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## Empowering Confident Confessor-Servant Evangelists Twenty-First-Century Multicultural Mission Work

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## Empowering Confident Confessor-Servant Evangelists Twenty-First-Century Multicultural Mission Work

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Gregory P. Seltz

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb . . . And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” (Rv 7:9–11)

Something has changed and that’s good. It is said that the context of twenty-first-century ministry is unlike any other ministry before it. Never has there been a time of such mass, immediate communication of information, never has there been a time of such mobility, and never has there been a time when cultures could so continuously engage each other daily as neighbors.<sup>1</sup> Foreshadowing the vision of Revelation 7, we are confronted by the joyful reality of “every tribe and nation” in the communities in which we live. Such an opportunity is exciting to a church which has been invited by its Lord to “make disciples of every nation” as ambassadors of his grace.

The shattering of mono-cultural communities, though, can also be quite unnerving, even frightening. The Revelation 7 vision is the culmination of God’s mission in the world, but the present day reality of that process still finds many people gathered together amidst competing worldviews, around many different thrones. Christianity’s claim of the particularity and universality of its gospel message is challenged more strongly today than ever before.<sup>2</sup> As Stanley Skreslet says,

On the one hand, the shrinking of the globe and the migration of peoples have created a pluralistic world—not only in the sense that many religions live side by side, but philosophically that all are to be accepted as different facets of truth. . . . beside this tolerant, accepting attitude is what Samuel P. Huntington has called the “the clash of civilizations”—that is, the clash of civilizations or cultures where religion is often the greatest influence.<sup>3</sup>

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, as a confessing church, feels this clash specifically as it proclaims the authority of the Bible and the particularity of the gospel message of salvation in Jesus Christ “alone” for all people, all nations. Any such con-

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fessional certainty, whether concerning the gospel, biblical morality, or the authority of the Bible, is viewed by the modern mind with suspicion, if not derision. In his book, *Culture Wars*, James Davidson Hunter catalogs this clash at the civic, communal level, lamenting the loss of a public moral consensus that makes communal life possible. His book seeks to reclaim a principled pluralism towards that end, but laments that without it, all that will be left is “competing interests, the power to promote those interests and the ideological constructions to legitimate those interests.”<sup>4</sup>

Such is the context in which the church today engages the mission of Jesus for the sake of those who don't yet know him. One who stands against such a spirit contextually, or stands apart from it for the purpose of calling all people to a common, compelling, community-building faith in Jesus Christ, will surely be caricatured. In the face of such suspicions, the temptation for the confessing church is to retreat into itself; to strive for orthodoxy for orthodoxy's sake; and to be isolated from the world, for the sake of the gospel when such a position is at odds with the gospel's own compulsion to share the faith as the grace-gift that it is.

The church, especially today, must not retreat into its particular, cultural comfort zones. Rather, in the midst of the confusions of modern culture, amidst the cacophony of competing voices of right and wrong, fulfillment and purpose, God's people are called *in Christ* to live purposeful lives of grace in grace for the sake of one's neighbor. Amid such real tensions the church of Jesus Christ is challenged to be the body of Christ for others, to build bridges, to more boldly speak Christ's message beyond the safety of its confessional walls.<sup>5</sup>

How can the Lutheran church faithfully share the truth of the gospel as public servants by being missional bridge-builders to cultures, even with worldviews antagonistic to itself? The thesis of this paper is that a “retreating confessionalism” or a “withdrawing orthodoxy” is not only wrong missionally, it is wrong theologically. This paper also argues that to be more effective witnesses to the gospel in the modern, multicultural context, the Lutheran church must take its theology *more* seriously, not less. On the other hand, it must take itself as a people less seriously, preparing ourselves for the contextual challenges as opportunities to be “fools for Christ” so that others might get to know him because we have gotten to know them and they have gotten to know us.

