

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

## Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

---

Doctor of Ministry Major Applied Project

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

---

4-1-1997

### Witnesses for the Defense A Lenten Worship Series for Holy Cross Lutheran Church Davenport, Iowa

Frederick Schuster

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, [ir\\_schusterf@csl.edu](mailto:ir_schusterf@csl.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/dmin>

Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)  
Digital Commons

---

#### Network Recommended Citation

Schuster, Frederick, "Witnesses for the Defense A Lenten Worship Series for Holy Cross Lutheran Church Davenport, Iowa" (1997). *Doctor of Ministry Major Applied Project*. 166.  
<https://scholar.csl.edu/dmin/166>

This Major Applied Project is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctor of Ministry Major Applied Project by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact [seitzw@csl.edu](mailto:seitzw@csl.edu).

WITNESSES FOR THE DEFENSE  
A LENTEN WORSHIP SERIES  
FOR HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH  
DAVENPORT, IOWA

A MAJOR APPLIED PROJECT SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF CONCORDIA SEMINARY  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY


BY

FREDERICK H. SCHUSTER

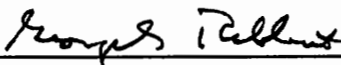
APRIL, 1997

Concordia Seminary

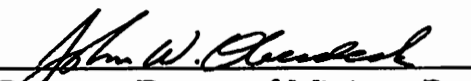
St. Louis, Missouri

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Advisor      Dr. James L. Brauer

5/24/97  
DATE

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Reader      Dr. George S. Robbert

5/22/97  
DATE

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Director, Doctor of Ministry Program  
Prof. John W. Oberdeck

5/15/97  
DATE

WITNESSES FOR THE DEFENSE  
A LENTEN WORSHIP SERIES  
FOR HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH  
DAVENPORT, IOWA

A MAJOR APPLIED PROJECT SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF CONCORDIA SEMINARY  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY  
FREDERICK H. SCHUSTER

APRIL, 1997

Concordia Seminary

St. Louis, Missouri

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	iii
I. SETTING AND INTRODUCTION .....	1
II. LUTHERAN THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR A LENTEN SERIES .....	6
III. THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS AND WORSHIP .....	30
IV. THE PRACTICE, PIETY AND WORSHIP OF LENT .....	37
V. THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN AS A BASIS FOR A LENTEN WORSHIP SERIES .....	54
VI. MATERIALS FOR THE LENTEN WORSHIP SERIES .....	76
Service One, Ash Wednesday The Testimony of the Voice of God .....	79
Midweek Service Two The Testimony of Jesus' Mastery Over Death .....	82
Midweek Service Three The Testimony of the Power of the Name .....	84
Midweek Service Four The Testimony of the Sign Seen By All .....	87
Midweek Service Five The Testimony of the Fulfillment of Responsibilities .....	90
Midweek Service Six The Testimony of the Reality of Thirst .....	93

	ii
Service Seven, Maundy Thursday	
The Testimony of the Abiding Spirit .....	96
Service Eight, Good Friday	
The Testimony of the Shout of Triumph .....	99
Service Nine, Easter Sunrise	
The Testimony of the Message of the Angels .....	101
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	105

## ABSTRACT

This Major Applied Project is the preparation of a Lenten Midweek Worship Series based on the Gospel according to St. John for use at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Davenport, Iowa.

The project investigates the Lutheran theology of worship, the concept of worship in the Lutheran Confessions, the place, practice and purpose of Lent in the church, and the relevance of the Gospel according to St. John as the basis for the series.

The study culminates with nine sermon studies, one for each of the six Wednesdays of Lent, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

## I. SETTING AND INTRODUCTION

The members of Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Davenport, Iowa, have had a long history of midweek worship in the season of Lent. This Major Applied Project undertakes the task of preparing a Lenten Worship Series for the congregation, examining the Lutheran understanding of worship, the expression of this understanding in the Confessions, and the purpose of Lent as its history in the Church applies to contemporary parish life. The Gospel according to St. John was chosen as the source of scriptural focus for the series under the theme Witnesses for the Defense.

Worship is at the heart and center of the life of the church. As the Lutheran Church shapes its worship according to biblical concepts, it sees God coming to man through Word and Sacrament in order to change rebellious hearts and to enable the change in heart to be reflected in a changed manner of living. Worship originates with God and man responds.

However, the format or purpose of a worship service can turn it into an activity directed to man rather than to God. When the worship of the church in Lent is designed to rouse pity for Jesus because of the suffering he endured, it

emphasizes the emotions. Such a person-centered approach to worship ultimately is idolatry. Worship does involve the emotions, but it is not to be driven by emotion. Is the main purpose of worship to exhibit obedience or the fervency of our response to God? No. Fulfilling the demands of God cannot be central. The primary purpose of worship is to receive the gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation from God.

While the Lutheran Confessions have no separate paragraphs devoted solely to the subject of worship, they contain many references to worship. God comes to serve man by offering him blessings: man responds by accepting the blessings. In the Apology we read:

But that virtue justifies which takes hold of Christ, communicating to us Christ's merits and, through them, grace and peace from God. This virtue is faith. . . . faith is not merely knowledge but rather a desire to accept and grasp what is offered in the promise of Christ. This obedience toward God, this desire to receive the offered promise, is no less an act of worship than is love. God wants us to believe him and to accept blessings from him; this he declares to be true worship (AP IV:227-228).

In the same section, the Apology later states, "Thus the service and worship of the Gospel is to receive good things from God, while the worship of the law is to offer and present our goods to God" (AP IV:310).

For many decades the Lenten Midweek Worship Service has been a staple in the life of a Lutheran parish. Through the years, many books containing



devotional series, themes and sermons have been written. An entire industry has evolved to provide coordinated Lenten worship materials.

In many a Lutheran parish, the typical Lenten series revolved around the seven words from the cross, or concentrated on the physical sufferings of the Savior. In effect, these Lenten treatments made of the season of Lent an extended Holy Week.

Even before Vatican II and the changes in liturgy which followed, there was an effort to reawaken a deeper appreciation of the church year and the way it influenced worship practices. As he addressed the subject of worship in the Lenten season, Fred Lindemann would write:

With Ash Wednesday we enter upon the second period of the Lenten Season. We, too, are to rise with Christ at Easter and walk with Him in newness of life. In preparation, we shall spend the coming weeks in examining our life to discover attitudes, practices, habits that are incongruous with the new life into which we have been born by Holy Baptism. It is a time of penitence, of putting out of our lives all that remains of the old life or has crept in once more. But it is also a time of special prayer, for without the help of the Holy Spirit nothing will be accomplished in us.<sup>1</sup>

The introduction of the revised Church Calendar and new books of worship has proved Lindemann's description of what Lenten worship should be like when it is shaped by the intent of the church year and Lutheran theology of worship to

---

<sup>1</sup>Fred H. Lindemann, The Sermon and the Propers: Volume II, Pre-lent to Pentecost. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958), p. 45.

be accurate. These are the emphases which help bring Lenten worship closer to the intent of Lent in the early history of the church.

The Gospel according to St. John was chosen as the source of material for the Lenten series because it depicts Jesus concerned about both spiritual and physical needs of people. He calls his disciples to follow his example in serving others, and in such service produce a testimony which will make people more receptive to his claims that he is the One through whom true life is offered and given.

This Gospel shows Jesus creating the new people of God. The Prologue begins with "In the beginning was the Word . . . ." In Chapter 20 the Lord Jesus appears to the disciples on the evening of his resurrection, and "he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" The Gospel is bookended by these allusions to the creation account.

John records no trial of any kind before the Sanhedrin. Instead, he focuses on a series of trials which has been taking place all during the ministry of Jesus. The leaders of the Jewish people condemned Jesus to death after Lazarus was raised from the dead. In the trial before Pontius Pilate the death penalty was imposed on the basis of the claim that Jesus tried to make himself "King of the Jews."

The original intent of the Gospel according to St. John was to present witnesses to influence people to believe that Jesus is truly the Son of God sent to make true life a reality. As this Gospel is shared with people who are children of God through their Baptism, the same testimonies will draw them to a closer relationship with the Savior, and give them power and direction for their own lives of witness to Jesus. God may use a strong faith and a committed life to influence their acquaintances to look more closely at the work and words of Jesus so they, too, can be led to faith in him.

## II. LUTHERAN THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR A LENTEN WORSHIP SERIES

Since the Lenten Midweek Service is a worship service in a Lutheran congregation, it will employ a Lutheran understanding of worship. As Lutherans, we believe that worship is initiated by God, and that man responds. For many people, worship begins with man and is tailored to fit the needs of the moment. Because such worship is self-centered, its relevance is measured in how satisfied the worshiper feels. God operates on a different level. He is the hidden God who reveals his power in seeming weakness, his glory in apparent lowliness. He delights in serving his people by offering forgiveness of sins, life and salvation through Word and Sacrament. True worship is the hand of faith receiving the gifts and promises of God. The presence of God is revealed in the objective Word and sacraments, and needs no verification by emotions or feelings. As God works through Word and sacrament he changes the heart, molds the thinking and shapes the life of the believer who loved God by loving his neighbor and using his skills and possessions to aid him. The aim of worship in Lent is to help the believer, by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, examine

attitudes and conduct and bring them closer to the will and way of God. The discipline of Lent is to result in a stronger faith and in increased sanctification that will endure past the season of Lent and continue throughout the rest of the year. Such a goal fits a Lutheran understanding of worship.

The word “worship” is frequently explained as coming from an old English word meaning “worthship” which is defined as activities in which man recognizes that God is worthy to be adored and proceeds to honor and adore him. When worship is perceived as a human activity, from us to God, it becomes a work of Law. The Law is never our helper, but our taskmaster which always accuses and is never satisfied.

On the other hand, when worship is understood as God’s action for us and in us, God is the focus of worship. The action flows from God to us and back to God. Instead of focusing on what people are doing, it focuses on what God does, and so is called “Divine Service.” This the understanding of worship which is described in the introduction to our hymnal, *Lutheran Worship*:

Our Lord speaks and we listen. His Word bestows what it says. Faith that is born from what is heard acknowledges the gifts received with eager thankfulness and praise. Music is drawn into this thankfulness and praise, enlarging and elevating the adoration of our gracious giver God.

Saying back to him what he has said to us, we repeat what is most true and sure. Most true and sure is his name, which he put upon us with the water of our Baptism. We are his, this we acknowledge at the beginning of the Divine Service. Where his name is, there is he. Before him we acknowledge that we are sinners, and we plead for forgiveness. His

forgiveness is given us, and we, freed and forgiven, acclaim him as our great and gracious God as we apply to ourselves the words he has used to make himself known to us.

The rhythm of our worship is from him to us, and then from us back to him. He gives his gifts, and together we receive and extol them. We build one another up as we speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Our Lord gives us his body to eat and his blood to drink.

Finally, his blessing moves us out into our calling, where his gifts have their fruition. How best to do this we may learn from his Word and from the way his Word has prompted his worship through the centuries. We are heirs of an astonishingly rich tradition. Each generation receives from those who went before and, in making that tradition of the Divine Service its own, adds what best may serve in its own day—the living heritage and something new.<sup>1</sup>

The Confessions say that true worship is possible only for a believer. John Pless reminds us that in our theology of worship, God is the subject and not the object of liturgical action.<sup>2</sup> This is in contrast to the usual understanding of liturgy when it is explained as the action of the people. The word liturgy derives from the Greek word *leitourgia*, which had the meaning of being responsible for giving taxes and service for the welfare of the Empire. The Christian Church took this active sense of the word and made it passive. Believers stand passively in the presence of God to receive his gifts for the life of the world.

---

<sup>1</sup>Lutheran Worship (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982), 6.

<sup>2</sup>John T. Pless, “Liturgy: Receiving the Gifts,” Paper presented to the LCMS Iowa District East Pastoral Conference, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, April 18-19, 1994.

God is present in Christ with the benefits he wants to bestow upon mankind— forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. But he is present in what seems an insignificant manner. He comes in his Word, which seems so weak. He is present in the bread and wine of the Sacrament. He enters the hearts and lives of people through the water and Word of Baptism.

In the liturgy we sing the *Kyrie*, “Lord, have mercy.” Mercy is a word which does not communicate well in our culture. In popular thought, mercy has the Greco-Roman concept of pity for some unfortunate soul. We do not want God to feel sorry for us.

In the Biblical understanding of it, mercy is not an emotion. Mercy is a concrete action of loving kindness flowing from the covenant which God made with us at our Baptism. The word is often found in the plural, the mercies of God, given us through the Means of Grace. The *Kyrie* calls upon God to show us what he promised in Baptism so we can share it with others.

And those touched by the redeeming power of God’s presence respond to God’s gifts. They offer their praises to God, speaking back to him what they have heard him say to them. They join in song, singing psalms and hymns as a demonstration of love. They give thanks as they share the Eucharist. Faith receives the gifts of God, while love responds to the gifts.

The church is not simply equivalent to the number of people involved with the visible local gathering. The church is hidden within those people, as Jesus' parables of the dragnet and the weeds and the wheat attest. Hermann Sasse says, "for the church of the New Testament the church was not an article of sight but an article of faith in the strict sense of the word." He also writes, "it is the conviction of all Christianity that the church is an article of faith and so not an object of observation."<sup>3</sup>

This is entirely consonant with Luther's discussion of the hidden God. Von Loewenich writes:

Just as, according to Luther's Heidelberg Theses, revelation is possible only in concealment, we are now confronted by the other side of the matter, namely that faith can be directed only to what is concealed, hidden, and invisible. In *The Bondage of the Will* Luther guides this thesis to its logical conclusion. As surely as we confess, 'I believe in a holy catholic church,' the church, too, insofar as it is an object of faith, is not visible to the physical eye. 'The church is hidden, the saints are unknown.' . . .<sup>4</sup>

Because God is the hidden God, man will not be able to find him through his own devices. Although God has left his footprints about his created order, even though man's conscience convicts him of sin and guilt, even though he has some vague impulse to worship, man will not be able to find God or come to faith in

---

<sup>3</sup>Hermann Sasse, *We Confess the Church, We Confess Series, Volume 3*, trans. Norman Nagel (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 48.

<sup>4</sup>Walther von Loewenich, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, trans. Herbert J. A. Bouman (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1976), 36.



him. God must reveal himself to us. But he does so in his own way, a way that is contrary to human expectations:

. . . in Jesus Christ the hidden God becomes the revealed God. . . . The hidden God has revealed Himself in human flesh. The revealed God is hidden in human flesh. He reveals Himself in a promise wrapped in swaddling cloths, in diapers, and nailed to a cross. The glory of God comes to rest in a baby and a corpse— a corpse, to be sure, which came alive again. . . . Always at the heart of God's transforming message of mercy is His revelation of Himself in the glory of suffering, in the splendor of the cross, in the triumph of death. Glory, splendor, and triumph lie concealed in the likes of suffering, cross, and death.<sup>5</sup>

This revelation of the hidden God comes through the Gospel, which Paul calls the word of the cross. In I Corinthians 1 he states that God will not honor the Jews' demands for signs, nor will he satisfy the Greeks' search for man-glorifying wisdom. Instead, it is the word of the cross which will have to satisfy, even though it is a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks. In God's design, however, that proclamation of Christ crucified is the power and the wisdom of God for those who are being saved.

