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On the cover: *Martin Luther: Hier stehe ich (Martin Luther: Here I Stand)*. Detail from Ottmar Hörl's installation of 800 Luther-figures on Market Square in Wittenberg, Germany from August 14 to September 12, 2010. Photo by Christoph Busse, courtesy of Maisenbacher GmbH.

### SEMINARY RIDGE REVIEW

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### Being the Church Among Atheists and Agnostics: Rebuilding Lutheran Ministry in Luther's Hometown of Eisleben

Claudia Bergmann

"Why in the world would anybody in their right mind come here to be a pastor?" We had been called to be exchange pastors in Eisleben, Germany, and serve the congregation in the city where Martin Luther was born, was baptized, and had died.¹ We had just left the plane and had our suitcases stored in the car that was to bring us to Eisleben. Kathrin, a congregational member from Eisleben, had picked us up and wanted to bring us to our new home. And when the small talk about the flight and the weather was done, she asked that fateful first question: "Why in the world would anybody in their right mind come here to be a pastor?"

At the time, we laughed off the question. We were absolutely excited to serve in this historic place. We could not wait to celebrate worship in the churches were Luther had said Mass. We could not wait to celebrate communion with chalices that were from the 1400's and that were probably used by Luther. We could not wait to baptize children and adults in the baptismal font where Luther had been baptized when he was just one day old. We were excited about living in a city where the great Reformer had begun his life, even if the Reformation itself began elsewhere. We told Kathrin so, but she just smiled and shook her head. I think our answer was not sufficient for her.

And so we started our ministry in Eisleben. We visited the churches where we would work for the next six years for the first time:

Sts. Peter-and-Paul, the church just up the street from where little Martin was born and where he was brought to be baptized on Nov 11, 1489

St. Nicolai, the church where the first Lutheran communion in Eisleben was celebrated

*St. Andrew*, the church were Luther preached his last sermon before his death and where his first funeral service was conducted before his body was removed to Wittenberg

Every day, we heard the bells of St. Andrew that Luther had heard when he was in Eisleben. Now it counted the hours of the day and night for us and called us to worship on Sundays as it had done for hundreds of years.

### The Situation in Lutherstadt Eisleben in 2003

The city of Eisleben looks back upon a magnificent history. It had been rich once. The copper mining industry had filled the coffers of the inhabitants and the city government. Magnificent buildings and churches were witness to a once prosperous town. But, already in Luther's time, the rich copper mines were depleted. During Communist times, copper from that area was still traded at the New York Stock Exchange because it was the purest copper in the world. But in those years, the Communist government was already subsidizing the copper mining. Once the country went under and the subsidies were gone, the copper mining days were over. 13,000 workers, inhabitants of Eisleben and the surrounding areas, lost their jobs in the years 1990 to 1992.

The city of Eisleben lost about a third of its inhabitants during the 1990's.<sup>2</sup> When we arrived in Eisleben in 2003, the city was a place where mostly older people lived who got by on their pensions. Even in the inner city, there were dozens of empty buildings that are no longer occupied and that slowly fall prey to the wind and the rain. Entire streets look like a bad row of teeth, with a few occupied buildings in good shape and many in between them in shambles.

Eisleben and its congregation were proud owners of three historic churches. But what had become of them?

*St. Nicolai* had fallen apart in the 1970's and 1980's. There circulates a story of St. Nicolai's last pastor who collected copper nails in his desk in the hopes of sometime in the future having enough of them so that

the roof of his church could be repaired. He never collected enough and the church roof caved in sometime in the 1980's. In 1990, a rich individual from West Germany took an interest in this church and raised money to repair the roof.<sup>3</sup> He was celebrated as the "Savior of St. Nicolai," but, aside from the roof, the church is still in dire disrepair. The congregation has no use for it and not enough money to fix it up. So, it was decided to leave this church in mothballs for later generations to decide what the congregation might do with it.

St. Andrew had a leaking roof, so that water would drip into the walls and leave them damp. The tower was beginning to tip a little bit due to the caverns left by the mining efforts underneath it. The magnificent altar had suffered damage from the damp atmosphere in the church. The chancel, from which Luther preached his last sermon, was in ill condition.

Sts. Peter-and-Paul was in a similar state as St. Andrew. The roof leaked, the walls cracked everywhere. The windows had holes, so that on more than one occasion birds would sing along in worship. The heating system there did not work, and, consequently, people had to bring heavy coats when they attended church in a season other than summer.

Aside from these three churches that urgently needed repairs, the congregation owned 16 other buildings or properties around town. But what should have been an asset was a liability. These building were in even worse condition than the churches, because for decades the congregation had fixed the churches first and left the other buildings for later repair. But "later" had not yet arrived.

And what was left of the congregation? As early as the Enlightenment, congregational membership had begun to dwindle. During the Nazi era, many people left the church because one of the pastors of Sts. Peter-and-Paul was a devoted Nazi who would wear Nazi boots under his alb. It is part of the oral memory in Eisleben, although not transmitted in writing, that this pastor put an image of Adolf Hitler on the altar, changed the baptismal formula, and baptized people in the name of Hitler, and the folk, and the fatherland. After the Nazi-friendly pastor had left, few of the people who had turned their back on the church because of him found their way back. The congregation had taken a hard hit. Then, during the Communist years, the government had allowed church life to continue, but kept a watchful eye upon the people who attended. According to witnesses from that time,

the secret police would stand right across from the church entrance and take a photograph of everybody who came to worship.<sup>5</sup> Americans often think that secularism in Eastern Europe started with communism, but, as we found out, the roots of secularism go much farther into the past.<sup>6</sup> Being photographed during worship by the Secret Service did not help, of course.

As a result, many families had decided to leave the congregation in order to protect themselves and their children from possible harm and persecution through the secret police. Very few of them had found their way back into the congregation after the fall of the Berlin Wall, because, now, they were ashamed of their fear. Thus within the history of the congregation, at least three major events or periods of time can be observed, in which membership dropped and from which the congregation did not recover.

When we arrived in Eisleben, there were about 1,000 congregational members still on the rolls. The three different congregations of St. Nicolai, Sts. Peter-and-Paul, and St. Andrew had been joined together. And where once five pastors had worked, there was now money for only one salary, which we shared as a husband-and-wife-team.

The remaining members of the congregation were no longer used to attending worship regularly. When we came to Eisleben, we could expect 15 to 20 out of 1000 members in worship on an average Sunday. However, the remaining active membership base was very active. There were about 20 volunteers who took turns keeping the churches open for tourists during the summer. There were about four women's groups that met regularly for Bible studies and educational events, a children's group, a confirmation group, a small youth group. Twelve people made up the congregation's Council. Most of them gave a considerable amount of time and effort to the congregation's needs. But it was just too few people. The volunteers felt like they never got done. Whenever a roof was fixed, two more began to leak. Whenever the leaves were removed from one gutter, three more clogged up. To many people in the active part of the congregation, it seemed like things deteriorated every year. The building efforts were never finished, ministry seemed at a standstill, and there was no money for anything, least of all for outreach, since every penny was put into a building project.

"Why in the world would anybody in their right mind come here to be a pastor?" was Kathrin's initial question when we came to Eisleben. Week after week, we realized what she had meant. We found ourselves surrounded by people who had lost their hopes and their smiles. Even among our fellow Christians, hopelessness, demoralization, and sarcasm had taken hold.

But perhaps worst of all was the disinterest of the general public in all things church. When Muslims, Hindus, and Christians meet, they might have their disagreements, but they can still talk about God. When one

meets non-Christian people in Eisleben, one cannot talk about God or the church. There are citizens of Eisleben who will tell you that Luther was influential for the development of the German language, which is true, but they will have never seen his baptismal church from the inside. There are people in Eisleben who have never heard "A Mighty Fortress" and would never care to sing it. There are even citizens of Eisleben who do not know what a cross is and what it symbolizes.

East Germany, and Eisleben in the middle of it, is one of the worst none-zones in the world, meaning that there are many people who would cross the box for "none" if they would be asked what beliefs they have. There was a study done in Leipzig, a city close to Eisleben. People who left the Leipzig train station were asked what they were: Christian or atheist? Soon, the researchers realized that they had asked the wrong question. People said that they were neither Christians nor atheists but that they were simply "normal." Eisleben, Luther's hometown, is a place where it is normal not to believe in God. Where it is normal not to be interested in the church. Where it is normal not to know anything about the faith.

## Rebuilding Lutheran Ministry: Three Lessons About Ministry I learned in Eisleben

After I have told you some details of what Lutherland is really like these days, I do not want to leave you with the feeling that all is lost for Luther's hometown. We think that Eisleben and Lutherland could have a magnificent future, which may possibly enrich Lutheranism as a whole. My husband and fellow pastor in Eisleben, Scott Moore, will soon talk about one aspect of that.

But first, I would like to share with you three stories that will illustrate how we tried to turn the congregation around. Our methods for ministry in Eisleben were quite simple but proved successful. I will go from simple to more complex and from less important to what we considered most important.

First Lesson: Little Things Matter, Especially to Little Numbers
Pastors in Germany do not get a lot of praise from their congregational
members. It is simply expected that pastors preach good sermons. In addition, the German culture is not necessarily one where encouragement is
given freely. People listen closely, though. So a German pastor often hears
about things that he or she should also have mentioned during the sermon
or did not portray correctly. But if the sermon was fine, people just shake

hands, nod, and go out the door. This German tendency to enjoy sermons quietly was the reason why I was taken by surprise when someone came up to me after a funeral, shook my hand, and told me right away that it was a fantastic service and a wonderful sermon. When I asked them to be specific, they said: "Your voice carried. I could actually hear you. That's all that matters."

When I went to Seminary and soon thereafter, I was of the opinion that the sermon is the most important thing in the worship service. Then comes the liturgy. Everything else is less important if not unimportant. But the "little things" do matter because, if they are not perfect, they actually distract people from the message. If there are very few resources and perhaps very few people attending a worship service (as was the case in Eisleben), the "little things" matter even more. Our attention to them showed that we did not care whether five old ladies were listening to us or a stadium full of worshipping families. Even a very small congregation deserves a faithful, well-crafted sermon and liturgy that is well done. It also deserves an ironed alb, clean shoes, fresh flowers on the altar, and working microphones. The first lesson for ministry that I learned in Eisleben was that we should prepare for each service in a thoughtful and careful way, as if we were preaching and presiding in front of a large gathering. Especially if our gathering was, in fact, quite small.

### Second Lesson: Fighting Legalism With Creativity

When we came to Eisleben, we encountered numerous rules that a pastor is supposed to follow. As good church people we wanted to play by the rules, but they did not always make sense to us. Especially when one considered how very little success some of these rules had generated over the years. One example: When a ministry team begins its work in a German congregation, the geographical area of the congregation is split up into two, and each pastor is responsible for one piece. The idea behind that rule is that someone who lives on High Street is baptized, confirmed, married, and buried by Pastor Moore. Someone who lives on Seminary Ridge Road can expect the same services from Pastor Bergmann. Everybody knows who is responsible, and there is no doubt about which pastor is supposed to do which job. Thus when we met our district supervisor for the first time, he brought a map with him, on which we were supposed to mark our respective territories.

Although we did not say so, we found that rule ridiculous. So we refused to sign up for two separate geographic areas in Eisleben and proposed – much to our superior's surprise – a different system. We decided to split up the tasks by personal gifts. As a model, we used the image of a garden.

One gardener would toil the land to make it farmable and put in the seeds, another would water and care and prune until it was time for the harvest. Scott, who is very good at approaching people and getting them involved initially, was the planter in our team. I, on the other hand, functioned as the caretaker and would focus on the people who were already part of the congregation.

When this gift-based approach to team ministry showed positive results, we tried to expand it to the whole congregation. We soon discovered a great gap between what people volunteered for and what they really loved. Peter, for example, had always been part of the building committee. He was a man and he was a plumber, so the building committee would be the right spot for him where he could use his gifts, right? But once we got to know Peter better, we found out that he could certainly use a hammer but did not care for hammering. Instead, he loved working with the youth. So, we encouraged him to get involved with the youth group, and especially with the youth band, where his son played the guitar.

The second lesson for ministry that I learned in Eisleben was that sometimes rules need to be broken. This is especially true when the traditional way has not proven to be particularly successful. In our case, we stopped worrying about filling all the slots on all of our committees. We stopped worrying about the old rule of geographical boundaries for team ministry. But we started to worry more about people and their gifts. We found that great ministry happens when the needs of the congregation and the gifts of the people doing ministry match.

### Third Lesson: Dealing With Secularism

Imagine that you as the pastor are called to do a funeral. A grandmother has died who was a member of your church and wanted the pastor of her congregation to do all that is necessary for a Christian burial. You don't know the deceased very well, so you schedule a meeting with the family. You meet with the deceased's children and grandchildren to discuss the preaching texts, readings and hymns, and the life of the woman you are supposed to bury. The grieving family has not much to say as far as the church service is concerned, but you attribute that to their grief and the fact that they are probably not regular churchgoing people. So, you make suggestions for hymns and readings that are subsequently welcomed by the family.

A few days later you arrive at the cemetery where the grieving family is already waiting for the service to begin. You say your introductory words and begin with a hymn. As the organist in the back plays the first line, you look up and realize that you are the only one singing. What is going on? Are

they so grief-stricken that they are not able to sing or speak anymore? They certainly do not look that way. You read the lessons you picked, you preach your sermon, you pray the prayers, you walk to the graveside and begin to pray the Lord's Prayer. But after the first four words you look up and see that everybody just looks straight ahead or down at their shoes. And then it dawns on you. You and the deceased are the only two Christians around. Nobody else belongs to the church, knows what is going on, or has any interest in what you do aside from the fact that they fulfill the last will of their beloved grandmother who was still a church member and wanted the pastor to do her funeral.

Unfortunately, this scenario is becoming more and more common in Germany, and especially in the secularized region of the country where Eisleben is located. Maybe you have encountered similar situations in your ministry context or will in the U.S.-context where rising secularism comes along with missing knowledge about everything church:

godparents who are not practicing Christians

couples to-be-married who want the festive church service but would rather avoid that God is mentioned in it

people at funerals who cannot speak the Lord's prayer

How does a pastor deal with secularism when she encounters it? Should pastors cater to the secularized audience? Tune their message down? Leave out the liturgy or explain the remnants of it so that even the un-churched folk can understand it? These are question that followed us all through our time in Eisleben.

As individual pastors, we knew what to do. On both a personal and a professional level, we tried to make our faith visible in natural ways:

blessing the meal in restaurants

introducing ourselves as the pastors in town

celebrating good and rich liturgy rather than tuning the liturgy and the message down

But how does a congregation as a whole deal with its location in a secularized society? Somewhat fearful and somewhat small as the congregation in Eisleben was, it had decided that its most fitting service was to provide occa-

sions or events for the people to enter the worship space. Then, they believed, something quasi-magical might happen and people might join the church. The entire music ministry of the congregation was based on that faulty assumption. If the agnostics and atheists would only enter the church for a concert, they might actually stay. Did that ever happen? Not to my knowledge.

So, the third lesson that I learned in Eisleben is that secularism, agnosticism, and atheism cannot be fought by putting on a wonderful organ concert so that people cross the threshold into the church building and magically stay. They should not be met with "liturgy lite" or no liturgy at all. The only two things that make a difference are authenticity and personal relationships. Christians in a secularized society must insist that being a follower of Christ is the most natural thing to do. Pastors should not hide the fact that they are pastors, that they celebrate the time-honored liturgy of the Church, and that they preach the Gospel, even if they are the only ones doing just that at a funeral where the only other Christian present has already passed on.

In U.S.-American church circles, it is common knowledge that it takes an average of seventeen invitations before someone un-churched is willing to try to come to worship once. In secularized Eisleben, seventeen invitations is probably not enough for most. But we were still surprised how many people took us up on our invitation when we invited them only once or twice.

### Developing Lutheran Identity: What Eisleben Can Offer to Lutherans

At the end of my presentation, I want to ask: Is there hope for "Lutherland" as we experienced it? Is there hope for Luther's hometown of Eisleben? My answer is a resounding "yes." And I will tell you why I think that there is hope for a congregation where few people come to worship, where all buildings are in urgent need of repair, and where the pastoral leadership was cut from five positions to one in recent memory.

Raising money to repair the churches and encouraging people to volunteer in the upkeep of the physical manifestations of the congregation is a good thing. It helps preserve the house of God. Taking care of the little things and using peoples' gifts appropriately is another good thing. It makes congregational life better, more meaningful, and more fun for the people who participate. But there is one detail about ministry in Eisleben that causes me to have great expectations for that city, even in the midst of secularism. The reason for my hope is connected to the baptismal font where the child who was to become the great reformer, Martin Luther, was dipped into God's grace.

Eisleben and one of its churches is the location where Martin Luther's life as a Christian started. And this is the location where the Eisleben congregation might gain new life as well. And I do not only mean new life in a theological sense, which of course is absolutely valid, but also in a sense that is based on sociology in general and on ritual studies in particular. Let me explain. In ritual studies, there is a concept called "ritual transfer." Its basic idea is that rituals can change according to the needs of the people who participate in these rituals. And more than that, if we believe in the power of rituals, we must also take into consideration that ritual can change people.<sup>8</sup>

Eisleben has always been a place for Lutheran pilgrimage. But unfortunately, the people of Eisleben never really understood why anyone in their right mind would travel there to see an old baptismal font, why anyone in their right mind would want to circle around that old font and sing "A Mighty Fortress," or why anyone would want to celebrate baptismal remembrance in their old church. As pastors in Eisleben, we tried to make people aware of the treasure in their midst. We celebrated baptismal remembrance regularly and emphasized over and over again how important baptismal theology is for us personally and for us as Lutherans. In that sense, we helped people transform their view of the ritual of baptism and raised their appreciation for it.

At the same time, we laid the groundwork for the construction of what will be known as a Center for Baptism, where people can come to learn about the meaning of baptism and the importance of baptismal remembrance. When larger and larger groups of people will travel to Eisleben in preparation for the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation, they will encounter the ritual location of Luther's baptism and the local ritual traditions of baptism in the current congregation. Their visits, their theology, and their piety may transform the people and the city of Eisleben. As some visitors are transformed by their experiences in Luther's hometown, their experiences may also transform the local congregation.

"Why in the world would anybody in their right mind want to come to Eisleben?"

Because this location – this baptismal font – symbolizes the powerful transformation of Christian identity in and through baptism.

#### Notes

1 Eisleben was first mentioned in a document in 994 CE under the name of "Islevo." In 1180, it was already called a "civitas," a city. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Eisleben experienced an upswing in its fortunes. During that time, it was located at the meeting point of two major trade routes, one leading from Halle into Western

Germany and another from Northern to Southern Germany, on which wine and copper were traded. For a summary of Eisleben's history and current events, see www.eisleben.eu. Also see Marion Ebruy and Klaus Foth, *Stadtführer Eisleben* (Eisleben: Mansfelder Heimatverein, 2002).

- 2 In 2002, Eisleben reached 20,000 inhabitants. After that, it slightly grew in numbers but only because the surrounding villages were incorporated into the city. In 2010, there were 203 births recorded in Eisleben and 391 deaths. It was predicted that the number of inhabitants would decrease between 2005 and 2025 by another 29.3%. Source: Statistisches Landesamt Sachsen-Anhalt at www.statistik.sachsen-anhalt.de.
- 3 Georg Rehklau received the title "honorary citizen of Eisleben" in 2005. See the publication of the *Evangelischer Presseverband für Bayern*, May 20, 2005.
- Between 1934 and 1939, Pastor Seifert and Pastor Günther alternated baptismal duties at Sts. Peter-and-Paul. In 1939, Pastor Günther was succeeded by Pastor Wurm. At the same time that the Nazi-friendly pastor served at Sts. Peter-and-Paul, Pastor Noack from the neighboring congregation, St. Ann, was imprisoned by the Nazis for his political activities and thrown into a concentration camp. In the city of Eisleben, there was, thus, a range of pastors following different political agendas and, thus, understanding the meaning of the Gospel in very different ways.
- 5 Eyewitness report of Annelie und Helmut Rostalski, 2005.
- 6 Literature on the roots and historical development of secularism abounds. Two important works that should be mentioned here are David Martin's *A General Theory of Secularization* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), which attempts to view both Europe as a whole and individual countries within Europe and their experiences with secularization, as well as Wolfhart Pannenberg's *Christianity in a Secularized World* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), which summarizes the different views on the historical causes for secularization.
- 7 See Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, "Religionslosigkeit als Thema der Religionssoziologie," Pastoraltheologie 90 (2000) 152. About 20 years later, in 2011, "Die Zeit," a major German weekly, conducted a survey about religiosity in Saxony in East Germany and found that 88% believe that religion is unimportant.
- 8 See Azel Michael, ed., Ritual Dynamics and the Science of Ritual (5 vols., Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010-2011). In Vol 5: Transfer and Spaces, see the article by Donald S. Sutton, "Transfer of Ritual at a Northern Sichuan Site: Tibetan and Han Chinese Pilgrims, and Han Chinese Tourists," 237-257.
- 9 Sutton explains this interaction between site, established group, and new (religious pilgrim or tourist) group in the following manner: "... if the site is already in use, interaction with other groups will proceed in a sort of triangular fashion, with the site playing an active role in the developing relationships between the new and the established group, both transforming and being transformed by them." Ibid., 236-237.