To come to grips with this challenge, this paper seeks to fuse the two poles of confident confessors and servant witnesses into one, albeit from different vantage points. It is Christ for us and Christ for others through us, to those whom he has presently brought not only to our shores, but also to our doors.

### **Sacramental Certainty—Evangelistic, Relational Risk**

Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism, but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.” (Acts 10:34–36)

William Dyrness says in *How Does America Hear the Gospel*, “To ask how a particular culture will hear and respond to the gospel is first to ask what kind of people exist in that place.”<sup>6</sup> Such a reality calls us back daily to what it means to be a “graced” believer in Christ alone even as it moves a person outside of his or her cultural comfort zone in sharing that good news. Such was the experience of Peter in Acts 10. Here, his certain relationship with God is called back to basics even as Peter is called forth to serve. Here, he was a “forgiven sinner for others.” The dynamics of the gospel alive in him for neighbor still needed growth and maturity, but the reality of his certain relationship with God and his needed growth in witness is a daily thing for believers. In fact, God’s people live each day in the reality of sacramental certainty in regards to our relationship with God, and the reality of compelling, ongoing, sacrificial, evangelistic risk for the sake of our neighbor.

Sacramental certainty—the confidence of one’s relationship with God grounded in the work of Jesus Christ on the cross delivered to us through the gifts of his word, his name in baptism, and his body and blood in his supper for us—makes possible a confidence which allows us to be moved out of our personal, cultural comfort zones in the strength and confidence of his Spirit. This “confident vulnerability” makes us useful to Christ Jesus in reaching others with his good news because it exhibits clearly our need for Jesus, our own commonality as a fellow sinner, and the uniqueness of Christ and his saving message for us all.

That is what one sees Peter experiencing in Acts 10. The utter grace-ness of the gospel was not Peter’s private possession and could not be confined to Peter’s cultural context. Just as in Genesis 12, the blessing of the promise was not only to the one who received it, namely Abraham and his seed, but it was to be received so that it could continually be given away. God’s love is like that. Peter faced the tension between the certainty of the gospel and his being a servant to those who were repulsive to him. Such is the great opportunity for the Lutheran church at this moment in history. Perhaps now is a time when the value of the depth of the message of the gospel, which “enfleshes” itself among people for their salvation, can be most appreciated.

The sacramentalness of the gospel,<sup>7</sup> a Lutheran core proclamation, breeds, if seriously entertained, a confidence that compels believers to be transparent before others because of the kind of Savior Jesus is for us. John 1:14 and Luke 9:51 give the picture of a Savior who would resolutely journey to the absolute flesh level of humanity’s need, and even there willingly endure suffering and death to accomplish mankind’s salvation. Such a Savior who continues to meet us through his word and sacraments joyfully motivates us to persevere as vulnerable witnesses, not as those who are “holier than thou” but as gift of grace receivers as well. The sacramentalness of the gospel helps the church see what gift-receiving and gift-giving grace is really like. God’s forgiveness enfleshes itself for our sake and through us for others. Arthur Carl Piepkorn, in his article, “The One Eucharist for the One World,” outlines this with regards to the Lord’s Supper, saying,

The stress falls on the fact that He is *incarnate*. In assuming our common humanity, He united Himself with all of humankind, so that there are no human limits to the identification of the Christ of the Eucharist with the one world of human beings.<sup>8</sup>

And as such,

Everyone who eats the body and drinks the blood of the Christ through whom and in whom and for whom all things were made, can, according to his vocation and influence and resources, conscientiously seek to redeem the area of his own influence for the Christ whose advent into the world had as its aim the destruction of the works of the adversary.<sup>9</sup>

And one could add, “has as its aim the salvation of every human being on the planet.”

Our witness to that “enfleshed” grace to us then, extends outwardly from us the same. Graced people rejoice in engaging, even taking another’s culture more seriously so as to be more effective bridge-builders. We learn with Peter, “Do not call anything impure, that God has made clean” (Acts 10:15).