The message of the cross is more than a mere presentation of God's offer of forgiveness that people may decide to receive or not. It is the word of God's power that is able to change hearts and turn people in penitence to God. Paul says in Romans 1:16 that the Gospel ". . . is the power of God for the salvation

---

<sup>5</sup>Robert Kolb, Speaking the Gospel Today, A Theology for Evangelism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), 52-53.

of everyone who believes.” Through the use of the Gospel not only is sin forgiven, but the believer is given power to amend the sinful life, to be joyfully aware of God’s will and to live out that will. The Gospel can be compared to a dynamo providing a steady source of power that can be utilized.

The liturgical rhythm of life finds believers bringing unbelievers into the presence of God, teaching them, baptizing them and communing with them. This has always been a part of Lutheran church life and practice. Kolb says:

The goal of Christian witness is to incorporate broken sinners into the body of Christ, through His baptismal action which takes into Himself their sins and which then bestows upon them His righteousness and innocence. This baptismal action also incorporates the person to whom the believer has been witnessing into the worshiping community, the body of Christ, His church.<sup>6</sup>

In contrast to this understanding of worship, David Luecke recommends that kind of worship service where a “recurring theme is that each person should have a profound, personal experience with God.”<sup>7</sup> He adds,

One of the results of my exposure to Evangelicals is that I now hesitate about which way to face when conducting a worship service. . . . I find it increasingly difficult to turn my back on the audience. . . . In some churches the altar is part of the front wall, and the pastor then is talking to a wall. . . . It accentuates a break of contact with the participants. . . . More than a communication style, facing them is a matter of respect for their importance before God. . . . Looking with Evangelical sensitivities, though, I can better see the weakness that often appears when the

---

<sup>6</sup>Kolb, 179.

<sup>7</sup>David Luecke, Evangelical Style and Lutheran Substance, Facing America’s Mission Challenge (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1988), 107.

formalities reinforce pastoral communication that tends to stay somewhat impersonal.<sup>8</sup>

Luecke also finds the formal, liturgical service suffering from what he considers the inherent weakness of being difficult for initiating fellowship because of its complexity and because it does not relate as well to the felt needs of the participants.

In the introduction to this book, Luecke cited Dean M. Kelley's Why Conservative Churches Are Growing, with its conclusion that growing churches were conservative in theology and standards of Christian living. He emphasized that these conservative growing churches were new churches, the products of the American scene. Churches which were unwilling to adapt their style of ministry to the American culture remained static or declined. Adaptability to culture seems to be the catalyst that makes teaching and lifestyle effective.<sup>9</sup>

In many ways, Luecke's thesis that the need to change the style of the church to become more like the style of growing churches has a familiar ring to it.

Hermann Sasse refers to Samuel Schmucker, who in 1854

. . . published his Definite Platform, a watered-down Augsburg Confession from which the specifically Lutheran doctrines had been

---

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 108.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 8-9.

removed. His goal was an 'American Lutheranism,' indigenous and living in harmonious fellowship with the Reformed Churches.<sup>10</sup>

The theology of the cross can easily be corrupted into its reverse image, a theology of glory. Kolb sums it up this way:

The church does not belong to its members; they, rather, as individuals and as a congregation, belong to the church's Lord and are directed by His Word. . . . This is not to say that the sociological principles which govern human institutions do not come into play in the life of the church. . . . These two facts about the church must be kept in tension: the church belongs to Jesus, and it functions as a human institution. . . . The tension dare not be resolved by regarding the church in institutional form only in terms of sociological principles and at best only loosely related to the true people of God. Neither can the tension be resolved by abandoning all recourse to insight into the nature of the human creature which may be gained from study of such disciplines as psychology, sociology and anthropology. We must also remember that these disciplines, even when unbiblical presuppositions do not shape their results, can give us descriptive insights, but never prescriptive directives, into the nature of our hearers and ourselves.<sup>11</sup>

When the social sciences seem to be more important than the cross-word of God's power in shaping the ministry of the congregation, when sociological principles become the primary criteria for guiding the worship service, the substance of the church has been attacked. That which is to be the servant has then become the lord.

In the attempt to make worship more appealing, especially to "seekers," the tendency is to replace the formal liturgical service with what has been called

---

<sup>10</sup>Sasse, 63.

<sup>11</sup>Kolb, 180-181.

contemporary worship forms. This results many times in worship that is man-centered, focusing on the perceived wants and needs of people. For example, instead of objective, general confession and absolution people may be asked to recite a list of sinful actions against the Gospel. This list might include such things as ingratitude, ineffectiveness, or a lack of courage for witnessing. Such a confession reinforces the idea that sin is a matter of life-style, a problem which can be lessened if only people would try harder to live a better life. The matter of original sin is ignored, or given only a passing mention. The First Commandment, with its teaching that all sin ultimately is sin against God, is rarely mentioned. There is a premium on feeling good, or on a visible, tangible reward for faithful obedience.

This concentration on the visible evidences of God's approval toward faithful followers is appealing to people who want some kind of validation of God's Word.

Robert Kolb comments on this need for validation:

It is difficult for contemporary North Americans to entrust much of the burden of life, much of their existence, to mere promises, not just because human promises seem so often easily broken but especially because the epistemology of our culture insists to a large extent on proofs. We believe that solid, indisputable knowledge cannot come on the strength of a promise.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup>Kolb, 53.

But when people make trust in God's promises contingent on some external proof of their reliability, they actually try to put themselves above God, and turn upside-down his way of dealing with men. For, as Kolb says, "God will not reveal Himself in all His glory to His human creatures, not even to Moses himself. God in all His Self is hidden from us."<sup>13</sup>

Luecke comments on the contrast between a theology of glory and a theology of the cross, writing:

For Luther the theology of the cross stood in contrast to a theology of glory. Christians are prone to the latter when they want to evaluate their discipleship according to the results or glory it brings. Triumphalism is another (negative) word for an approach to church life that encourages people to follow Christ because of the visible triumphs He will bring to their lives.<sup>14</sup>

That his understanding of what the theology of the cross is all about differs from the intention of Luther becomes evident as he continues: "Living the way of the cross makes it possible for churches to recognize success and to make the choices that help them continue to bring it about."<sup>15</sup> He also sees the theology of the cross as support for risk-taking:

Believers who deny themselves to follow Jesus are ready to live a life of risks. This modern word can serve partially to translate the meaning of

---

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 52.

<sup>14</sup>Luecke, 30.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 30.

the cross into a church's understanding of the issue of preservation vs. innovation.<sup>16</sup>

Eugene Peterson describes some of the effects when worship is shaped by the perceived needs of the worshipers:

Pastors are subjected to two recurrent phrases from the people to whom they give spiritual leadership. Both are reminiscent of Baalism, enough so as to earn the label, 'Neo-Baalism.' . . . The phrase 'let's have a worship experience' is Baalism's substitute for 'let us worship god.' The difference is between cultivating something that makes sense to an individual and acting in response to what makes sense to God. In 'a worship experience' a person sees something which excites interest and tries to put religious wrappings around it. . . . The other phrase of 'Neo-Baalism' is 'I don't get anything out of it.' When it refers to participation in the Christian community it is accepted as a serious criticism and a valid excuse from further engagement in something which personal experience testifies is irrelevant and uninteresting. The assumption that supposedly validates the phrase is that worship must be attractive and personally gratifying. But that is simply Baalism *redevivus*, worship trimmed to the emotional and spiritual specifications of the worshiper.<sup>17</sup>

Over against this approach to Christian life in the church, the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions speak of God demonstrating his presence and blessings in ways that are hidden to the natural sight of men and contrary to their natural expectations.

The second phrase about worship presupposes that it must be subjectively attractive and personally gratifying if it is to be valid. But that, too, is Baalism—

---

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 31.

<sup>17</sup>Eugene H. Peterson, Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Care (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980), 145.

“worship trimmed to the emotional and spiritual specifications of the worshiper.” This reverses the order of worship, in which God comes to us with something beyond us.<sup>18</sup>

In a human-centered service of worship the accent is on people and what they perceive as their needs. The temptation may be to follow what has been “successful,” attempting to imitate a service popularized by television evangelists and using forms and music that would be more reflective of the world about us than of our meeting with God. Many times more consideration may be given to the person who is a first-time visitor than to those long-time members who are not comfortable with what is called informal, subjective form of worship and who prefer the formal, objective worship service.

Writing in the Summer, 1989 issue of Issues in Christian Education, James Brauer contends that “there may be little help in trying to distinguish between ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ worship.” In fact, the search may really be for what is “genuine” worship, which God wants. Regardless of the form, “the pressure truly is on to be genuine.”<sup>19</sup>

In the same issue, Arthur Just points out the deficiencies of contemporary liturgies in the evangelical style of non-traditional worship, saying:

---

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 146-147.

<sup>19</sup>James Brauer, “It’s Not Formality Vs. Informality,” Issues in Christian Education, 23/2 (Summer, 1988): 5.



There are two fundamental liturgical principles ignored in this shift toward contemporary worship services. First, our Lutheran liturgy of the Gospel and the Sacraments is the primary means by which the church hands down its Biblical and confessional faith from generation to generation and nurtures its members. . . . Lutheran worship is objective worship—the Gospel is proclaimed through the objective means of grace. Here the congregation stands in God’s presence to receive God’s gifts, and it responds in faith and love. Even an informed layman recognizes that most contemporary liturgies and hymns foster subjective worship and crass emotionalism.

Second, liturgy serves to transform the culture and not vice-versa. The church exists to convert the culture, not be converted by it. . . . It is not our responsibility to give people **what they want**, but to give people **what they need**. Visitors do not visit us to change our liturgy, but to be changed by it.<sup>20</sup>

Congregations may try to structure their worship services so visitors will feel comfortable and want to return. The objective is to be replaced with the subjective. In the attempt to recruit the baby-boomer generation, the church is to accommodate herself to their likes and dislikes. As Just remarks, “Our American culture (i.e., evangelicalism) is hostile to the theology of the cross and to our Lutheran Christology that proclaims that salvation may never be separated from Christ’s sacramental presence.”<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup>Arthur Just, Jr. “Reflections: the Grass Roots Liturgical Movement,” Issues in Christian Education, 23/2 (Summer, 1988): 5.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 5.

In another presentation, Just speaks out against a view of the liturgy that is totally wrapped up in one's own needs to the exclusion of the Body of Christ and the world:

Those who gather on Sunday mornings to worship the Creator and Redeemer are not assembling to be turned on, to feel good, to get something out of worship. They assemble to stand in the presence of the God who is the object of their worship and to stand in such presence on the world's behalf.<sup>22</sup>

Peterson reacts in a similar manner to the spirit which motivates much of contemporary liturgy. People who approach God in worship in order to realize their own ends reduce God to a provider of answers and miracles. In detaching knowledge which has its source in God and using it for their own ends, they fail to come close to God. Peterson notes that the "only way to keep knowledge from becoming separated from relationship with God is to return to the confessional base of worship."<sup>23</sup>

It is interesting that when other churches are trying to copy the Evangelical type of worship service, a number of Evangelicals are dissatisfied with that type of service. Robert Webber writes that he was seeking a more profound worship experience. He wanted a

. . . sense of mystery that rationalistic Christianity of either the liberal or evangelical sort seems to deny. I found myself longing for an

---

<sup>22</sup>Arthur Just, Liturgy and Pastoral Care, conference paper, no date.

<sup>23</sup>Peterson, 138.

experience of worship that went beyond either emotionalism or intellectualism. . . . I also felt a need for visible and tangible symbols that I could touch, feel, and experience with my senses. This need is met in the reality of Christ presented to me through the sacraments. These three needs—mystery, worship, and sacraments—are closely related.<sup>24</sup>

This is in reaction against the models of worship found in the Evangelical churches, which Webber says are directed to educational, evangelistic or entertainment goals.

He expands on this in an article written for the *Evangelical Journal* in which he urges liturgical renewal among the Evangelicals. He has concluded that there is a radical difference between 16th century worship forms and contemporary practice, and that Protestant worship has followed the curvature of culture, rather than being faithful to the tradition of the church. He discerns four shifts which have occurred as the shape of worship was accommodated to the culture.

The first shift came with the introduction of the print media, which led Protestant liturgies to become word centered, and to attach greater religious importance to the verbal content of worship.

The second shift came about as a result of the enlightenment. The concern was for rational, observable and consistent truth which grew out of the empirical

---

<sup>24</sup>Robert Webber, Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail. Why Evangelicals Are Attracted to the Liturgical Church, (Waco, Texas: Word, 1985), 15-16.

method. The focal point of worship became the sermon with its educational emphasis.

The third shift found the purpose of the sermon directed more toward the will and emotions in the cause of awakening and evangelism. The altar call was the goal toward which the sermon was directed.

The trend Webber sees at this time is a fourth shift, inclining toward an entertainment model of church service which deals with performances, stages and audiences.

This series of alterations to the Protestant worship service has left a void in the spiritual life of people like Webber. He voices his concern that

This kind of worship not only represents a radical departure from historic worship but also an accommodation to the trends of secularization. Worship, which should stand at the very center of our Christian experience, having been secularized, is unable to feed, nourish, enhance, challenge, inspire or shape.<sup>25</sup>

In his classic Liturgy and Spiritual Awakening, Bo Giertz reminds us that it is the Word of God which creates the church. The findings of the social sciences can help us understand how that Word can be shared more effectively, but when those same findings are used to control the worship and manipulate the worshipers, the cross is robbed of its power and the work of man is glorified.

---

<sup>25</sup>Robert Webber, "Preconditions for Worship Renewal: New Attention to the Biblical and Historical Sources," Evangelical Journal 3/10 (1991): 5.

We have a generation which has little patience with the events of the past. There is little concern for the continuity of the long line of saints who stood between us and the foundational days of the Christian church. Giertz reminds us that

If we wish to know what true Christianity means, how the church of Christ lives and works, and how a soul is saved, we must seek to understand three great heritages of the church. We must go back first to the days of the apostles, martyrs and church fathers; then we must ponder the message of the Reformers; and lastly, bring to remembrance the blessed spiritual leaders in the last century through whom God gave the church great awakenings from which all future generations may learn. . . . We are to learn lessons from the past that are to be a vital force in the present. It is the risen and living Lord who wrought all this in the past. To hold fast the old heritage is to abide in Him. . . . In the measure that we live by the resources which built the church in days of old, will Christ give us clear instruction for the way we must walk today.<sup>26</sup>

This is one of the priorities mentioned by Robert Webber in his quest for truly satisfying worship. In the worship traditions of the Lutheran Church, we have what others seek, and we want to share this insight with our people who have not yet caught this vision.