Claudia D. Bergmann is a graduate of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (M.Div.) and of the University of Chicago (Ph.D., Hebrew Bible). Her dissertation Childbirth as a Metaphor for Crisis: Evidence from the Ancient Near East, the Hebrew Bible, and 1QH XI, 1-18 was published by De Gruyter. She is currently a post-doctoral student at the University of Erfurt, Germany, where she is studying the "eschatological meal" in extra-biblical literature from an exegetical and ritual studies perspective. "Being the Church Among Atheists and Agnostics" was The Rev. George F. and Janet E. Harkins Lecture I at the 2011 Luther Colloquy.

### Lutherans and Catholics in the Homeland of the Reformation: From Bitter Battles to Dialogue and Common Witness

Günther Gassmann

My homecoming to Gettysburg and my presence among you during theses days is a wonderful and moving gift to me. Together with my wife, Ulla, I lived and taught at Gettysburg for eleven semesters between 1995 and 2004. This was a rich initial period in my retirement, filled with joyful contacts with my Gettysburg Seminary colleagues, successive groups of students, and many encounters with Lutherans and other good Christians in this country. Thus I am very grateful to be back in this historic, cultural, and theological environment that has left a lasting mark on my life and memory. For giving me this opportunity my heartfelt thanks are extended to the Seminary and its President Michael Cooper-White, to the Institute for Luther Studies and its Director Kirsi Stjerna, and to the remembrance of my German fellow country-woman, Bertha Paulssen, who became in 1946 at Gettysburg the first tenured woman at a Lutheran seminary. Before she came to Gettysburg Bertha Paulssen had pioneered in social, psychological, pastoral counselling studies, and at Gettysburg she a generation of pastors and laypeople who became leaders in social-diaconal ministries.

I. The Reformation Division and its Lasting Impact on German History The Lutheran-Roman Catholic division and the resulting bitter theological battles together with social and political conflicts have profoundly and last-

ingly shaped and impressed German history and the lives and mentality of German populations throughout the last five-hundred years. I will indicate only a few elements of this tragic and conflictual history.

It is significant that the Lutheran-Catholic division and theological conflicts began already before "Lutheran" ecclesiastical institutions had been established. During the first two decades of the sixteenth century, we find a widespread popular-emotional milieu of large groups of people in Europe who were, in a diffused and not yet clearly articulated sense, yearning for reforms in the late Medieval Church. This still dormant yet explosive mind-set was touched off by the sparks of the reforming voices of the suddenly publicly appearing reformers: Lutheran, Reformed, Anabaptist, Spiritualist, English-moderate, but most prominently, forcefully, and effectively by one Catholic theologian: Martin Luther. The Reformation movements, thus launched in many parts of the continent and supported by popular involvement, spread with incredible speed. They were facilitated by the improved printing methods. The Reformation was the first media-propelled movement in history. New books by Martin Luther reached younger English reform-minded theologians in Cambridge within a few days – faster than present-day "snail-mail".

On 31 October 1517 Martin Luther published his Ninety-Five Theses in Wittenberg. Whether he nailed them to the door of the Castle Church or not is the object of a lively debate today and will be further clarified at this Luther Colloquy by the Wittenberg detective, Dr. Martin Treu. Anyhow, the events in October 1517 are generally regarded as the public beginning of the Lutheran reform movement. Whether a mighty hammer was bouncing against the wooden door or the Ninety-Five Theses were sent by e-mail or another way to the dean of the theological faculty – a spiritual, theological, educational, and social explosion was the result. The masses in many parts of Europe did not become, as Marxist historians would affirm, the subjects of history, but they were inspired and set in motion by the leadership of Martin Luther and his co-reformers, inspired in some cases even to the degree that the poor peasants followed the schwärmerisch-enthusiastic calls of former Lutheran theologian, Thomas Müntzer, into the Peasants' War of 1525, where they were slaughtered by the soldiers of the princes.

Populations in large parts of central and northern Europe welcomed the Lutheran reform movement. However, before its ecclesiastical consolidation began to develop in the 1520s, the conflict between Luther and his church began already in 1518 – one year after Wittenberg 1517. Now the scenario for future battles began to emerge, and some of the main actors entered the stage: Luther and his friends and protectors, and his Catholic counterparts with the Pope and Emperor on their side. In August of 1518 old Emperor Maximilian informed Pope Leo X about the danger represented by Martin Luther for the

unity of the faith, and the Elector of Saxony, Frederic the Wise, was asked to deal with his dangerous citizen. Luther was asked to come to Rome, but he was suspicious and refused. Instead he began to remark that Pope and Councils may err, and already towards the end of 1518 he asserted in a letter that the Pope may be the Antichrist – a judgement he affirmed at the Leipzig Disputation (June/July 1518) when he also rejected the primacy of the Pope. The conflict escalated step by step.

In October of 1518 Luther was interrogated by the Papal Legate, Cajetan, at Augsburg. A few days later Luther formulated a formal appeal to the Pope, and in November of 1518 he appealed to a council – following the model of an appeal of the Paris Sorbonne University of March 1518. On 17 November 1520 he published once again a formal appeal for a general council. By these steps Luther had, indeed, moved the conflict to the highest official level of Pope and Emperor. It was no longer simply a personal affair. In June of 1520, Pope Leo X issued a bull threatening Luther with the ban unless he recanted forty-one assertions concerning indulgences, penance, sin and grace, the right of the laity to receive the two kinds in the Lord's Supper, good works, papal authority, etc., which he had put forward. These were declared offensive, erroneous, and false.

Luther's followers were warned not to protect him. Luther angrily responded to "blasphemous Rome", and his friends, led by Melanchthon and John Agricola, arranged in December of 1520 for a public burning of books, such as copies of Canon Law and other papal books. The action reached its climax when Luther threw into the bonfire a copy of the bull against him. These were lively actions compared to present-day lame paper protests, even though the burning of books is not recommended after the German Nazis burned thousands of books by Jewish and other "decadent" authors. The Luther-conflict further escalated, and on 3 January 1521 Pope Leo X banned Luther as a heretic. However, Luther's influential protectors made it possible that Luther could appear at the Diet of Worms on 17 and 18 April 1521 – and this appearance provided for painters and film-makers wonderful scenes. We know the story and its continuation.

The concluding Edict of Worms (26 May 1521) pronounced Luther guilty of high treason, thus the case against him was not only pursued on an ecclesiastical level but also in the secular context of imperial law. Moreover the Edict portrayed Luther as a demon in monk's garb. Whoever was aiding him was to be arrested and tried for high treason. However, these measures did not silence and suffocate the Lutheran reform movement but made it even more widely known. With the consolidation of Lutheranism by means of the Lutheran Confessions after 1529 and the beginning of introducing Lutheran church orders in the second half of the 1520s in German territories, imperial free cities, and national churches in northern Europe, the Lutheran movement

became institutionalized in the form of Lutheran congregations and churches. The movement also took roots in large sections of the Habsburg lands of central and south-eastern Europe.

The split between what now became the *Roman* Catholic Church and the Lutheran churches, despite some attempts to preserve the unity of the Church, was deepened and cemented by mutual condemnations and rejections expressed in the Lutheran Confessions and in official Roman Catholic statements up to the Council of Trent since 1545. These controversies and condemnations were accompanied and undergirded by lively and noisy Catholic-Lutheran theological battles that continued for centuries until our time.

A central place and role in these controversies was dedicated to Martin Luther. A first publication on his life and work, a kind of biography, was published in 1549 by the learned Catholic theologian, Johannes Cochläus, in which Luther was condemned as a heretic and destroyer of the faith. This book has for nearly five-hundred years influenced the Catholic portrayal of Luther as the one that wrecked/ruined the unity of Western Christendom, as a traitor of the true faith, and a morally inferior creature. This was reciprocated by Lutheran-inspired satirical prints and leaflets depicting the Pope and bishops in rather ugly animal-like images. Those were rough, wild theological battles in the horizon of God and devil.

The so-called "religious peace" of the Augsburg Diet of 1555 politically confirmed and defined the confessional division of Germany by officially recognizing the Lutheran faith as one of the two established religions of the Empire, and by the famous rule that the subjects of a given territory had to adhere to the religion of their ruler or had to leave the country. Thus the religious division was territorialized and, to a certain degree, still marks the German religious landscape today, nearly five-hundred years later: there is today still a clear Lutheran confessional majority in Northern and Eastern Germany and a Roman Catholic majority in Southern Germany.

The religious peace of Augsburg did not last very long. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw the struggles of the Counter-Reformation — Catholic Reform — with its efforts, often politically and militarily supported, to recover lost spiritual and territorial ground. Post-Reformation German (and European) history during these centuries became even more chaotic and bloody with the political battles between Protestant and Catholic powers during the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648). This war converted large areas of Germany into a wasteland in which, nevertheless, and as a form of spiritual resistance, pastors and poets such as Paul Gerhardt created some of our most beloved and even joyful hymns that are still in our and your hymnbooks.

Recovering from the horrors of religious-political wars, the German states in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries slowly began to grant a certain

measure of religious tolerance. However, the dominant religious orientation of German states or Free Imperial Cities continued to uphold forms of segregation of populations according to their religious affiliation. This concerned many sectors of public life and shaped the mentality of people. Even fifty years ago a Lutheran in Catholic Bavaria could not become director of a school. Still some decades ago a Catholic had no great chance to become elected major of a town in Northern Germany.

In the late nineteenth century the Lutheran/Protestant – Catholic division was politically reinforced by the so-called *Kulturkampf* (culture struggle) when in Prussia, followed by some other German states, state legislation heavily reduced the freedom of the Roman Catholic Church by limiting the authority and power of its bishops, abolishing religious orders (especially Jesuits), disallowing political remarks from Catholic pulpits, mandating civil marriage, and other measures intended to reduce Catholic power and influence and to increase state superiority over many areas of social life and organisation.

One could mention many other historical examples that illustrate how German political, social, cultural, and religious life was deeply affected, influenced, and divided far into the twentieth century by the Lutheran/Protestant – Roman Catholic division. I mention only one last example: in Germany the study, critique and rejection of Catholic doctrinal positions was known (typically) as *Kontroverstheologie* (controversial theology), a method to identify and highlight the differences. As students of theology in the 1950s we had to identify the differences – and not the similarities – between Catholic and Lutheran doctrines. Once divided, always divided?

### II. A New Age of Lutheran-Catholic Relations

### 1. The post-war background

The tragedy of World War II 1939-1945, when Catholics, Lutherans, and other Protestants suffered together and helped each other, when Catholic priests and Lutheran pastors in camps of German prisoners of war served all prisoners without distinction, including with the sacraments, when Catholics and Lutherans together struggled with the question of whether their oath of obedience to Adolf Hitler could be broken by resisting his inhuman regime, when after the war Protestants and Catholics cooperated in rebuilding politically and practically their country – these and other experiences have deeply marked the minds of many people and dramatically changed Protestant-Catholic attitudes and relations in many sectors of society and, of course, also between the

churches. In this new historical context and the changed perception of Catholics and Lutherans of each other and their churches, the Catholic-Lutheran dialogue in Germany began unofficially soon after World War II, in 1945 and twenty years before the Second Vatican Council.

### 2. The ecclesial/confessional structures in Germany

An initial word about the sometimes confusing confessional landscape of Germany: as a heritage of Reformation political settlements, we have today nine Lutheran and ten United (with Lutheran and Reformed background) territorial churches (Landeskirchen), which do not overlap geographically, and two small Reformed churches. They all form the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), which is structurally a federation and theologically a communion. Seven of the Lutheran member churches of the EKD form at the same time the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD) that considers itself one church. The United Churches also comprise many congregations and regions that are Lutheran in their history, catechism, liturgy and mentality, and a large number of the members in these churches consider themselves to be Lutheran. This confessional arrangement was paralleled in the two Germanys during the German division until 1989. Accordingly, the majority of non-Catholics in Germany could be identified as - more or less - self-consciously Lutheran. In this more general sense I speak of Lutherans and Catholics in Germany. Therefore, when it comes to ecumenical dialogues we should distinguish between two levels and structures: one level is the specific, official Lutheran- (VELKD) Roman Catholic theological dialogue, and the other level is the broader structure of conversations and relations between the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Roman Catholic Church, i.e., relations between Protestants and Catholics.

### 3. The specifically Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue

Let me begin with the specific, official Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue in Germany. The Second Vatican Council (1963-1965) encouraged and exhorted "all the Catholic faithful to recognize the signs of the times and to take an active and intelligent part in the work of ecumenism." Both for the Catholic and the Lutheran traditions such ecumenical work is realized especially in the form of bilateral theological dialogues. This focus on theology corresponds

to the depth of the theological conflicts and divisions between both communions that require major theological efforts for their resolution. Against the background of this methodological and conceptual preference, it is not surprising that one of the first international bilateral theological dialogues is the one, still continuing today, between the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Roman Catholic Church. It was initiated immediately after the end of the Second Vatican Council in 1965.

This international dialogue is accompanied by national dialogues here in the United States (that are now burdened by recent social-ethical decisions of the ELCA) and other countries including the two Germanys in the seventies and eighties, and since 1989 the reunited Germany. In West Germany, a bilateral Working Group of the German Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Governing Board (*Kirchenleitung*) of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (VELKD) began its dialogue in 1976 and (after about fifteen sessions) has presented in 1984 its report, *Church Fellowship in Word and Sacrament*.<sup>2</sup> This title very clearly states the goal of the dialogue. In a concise way the text describes basic common understandings on themes such as communion in Christ, confessing the one faith, worship and sacraments, ordained ministry, and ways ahead to full communion.

In its response to this report, in 1985 the VELKD included a most significant statement by declaring that the Lutheran condemnations of the Mass as an "abomination" and of the Pope as "Antichrist" at the time of the Reformation no longer apply to the present teaching of the Catholic Church.<sup>3</sup> This new interpretation was taken up in a special and more popular edition of the Lutheran Confessions, 4 where in four footnotes the condemnations are explained and qualified with reference to the Catholic-Lutheran dialogue as no longer applicable. This represents a remarkable reception of Lutheran-Catholic convergences and their implications for the official teaching of the churches. This way of dealing with decisions and statements of past history that are judged as no longer applicable today seems to be an appropriate method of dealing with historical statements that cannot be erased from history. What an enormously wide jump has been taken from the time of bitter theological battles and mutual rejection to this radical reversal of looking at each other.

A second Lutheran-Catholic Bilateral Working Group in Germany was appointed in 1987 and presented in 2000 its much dis-

cussed report, Communio Sanctorum: The Church as the Communion of Saints.5 It is a coherent and comprehensive presentation of common perspectives on the church in its biblical and trinitarian dimension, founded on word and sacrament, a communion of justified sinners, served by all members and ministries, including a universal ministry of unity - to be further discussed, and stretching out to the communion of saints with, among many others, Mary the mother of the Lord. It also contains a most helpful methodological clarification when it states in its Preface that the Working Group proceeded methodologically according to the new principles of ecumenical hermeneutics according to which "the unity sought does not imply uniformity but a diversity in which remaining differences do not become a church-dividing force." The goal of the dialogue is not a consensus in the sense of a complete identity of opinion but a "differentiated consensus" that includes agreement in the fundamental and essential content of a hitherto controversial doctrine, and "an explanation how and why the remaining doctrinal differences can be accepted without undercutting the basis and essence of the agreement."6

Again, *Communio Sanctorum* is a theologically rich and in certain respects a daring text that has moved miles beyond old controversies – but too many miles for some more Protestant-minded and Rome-fearing German professors! They had comfortably settled into the armchairs of old theological controversies and distinctions from which, already one year before, they had woken up in protest when the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justific*ation was published in 1999.

The third round of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue in Germany started in May of 2009, this time dealing with a theme that is not very much present in the different dialogues: "God and the Dignity of the Human Person" – a theme that clearly aims at a common Christian witness in addressing present human predicaments. Thus this dialogue renders its specific contribution to overcoming the painful and divisive Catholic-Lutheran theological history of Germany and beyond.

Of special significance is, of course, the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* just mentioned. This declaration, prepared by a special international Lutheran-Catholic drafting group on the basis of the results of the Catholic-Lutheran dialogues in the USA, in Germany, and on the worldwide level (LWF), was signed by the partners at a festive celebration on symbolic 31 Oc-

tober 1999 in historic Augsburg. A few days before, on 27 October, I spoke at the Luther Colloquy 1999 in Gettysburg about this outstanding event, which was characterized by the main representatives of the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation as "an ecumenical event of historical significance.7 The text of the Joint Declaration concludes "that a consensus in basic truths of the doctrine of justification exists between Lutherans and Catholics. In light of this consensus the remaining differences of language, theological elaboration, and emphasis in the understanding of justification ... are acceptable." And concerning the condemnations of the Reformation era, the Joint Declaration states explicitly: "The teaching of the Lutheran churches presented in this Declaration does not fall under the condemnations of the Council of Trent. The condemnations in the Lutheran confessions do not apply to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church presented in this Declaration."8

No wonder that the *Joint Declaration* with its "differentiated consensus" on the doctrine of justification met with special and often also critical attention in the "country of the Reformation", but the German Lutheran Churches had expressed their assent to it, the LWF had agreed to it, and in 2006 all member churches of the World Methodist Council agreed to it and thus broadened the basis of the agreement. It is of singular importance that the *Joint Declaration* is the first ecumenical document so far that has been accepted officially by the Roman Catholic Church. It represents a historic breakthrough in Catholic-Lutheran relations and has helped in many countries to bring Catholics and Lutherans closer together.

4 The wider Protestant-Catholic dialogue and common witness
Now I come to the second level of dialogue in Germany, the conversations between theologians of the member churches of the EKD (that is mostly Lutherans and also Reformed) and the Roman Catholic Church. Before Vatican II joint ecumenical commissions were not yet allowed according to Catholic ecclesial regulations. Nevertheless, ecumenically minded German Lutheran and Catholic bishops and professors of theology had an ingenious idea. They formed in 1946 – unofficially but known to and paid by the authorities – two separate commissions: a Catholic and a Lutheran ecumenical commission. The two commissions met at the same time and in the same or neighbouring place and then held joint sessions. Thus they were in fact a joint commission but in appear-

ance two commissions. It was a trick, and everybody knew that it was a trick, but the appearance of two separate commissions was maintained. After Vatican II this ecumenical comedy was no longer necessary and the Ecumenical Working Group of Evangelical (in fact all Lutheran) and Catholic Theologians (ÖAK) was officially formed. Later one or two additional Reformed theologians were added in order to make it more representative.<sup>9</sup>

This was a truly pioneering enterprise, and the Ecumenical Working Group has become an important theological think-tank on ecumenical problems and the exploration of ways ahead. It has published the contributions of its members and the results of its reflections in 14 volumes so far. A major contribution of the Group has been its work on the mutual condemnations at the time of the Reformation. Both the Lutheran Confessions and Roman Catholic statements of the Council of Trent mutually condemned and declared as heretical certain official doctrinal positions of each side. These are today regarded as major barriers for ecumenical progress, and their removal is considered as one of the conditions of achieving Christian unity. Accordingly, the Ecumenical Working Group was asked to reconsider the mutual condemnations in the official documents of both churches. The Working Group studied and researched in three study groups between 1981 and 1985 with over 30 members the condemnations related to justification, sacraments, and ministry. The final report<sup>10</sup> was published in 1985. In it the churches are asked to accept the findings that the mutual condemnations of the Reformation era are no longer applicable to the two churches and therefore should no longer be repeated. These findings became a constitutive point in the elaboration of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (1999) which I have mentioned above.

Three major volumes with material of the Ecumenical Working Group, published between 2004 and 2008, contain historical and systematic essays on the study project, *The Ministry of the Church in Apostolic Succession*<sup>11</sup> – one of the few remaining thorny issues of Catholic-Lutheran relations. The background material of 1,200 pages and the concluding report indicate ways in which an agreement on the apostolicity both of Catholic and Lutheran ordained ministries can be achieved. This is proposed in the perspective of the apostolicity and continuity of the Church as a whole, the distinction between the content/meaning of apostolic succession and its manifold formal expressions, and the differentiation

also between the succession of individual ministers and the succession of the whole apostolic community as a group.

