeated at Bishop's Theological Conference for Professional Leaders, SE Michigan Synod, ELCA, February 1-3, 2004.

196. "Luther's Theology of the Cross." Presentation at Grace Lutheran Church, River Forest, IL, February 8, 2003.

196a. "Contra J. Mattam." His essay "Inculturated Evangelization and Conversion." For: Theology Today Friday Noon Seminar, September 26, 2003.

197. "The Reformation Aha! In Today's World." Three sessions at the Reformation Colloquium at Inter-Lutheran Council for Continuing Education, Woodlands Conference Center, Florida, October 28-29, 2003.

2004

198. Revised Schroeder Version of the LCMS Mission Affirmations of 1965. Jan. 27, 2004.

198a. "The Word of God: Lutheran Hermeneutics For Our Day." SE Michigan Synod (ELCA), Bishop's Theological Conference for Professional Leaders. Three sessions: "The Reformation Aha! For How to Read the Bible; The Reformation Aha! For How to Read the World; Using the Bible-Aha! For Reading Homosexuality." February 1-2, 2004.

199. "The Cross for the Modern World." Two Lenten lectures at Queenstown Lutheran Church, Singapore, March 24 & March 31, 2004.

200. "Lutheran Confessional Theology." Weekly seminar with pastors of the Lutheran Church of Singapore. Four sessions on Lutheran hermeneutics, four sessions on the Book of Concord. March-April 2004.

201. "Lutheran Distinctives." Thursday seminar sessions with Lutheran students at Trinity Theological College, Singapore, March- April 2004.

202. "Discipleship and Spirituality According to Luther's Catechism." Presentation to Jurong Christian Church, Singapore, March 25-26, 2004. [Edited and published in Indonesian in Festschrift for Armencius Munthe, Anugerah Tuhan Yang Tak Terhingga. Medan, Indonesia. 2004. pp 162-169.]

203. "Baptism." Response to Fredric Lee about Alpha Course statement. Singapore, April 10, 2004.

204. "Suffering." "Discipleship using Luther's Catechism," "Effective Pastoral Ministry," "Luther's The Freedom of a Christian," "How God Causes the Church to Grow." Five presentations for Luth. Church of the Redeemer, Singapore. April 13 – 22, 2004.

205. "Living as Easter People – In Freedom, In Hope" two

presentations for Queenstown Luth. Church, Singapore. April 21 & 28, 2004.

206. "A Biblical Study (mostly from Matthew) on Authority in the Church." Presentation to Lutheran Church of Singapore Council Members Fellowship, May 8, 2004.

207. "Lutheran Spirituality According to Luther's Small Catechism." Presentation at the Spiritual Retreat with Singapore Lutheran Pastors across the Straits in Malaysia, May 17-18, 2004.

208. "Deconstructing Missio Dei – 'in the Light of the Gospel.'" Presentation at International Association For Mission Studies, Balaton, Hungary, August, 2004.

209. "Mission in Asian Contexts from a Lutheran Perspective." Week-long LWF seminar (five sessions) at Sabah Theological Seminary, Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, August 9-15, 2004.

209a. "An Elephant in the Living Room." Posting to IAMS XI Participants: Some Thoughts about IAMS Eleven, Port Dickson, Malaysia, July 31-August 7, 2004. Email sent on August 28, 2004.

210. "Resolving the Life-Faith Tension Through the Crossings Movement." Interview reported in The Christian Press Korean-language newspaper, Seoul, Korea, September 6, 2004.

211. "A Review of Reformation Theology." Four sessions at Peace Lutheran Church Adult Bible Class, Belleville, IL, October 2004.

212. "Mission in Today's Global Contexts...From A Lutheran Perspective." Presentation to ELCA Pastoral Conference, Altamont, IL, October 28, 2004.

213. "In a World of Many Faiths, Why Jesus?" Bible Studies for Trinity Lutheran Church, Town & Country, MO. October- November,

2004.

214. "Some Thoughts about Vision Statements for the Lutheran Church in Singapore."

215. "Global Mission Volunteering with the Lutheran Church in Singapore." Report to Global Mission execs of ELCA. June 29, 2004

2005

216. "Lutheran Answers for 'How to...?' Questions: What Difference These Answers Make for Congregational Life." Three sessions at Pacific Hills Lutheran Church, Omaha, NE, April 9-10, 2005.

217. "Why Lutheran (at all)? And Why Now?" Presentation to Central/Southern Illinois Synod (ELCA) Conference Assembly, St. John's Lutheran Church, Bloomington, IL, April 17, 2005.

218. "Luther's 95 Theses – What Was That All About?" Adult Class, Trinity Lutheran Church, Town & Country, MO, October 30, 2005.

219. "Pentecost." Short presentation to Lutheran Campus Ministry Reformation Service, Graham Chapel, Washington University, St. Louis, MO, October 30, 2005.

219a. "Luther's 95 Theses – What Was That All About?" Presentation to Pauline Pearson's Roman Catholic parish in North St. Louis Country, Oct. 31, 2005.

220. "Luther as Mission Theologian: 9.5 Theses." Presentation at the Forum of Lutheran Clergy of Metro St. Louis, University Club Tower, Brentwood, MO, October 31, 2005.

220a. "Philip Jenkins' Global Christianity Viewed Through Luther's Lenses." Unknown venue, December 5, 2005.

2006

221. "A Second Look at the Gospel of Mark – Midway in the Year of Mark," Currents in Theology and Mission, 33:4 (August 2006), pp. 291-299.

2007

222. "The Word of God and Daily Work." "Old-fashioned" Crossings weekend workshop with the church council of Zion Lutheran Church, York, PA, March 2-4, 2007.

223. Reflections on Dan Finucane's (SLU) and Deborah Krause's (Eden Seminary) sessions. Presentation to Bethel Lutheran Church Adult Forum, University City, MO, October 21 and 28, 2007.

2008

224. "Foreword" in R. W. Bertram, A Time For Confessing, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, pp. vii-xv.

225. "The Doctrine of Atonement." Discussion with Students at Lutheran Campus Ministry House, University City, MO, March 31, 2008.

226. "Luther a Mission Theologian? Yes, Indeed. Reconciliation at the Center of his Mission Theology." Presentation at IAMS 12, Ballatonfured, Hungary, August 16-23, 2008.

227. Mission Report for summer in Europe. Three sessions for Adult Forum, Bethel Lutheran Church, University City, MO, September 2008.

228. "A Vademecum for 'RWBertram: A Time for Confessing.'" Presentation at Crossings Conference, Belleville, IL, October 19-22, 2008.

2009

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[Total = 256 with "a" addenda included.]

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400-plus

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[Plus two "a" addenda = 56]

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"Sabbatheology" The first 80 or so weekly postings 1996 – 1997.

"Thursday Theology" weekly postings (#1 to #700) 1998 – 2011.

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