We ignore this at our own peril. Giertz is convinced that in this link with past we have help and hope for the present.

The church has exactly as many sinners as she has members. . . . The Holy Spirit always needs to awaken slumbering souls, stir up the dust, push the Old Adam against the wall, and blow a new breath of life into

---

<sup>26</sup>Bo Giertz, *Liturgy and Spiritual Awakening*, trans. Clifford Ansgar Nelson, (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana Book Concern, 1950), 8-9.

the dead bones. Awakening is never superfluous, as long as we are in the flesh. Liturgy is just as needful. There can be no normal church life without liturgy. . . . it would be wrong to say that the new forms that grow up in this way are usually less attractive and more profane than the ancient liturgy.<sup>27</sup>

The Word of God is used by the Holy Spirit as the means by which he comes to awaken slumbering souls. That Word is part and parcel of the ancient liturgies. Hearts untouched by the Word cannot appreciate the liturgy, the work of worship. It is the mark of the cross that just as the Lord was despised because of his lowly, hidden entrance into the world, and his death upon the cross, so his Word is despised, and so is that liturgical form of worship. But it is precisely in that apparent lowliness that the glory of the infant Jesus was made visible; in the apparent foolishness of the preaching of the cross that the power of God is showed forth, and in the apparent irrelevance of the liturgy that the meaning of Christ's presence for our lives is given contemporary validity.

Another sign of the cross under which we employ the liturgy is the way in which the believers look to the objective reality of life in the Body of Christ.

Giertz says,

There are people who find it difficult to feel at home in the liturgical forms. All liturgy demands the submerging of self. The individual shall become a part of a praying congregation. . . . He who will not

---

<sup>27</sup>Giertz, 16-17.

subordinate himself in such fellowship is no Christian, because one cannot be a Christian by one's self.<sup>28</sup>

Living under the cross means that we deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Jesus— who gave himself up in loving care for all mankind.

Liturgy for the sake of liturgy may be satisfying to some, but this is what Giertz calls a false liturgy. It can result in Pharisaism that jams the signals of the Holy Spirit and hardens the heart against his promptings. This is no theology of the cross, but one of glory. And that is the way that leads to destruction.

Proper use of the liturgy, then, puts the individual into an objective framework in terms of historical continuity, of the hidden reality of the Body of Christ, and the daily need for putting to death the Old Adam and rising to new life with Christ in the New Man. When used improperly, liturgy can become a threat to the spiritual life to the extent it is thought of as an end in itself and not a tool for use in the hand of the Holy Spirit.

The believer whose faith is nourished by regular worship under the objective liturgy of Word and Sacrament is led to understand that even such worship alone is not sufficient. Living under the cross means the daily return to Baptism and the practice of prayer.

---

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 22-23.

In his Small Catechism, Luther points out the need to return to our Baptism on a daily basis, even though Baptism is a once-in-a-lifetime event. The question and answer are:

*What does such baptizing with water indicate?*

It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires, and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.<sup>29</sup>

This daily return to Baptism is nothing more than contrition and sorrow over sin, and finding assurance of forgiveness in the objective promise of God applied so personally in the Sacrament. Because this is not a superstitious use of the Sacrament, it maintains the believer in the fellowship of believers. The Word and promise of God are the power which sustain the believer in this relationship.

In his Small Catechism, Luther also included a section entitled “Daily Prayers.” The heading over each division begins with the words, “How the head of the family should teach his household. . . .” Prayer is a skill to be learned and shared, and the season of Lent provides a fine opportunity for practice.

Robert Kolb remarks that “So many false ideas concerning prayer abound in our religious culture that the task of teaching people how to pray must begin by clearing away these misimpressions.”<sup>30</sup> Contrary to popular piety, prayer does not

---

<sup>29</sup>Martin Luther, Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1991), 22-23.

<sup>30</sup>Kolb, 187.



- provide God with information he did not previously have:
- offer some special power to those who pray; prayer is not a magic formula designed to manipulate God:
- become an exercise in self-hypnosis, nor is it some form of therapy.

Prayer is rather the opportunity for children of God to enter into conversation with their heavenly Father to share with him their joys and sorrows, their aches, pains, fears and dreads. This is done in response to God's gracious invitation, in answer to his approach to us in his Word.

Kolb reminds us that "our prayer can never occur prior to God's advance toward us in the Word, and what we have to say to Him is always shaped by His Word and in response to it."<sup>31</sup> He goes on to quote Dietrich Bohnoeffler's Psalms: the Prayer Book of the Bible: "The child learns to speak because his father speaks to him. He learns the speech of his father. So we learn to speak to God because God has spoken to us and speaks to us. . . . Repeating God's own words after him, we begin to pray to Him."

Under the cross, the child of God will learn to have his will taken captive by the living Word of God. He will remember that he is simultaneously saint and sinner, and this paradox is the cause of the daily struggle that goes on within him. As saint, he wills to do what God wills: as sinner he despises that and stands in

---

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 187.

proud rebellion against God. This inner conflict makes itself visible in his conflicts with others about him, in his reluctance to worship God and serve him by being servant to others. Von Loewenich says it this way:

God is a hidden God, faith is the evidence of things that do not appear, the life of the Christian is hidden. These three statements belong together in the most intimate way. . . . The Christian life can never be fully identified with the empirical life that we lead. The Christian life is an object of faith and, as such, is hidden. What we see is never the real thing; only God and faith see this innermost core. . . . the senses and reason remain captive to the empirical. Being a Christian is not externally perceptible like differences in race or sex. . . . In Christ the sinner is righteous. The reality of Christ is stronger than the reality of sin. . . . But it is a reality of faith, a hidden reality. . . . Since the spiritual man always remains the empirical man— and as such is carnal man— we may speak of a double life of the Christian. . . . This double life cannot be definitive. The tension demands a resolution. The hidden life must one day come out into the open. Thus we again meet the eschatological character of the theology of the cross.<sup>32</sup>

The goal of Lenten worship, then, will be to help the worshipers look to their baptism as the means by which God has come to them, incorporating them into his body. They are commissioned to share the offer of life and salvation with those around them by their words and by their deeds of service. In the texts from the Gospel according to St. John, they will be confronted with the various ways in which Jesus was faithful to the commission given him by the Father. As the Holy Spirit works through the Word, they will be strengthened in their faith. The suffering and death of the Savior are not emphasized in order to elicit pity for him

---

<sup>32</sup>Von Loewenich, 114-117.

in his ordeal, but to impress upon the believers the tremendous power of Satan, sin and death. Because the Savior fought and won the battle against these foes, the believers are also victorious. The love of God in Christ is emphasized, because both Father and Son were so committed to the welfare of the human creation that they did not shrink from offering up this sacrifice for sin. The order of worship is the objective framework in which to place the saving work of God as well as all the needs of the worshiper. God bespeaks his loving forgiveness as well as his daily care and protection, and the believer responds with prayer and praise.

### III. THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS ON WORSHIP

The Lutheran Confessions reaffirm that worship is God-initiated and God-centered. God is the subject, not the object, of worship. The Church is defined liturgically. The Divine Service is a function of the Means of Grace. The form of worship becomes a matter of confessional doxology and is not a matter of practice, taste, style or historical romanticism. And while the Confessions do not prescribe any particular order of worship, they acknowledge that using or not using an order of worship may become a matter of conscience and confession under certain circumstances. Worship is no mere mental activity, nor is worship restricted to the gathering of the congregation. Worship includes the fruits of faith, the godly conduct of the believer.

Worship in the Lutheran Church is shaped by the biblical understandings which come from the Scriptures. The Lutheran Confessions discuss worship in a variety of ways as they identify the various points at which the followers of the Reformation disagree with the practices and philosophies of the Roman Catholic Church.

According to the Scriptures, worship is not merely the activity of human beings who recognize the worth of God and render him their obedience. True worship occurs only when God has revealed himself through Word and Sacrament and people respond with faith in the Triune God. And so true worship is *Gottesdienst*, divine service, God serving his people.

Arthur Carl Piepkorn begins his discussion of *What the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church Have to Say About Worship and the Sacraments* by saying, “The Symbolical Books teach that worship in its essence IS faith in God through Christ, and that faith in God through Christ IS worship.” He continues by saying, “Accordingly, there can be no real worship except by Christians.”<sup>1</sup>

As the Apology discusses *leitourgia*, it contradicts the Roman Catholic contention that the word means sacrifice. According to its usage, the word means a public service. “Liturgy” means public duties or ministrations. Liturgy is the Lord’s public duty and ministration, his public service to his people.

In the discussion, it is said that “the term ‘liturgy’ squares well with the ministry” (AP XXIV:79-83). It does not mean a sacrifice. A minister is one who consecrates, who shows forth the body and blood of the Savior. The minister

---

<sup>1</sup>Arthur Carl Piepkorn, What the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church Have to Say About Worship and the Sacraments, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1952), 3.

offers the results of the Savior's substitutionary life, death and resurrection in the Sacrament as God's representative.

Such a service is received only by faith. AP IV:49 contrasts faith, the worship that receives God's offered blessings with the worship which offers God our own merits. The previous paragraph says that the faith that justifies is more than mere historical knowledge, but the firm acceptance of God's offer promising forgiveness of sins and justification. Faith means to want and to accept the promise of God.

It is by faith that God wants to be worshiped, it is faith that brings us into the worshiping family of God. Faith is the firm acceptance of God's promise.

And so liturgy is approached under the topic of justification. Orthodox Lutheran dogmaticians located the Divine Service under the area of the Means of Grace. Schleiermacher relocated the study of liturgy to the area of practice. As a result, it is possible for people to discuss liturgy as an alternative practice, not realizing the consequences of this change.

The Augsburg Confession says in Article VII that the church is the assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel. God uses these means of Grace to begin the life of faith, nourish that life and sustain it until it reaches fruition in the Kingdom of Glory. The Divine Service is never a matter of things

that are indifferent, for the proper administration of the Sacraments and the proclamation of the Gospel are essential.

Because man by nature is separated from God, with no true fear of God, no place in his heart for God, he cannot offer God worship that is pleasing to him.

In the Augsburg Confession (II:1) it was stated that

since the fall of Adam all men who are born according to the course of nature are conceived and born in sin. That is, all men are full of evil lusts and inclinations from their mothers' wombs and are unable by nature to have the true fear of God or true faith in God.

In the Apology (II:3) this statement is expanded.

This passage testifies that in those who are born according to the flesh we deny the existence not only of actual fear and trust in God but also of the possibility and gift to produce it. We cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God by our own merits, works, or satisfactions.

Great stress is laid on the article of justification. We can stand before God only as we receive forgiveness of sins and become righteous before God by grace, through faith, for the sake of Christ. God has instituted the office of the ministry in order that we might receive his great gift.

The Large Catechism (II:66) teaches that

all who are outside the Christian Church, whether heathen, Turks, Jews, or false Christians and hypocrites, even though they believe in and worship only the one true God, Nevertheless do not know what his attitude is toward them. They cannot be confident of his love and blessing. . . . for they do not have the Lord Christ, and, besides, they are not illuminated and blessed by the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The Church of the Reformation did not abandon ritual in worship, or liturgical orders of worship. Article XXIV of the Apology begins with the declaration that the Mass, vestments, services and readings have been retained. But they have been matched against the pattern of the doctrine of justification by grace. The proclamation of the Word and administration of the Lord's Supper became the twin foci of the Lutheran liturgical structure.

Piepkorn comments that this conservative approach clearly shows that the Lutheran Church is "consciously and determinedly a part of the Catholic Church of the West."<sup>2</sup> They retained a maximum of the traditional rite and ceremony, because these worship categories and formulations were the vehicles of divine truth as long as they did not compromise evangelical truth.

Even though the Reformers were familiar with the rites and liturgical statements of both the Eastern Church as well as the church before the East-West schism, they based their liturgical practice on the form in use in northern Europe at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Piepkorn says that the Roman rite was in the process of change during this time, but the changes did not reach into northern Europe in time to influence the Lutheran usage. He claims that the Lutheran rite generally is an older and purer form of the Western rite than the revised Roman rite. This gave the Church of the Reformation a denominationally

---

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 10.



and confessionally distinctive rite which testifies to the antiquity, historic continuity and catholicity of the Lutheran Church.<sup>3</sup>

The God who sent his Son into the world as his accredited Agent who would testify to the love of God, live out the Word of God in constant blameless fulfillment of the Law, offer up his life as the atoning sacrifice for all people, and rise again on the third day has provided the means by which people through the ages can be given life in all its abundance. The Apostles were sent out with authority to forgive and retain sins, and to proclaim the Word and administer the Sacraments, extending the Divine Service through them. And those who come to faith in the Savior take their place in the long line of believers who continue to share the Good News of God's earnest desire to awaken faith in the hearts of all people.

Luther's Catechisms are confessional documents for the Lutheran Church. As such they form a guide for the liturgy as they teach the two tables of the Law in all their awesome majesty. As they lead people to see the utter impossibility of satisfying God's demand for holiness, they also prepare them to see God's answer to the predicament in the saving work of the Triune God. They are instructed in the true worship of receiving God's gifts by faith, and the demonstration of that faith by acts of loving service toward the neighbor.

---

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 11-12.

True worship of God is not confined to the house of worship. Believers are urged to offer up their bodies as living, spiritual sacrifices, which is their spiritual worship. Worship is spiritual because the spirit knows and has taken hold of God.

The Apology (XXIV:25-26) speaks of “eucharistic sacrifices,” or “sacrifices of praise.” They are the proclamation of the Gospel, faith, prayer, thanksgiving, confession, the afflictions of the saints, the works of the saints. Spiritual sacrifices are prompted by the Holy Spirit within the believer. They are different, not only from the Levitical sacrifice of animals, but also from the human works which are offered *ex opere operato*.

Paragraph 27 says, “In short, the worship of the New Testament is spiritual; it is the righteousness of faith in the heart and the fruits of faith.” The believer now relocates his sacrifice from the house of worship into the world, where he offers his body as a living sacrifice in works of love for the welfare of the neighbor.

Lenten worship is “spring training” for the Christian. He is strengthened in faith that Jesus truly is his Savior. That strengthening, growing faith responds with worship, receiving the gifts God grants through Word and Sacrament, and turning to family, friends, co-workers and others, offers up the sacrifice of loving service.

