

**The Relation of Other Disciplines to the Study
and Teaching of Theology:
An Attempt at a Lutheran Perspective**

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A. Distinguishing between the discipline of theology and the so-called non-theological disciplines.

No one in this audience is likely to deny that theology is a distinctive discipline, unique for some reason or other in the midst of the numerous disciplines promoted and pursued in the market place of modern scholarship. The word "theology" itself indicates what we think is unique about our discipline. God himself is the subject matter. No other discipline in the academic market place claims this for its subject matter. The more Lutheran we are the more we should be inclined to say that not God per se (deus nudus), but the "Word of God," the masks and media by which God communicates with men, these are the subject matter of the theological discipline. More Lutheran still, it seems to me, would be the acknowledgment that this "Word of God," the intermediate instruments whereby God communicates with men, is a juridical word, wherein God not only communicates with mankind, but passes verdict on his existence, and in his "verdictive" word, God creates what is real in us with whom he communicates. God is not the umpire who "calls 'em the way I sees 'em." But whatever "he calls 'em," that's what they become. As Elert says (Ethos, p. 10) "The recognition of the divine authority to exercise judgment is the indispensable prerequisite...of all...theological disciplines." But the uniqueness of theology, he reminds us, "must not be sought in the wrong place. Theology has no quarrel with the norms of the normative sciences, even less with the methods and

conclusions of [natural] science or history. Theology itself undertakes the investigation of historical events, for instance the history of the Hebrew people or the beginnings of Christianity. The theologian is grateful to historians, orientalist, and classicists for their help in his field. When theology introduces the concept of God it is not as a stopgap, as though otherwise there were a break in the natural chain of events, or as though the concept would explain something otherwise "unintelligible." For the theologian the historical process stands in relationship to God because, as a theologian, he perceives in the data of history the claims of an Absolute which transcends all facts and events and addresses itself to us apart from all details and coincidences of the past. The theologian does not direct himself to an 'objective' knowledge in the field of history or science but appeals to the conscience. A personal decision is required of us--do we accept the fact that we are under the verdict of God or do we reject it?...This...awareness of the divine verdict becomes the foundation of all theology." The distinctive subject matter of Christian theology available for examination and disciplined questioning is this verdictive and creative Word of God.

However, this does not mean that everything that can be known about God or everything that God says and does is the distinctive subject matter of theology. When a Christian views the traditional subject matters of the other disciplines, conveniently even if arbitrarily divided into humanities, natural and social sciences (e.g., a novel, a photograph of Mars, the population explosion) his faith evokes from him the confession that here too he is encountering the activity of God. A book, a space machine, and an exploding population are the work of the creator. Although this distinction will not stand for very long (in this paper either), for the moment let us make the distinction between Word of God as defined above as the subject matter of theology, and Work of the Creator in creation as the legitimate subject matters of all the various "non-theological" disciplines. You see the fly in the ointment already in the attempt to talk about God's work as an apparently "non-theological" affair.

The point I wish to make is that not everything God does or is doing is automatically the bailiwick of theology. E.g., what God was doing in burying human fossils in the Olduvai

Gorge in Tanganyika some 1,750,000 years ago (according to the potassium-argon dating formula) is not immediately the subject matter of theology. The Christian confesses that this fossilizing is an act of the creator, just as much as the discovery of the fossils was, just as much as the potassium-argon clock is. But according to current academic conventions the discipline (or sub-discipline) of paleo-anthropology is the place where this subject matter is appropriately at home. (The same goes for the God-given pictures from Mars a few weeks ago.) The only way the Olduvai fossils might become the proper subject matter of theology would be if they prompted one to ask a question (which in terms of anthropology is senseless) such as: Why were fossils discovered there and not the living creatures themselves? In terms of scientific anthropology the question is absurd: Of course no one lives for nearly 2,000 millenia. I suggest that we have a parallel theological treatment of similar material in Genesis 5 where each paragraph of that pre-patriarchal and perhaps pre-historic paleo-anthropology concludes with the monotonous repetition of the theological verdict: "And he died...and he died... The possibilities of fossils raising a theological question requires further refinement of the definition of the subject matter of theology.