The present working period of the Ecumenical Working Group has the extremely important task of "harvesting", which is to summarize and focus the rich material on the Eucharist by preparing a "joint declaration" on the doctrine and practice of the Eucharist similar to the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. There also is a plan to prepare provisional drafts on a similar joint declaration on the ministry. The two projects represent, indeed, exiting tasks, because they would enable further steps from endless discussions to committed agreements and decisions of the churches.

#### 5. Common witness on social-ethical issues

Besides these less formal theological conversations on a broader level, the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) does not conduct bilateral theological dialogues on doctrinal issues with the Roman Catholic Church - most probably because of its federal ecclesial structure that would not allow a church-to-church dialogue. But the EKD is involved in conversations with the Catholic Church on social-ethical, public issues that are of concern for the whole population of the country. Here we find impressive examples of Protestant-Roman Catholic common witness in a secularized society. Under the authority of the German Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), over twenty joint statements/declarations were issued between 1985 and 2011. These texts were prepared by committees of experts and then received and published by the governing bodies of the EKD and of the Bishops' Conference. Several of these texts found much attention in the media and were discussed in a broad public debate. I can mention only two of them.

In 1985 the Joint Declaration on "Taking Responsibility for Creation" was published. It immediately found so much attention far beyond the churches that it had to be reprinted several times. The text proceeds from the challenge posed to humanity to overcome the misuse of nature and the environment, as well as the short-sightedness and ignorance concerning responsibility for creation despite much good will. Christians and churches are called to render their contribution to "the preservation and improvement of living conditions in our country and in our world". This is explicated by many scientific considerations, theological reflections, and practical examples in five chapters on (1) the environmental

crisis and its causes, (2) past solutions and wrong developments, (3) the ecological problem as ethical challenge, (4) the Christian message of creation, salvation, and fulfilment of the world, (5) the necessity of new ways of thinking and action. This document of over thirty pages represents a new voice, a united Catholic-Protestant voice that was forcefully articulated as a common Christian reflection and appeal on the future of humanity.

Even more interest and public attention was found by the "Word" (joint statement) of the Council of the EKD and the German Bishops' Conference in 1997, entitled "For a Future in Solidarity and Justice". The text addresses the economic and social situation in Germany in an ecumenical and world-wide horizon. Its Preface states that the churches – guided and encouraged by the biblical message and Christian social ethics - want to render their contribution to the necessary new orientation of society and the renewal of the socially marked economy. They also want to contribute to an agreement on the foundations and perspectives of a humane, free, just, and solidarity-based order of state and society. The text expresses the conviction that life lived within the grace of God gives courage and confidence for action. Therefore proclamation in this spirit is oriented not only towards the inner life of the individual but also towards his or her social, cultural, and economic existential conditions.

This statement on "For a Future in Solidarity and Justice" lists some of the tasks and goals before society, which are supported by the churches. They are enumerated in the following section-headlines: reduce unemployment – consolidate social security-systems - strengthen solidarity in society by supporting families - implement full equality of men and women - strengthen chances of young people – create just distribution of wealth – support ecological (structural) change – encourage changes of life-styles – affirm responsibility within One world. These aims were strongly welcomed in many circles of society such as social-political movements and trade unions. The text as a whole is the result of a longer consultative process of experts from the social, economic, and theological sciences. Important also is the fact that the text articulates common Catholic and Protestant social-ethical fundamental concepts that have diverged considerably in the past. Here Catholic and Protestant churches have developed analyses and visions that speak in a competent, helpful, and challenging way to problems of contemporary society.

### III. Concluding Remarks

I have sketched a rather positive picture of Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue and common Protestant-Catholic witness in Germany during the last decades. This picture finds its even more positive echo on the local level. Here we find many contacts, forms of cooperation, common celebration, and other expressions of new relationships between Lutheran and Catholic congregations. In many places a general atmosphere of Christian fellowship can be experienced. Recently the female pastor of our congregation in our little town in Bavaria preached again at a festive Roman Catholic mass in our neighbouring Catholic church. She did this in the Bavarian dialect and in the form of rhymes. Her sermon was greeted with thundering applause by the three-hundred Catholics in the church. Wonderful.

Another sign of the new historical context of Lutheran/Protestant – Roman Catholic relations in Germany was the recent visit of Pope Benedict XVI from 22 to 25 September 2011. The Pope met with representatives of the Protestant churches in Germany, not only in the highly symbolical Lutheran place of the former Augustinian Monastery in Erfurt where Martin Luther studied and was ordained a priest, but the Pope also greeted the Präses/Chairman of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) with the words, "Dear Brother Präses Schneider" – a remarkable gesture of Christian fellowship! And in his address in the Augustinian Monastery the Pope emphasized not only the ecumenical task in a secularized society to witness together to the deepest foundations of our shared faith, but he also referred at length, impressed by the history and context of Luther's Monastery, to the significance of Luther's theological thinking. He spoke about the way in which Luther's christocentric orientation was the basic hermeneutical criterion of Luther's theology and spirituality, and how Luther's central question, "How do I get a gracious God", formed the deep passion and impulse of Luther's life and theological struggle. "That this question was the moving force of his entire life touches again and again my own heart," said the Pope.

The visit of the Pope was another occasion for Lutherans and other Protestants in Germany to repeat their request that their churches, sacraments, and ministries be fully recognized by the Catholic Church, that people living in confessionally mixed marriages be admitted to the Eucharist, and that renewing changes in the Catholic Church should facilitate closer ecumenical relations. We still have much to do to overcome the wounds and bitter memories and the still existing theological divisions of the past. Nevertheless, the stark contrast between the grim background of our confessional history in Germany that I have indicated and the present excitingly

changing and new Lutheran-Catholic relations justify, I believe, my rather positive presentation. I have experienced it with my own body, blood, and spirit. When I was a small boy, my mother in Protestant Thuringia admonished me: "Don't play with Catholic children!" During the last five decades I have talked with three Popes and "played" with many Catholic theologians in dialogues, conversations, and ecumenical projects. What a change!

#### Notes

- 1 Decree on Ecumenism, UR I, 4.
- 2 Kirchengemeinschaft in Wort und Sakrament: Bilaterale Arbeitsgruppe der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz und der Kirchenleitung der Vereinigten Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche Deutschland (Paderborn: Bonifatius; Hannover: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1984).
- 3 This was in line with a new study on this issue by the Ecumenical Working Group of Evangelical and Catholic Theologians (ÖAK) published in 1985, see section 4.
- 4 Horst Pöhlmann, ed., *Unser Glaube: Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1991) 451-2, 466, 515-6, 520.
- 5 Communio Sanctorum: The Church as the Communion of Saints. Bilateral Working Group of the German National Bishops' Conference and the Church Leadership of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (trans. Mark W. Jeske, Michael Root, and Daniel R. Smith; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004).
- 6 Ibid., xi
- 7 Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification. The Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000) 6.
- 8 Joint Declaration, 25-26.
- 9 For a detailed history of the group, see Barbara Schwahn, *Der Ökumenische Arbeits-kreis evangelischer und katholischer Theologen von 1946 bis 1975* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996).
- 10 Karl Lehmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg, eds. The Condemnations of the Reformation Era: Do They Still Divide? (trans. Margaret Kohl; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990)
- 11 Th. Schneider, D. Sattler, and G. Wenz, eds. Das kirchliche Amt in apostolischer Nachfolge (3 vols; Freiburg: Herder; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004, 2006, 2008).

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## Sermon for Luther Colloquy Worship (Psalm 46)

Dirk Lange

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

A fortress is built. A mighty fortress. A huge wall. A wall to keep out and a wall to keep in. A wall that secludes, a wall that inculcates a people into one way of existence, into a very gray, dreary one dimensional living, into an oppressive system without cracks, without breaks, without ... life.

A fortress becomes this place of power and control. On earth such wall has no equal. And we are seduced. Brick by brick, wall by wall, suspicion by suspicion, power is built, oppression takes hold. We construct an identity, a world, a security, a way of salvation... a ghetto.

Who can defeat and break such power? Who can defeat such a horde of devils? Who can overcome such oppression in the land? Some turn to horses, to powerful horses, some trust in chariots for protection and life, some take up bows and spears ... they turn to tanks and middle-range nuclear missiles. They construct them and place them up along the wall ... thinking to oppose oppression by more oppression.

Oppression on both sides. Slavery on both sides. Sin on both sides. There is no going out or coming in. There is inertia. A silent, a dead zone. The law "speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced, and the whole world may be held accountable to God." The whole world ... those inside the walls and those outside the walls.

Selah.

Unfortunately, as we sing the psalm, we aren't confronted by this curious word that appears now and again, a bit haphazardly in the psalms. It appears three times in our beloved Psalm 46, once after verse 3 ("though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. Selah"); and once

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after verses 7 and 11 ("The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah"). Luther, the Old Testament professor and translator, couldn't figure it out. Finally, he writes: "The word Selah is introduced confusedly and altogether without discernable order, to show, that the motion of the Spirit is secret, unknown to us, and by no means possible to be foreseen..." And then he continues: "Wherever it comes, it requires us to omit the words of the psalms," or we might say, it interrupts the words of the psalms, it breaks into the words. Lastly, he writes, we are brought to a "pausing and quiet frame."

Selah ... breaks into our reading, into our meditation, into our life, and disrupts the meaning we are constructing. It breaks through the mighty walls, Selah ... silences us (and our constructions).

The walls of a medieval church, the hierarchy and magic of the sacraments, the control of people's conscience ...

The walls of a gray society, of Stasi oppression and forced conformity, the loss of hope in a totalitarian system...

The walls of another society, trusting in arms build-up, in a weapons' industry, in superior power and technology, in consumerism ... as means to defeat communism.

All – all of them and all of us – all are silenced. All are subdued, defeated, silenced by one little Word. And something of the Spirit is possible. Selah.

One word, one small group praying, one voice crying, one bright vigil candle.

Isaiah says: "In silence and in hope shall your strength be" (Isa 30:15-16). But too often we say: "By no means. We will take refuge with horses." That is, with power, with weapons, in worldly battle, without the name of the Lord. "The saints, however, are in silence and patience and in hope, not physical activity ... for the saints are saved by the name of the Lord. This does not come about except in hope and patience and silence, whereas the ungodly seek to be saved in bustle and physical activity," in building walls, constructing weapons and fighting wars.

Selah.

In a silent, unexpected interruption of the Spirit, we are freed. A candle is lit. The wall crumbles, and the weapons are rendered useless. God acts. God "makes wars cease to the end of the earth; God breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; God burns the shields with fire." And God does this in such a way that we have nothing to boast about! The people will look at our procession of lighted candles, at our prayers for peace, and they will praise (not us!) but God.

"Be still ... and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth."

Selah.

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#### Notes

1 Psalm 53 (54). WA 3:301, 9-13.

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### Ad Fontem: A New Trajectory in German Lutheran Baptismal Architecture

Scott A. Moore

I have been living as an expatriate in the Land of Luther for just shy of eight years. The longer I stay away from the culture of my birth, the more heightened my awareness becomes about what it means for me to be Scott Alan Moore, born in Takoma Park, Maryland, on April 4, 1968, just hours after the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. These are details to be sure, but they are a part of my personal story. Since my daughter Sophia was born on October 30, 2007, I have spent an increasing amount of free-time investigating my family roots. I have found that as a descendant of Robert Hairston, I can submit an application to become a Son of the American Revolution, and then Sophia can become a Daughter of the American Revolution. I want to give her that. I want to give her a sense of connection to a land and culture, which she has only gotten to know on two separate month-long vacations. I have also found out that one of my ancestors, Fleming Saunders, was an officer in the Army of Northern Virginia during the Civil War. He married into the Hairston family and was fighting with others to maintain the rights to keep the hundreds of slaves his in-laws had in order to work one of the largest plantations in Virginia. This is a detail I am certainly not proud of, but I was glad to learn the truth about that part of my family. I will pass that on to my daughter, too. I have found other tidbits of family past through the power of the internet, like the photos of the three ships my grandfather served on during first World War on the Chesapeake Bay: the USS Elfrida, USS Clio, and USS Chilowee. I have found pictures of homes that various grandparents lived in as children, and I have visited some of them myself. I find myself driving and walking my old haunts every time I come back to this part of the country. If even for a mo-

ment, I want to stand where I stood before and re-connect with a part of my history and family tradition. I am not alone in that activity, I know. For alumni, even coming to the Luther Colloquy has that effect: personal history in a place that has history. And yet, it, too, changes and grows.

Enter: a group of North American Lutherans into the church of Sts. Peter and Paul in Eisleben, Germany. They have been on the bus for three hours after having spent the morning driving from Berlin, where they left after having flown through the night and arrived the next morning. They are not yet adjusted, already a tad travel weary, overloaded with impressions from sounds, sights, smells of a different culture: familiar, desired, yet strange and exciting. They look around. They marvel at the ribbed vaulted ceiling, and the pre-Reformation altar dedicated to St. Ann, the patron saint of miners. They wander around the church and take in the rest of the liturgical and devotional art. Finally they gather around the font, which contains the remnants of the font in which the Blessed Reformer was baptized. They touch it. They are quiet. They feel connected. They feel like they are being reformed in their identity as Lutheran Christians. And, they are. Perhaps you are one of those Lutheran Christians that has been on such a trip. Maybe you know a few of them and have heard their stories. I would like to think that, at least, you would like to be one of them and are interested in our common heritage in the tradition of Martin Luther and enjoy "seeing, hearing, and learning about" those places and moments of our Christian history that have marked us in a particular way.

### The Power of Place

The power of place in the forming and re-forming of human identity is indisputable. The spatial dimensions of our existence is something we take for granted, on the one hand, when we find ourselves in spaces and places we know well and with which we are very comfortable, like our daily environs. There are times, on the other hand, when the awareness of the power of a given place becomes heightened: for example, when we experience it for the very first time, when we have time between our experiences of a space in question, when something changes within us that, in turn, expands our awareness, or perhaps when we experience a familiar place vicariously through the fresh/new experience of others either in their presence as they experience it or through their narratives after the fact.

We carve out, mark, and name spaces and places as special or even holy in a manner of ways: how we use them, how we talk about them, how we dress and behave when being there, etc. And, space is a critically significant aspect of how we humans negotiate our religious experience and the traditions of our respective faiths. We build churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples as ways of putting the holy into a spatial context. Sometimes this is temporary; most often these places quickly take on a permanent character through the ritualization of people coming to the place and doing whatever it is they do in that place.

Places not only provide the framework for our acts of tradition. They become a bearer of the tradition itself (along with various narratives both oral and written). Where particular enactments and re-enactments of tradition are limited in their moments in time (we don't imagine, for example, Martin Luther standing at the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg constantly hammering the 95 Theses through the ages), a physical location and its architecture serves as a "place marker" in the historical narrative, calling our attention again and again like a well-worn "dog ear": our list of favorites or most notable, so to speak. Our ability to engage in spatial imagination is so well-tuned that we can integrate the legendary and historical narrative into a given place and can envision what "happened" there, even if it didn't actually happen.

Places underscore our cultural and, at times, our religious memory. "When and how has God acted in history on this planet?" is an essential question for us as Christians. If we can connect that to a place it somehow becomes more real for us. It anchors such experiences and allows them to be shared more solidly with others. It gives others a reference point for the narrative.

"Spatial Reference Points" of the Lutheran Christian Tradition
Within the context of our faith tradition, these spatial reference points draw
us to them. We are hungry for the stories of our roots (as Lutheran Christians). We could hear the story of Luther cowering in a thunderstorm in
Stotternheim or the story of him saying, "Here I stand" in Worms over and
over and over. We want to imagine and envision. We want to carry those
images and integrate them into our own personal faith story. We want these
spaces and places to be partly ours, even if but for a moment. We hope they
will be little mountaintops where we have a moment of "aha", where we understand our relationship to God a little better.

These are the motivations of pilgrims. It is an interesting concept for us as Lutheran Christians. We have writings of Luther himself calling the practice of pilgrimage into question. He was, of course, scarred greatly by his great pilgrimage opportunity in 1510, when he traveled to Rome. We often hear about the corruption and decadence that was going on in the Eternal City at that time. We hear and tell stories in confirmation classes, sermons,

and adult forums regularly about the abuses that were going on in the Western Church at that time, as well. What we do not mention about that trip was that the place Luther had hoped to see was a mess. Not only morally (although that was the case), but architecturally. The holy site of the grave of St. Peter was but a miserable construction site. The cathedral seat and altar of St. Peter's were exposed to the elements. It was anything but a worthy pilgrimage site. It told nothing of the glory of the faith and the apostolic tradition celebrated in that place. It proclaimed nothing stable whatsoever. Of course the fundraising plan for the building of a new church, one to rival that of any emperor before, was questionable. Of course there was corruption. But let us not underestimate the effect on Luther of seeing a much hoped for place in such a dilapidated state.<sup>3</sup>

Luther's frustration at what he saw and heard lead him to write some strong words about the practice of pilgrimage in his time. Concerning the practice of pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela Luther wrote:

This holy James, whose feast day we celebrate today, is highly regarded as well as John the brother of James and Salome their mother, who stood under the cross (Acts 12:2). Now one does not read anything about St. James in Acts, except that Herod had him killed by the sword, that is all. How he came to Compostela, where the great pilgrimage heads, now of that we are not certain: some say he lies in France in Toulouse, but they are just as uncertain in their claim. That's why you should leave things be and not walk there, for one does not know whether it is Saint James, or a dead dog, or a dead horse, that lies there. That's why it serves them right, those who go there: while they neglect the good and right works, which God commands, they stumble and walk to St. James, and before they give a poor man 30 Gulden, they would rather head [to Compostela] and eat for 40 Gulden worth or one hundred. Therefore, let them preach what they want, let an indulgence be an indulgence, let them travel there. You, however, stay at home. But the worst is, that one would set his heart on St. James and God should be cast to the side out of the center: with this, St. James is not honored, and for God it is an even greater dishonor.<sup>4</sup>

And concerning pilgrimages to Rome, Luther shared the following thoughts:

Pilgrimages to Rome should either be abolished or else no one should be allowed to make such a pilgrimage for reasons of curiosity or his own pious devotion, unless it is first acknowledged by his parish priest, his town authorities, or his overlord that he has a good and sufficient reason for doing so. I say this not because pilgrimages are bad, but because they are ill-advised at this time. At Rome men do not find a good example, but, on the contrary, pure scandal. The Romanists themselves devised the saying, "The nearer Rome, the worse Christians." After a pilgrimage to Rome men bring back with them contempt for God and his commandments. They say the first time a man goes to Rome he seeks a rascal; the second time he finds one; the third time he brings him back home with him. Now, however, the Romanists have grown so clever that they can make three pilgrimages in one! The pilgrims have brought back such a pretty mess of experiences from Rome that it would be better never to have seen Rome or known anything about it.<sup>5</sup>

The intellectual inheritance of such writings has informed the Protestant tradition in Germany with a skeptical view, if not an overt distaste, of things "pilgrim". This is at least the case among the intellectual, theological elite. Pilgrimage as an acceptable devotional practice is seen as primarily the domain of Roman Catholicism among Christians. There has been an interesting tension, however, among the population within the church and beyond. Maybe Lutheran Christians don't make pilgrimages, according to German Protestant theologians, and if they were to make such pilgrimages, they certainly shouldn't make them to the sites connected to Luther himself. He wouldn't want that, of course. There is, however, a growing tendency toward "walking the faith": going on pilgrimages of some kind with a connection to the faith tradition in Lutheran/Protestant circles. There are many examples of it sprouting up in Scandinavia, where they are reclaiming pilgrimage practices to ancient holy places like Nidaros (modern-day Trondheim) in Norway or St. Olaf in southern Sweden.

In Germany as well, there are some of the earliest examples of memorial places dedicated to the Great Reformer. His birth house and museum, his death house, his house in Wittenberg, the various churches where important things happened in his life. Since the times of the Prussian Kings, there has been a continued attention to caring for these places for the purposes of holding on to the cultural and religious narrative of Protestant Germany.

The places called the "Luther Sites", Wittenberg, Eisleben, Erfurt, and Eisenach with the Wartburg Castle, attract and leave their mark on hundreds of thousands of people each year. This past summer I was giving a workshop in St. Mary's church in Wittenberg (also known as the Town

Church) as a part of the pan-Lutheran Luther500 Festival. At one point, I looked around and counted six different tour groups in the church at the same time. Six. During Claudia's and my time in Eisleben, which doesn't get the same kind of pilgrim/tourist traffic that Wittenberg does, we as the pastors had contacts with hundreds of groups ranging from two/three people to groups approaching one hundred. And that was only a portion of the many groups that came through.