#### IV. THE PRACTICE, PIETY AND WORSHIP OF LENT

The history of Lent with its attendant practices is a fascinating one. From its beginnings as a forty-hour observance of the time the body of Jesus lay in the tomb the season of Lent underwent a series of changes which resulted in the present forty-day observance excluding the six Sundays in Lent. Traditions and customs used to explain and support the various disciplines of Lent have come and gone. Fasting is perhaps the custom most associated with the season of Lent, although many people are not really sure why this is so. The *Mardi Gras* and the carnivals which usher in the Lenten season attract the participation of many only because of the sensual indulgences that have become so common. Very few remember that their original purpose was to use up the kitchen fats and oils in preparation for the days of Lent when the faithful would abstain from foods made with them and when no meat would be eaten. Even though the rigors of Lenten discipline are not well received by the majority of the American population, a growing number of people seem to be rediscovering some benefits to be derived from them. Worship during the season would concentrate on the believer's baptismal relationship to Jesus, and how that would be expressed in devotion and

sanctified living. During the earlier decades of the twentieth century, Lutheran piety has seemed to focus on the suffering and death of Jesus in such a way that the entire season of Lent was made into an extended Holy Week observance. The renewed interest in liturgy and the history of Lenten observances has begun to bring present Lenten practice more into line with the ancient practice. This renewal of Lenten piety and practice will be the subject of this section.

According to *Proclaim: A Guide for Planning Liturgy and Music*, Lent is “a time in which God’s baptized people 1) cleanse their hearts through the discipline of Lent, described as repentance, prayer, fasting and almsgiving,” 2) prepare with joy for the Paschal feast, 3) turn to him for renewal of zeal in faith and life, and 4) pray that they may be given the fullness of grace that belongs to the children of God.<sup>1</sup>

Through the years, the shape and practice of Lent has changed, but its purpose of preparing to celebrate the Resurrection has remained. Theodore Kleinhaus maintains that the true character of “Pre-Easter” (Pre-Lent and Lent prior to the renewal of the church calendar) is “one of expectation, of waiting, not unlike that of Advent, in which the Christian ought to feel not only sorrow, because of his sin and Christ’s death, but also joy, because of the triumph of his

---

<sup>1</sup>Barry L. Bobb and Hans Boehringer, *Proclaim: A Guide for Planning Liturgy and Music, Series B*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987), 113-114.

resurrection.”<sup>2</sup> The liturgies of the Eastern church retain the older Hallelujahs, looking forward to the resurrection of the Savior, but the focus of the Western church turned to the suffering and death of the Christ.

Through the years the period of Lent has changed and grown. In the first century Lent was a period of forty hours, commemorating the forty hours the body of Jesus lay in the tomb. It would culminate with an Easter service at 3:00 a.m.

By the third century, the forty-hour observance had expanded to six days, known as Holy Week and was marked by strict abstinence. The practice of holding Holy Week services in Jerusalem became popular during the fourth century. These services were held on the appropriate day at the site where the sacred event took place during the last week of Christ’s life before his crucifixion, that is, at the Upper Room, Gethsemane, Pilate’s Court, and the other places of importance.

Gradually Lent was lengthened from six day’s duration to thirty-six days, a tithe of the 365 days in the year. During the time of Charlemagne, (c. 800) four days were added, making Lent a forty-day observance. According to *Proclaim*, the number forty recalls Moses’ presence before the Lord on Sinai for forty days, the

---

<sup>2</sup>Theodore J. Kleinhans, The Year of the Lord, The Church Year: Its Customs, Growth and Ceremonies, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967). 61-62.

forty years in which God led Israel in the wilderness, Elijah's forty-day fast on his pilgrimage to Horeb, and the Lord's fasting for forty days in the wilderness when he was tempted by Satan.<sup>3</sup>

One of the disciplines of Lent that comes from the early days of the Christian church is that of fasting. In the New Testament period the church encouraged the faithful to fast on Fridays (the day Christ died) and on Wednesdays (the day Judas agreed to betray the Savior).<sup>4</sup> Fred Lindemann comments that

When early church fathers say that the Lenten fast originated with the Apostles, they do not mean the period of forty days we know as Lent. Probably the Lenten fast had its origin in the desire to perpetuate in the lives of the faithful the sorrow and mourning experienced by the disciples during the hours when their Lord was crucified and lay in the grave.<sup>5</sup>

During the Medieval period of the church, rigorous Lenten fasting was common. Some people would fast from Sunday noon until the next Saturday. Some would eat only bread and water and bitter herbs throughout the forty days to remind themselves of the bitterness of our Lord's suffering on their behalf.

Even if the faithful did not take fasting that far, they generally abstained from meat, dairy products, and eggs during Lent. Fasting could mean but one meal a day. In time, the fast was relaxed enough to permit lunch.

---

<sup>3</sup>Proclaim, 117.

<sup>4</sup>Kleinhans, 64.

<sup>5</sup>Fred H. Lindemann, The Sermon and the Propers, Volume II, Prelent to Pentecost, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958), 43.

Fasting served a purpose beyond personal discipline. Those who fasted were encouraged to give to the poor what they would have spent on the food that was not consumed.

Lent was also a penitential season. The *Manual on the Liturgy—Lutheran Book of Worship* states that Ash Wednesday was originally a day for the expulsion of penitents from the church, a time of temporary excommunication.<sup>6</sup> *Proclaim* enlarges on this by describing the penitents as baptized persons guilty of serious sin who confessed their sin to their bishop and accepted excommunication, that is, exclusion from Holy Communion, until Maundy Thursday. In time, this practice was expanded to allow Christians not guilty of serious sin voluntarily to submit to the disciplines (faithful meditation on the Word of God and the practice of repentance, prayer, fasting and almsgiving) that led to their Baptism.<sup>7</sup>

John Brokhoff has observed that many people today are not sympathetic to the practice of Lent. He claims there is a desire for shortening the Lenten period, for abolishing the practice of fasting, and discontinuing special Lenten services. Many people cannot or will not be bothered with self-denial. Many churches

---

<sup>6</sup>Philip H. Pfatteicher and Carlos R. Messerli, Manual on the Liturgy—Lutheran Book of Worship, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1979), 306.

<sup>7</sup>Proclaim, 113-114.

have not had special Lenten services, and lack of attendance has caused other churches to discontinue them.<sup>8</sup>

Lindemann indicates that the term “keeping Lent” was used by some to try to avoid the word “fast.” In a sense fasting can be defined as the avoidance of anything that could interfere with, distract from, or disturb the preparation for the new life with the risen Christ. Lindemann discourages what he calls “the fad of ‘keeping Lent’ by not smoking or not eating candy or dessert.” He contends that all Lenten observances are to aim at permanent improvement in the Christian life. Lent is the time for practice and training in virtues and self-denial that are to be permanent and habitual in the renewed life after Easter.<sup>9</sup>

Brokhoff claims that the revised calendar and lectionary are at least partially shaped by current attitudes toward the practice of Lent. He states that Palm Sunday and Passion Sunday were combined on the sixth Sunday in Lent to allow churches to share the history of the passion in spite of discontinued or poorly attended midweek services during Holy Week.<sup>10</sup> However, even if he has accurately identified a trend of reduced Holy Week worship in the contemporary practice of Christian piety, that is not the primary reason for the shift of Passion

---

<sup>8</sup>John R. Brokhoff, Lectionary Preaching Workbook, Series B (Lima, Ohio: The C.S.S. Publishing Company, 1981), 99.

<sup>9</sup>Lindemann, 43 - 46.

<sup>10</sup>Brokhoff, 101.



Sunday. The reading of the Gospel accounts in Holy Week, beginning on Palm Sunday, is actually a return to a practice more ancient than preaching on the passion narrative through Lent.

There does seem to be some truth in statements claiming it is more difficult to attract worshipers to special mid-week Lenten worship services since many families are stressed with convoluted and conflicting schedules. Many businesses, schools, and other organizations contribute to the problem as they schedule meetings or activities on the same night as the Lenten worship. In my experience with parishes in Texas and in Iowa, the community would observe a church night, and most organizations would honor it. This allowed churches to have their services and activities on that night without schedule conflict. Metropolitan communities have difficulty doing this. Many times there is active opposition to having such a church night.

Nevertheless, there are signs that Lenten piety and practice have an appeal to many. The imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday seems to be gaining in popularity. There have been instances when Protestants have received the imposition of ashes in Roman Catholic services because their own congregations do not have the practice. Other people have demonstrated a willingness to participate in at least Ash Wednesday and Good Friday services, even though they would not attend the other Lenten midweek services.

In spite of growing competition for time and a general lessening of interest in Lenten piety and practice, Lenten midweek worship services can be meaningful and worthwhile both for members of the congregation and for visitors who can be encouraged to participate. And even though “giving up” something like desserts or chocolate may not seem like fasting to some, it can be a starting point for those who have yet to appreciate the blessings of Lenten disciplines that can strengthen self-control and lead to a greater awareness of what is a God-pleasing lifestyle. If Lent is to be the “spring training” for Christian living, it deserves deeper appreciation of its potential.

The death and resurrection of Jesus forms the pivot point around which the church year revolves. The beginning of Lent was the forty-hour fast in remembrance of the Savior’s rest in the tomb. Later this was expanded to include remembrance of the events on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. The Triduum (Maundy Thursday to Easter) is the focal point, then, of Holy Week, which is entered through the observance of Passion Sunday with its attendant Palm Sunday celebration.

By the Fourth Century, observance of Holy Week in Jerusalem centered around the traditional sites of Jesus’ activity during the time between Palm Sunday and Good Friday. By this time Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine, had built churches at the places where tradition said Jesus had been

born, where he raised Lazarus, where he celebrated the Last Supper, and where he died.

Jerusalem influenced other Christian worshipers since it was the place where the foundational events of the Christian Church happened. It was there that Jesus was crucified, died and was buried. It was there that his resurrection took place. As he ascended into heaven, Jesus commanded his disciples to remain in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit would be poured out on them. The leaders of the Christian Church made Jerusalem their headquarters. Even in later centuries whatever was done at Jerusalem in terms of observing the events of Holy Week made an impact on other centers of the Christian Church and helped shape the way in which they observed Holy Week.

Lindemann describes the visit of the Spanish pilgrim Silvia, or Etheria, some time around A. D. 390.<sup>11</sup> She provided a detailed description, which is considered to be the oldest and clearest available to us, of the Holy Week and Easter observance at the holy places in Jerusalem.

The elaborate procedure began on the Saturday before Palm Sunday, when the Christians would gather in Bethany at the church built in honor of Lazarus. The next morning they went to the church built at Golgotha to honor the martyrs. They would worship at the shrines on the Mount of Olives in the

---

<sup>11</sup>Lindemann, 66-67.

afternoon. After this, the account of the Savior's triumphant entry into Jerusalem was read, and then the pilgrims would march to the city of Jerusalem waving palm and olive branches. The bishop, as a type of the Christ, rode on a donkey.

On Maundy Thursday evening, the pilgrims would go to the Mount of Olives, where they would spend the night. At Good Friday dawn they went to the courtyard of Pontius Pilate, where the Gospel accounts of the trial were read.

Etheria mentions various "stations of the cross," describing the court of Pilate, Calvary and the Holy Sepulcher. She skips over the events of Holy Saturday, likening them to the activities practiced in Spain. She goes on to mention some of the customs connected with Easter and its octave.

Brokhoff says that in the fourth century these Holy Week events were observed: Palm Sunday, the entry into Jerusalem; Monday, the cleansing of the Temple; Tuesday, the discourse on the Mount of Olives; Wednesday, Judas' agreement to betray Jesus; Maundy Thursday, the events of the Upper Room; Good Friday, Calvary; Saturday, the rest in the tomb.<sup>12</sup> Lindemann explains why Etheria apparently does not mention special activities on days other than Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday: "In general the Monday, Tuesday,

---

<sup>12</sup>Brokhoff, 97.

and Wednesday of Holy Week held no great significance.”<sup>13</sup> The *Manual on the*

*Liturgy* says:

Before the fifth century there seem to have been no services on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday of Holy Week, and there has never been much of an attempt to reconstruct liturgically the day-by-day chronology of Holy Week. The emphasis has always been on the Passion as a whole. The emphasis continues to fall, as it always has, on the Sunday of the Passion and the *Triduum*, the three sacred days of Thursday, Friday, and Saturday— seen as one celebration— in which are commemorated the central events of Christianity. Each day of this triduum needs the other two to complete the account, the doctrine, and the proclamation.<sup>14</sup>

To summarize, Holy Week grew from a one-day celebration of Christ’s Easter triumph to observing the Triduum. To this was added the Palm Sunday celebration, and then the week was filled in with remembering the events of Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Finally, there came the development of a two-week Passion-tide. The recent Lutheran revisions of the calendar and lectionary have drawn from this ancient Jerusalem practice.

Once again Lent is a time given over to prepare for the paschal festival. Meditation on the suffering and death of Jesus is concentrated into the final week, Holy Week, and a two-week Passion-tide is no longer observed. *Lutheran Worship*

---

<sup>13</sup>Lindemann, 69.

<sup>14</sup>Manual, 316.

provides propers for each of the days of Holy Week, the only week for which this is done.<sup>15</sup>

In recent centuries among Lutherans popular Lenten piety had focused on the suffering and death of the Savior during the forty days of Lent, a departure from the original intent and purpose of Lent. *Proclaim* says:

The focus of Lent, then, is not first of all the passion of our Lord, but Baptism. Lent is not an extended Holy Week. The sacrifice of Christ is always at the heart of our faith, life and worship, but Holy Week, rather than Lent, is the time when the passion of Christ becomes the focus of the liturgy. Lent points the Christian to and seeks to prepare her or him for the Vigil of Easter and so for the Fifty Days of Easter. "It is this centrality of Baptism that the church is trying to restore to the liturgy by making the Easter Vigil the fulcrum of the Lent-to-Pentecost path the child of God takes."<sup>16</sup>

The central notion in the early church was this: Lent was the time of preparation for those about to be baptized. The traditional propers for the first four Sundays in Lent reflect the progress of the candidates for Holy Baptism.

*Invocavit*(or *Invocabit*), the First Sunday in Lent, marked the first step in the final preparation for Baptism at the Easter Vigil. Candidates were now called *profitentes* and were taught how to profess for God. As servants of God, they were to exhibit this faith in their lives and be helpful to others in living the faith. The

---

<sup>15</sup>Proclaim, 188.

<sup>16</sup>Proclaim, 115.

account of Christ's temptation in the wilderness became the pattern and the power for resisting temptation and for being a true servant of God.

*Reminiscere* was the name given the Second Sunday in Lent. On that day the candidates were known as *exodoumenoi* and were taught they were in the company of evil outside the fold of the Church. The readings portrayed their battle against the mighty attempts of Satan, who wanted to retain control of them and to put down their attempts to walk in holiness and remain true to the faith.

The Third Sunday in Lent was called *Oculi*. The candidates for Baptism were now called *initiati*, or novices. They were required to renounce the devil publicly, and underwent the rite of exorcism: "Depart, thou unclean spirit, and give place to the Holy Spirit." The lections warned them to let the cleaned and swept dwelling of the heart be filled with the Holy Spirit, lest the evil spirits repossess it and make them liable to the wrath of God which falls on children of disobedience. With the presence of the Holy Spirit they were children of God, heirs of eternal salvation.