Lutherans have the theological vocabulary, then, to express this kind of “grace receiving, grace giving” relational mission. Lingenfelter asks a question concerning the ramifications of the incarnation:

We hold the incarnation as a fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith: God himself became flesh and dwelt among humans. We seldom ask, however, what the implications of this incarnation are. What did it mean for him to become flesh . . . Does his example have any significance for us as we are sent to others?

Lutherans can answer, “Yes.” It is sacramental certainty, relational-evangelistic risk. Living amidst such certainty of one’s relationship to God compels one to embrace one’s personal vulnerability in service to others. This vulnerability allows others who do not know Jesus to sense the authenticity of the message. Such messenger vulnerability allows one to begin bridging to another culture, empowering one to become a useful witness of the uniqueness of Jesus in a particular community.

Authenticity, vulnerability, usefulness in Christ’s hands to another, these are key components flowing from our Lutheran theological disposition of grace alone. They help us address the pressures of the pluralistic community. In fact, pluralism’s hidden challenge is that only the truth should be left standing. David Brit says,

The presence of different or conflicting values is threatening. They make our own values seem arbitrary, precarious. Pluralism in urban life, by definition, quickly brings city dwellers into contact with different values and points of view. Though people in the city may assimilate many different or conflicting values, even city folks tend to gather around shared values.<sup>10</sup>

Amidst such tensions, communities are still looking for shared values, common ground. Common ground is not just something one preaches; it is something one lives with others. At the Lutheran Hour, we know that there is a price to pay for mission ministry. As a first way into communities through radio, media, and mission outreach efforts with congregations, we know there is a cost for sharing the gift of Jesus.

Messengers are always tested in new communities to see if they actually believe what they are saying. The community examines, even tests, words and deeds as a part of the process of making them their own. As Martin Köhler stated more than one hundred years ago, “mission is the mother of theology.” Frontline missionary outreach will force evangelists to examine and apply theological truths in ways often not experienced by those nestled in the safety of their studies and chancels.

That’s a tension that exists for every sermon preached on the radio, for every contested issue engaged with a Christian worldview broader than our congregational or communal boundaries. But it is the reality of Acts 10 ministry. To stay the course of servanthood in the heat of ministry is to see mission for others in the way that Christ sees mission for you (Heb 12:1–3). Sacramental certainty endures the barriers that all cultures erect against the Gospel, but it also rejoices in the garb of language and custom that allow the gospel to speak “anew in the specific cloak one’s humanity in community.” For, as Sherwood Lingenfelter says,

Culture is the anthropologist’s label for the sum of the distinctive characteristics of a people’s way of life. All human behavior occurs within particular cultures, within socially defined contexts.<sup>11</sup>

Culture is people being people. To be the church of the incarnate Christ is to willingly, continuously live in the tension of cultural relevance and faithful confession ... being Christ’s church in and for the community. This is a deeply theological and practical exercise. It takes muscle and heart. No faith muscle is left unused. Robert Schreiter warns of the need to maintain both “theological depth and cultural relevance” in mission, when he says,

Cultural sensitivity can become an excuse for not examining the depth and intensity of one’s own commitment to Christ and thus a way to avoid the demands of mission or the stringency of sustained dialogue.<sup>12</sup>

Even more acutely today then, one must be continuously, both students of the Scriptures and students of the people whom we serve. The theological depth of the gospel message both grounds and compels us to mission, to serving our neighbor with Christ-like confidence and Christ-like humility. Our theology provides not only a ground upon which to stand, not only confidence, but also a compelling message and method by which the church might exhaust every opportunity in reaching the nations for Christ. *The Lutheran Hour* and Lutheran Hour Ministries exist to help God’s people interface, through various media, with those who do not know Jesus Christ as their Savior. But the church is still that face-to-face, sacramental real place of Christ’s presence, Christ’s love for us and through us to one another. Our motto is “Christ to the

Nations,” but those nations to our churches, places to continue to receive and share God’s grace. We are the air force of mission ministry, and the church is the ground troops of grace to accomplish the mission for which he has sent us.