Most of the tour operators, however, in order to help their groups see as much as possible, visit these places at a pace that is not conducive to the spiritual component of pilgrimage. The rapid consumption of the history and culture is at cross-purposes with the idea of being a pilgrim and having the necessary time to allow such places and their stories work on us. The sheer numbers of people in some places also make it difficult to achieve the desired spiritual experience in these places.

Up until very recently, each Luther site was left to telling its particular part of the Reformer's story over and over again - making its contribution to the religious-cultural memory of Lutheran Protestant Christianity – in somewhat of a vacuum: here Martin Luther was born, here he was baptized, here he nailed the 95 Theses, here he preached his last sermons, here he threw an inkwell at the devil, etc. But for almost five years now, Germany and the respective cities have been much more focused on creating some kind of thematic cohesion within the context of Lutheran Pilgrimage. In 2008, the EKD (the Evangelical Protestant Church in Germany) called the "Luther Decade" into existence. Germany and the world were given ten years to build up to the celebration of the event - the nailing of the 95 Theses on October 31, 1517 - which Lutherans in the Reformation tradition identify as the beginning of the German Protestant Reformation. Millions of Euros have been allocated in order to renovate a number of significant Luther sites. Much has been done in the area of Germany that was not supported by the Marshall Plan and where praise-worthy pastors, congregations, and local municipalities in some cases scrounged and worked together to keep significant buildings from falling into disrepair while still serving as places of worship and tourism.

It is an interesting situation, currently. Because of their pure tourist nature, the museum sites connected to Martin Luther – his house in Wittenberg, the birth house and death house in Eisleben, or the Luther house in Mansfeld – seem to be doing better than Wittenberg's Town and Castle Churches, Eisleben's Baptismal (of Luther) and Last-Sermons (of Luther) churches, and the Augustinian Monastery Church. Ironically, these religious sites are exactly the places where pilgrims can connect a part of Luther's

biography to concepts, ideas, and practices of the faith, yet are not visited with the same frequency.

Let us take one example that I know very well to see how one congregation in Eisleben is responding to the historic importance of one of their churches and expanding it to meet the needs and desires of pilgrims, in order to give testimony to the baptismal theology of Martin Luther in an extremely non-Christian context: Sts. Peter and Paul in Eisleben. This is the church where Martin was baptized. This church, which once welcomed groups as I mentioned at the beginning of our time together, is being radically transformed to express, architecturally and programmatically, the importance of the theology of baptism. When they are finished in the next few months, 10 pilgrims will be welcomed into a space that preaches the importance of baptism loudly and clearly. They will now be able to participate in services of baptismal remembrance (as they had been doing in the past seven years) in a space that also teaches about the interconnectedness of the baptism we share. They will be able to learn about the practices of various traditions. Individuals and congregations can even decide to celebrate baptisms there in the Luther font or in the ecumenical baptistery being built (although that isn't the primary goal of this renovation). This site is a fine example of Lutheran pilgrimage at its best. It takes the pilgrim beyond the historical artifacts into a deeper reality. Seeing Luther's baptismal font standing there alone is interesting and captures our religious imagination, but not particularly Lutheran if we just celebrate Martin Luther. What really inspires, however, is the movement to our baptism not as traditional Lutherans but as those who are brought into the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Something of which Luther would have approved.

There are many people in many various institutions between churches and cities excited and eager to welcome tourists and pilgrims. Of course, there are varied differences in the level of sensitivity towards pilgrims and the ways in which to make the most of their time and experiences in these locations.

An often over-looked treasure to be found in and around these actual pilgrimage sites are the people of faith in these places. <sup>11</sup> They have the same roots, but they have grown differently in the same tradition. They focus on other aspects of being Lutheran than maybe you or I do. They are struggling to use the same theological tradition to find answers to how to live the faith in a different context. They aren't our ancestors. Lutherans in Luther-land are more like our cousins in this family. We can learn from them. They have experienced difficult and amazing things since we left them behind to immigrate to the New World.

### Vicarious Pilgrimage

I would love to accompany all of you on a pilgrimage to the Land of Luther, but that is, unfortunately, not possible. Most of the members in the congregations throughout our church will not have the opportunity to walk in Luther's footsteps. Their identity as Christians in the Lutheran tradition will not be shaped through experiencing, first hand, the story in these locations and spaces. Realistically, between now and 2017 there might be a few thousand ELCA pilgrims traveling to the Luther sites. And, while I fully support the ministries of our church such as the ELCA Wittenberg Center, the reality is, it directly affects very few members. Ideally, though, if these pilgrims have great experiences, they will return and tell stories and share their experiences in creative ways helping their hearers to engage in what I call "vicarious pilgrimage". It can be exciting and rejuvenating for our own faith when we hear the stories of other faithful Christians and their experiences. Perhaps that happened for some of you as Claudia Bergmann was sharing some of the stories of our experiences just moments ago. Vicarious pilgrimage can be like classic slideshows with souvenirs that are passed around. It can be a special gift like a Luther Rose pin purchased in a Luther City or maybe a copy of the 95 Theses from Wittenberg, etc. It could be like the letter I received from a 5th grader just last year. In it she included a little Flat Stanley and asked me to take a picture of him in some special place in a Luther Site of my choosing and then share something about what Flat Stanley was seeing.

I would like to invite you into an intentional moment of Vicarious Pilgrimage right now. Take our little friend, Martin, who greeted you today on your way in. 12 That Martin is called a "Luther-Botschafter" or "Luther ambassador" and was part of an art exhibit called "Here I Stand" by the artist, Ottmar Hörl. The statues of Luther and Melanchthon in Wittenberg needed to be restored. During the downtime while the monuments were away, plastic miniature replicas in four bold colors were created and put on display on the market square in Wittenberg, changing the perspective of how we view monuments and our physical relation to them. And now, one of those guys is here, and there is information in the back on the project itself. There is also one in my home, usually not dressed like this. There were 800 of them on the square, and they caused quite the stir. Imagine what would happen if we had 800 multi-colored sitting Luthers all over the campus. That is just something to consider. This Little Luther Ambassador invites us to think about the larger one in Wittenberg. Wittenberg comes to us and is a sign of the larger story that took place there.

Another last example of vicarious pilgrimage, and by no means have I exhausted all the possibilities, would be traveling exhibitions with religious

and cultural artifacts where those that can't make it to the Land of Luther can at least look at, up close, things like Martin and Katie's wedding ring, or a chalice from that era, or a copy of his death mask, and the like.

All my focus today is, of course, on Lutheran Christian identity. And, I am not suggesting that the Lutheran part is more important than that which is Christian. We all know of the myriad of possibilities to go on pilgrimages to the Holy Land and see where Jesus walked. I am suggesting, however, that there are significant opportunities to strengthen the identity of our particular tradition. In strengthening our tradition, I would hope we also pay particular attention to those aspects that speak to us in our context today.

Actual pilgrimage and vicarious pilgrimage: both serve in different ways to connect us and re-connect us to our cultural roots of faith. They also have the potential to change us for the better. They are moments when we allow ourselves to be 'transported' to another place and we are open to new and renewed ideas. It is a moment of potential transformation.

### Virtual Pilgrimage

Pilgrimage doesn't only stop at the actual and vicarious forms. There is a third type of pilgrimage at our disposal: I refer to it as "virtual pilgrimage". The advent of new technologies allows us to be virtually present in these pilgrimage sites and in many ways encounter the stories one step further removed from the excitement of the live recounting of such experiences by someone first hand. There is much room to grow in this realm. I, personally, would love to see Gettysburg Seminary take the lead in creating such resources giving Lutheran Christians and others a chance to visit places and see things in our tradition in a virtual way, which they might not otherwise be able to do for many reasons. Beyond the technology, we have other ways to engage virtually in our tradition: for example, when we engage our imagination and make use of the Church Year to integrate our history with today. Many congregations will do it this coming Sunday (Reformation Sunday) or maybe even on Monday (October 31).

Reformation Day is not enough, however, and perhaps not even always the best example because of the history of using that day to drive a wedge between 'us and them'. 'Them' being Rome, of course. I know you understand that, but we all fall into the trap of convenience. We feel we have more pressing issues in our congregations: stewardship, evangelism, roofs to put on, fires to put out, votes of congregations on whether to remain in the ELCA or leave, etc. We are so consumed with today and tomorrow and

maybe next week that we barely have time to breathe let alone investigate and discover what our Lutheran heritage and its interpretation around the world possesses that might help us know ourselves better. But when we watch the struggle to "Occupy Wall Street", what better time is there to take a look at how Luther and his Wittenberg colleagues struggled with the powers that be and staged a burning of the Papal Bull? When do we resist? Why do we resist? When do we protest? How do we protest? Or, what does it mean to celebrate a birthday or a baptismal birthday in our families? What did Luther's baptismal birthday on November 11 mean to him? In our current climate of increasing ecumenism on the part of the ELCA, what does it mean to celebrate the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession on June 25, as an effort to show Rome then and now where there was and still is common ground? These are all times throughout the year where we can take advantage of historical events to underscore certain aspects of our Lutheran Christian heritage.

#### Conclusion

My identity as Scott Alan Moore, who is an O'Neal, a Herron, a Stovall, and a Hairston, to name a few, has been strengthened and informed through my own actual pilgrimage to my family sites, through vicarious pilgrimage in the stories and artifacts from other family members passing on the tradition, and virtually when I access that which I can't visit or see or hear through other media. I believe I am more Scott because of this than I was before.

We have that chance as Lutheran Christians, as well. The opportunities are either already there or waiting to be developed. It is a worthy tradition to maintain. When we live into it in healthy ways, it leads us not only to understanding ourselves better but also the other traditions outside of our own. Most importantly, though, it leads us to find our Lutheran identity in Jesus Christ.

### Notes

- 1 See the story of Jacob in Genesis 28.
- Where a geographic location lacks clarity as a marker (think of the open fields around Gettysburg), it is necessary to mark it architecturally (think of all the monuments along the battlefield roads). An opposite example from Gettysburg would be Little Round Top and Devil's Den. There are markers, but far fewer in comparison.
- 3 Wolfgang Frühwald, Vortrag an der deutschen Botschaft beim Heiligen Stuhl in Rom am 30. Oktober 2006 (Downloaded from the internet on December 1, 2011 from:

- http://www.goethezeitportal.de/fileadmin/PDF/db/wiss/bildende\_kunst/fruehwald\_petersdom.pdf.
- Translation mine. Luther's text is as follows: "Diser hailig Jacobus, des fest man heüt begeet, ist groß geacht und Joannes des Jacobi bruder, und Salome jr baider muter, der under [Apg. 12, 2] dem creütz gestanden ist. Nun lißt man vonn sant Jacob nit meer in Act. am xij, dann das jn der Herodes hab mit dem schwert getoedt, das ist es als. Wie er in Hispaniam kommen ist gen Compostel, da die groß walfart hin ist, da haben wir nu nichts gewiß von dem: etlich sagen, er lig in Franckreich zu Thalosa, aber sy seind jrer sach auch nit gewiß. Darumb laß man sy ligen und lauff nit dahin, dann man waißt nit ob sant Jacob oder ain todter hund oder ain todts roß da ligt, darumb geschicht inen auch recht die da also hinlauffen: dann dieweil man die guten rechten werck die got gebeüt nachlaßt, so felt man dahin und laufft zu sant Jacob, und ee man geb ainem armen man .xxx. guldin, ee laufft man hin und verzeret xxxx. oder hundert. Darumb laß predigen wer da will, laß ablaß ablaß sein, laß raisen wer da wil, bleib du dahaim. Aber das ist nun das ergst, das man das hertz auf sant Jacob will setzen und got sol darneben hingeen und auß dem mittel geworffen werden: damit geschicht sant Jacob kain eer und got ain grosse uneer." Ain Sermon von sant Jacob dem meereren und hailigen zwoelffpotten" (WA 10/3:235). Luther's reference to St. James and Toulouse is an interesting one. Both the French cities of Toulouse (Thalosa in Luther's German text) and Toul were cities along the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela. In my cursory search, I found no references to indicate that St. James was venerated in Toulouse. There is, however, another St. James, St. James of Toul, bishop and saint (d. 769). Perhaps there was a confusion on Luther's part.
- LW 44:169-170. Luther's text is as follows: "Zum zwelfften, das man die walfarten gen Rom abethet, odder niemant von eygener furwitz odder andacht wallen liesse, er wurd dan zuvor von seinem pfarrer, stad odder ubirhern erkant gnugsam und redlich ursach haben. Das sag ich nit darumb, das walfarten bosze seyn, szondern das sie zu disser zeit ubel geratten, dan sie zu Rom kein gut exempel, szondern eytel ergernisz sehen, unnd wie sie selb ein sprichwort gemacht haben 'Yhe nehr Rom, yhe erger Christen', bringen sie mit sich vorachtung gottis und gottis geboten. Man sagt: wer das erste mal gen Rom gaht, der sucht einen schalck, zum andern mal fynd er yhn, zum dritten bringt er yhn mit erausz. Aber sie sein nw szo geschickt wordenn, das sie die drey reysz auff ein mal auszrichten, unnd haben furwar uns solch stucklin ausz Rom bracht, es were besser, Rom nie gesehen noch erkandt." An den Christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des Christlichen standes besserung, 1520 (WA 6:437).
- For an interesting assessment of the Protestant way of engaging in pilgrimage to significant sites see Stefan Rhein, "'2017' Wie wird Erinnerung Organisiert?," in Erinnerung: Dokumentation einer Veranstaltung der UNESCO-Stätten im Raum Dessau-Wittenberg (M. Cuno Verlag, 2007) 28-35.
- 7 While this lecture is focused on pilgrimages of faith, it should be noted that people engage in pilgrimage practices that have many of the same earmarks even if not connected to a particular faith tradition. Some examples might be visiting national landmarks or graves of famous individuals. Accompanying this is the phenomenon of collecting "relics": a scarf with Elvis' sweat, a baseball signed by Babe Ruth, or a book autographed by the author.
- 8 See Luther Memorials Foundation of Saxony-Anhalt at www.martinluther.de (Dec. 26, 2011).
- See www.luther-2017.de/eng (Dec. 26, 2011)

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- 10 The re-dedication of the finished architectural renovations (phase 1) is scheduled for April 29, 2012.
- 11 I want to thank Prof. Kit Kleinhans at Wartburg College for reminding me to give voice to this important aspect, which I would have silently taken for granted otherwise
- 12 The exhibit, "Here I Stand" ran from August 14-September 12, 2010.

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### Luther Colloquy 2011, Concluding Remarks

Michael Cooper-White

On behalf of Gettysburg Seminary, and all of us gathered here throughout this great day, I join my colleague, Dr. Kirsi Stjerna, in expressing profound gratitude to our presenters. I also want to acknowledge the presence among us of two of the Luther Colloquy's founding faculty members, professors emeriti Eric Gritsch and Gerald Christianson, both of whom gave leadership in this annual colloquy during its early years. Finally, I acknowledge another reactivated "retired one" among us, Dr. William Avery, serving so ably as Acting Dean during the current sabbatical of Dean Robin Steinke.

The planning committee asked that I attempt to weave together some brief summary-remarks on all that we have heard and learned throughout this day, which was truly inspirational as well as educational. Since we are midway in the 2011 World Series baseball contest, it occurs to me that my role is akin to that of a good relief pitcher: the task is to close it out as strongly and quickly as possible.

In the day's first inning, Dr. Claudia Bergmann led off with a homerun, reminding us that the Reformation began with baptism – Martin Luther's at the still-in-use font of the Eisleben parish she and Pr. Moore served for their first calls. She spoke of the importance of little things, paying attention to detail, which signals to a community of God's people, no matter how small in number, that their pastor takes them seriously. Dr. Bergmann spoke of the necessity to avoid "liturgy lite," and the critical nature of engaging folks in authentic relationships. Especially in parishes being stifled by hidebound tradition, one might engage in fighting legalism with creativity, and some holy rule-breaking. Finally, she shared compelling stories of shaping ministry in such a way as to enable the gifts of the people to flourish. A lasting

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image for me will be that of Peter the plumber, tired of having to fix pipes around the church, freed at last to follow his passion of working with the parish youth.

In today's second inning, Pastor Scott Moore reminded us of the value of pilgrimage to sacred sites and historic places. This Gettysburg graduate who stewarded the historic parish in Eisleben in company of his spouse, Dr. Bergmann, spoke eloquently of how one creates meaningful experiences by extending hospitality to multitudes of strangers who flock to certain locales. In my own initial formation for ministry, my pilgrimage to serve as an intern among the saints of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile was the single most life-changing experience. We hear similar testimonies these days from Gettysburg seminarians led by the faculty on pilgrimages to sites in Rome, Israel, Turkey, Greece, Germany, Atlanta (the King sites), and Central America. As we prepare to convert the Seminary's historic Schmucker Hall to a place of pilgrimage for students of the great American Civil War and many others, we can learn much from Pr. Moore's experiences and insights.

Because he grew up in Germany, where baseball is not a "big deal" the way it is for us Americans, it is hard to picture Dr. Günther Gassmann in a baseball uniform. Nevertheless, as I pondered the matter, it occurred to me that in Günther we have a kind of Tony LaRussa (manager of the St. Louis Cardinals vying for victory in the 2011 World Series). I came to know LaRussa's talents a quarter century ago when he managed the Oakland Athletics during the seasons I regularly attended their games in the Oakland Coliseum. It has been said of LaRussa, one of only two managers to have under his belt World Series championships in both the American and National leagues, that he is so good at the job simply because of his experience and his dogged dedication to the sport. With more than 5,000 major league baseball games behind him, and as a perennial student of the game he loves, LaRussa's is an unparalleled career. So it is with our friend Dr. Gassmann, who has "managed" multiple dialogue and scholarly teams in Lutheran and ecumenical arenas for more than a half century. Some suggest he knows more about Lutheranism than Martin Luther; others claim that he knows more theology than God. Günther's marvelous historical survey showed us the enormity of Luther's influence, not only in religion and theology, but upon culture, language, politics and every aspect of life. This brilliant historical survey of Luther's legacy is a profound reminder of just how much influence can be exerted by a dogged, determined public theologian, which we at Gettysburg like to say is the kind of leader we seek to send forth from this place.

Worship services usually do not receive public "reviews," but since today's worship was such an integral part of the Colloquy, I offer a brief

reprise. Dr. Dirk Lange's sermon gave powerful testimony to why we at Gettysburg Seminary are so excited about our emerging partnership with our colleagues over in the Twin Cities at Luther Seminary. Students of both schools will have greater access to the marvelous combined collective wisdom of our two great faculties, and we will be working together in launching some new initiatives that we trust will be a blessing to the church and academy. Dr. Lange's proclamation revealed to us that a wall, such as the one that divided the city of Berlin and the land of Germany for nearly four decades, is a fortress, a place of power and control, and a means of oppression. But, declared our preacher, the Spirit finds or makes cracks in walls and ushers us into the wide-open spaces of salvation and shalom. Selah.

Now it seems to me that what Dr. Martin Treu was up to in this Colloquy's final lecture was a kind of "background check on Martin Luther," trying to determine whether or not the Reformer might have been on steroids when over and over again he hit the papal pitches out of the park. That is to say, Dr. Treu demonstrated so effectively the necessity of ongoing careful scholarship, which probes previously assumed realities to verify their authenticity or offer necessary revisions. While it's not a matter on which the Church stands or falls, it is important how and where and by whom the 95 theses were posted. The Church's witness is determined in good measure by the integrity and historical veracity of the stories we tell. And our historians and other scholars fortify our witness as they persist in such careful scholarship as that demonstrated this afternoon by our guest from Wittenberg, Dr. Treu.

Late in the game, when many in the stands have already taken their departure, the mark of a good relief pitcher is the element of surprise. The reliever succeeds by throwing a new kind of curve ball, or a faster fastball, or a pitch that breaks in a surprising direction just before it crosses the plate. So, in conclusion, let me toss out a couple of final pitches here for you to consider as you stand there at the bat.

Fifty years ago, a young, recently inaugurated U.S. president traveled to a newly-walled city of Berlin. John F. Kennedy won the hearts of the German people and much of the world when he declared: "Ich bin ein Berliner." In that short four-word phrase, President Kennedy declared U.S. solidarity with an oppressed and anxious people. In the current presidential pre-primary season, multiple candidates vie for our highest office. And several of them speak of building walls – along our border to the south in particular. I keep waiting for a presidential candidate who will go to the Rio Grande river in Texas, Arizona or southern California, cross to the middle of a bridge over the international border, stand midway between both border control stations and declare into the microphones, "Yo soy un Mexicano."