*Laetare*, the Fourth Sunday in Lent, was the day the candidates pledged their allegiance to God and were named *audientes*. This meant that now they were admitted to the hearing of the Gospel, permitted to remain through part of the liturgy, and were for the first time given the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. The readings taught that through their faith in the Savior they were now children of

promise, born according to the Spirit, children of the rejoicing Jerusalem. Jesus knew of their physical needs, as he had also experienced weariness, hunger and thirst. He would provide the bread of life, the water of life, and rest for the weary, for he had made forgiveness of sins a reality through his life, death and resurrection.<sup>17</sup>

*Lutheran Worship* preserves the focus on this sequence as it retains the traditional Introit for each of the first four Sundays in Lent. The content of the pre-baptismal instruction of the candidates is retained in the lections, particularly in the Gospels of Series A.

The climax of this preparation comes at the end of Holy Week, during the worship services on Maundy Thursday through the Easter Vigil. While the candidates were working through the final steps of their preparation for Baptism, the “penitents” who had been guilty of serious sin and who had accepted exclusion from the Sacrament of the Altar, were occupied with an intensive and extensive penitential discipline. On Maundy Thursday they were reconciled with the church. Recognizing the sincerity of their repentance, the congregation prayed for their forgiveness, and admitted them to the Lord’s Supper once again.

Early in the fourth century, the Easter Vigil on Saturday evening became the primary time for the baptism of the candidates. They gathered in the church,

---

<sup>17</sup>Lindemann, 44-45.



men on one side, women and children on the other. Once again, the candidates were exorcized against the powers of Satan. Holy oil was applied to ears and noses. As they faced the west, they would say, "I renounce you, Satan, with all your pomp and works." Turning to the east, they would say, "I dedicate myself to you, Jesus Christ, eternal and uncreated Light."<sup>18</sup> As midnight neared, they would strip themselves of all jewelry, hear the final remarks of the bishop, and then go to the waters of their Baptism. After they were baptized, first the men and then the women and children, the *illuminandi*, as they were now called, were anointed with oil and put on clean white garments and new sandals. They would wear these for the entire octave of Easter.

As we worship during Lent, we link our devotion to repentance as we concentrate on what God has done for us in our Baptism. As Luther teaches, "Baptism works forgiveness of sins, deliverance from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe." Baptism brought us into a new relationship with our God, in which the life-long process of growing in the renewed image of God is carried out. Luther reminds us that Baptism signifies "that the old Adam in us should by daily contrition be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts, and again a new man daily come forth and arise, who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever."

---

<sup>18</sup>Ibid, 73.

Our focus on the Lord's passion, then, is not for the purpose of pitying him for all the pain and anguish he endured but for remembering his willingness to be made man, to live under Law, and to suffer death and the pangs of hell for us. Such remembering acknowledges the deadly serious nature of sin, its great power, and the wrath of God over against sin and sinners. It also lifts before our eyes the mercy of God and his grace in sending his Son to experience all this as our Substitute.

Lent is the time when God's family intensifies its use of the power of the cross in daily life. St. Paul addressed the seeming weakness of a Savior who died on the cross when he said, "the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (I Corinthians 1:18). In our Baptism God has saved us from sin, using the power of the cross so we can be raised up to newness of life and resist Satan with his temptations. As baptized children of God, we want to grow in the desire to live as God's servants and please him with holiness of living.

Our Lenten worship would strengthen in us the conviction that we are utterly dependent on God for all these blessings. No matter how sincere we may be, no matter how hard we strive on our own, we will never attain the perfect image of God until we are raised on the Last Day. In the meantime, our spiritual life is

based on our daily turning to the Lord for his word of forgiveness and his word of strength for renewing our struggle with world, Satan, and self.

Lenten worship and discipline emphasizes that the Christian faith is more than merely receiving forgiveness for sins. God has forgiven us so we can be reconciled to him and so we can be given the desire and power to live as his servants and representatives. God would use us to make visible his love which transforms rebellious children into obedient children. He would teach us his way of life. He would draw others, mired in the depths of separation from him, to repent and come to the knowledge of Christ and be saved.

## V. THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN AS A BASIS FOR A LENTEN WORSHIP SERIES

The Gospel according to St. John will be used as the basis for a Lenten series at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Davenport, Iowa. John emphasizes that Jesus has been sent by God the Father as the Servant who brings into being the new age promised for so long by the prophets. He is indeed the Messiah. The death of Jesus by crucifixion under Roman authority might seem to cancel out that claim and cloud the status and work of Jesus. The divine necessity of everything that happened to Jesus, of all he did and said, is another of the claims of the Gospel that will shape our understanding of the work of Jesus, and also give meaning to Lenten devotion.

Because John plainly tells us why he wrote this Gospel the way he did, there can be little doubt about the purpose of this writing. Martin Franzmann says,

The central and controlling purpose of the Gospel is stated by the evangelist himself: 'Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book, but these are written that you may believe

that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name' (John 20:30,31).<sup>1</sup>

He goes on to mention aspects of the style of the Gospel, the opposition of "the Jews," whom he describes as being practically equivalent to "unbelieving Jews," and the leading role of the Pharisees who refused to accept him as Son of God and Messiah, as well as opposition by Gentiles, who refused to accept the true humanity of the Son of God.

Leon Morris also emphasizes the fact that John definitely stated his purpose in writing the Gospel. In addition, he points out that John has a rich complex of interlocking lines of argument to prove his point:

John is a master at hammering away at his point from a number of angles. That Jesus is the Word made flesh underlines all he writes. His great themes center on Christ; the oneness of Christ with the Father, his dependence, his functions as light of the world, as life, as truth, as the way. These and other themes may be woven into a discourse or begun in one discourse and taken up in another. They may be set forth symbolically in a sign and explained in a discourse. The sign brings out the truth that the very power of God is at work in Jesus, and the discourse makes it clear that the wisdom of God is on his lips. Any of John's great themes may be found in several discourses and illustrated by several signs. Every sign can be linked in some way with a discourse, and such links are part of the way John carried out his plan. In John the words and the works go together. But basically such links stem from the fact that John is working out one consistent purpose throughout his entire Gospel. He is writing to show that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, so that people may believe and have life. Everything he writes

---

<sup>1</sup>Martin Franzmann, The Word of the Lord Grows, A First Historical Introduction to the New Testament, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), 252.

bears on this overriding purpose. The Gospel is a unity and must be understood as such.<sup>2</sup>

Although the Gospel according to St. John has not enjoyed a reputation for historical accuracy among many scholars and critics, it is more and more admitted that this reputation is undeserved. Leon Morris disputes the notion that John has subordinated historical and geographical accuracy to his theological concerns, stating that this attitude is increasingly hard to maintain. He says,

The fact is that John is concerned with historical information. . . . John apparently records this kind of information because he believes it to be accurate. It is also the case that John is remarkably accurate in a number of areas in which he can be tested. . . . we ought not think of John as a writer who is not at all interested in history. He is certainly a theologian, but he has a reverence for the facts. There is no real reason for thinking that he composed edifying stories which had theological meaning but bore little relationship to what had actually happened.<sup>3</sup>

It is refreshing to have the accuracy of the evangelist defended in this way. After all, John was one of the earliest of the disciples of the Lord. He was with him throughout his ministry. He was one of the “inner three” who were with Jesus at special times. Not only does it give added meaning to the Gospel, but it is a reminder that the God who inspired the author to put these things in written form does not fudge with the truth.

---

<sup>2</sup>Leon Morris, Jesus is the Christ, Studies in the Theology of John, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 42.

<sup>3</sup>Leon Morris, The Gospel According to John, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), 41-42, 47-48.

There can be distinguished a three-fold purpose of the Gospel: (1) to **delineate boldly** the majestic figure of the eschatological bringer of revelation and salvation; (2) to **display** the radiant glory of the Logos made flesh; and (3) to **disclose** the ever-present significance of the saving events in the past.

In the Prologue of the Gospel John uses language highly reminiscent of Genesis. The name *The Word* is applied to Jesus, which shows that Jesus is to be the visible expression of all that had been written in the Scriptures. He is described as the One who was present at the creation, which was accomplished by the mighty, effective Word of God. And it is pointedly said, "Without him was nothing made that was made."

One feature of the Gospel is the record of Jesus' use of the name "I Am." In the Prologue John had written that "the Word was with God and the Word was God." Now Jesus lays claim to the name indelibly connected to the Exodus event, the personal name of God. It was a name so holy that whenever it occurred in public readings another name was read in its place, lest it inadvertently be misused. His use of the divine name heightened the tensions between Jesus and the religious leaders of Israel.

John has a way with words. There are numerous words used frequently to describe Jesus in meaning-packed ways: Light, Life, Door, Way, Truth, Life. John has a habit of using words with double meaning, intending that both meanings

be caught and applied. The richness of this bewildering array of ideas, words pregnant with meaning, and the skill with which he arranges the sequence of action and discourse is attested to by the variety of ways scholars have outlined the Gospel. No matter what the outline a definite change occurs at chapter 13. Throughout the first twelve chapters, Jesus has been interacting publicly with any and all people. But beginning at chapter 13, Jesus is depicted as concentrating on the disciples, the inner corps of the Twelve and the other believing followers.

John uses the word “sign” in a special way. The word itself is not unusual; the Synoptists use it almost as frequently as does John (Matthew 13 times, Mark 7 times, and Luke 11). Of the 17 occurrences in John, 11 refer to the miracles of Jesus. As John uses the term, signs are powerful deeds which point beyond Jesus to the Father.

The signs showed that God was at work in and through Jesus. Signs are meant to lead people to come to Jesus. Signs are meant to call forth faith. Jesus welcomed those who reacted to signs by believing in him. Jesus did not use his divine power to have the signs compel people to believe. John’s use of the word is another connection with the God of the Hebrew Scriptures. The use of “sign” in those pages primarily occurred in connection with the presence of God. It was used for God’s deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage with “signs and wonders.” The word continued to be used in a general sense in many areas of life.



But for people with ears attuned to God's Word, "sign" could be a reminder of the activity of God.

The word "sign" also tells us about God the Father. As Jesus performed the signs, they pointed beyond him to the Father. Jesus himself maintained that he was sent from the Father, with a Father-given mission to perform. John portrays the Father in the highest place; he is the supreme God at work, revealing himself through the Son he sent into the world. This is the God who is holy and mighty and awesome, yet who is also close to his people in a caring way. He was even then in the midst of redeeming his people once again from captivity, to the devil, the world and death.

At the beginning of John's record of the ministry of Jesus there is the sign at Cana. This is followed by the night-time visit of Nicodemus. The Cana sign indicated that Judaism must be changed and purified if it would find its fulfillment in Jesus. And Nicodemus is shown the inadequacy of Judaism, for it is a necessity to be born again through water and the Spirit.

John shows that the word "sign" could also be used in a different way. A number of times the Jews ask Jesus to validate his words and actions by showing a sign. They had seen the signs of Jesus, but they had failed to perceive the hand of God at work in them. Because of that, the signs did not call forth faith, but resulted in hardening of the heart.

Morris also notes that the idea of glory was included in the signs. In the Gospel, the word can also emphasize the glory we see in lowliness. By using the word “sign” John is proclaiming that Jesus was worthy of honor and glory. The signs showed that God was present with Jesus in a way he was not with other people.

John also uses the word “works” to describe Jesus’ actions. Again, the word is used in a general way many times, but when it is applied to Jesus it usually means miracles. These were works of his Father. The works are “signs” under another name. They, too, are meant to call people to faith. Jesus said no one could come to him unless the Father drew him. John shows that God the Father is active in and through the Son.

John uses “signs and wonders” in a multi-faceted way. One of those facets reflects the idea of witness— the deeds of the Savior testify that he is no mere mortal, but in reality the God who took human nature into his divine nature and came to dwell for a short time in the world he had made. He who had made all things is now at work to bring life for all people.

Morris points out that there are seven discourses recorded in John, and that there are also seven signs. He sees this as an artistic arrangement by John.<sup>4</sup> He combines signs and discourses in this way:

---

<sup>4</sup>Morris, Jesus Is the Christ, 20ff.

## SIGNS

1. Water into wine (2:1-11)
2. Healing the nobleman's son (4:46-54)
3. Healing the lame man (5:1-18)
4. Feeding the multitude (6:1-15)
5. Walking on the water (6:16-21)
6. Sight to the man born blind (9:1-41)
7. Raising of Lazarus (11:1-57)

## DISCOURSES

1. The new birth(3:1-21)
2. The water of life (4:1-42)
3. The divine Son (5:19-47)
4. The bread of life (6:22-59)
5. The life-giving Spirit (7:1-52)
6. The light of the world (8:12-59)
7. The good shepherd (10:1-42)

Each portion of this arrangement advances and reveals the central message of John. The Cana miracle shows the power of Jesus to bring about new life. The discourse shows that Nicodemus does not have that new life which comes only through the transforming power of Jesus; he must be born anew from above. The cleansing of the temple is fitted between sign and discourse. Jesus spoke of his death and the resurrection to follow three days later. That would be the "hour" he mentioned to Mary and the source of the new life given through the Spirit.

The discourse with the woman at the well contrasts Judaism with the work of Jesus. The woman was dubious that Jesus could be greater than Jacob, but Jesus was going to do more than revitalize Judaism. "Water" was used by Judaism to refer to the law; Jesus would replace that ineffective water with life-giving water which would be given through the Spirit. When Jesus learned of the nobleman's son, he told the father, "Go, your son lives." Jesus said this twice more. By repeating the word "lives" three times, Jesus was indicating abundance of life, eternal life. The word of power was a forward look: water of life was bringing life.

At the healing of the man who had waited 38 years by the Pool of Bethesda the water motif is again present. The law was ineffective, but what the water could not do for the man, Jesus did with a word. We might think of Luther's word about Baptism here: without the Word, it is simply water and no baptism. Here Jesus asked the man, "Do you want to get well?" The word will be used in the discourse, "You refuse to come to me to have life." The healing took place on the Sabbath. Jesus was asserting that he could do things on the Sabbath the Pharisees could not. The healing was done through the power of God, for apart from the Father the Son could do nothing. Jesus claimed to be equal with the Father, he was doing the same things as the Father.

The bread of life remarks after the feeding of the 5000 are filled with Exodus overtones. Bread, like water, was used to represent the Law. When the people asked about bread from heaven, manna, they were thinking about the expectation that when the Messiah came the miracle of manna would be repeated. The miracle is eloquent testimony that Jesus is able to supply the needs of the people, physical as well as spiritual.

Morris sees the aftermath of the wilderness feeding, walking on the water, being connected with the events surrounding his visit at Jerusalem. The disciples in the boat did not recognize Jesus as he came walking across the water in the darkness of night. They were afraid, thinking they had seen a ghost. But Jesus

calmed them, as well as the waves. He had not deserted them, he came to care for them. Jesus' brothers display a similar lack of recognition. They mockingly urge him to go to Jerusalem for the feast if he wants to gather a crowd of followers. The people at the feast were wondering whether or not Jesus would appear, wondering about his person and purpose. As he hints at the Sabbath healing at the Pool of Bethesda, he is reminding the Jews that they do not understand the Sabbath. Jesus had fulfilled the intention of the Sabbath by healing on that day. There would come a time when Jesus would not be present, but the Holy Spirit would be sent. Jesus' absence would be only apparent, not real.