The subject matter of Christian theology ought perhaps be defined stricte dicta and late dicta parallel to what the Lutheran Confessions do when defining "gospel." The parallel here is more than just methodological. Late dicta theology has as its subject matter the verdicting and creating word of God as discussed above wherever it comes through to man, even in those segments of life and in those academic disciplines not normally considered religious or theological, in this case even in the Olduvai fossils if the judgment of God on this our brother strikes us as we contemplate and study what was once a man. That according to our confessions is included in the Gospel late dicta.

But the subject matter of Christian theology stricte dicta is the Gospel stricte dicta, that new reality which e.g., St. Mark has in focus and which he finds nowhere else in creation when he opens his evangel with the words "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." The scholarly study of what Mark calls his subject matter is neither helped nor hindered by the study of the Olduvai fossil finds, nor the Mars pictures, nor

my psychiatrist's accurate report of what's going on in my psyche. I can find no way that I or St. Mark (had he known any of these items himself) could incorporate these data into the "Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" so that it would add or detract a jot or a tittle from that unique subject matter of theology stricte dicta. To be sure, that "Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" has more to its subject matter than simply the biography of Jesus of Nazareth. As a "subject matter" the gospel of JC, the Son of God includes people in relationship to him, so that when I myself become related to him, I too become part of that subject matter for theological study. But even with that very arch-Lutheran insight that a man himself is the subject matter of a highly theo-centric theology, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God which now includes me, a particular 20th century man is not altered a bit by Olduvai, Mars, and my psychiatrist, even though these are specific component parts of my particular biography. Mark's "gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God" is not one wit impoverished by virtue of his ignorance about these others. There may well be something the Gospel of JC, the Son of God has to add to the truth of the Olduvai human fossils, but the relationship is not reciprocal.

Conclusion: although Richard Luecke is going to show us on Wednesday how Christians are called to give a certain kind of "yes" to the secular, Christian theology stricte dicta must say "no" to the increasingly popular and apparently pious desire for substantive aid from any of the other disciplines. We are fooling ourselves if we "listen for a while instead of talk" or "seek honestly to learn from" the secular disciplines in the hope of learning something substantive about the proper subject matter of theology stricte dicta. Neither paleontology, nor economics, nor sociology, nor jurisprudence, nor psychology can contribute anything to theology if theology is the special discipline that studies the Gospel of JC, the Son of God. In our Lutheran tradition, as a matter of fact, one might say that even what God Himself says or does apart from the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God--especially in his verdictive activity labeled by us as God's law--cannot contribute a thing to the subject matter of the "science of the Gospel" unless it be the knowledge that this Gospel stricte dicta is not like any of these other words and works of God.

In our Lutheran tradition this distinction has been expressed as that between God's "Schoepfungsordnung" and His "Gnadenordnung." If for the moment we substitute the term discipline for the term Ordnung--referentially not too far-fetched--then we have the disciplines of creation and the discipline of grace. God's various works are the subject matters of both. He is the author of both orders and both kinds of disciplines, but only in the grace-discipline is the Gospel of JC, the Son of God, the proper subject matter.

However, because Mark wrote his gospel some two millenia ago in the Greek language in a Hebraic intellectual atmosphere, historical study and linguistic study will clearly be prime auxiliary sciences from the disciplines of creation to assist the discipline of grace. But the study of history per se and languages per se, apart from this particular history and the language used to speak about it, ought not be expected to provide more scientia of the Gospel, although it will indeed do so for God's non-gracious disciplines.

B. An attempt at a Lutheran understanding of non-theological disciplines.

Within Lutheranism non-theological disciplines have always been at home. Their proper place within the home, however, is at present not exactly clear. Are they full-fledged natural children, or step-children, or adopted children, or part of the servant staff? One prominent perspective coming from the Christian humanism of the Reformation era has viewed them as a combination of stepchildren and domestic (if not domesticated) servants, viz., they have the same father as theology, but their chief family function is to give the first-born natural child (theology) the auxiliary assistance needed for theology's proper work, to wit, the exposition of the Sacred Scriptures. J.J. Pelikan's lectures at the dedication of Fuerbringer Library here three years ago (vide CTM 12/1963) elaborated on this Reformation heritage of respect for and appropriation of non-theological disciplines. The "secular" disciplines of linguistics and history have been cherished as the natural auxiliaries to Biblical exegesis which for Pelikan is "the task of the theologian, of every theologian" or else what he is doing "is not theology." We shall return to this citation later. Pelikan also adds to this traditional notion additional reasons for theology attending to non-theological thought. One is "the humanizing influence that only such thought can

bring into the family of theological discourse" which thereby protects the theologian from a gnosticism that ignores or denies "the sheer gift of divine creation." The second is for apologetic purposes, not the pathetic apologetic of defending God, but the "eristic" apologetic which understands modern man in the very terms with which he understands himself in order to "exhibit (to him) that man can still exist as man only under God."