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In 1987, another U.S. president, of the other political party, made another speech in Germany. At Berlin's famous Brandenburg Gate, Ronald Reagan boldly faced Soviet premier Mikail Gorbachev and demanded, "Tear down this wall!" In less than two years, the great wall was dismantled. In his concluding remarks, Günther Gassmann spoke of his delight in the progress of the ecumenical movement, where from being a child taught the pope was the enemy, Günther ended up "playing with three popes." Yet, how we long and yearn still to commune with at least one. What might happen if leaders of the Lutheran World Federation, and other great churches of the Reformation heritage, would move beyond the diplomatic niceties when they are granted an audience with the pope, planting their feet firmly in the halls of the Vatican and demanding, "Holy Father, open up your table"?

I conclude my relief pitcher's stint by tossing out two final questions: "Where is God calling each of us to search for cracks in the walls of the world that continue to divide us and to oppress so many? Where must we persist in chip-chip-chipping away in the continuing quest to fulfill the vision of our Lord Jesus when he prayed so fervently on what was perhaps the first real Reformation Day: "That they may be one ...?"

Michael Cooper-White is President of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. His most recent books are The Comeback God: A Theological Primer for a Life of Faith and Church Administration: Programs, Process, Purpose. He teaches church administration and he serves on the boards of the Eastern Cluster of Lutheran Seminaries and Washington Theological Consortium, as well as the National Trust for Historic Gettysburg.

### A Community of Engagement: 2011 Opening Academic Convocation

Nelson T. Strobert

I am indeed humbled by this honor as the first recipient of the Paulssen-Hale Chair for Church and Society. These two formidable figures in the history of Gettysburg Seminary are on whose shoulders we gather for the beginning of this academic year. Their work exemplifies this seminary's past, but their work also assists us in working in the present context and helps to propel us into new tomorrows, the future.

I met Dr. Paulssen my first month here several decades ago as a firstyear seminarian. My pastor at the time, William Schiemann (Gettysburg Seminary 1955), told me that I should meet and greet Dr. Paulssen when I arrived on campus. I met her at Gettysburg Hospital and gave her greetings from Schiemann. I know that he had not majored in sociology while here, but she must have had an influence on him as he came to Epiphany Lutheran Church in Brooklyn, New York, and looked at the context for ministry, the community and its people during the 1950s. I met Dr. Russell Hale during my senior year at Gettysburg when I took the required sociology of religion course. I remember his stress on knowing the context of the community and imparting the latest in research in the field. When I returned to Gettysburg to be on the faculty, his same commitment to research was apparent. Even upon a visit to his and Phyllis's home, he was still involved with and interested in (and shared with my colleague William Avery and myself his thoughts on) a new work by Robert Wuthnow about a week before his death.

These two lives were similar in their theological and scholarly research, but I want to say that beyond their academic lives they were two servants of the church; teachers of the church, committed to the ministry and the

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preparation of people of God for ministry or service within and outside of the church. As such, I want to say they were part of what I want to call *engaged* people in the life of the church and the community. They were part of what I see as one of the distinctive parts of theological education in general and Gettysburg Seminary in particular. For my time with you this afternoon, I want to describe what I see as engagement on the part of these two teachers of the church, the engagement which is part of the history of this Seminary, and I want to suggest and give a model for the continued engagement of this community in the ongoing story in the educational ministry of the church.

In 1954 and 1955 Bertha Paulssen, on a retreat for senior seminarians at nearby Camp Nawakwa, addressed the group with a presentation entitled, "The Seminarian and the World Today." In the paper she addressed the seminarians preparing for ministry only ten years after the end of World War II and one or two years after the end of the Korean War. She mentioned that those students who were venturing out into church work were in many ways in an enviable position. America was going through a "revival of religion," church membership was high, and monetary giving to the church was high as well. It was during the heyday of Billy Graham who was attracting large audiences to his "Crusades." It was a time of a large number of mission starts, in the academic arena there were a number of positions in the formation of religion and religious studies departments. On the political spectrum national leaders including the presidents were open about their religious affiliations and interests. With all that was going on in the religious arena, more ministers or church workers were needed for the tasks. At the same time, Paulssen went on to say that while this was the situation, there were also threats to this boom. No longer could students in the United States be oblivious to the threat of war and nuclear disaster. Although the seminarian was not subject to the draft or required military service, the newly called worker would have to do ministry in an atmosphere of "danger and fear." In addition to all of that, there was the expanding secularization of life. Paulssen was keen to note that many may not be aware of some of these issues but challenged them to listen to the young people who might be in despair, look at the films that the Hollywood movie industry is producing, the voices of those who live in poverty, or the encounter of "bull-sessions" in their dormitory, and they will hear the needs of the contemporary American. The people are in "a desperate escape, a flight from themselves." But what are these seminarians to do? Paulssen admonishes them at the end:

Wherever you will be sent from here to the mission church, the downtown church, the rural church, the small town church, you

must be prepared to face the mind of Modern Man – his anxiety, skepticism, and his religious illiteracy. Last but not least, wherever you will be sent from here to the mission church, the downtown church, the rural church, will find that you will leave the Seminary with a new theology. We begin to understand again that in suffering and chaos – under the cross – the Christian message breaks into human hearts with overwhelming power.... Your responsibility and challenge in the coming years will be to permit yourselves to be grasped by this movement – to become a part of this reformation movement. Do not be satisfied to learn facts and skills plus techniques and methods. But to be apprehended by the power that radiates from the witnesses of the New Testament. Never forget that your task will be to bring the Gospel that lives in your hearts to the hungry people of our nation.<sup>2</sup>

From this presentation, she challenged students to be aware of and engaged with the world, to be engaged with the people with whom one has been called to serve, to look at the context for ministry, and from that context to be so informed and empowered by the gospel to assist in helping the modern citizen to see and be grasped by the gospel story of Jesus.

In the mid-1970s, J. Russell Hale published, *The Unchurched*.<sup>3</sup> He traveled by foot, airplane, boat, and car, and logged over 30,000 miles to examine the reason at that time for the millions of people who were not in church on Sunday mornings. He tracked the anti-institutionalist, the boxed in, the burned out, the floaters, the hedonists, the locked out, the nomads, the pilgrims, the publicans, and the True unbelievers. These were the people who were not on the church membership lists or adherents to the local faith communities. The importance of this study was the fact that these were the people not studied, for whom research was limited. What was really significant for me was the fact that Hale listened. It took him from West Virginia to California; from Alabama to Oregon. Hale took their stories seriously and stated:

These people were willing to discuss with me, a complete stranger, some of their most deeply felt hurts, hostilities, and convictions. They welcomed me into their homes with hospitality, with openness, and with interest in my project. I never misrepresented what it was I was seeking from them.... It was early apparent to me that they were "baring their souls" in a fashion seldom matched in their conversations with other ministers they had known in the past or with whom they were presently acquainted in their own communities.<sup>4</sup>

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At that time in the 1970s, there were forty million people in this category of unchurched. In 2011, there are 100 million people, according to the latest Barna Foundation report.

What we see in these two individuals are people who respected and took seriously people in various communities, in various situations, inside and outside of the church in their day.

What are the seminarians and church members finding today in 2011? Several research reports have been published, which will give us an indication of what we in the institutional church will find as students, teachers, and workers. In *American Religion: Contemporary Trends*, published this year, Mark Chaves, Professor of Sociology, Religion, and Divinity at Duke Divinity School, shares his findings from research. I highlight some of his work that will be instructive for us:

Religious leadership is a less attractive career choice for young people than it used to be. The numbers of older clergy and of female clergy are higher than they were several decades ago.

The proportion of Americans who claim no religious affiliation has increased dramatically. These are the people called religious "NONES."

The declining proportion of Protestants in the United States. In 1970, 62% percent of Americans identified with a Protestant church or denomination. By 2008, just slightly more than half do. If this trend continues, the United States soon will not have a Protestant majority for the first time in its history.

Not all religions are equally appreciated. American Christians are much more suspicious of Muslims than of Jews. They are more wary of atheists than of people who believe in a God different than their own. Even more troubling, outbursts of anti-Muslim sentiment, vandalism, and violence have increased since 2001, and there are signs that the general public's suspicion of Muslims also has increased.

Congregations have become more ethnically and racially diverse. There are diverse congregations: an equal mix of black and white; black, white and Asian; and Latino/a among white non-Hispanics. We are able to see these changes although most American congregations continue to be racially and ethnically divided. This trend in diversity is not increasing in predominately black churches.

The decline in children's religious participation. At the end of the twentieth century, fewer American children grew up in religiously active households.

The greater use of computer technology by congregations utilizing websites and electronic mail. In 1998, 17% of congregations had websites. In 2006 there were 44% of congregations with websites. In addition, the number of congregations using e-mail for communication went from 21% to 59%. Visual projection equipment increased from 12% to 27%.

Similar trends were stated in the Barna Report published this past August, where we find the following:<sup>6</sup>

Attendance at a church service in any given week has declined among self-identified Christians.

Adults are less likely to attend Sunday school in a typical week than was true twenty years ago.

Twenty years ago 30% of the self-identified Christians volunteered at a church; that figure has declined to 22% today.

Bible reading dropped slightly over the last twenty years within this segment, going from 51% to 46%.

Those who embrace the label "Christian" for themselves are now ten percentage points more likely to be unchurched than was true in 1991. The 31% who fit this profile have not attended any church service during the past six months, excluding special services such as weddings or funerals.

Needless to say, those of us called to rostered leadership as associates in ministry, diaconal ministers, pastors, and those of us called to live out ministry in other workplaces, are challenged by the changing landscape of American Christianity. How might we respond to these indicators: racism, the unchurched, biblical illiteracy, suspicion? The work of Paulssen and Hale indicates something instructive for us, for I think they embody what Gettysburg Seminary is about and what all seminary and theological education must be about: Engagement.

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I am using this term in a variety of approaches. David Hunter, in a monograph entitled *Religious Education as Engagement*, used the term to describe a meeting, knowing (not knowing about), responding to or ignoring, loving, hating. As he uses the term, he refers to the experience we are having or ought to be having as Christians. As a theological term, then, engagement is the moment when God acts in or upon the life of an individual and the individual faces the obligation to respond. Inasmuch as God is always acting in all life and upon God's entire creation, the whole range of one's experience has this theological dimension of engagement.

Ian Markham, in *A Theology of Engagement*, 8 asserts that "Engagement" has affinities with "involvement," "participation," "being engrossed," and "being committed." It may carry a sense of "opposition" (e.g., an engagement in war is hardly friendly) or "constructive change" (e.g., the children watching the film). So the attachments may carry a wide range of attitudes. It involves both positive participation and at the same time observation. For Markham, this must include non-Christian encounters as well.

A comparable word for engagement is commitment. Margaret Farley, in *Personal Commitments*, states: "Commitment seems, in our ordinary language, to include a notion of willingness to do something for or about whatever it is we are committed. It entails a new relationship in the present – a relation of binding and being bound, given and being-claimed."

Meeting, knowing, involvement, being engrossed and committed, binding and being bound, are descriptors that have been a part of the Gettysburg tradition from the very early days of its history. The leitmotif of engagement in church, community, nation, and world has been the Gettysburg Seminary story.

Engagement for Samuel Simon Schmucker meant an openness to the world of intellect, that would not "shrink from investigation, nor tremble before the intellectual attitude of friend or foe." <sup>10</sup> In opposition to those who saw the career of learning as forbidden fruit, he held no apprehension that the acquisition of knowledge would offer any danger to faith.

Donald R. Heiges, in his inaugural address as president of Gettysburg Seminary stated, "A theological school created and maintained by the church, carries on its work in dynamic relationship with the culture in which it exists." With that being the case, he went on to say that "a school of theology will take seriously the world, both as the context of its existence and the field of its concern ... this engagement will be as broad as time and opportunity allow but in minimal terms it will include dialog with representatives of non-theological disciplines, a period of clinical training in a hospital, participation in political or social action, direct exposure to contemporary art and literature, and apprenticeship in the church's ministry."

In the present era, President Michael Cooper-White stated in his inaugural address: "...[W]e must increasingly see ourselves as a seminary of, by and for a church engaged in God's mission through the richly diverse and splendidly multicultural global community." <sup>12</sup>

The presidential leadership of Gettysburg Seminary was only articulating that which has come from and passed on through God's Word. It is God's commitment to the individuals and the world, as we read regarding the covenant in Gen 9:9: "But I will establish my covenant with you." In Gen 9:15 we read: "I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh." As Rolf Rendtorff has stated, in this covenant God is committed irrevocably to the continuing existence of the world and of humanity. This binding of God to us in covenantal relationship is exemplified in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and it is made explicit in the Eucharist: "This is my body... This is my blood."

How can that continue today in the work that we do here at Gettysburg, or at any other school of theology? I have found the work of the late religious educator, Grant Shockley, to be of great importance. His model emerges out of the Black Church experience, but I think it is relevant for all churches and for us today gathered here. He posits an "Intentional Engagement Model for Social Justice." It seems to me that this model assists us in looking at our work in the theological education arena. It consists of the interplay and development of the following:

- 1. Biblical Integrity to affirm that God is concerned and been involved in history and has a concern for justice and freedom.
- 2. Radical contextuality to hold reflection and action in a creative tension; an engaged theology.
- 3. Systematic Engagement to identify, analyze, correct, restrain destructive systems that support and sustain oppression, racism, and sexism.
- 4. Educational change helping to develop in individuals "a sense of hope and expectancy" that God confronts us in the present; to be involved in social justice practice.
- 5. Programmatic integration to be accountable not only to the local congregation but to the community and world in which the church exists. 14

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For Shockley, to become involved creatively is testimony to the rostered leader's attempt to be an authentic interpreter and teacher of the whole gospel.

As we embark on a new academic year, for those of you who will begin your studies I hope that you find this a place of engagement where theological rigor, investigation, and reading will be your delight. As faculty, we hope you will see our engagement not narrow in scope but as broad as the world and the Word will take us as we continue to be engaged in our theological disciplines and engage students in interpreting, questioning and raising issues. We hope that we are helping you to encounter and engage locally and globally to encounter "the other." For administration, staff, and regional representatives, we hope that your time in your work here, or wherever you travel in the church, will help to remind us of Gettysburg's responsibility to be engaged in the world as an educational institution of the church.

Much of my research time over the past few years has centered on the life and work of Daniel A. Payne an alumnus of this seminary in the 1830s and the first African American to study here. I continue to ponder and am encouraged by his words about Gettysburg written in his autobiography, *Recollections of Seventy Years*: "From that worm sprung up an acquaintance with that great naturalist [John Bachmann] who gave me those letters of introduction to the Lutheran clergy, who placed me in the theological seminary at Gettysburg, which prepared me for the enlarged usefulness of more than fifty-three years." <sup>15</sup>

Engagement and commitment. These are the words that describe Bertha Paulssen and Russell Hale. May they be descriptors of us as well as we work to be a community of engagement. Thank you.

### Notes

- 1 Bertha Paulssen, "The Seminarian and the World Today," unpublished manuscript, Abdel Ross Wentz Library Archives.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 J. Russell Hale, *The Unchurched: Who They Are and Why They Stay Away* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977).
- 4 Ibid., 12.
- 5 Mark Chaves, American Religion: Contemporary Trends (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).
- 6 "Major Faith Shifts Evident Among Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics Since 1991," Barna Report, August 2, 2011.
- 7 David Hunter, Christian Education as Engagement (New York: Seabury, 1963).
- 8 Ian Markham, A Theology of Engagement (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003).

9 Margaret Farley, *Personal Commitments: Beginning, Keeping, Changing* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986).

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- 10 S. S. Schmucker, An Inaugural Address Delivered Before the Directors of the Theological Seminary of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Carlisle, PA: J. Tizzard and J. Crever, 1825) 24.
- 11 Donald R. Heiges, "Prospectus for a School of Theology," LTSG Bulletin 42 (Nov 1942) 26-35.
- 12 Michael Cooper-White, "Gettysburg 2000: At the Crossroads of History and Hope," Seminary Ridge Review 3/1 (2000) 13.
- 13 Rolf Rendtorff, The Canonical Hebrew Bible: A Theology of the Old Testament (trans. David E. Orton; Leiden, Netherlands: Deo, 2005).
- 14 Grant Shockley, "Black Pastoral Leadership in Religious Education: Social Justice Correlates," in *The Pastor as Religious Educator* (ed. Robert L. Browning; Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press) 178-209.
- 15 Daniel A. Payne, *Recollections of Seventy Years* (Nashville: A.M.E. Sunday School Union, 1888; reprint New York: Arno and the New York Times, 1968) 333.

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### **BOOK REVIEWS**

# Faith Forming Faith: Bringing New Christians to Baptism and Beyond

Paul E. Hoffman (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books 2012) Reviewed by John Spangler

Lutheranism is a teaching movement, a catechetical movement within the widest description of the Church of Jesus Christ. And Lutheranism's most important contributions to the wider tradition of Christianity could very well be in its attachment to classic, underlying theological content while maintaining flexibility in how it delivers, practices and ministers in ever changing contexts.

In 109 pages, Pastor Paul E. Hoffman presents a followable, coherent, economic, and thoroughly tested implementation of this underlying commitment to classic models of faith formation while applying it in a way that modern congregations can appreciate and value deeply. It is in essence the catechumenate in a congregational context.

Hoffman's newest work follows on the highly successful congregational study by Dianna Butler Bass, *Christianity for the Rest of Us: How the Neighborhood Church is Transforming the Faith*, a case-driven study of exemplary ministries that included Hoffman's congregation, Phinney Ridge Lutheran Church in Seattle, Washington. *Christianity* is a worthy read and an excellent study for pastors, planners and congregations leaders. *Faith Forming Faith* offers the "how to" and the process of the principled engine of faith, education and leadership formation in his parish.

Paul Hoffman's *Faith Forming Faith* offers a full and coherent description of "The Way," Phinney Ridge's name for its method of bringing people along and raising up new Christians and new members. It takes a long time.

Pastorally adapted, "The Way" takes the time necessary to reboot one's understanding, stripping away the short cuts and the layers of accumulated

modernity to follow classic patterns found in the *Didache* and early practice of Christian faith formation. Its integrity lies in the fact that it does make accessible the complexity and nuance of the faith, a necessity in the modern world. Seattle and the Pacific Northwest knows that it is in the faith zone known as "None" and presumes no nominal Christian background, but "The Way" does not presume much of anything about those who consider taking this spiritual journey.

One of the better features of Pastor Hoffman's approach is that it delivers more than he promises. The subtitle clarifies this faith as a Lutheran version of the rite of Christian initiation, "bringing new Christians to Baptism and Beyond." But his adaptation of the catechumenate is even better than that, because it can awaken the ancient stirrings of a baptized Christian whose baptismal faith has grown vague and faded. It is the welcoming point for an adult seeker, but doesn't exclude the adult who is desperately in need of rebuilding faith, revisiting the baptismal promises or starting over to recover an inner sense, an inner voice that wants to get a firmer grip on the faith. This could work for parents of young adults involved in confirmation instruction. "The Way" allows adults of any age to reawaken old stirrings and reframe and begin to grow again.

Hoffman integrates this program into the life of the congregation easily because it is baptismally focused, oriented to the Vigil of Easter, and thus tied to the regular worship life. He includes enough testimony and case studies to make it humanly comprehensible. In chapters such as "The Baptismal Shift: From Personal Demand to Relational Responsibility" you see the big picture and archetypical trajectory of the teaching. Chapters 4 and 7, "Transformed Lives" and "Parish Transformation" respectively offer insight into the impact of this journey on individuals and the larger community as a whole.

Finally, Hoffman is generous and offers comments in appendices on sacramental practices, questions and reflections on getting started, and three sermons that support and integrate this ministry in regular worship life.

But the gem inside this little book is chapter 11, "The Gracious Gift of Flexibility" which sets a pastoral tone. Grace is not only the goal, but the best way to get there, and Hoffman here proves that it doesn't help to rigidly enforce schedule or program in a rule-oriented way. He already enjoys the commitment and desire of participants, and has helped nurture a magnetic experience that creates momentum. And so he figures out a way for those who travel, who spend seasons away, those who deliver babies to participate and experience the grace of flexibility in the process. Readers of *Christianity for the Rest of Us* already understand why Paul Hoffman is a favorite intern-

ship supervisor for Gettysburg Seminary. *Faith Forming Faith* will help you consider tapping into some underutilized resources embedded in the "DNA" of Lutheranism, especially in the all-important ministry of formation.

