

More Discoveries from That Year Downunder 1994

Colleagues,

A few weeks ago (TT631) you received an item that I'd once composed, but completely forgotten. However, Bob Schultz had not. Its theme was: seminary education, going down the aisles of the supermarket or cooking in the kitchen? It came from my first post-retirement year 1994. Marie and I were year-long guests of the Luth. Church in Australia, she working in the seminary library, I in the classroom. Schultz's discovery prompted me to open the long-untouched Aussie file folder on my computer. Eureka! Some twenty additional relics that were confected for various audiences in that year downunder. Forgotten "treasures"? Well, maybe. You decide. Here are four samples.

Peace and Joy!

Ed Schroeder

Luther Seminary, Adelaide **MISSION AND EVANGELISM Semester 2, 1994**

Some helps for putting together your own theology and strategy for mission.

1. Articulate (in terms of your own experience, your own favored images and metaphors) what the movement is when a person not-trusting-Christ moves to be a Christ-truster.
2. In your analysis of the particular people focused on for your mission theology and strategy, spell out the "culture" in which they are currently living, their

symbols, myths, rituals.

3. Then analyze that culture to expose its soteriology. Why does it seem “good”—or even “saving”—to the folks who “believe” it, who hang their hearts on it?
4. Relate this to your #1 (above) statement and the way you described people “before coming to Christ” there. Can you connect that description with the cultural soteriology you discovered in #3 above? If not, back to the drawing board to take another look and revise either #1 or #3.
5. When you have that “false” soteriology spelled out so that it makes sense to you, i.e., so you can say that you too would be “grabbed” by it if you did not have the Christ-alternative, then spell out the Good News of Christ in a way that might make sense to folks trusting that “false” soteriology. Do this first, if possible, in theological language, working to the point of showing how the Christian Gospel is actually “better news” than whatever the “good news” is in the cultural soteriology you’re working with. Do this first of all for your own sake, for achieving theological clarity about what you are doing.
6. Then work out a strategy for picking up conversation with someone hooked by that cultural soteriology and then moving the conversation to the “better news” of the Christian Gospel. This time avoid using professional theological terms in the language of this conversation. Remember that your goal is not to prove to the candidate that the Gospel is correct or true, but to help him/her see personally that it is indeed “good news,” yes, “better news” than they are living on now. What you are inviting them to do is to switch from the cultural gospel they are trusting to the Gospel of Christ.
7. If you have time, sketch out some organized way (in a Lutheran congregation, or an ecumenical community-wide project, or in an LCA district, or the whole LCA, or some

other specific context) to get this into action.

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Luther Seminary

Handout for students in the Ethics Class

THE DEBATE ABOUT THE THIRD USE OF THE LAW

An in-house Lutheran debate in the late 1500s arising after Luther and Melanchthon had died.

The language of the various uses of God's law (Latin: usus legis) came from Luther and Melanchthon themselves. Luther frequently spoke of duplex usus legis. Melanchthon sometimes spoke of triplex usus legis.

The "uses" were eventually numbered as follows:

first use = God using the law to coax, cajole, force sinners to do more good and less damage than they would if the law were absent. Carrots and sticks as motivators.

second use = God using the law to convict us of sin and drive us to Christ.

third use = God using the law (encouraging Christians to use the law) as a guide for living the new life of faith.

It was about this third use that the argument arose. It went something like this.

Statement: The law of God is a resource for the reborn Christian to serve as an ethical guide in living out his/her Christian life. Since Christ removes the law's accusatory (2nd use) role against us, the law now is helpful information about what God wants us to do.

Arguing for the affirmative:

1. That's what the Bible teaches—even though the expression “3rd use” is not in the Bible.
2. That is what the Formula of Concord Article 6 teaches when the Formulators sought to settle the argument.
3. Christ and the Holy Spirit use the law (and other means) to guide us in living the Christian life.
4. Without a third-use we are open to anti-nomianism, defenseless against libertinism—in short a law-less life with no guidelines or restrictions at all.