In addition to these three reasons for theology paying "appreciative attention to non-theological thought"--interpreting Scripture, appreciating the sheer gift of creation, apologetic Anknüpfungspunkt to modern man-- I should like to propose another. This may not be a fourth to add to the list, but more in the nature of a theological statement of what the non-theological disciplines are in the first place, from which one might then have fuller understanding of Pelikan's three reasons and perhaps deduce even more.

The subject matter studied and investigated in all the so-called non-theological disciplines is creation, the work of the creator. The creation as we know it in its entirety and in all its parts is "creation after the fall." The predicate "fallen" applies properly not only to the imperfection with which scholarly men study and investigate their subject matter, but applies to the subject matter itself. When a Christian social scientist does some pavement-pounding research on metropolitan St. Louis, he knows even before his first interview that he is dealing with sinners, pieces of the fallen creation. (He may also be dealing with pieces of redeemed creation in some cases, but that he will not know ahead of time, and even when he hears confessions of faith from the people he interviews he has no absolute surety that this is truth and not just words.) Creation as we encounter it, besides being beautiful, beneficial, a marvel and "sheer gift," is creation after the fall. Lutheran Christians who occasionally are stampeded into a near monolatry of the first article because of their guilt feelings about an alleged monolatry of the second article ought to temper their ontology with that which they already know about hamartology because of which the christology of the second article is necessary in order to bring into existence the eschatology and ecclesiology of the third article.

Expressed in other terms, we have no direct access to the tob of Genesis 1. Between us and that "very good" creation stands the curse of Genesis 3. The cherub at the gate of Eden at the end of chapter three is posted precisely to prevent any assumed or attempted "natural" access to supralapsarian creation. The only access to the status integritatis not only with the creator but also with the creation is He who is "the way, truth, and life, but by whom no one comes to the father." In this respect the cherub of Eden executes the usus paedagogicus of Galatians 3:24. Paul's own perspective of the creation apart from Christ is that "all things [are] consigned hypo hamartian confined hypo nomon." (3:22f.) Therefore any serious study of anything in creation will be less than the full truth if it neglects the "nomological" character of all creation after the fall. The truth about all creation after the fall is that it is nomological existence. The concept of nomos spotlighted in the term nomological is not merely Paul's label for God's disposition or even His vocalized legislation, to which a given piece of creation (e.g., a particular man) might be positively or negatively inclined. Nomos as Paul uses it here is predicated to man and creation as well as being predicated to God. It labels both a reality about God (a theological reality) and an anthropological and ktisiological one. This is what lies at the base of the evangelical doctrine of creation: creation is the actualizing of God's verdictive word in tangible spatial-temporal form. My actual human biographical reality as it unfolds chronologically in my own personal history is the result of the Word of the creator. And if his word about me is nomos, then hypo nomon I am. The same creative method applies to the new creation. The big difference is the new Word of the Creator.

It seems to me Paul would suggest that any discipline not studying the "gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" is automatically investigating nomological reality. Therefore for the Christian in a non-theological discipline he already knows this "fact" about his subject matter. In a sense he sees it as part of the objective data of the subject matter of his discipline. Therefore it seems to me that here the Christian has an additional question to ask in addition to those of his pagan colleagues, viz.. What does this piece of creation which I am studying demonstrate of the theological reality of nomological existence?

In the Elert citation at the beginning of the paper we heard that the "recognition of the divine authority to exercise judgment (on creation) is the indispensable prerequisite of theology." It is not the Gospel which conveys this recognition--at least not immediately--but nomological creation itself and the disciplines devoted to its study are channels for this. When this occurs via whatever discipline, then that discipline becomes a theological discipline, but, nota bene, theological discipline late dicta. And if I am a part of the creation, which I am investigating in my non-theological discipline, then the recognition of God's right to exercise judgment becomes for me the recognition that I have to justify myself before God--the first recorded piece of nomological human data "after the fall" (Gen. 3:8f.). One could add additional items to the list just from Genesis 3, items to be expected in a disciplined encounter with nomological creation: namely, curse, futility, death, as well as God's continuing preservation of, care for, and communication with creation after the fall.