John Spangler serves as the Executive Assistant to the Seminary President, writes often for the Gettysburg Seminary *Views* and occasionally for *The Lutheran* magazine and other publications.

### Kierkegaard: A Brief Overview of the Life and Writings of Søren Kierkegaard

Albert Anderson (Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2010 Reviewed by Jennifer Chrien

Kierkegaard: A Brief Overview makes its intent clear from the outset. As David Preus writes in the foreward, "This primer is not designed as a contribution to advanced Kierkegaard studies. Instead it provides a reliable point of departure for pastors, teachers, students, leaders in congregations and institutions, as well as the general reading public." In the role of introducing Kierkegaard to the interested but uninitiated, this little book serves admirably.

Author Albert Anderson manages to tackle the major points of Kierkegaard's biography, the major themes of his writing, and give at least a brief introduction to most of Kierkegaard's books. The first chapter, "Early Development," describes Kierkegaard's family and his study of Plato under his father's tutelage. It also relates the "crisis" of his romance and broken engagement with Regine. Anderson throughout the book helps to weave in these biographical details as a facet of Kierkegaard's thought, while also making Kierkegaard more accessible as a person.

Later chapters address some of the important high points of Kierke-gaard study. Anderson devotes quite a bit of time to explaining Kierkegaard's "right handed" and "left handed" authorship – that is, those works he published under his own name and those he published under an array of pseudonyms. Other chapter headings include "Stages," (which treats the esthetic, ethical, and religious stages of life) "Despair," "Self," "Subjectivity," and "Discourse." Under these titles, Anderson lifts up and explains the major themes of Kierkegaard's writing in a clear and interwoven fashion.

This slim volume succeeds as an introduction to the life and writings of Kierkegaard. Where it stumbles is in its attempts to also be an introduction to the writings of Plato, Descartes, Kant, Hegel, and others. Anderson brings up these other philosophers to explain how their thought influenced Kierkegaard. It is an important connection, and helpful to those who are familiar with Greek, French, and German philosophy. However, to a reader who is unfamiliar with someone like Plato, Anderson's brief descriptions may be confusing. It serves as a reminder that a deep understanding of

Kierkegaard requires at least some understanding of the philosophical world in which he moved.

In his introduction, Anderson wonders if Kierkegaard would approve of this little book. He suspects that Kierkegaard would not – unless it led readers to Kierkegaard's own work. Anderson resolves, "I trust that what follows is more helpful than misleading, more lucid than cloudy. If so, I would expect readers to better understand Søren Kierkegaard and to decide which of his works they wish to read first." Whether this book is picked up by a reader unfamiliar with Kierkegaard, or one who perhaps had to read *Fear and Trembling* in some long-distant college course, it certainly points the way to choosing which of Kierkegaard's books one wants to read first. It provides an entrance into the labyrinth of Kierkegaard's writings and a golden thread to assist with the journey. Anderson's book would be useful for a layperson, pastor, or book group seeking to learn more about the life and writings of Kierkegaard.

Jennifer Chrien is an M.Div. student (class of 2012) at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, where she is preparing for first call. She holds a B.A. in Liberal Arts from St. John's College in Santa Fe, NM. While at St. John's, she was introduced to the writings of Søren Kierkegaard and developed a strong interest in his philosophy and theology.

### Preaching from Home: The Stories of Seven Lutheran Women Hymn Writers

Gracia Grindal (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011) Reviewed by Mark Oldenburg

Occasionally I teach a course in the devotional classics of the Lutheran church. Wishing to refute those who assume that there is no cultivation of the spiritual life in Lutheranism, I design the course to span the time from 1580 to 1850, lifting up those works which not only were written by Lutherans but which also graced generations of Lutheran nightstands. So, we delve into Arndt and Rosenius, Hauge and Gerhardt, Pontoppidan and Spener for forgotten treasures. One of the frustrating parts of putting this course together is the relative scarcity of available works by women. Both anecdotes and novels indicate that women were prime consumers of devotional literature. It's been difficult, however, to find devotional literature that they created. One way I have made up that gap is to include a section on women hymn-writers. One minor gift of this book will be to make that section more interesting, varied, and contextual.

As the subtitle indicates, in this book Grindal tells the stories of six authors, all of them women, all of them Lutheran, and all of them Scandinavian. The seventeenth and eighteenth century each provide one writer (Dorothe Engelbretsdatter and Birgitte Hert Boye, respectively), the nineteenth two (Berthe Canutte Aarflot and Lina Sandell) and the twentieth century three (Britt G. Hallqvist, Lisbeth Smedegaard Andersen, and Grindal herself). Since only Sandell will be familiar to most readers (and Sandell only from two or three of her 2000-plus hymns), this work will certainly provide readers with new horizons.

Grindal not only tells the story of the life of each writer, but sets her in the context of her own time, connecting each with contemporary sorts of Pietism. She translates and analyzes representative samples of each writer's hymns. And in almost every case she provides something extra. She connects one of Boye's hymns, for instance, with the experience of child-bearing (including the old tradition of the "churching of women"). She uses Aarflot's own reminiscences to explicate the *ordo salutis*, the progression of

steps in the process of salvation. And she provides a comprehensive overview of the treatment of Sandell in American Lutheran hymnals.

Grindal knows that a good tune can immeasurably help a hymn text find its way under the singers' skins. And she also knows (and describes from her own experience) that a bad tune can sink an otherwise good text. It is unfortunate, then, that so few tunes are provided, and several of those are rather crudely engraved. In particular, having the tune might help the reader better understand the attraction and value of the earlier writers, who seem rather pallid.

The most useful and enjoyable sections are those of the contemporary Scandinavian writers. If Grindal's translations are in any way faithful, Hallqvist brings a freshness and whimsy which are fully reverent and greatly needed; Andersen expresses the experience of post-modern worshipers in a way deeper and more honest than a facile mention of technology or concluding liberal bromide can. Both are delights and deserve immediate and wide use. Andersen, especially, would certainly reward the old Lutheran practice of reading hymns for devotional use as well as singing them for congregational use. Her works seem particularly designed for those struggling to believe, and to make sense of faith in their own experience.

Grindal's desire in this book is obviously three fold. First, she is interested in telling these stories and making these hymns available to raise the status and availability of Scandinavian hymn-writers, so under-represented in English translation. Second, she is interested in in raising the status and availability of women hymn-writers, both in the past and the present. Many of these writers were hugely popular in their homelands, but were soon eliminated from later hymnals even there by prejudice and changing taste. Finally, she is interested in defending a vision of hymn-writing as preaching, rather than as praise or prayer. That is, she sees hymnody as proclamation, basically directed from God to humanity, rather than as the expression of the emotions or desires of the faithful, basically directed from humanity to God. Thus the title, and not simply the subtitle, of the book is most apt: these writers are preachers, no less because they preach from the kitchen or the living room rather than from the pulpit (only Andersen was ordained).

A few words of warning to the reader, however. Grindal assumes a level of familiarity with Scandinavian Pietism and hymnody which few readers would have. Even if the names of Brorson, Kingo, and Grundtvig are unfamiliar to you, you can still read the book with pleasure, but even a nodding acquaintance with popular Scandinavian Lutheranism would decrease the numbers of speed bumps. And, of course, Grindal is nothing if not opinionated, bordering on the dismissive. If "German" is not a criticism for you, if

you have even a passing regard for rhymes, be prepared to be irritated. I have always found such honesty and personality refreshing in Grindal, whether I share her opinion (Fred Kaan as stylistically annoying) or not (the discipline of the lectionary).

This work would serve well as an invitation to Scandinavian Lutheranism, to the works of these writers in particular, and to a renewed discussion of the points and practices of hymn-writing. I hope that even more people with Grindal's linguistic ability and literary skill open up these treasures of congregational song to the wider church.

The Rev. Dr. Mark W. Oldenburg is Dean of the Chapel and Steck-Miller Professor of the Art of Worship at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. Prior to coming to Gettysburg, he served as parish pastor and on synod staff in New Jersey. His primary interests are in the church year, hymnology, and the history of American Lutheran worship. He is a coeditor, with Günther Gassmann and Duane H. Larson of the second edition of the Historical Dictionary of Lutheranism published in 2011 by Scarecrow Press. Oldenburg chairs the Music, Gettysburg! program.

# Bonhoeffer: A Brief Overview of the Life and Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer

John W. Matthews (Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2011) Reviewed by Robert Swartz

This small book about Bonhoeffer is written to provide background, context, and introductory content, and is thus organized to especially benefit small group study. The book opens with a biographical introduction, placing Bonhoeffer in his context. The book is then laid out in six chapters, each placing a facet of his Christology in the framework of his experiences. In chapter one, Matthews quotes Bonhoeffer's question from Tegel Prison: "Who is Christ actually for us today?" He then goes on to draw out this Christology in such a way as to invite the reader to ask this same question in light of his writings and work. Matthews communicates Bonhoeffer's theology with clarity and precision, always careful to present these ideas in relationship with Christ, who is always the center. This organizational style is well suited to keeping new readers grounded while introducing subsequent ideas.

After his description of Bonhoeffer's life and writings, Matthews raises interesting questions in the final chapter, problematizing the theologian's legacy. These questions have serious implications for Christians today, especially in light of the Christian struggle to live authentically that is highlighted in this book. Being called by Christ to work for the kingdom means living in a world of ambiguity, and the questions posed by Matthews in chapter six are large enough to provide plenty of room for group discussion. The author has accomplished his mission of providing a rich yet accessible introduction to Bonhoeffer, proclaiming Christ at the center of this world and calling us to action.

Lutherans have a complicated relationship with action. Justification by grace through faith is a great gift that we rightly proclaim. In focusing strongly on our individual relationship with God in Christ, however, we often fail to articulate exactly how we move from this great gift to our loving response. Good works are the fruits, not the seed, of faith, but we are so eager to avoid associating anything we do with earning righteousness that we often steer clear of talking about works at all. This necessary component

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of Lutheran theology is often missing in congregational life, lest it be misinterpreted or distorted.

That such a crucial theological component is lacking in the life of the church was not lost on Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Throughout his life, Bonhoeffer proclaimed the centrality of Christ and the call to act for the kingdom. His example – reflected both in his writings and in his life as he lived it – is a rich starting place to re-examine this relationship. John Matthews has written a worthy guide for anyone who desires a brief introduction to the theology of this twentieth-century prophet.

Robert Swartz is an S.T.M. student at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. He holds a B.A. from Gettysburg College and an M.Div. from Harvard Divinity School, where his thesis explored the theology of the ELCA's "Music and the Christian Assembly" principles, part of the Renewing Worship resources. His S.T.M. thesis will explore a Lutheran theology of the church as the Body of Christ.

### POETRY + THEOLOGY

### Attention and Neglect

Katy Giebenhain

In February I was in New York for a performance of the requiem "Flowers Over the Graves of War." Poet and librettist Michael Dennis Browne's moving and timely text was put to music by James Eakin III. Conductor was Tim Seelig. It was performed with orchestra, mixed choir, and three soloists as part of the Distinguished Concerts International series at Carnegie Hall. I went up a day early since I was keen to follow the Dylan Thomas Walking Tour of Greenwich Village. Thomas (b. 1914) made four trips to the States where he was, at that time, the closest thing to a rock star a poet on American soil could aspire to. He died in New York City in 1953. The tour was written by Peter Thabit Jones and Aeronwy Thomas (Thomas's daughter, who died in 2009). Their map and descriptions are available at www.dylanthomas.com along with other information about the Dylan Thomas Centre in Swansea.

Sunday morning I worshipped at the Church of St. Luke in the Field, where the funeral was held before his body was sent back to Wales accompanied by his widow Caitlin. It's also the first stop on the tour. An Episcopal parish founded in 1820 in the Diocese of New York, the atmosphere at St. Luke in the Field is both of a specific place and community and of the greater church in the world. Why? This is not something you can put your finger on, but it definitely seemed so to me. Eucharist there was a wonderful way to launch the day.

The Rev. Mary Foulke preached on Mark 9:2-9 and "sacramental moments" in our lives, and the ways we instinctually try to keep them – like Peter wanting to hold on to the transfigured glory of Jesus and the prophets by building dwellings to contain them. "On this feast of the Transfiguration" she said, "we think especially about the spiritual practice of noticing moments of glory right in front of us: not to capture and preserve, but to

experience and be changed by [them]." Isn't this what poets and preachers are up to all the time, in their own ways? She concluded with a poem by Kathleen Norris. In "The Wedding in the Courthouse" the narrator is an impromptu witness for a couple wishing to marry. Here is the last stanza:

I can picture Lucille
Chain-smoking: surprised
And pleased
To interrupt routine.
And the Deputy Sheriff,
A young man, blushing,
Loaded gun in his holster,
Arms hanging loose:
He looked at his shoes.
But it's the words
I remember most. It was as if
I was hearing them for the first time.
Lucille put out a cigarette
And began: "Dearly beloved,"
And we were.<sup>2</sup>

Foulke uses the poem to illustrate her point about what we pay attention to around us and how we are beloved. We are. This is a parish welcoming all persons, so her words carry weight. It reminded me that too many of our churches are communities of conditional welcome, rather than accepting each other into full participation in the church's work and worship regardless of gender and sexual orientation.

Afterward I was hot on the trail of a few of Dylan Thomas's former haunts. I'm a bit protective whenever I hear or read the assertion that he died of alcoholism. Certainly he was an alcoholic and a boisterous, brilliant, persona with the dark side of rock-star behavior. But there is more to the story. If you are interested I recommend *Fatal Neglect: Who Killed Dylan Thomas* by David N. Thomas (published by Seren www.seren-books.com).

A couple of weeks later the current U.K. and U.S. poets laureate, Carol Ann Duffy and Philip Levine were at the Associated Writing Programs conference in Chicago. At their reading, Levine mentioned that he had heard Dylan Thomas read a couple of times (in New York and Michigan) when he was in the States on his tours. It's always a vicarious thrill to encounter someone who heard him live. In high school, as part of his early stumbling into the world of poetry, Levine read and was strongly influenced by poems by Wilfred Owen,<sup>3</sup> the WWI icon of war poetry. This got me reaching for

the bookshelf next to my bed for *After the First Death: An Anthology of Wales and War in the Twentieth Century*<sup>4</sup> by Tony Curtis for some Wilfred Owen. I keep this book amongst the German interior design magazines and stacks of rotating poetry collections. The title comes from the last line of Dylan Thomas's "A Refusal to Mourn, the Death by Fire, of a Child in London," which got me circling back to Michael Dennis Browne's requiem, and its call for peace in a time of war.

Three of our poets in this issue of *Seminary Ridge Review* write from Wales. I consider them each to be international poets not only because of where they've travelled, but because even their poems with regional themes show a curiosity about and a respect for people around the planet. Huw Jones studied theology before shifting into a career of writing and teaching in several countries. He now lives in Wrexam, in North Wales and publishes in both Welsh and English. Read "A White Peacock" on page 90. Gillian Clarke, the national poet of Wales, has kindly let us reprint "Unpacking the Angel" on p. 85. Visit www.literaturewales.org or www.gillianclarke.co.uk/ to learn more about her and her work.

From Philip Gross we have "Schwa" on page 81 which has come out in his newest collection *Deep Field* (published by Bloodaxe Books in the U.K. and forthcoming from Dufour Editions in the U.S.). "Schwa" is taken from a 20-poem cycle called "Vocable." Gross wrote *Deep Field* largely in response to his Estonian father's loss of language(s), in his nineties, to deafness and aphasia. The cover photo from NASA gives us the deepest view ever taken of the universe from the Hubble Telescope in 2004, and it is a fantastic counterpart to the intimate, inner-exploration of these poems and the sense of scale for what we grapple with when facing loss of ability. It's a book with perspective, in every sense of the word. Connected to his father's experience with speaking and remembering and loss of language come, inevitably, his own jolts of childhood remembrances, from a choking incident to stuttering, to the unspoken changes in vocabulary and identities tied to all refugees.

One day you woke to find that you'd lost barley. Oats. Wheat. Tried each of your five languages and nothing answered to its name. (16)

In the poems from *Deep Field*, as in earlier poems, Gross is aware of what isn't said, but knows silence is not a void. It is much like the "negative space" or "white space" graphic designers wrestle with. It is equally important. In 2010 Gross was awarded the T.S. Eliot prize for his book *The Water Table*, involving the Bristol Channel and the area around it. In an interview

after the award, he was discussing with Stephen Adams how writers are aware of their environment, and how to find messages in that environment. "I think that's what a poem is — it's a piece of extraordinary attention." He attributes the silence in his poems partially to the influence of his father. Gross is interested in poetry being "a matter of words and silence. But I want to make that a resonant silence." He further attributes his Quaker faith to a respect for what is left unsaid, and for plain expression.

Hear Gross read a sample from *Deep Field* on the Bloodaxe website: www.bloodaxebooks.com/. For information about the U.S. release visit Dufour Editions www.slirz.com).

In this issue we are also pleased to have work from Pennsylvania poets Todd Davis, Eric Stenman, Marjorie Maddox and Marty Malone as well as from Neill Morgan (Texas), Gerry LaFemina (Maryland and New York), Tim Sherry (Washington), David M. Frye (Nebraska) and Mary O'Connor (South Dakota). Book recommendations include *The Zones of Paradise* by Lynn Powell, *Things to Pray to in Vermont* by Tony Whedon and *God Breaketh Not All Men's Hearts Alike: New & Later Collected Poems* by Stanley Moss.

#### Notes:

- The Rev. Mary Foulke, "Moments of Glory" (New York: February 19, 2012) < www. stlukeinthefields.org/sermons >.
- 2 Kathleen Norris, "The Wedding in the Courthouse" from *Cries of the Spirit: A Celebration of Women's Spirituality* edited by Marilyn Sewell (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), p. 189.
- 3 Michael Bourne, "Philip Levine's American Lyric," Poets & Writers. March/April 2012, p. 21.
- 4. Tony Curtis, After the First Death: An Anthology of Wales and War in the Twentieth Century (Brigend, Wales: Seren, 2007).
- 5 Stephen Adams, "Philip Gross Speaks About The Water Table," The Telegraph. (London: January 20, 2010 < www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/booknews/7029350/ Philip-Gross-speaks-about-The-Water-Table.html >.
- 6 Adams interview.
- 7 Adams interview.

# Book recommendations

#### The Zones of Paradise

The energy from Lynn Powell's well-crafted book will jab you in the ribs (in a good way, more like a goosing). I feel like she's well-rested and prepared, like she's done the work needed to present us this collection honed and fully-formed. It has that air about it. It's a book that's had a good night's sleep before opening itself to the world. Here's the end of a poem perfect for this time of year, "April and Ecclesiastes:"

Even the scraggle of woods, rank with snowmelt and leaf rot, wades into drifts of sorrel, pools of trout lilies, while peepers make a ruckus and, one by one, the iridescents hatch.

It's a swig of Eden, a rendezvous of promises, the luxuries of lust before anybody gets hurt – (19)

A brilliant poem marbling faith, art, and a hospital emergency is found in "Verses for *The Madonna of Humility with the Temptation of Eve*" after a ca. 1400 work of tempera and gold on wood by Carlo da Camerino. I won't include excerpts because this just hast to be read in-full. Another poem based on a painting is "Larder With Christ at Emmaus," a poem bursting with description and wonder at a small depiction of Christ in the background of a kitchen scene "he's lurching through the archway, his half- / life of a heart panicked / by the recent chastities of cross and grave, / though two companions steady him fellow travelers / who won't recognize him til ... (29) and the third stanza:

In later rooms, the Dutch will tell stories with imported pomegranates, parrots, oysters, the carnal spectrum of blooms.

Sometimes the reamed-out socket of a skull, placed among decanter, vase, and lute, will annotate the pleasure with its nasty footnote from the future. (30)

Another fine spring poem is "Etudes, for Unaccompanied Voice." When Powell writes about nature it is not decorative. When she writes about children it is not sentimental. Part of the sense of this book being "complete" and "well-rested" is that she goes past surface reactions into the core of her themes. She strives to recognize what's *really* going on in herself and around her. "Great-Grandma writes to ask if we have found a church" she writes in a poem from Sydney Australia called "Varieties of Religious Experience,"

And I wonder if this counts: the refuge of a cool piano in a sun-saturated city. I sing each verse twice to accentuate its truth, but for every song I sing, I've disowned dozens. (53)

The Zones of Paradise is published by University of Akron Press. Visit www.uakron.edu/uapress. Originally from East Tennessee, Lynn Powell is Visiting Assistant Professor in Creative Writing at Oberlin College. She is also the author of the poetry collection Old & New Testaments, and a book of nonfiction, Framing Innocence: A Mother's Photographs, A Prosecutor's Zeal, and a Small Town's Response.