All excuses are to be laid aside. The challenge of sacramental certainty is not merely a willingness to be faithful personally. Orthodoxy’s depth is its willingness to be faithful to the faith for the sake of another. The liturgy’s phrase, “Faith towards God and fervent love towards one another”<sup>13</sup> maintains this tension. Sacramental certainty means evangelistic, relationship risk for the sake of others.

### Mission for Others with a “Special Ops” Mindset

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus. (Phil 2:1–5a)

In view of the ever-increasing multicultural nature of twenty-first-century ministry, one understands that building bridges is essential to connecting the gospel to the diverse communities in which the church finds itself today. Such bridge building often demands that someone pay the price sociologically and relationally for it to happen. Bridge building requires a different mindset, a mindset of initiative. In the face of such reality, the Lutheran church has the opportunity to teach its people to be in-depth theologians not just in Bible study rooms and fellowship halls, but also in the boardrooms, the neighborhoods, and the street corners of life. Such missional learning roots one in Christ for the reality of being “dropped” into missional ministry right outside our doors.

As such, even pastoral ministry can no longer be viewed only as a “*Seelsorger* of the flock”<sup>14</sup> alone. The extended family structures that were so much a part of our church history are quickly fading. The *Seelsorger* ministry to relatively stable communities undergirded by strong extended family units is gone. The vision for a new model of pastoral ministry is not to dispense with the idea of the *Seelsorger*, but to place it in its larger biblical mission context.

To be a confident-confessor, servant-evangelist pastor is to engage in ministry with a “special ops” mindset that sees ministry initiative in both directions, both to the community and the community of faith now gathered by the Spirit in the name of Jesus. Such a mindset sees ministry with our people as servant evangelist-witnesses constantly rooted *in Christ* through word and sacrament, to be prepared to live boldly at the cultural fault lines where the church meets the world. Such a special ops, communal mindset moves perseveringly into cultures unlike our own until the task of forming a ministry beachhead is complete. Leadership commitment is key to a mindset that says, “I will not quit until the job is done” both for my people, and for our community.

Such a mindset, though, is not for pastors alone. This biblical mindset calls both pastors and people to be ever learning about the things of Christ and the things of the community so that the good news of the gospel can be translated and delivered to people in ways that can be understood. Anthony Bradley, in *Liberating Black Theology*, talks about the benefit of a “culturally applied hermeneutic” for mission. This hermeneutic is not for textual exegesis, but is involved in the application and transmission of that exegeted text to a particular culture or cultural situation. To the specific challenge of sharing the gospel with African-Americans who have experienced racism in a “Christian” America he says,

In order to know the right questions to ask of the text in light of a particular culture, the exegete must know the culture to which he seeks to communicate for effective understanding and application . . . A culturally applied hermeneutic simply enhances the communicative dimension of biblical exposition.<sup>15</sup>

I would add that such an applied hermeneutic especially allows the servant evangelist to be honest about one’s own cultural questions in hopes of an honest, authentic dialogue with others in and through the inspired texts of the Bible. Such openness to others’ questions, challenges, and concerns is a risk. But such servant evangelistic risk taking always drives a person back to the certainty of the person and work of Christ sacramentally delivered both for oneself and for others.

In mission, the special operations missional mindset immediately makes us aware of our insecurities and inabilities. It is true “as finite human beings we are constrained by the limitations of our minds, our life histories, and our personal abilities. Few of us have the emotional strength to endure the changes that full incarnation in another culture would require.”<sup>16</sup>

But, fully aware of our limitations, the special ops missional mentality rooted in the promises and faithfulness of God, is still ultimately concerned with the possibilities and capabilities that are at hand because of God’s mission commission and promise. This mindset understands that the initiative for ministry comes from God to us and likewise from God’s people to those who do not know him and with confidence, rises each day to learn to engage the culture anew. An “incarnational model of ministry,” is not only a ministry that is willing to become part of the culture. It is a ministry that is open to the work of establishing a meaningful, authentic place for the gospel in a culture different from our own.