The sixth combination shows Jesus named as the light of the world two times. After the first, he tells how people are in bondage to the evil one and in the darkness of sin. The second time introduces the healing of the man born blind. Speaking the divine name, Jesus laid claim to being the light of the world. John records this to show that Jesus is classed with God, not created things. Jesus promised that whoever followed him would not walk in darkness but would have the light of life. The one who follows Jesus in a determined, ongoing fashion will be able to enjoy the light of life.

The seventh pair involves the raising of Lazarus. With this sign Jesus demonstrated that he is the Lord of life. Human beings are powerless in the face of death, but as Jesus spoke the word of power, Lazarus was brought back to life.

In the good shepherd discourse, Jesus made the same claim about his own death and resurrection. No one would take away his life. He would lay it down and he would take it up again. Just as the good shepherd would care for his sheep, even to the point of laying down his life for them, so Jesus now came to care for his friends, Mary and Martha, as well as Lazarus. Jesus is superior to death, demonstrating it both in his calling Lazarus back to life, and in the way he goes to his own death and rises from it.

In the signs and discourses Jesus has made his own testimony about his person and purpose. As a result of his signs and discourses, many believed. Others refused to believe. After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the high priest declared that it was better for one person to be offered up rather than have the whole nation suffer. This, too, became testimony because God intended the sacrifice of his Son to do more than save a city, or a nation. His task was to win forgiveness for all and make life available to all.

During the season of Lent, our attention is inevitably drawn to the crucifixion of Jesus. Death, especially death by crucifixion, is a great obstacle for those who struggle to reconcile the crucifixion with the claims that Jesus is Son of God and Messiah. John, with the synoptic evangelists, does not try to hide the fact of the crucifixion, nor does he attempt to dismiss the crucifixion as a miscarriage of

justice. The suffering and death of Jesus, together with his resurrection, mark the climax of his career and mission.

The vehicle by which Jesus is condemned to death is the law as it had been codified by the scholars of the Law. John records numerous instances when Jesus was accused of disobeying the Sabbath laws, or laws prohibiting blasphemy. In the minds of his judges, he was guilty as charged and had earned the death penalty. Because the Jews were barred from carrying out an execution without the consent of the Roman government, it was necessary to charge Jesus with a crime which would motivate the Romans to execute him if he would be put to death. The charge of attempting to be the messianic king was upheld and Jesus was crucified.

A. E. Harvey suggests that the Synoptic Gospels attempt to defuse the situation by contending that the courts were corrupt, and that the sentences handed down by Jew and Roman alike were wrong. He says that John, on the other hand, would admit that the law was correctly applied to the case of Jesus, but that the judges failed to understand and appreciate the testimony which supported Jesus. The Jews were correct in their procedure but mistaken in their verdict.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> A. E. Harvey, Jesus on Trial: A Study in the Fourth Gospel, (London: SPCK, 1976), 103-104.

Although it is not mentioned in this connection, it is necessary for us to remember that the law was applied to Jesus on a number of levels. Inasmuch as he was the sinless Son of God, he was not guilty of the charges leveled against him. At the same time, however, he was carrying the sin of all mankind. In his role of Substitute he was guilty of transgressing the Law of God. Paul writes in II Corinthians 5:21, "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." This is the same point made through John the Baptizer as he spoke the words, "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29, NIV). The effectiveness of his death as payment for the sins of the world depended upon his personal jeopardy under the Law. The testimony of all the witnesses that John the Evangelist brings forward is unanimous in asserting the innocence of Jesus.

Harvey sees John as a legal document, recording the testimony of a variety of witnesses for Jesus as well as the way his accusers conducted themselves. He says that

a number of episodes in the Gospel are deliberately reported in the form of legal proceedings and that characteristic Johannine terms such as 'evidence' and 'witness' have their full technical force. . . . disputes between Jesus and 'the Jews' occupy a large part of the narrative, and . . . these disputes have much of the formal character of a case at law. . . .<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 14, 15.



He goes on to say that John portrays two parties in dispute. The evidence in the dispute is presented in such a way that the reader is persuaded that Jesus is in the right.

Harvey cautions us against reading into the notion of a trial our modern western legal procedures. There are significant differences between our procedures and those practiced in Jesus' time.

First, there was ordinarily no formally constituted court. Any three people who were competent could be called on at any time to hear a case and even to carry out the sentence.

Second, there was less distinction between the function of judge and witness. The main question was the admissibility and competence of witnesses. Their clear and unambiguous testimony would almost automatically result in a guilty verdict, and the witnesses could be made responsible for carrying out the sentence.

Third, in cases where there was but one witness, the judges would have to decide whether or not to accept that testimony. Alternatively, they could ask the witness to "call God to witness," that is, require an oath.

Harvey shows how the Jewish legal system operated and was applied to Jesus. The first step would involve two or three persons who were qualified in the law. When they saw someone performing a prohibited act, they would give him a formal warning. If the person persisted in the activity, it would be considered a

"presumptuous sin." Then the witnesses would inquire about mitigating circumstances. If there were none, it would be the duty of the witnesses to apply the law and its punishment.

Harvey cites several times when Jesus was observed ignoring the Sabbath regulations or speaking words which were considered blasphemy. At these times the procedures just described were carried out by the "Jews." And this substantiates his reading of John's Gospel as a series of trials.

At stake in these trials is the role and task of Jesus himself. He is portrayed as the Son of God who has come to inaugurate the new age, the messianic kingdom foretold by the prophets. He is, in fact, the divine Agent of God. John defends and validates the person and work of Jesus by marshalling a series of witnesses who give testimony about him.

The first is John the Baptizer. His role as witness is confirmed by the legal vocabulary used to describe his words and actions, as well as by the success his testimony enjoyed. Some of his disciples did obey his words and followed Jesus.

Andrew and an unnamed disciple are those disciples, and they began a chain reaction. Andrew testified to Simon, his brother, who accepted the testimony on the basis of his relationship to Simon. This resulted in two disciples from Bethsaida, and this influenced Philip, also from Bethsaida, to respond to Jesus'

invitation. The relationships between these men helped establish the reliability of their testimony, which was accepted.

Nathanael did not accept Philip's testimony, so his status as a reliable witness does not depend on family relationship or being a close neighbor of Philip. Jesus characterized him as an Israelite, which distinguished him as one of the people of God who would inherit his promises. He was not called a "Jew," the word used to describe Jesus' opponents. He was also described as one "without guile," one of the characteristics of a reliable witness. His recognition of Jesus as "King of Israel" and "Son of God" is weighty testimony and echoes that of John the Baptizer.

Later on, after the Bread of Life discourse, Peter speaking on behalf of the disciples says, "We have believed and have known that you are the holy one of God." Harvey says that this is a new title applied to Jesus. The only other time it appears in the Gospels is when it is spoken by a demon. The disciples have become convinced of Jesus' identity because it was given them by divine, heavenly authority.

Harvey also lists the times when Jesus is addressed or described as "The Son of God" or "The Holy One of God:"

- (1) by the angel at his birth;
- (2) by the voice from heaven at the baptism of Jesus;
- (3) by the voice from the cloud at the Transfiguration;

- (4) by Satan at two of the three times he tempted Jesus in the wilderness;
- (5) by demons, who fell down before him whenever they saw him during his ministry beyond the Jordan and in the area of Tyre and Sidon;
- (6) by the disciples in the boat after Jesus had stilled the storm;
- (7) by Peter at his confession in Caesarea Philippi;
- (8) by the centurion at the cross.<sup>7</sup>

With the exception of the centurion and the disciples in the boat, all these testimonies naming Jesus the Son of God came from heavenly beings, or in Peter's case, was revealed by God. This is testimony by those who have access to knowledge that is beyond human understanding.

Such testimony helps to sharpen our appreciation of what John is doing. He is asserting that Jesus was acting as God's spokesman, God's agent, with God's authorization in all he did or said. The consequences of such an assertion were that, on the one hand, Jesus would be recognized and obeyed as the holder of true authority in the world. The alternative was that this testimony be disputed and rejected: if that would happen Jesus would be shown to be a blasphemer, properly subject to the punishment of the law.

---

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 41-43.

For many people, the response was positive. They gave Jesus the title "prophet," and looked upon him as the Agent of God. Sometimes he was called "the Prophet," the name given to the One who was to inaugurate the new age.

Jesus was also called "rabbi," or "teacher." The authority with which he taught amazed the people. This was an authority which Jesus attributed to the fact that his teaching was not his own, but what his heavenly Father had commanded him to teach. Nicodemus could call Jesus "a Teacher who has come from God" (John 3:2 NIV).

Both titles, prophet and teacher, posed a threat to the religious authorities and powers. If the titles accepted by Jesus were correct, any opposition to him or refusal to recognize his authority would become opposition to God and would be punishable. In addition, according to the thought pattern of the day, the inauguration of the new age, the messianic age, would mark the beginning of warfare against the resident rulers of the land, the Romans. Still fresh in the minds of many was the tragic aftermath of the uprising which took place at Jerusalem soon after the death of Herod in 4 B.C. About 2000 people were crucified, many killed or maimed in battle, and many more sold into slavery.

One alternative action available to the "Jews," who were certain that God-given authority belonged to them, was the attempt to discredit Jesus and all who

would accept the testimony of the various witnesses. This was part of the ongoing series of trials and confrontations between Jesus and the religious leaders of Israel.

Yet another source of testimony which would confirm Jesus' status as Son of God and Certified Divine Agent of the Father would be the signs and works of Jesus. From Scripture, people would know that Moses was God's agent sent to rescue Israel from Egypt. He was given the ability to work signs which would confirm his status. And so John calls the miracles of Jesus "signs," and affirms that as a result of these signs people believed. The ambiguity of the word "believe" is deliberate. John describes two levels of belief.

The signs are corroborating evidence that Jesus truly is who and what he claims to be: believing is the legal response of accepting his credentials. For John, however, to believe is also to be in that relationship with Jesus which brings the new, eternal life which God offers through his Son.

As the religious leaders responded to the greatest sign produced by Jesus, the raising of Lazarus, they were afraid that the multitudes would "believe" in Jesus in the former sense. That would mean accepting Jesus as leader of the nation, as king. That would mean not only the loss of their positions of leadership, but also the probability of the Romans reacting with military action against a political threat, as they did in 4 B.C.

Their response was to issue a "wanted dead or alive" bulletin for Jesus. Caiaphas, the high priest, was ironically unaware of the whole truth of his statement that it was expedient that one man die for the people rather than the whole nation perish. All the previous attempts to put Jesus to death because of his perceived breaking of the sabbath laws or laws of blasphemy paled against the new determined plotting to take his life. Even Lazarus, the man raised from the dead, was in danger of execution in the attempt to put an end to the threat posed by Jesus.

Chapters 2 through 12 of the Gospel according to St. John record the way in which Jesus' claims to be the Divine Certified Agent of God were presented to the "Jews." The recurring verdict throughout by the Jews was one of rejecting his claims. Beginning with chapter 13 John recounts the way in which Jesus works with those "who did receive him." The words of Jesus paint the picture of how his followers will continue to testify about him, and how Jesus will continue to be with them.

Just as God the Father sent Jesus into the world to be his Agent, so now in the same way Jesus sends the disciples into the world to be representatives of the Agent. They are to be treated as if the One who sent them were present. Jesus cautioned his disciples that they truly would be treated just as he himself was

being treated, for the world would continue its attempt to destroy the work of God.

As the disciples faithfully carried out their commission to bear witness to the person and work of Jesus, they would be supported by the Paraclete. The word paraclete denotes, not a defense lawyer, but a supporting witness who would support and reinforce the testimony of those brought to trial. This Paraclete would stand by the witnesses who bear testimony to Jesus in this world as well as in the heavenly courts, wherever and whenever an accuser would rise up against them.

As John wrote his gospel, he was doing more than simply rehearsing the trials of Jesus. He was presenting the evidence of witnesses who contradicted the guilty verdict of the Jews, evidence which proclaimed the innocence of Jesus and the truth of the claims made by him and for him. He did this so every reader would be able to judge for himself the truth of this testimony and be led to believe in Jesus as God's Agent and Savior. Those who are led to faith in Jesus are, in turn, to become witnesses in behalf of the Savior who are to add their testimony to that of the gospel witnesses.

It is against this background that a series of Lenten services can be arranged on the basis of this gospel. The major themes of Lent are all to be found in these pages. The gifts given in Baptism are purchased by the One sent to make the



abundant life available to all people. And the conduct of those people called to share the testimony of the witnesses which John has so adroitly put forward and which has captured their own trust is rehearsed during the season of Lent so it can be continued all the rest of the year.

We have portrayed for us the incarnation, the substitutionary life and death of the Savior, the themes of faithfulness, obedience, and successful completion of the task assigned Jesus. The divine necessity of the cross is emphasized as Jesus speaks of his "hour."

As all this is rehearsed, the Holy Spirit would lead each person to respond to the evidence set before him or her. People are made to see the need to grapple with the evidence of the witnesses, the need to believe that testimony and add to it their own experience of Jesus. There is also the assurance that we will not be left powerless or deserted by our God, but that we will have the might and wisdom and authority of the Paraclete at our disposal.

John's eye-witness account of the crucifixion seems strangely incomplete, for he records but three of the seven last words of the Savior from the cross. Why those three, and how do they fit into the scheme of his gospel? And how can the uniqueness of John's account be given its due against the background of a harmony of the gospels?

## VI. MATERIALS FOR THE LENTEN WORSHIP SERIES

The theme for the Lenten Worship Series is Witnesses for the Defense. The series will be based on the Gospel according to St. John, with its rich array of themes, titles, actions and words of the Savior that can serve as Gospel motivation for faith and life.

As we have seen, John wrote in order to lead people to believe in Jesus as the Savior and Source of true life. The status of Jesus as Son of God and Messiah was threatened by the indisputable fact of his crucifixion. The Gospel presents a series of witnesses that point to his credentials. Confrontations between Jesus and the religious leaders are presented in the form of trials over perceived infractions of the Ceremonial Law. The testimony of witnesses concerning these infractions was insufficient to condemn Jesus.

In the Gospel according to St. Matthew, the evangelist took great pains to demonstrate that all the Old Testament was fulfilled in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. John did much the same thing as he portrayed the holy sites and holy activities of Judaism being replaced by Jesus. John also applied a series of titles

to Jesus, culminating with “King of the Jews” placarded over his cross by Pilate himself.

John did not record the trial before the Sanhedrin because he focused on the series of trials which took place over the course of Jesus’ career. After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead the religious leaders of Judea pronounced judgement on him and condemned him to death. Because they were unable to carry out the death sentence, it was necessary to get the Roman government to uphold the death sentence and carry it out.