What follows are some additional characteristics of nomological existence which a Christian scholar might expect to encounter in his study of it. The items are summarized from Elert's Christian Ethos.

1. Nomological existence is "confined existence," confined to a particular Seinsgefuge by God's creative and governing action, confined to a Sollgefuge by God's legislative action, confined to a Qualitatsgefuge by God's judicial and executing action.
2. Nomological existence is preserved existence.
3. Nomological existence is threatened existence,
4. Nomological existence is retributive existence.
5. Nomological existence is guilty existence.
6. Nomological existence is response-able existence.
7. Nomological existence is order-ed existence.
8. Nomological existence is existence under the law of life and the law of death.

Just how any or all of these aspects of nomological existence might find place in non-theological disciplines, I'm not sure. For some disciplines the connection seems more

likely than others. Perhaps the whole notion is a phantom. Yet I would think that it ought to be tried before it is abandoned and I am not aware of any place where it has consciously been tried in the contemporary world of scholarship. I share the uneasiness which many of you sense at the prospect of interlacing our non-theological academic disciplines with all sorts of "God-talk." We want to retort: "Cobbler stick to your shoe-making," and the specter arises for all of us of the instructor using his secular discipline as a platform for his own subjective homilies about religion. But it need not be so, especially among Lutherans who, on the one hand, have in their understanding of nomological existence a narrowly prescribed area of the sort of theological reality they expect to find in creation after the fall (that would impede complete subjective arbitrariness) and, on the other hand, by virtue of their doctrine of creation have the conviction that they are encountering the handiwork of the creator in the subject matter of their own discipline, and that therefore it is not only a scientific, or artistic, or literary, or psychic-socio phenomenon, but also a theological phenomenon. This is so not because they "subjectively" ascribe the theological reality to the phenomenon, but it is "objectively" there before their conviction and they are only recognizing it ex post facto.

If nevertheless we are still uncomfortable and uneasy about such a theology of the non-theological disciplines, it may be because of our uncertainty about or our divergent views on the discipline of theology itself.

C. An Attempt at a Lutheran Understanding of the Discipline of Theology

Earlier in the paper I asserted that the non-theological disciplines have nothing to contribute substantially to the subject matter of theology stricta dicta. If, however, non-theological disciplines were carried on in the manner suggested above by Christian scholars, one result might be a reinforced focus on what I view as the proper subject matter of the discipline of theology itself. As the "non-theologian" scholar encounters the myriad masks of nomological existence in his particular subject matter, he ought to come pounding on the door of the theologian and demand of him: What have you got in your proper subject matter, the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God, that will enable me

to live with or even overcome this particular aspect of curse, vanity and death that I have heard God speak in my own professional discipline? The theologian in this case could hardly have fulfilled his professional or vocational task just by reminding the questioner that "Jesus Christ died for your sins," but here the specific Gospel must be particularly enunciated to a specific aspect of the reality of nomological existence, which to be sure has indeed been abrogated and overcome by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Perhaps in this way the highly prized "dialogue" with the non-theological disciplines which we professional theologians have occasionally sought to initiate--perhaps somewhat imperialistically and in my experience not very successfully--might be forced upon us from the other side of the fence. And where might this better be tried than on our own campuses where the scholar on the other side of the fence is already our friend--or even if not friendly, he is at least our brother by baptism.

Bob Menzel's paper to follow will quite likely go into the nature of the discipline of theology in more detail. For my own understanding of our discipline I have added one more ingredient to the previous statement of Pelikan: "The task of the theologian, of every theologian, is the exposition of the Sacred Scriptures. Theology must be exegetical, or it is not theology." That ingredient is; "The task of the theologian, of every theologian, is the exposition of the Word of God (HIM) in the Word of God (IT). Theology must be evangel-ological (in order to speak to our nomological existence) or it is not theology."