Lutheran Hour Ministries, through media outreach, missional leadership training and hands-on mission work with churches throughout the country, is striving to maximize this “special ops” mission mindset. Confident in the gospel and ever learning in mission, such work with God’s people is for the purpose of “establishing a beachhead for ministry in new communities in the United States and around the world.”<sup>17</sup> In missional terminology, Lingenfelter would call this the end process of cultural learning. He says,



The reason that incarnation (i.e., a willingness to begin to learn as if we are helpless infants) is necessary for cross-cultural ministry lies in the nature of cultural learning and perception. Culture is always learned and shared with others, and in this process people begin to perceive and respond to one another in culturally conditioned ways.<sup>18</sup>

To be a cultural learner who finally establishes that “beachhead of ministry in a new place” is to be a person who is always working to “earn the right”<sup>19</sup> to share the gospel. Lingenfelter calls it becoming a “150 percent” people, “becoming 75 percent of the culture that we were born in and 75 percent of the culture that we are reaching.”<sup>20</sup> David Hesselgrave calls this work, “contextualization as ‘apostolic accommodation.’”<sup>21</sup>

It is *apostolic* because it is especially but not solely the responsibility and privilege of those who are sent to other peoples in other cultures. The *context* is the arenas of non-Christian belief systems. The *method* is to establish a common ground in which unbelievers can be taught the truth of the supracultural Gospel. The *result* will be the transformation of those who place their faith in Christ and the confirmation in unbelief of those who refuse so to do.<sup>22</sup>

In emphasizing the entrepreneurial, “think on your feet, don’t stop until it’s done” mindset, this is what is meant by a special ops mindset *in Christ for others*, a servant witness boldly willing to cross barriers that seem impenetrable. It’s a challenge laid not only on the called leadership of the church, but for all God’s people together in mission for others. There are no secrets for success here, just the hardest work one will ever love.<sup>23</sup>

### **Pastors as Missionaries, Church as Mission Outpost**

Finally, to be bearers of his gospel, one not only must start with others where Christ himself started with us, but one must seek to finish the job as well. This vision of the church itself must grow to rise to the challenge of “every tribe, every nation” gathered around Christ’s throne of grace. The vision of “pastor as missionary and church as mission outpost” sees mission accomplished when the community carries on with the ministry once the initial work is done. As the Chinese proverb says,

Go to the people.  
Live among them.  
Learn from them.  
Start with what they know.  
Build on what they have.  
But of the best leaders,  
When their task is accomplished,  
Their work is done,  
The people all remark,  
“We have done it ourselves.”<sup>24</sup>

The missionary mindset is more than “we have done it ourselves”; it realizes that God’s work is done when we are on his mission together as his people, gathered around his gifts, for others. The baton of ministry must always be passed confessionally, evangelistically, and with humility. Tom Steffen, in *Passing the Baton*, says that an international missionary cannot even begin to think of withdrawing until leadership is in place. He says,

Expatriate team members attempting to move to Resident Advisor or Itinerant Advisor roles must give priority to preparing national leaders in ways that emphasize the importance of biblically functional substitutes.<sup>25</sup>

But that mindset exists for all God’s churches everywhere. The Apostle Paul told Timothy and Titus to finish the job of mission by making sure that there were elders-bishops-overseers in every place (Ti 1:5). The baton of leadership must always be passed.

But, this work of replacing oneself takes on a broader understanding when we think of Luther’s expansion of “Christian vocation” to every sphere of life dedicated to the gospel of Jesus. In this sense, the church needs to see its “witness role as the replacing of itself” as the continuing missionary outpost to the community. Such a vision breeds perseverance. Harvey Conn says in *Planting Urban Churches*, that one of the four basic keys to effective urban ministry is seeing “churches as God’s missionary instruments.”<sup>26</sup>

For our work at Lutheran Hour Ministries, this missionary mindset is fundamental. Our programming is designed to be that “first wave into the community,” using technology to get to people who do not know Jesus. We are also aware that such a disembodied voice of the word, though beneficial, still must be a part of a movement to empower personal connections, to the means of grace and to other believing Christians, part of a holistic ministry of the church for the community.