#### God Breaketh Not All Men's Hearts Alike

This fall Seven Stories Press brought out a hunk of a collection with new and older poems from Stanley Moss. Arranged with recent work first, it mostly moves in reverse chronological order to include parts of *A History of Color, New and Selected Poems 2006, Asleep in the Garden, The Intelligence of Clouds, Skull of Adam* and *The Wrong Angel.* He brings us poems of experience, but not the bossy kind. Connecting the dots between Greek mythology, religions, daily life and the reality of human bodies, Moss then reaches into his far and recent past for more experiences than most of us could gather in several lives.

At night, when Moss was a child, he kept moving his pillow to a different part of his bed because he "liked the feeling of not knowing where I was when I woke up." This book is a lot like that for me, because I don't know where each poem will take me. It also reveals something about the author's way of moving around the world with a fearless curiosity. In scope, many books, even of this size, feel like paintings or a series of prints. This is a mural. There is so much going on you want to look at every canoe, every bone, every seashell, every pear, every cloud and unfolding scene. Lots of death here (no-nonsense acknowledgements of its reality), lots of flowers,

guts, music, lots of God. Don't stereotype atheists. God is mentioned more in this collection than any other I can think of. Readers will also sense a strong familiarity with visual art, but none of these feel like standard "this-is-what-I'm-looking-at" art poems. None of them. Death references range from acknowledging that it is more difficult to think of his father's death than his own, and, from "A Guest in Jerusalem," "I wish you the luxury / of worrying about aging or money, instead of a child getting killed, / that no mother or father should know the sorrow / that comes when there is nothing to worry about anymore." (130)

Traveling pillow-to-pillow through the collection, here's one of my favorites:

#### Postcard to Walt Whitman From Siena

Today I walked along the vaulted hall of a Renaissance hospital opposite the Duomo and I thought of you, Walt Whitman, in your forties, writing letters for the wounded and dying. This October Italian morning is clean as the air of Montauk. In the sunlit galleries among medieval painters there is a kind of gossip about the life of Christ - the artists did not sign their names, worked for the honor of illumination, gold leaf, not leaves of grass. I remember you sang Italian arias and "The Star-Spangled banner" in your bathtub. To wash the horribly wounded and the dying, you did not need to think of them as Jesus. Walt, I saw a cradle shaped like a church you could rock. Yesterday at five o'clock I heard the rosary up the "joys and sorrows" of the Virgin, had coffee, then returned for the litany, metaphors about the Virgin: star of the sea, lily of the valley, tower of ivory – like you and your America. Walt, I know you and the Virgin Mother have conversation with the poor. I try to listen. (205)

Don't miss a comparison of religious orders to ice cream. "... Rabbis, Priests, Mullahs, / Gurus Buddhists, Shiites, Sunni, Dominicans, Franciscans, Capuchins, Carmelites" (163) where he interjects justice into a scene

of assorted refreshment. Forgive me for interjecting Dylan Thomas yet again, but Stanley Moss and Dylan Thomas were friends. I had no idea until reading "Diary of a Satyr" at the conclusion of the collection. All roads lead to Laugharne this month! Hayden Carruth calls Moss's poems "songs of unbelievable belief." (8) We're just scratching the surface here. I recommend this book, and I recommend reading some Dylan Thomas while you're at it.

Visit Seven Stories Press www.sevenstories.com. "Postcard to Walt Whitman From Siena" is reprinted with permission of the Press from *God Breaketh Not All Men's Hearts Alike*. Stanley Moss is the publisher of Sheep Meadow Press (visit http://sheepmeadowpress.com), a nonprofit publisher of poetry, poetry translations and belles-lettres founded in 1977, and an art dealer, especially in Spanish and Italian old masters. He lives in Clinton Corners, N.Y.

#### Things to Pray to in Vermont

Reading this book is like riding shotgun in a magical pick-up truck from country to country, through time and space. You can feel the air on your bare arm stuck out the window. You see bodies of water small and vast, cyclists on Nanjing Lu, Galileo packing his things, a girl selling papers in Madrid, Ovid in the marketplace, wild turkeys, black bears sick on raspberries, and the experience of being introduced to a euphonium... "more than a horn, / he thought, a conduit straight to the brain, / a syllable of sound, an ache between the lips" (8). It is good to have Tony Whedon driving.

Music is important in the writing and the scenes, and not simply because the author is a jazz trombonist. The presence of sound, all kinds of sound, adds to a musical sense about the poems. Readers are moved in and out through different cultures with brokenness and curiosity, grief and pleasure. We hear the moving. From "Nightwatch," for example

Someone's at the door – or it's the rap of a woodpecker on the stovepipe, or ice sliding

from the roof, crunch, crunch,

the shifting of timbers: and later the thud of a bird,

on his windowpane, and later, sleet tings the glass, he could sit up all night and listen to

the sky fill up with it,

wishing she were here, hearing her comb out her noisy hair. (77)

Or, the sounds in this section from "Small Town Crimes," which launches with an AA meeting:

"It's tinder dry out there, crisp as a bacon factory, someone says. We drive to our separate houses where we're all on house arrest. Like Ted, we repent fully clothed before God. The wind rattles the shutters. The fires have crept up the mountain. The night air catches their glow like a fixative. (23)

Can you hear that as much as see it?

In "The Sky Pump" Darwin is sailing in the Beagle. Whedon's light but steady references to science and faith explore, they don't push. In "Ascension," walking a logging road into the forest, talking to Augustine, the text spacing and line breaks contribute to the sounds and pauses in the poem. The entire book is full of tactile and audible details.

Things to Pray to in Vermont (2011) is published by Mid-List Press in Minneapolis, Minn. Visit www.midlist.org/. Tony Whedon has lived in Paris, Greece and Spain and has traveled across four continents. He is now in Vermont, on property that was a former commune. His collection of essays on exile, A Language Dark Enough, won the Mid-List Press award for creative non-fiction. Whedon performs his poetry and plays at gigs around New England with the band PoJazz.

# Elefanterna

#### Eric Stenman

Elefanterna lär sörja djupt när en av dem dör, i synnerhet när elefanten som dog är ung och frisk, som Du var, och jag tänker mig att det inte finns någon skillnad alls mellan oss och dem, att en skimrande andlighet sväver over världen som denses med ögonen och hörs med öronen vare sig man är elefant eller människa.

# Elephants

Translated from the Swedish

Elephants are said to mourn deeply
When one of them dies,
Especially when the elephant
Is young and healthy, as you were,
And I suppose there's
No difference at all between us and them,
That a shimmering holiness is held
Above the world as it is seen with our eyes
And heard with our ears, whether one
Is an elephant or a man.

Eric Stenman is an APC board-certified chaplain, serving as chaplain at Hanover Hospital. He and his wife Joanne (both Gettysburg Seminary alums) were the first husband-wife clergy team in the LCA/ELCA serving the same congregation, which they did in three congregations for their 30-year parish career. His roots are in the Swedish Augustana Lutheran Synod. A graduate of Gustavus Adolphus College, he majored in English and also studied Swedish, German and Greek. For a time he studied at Universitetet Lund in Sweden, but returned early because of the Vietnam War. "Elephants" is from his unpublished collection Ett tusen dagar (A Thousand Days), written during the first one thousand days following the death of his19-year old son Kurt. During a solo trip to Sweden to visit family, 17-year old Kurt had brought home as his souvenir a large enameled ceramic elephant side table from India, purchased at a junk shop in Stockholm. He was pulled aside by customs as an obvious drug runner. "No, it's just an elephant," he said. Kurt's elephant is the inspiration for this poem.

# Euchre and Eucharist

"I like to play euchre.

He likes to play Eucharist."

– Robert Frost on T.S. Eliot

# Marjorie Maddox

Something there is that doesn't love a game, that wants its end. The telephone, the other world clanging to get in.

And yet the end is where we start from. And every trick that is right (where every play is at home, taking its place to support the others) brings us to the dealing.

Pass the wine.

Trump is the still point of this shuffled world, miracles and tricks hidden by the other.

Good neighbors make good partners. This is my hand. Take, eat.

This is my ace, which was dealt for you; bet in remembrance of me.

In this garden of numbers that promise redemption, picking apples is a distraction. Focus on five sacraments of points; pray unceasingly.

Each suit, a pattern of timeless moments, speaks its own liturgy, wants the red-and-black of blood-and-sin.

Hope is the cruelest game, breeding lies out of the dead hand, mixing memory and desire.

Here is the man with three staves, and here the Wheel, and here is the one-eyed merchant, and this card, which is blank, is something he carries on his back, which I am forbidden to see.

We pick what we cannot know, believe what we cannot see, try to get away from earth awhile and then come back to it and begin over.

O to be a swinger of chalices! To consume the earthly incense of cigarettes, the confessions of cards.

We die with the dying: See, they depart, and we go with them. We are born with the dead, plastic chips on our tongues.

There are hours to go before I sleep.

I play much of the night, and go south in the winter.

# Rebekah

The one willing to leave the well to follow a servant to her groom found love in a dead mother-in-law's tent.

The one barren until her husband begged Jehovah for heirs, transformed her womb to a battleground for twins.

The one disguised as a sister when Isaac feared the Philistines would slay him, kissed him anyway in view of Abimelech.

The one whose husband loved Esau – and, blind, waited to bestow his blessing – instead sent Jacob covered with goatskins.

The one who watched her elder son's grief, his revenge blossom toward murder, plotted and schemed.

The one whose disgust of Hittites camouflaged her love for Jacob saved the lineage.

The one.

Marjorie Maddox, Professor of English at Lock Haven University has published Perpendicular As I; Transplant, Transport, Transubstantiation; Weeknights at the Cathedral; When the Wood Clacks Out Your Name: Baseball Poems; six chapbooks, and over 350 poems, stories, and essays. She is the co-editor of Common Wealth: Contemporary Poets on Pennsylvania and author of two children's books from Boyds Mills Press. Her short story collection, What She Was Saying, was a finalist for the Katherine Anne Porter Book Award. The recipient of numerous awards, Maddox lives with her husband and two children in Williamsport, Pa. Visit www.lhup.edu/mmaddoxh/biography.htm.

# Schwa

for Zélie

Philip Gross

A groan

arises

from your sleep. Love, bear with me; the tone may get Biblical; it's the memory of great aunt Bess, daily letting us know what it cost her,

> this life. A sacrifice, that exhalation

had an unmistakeable burnt smell. Arise it did, arise

it does.

And this

was last night; this was you between sleeping and waking, with a noword, uttered maybe not to me, not quite 'uh' nor quite 'oh'.

(Even those

say something, be it hesitation, disappointment, mild demurral or surprise

or bliss.) No,

this was schwa

itself, common featureless 9, the zero of phonetics, the vowel of the Prayer of the Heart, of the heart in the toils of the body, the body

itself: the tired animal

shifts in its stall;

the congregation stands and Let our cry come unto Thee

is the matter

which arises

from ash-smelling crispy-thin pages, out of body-ache in unaccommodating pews. If God is listening – I mean, if that's what He *is*, a perfect

unexhausted listening – He'll hear this,

naked, and acceptable: each chafe and creak of decay.

(A half century on

I guess some

of the ways Bess must have ached.)
And the words of the book, like our thoughts, fall to a rustling, like the hush-pause when the congregation

turns a page. Un-

awed and one

by one, our bodies rise, at last, and state their case.

Philip Gross is Professor of Creative Writing at University of Glamorgan, Wales. "Schwa" is from the 20-poem cycle "Vocable" in Deep Field (Bloodaxe Books, 2011 with North American publication by Dufour Editions in 2012. Visit www.slirz.com). Deep Field is a Poetry Book Society Recommendation. Although best known as a poet, Gross writes novels for young people, opera libretti, and works for radio and stage. I Spy Pinhole Eye (a poetry and photography collaboration with Simon Denison) won the Wales Book of the Year. He lives in Penarth, South Wales.

# In the Attic of the Science Building

#### Martin Malone

Light filters through louvered windows on obsolescence.

Here a machine whose dials measure the weight of escaping souls.

Here glassware blown to shapes catering to unimaginable desires.

Here is the life-size plastic model of my skull,

carefully mapping all the flaws of my character.

Now a laser array calibrated to measure the distance

between what we say and what we mean.

Now the aisles of bound journals,

The Sedimentary Geology of Intentions,

The Proceedings of the Society for the Study of the Rarest Events,

The Analytic Chemistry of the Decay of Paper.

Now the aisles of old computers,

inversely proportional between size and optimism.

Down this aisle unfinished experiments.

Control variables stored in boxes,

as experimental variables wander off through the darkness.

The aisle of antique microscopes marked "No lie too small"

next to the aisle of telescopes carefully labeled

"Look no farther than you wish to see."

This Tardis-like space, larger than the building below.

Each aisle stretches into gloom.

Each shelf reaches up to darkness.

Each corner opens onto further aisles.

Each dust mote measured by optical sensors

that continuously calculate the weight

that grows over the years,

as each item is more thickly covered.

They figure the moment when the floor

will no longer sustain the collection.

There is of course no solution to that finding except collapse.

Martin Malone teaches in the Department of Sociology at Mount Saint Mary's University. His poems have appeared in Dream International Quarterly, Lighted Corners, and The Monocacy Valley Review. His degrees are from New York University, Southern Illinois University, and Indiana University. Malone has studied and published books and articles on cross-cultural research, conversation analysis, and the sociology of emotions. He lives in Gettysburg, Pa.

# Unpacking the Angel

#### Gillian Clarke

Twelve papier maché apples taken one by one from their dark season in the loft. Eleven glass balls, one broken.

My children swim to me from their brittle windows. Birds flown from the mirrors in the rich house of the lady who asked us to tea when Dylan was three, and beautiful.

Tangled strands of Woolworths *Lametta*, saved nearly forty years from a first flat.
Putti from Venice, from the flaking plaster of churches, from Bellini and Canaletto.
They feather the room like light off water.
The Journey to Bethlehem in brass. The crib from Tübingen. The Holy Family
I made from *Polyfilla*, wire and rags.

Snarled strings of light bulbs on green flex, vines of stars the lights of far-off cities. From the Christmas fair on the Kürfurstendam two crystal drops, rousing from the drafts that stir the tree the whine of air-raids, the church in flames, stained glass bursting. And the Berlin angel, whose sleeves still bear a trace of concrete from the broken wall.

On the twelfth day we undress the tree: twelve papier maché apples, eleven balls, ten birds, *Lametta*, putti, painted crib and Holy Family, the burning city, angels of mercy and death. All into the box

with flakes of human skin, glitter, glass, pine-needles sifted to corners and under the flaps, dust, maybe, from every year of my life.

Gillian Clarke is the National Poet of Wales. "Unpacking the Angel" is printed with permission of the author from Five Fields (Carcanet Press, visit http://www.carcanet.co.uk/). Born in Cardiff, Clarke is a poet, playwright, editor, translator (from Welsh), writing tutor and president of Tŷ Newydd, the writers' centre in North Wales which she co-founded in 1990. A few of her many collections include Making the Beds for the Dead, The King of Britain's Daughter, Letter from a Far Country and The Sundial. Her work has been translated into ten languages. She lives in Ceredigion, raises a small flock of sheep, and cares for the land according to organic and conservation practice. Visit www.literaturewales.org or www.gillianclarke.co.uk/.

# Now

#### Gerry LaFemina

the rain stops. And now those who have sheltered in the bakery leave so that Amsterdam Ave. is once again pedestrian heavy.

Grey water struts the gutters for the storm drain. Now the counter girl delivers a cookie to a homeless woman outside who is grateful & generous

with her smile. Now a taxi slams its brakes as if trying to make the whole world stop, to break this axial spin. There is no Superman

though movie posters on the sides of buildings announce another heroic blockbuster coming soon. No one is waiting. Not the pill-addled girl,

the off-Broadway character actor who still lives with his parents – they're out there with the others, getting by. I can sympathize.

For weeks a friend's son has been weeping & cursing & it seems like there's nothing she can say or do, not now –

nothing anyone can do. When the rain resumes, the bakery fills up again with laughter & complaints as people take napkins to their foreheads.

They inhale the lush scent of sugar & dough, of fresh coffee. Now I'd normally say something striving to sound profound, but there's little left

but the sweet tastes of childhood & frosting. Now someone orders a cupcake. I've come here seeking not just shelter but sanctuary

as someone laughs without reservation or fanfare. I hear the bakers – their voices coated in flour; they're my heroes even if they've saved no one.

# Parable

That night among the flotsam & jetsam of my life & among, too, the blown debris of the city, among the wreckage & driftwood, among so many broken selves

I stepped into St. Dymphna's, not a parish but a tavern, & there lit the taper of a woman's smoke because I hoped – well, you know . . . It was like being sixteen

again, in church, when I believed piety might make me more attractive, trying to make it with an usher's daughter. Such were my indulgences –

how many White Russians did I buy in hopes kahlua & vodka might make me more something, in hopes that juke box soul might allow the guardian angel I'd flipped off

to smile upon me? Outside was all detritus & distress. When I returned from the men's room she'd gone. Someone rang bells of laughter, while neon signs glowed like apocryphal stained glass

mosaics of the haloed & sinful both.

On how I longed to be one or the other that night, so many years ago, in our bar named for the patron saint of madness.

Gerry LaFemina directs the Frostburg Center for Creative Writing at Frostburg State University. His B.A. is from Sarah Lawrence College; his M.A. and M.F.A are from Western Michigan University. His poetry collection The Parakeets of Brooklyn won the 2003 Bordighera Prize and was published in a bilingual edition of English and Italian. LaFemina is the author of several books of poems and a book of short stories. His newest collection, Vanishing Horizon, is available from Anhinga Press (visit www.anhinga.org). Before his life as a poet and professor, LaFemina was the lead singer of a hardcore punk band and of a ska band. His awards include a Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs grant and a Pushcart Prize. He is a columnist for Highbrow Magazine.

# A White Peacock

At the Hotel Rio, Bulawayo

Huw Jones

White as Fra Angelico's palette before he mixed both sky and sea, painted a sparkling peacock to strut above his crowded Nativity – neck outstretched as though the Magi kneeled before its hundred eyes.

White as a cloud from the cool Highlands perched on a wall behind the hotel, a mid-day ghost, snow on sand. A rooftop vision, a guardian angel for Joy, Pretty, Freedom, Prosper – babies born in the servants' quarter.

A chef's hat on thin legs chased by children at Sunday's braii across the lawns and flowerbeds. A cocky gent with colonial tie lording it with every waiter trying to walk as though he's sober.

White as moonrise between syringas its harsh cry startles guests drinking under the Southern Cross; cries of those officially lost, Thabo, Thabani, left for dead, vultures patrolling overhead.

braii: barbecue

Th: pronounced as T

Huw Jones grew up in Welshpool, mid-Wales. He graduated in Theology from University College Wales Aberystwyth. He has taught in schools and colleges in Wales, Botswana, Zimbabwe and England. He publishes in books and journals in both Welsh and English, including a bilingual collection reflecting his time in Africa. Jones's latest collection is for the young at heart, Odd Socks and Other Oddities (published by Gwasg y Bwthyn, 2009). Visit www.carreggwalch.com/.

# Sometimes all you can do is Just Wonder

# Tim Sherry

Tee-shirts sometimes say more than sermons. That was the message. It didn't matter that there was a sermon. What mattered was that the girl giving the sermon last night at vespers was talking with notes, but her tee-shirt was going off into the space high up in the village center the way fireworks go off in the sky ten miles north and you wonder what they would look like if you were right there. You want to see the last droop of fire into the water. We couldn't take our eyes off Religion sucks sometimes too. Couldn't. Didn't want to. We wondered what set off that kind of fireworks. Everyone gets to wear their version of politics or love or football. But religion? Was she just trying to be funny? She must have decided God has something to do with broken hearts or abuse or mean e-mail. But the woman knitting in the first pew shook her head and speeded up. A little boy in the back wondered if you can say suck in church, and his mother, whose tattoo under a short sleeve showed something about love, explained with a hug. All of which leads you to just wonder what it would have said if Mary had been wearing a tee-shirt on the way to Bethlehem.

Tim Sherry has worked as a longtime public school teacher and administrator in Tacoma, Wash. His master's degree in English is from University of Chicago. "Sometimes all you can do is Just Wonder" is from a manuscript-in-progress about Holden Village, a Lutheran wilderness retreat center above Lake Chelan, Wash. (visit www.holdenvillage.org/).

# What Recompense Beauty?

#### Todd Davis

How did he touch my mother's body once he knew he was dying? Woods white with Juneberry and the question of how to kiss the perishing world, where to place his arms and how to accept the gentle washing of the flesh.