Arguing for the negative:

1. There never is a law of God that is just information about how to behave. God's law is always accusatory, *lex semper accusat* (Apology IV). Thus its purpose is always to drive us to Christ, not to assist us in our Christian ethics.
2. Formula of Concord 6 does not use the term “third use” in the sense of the statement formulated above. FC 6 directs the law's “use” in the life of a Christian to the Old Adam that exists in every Christian, not to the new person in Christ now resident there.
3. When God's law addresses the Old Adam in every Christian, the law carries out its first two uses: to coerce/coax sinners—with carrot and stick—to preserve and care for others, and also to accuse them of their sin. Call it a curb and then a mirror.
4. Safeguards against anti-nomianism and libertinism returning to threaten the life of a Christian, and guidance for living the new life of faith, all these come from Christ himself (He our Lord, we his disciples) and from the Holy Spirit (“led by the Spirit”), not from the law.
5. If Christ-trusters go to the law for ethical help, they necessarily desert Christ/Holy Spirit in doing so.

CROSSING FAITH AND THE WORKPLACE

An In-Service Seminar with the faculty of Yirara College, a government college for aboriginal students—in the “Red Center” of the country—recently turned over to the Luth. Ch. of Australia because of its historic good track record in work with aboriginals.

Alice Springs, Northern Territory

July 18-19, 1994

Monday 18 July

1. 8:45 – 10:15 a.m. TRACKING MY DAILY WORK – Taking an inventory of my daily work, (daily work = not necessarily what I get paid for, if I do get paid, but what I do all day that makes me tired when bedtime comes around), what that work does to me, what it means to me, how my work shapes who I am. Participants reflect on their own daily work, show and tell those reflections in conversation with another participant, and contribute the shared exchange to a group-produced specific agenda for the seminar. Tea Break
2. 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon GROUNDING – Christian sources, Christian roots, for linking faith and daily work. Biblical study of text(s) from the church lectionary, specifically, the texts for these current several Sundays, John 6. Lunch
3. 12:45 – 1:45 p.m. CROSSING – Intersecting the Biblical case study just done with the agenda produced from session one above.
4. 1:50 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. CHRISTIAN CALLINGS in Today’s Secular Society A Model for Reflecting on Christian

Vocation: "We dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you, God, have made." (Offertory collect in the LBW/USA)Wrap-up and Closing Devotions

Tuesday 19 July

5. 8:45 – 10:15 Once More the Workplace. TRACKING the macro-Issues (systemic, structural, cultural) in society and church that impact daily work at Yirara College.Tea Break
6. 10:30 – 12:00 GROUNDING Sample Biblical text: I Peter "Modeling the faith in an alien culture."Lunch
7. 12:45 – 1:45 CROSSING the Macro-Issues with I Peter
8. 1:50 – 2:45 REDEEMING the symbols in today's workplace: "It's just a job." "I've got my career." Calling? Unemployed., Superannuation.Wrap-up: Where do we go from here?
Closing Devotions.

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**Presentation to "Lutherans for Life," Adelaide chapter.
May 28, 1994**

OUR CHRISTIAN CALLING: THE CARE AND REDEMPTION OF GOD'S CREATION

Intro: Last Sunday's Pentecost story: Acts 2: 42,44-47. Sounds so peaceful. Wouldn't be difficult to carry out the calling in that context. "Having the good will of all the people. Daily the number of Xians grows." Sound like Australia? Not quite. Sound like the USA? Not really. (Cf. statistics of mainline churches.)

Our assignment takes place in a world more like the one described in the the opening words of the First Epistle of

Peter: Peter, an apostle of JC, to the exiles (Greek word "parepideemois" could be "refugees") of the diaspora in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia. (1:1) In 2:11 they are called "aliens" in addition to "exiles/refugees. The descriptors for them are "suffering various trials, moral warfare, maligned as evil-doers, do right and suffer for it, get abused, fiery ordeal, sharing Christ's sufferings, reviled for the name of Christ, suffer as a Christian," and at the end in chapter 5, "that roaring lion stalking his prey hungry to devour."