All this was necessary so Jesus could successfully create the new People of God. The Prologue begins with “In the beginning was the Word. . . .” In Chapter 20, when the Lord Jesus appeared to the disciples on Easter Sunday evening, “he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” The Gospel is bookended with these allusions to the creation account.

There are two sets of witnesses in the Gospel: one set testified against Jesus as a lawbreaker and as one whose actions endangered the existence of Israel. The second set testified for Jesus as Son of God, King of Israel, and fulfillment of Scripture.

The weekly worship services will highlight specific ways in which the testimony about the truth of Jesus’ claims and mission impact the lives of today’s disciples. A growing faith in Jesus as Son of God and Savior made evident by a

way of life growing in concern for and service to people will be the desired outcome of the sermons.

SERVICE ONE, ASH WEDNESDAY  
THE TESTIMONY OF THE VOICE OF GOD

Ash Wednesday begins the season with a call to participation in the Lenten journey. The mood of the Ash Wednesday service is one of penitence and reflection upon the quality of one's faith and life. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

The first witness for the defense of Jesus as Son of God and Savior of the world is The Voice of God. It was heard by those around Jesus, and Jesus said it was for their benefit. It was another occurrence of the voice of God testifying to the identity and purpose of Jesus. We hear it in the words of John 12:22-33.

The voice from heaven had come on two other occasions, at the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River, and at the Transfiguration. The words of the Father signified that Jesus was to carry out his kingly role by being the Suffering Servant. Now the voice speaks in approval of the words and works of Jesus, and once again points him to the cross.

The request of the Greeks (Gentiles) to see Jesus is the event which signals that his hour, his appointment with the cross, is near. The temptation to avoid the hour is overcome, and he prays that the Father's name might be glorified.

---

<sup>1</sup>Barry L. Bobb and Hans Boehringer, Proclaim: A Guide for Planning Liturgy and Music, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 117.

The testimony of the voice of God shows that he approved of all his Son had done and said in his lifetime, and that his death would not mean the frustration of his task but its fulfillment.

This obviously is testimony from a more-than-human source. Jesus would be lifted up onto the cross, then taken down and placed in the grave. But God would lift him up from the grave, glorifying him. He would further lift him up at the Ascension, so Jesus could be intimately present with all his believers in every situation.

The testimony of the voice of God comes to us in our Lenten worship. We have heard all this before, now God calls to a stronger faith in the Savior, to a greater awareness of faith in our lives, and to a life that better matches our confession of faith. The Greeks who wanted to see Jesus were told to wait for a few days. Then they would see the glory of the risen Savior. We have seen him through faith, and now we too can bring others to meet the Savior.

As we worship on Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey of Lenten discipline. We have been drawn to the Savior in the waters of our Baptism, plunged into death with him and raised to life with him. In that Baptism God has begun the task of restoring the image of God in us so others may see God's work reflected in our words and actions. We focus on the voice of God for us in Word and Sacrament. There are competing voices (culture, peers, our sinful nature)

which interfere with God's voice and tempt us to contradict our spoken confession of faith with our conduct. We offer up our sin-troubled hearts to Jesus, and hear again his word of forgiveness. As the Holy Spirit leads us to meditate on the cost of that forgiveness, he also imparts divine strength and purpose so we may offer up our bodies in loving service. We are helped to make our actions agree with our confession. This will help those who observe God at work in us be more receptive to the Voice of God.

## MIDWEEK SERVICE TWO

## THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS' MASTERY OVER DEATH

The text is John 12:1-11, the anointing at Bethany. This occurred at a meal in Jesus' honor where Lazarus was present and where Martha served. The pericope follows the information about the plot to put Jesus to death and concludes with the note that the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, because so many of the Jews were going over to Jesus, putting their faith in him because of the raising of Lazarus.

It is in this account about death and how it is overcome that we meet our second Witness for the Defense, Jesus' Mastery Over Death.

Writing in Interpretation, J. Ramsey Michaels describes the situation in this way:

From the stench of Lazarus in the tomb in chapter 11 to the extraordinary seventy-five pounds of spices used to embalm the body of Jesus in chapter 19, the grim reality of "earthly death" is never far away. Nowhere is its reality more evident than in the story of the anointing of Jesus' feet by Mary of Bethany. The story has been read as an example of Jesus' high regard for women or as a problem for those concerned about Jesus' views of the poor . . . Yet is not about the poor, nor is it about women. It is *one* woman's story, but in the end it is a story about death and how death is overcome.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup>J. Ramsey Michaels, "Expository Article," Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology, 43/3 (July 1989): 287.



Mary's act of devotion was a thank-you for restoring Lazarus to life as well as a down-payment on the burial of Jesus. Her gift was a sacrifice, remarkable for the extravagant and very costly use of nard. She took the place of a servant as she cared for the feet of Jesus. Later on, in the upper room, Jesus would "do feet" for the disciples.

Jesus raised Lazarus, yet he himself tasted of death. Jesus' death and resurrection showed his mastery over the power and sting of death. He gives us aid and comfort as we deal with death. The older we get, the more we appreciate the reality of death. Younger people speak of death in a theoretical sense, but for older people death becomes a more pressing issue. People say they do not fear death but are afraid of how they might die. Contemporary Americans want nothing to do with discomfort, so they are open to euthanasia or physician assisted suicide. Death itself is a symptom of original sin, as are disease, physical defects, impairment, and loss with the grief which accompanies it.

We have heard the testimony that Jesus is Master of death, who demonstrated it by raising Lazarus from the grave, and by rising from his own grave. In our Baptism we have been given a share in his mastery over death. Fear of death no longer need keep us from facing it with confidence. The manner in which we prepare for our own death can be a powerful witness to others who struggle with their fear of dying.

## MIDWEEK SERVICE THREE

### THE TESTIMONY OF THE POWER OF THE NAME

As we ponder the testimony of the witnesses John has gathered for our meditation, we have heard the testimony of the Voice of God, and seen the witness of Jesus' Mastery over Death. Now we consider the testimony about Jesus which was given by The Power of the Name.

The text is John 18:1-12, the arrest of Jesus. The involvement of Roman military personnel foreshadowed the Roman sentence of death by crucifixion. Jesus did not flee, but boldly identified himself as the one who was sought. He faithfully carried out his responsibility as he tended to the safety of his disciples. He had prayed in his High Priestly Prayer, "While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that the Scripture would be fulfilled" (John 17:12 NIV).

He rebuked Peter for attempting to defend him with his sword. The ineptness of this "defense" made a mockery of the later assertion that Jesus was trying to set himself up as a rival to Rome. Besides, his kingdom is not a kingdom dependent on military might. He allowed himself to be arrested so he might drink the cup given him by the Father. Even as he was arrested, he testified to his true

identity with "I am he," the divine name. The power of that name was evidenced as the men who came to arrest him fell backwards to the ground. Jesus was not taken captive, he gave himself up to the band of police.

The role of Judas as betrayer is also put into bold relief. He is described as leading the arresting group to the olive grove and standing with the enemies of Jesus. In chapter 6, Jesus followed Peter's confession with the assertion that he had chosen the twelve, and yet one of them was a devil. The word devil means adversary: with his act of betrayal Judas joins the enemies of Jesus, rejecting the testimony of witnesses and actions that proclaimed Jesus as true Son of God and King of Israel.

John shares this event as testimony that although Jesus ostensibly was arrested so the authorities could execute him for disobedience to the Law, it was actually part of God's plan for making life available for those who believed in Jesus as Savior. What seemed to be weakness when Jesus was captured was actually the power of the name working to reconcile enemies of God to himself.

No matter how hard we try to have our faith make a difference in our lives, we lack that power. Faith is not something we muster up by ourselves, it is a gift which comes from outside of us. The power to change hearts and lives comes in the Name which God has placed on us in our Baptism. It is cloaked in weakness and seeming lack of results. But God is at work according to his promise to help,

protect, preserve and guide his people. We worship in the name of God. God places his name upon us again in the benediction. In the power of that name we carry out our daily tasks.

When we distrust that power and turn to our own resources we fail. Followers of Jesus can be like a Judas and become adversaries and betrayers. They can behave like a Peter and attempt to promote the work of Jesus by force. When we fear people and what they can do to us more than we stand in awe of God, we fail. Our trust in God has been overcome by doubts. However, Jesus has won forgiveness even for enemies of God and for those who rely on their own power instead of the power of the name. When our lives demonstrate our dependence of the power of God's name, God uses our testimony about his presence and help in all situations to lead people still separated from God to an awareness of the God who offers forgiveness and life through that name.

## MIDWEEK SERVICE FOUR

## THE TESTIMONY OF THE SIGN SEEN BY ALL

We call as witness for the defense Pontius Pilate, who testified that Jesus is King. This is confirmation by the ruling official of a foreign state that Jesus' claim is true.

The text is John 19:17-25, describing the crucifixion of Jesus, the title placed on the cross, and the division of his clothing.

Jesus' real enthronement takes place on the cross. The world's greatest power acknowledges and insists that Jesus is a king. When the people of God refuse to recognize his kingship, the Gentiles do. The Gentiles will eventually be drawn to him.

The title king is in stark contrast to the apparent weakness and helplessness of Jesus. He has been crucified, he cannot stop the soldiers from appropriating his clothing, the usual "bonus" for the crucifixion detail. David Hubbard divides John's account into two scenes: the first scene is centered about the cross and title, the second centered about sharing of Jesus' clothing. He says:

Throughout the scene Jesus is passive, pinned to the cross, awaiting death. . . . As the superscription carried a majestic message in a context of humiliation, so do the garments. On the one hand, their removal and reallocation speak of dispossession, vulnerability, shame. On the other, they remind us of Jesus' servanthood without whose washing of the disciples' feet they would no longer belong to him. His first act in that foot-washing was

to divest himself of his outer garment to ready himself for servitude. . . . The king and the servant were one— the royal slave, the servile monarch.<sup>3</sup>

The title and the quotation of Psalm 22 also apply the testimony of Scripture to describe what is happening as the fruit of God's plan: Jesus faithfully carried out his commission. In spite of the apparent humiliation, Jesus was exalted at the crucifixion.

This king rules by serving. Although it looks like Jesus has failed his commission, his apparent defeat and helplessness have become the method of redeeming the world. The seamless robe identified him as the Priest who offers up himself. By offering up himself as the sacrifice for all sin, he performed his ultimate service.

Our response to powerlessness is either despair or an attempt to grab for control. Jesus did neither. Our Lenten discipline leads us to confess that Jesus is our King and to entrust our lives to him in spite of what the sinful world understands as weakness on his part, or as weakness on our part.

This becomes a question of who is king in our lives, of who is in control. There really are only two ruling powers, Satan and God.

The cross is really the power which brings God's order into our lives. But the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. The power of the

---

<sup>3</sup>David Allan Hubbard, "Expository Article," Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology. 43/4 (October 1989): 399.

cross has been applied to us in our Baptism, it is renewed and reinforced as we study the Word and receive the Sacrament of the Altar. But the power of the cross is the power to be a servant, not the power to bend others to our will. We want to use a show of power, but Jesus leads us to service. In our weakness, his power is revealed as the source of success.

We hear the word of God's forgiveness for our grasping for control, and the Holy Spirit leads us to live in obedience to and imitation of our King, who rules by serving.

## MIDWEEK SERVICE FIVE

## THE TESTIMONY OF THE FULFILLMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

As John marshals witnesses for the defense of Jesus, he turns to Jesus himself. We are to consider the way in which Jesus accomplished The Fulfillment of Responsibilities.

The text is John 19:25-27. Here the first of the three words from the cross recorded by John is spoken. Jesus provided for his mother, Mary, and John, the disciple whom he loved.

As Jesus called his mother "woman," he showed no disrespect. This form of address ties the crucifixion to the wedding at Cana. There Jesus said his **hour** had not yet come: here John would take Mary into his home from that **hour**. Jesus was now alone. John 1:11 had said, "To his own home he came, and his own people did not receive him." But Jesus carried out the responsibility of the eldest son and provided for the welfare of his mother, who was received into John's home.

John's Gospel takes seriously the reality of the incarnation. Jesus was scrupulous about fulfilling his human responsibilities. This was a further demonstration of the character and reliability of Jesus. Because he demonstrated



his faithfulness, his words of testimony about himself would bear greater weight as the words of the gospel would seek a positive reaction from the readers.

As Jesus fulfilled his human responsibilities, he also faithfully kept the Law of God perfectly. His faithful obedience to his heavenly Father was offered up on our behalf. Jesus lived as our Substitute, and we receive credit for what he did as we come to faith in him.

In our world we struggle with the devaluation of the word of honor. Even signed and notarized contracts are broken. Solemn vows and promises are forgotten. We even hesitate to commit ourselves too far in advance to participate in activities because that commitment might interfere with something more interesting that may come up later.

Through the Holy Spirit we learn that all our words and responsibilities come under obligation to Jesus, not legalistic compulsion. Our obligation of love for Jesus echoes the way Jesus cared for us. When we break promises and fail to carry out responsibilities, we sin. Even when we are unfaithful, he remains faithful to all his promises, because he cannot deny himself. He forgives our sin. More than forgiveness, the power of Word and Sacrament bring us the desire and ability to reinforce our testimony about Jesus with faithful completion of promises and responsibilities.

Peter comments on the need to reinforce the witness of words with the witness of a faithful life when he writes, “Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us” (I Peter 2:12 NIV). Lent’s “spring practice” of godly living is carried out so what is practiced can become a permanent part of the believer’s way of life.

Our trust in Jesus is strengthened as we come to appreciate his faithfulness. Our faithful fulfillment of our human responsibilities can influence others to begin to look favorably upon the promises of the Savior, and knowing them to respond in faith by the working of the Holy Spirit.

## MIDWEEK SERVICE SIX

## THE TESTIMONY OF THE REALITY OF THIRST

The text is John 19:28-29, the second word from the cross recorded by John. He cried out, "I am thirsty."

Of all the words from the cross, this seems to be most baffling to sermonizers. Clovis Chappell perceives it as a prayer, offered not to God but to the people who had so callously crucified him. He cites this as a demonstration that Jesus was not ashamed to ask favors from his enemies.<sup>4</sup>

Edmund Schlink contrasts the glory and majesty of God to the weakness shown by the thirsty Savior. Any doubt we might have about the true humanity of Jesus is overcome by his cry. The Son of God expresses real suffering and pain, and assures us that he has become one with us.<sup>5</sup>

William Poovey, in a sermon titled "The Nature That Doesn't Change," also asserts the real humanity of Christ. His cry of thirst is verification that he not only was human for some thirty years, but continues to be human after his

---

<sup>4</sup>Clovis G. Chappell, The Seven Words, (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1952), 50-51.