Such a missionary mindset sees the whole picture, from evangelism (building bridges to people coming to faith) to maturity in faith (catechesis) to leadership (community people of the faith community carrying the mantle of Christ’s ministry). The church will have to be at its best to not only resist the pressures of pluralism, but to maximize the opportunities that modernity and post-modernity offer and to do it generation after generation after generation.

If *sola fides*, *sola Scriptura*, and *sola gratia* is truly the rallying cry of the Lutheran church, then bloodlines are not our strength. Our strength will always be found in the continuing reality of the heavenly Father’s adoption of people in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. The incarnate word, sacramentally delivering his good news so that the body of Christ can live for others today, that will always be our certainty, our strength. Of that body, Leslie Newbiggin says,

The church is an entity which has outlasted many states, nations and empires, and it will outlast those that exist today. The church is nothing

other than that movement launched into the public life of the world by its sovereign Lord to continue that which he came to do until it is finished in his return in glory . . . The church can never settle down to being a voluntary society concerned merely with private and domestic affairs. It is bound to challenge in the name of the one Lord all the powers, ideologies, myth, assumptions and world views which do not acknowledge him as Lord.<sup>27</sup>

The modern church has the renewed opportunity to become a gathering ground of the neighborhood that transcends the boundaries of language, culture, and class. The church may live amid conflicting ideologies, but it always carries a message which calls for shared values that transcend or at least challenge all cultural perspectives foreign to the gospel. Pastors as missionaries and the church as mission outpost sees this work as ongoing with leadership continually reflecting the community in which it serves.

## Conclusion

Are we ready for the reality that confronts us. Are we preparing people for the reality of this kind of mission-ministry. Special-Ops pastors are not the Father Mulcahys (the gentle, non-directive, counselor-type chaplain on the television show *MASH*) who are working in the background of the fighting forces. They are *Seeksorgers*, yes, but also field commanders leading the charge of the “special forces” army of God’s grace, Christ’s church. To be prepared, God’s people must rise to the challenge of deep theological and in-depth cultural training, one in the classroom and Bible studies of our churches, one on the streets of the neighborhoods we serve. To rise to this challenge is be the Lutheran church at its best, bringing the sacramental, incarnational gospel to the nations that now “grace” our communities in need of God’s grace. Being Christ’s grace community there, in a sea of competing religious and secular worldviews, this is the opportunity in which we find ourselves today. This is the opportunity that Lutheran Hour Ministries believes God has positioned us together to engage.

For such a time as this, the church remembers what its Lord says, “I know the plans I have for you.”

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Leonard Sweet, *Postmodern Pilgrims* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2000), xiv, describes the situation well. “Given our ‘radical discontinuity’ with the past, we must restate Christian faith in a manner that takes full account of an anti-Christian, Einsteinian universe.” How a sacramental, law/gospel, confessional church such as the LCMS begins to engage is the question for this paper.

<sup>2</sup> Benjamin Wiker, *Moral Darwinism: How We Became Hedonists* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002) makes the case that modern/postmodern thinking is heavily influenced by a “hedonistic materialism” rooted in a more public Epicureanism, undergirded by philosophical Darwinism culminating in a “this world only” sensuality and utilitarianism that is at war with any notion of intelligent, purposeful design in creation or purpose in human life. Unlike the asceticism and private nature of early Greek Epicurean-hedonism, modern hedonistic thought is very much public and political. In view of the public, political nature of this movement, the missional notion of a compelling, Christian worldview for modern, even postmodern, people is therefore suspect, to be challenged and even dismissed.