That's probably closer to our own time with its distance between our culture and our Gospel. Not much fiery ordeal in Australia for Christians, more likely, just ignored or sneered at. But there are places even in the so-called "free world" where Christians pay with marks on their bodies for the faith. [One of my grad students, Keun Soo Hong, is in a Korean prison with charge of treason for what he preached.]

I want to pick up the word "exile" and un-pack it. The two big OT terms that start the same way are exodus and exile. First one is a good-news term, the second is bad-news. The NT (as far as I know) mentions the word exodus only once—Luke's account of Jesus' transfiguration— but the term exile surfaces as the major metaphor here in I Peter and again in Hebrews. In both places the term is literally turned-around from its OT meaning. Easiest place to illustrate that is from the description in Hebrews. Cf. Hebrews 11, the great litany of OT heroes who coped with their own hostile environments "by faith." And right in the middle of that list [Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham ("by faith" 4x) Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses (4x), the exodus marchers (2x), Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, prophets, etc.] comes a footnote on exile, vv.13-16. Namely this, these "by faith" folks, says the writer, were in exile, not from a homeland where they once had lived and to which they longed to return, but from a homeland up front in the future where they

had never been before. They were (still) in exile from a future homeland, not from their past one.

So Christians are exiles/refugees/aliens/displaced persons currently living in a country that is not their home country. You might say they carry two passports: one for the country they currently live in (Australia), the second for a country they haven't got to yet. But they will, and they already carry the passport that documents that place as their rightful home. (Maybe your baptismal certificate?)

Some clues from First Peter for living in such circumstances:

1. "Hypotassein" (Greek = "hang in there") with all human institutions. Don't opt out, and don't cow-tow under, but get back "in-under" and live your Christ-life within the secular structures that God still has going in the society you live in: emperors (=govt), marriage, economics.
2. And in these structures "do good" – 2:20; 3:6,17; 4:19.3.
3. Break the retaliation cycle 3:8ff.
4. Be serious, be disciplined. (Cf. The centrality of discipline in MLKing Jr. and the U.S. Civil Rights movement)
5. You know who is to be feared, and who is not to be feared. Give "honor, respect, value" (Greek: "timee") to everyone, even the emperor, but not "fear" (Gk: "phobos"). "Fear" is fitting only for God. Fear is a first commandment item. Only God qualifies for it. Cf. Luke 12:4f. on whom to fear and whom not to fear.
6. Suffering for the NAME. Today's new focus on the Name of Jesus. Why Jesus?

Conclude with these selection from the Epistle to Diognetus [dated sometime in the second century A.D.]

CHAPTER V – THE MANNERS OF THE CHRISTIANS.

For the Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observe. For they neither inhabit cities of their own, nor employ a peculiar form of speech, nor lead a life which is marked out by any singularity. The course of conduct which they follow has not been devised by any speculation or deliberation of inquisitive men; nor do they, like some, proclaim themselves the advocates of any merely human doctrines. But, inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined, and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life.

They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers. They marry, as do all [others]; they beget children; but they do not destroy their offspring. They have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives.

They love all men, and are persecuted by all. They are unknown and condemned; they are put to death, and restored to life. They are poor, yet make many rich; they are in lack of all things, and yet abound in all; they are dishonoured, and yet in their very dishonour are glorified. They are evil spoken of, and yet are justified; they are reviled, and bless; they are insulted, and repay the insult with honour; they do good, yet are punished as evil-doers. When punished, they rejoice as if quickened into life; they are assailed by the Jews as foreigners, and are persecuted by the Greeks; yet those who hate them are unable to

assign any reason for their hatred.

To sum up all in one word—what the soul is in the body, that are Christians in the world. . . . God has assigned them this illustrious position, which it were unlawful for them to forsake.