One might be tempted to argue that what the last sentence describes is more properly the job description of the Christian preacher, rather than of the academic theologian. Spelling out the distinction between preacher and theological teacher is more than my assignment, but I would suggest that many of the things R. R. Caemmerer has said in criticism of Dodd's distinction between kerygma and didache (CTM 1961) are applicable here. The life of the church goes on as preaching, Christian life and Christian worship are simply done. This can and does go on without the services of what we have come to know as the professional theologian, i.e., people like us. The church has theology even without people like us. "Theology and church belong together because both represent the same cause, [i.e., the Gospel] though in different ways. The church represents it

apodictically by the very performance of her life functions in her public proclamation, her ethos, her cultus. Theology represents it scientifically, i.e., critically. Theology does not cast doubt upon the church's dogma, ethos and cultus, but asks the question of their adequate foundations (zureichende Begründung). These three functions of the church correspond to theology's three sub-disciplines, dogmatics, ethics, and practical theology." (Elert: Ethos. p. 30, German edition)

This is my own working definition of my professional vocation as a theologian. It corresponds in large measure to the formal definition of critical scientific disciplines outside the field of theology too, viz., inquiry for the "zureichende Begründung" (adequate justification, sufficient reason, sufficient grounds) of what passes as scientia of a particular subject matter. My particular subject matter is the Gospel whose dimensions--though specifically limited to prevent me from slipping into some aspect of God's nomological world and think that I am there doing theology stricte dicta--are themselves at least as extensive as nomological existence itself, in that this Gospel is itself the replacement of nomological creation with a new one. My own constant scientific question in a multitude of forms is: What are the adequate foundations of the Gospel itself and then secondly, in the Gospel itself for predicating to this or that particular word or quality or action the label "Christian"?

D. Some Concluding Aspects of the Relationship Between Theological and Non-Theological Disciplines.

One possible point of contact between the two discipline areas might initially be found in the modest methodological consideration indicated in the previous paragraph, viz., the common concern to get at the "adequate foundations" of what passes as scientia in a particular subject matter.

Historically the relationship between the two in our tradition has been that which Pelikan indicated--auxiliaries to studying the Scriptures, appreciating creation, and approaching contemporary man.

Theoretically most of my paper has been working on an old Lutheran cornerstone (which is honored more in the speaking than in the doing, I suspect) which all of you know and which you have surely already discovered as you translate the root words of nomological and evangelylogical back into English. My own working with this arch-Lutheran distinction is still in its infancy, but at the moment I see no other option having the "zureichende Begründung" for relating the two discipline areas.

Practically I shall conclude with attempting some answers to the questions posed for me by A. C. Piepkorn and R. W. Bertram when this paper was assigned me.

Question 1. What do the doctrines of the natural and supernatural ends of man, or, put differently, the doctrines of creation, redemption and sanctification-in-the-wider-sense have to say to this subject?

Answer 1. I understand this to be the major theoretical question and my answer is everything that has been said above.

Question 2. What will curricula look like in which each of the other disciplines will make a maximum contribution to the professional theological competence of our graduates without suffering a violation of its own integrity?

Answer 2. I am in no position to make specific recommendations in other disciplines because I am illiterate in most of them. But I would ask the curriculum planners competent in each of those disciplines: Where in your subject matter might it be possible to raise the nomological question: What judgment of the Creator encounters man in this field? It seems to me that that would be the one additional question which our curricula would ask beyond what competent secular scholarship expects in any given discipline.

Question 3. Concretely and in our circumstances, how can instruction in each of the other disciplines be shaped to make a maximum contribution to the professional

theological competence of our graduates (notably in the cases of language study, history, philosophy, and communication and education skills)?

Answer 3. Use these disciplines (and let the student himself practice it) to perform the auxiliary functions they can perform for theology strictae dicta, (a) formally as auxiliary in the reading of the scriptures and (b) materially as auxiliary in exposing and comprehending nomological existence.

Question 4. What can be done to prevent the heteronomous domination of other disciplines by theology on our campuses?

Answer 4. If theologians really knew what their proper subject matter was and how to practice the discipline of that subject matter, there would be much less heteronomy. The comments above on the imperialism of theologians would be broken if we acknowledged that we are not the only ones engaged in "God-talk" ex officio, but that all the other disciplines are too, insofar as they are working on God's creation. (Cf. Psalm 8, 19, etc.) Our specialty as theologians is one particular word of God, the Gospel.

Question 5. What can be done to insure that the teachers of theology are as adequately trained and prepared in theology as teachers of other disciplines are in theirs?

Answer 5. First sentence of Answer 4 applies here too. We might take a leaf from the annals of the University of Wittenberg and see how theological education was restructured when the faculty there became convinced that "all theology has to be exegetical (and evangelological) or it is not theology." Here the church historians could help us.

Question 6. What can be done to insure that the student will expect to have as much demanded of him in his study of theology as in his study of other disciplines?