<sup>3</sup> Stanley H. Skreslet, "Impending Transformation: Mission Structures for a New Century," *Mission at the Dawn of the 21st Century*, ed. Paul Varo Martinson (Minneapolis: Kirk House, 1999), 319.

<sup>4</sup> James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 313.

<sup>5</sup> Arthur Carl Piepkorn deals with the tension of the confessional nature of the Lord's Supper, namely its limiting requirement for participation being for repentant, baptized believers only, while still proclaiming that the supper is indeed for the whole world. Such is the tension for the church of the incarnate Lord who still comes among his people in the flesh through words, water, bread, and wine. Therefore, no matter the world's particular view of the church, we, as believers in Jesus Christ, are to be in the world, not of the world, yet for the world. "The One Eucharist for the One World," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 43, no. 2 (1972): 94–108.

<sup>6</sup> William Dyrness, *How Does America Hear the Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 20.

<sup>7</sup> By this I mean that the gospel proclaims a Lord who not only dies for us "graciously in the flesh" but also brings the merits of his cross to us graciously to the "flesh level of our need" as well as all the way to our ears, our eyes, our mouth, our hearts, and our minds. The word *sacramental* is thus related to the word *incarnate* because salvation for sinful, flesh-level humans must reach them at the very point of their need.

<sup>8</sup> Piepkorn, 97.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>10</sup> David Brit, "From Homogeneity to Congruence," *Planting and Growing Urban Churches* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997), 143.

<sup>11</sup> Sherwood G. Lingenfelter and Marvin K. Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986), 17–18.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Schreiter, "Globalization as Cross-Cultural dialogue," *The Globalization of Theological Education*, eds. Alice F. Evans and David Roozen (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis books, 1993), 125.

<sup>13</sup> *Lutheran Worship* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982), 153. <sup>14</sup> In John Fritz, *Pastoral Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2003), 184–229, "curing souls" is defined as a function of pastoring the flock. Again, it is not "pastor the flock" or "reach the lost," but rather both. The pastor tends to the flock who is God's army in the battle for souls. This paper, then, calls for an expansion of seeing the church in this more dynamic context.

<sup>15</sup> Anthony B. Bradley, *Liberating Black Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 155.

<sup>16</sup> Lingenfelter, 121.

<sup>17</sup> Right now, Lutheran Hour Ministries is working in the Florida/Georgia district of the LCMS in a "Regional Outreach Initiative," where our ministry spends years in the district, learning, training, equipping, and helping to launch effective outreach ministry through the churches committed to the effort. This is not a program as much as a movement that prepares God's people for the evangelistic challenges of the day as well as instilling in them a "special ops" mindset of persevering service.

<sup>18</sup> Lingenfelter, 22.

<sup>19</sup> In Lutheran terminology, this might be expressed as "carrying one's cross for others." There is always a cost in bringing the gospel to one who does not know Jesus. Jesus paid that price (incarnation, death, resurrection), and we model that mindset as we serve others in his name.

<sup>20</sup> Lingenfelter, 25.

<sup>21</sup> David J. Hesselgrave, *Today's Choices for Tomorrow's Mission* (Grand Rapids: Academic Books, 1988), 161.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> For pastoral leadership, this work entails hitting the streets in an effort to build community capital as well as community awareness that helps fine-tune one's effort to share Jesus Christ. For church members, it is the opportunity to get to know our neighbors better, creating opportunities to love them as Christ loves us, to be able to share the gospel in a way that by God's Spirit, they will believe. I often share with people that the greatest joy in ministry is to realize that there are people who will be in heaven because they got to know Jesus because they got to know you.

<sup>24</sup> Harvie Conn, *Planting Urban Churches* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997), 181.

<sup>25</sup> Tom A. Steffen, *Passing the Baton: Church Planting that Empowers* (LaHabra, CA: Center for Organizational & Ministry Development, 1997), 198.

<sup>26</sup> Conn, 21.

<sup>27</sup> Leslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 221.