<sup>5</sup>Edmund Schlink, Paul Koehneke, trans. The Victor Speaks (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958), 24-29.

resurrection and ascension.<sup>6</sup> John demonstrates the reality of Jesus' human nature. He had undergone arrest, trials, beatings and scourging. His body had undergone terrible shock. There is no record of his having drunk anything since the meal in the upper room. Schlink and Poovey rightly emphasize the humanity of Jesus in their treatment of this word.

The unity of Scripture is also demonstrated once again. The prophecies and promises of God were fulfilled. More, Jesus was the one who had provided an abundance of the best wine for those celebrating at Cana's wedding. Now he drinks the sour wine offered from a Roman soldier's ration. That wine is thirst-quenching and body-strengthening, offered as an act of kindness by the anonymous soldier.

In the Prologue, John had said that the Logos "camped out for a brief time among us." He became flesh of our flesh and experienced everything our humanity experiences in the way of pain, deprivation, and suffering. But we are not to react with pity for Jesus. Instead, we are to come to a deeper appreciation of the reality of sin and the incredible cost of sin's forgiveness. As Jesus drank the wine, he was preparing himself for one last cry, the cry of victory. He had come to restore us to God, not only according to the soul, but according to the body as

---

<sup>6</sup>W. A. Poovey, Cross Words: Sermons and Dramas for Lent, (Minneapolis:Augsburg, 1968), 73-79.

well. He who had participated in the creation of the body now was completing his task of redeeming the body.

The text connects Jesus' cry of thirst with completion of his task and with the fulfillment of Scripture. The words "I thirst" can remind us of the Beatitude, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Matthew 5:6 NIV). Those who know their sin look to Jesus as the source of righteousness. He is the righteousness needed by the sinner. Jesus told the Samaritan woman he could give her living water (John 4:10). At the Feast of Tabernacles Jesus said, "If a man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink" (John 7:37 NIV). For the Jewish people, the figures of "bread" and "water" referred to the Scriptures. Jesus had told the Jews, "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life" (John 5:39-40 NIV). And Peter could write about slaking thirst with "the pure milk" (I Peter 2:2 NIV).

Jesus' physical agony and thirst were real. The sin for which he offered up himself is real. The Scriptures bring not only the description of Jesus' suffering for sin, but also the power of the Holy Spirit to open the heart to receive the word of forgiveness and life. When people thirst for something more than this world can offer, our sharing the Word of Life with them can lead them to fulfillment of this desire.

SERVICE SEVEN: MAUNDY THURSDAY  
THE TESTIMONY OF THE ABIDING SPIRIT

The first witness for the defense was the voice of God the Father. In this service we hear that testimony supporting Jesus will come from the Holy Spirit. This Heavenly Being brings testimony that is beyond human understanding, and is testimony that will always be available to the followers of Jesus. It is the Testimony of the Abiding Spirit.

The text is John 14:23-31. The lection is part of the upper room discourses of Jesus on the night in which he was betrayed. John does not record the institution of the Lord's Supper, but he does record the words of Jesus which give guidance and the promise of reinforcement by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The appointed Gospel for Maundy Thursday is the account of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples, and the ensuing new commandment. The text reiterates the new commandment, tying it to the relationship of faith and love with the Savior. Just as Jesus was scrupulous to speak the testimony which was given him by the Father and to do what the Father commanded, so believers testify to their relationship with him by their love of God and their obedience to him.

In his state of humiliation, Jesus can say that the Father is greater than he. But he will return to the Father after he has successfully done battle with the

prince of this world and has completely accomplished the task that the Father has given him to do.

Jesus ties together love for God and obedience to God. Obedience to the will of God is to believe in Jesus as Savior. This belief leads to willing and humble service to others in a manner that Jesus showed. His faithfulness to the Father led to his service. Trusting in him we are led to similar service to God and others.

He pointed back to his faithful transmission of the words of his Father and promised his special peace. But he also pointed ahead to his departure. He would leave the disciples for a short time as he would lie in the tomb. He would return, again for a short time, and then return to his heavenly throne. But he would not leave his disciples alone. The Father would send the Holy Spirit in his name. The Holy Spirit instills and nourishes faith. He guides, supports and encourages the followers of Jesus by bringing to mind the words and teachings of the Savior.

In our Lenten devotions the promise of the Savior is carried out. The disciples were fearful and discouraged when Jesus was taken from them, they fled, they hid, they denied the Savior. Even after the resurrection they did not fully grasp what their discipleship was all about. They continued to think about the Kingdom of God in terms of power and position. It was only later that they were led to recognize that the life of the Christian is the life of servanthood. That is our experience as well. The Holy Spirit faithfully leads us to recognition of our

sins of status seeking, moves us to penitence, brings us forgiveness, and guides us in renewed commitment to servanthood. We live in the assurance that we will never be deserted by our God, and we share that conviction as we pass on to others the testimony of the Holy Spirit. He brings to mind what we need to make our witness to others. But biblical illiteracy plagues us. The Holy Spirit cannot help us recall what we have never learned, so we are impressed with the need to become familiar with the words and events recorded in the Scriptures.

Our Maundy Thursday worship begins the most holy part of Lent and Holy Week. We look to what God accomplished on Good Friday and Easter Sunday as our source of true life. The relationship with the Savior is nourished by the Sacrament of the Altar. By it God dwells with us, strengthens our faith and leads us in the obedience of love. The Sacrament is one of the Means of Grace through which the Holy Spirit continues the good work begun in us at our Baptism. Jesus had promised the disciples that the Paraclete would be a readily present source of help and comfort for them. We celebrate the ongoing fulfillment of that promise in our lives today.



## SERVICE EIGHT: GOOD FRIDAY

### THE TESTIMONY OF THE SHOUT OF TRIUMPH

The text is John 19:30, the third word from the cross recorded by John. With the perfect tense form of the verb, Jesus cried out in victory, having accomplished completely the task given him by the Father. He was the faithful Son of the Father and obedient Suffering Servant to the very end.

The completeness of his fulfillment is emphasized by the paragraph in which the text is found: Jesus knew that all things were accomplished. The all things include also other key terms in the gospel: the hour, the will of the Father, the victory over sin, Satan and death. He was the sacrifice to pay for the sin and guilt of the world so he could give life instead of death. He suffered the torments of hell so those who believe in him as Savior will never have to experience the eternal pangs of separation from God.

The only way death could be overcome was for Jesus to suffer death himself. But the death on the cross would be followed by the resurrection from the tomb, and by the ascension into heaven.

Instead of pity for the pain, or anger against the unjustness of the verdict of Pilate and the sentence of death, John emphasizes Jesus' faithfulness and victory. The death of Jesus is not a contradiction of his claims, but the ultimate purpose

for his coming into the world. The resurrection would be the ultimate vindication for him.

The response to the Savior's work of love which God wants from the followers of Jesus is a life of witness and service. St. Paul reminds us that the gift of forgiveness is to be followed with the realization that "we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10 NIV). We have been rescued from spiritual death and servitude to the prince of this world in order to be servants of the living God. In our sinful pride, we are prone to think that we must add our efforts to Christ's work and so complete it. But Christ's work has been entirely completed, for "we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10 NIV).

Because Jesus could say, "It is finished," we are able to know the fullness of life. We are assured that by believing in him as Savior we escape perishing eternally. We are freed from the power of death so we are able to live with God and for God in that portion of eternal life we have on this earth. That life will be given us in its fullness as we join the Savior in eternity.

## SERVICE NINE: EASTER SUNRISE

## THE TESTIMONY OF THE MESSAGE OF THE ANGELS

The account of the first Easter shows how unexpected the resurrection of Jesus was. In spite of the Savior's repeated statements that after his death he would rise again, his followers did not anticipate the empty tomb. The Gospel accounts relate the intention of the women to complete the task of burial as they walked to the tomb.

John focuses on Mary Magdalene to the exclusion of the other women who are mentioned in the Synoptics. When she saw that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance to the tomb, her first impulse was to run to Simon Peter and John ("the other disciple, the one Jesus loved") with the report that "they" had taken the body of the Lord out of the tomb and moved it to an unknown place. They in turn ran to investigate and John, at least, "believed." He added parenthetically, "(They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead)" (John 20:9 NIV).

When the two disciples had returned to their homes, Mary remained at the tomb, weeping. When next she looked into the tomb, she saw two angels. John records only the question they asked of Mary, "Why are you crying?" Mary repeated her ignorance of the whereabouts of Jesus' body. In the Gospel

according to St. Luke we find a longer question and statement from the angels: “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!” (Luke 24:5-6). Both accounts emphasize the reality of the resurrection, for as Mary answered John’s angelic question she turned to see the risen Lord, but did not recognize him. It was only after Jesus had called her by name that she came to realize that Jesus truly had risen from the dead.

Jesus’ resurrection was attested by heavenly beings, not by the fanciful wishes of disappointed followers. The question about inappropriate grief paved the way for Mary to look at the risen Jesus. The empty tomb is only an empty tomb. The presence of the linen strips and neatly folded head covering and even the words of the angels were not complete until the voice of the risen Savior cut through the tears of grief and allowed Mary to recognize him. She was able to tell the disciples, “I have seen the Lord.”

The many activities which have become associated with Easter can help illustrate the resurrection. But when attention is focused on them and not on the Savior, people repeat what the disciples and Mary did: they miss the reality of the bodily resurrection of Jesus. Easter means more than the resurrection of the spirit of the Christ in the hearts and minds of good people. It is the resurrection of the body of the crucified Lord that is attested. Like Mary, believers are led to say, “I have seen the Lord.”

As John recorded the events which followed the resurrection account, he testified that succeeding generations of believers would respond to the testimony of the disciples. Jesus would be visibly present among the disciples for only a short while. After he returned to the Father, the disciples would carry out the responsibility of feeding and tending the sheep and lambs of the Savior. They would be helped and strengthened by the presence of the Holy Spirit, who would use their testimony of Word and Sacrament to bring people to faith.

We have heard the voice of God calling us to faith. In our Baptism God has called us by name, and given us his name. The death of Jesus is our death; the resurrection of Jesus is our resurrection. This becomes ours in Baptism. In an age when people are seeking for answers to the grief and emptiness which they experience, we are able to add our testimony to that of the angels and of Mary: "We have seen the Lord." As we share the witness of the Word with others, they will be faced with the claims of Jesus to be the Savior who has died for them and risen again so they need not face eternal death, but have life by believing in him. The Holy Spirit will use that testimony as the means of helping them to see the risen Lord.

The Lenten journey has been completed. As the series of sermons has unfolded, believers have been directed to their baptism as a call into the service of the Savior. They have been led to hear the testimony of reliable witnesses about the claims and qualifications of Jesus, who is the Son of God and Savior of all mankind. The encounter with the Gospel leads to a growing faith in Jesus as their own Savior, and a way of life that more completely demonstrates that faith. The Lenten discipline of study of the Word, of repentance and of being called to fruits of faith by the Spirit results in a transformation that continues throughout the year. God will use believers' words of testimony and Christian deeds to his glory, influencing the thinking of friends and neighbors as they are invited to believe on Jesus Christ and to receive what Jesus has come into the world to make available, life eternal.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### BOOKS

- Bobb, Barry L. and Hans Boehringer. Proclaim: A Guide for Planning Worship and Music, Series B. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987.
- Brokhoff, John R. Lectionary Preaching Workbook Series B. Lima, Ohio: The C.S.S. Publishing Company, 1981.
- Brown, Raymond. The Gospel According to St. John. Anchor Bible Series. New York: Doubleday, I, 1966; II, 1970.
- Bruce, F. F. New Testament History. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1952.
- Chappell, Clovis G. The Seven Words. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1952.
- Cullmann, Oscar. Christology of the New Testament. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959.
- Franzmann, Martin H. The Word of the Lord Grows: A First Historical Introduction to the New Testament. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961.
- Giertz, Bo. Liturgy and Spiritual Awakening. translated by Clifford Ansgar Nelson. Rock Island: Augustana Book Concern, 1950.
- Harvey, A. E. Jesus On Trial: A Study in the Fourth Gospel. Atlanta: John Knox, 1976.
- Jeremias, Joachim. Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969.
- Kiehl, Erich H. The Passion of Our Lord. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1990.

- Kleinhans, Theodore J. The Year of the Lord, The Church Year: Its Customs, Growth and Ceremonies. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967.
- Kolb, Robert. Speaking the Gospel Today, A Theology for Evangelism. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984.
- Lindemann, Fred H. The Sermon and the Propers, Vol II Prelent to Pentecost. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967.
- Luecke, David. Evangelical Style and Lutheran Substance. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1988.
- Luther, Martin. Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1991.
- Lutheran Worship. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982.
- Marquart, Kurt E. Vol. 9: The Church and Her Fellowship, Ministry, and Governance. Fort Wayne: The International Foundation for Lutheran Confessional Research, 1990.
- Morris, Leon. The Gospel According to John: New International Commentary of the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans: 1971, 1971.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus is the Christ, Studies in the Theology of John. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956.
- Peterson, Eugene H. Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Care. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980.
- Pfatteicher, Phillip H. and Carlos R. Messerli. Manual on the Liturgy-Lutheran Book of Worship. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1979.
- Piepkorn, Arthur Carl. What the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church Have to Say About Worship and the Sacraments. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1952.



- Poovey, W. A. Cross Words: Sermons and Dramas for Lent. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1968.
- Sasse, Hermann. We Confess the Church, We Confess Series, Vol. 3. Translated by Norman Nagel St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986.
- Scaer, David P. Vol 6: Christology in Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics. Fort Wayne: The International Foundation for Lutheran Confessional Research, 1989.
- Schlink. The Victor Speaks. Translated by Paul Koehneke St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958.
- Senkbeil, Harold. Sanctification: Christ in Action: Evangelical Challenge and Lutheran Response. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1989.
- von Loewenich, Walther. Luther's Theology of the Cross. Translated by Herbert J. A. Bouman Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1976.
- Webber, Robert. Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail: Why Evangelicals Are Attracted to the Liturgical Church. Waco, Texas: Word, 1985.

#### JOURNAL ARTICLES

- Brauer, James L. "It's Not Formality Vs. Informality." Issues in Christian Education 23 (Summer 1989): 5.
- Hubbard, David Allen. "Expository Article, John 19:17-30." Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology 43 (October 1989): 397-401.
- Just, Arthur A. Jr. "Reflections: The Grass-Roots Liturgical Movement." Issues in Christian Education 23 (Summer 1989): 5.
- Michaels, J. Ramsey. "Expository Article, John 12:1-11." Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology 43 (July 1989): 287-291.
- Webber, Robert. "Preconditions for Worship Renewal: New Attention to the Biblical and Historical Sources." Evangelical Journal 3:10 (1991): 5.

## UNPUBLISHED CONFERENCE PAPERS

Just, Arthur A. Jr. "Liturgy and Pastoral Care"

Pless, John T. "How Does Catechesis Relate to Worship?"

\_\_\_\_\_ "Liturgy: Receiving the Gifts"

\_\_\_\_\_ "Six Theses on Liturgy and Evangelism"