Answer 6. Flunk him for shoddy work in theology (i.e., the professor himself must distinguish between nomological order and evangelological order when grading his papers.)

Question 7. Granted that the immediate vocation of a student on one of our campuses is to be a student, how can his study of theology promote the new obedience in terms of his becoming a better student in the other disciplines?

Answer 7. The "how to" question of the new obedience in any particular biography can, of course, only be answered by the evangel itself if it is to be a new (non-nomological) obedience. Therefore a student can only be expected to view his academic vocation as the field for his new obedience when and if he hears the pro te of this Word of God as he studies it, and is encouraged and has been trained to practice this discipline himself. If so, then let him do it.

Question 8. What level of proficiency and training is demanded for teaching theology at the various levels that our campuses represent, from high school to post-professional graduate study?

Answer 8. I don't know. I find that teaching Sunday School teachers at Immanuel in Valparaiso is just as taxing as any other teaching I do. The most important requirement as standard for any teacher of theology is the gift and-skill of seeing the pro me of the Word of God so that I know what I'm saying when I claim to the student tua res agitur.

Question 9. What theological training is necessary and desirable for the career-instructor in non-theological subjects on our campus?

Answer 9. Enough to be alert for and capable of searching out the "theology" in his non-theological subject matter. How many years this takes or whether it requires a vicarage I'm in no position to say.

Question 10. How can theologically trained instructors in non-theological disciplines on our campuses facilitate the interdisciplinary dialogs of which theology is one of the partners?

Answer 10. I addressed this above when I suggested that as the non-theologian scholar encounters the myriad masks of nomological existence in his discipline he ought to come pounding on the office door of us who are the technical theologians and force us to talk with him and talk straight. Another way of answering the question is to say that the instructor must do what every disciplinarian is obliged to do, viz., be a spokesman for what he knows to be the truth since he has tested it for its "zureichende Begründung." If it is knowledge of the truth, it contains in itself the dynamis for persuasively propagandizing itself. The academic marketplace is eristic as Pelikan says and therefore the chances for truth being acknowledged depend upon the winsome courage and honest conviction with which it is promoted. This of course includes the willingness to engage in polemics, the moral and intellectual strength to demonstrate that contrary assertions are not true.

Question 11. In the developing situation where the practitioners of each discipline often tend to be formed into a community to which the members give a primary kind of loyalty and commitment, what is the role of theology over against the Christian member of these communities on our campuses?

Answer 11. The role of theology is to warn against and expose the idolatry of every primary loyalty (even a loyalty to the discipline of theology) that conflicts with the first commandment, while sympathetically understanding and appreciating the magnetism of every form of idolatry. Besides this theological training ought to have supplied the Christian practitioner with the skills for spotting false theology within the discipline itself which may well be directly tied to idolizing discipline via some primary loyalty. Here one is called to polemics as a spokesman for God in exposing and illuminating the theological truth that genuinely is present in a particular subject matter.

Question 12. Without trespassing on the professional domains of the other disciplines how can theology most effectively challenge the materialistic assumptions that are increasingly implied in the teaching of the behavioral sciences?

Answer 12. In addition to what was said in #11, I would suggest caution in "challenging the materialistic assumptions etc." not only because I'm a novice in the behavioral sciences, but also because one does not have to denigrate the materiality of any discipline in order to enhance its theologicality. We might take a cue from Luther's treatment of death in his Genesis commentary and especially in his exegesis of Psalm 90 (Cf. Thieliicke's Tod und Leben), where the biological reality of death is not minimized in the least, but where it is "theologized" by Luther's seeing the biological reality as the means whereby God moves along juridically active in creation after the fall. We do not have to find some break in the causal chain of the material world in order to have a place to put God in. The Christian behavioral scientist goes all the way with the scientia of his discipline, but then asks one additional (not substitute) question: "What does God say of all this? He says thus..." and you know how the passage continues. It is locus classicus for nomological existence.

Conclusion:

This is my suggestion for the topic assigned me. It may not work at all. I do not know that it has consciously been attempted anywhere. Perhaps it has. Because it has certain explicit Lutheran roots, we Lutherans surely ought to try it in the current education explosion before we switch to some other options rooted historically in Geneva, Canterbury or Rome, or currently in Marburg, Basel, Oxford or Chicago. This is not to say that we would "fight rather than switch", but that we fight (at least a little) before we switch.

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