With her breast in hand did he say, "I believe; help my unbelief"? And did he accept with some semblance of joy a last look at the buttercups that bloom by the doorstep, the final bit of fragrance in their passing hour, the overwhelming sweetness of multiflora rose and the press of my mother's skin against his?

Not long before my father died, I helped my son with a high school art project. We took river-stone and formed it in a ring near an eddy where water could flow beneath it. Just beyond the river we traipsed through a field to gather dame's rocket, stripped its purple and white flowers, each four-petaled, and placed them on the moving water's shimmering surface.

The body's cartography is all we have to go by, and already my wife and I notice our flesh sloughing. Does it make a difference that we recognize such brevity? Beauty is brought to our door each day, a recompense, yet in loss we believe we belong to the earth, to the wild God of Mercy who makes even death beautiful.

With the moon almost over the rim of Brush Mountain, my son and I walked toward home through spring grasses already as tall as our waists. The flowers at the center of that ring undulated with the river's current, appearing like fire – not an eternal flame, but light enough to last into night's first dark.

# Brushwolf

When a man cocked a rifle and aimed at a wolf's head, what was he trying to kill?

- Barry Lopez, Of Wolves and Men

It's no different here. Mostly fear. Or hate. Or some semblance of failure.

If you grab the devil's walking stick, it'll tear your hand in two. Fruit so heavy only a few birds eat, and most of the berries are left to fall and turn the earth.

We believe the brushwolf walks in shadows as dark as that tree's fruit, blood as acrid as rot in October.

Some nights you can hear a fawn crying like a child, torn and ragged, dragged into death's quiet muzzle.

In the coldest months we sit in hunting blinds hoping for a deer to pass, saying we must feed our families.

At night we dream beside our wives, praying to the lie of sleep that the innocence of our children might save us.

As we enter the hunt our desire to see a brushwolf rises: first wind after the sun comes up; fire irrevocably altering the earth.

But what of the wolf that runs in our bodies? – its blood a river of silence wandering this place we've cut and cleared.

Each time we raise our rifles, peer into the undergrowth, the head of the animal is magnified, and the oldest among us try hard not to imagine what we will kill.

Todd Davis teaches creative writing, American literature, and environmental studies at Penn State University's Altoona College. He is the author of four collections of poetry and a limited edition chapbook. He edited the nonfiction collection, Fast Break to Line Break: Poets on the Art of Basketball, and co-edited Making Poems: 40 Poems with Commentary by the Poets. His poetry has been featured on The Writer's Almanac and in American Life in Poetry. His poems have won the Gwendolyn Brooks Poetry Prize and have appeared in such journals and magazines as Iowa Review, The North American Review, Indiana Review, Shenandoah, Image, Ecotone, West Branch, River Styx, Quarterly West, Green Mountains Review, Sou'wester, and Poetry East. Visit Michigan State University Press http://msupress.msu.edu/and Seven Kitchens Press http://sevenkitchenspress.com/.

# Woman with Fistula

# Mary O'Connor

She had trained herself to disappear. If there was a tree she crouched by it blending with the trunk; if there was a shadow, she became the darker part. In town she kept moving, face covered, stained robes pulled round her. She could be as grey as masonry, ochre as mudbrick. Only the smell gave her position.

Most of the time she stayed in, kept up her washing: what wrappings and bindings she foraged stayed brown and rusty, though they were dirt-free if damp, each hour. Her firstborn had torn her, now her foul porous innards betrayed her no matter how close she held her raw thighs. She was unclean, her odor a leper's bell.

When the boy was weaned her husband, a just man, arranged for her life in a lean-to on the outer wall of his courtyard. Food appeared each day. He did not speak. But how could she blame him? One thing leaked into another – blood, urine, feces, all came trickling out together between her legs. How could she be lonely? She was nobody, a limping leaking sac of nothing, a drain.

Now on the outskirts of the temple she reached, still trying to disappear. The crowd round the prophet veered from her like a shoal of fish. He did not move. "Some one touched me." A person? Some person, did he say? A bit of the dirt wall detached itself and crept forward, not yet showing a face. But he said "person."

Luke 8: 41-56

Mary O'Connor, RSM, was born in Ireland. She holds an M.F.A. from Columbia University and a Ph.D. in English from UCLA. O'Connor gives poetry retreats and, in the tradition of her religious community, gets involved in women's rights and the welfare of women at risk. She has published essays, short stories, and poetry. Most recently her essay, "Resilience and Survival: Immigrant and Refugee Women in South Dakota," is in a forthcoming collection from SDSU, and a poetry chapbook, Windows and Doots is forthcoming from Finishing Line Press this year.

# Hard from the South

David M. Frye

The wind blew hard from the south rare and hard and long blew all day hard against the windows whipping leafless trees into frantic oscillations whipping me to the hard edge nervous and edgy and distracted hearing the moaning whistling in through cracks scraping a loose strip of shingles on the roof like a chest dragged across the floor to block the door for protection from the unknown out there somewhere it was knocking pounding wanting to come inside but the door was shut until I turned the handle and then hard hands pushed it open wide and full force the wind blew against me my face and chest and legs as I walked leaning south bent into the wind head down breathing in the air out ahead because the air here

had already blown by leaning acutely stepping into the wind's maw my head down but out ahead of my feet trusting in the push the force the pressure the wall of wind to blow and not to stop its unseen life invisible power to move to change to push to force to bend to break but as I pulled each breath from its rushing north I remembered the lesson dead languages Hebrew – ruach Greek – pneuma dusty multivalent wonders ruach sweeping over the dark face of the deep before the dawn of the first day pneuma tearing heaven in two to drop on him dove in a holy flutter wind – breath – spirit pneuma – ruach always God's choice to blow howl whip pant sigh gasp lead haunt inspire and so he did hard from the south long and hard and rare a force a pressure a voice.

David M. Frye's undergraduate degree in physics is from Lebanon Valley College, Annville, Pa. His M.Div. is from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, and his M.A. in journalism is from the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. Frye has served congregations and social ministry organizations in Nebraska. He is a Benedictine Oblate with the Lincoln Chapter of the Benedictine Oblates of Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, South Dakota. Publications include work in Word in Season, Simul: Lutheran Voices in Poetry, The Postal History Journal and Holy Earth, (forthcoming from Anamchara Books; visit www.anamcharabooks.com/). He lives in the country west of Lincoln, Nebraska.

# The Aging Athlete Ends His Lenten Fast

Neill Morgan

In a vain and selfish attempt to reach racing weight, I have fasted from sugar, alcohol, potatoes, and bread. For forty days, nothing sweet has touched the tip of my tongue. Until now. In the beginning, the cravings clung to me every hour, calling "Come, make love to me." Every morning meeting offered croissants with jam, éclairs, and cream-filled crepes dusted white; every friendly training ride or run ended at the corner pub where laughter, lies, and lager flowed in the joy of a flock of friends who cannot think of a single place they would rather be than right here, right now. I sat or stood apart, a fish out of school, a watchman on the edge of camp. With the passing of twenty-one days, the urge to inhale the sweets or to surrender to friends, "Oh sure, just one, a Guinness perhaps," faded, became intermittent, brief blazes of lightning at the end of a storm. For weeks, I lived every waking hour in Spartan discipline. I did not even glance at the bread basket. I smiled broadly with friends from all over town, from east and west, north and south, gathered at table after pedaling and sweating down county roads, "Take this! Eat one of these! Drink this! Remember today, always!" I remember the ashen taste on my gums of "No thank you." I chugged down my unsweetened iced Oolong, desensitized to the distance.

And now. At sunrise on the first day of the week, the tiny pinch from the sweet Hawaiian loaf dipped in wine, sends an electric jolt from my tongue to my toes. One morsel, one taste, and I am united with a body beyond all time and space.

Neill Morgan serves as pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Sherman, Texas. His B.A. in English is from Austin College, his M.Div. is from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Previous work includes poetry and short fiction published in Sleepy Tree: An Anthology of Texas Writers. His soon-to-be-finished book is titled The Bible Is My Crazy Uncle: A Family Systems Approach to Scripture. He has not actually reached racing weight since 1985.

# **GETTYSBURG SEMINARY FINE ARTS**

# **Dressing Sacred Space**

John Spangler

In two exhibitions offered within the Seminary's walls, *Dressing the Church* in 2005 and *Dressing Sacred Space* in the fall of 2011, one could see examples of at least six unusually skilled textile artists who have given the work of their hands in support of preachers and liturgical leaders.

Their artistry helps mark the time and seasons, draw attention to the space in the room where certain actions are going to take place, occasionally highlight a text.

# Craft Versus Catalogue

While the forms of worship and the hymnal may unify assemblies across the miles, the material and texture and appearance of the cloth that drapes from the altar, lectern and pulpit become opportunities for distinguishing features. A pastor colleague arrived at a regular lectionary study session one day delighted to share the price he had found on a set of green paraments for his church's worship space. For less than \$250, he was able to replace a worn, traditional brocade book mark, altar cloth and pulpit cover on sale from a catalogue. This was a perfect solution for this very traditionally-styled and furnished space. Replacement of kind for kind at the lowest possible price, however, caused his congregation to miss the opportunity to update its look, introduce pieces that might cause visual interest and a new way of seeing and hearing in worship. Rather than develop the worship space as a distinctive space in a familiar context, this congregation's worship space continued to look like every other carpenter's gothic space ever built. In the catalogue vs. craft face off, the good news of that day was that the catalogue outlet threw in a free matching stole in the deal.

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To be fair, this colleague's worship space didn't feature a 30 x 12 foot vertical band of seeded glass window panes, stiffly colored blue, green, gold and white behind the altar like my own, 20 miles down the road. This window faced east, backlighting the altar every Sunday morning and forced leaders to think through this space's visual characteristics and challenges. The congregation was commissioning a set of green paraments, and had the good fortune of identifying a liturgical weaver who lived just an hour away and who visited the space to explore the colors and shapes that were already framing the room and the furnishings. This weaver, experienced and shaped by years of studying color and posessing a theological consciousness, wove a green parament set that worked with this great window and laced gold and blues into the fabric to lay a visual foundation for baptismal water. "I know you baptize often during this lengthy season" she said, "and so I thought that the water should be a good feature to tie the colors of the room to the theology of the season." Some of Joyce Rettstadt's weavings anchored the "Dressing the Church" exhibit at Gettysburg Seminary in 2005 along with works from Celeste Lauritsen and Marjorie Ford Sethna.

These exhibits differ from other art exhibits in that these are garments for the worship space's furnishings, marking altar, lectern, pulpit and leadership. And even though seminarians are well prepared for worship and music leadership, we plan such exhibits so that they can lead their congregations beyond the catalogue and discover that there are highly skilled and imaginative weavers and textile artists nearby.

# What Sets Sacred Space Apart?

Think about the difference between the sweatshirt and chinos you throw on for running errands or weeding in the garden and a bridal gown for a wedding. Do you not invest in fabric and craftsmanship? It isn't about following a certain aesthetic, it is about taking care. Regardless of your budget and your style (from a damask gown with a train, to a smart suit and hat, to a contemporary dress which may not even be white – these choices are not accidental). There are limitless ways to enhance and set aside spaces where we gather for worship and fellowship. Replacing altar cloths or selecting a painting or sculpture or a new baptismal font need not be a quick-fix. Such pieces last for generations, for decades. They are used often and they are part of the space. Let them do their job well.

One of our featured artists in the gallery this past fall was Linda Witte Henke whose studio is in Indianapolis, Ind. She has studied art, theology and journalism along the way to her vocation as a contemporary textile artist. She reminds us of the value of art in sacred spaces, which we often underestimate. "Decades of research have consistently demonstrated that people have differing sensory preferences. If we are sincere in our commitment to communicate the gospel to all people, then we need to be intentional about employing stimuli for all of the senses. In particular, in a culture that has become strongly visual, provision of quality visual stimuli is not a luxury; it's a necessity."

An important part of understanding the art of worship leadership is the language of the arts. Liturgical scholars often explore the links between liturgy and the arts, and Aidan Kavanagh is one who saw in the *Didache* and other early Christian descriptions of ritual language a nuanced dynamic. With a spotlight on the "unspeakable mystery," Kavanagh writes that these rites "wisely, therefore, emphasize words far less than right and ambiguous gestures, images and sensations. They assert rather than argue, proclaim rather than explain, engage rather than discourse. Their classroom is a river, pool, bath house, or tomb. Their language is asceticism, good works, exorcism, bathing and anointing and dining. Their purpose is gradually to ease one into the love of God for the world through Jesus Christ...by death and resurrection." (*The Shape of Baptism: The Rite of Christian Initiation*, 1983 Pueblo, NY, p. 158).

While Linda Witte Henke pursued the M.Div. degree at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio, she came across a quilter of unusual skill and contemporary design that "opened the door for me to consider a new world of possibilities for working with fabrics/textiles – designs, approaches, colors, techniques, processes, etc. I soon began exploring those possibilities in the creation of vestments for myself and my classmates."

Henke described for us "a strong sense of kinship with the many generations of women around the globe for whom fabrics/textiles (and, more specifically, liturgical fabrics/textiles) were the only avenue of artistic expression open to them. I am inspired by the colors, textures, finishes, and versatility of the media and empowered by its capacity to engage viewers irrespective of age, gender, social-economic, and ethnic distinctions. I often wish that I could have at least ten lifetimes to explore all the ideas that populate my imagination."

A signature work in the *Dressing Sacred Space* exhibit was Henke's eight-piece "Tabula Rasa," (page 107) which referenced connections between the individual's life/faith journey and the seasons of the Christian liturgical calendar. It employed translucent silk organza "windows" that showcase symbols of the seasons.

It is this imagination, informed by theological reflection that adds value to assemblies that make use of such weavers. Henke's work was framed by Berlin, Germany-based liturgical weaver Christina Utsch, and quilter Sue Ann Moore from Maine. We have exhibited weavers from Minnesota,

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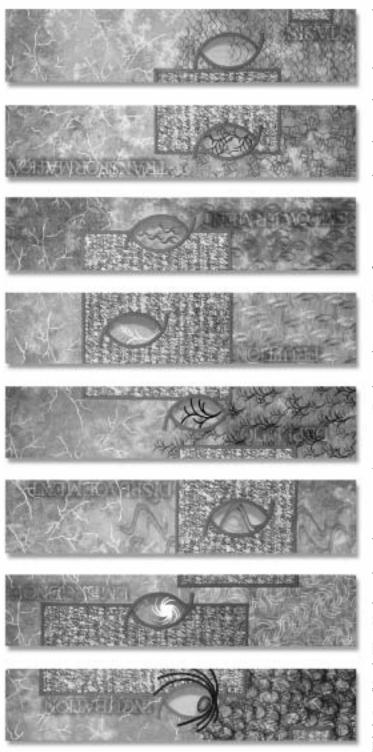
Massachusetts and several other places. It is our intention to convey to seminarians and pastors and lay leaders in congregations the fact that there is great talent across the landscape.

Henke has learned along the way that people engage visual arts in varying depths and in personal ways. She tells the story about getting started.

My first major artistic work, an 18-piece series marking signposts in Jesus' journey from Passion Sunday to Easter, was created to illustrate a book manuscript of devotional reflections. On something of a whim, I entered the series in "Expressions of the Sacred," a juried, all-media exhibition sponsored by Iliff School of Theology in Denver. Although I was pleased that the work was selected for inclusion in the exhibition, I presumed that, apart from the accompanying narrative reflections, the work could have only minimal impact. Imagine my



The *Dressing Sacred Space* exhibit opening was held in the Library Pioneer Room. "Tabula Rasa" is visible on the left. Works from ligurgical weaver Christina Utsch, quilter Sue Ann Moore and textile artist Linda Witte Henke were on display.



from cotton, wool, and silk fabrics that were dyed, over-dyed, and stenciled with paint, as well as from fabric commercially printed from designs developed by the artist using personal journal entries. The panels, which are embellished with improvisational stitching, also feature translucent organza "windows" embellished with appliqué and improvisational machine embroidery. Tabula Rasa," Linda Witte Henke, eight panels measuring 14.75 x 71 in. Employing the ancient Vesica form as its primary design element, the work was created

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surprise when I ended up spending the entire opening reception with viewers eager to be in conversation with me about their responses to my work. I came away from that experience with a new respect for and appreciation of art's capacity to engage, to communicate, to evoke, etc. – one that has since compelled me to invest my gifts to the harnessing of that power and promise in service of the gospel.

I wonder if we don't sell worshipers short to the extent that we think it "doesn't matter" what the worship space looks like. One successful commission in my congregation changed the way worshippers looked at worship space and understood the visual aspects of their faith and several of its symbols. I have heard examples from other congregations as well.

Henke is thankful for the way her seminary experience shaped her mindful integration of components in worship as the positive collaborative experience that it is with "liturgical seasons, lectionary texts, hymn selections, visual arts, etc." We have a ways to go, though. "That being said, I did then and do now lament the absence of opportunities for students in ELCA seminaries to experience something of the powerful role that visual arts (and artists) can play in ministry and mission, both within and beyond the congregation's worship. I am envious of the creative opportunities that are surfacing within the seminaries of our ecumenical partners and experience a sense of regret that ELCA seminarians – future leaders in our denomination – are not being exposed to similar opportunities."

# Where to Turn for Help

Pastors and other leaders are always looking for the kind of resources that help members of altar guilds, local artists themselves and to help make anyone who is in a position to coordinate a commission toward an excellent outcome. The following represent Henke's short list of recommendations, some of which are in Gettysburg Seminary's Wentz Library:

Christians in the Visuals Arts (www.civa.org) hosts a number of juried, traveling exhibitions expressive of spiritual themes and provides links to the member artists' profiles and galleries (http://civa-artists.ning.com/profiles/members/).

A couple of museums provide sources of interest and inspiration, including *the Museum of Biblical Art* (www.mobia.org/) in New York City and the *Museum of Contemporary Religious Art* (www.mocra.slu.edu/) in Saint Louis, in Kansas City, Mo.

White Stone Gallery (http://whitestonegallery.com/) sponsors an annual Fine Art and Faith exhibition and is in the process of publishing an Art and Faith Catalog in both print and electronic formats.

Eyekons Gallery (www.eyekons.com) in Grand Rapids, Mich., maintains a Stock Image Bank of biblical art, religious images, and spiritual themes.

The work of artist, author and ordained minister *Jan L. Richardson* (www.janrichardson.com) never fails to enlighten and inspire me. Her blog (http://paintedprayerbook.com/2012/02) provides weekly reflections on the lectionary texts. Images of her work are available through www.janrichardsonimages.com. Of her numerous books, *Night Visions: Searching the Shadows of Advent and Christmas* is my personal favorite.

*Behold: Arts for the Church Year* from Logos Productions (www. logosproductions.com) is a devotional arts magazine that presents seasonal collections of images and texts, based on the Revised Common Lectionary.

Imagining the Word: An Arts and Lectionary Resource, published by United Church as separate volumes for each of the three lectionary cycles, contains amazing collections of imagery and text linked to the liturgical seasons. Although not currently in print, the volumes can often be found through www.amazon.com or other book sellers.

The juried, on-line art exhibitions sponsored by *Episcopal Church and Visual Arts* (www.ecva.org) are meaningful and inspiring. This group maintains a registry of member artists (http://ecva.org/artists/registry.html) working in many media to create spiritually expressive art, as well as the "Episcopal Café" blog (www.episcopalcafe.com), which serves as a forum for integrated reflection on theology and the arts.

Gettysburg Seminary will exhibit textile arts again in time, and will choose yet another set of weavers and textile artists to stir the imagination of current and future church leaders. If you have worked with one of the exemplary artists, the Seminary's Fine Arts Council would very much like to hear about him or her.

Read the complete interview with Linda Witte Henke on the Seminary website: www.seminaryridgereview.org.

#### 110 SEMINARY FINE ARTS

See more of Linda Witte Henke's work at www.lindahenke.com.

See more of Christina Utsch's work at www.atelier-paramentik.de.

See photos from past Fine Arts Council exhibits at www.Ltsg.edu/Programs/Finearts.

#### On the cover

Gettysburg Seminary wishes to thank Christoph Maisenbacher, from Maisenbacher GmbH in Trier and Berlin, Germany, the agent of installation artist Ottmar Hörl, for his assistance in securing permission to use the cover photo by photographer Christoph Busse. To learn more about the installation visit www.maisenbacher-art.com; to learn more about Ottmar Hörl visit www.ottmarhoerl.de/sites/english/index.php. To see Gettysburg Seminary's very own Luther statue from the installation, stop by the Seminary's Office of Communication.



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"If you don't how America, (if you don't like the coap use the things, I know one thing to say — get out! We don't savelyly Maddles — see don't strongly Maddle — see strongly God's see see from the see of the s

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