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CONGREGATIONAL RENEWAL THROUGH ADULT EDUCATION

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Practical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology

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by

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May 1965

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Problem

The problem expressed in the title of this thesis is not a new one. Ever since man rejected fellowship with God the need for renewal has been a concern of God's people. The exploration of the basis for and the possibility of such renewal among and within God's people has been studied in every generation, but the need for restatement and re-evaluation will remain a necessary procedure as long as man lives in the world.

Man is not perfect. He suffers from what the Scriptures call sin, which is disharmony and rebellion in relation to God. Christian man lives in a relationship of forgiveness with God, but he still is subject to the power of the devil, the allurements of the world, and the weakness of his own flesh. In this life, therefore, the man of God is constantly doing battle with the man of sin which dwells in his members. Because this is true the man of God needs the resources which God has made available through His Word and sacraments. These resources are necessary for through them life is renewed and the life in fellowship with God is sustained. The man of God is not able to fight this battle alone because the foes against which he fights, namely, the devil, the

world, and his own flesh are mightier than he. He needs the power of God, which comes to him through the Word of God, to be able to gain the victory.

Renewal is necessary for this man of faith and can take place through the Word of God as the believer hears and receives it. In this hearing and receiving the needs of man are met through his dependence upon Christ who conveys Himself to the heart of man through His Word.

Basic to a consideration of renewal within the congregation is an understanding of the theological sanctions for such renewal, and a definition of the means of renewal. The Lutheran Church has sought to develop an informed membership through a thorough study of the Scriptures, and a believing membership through the acceptance of Jesus Christ, who is the center of the Scriptural teaching. This thesis is an exploration of the theological basis for congregational renewal as it takes place through the education of adults.

#### Limitation of the Problem

This study is limited to an evaluation of how renewal takes place in the individual life and consequently in the congregation as well. It is a study of the theological basis for renewal, as it takes place through the Word of God, and of how this Word of God can be applied through adult education.

#### Establishment of the Context

One of the basic teachings of the Lutheran Church is

that renewal takes place through the Word of God as it is directed by the Holy Spirit, to its target, in the heart of man. The Word of God impinges upon man through preaching and teaching and causes both the man and the congregation to live and work in a life of ongoing renewal.

This thesis seeks to determine the need for renewal in the heart and life of man, and evaluates the Word of God as the means of such renewal. Furthermore, the life of renewal is examined as an ongoing process in the life of the Christian, as he lives by the Word of God. And finally, adult education is examined as a possible means through which the Word of God can impinge upon the heart and life of man to bring about this renewal.

The primary sources in this study include the Holy Scriptures and the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Additional sources include the works of Lutheran and Reformed theologians, both past and present.

The secondary sources include the accessible material in the field of this study. Many of the books in the field of adult education are tangential to the subject of this thesis and could not, therefore, serve as primary sources.

#### Definition of Terms

There are two terms basic to this study, "renewal" and "Word of God," which need to be defined.

"Renewal" is thought of as the renewed relationship which occurs in the heart of man when he hears and accepts



the Word of God. This is not a once-established, always-available relationship but rather a relationship which continues and increases in the heart of man as he returns to and remains in fellowship with Jesus Christ, who is the Word of God. "Renewal," therefore, is this infilling of grace and strength in the heart and life of the child of God, which takes place through the day by day return to the place of renewal, the Word of God.

The "Word of God" is understood as both the speech of God and the activity of God. Both the speech and the activity of God are directed and communicated toward people. The "Word of God," therefore, is the activity of God, and simultaneously it is the communication of that activity to people.

#### Methodology

The basic approach to this study is to examine the teaching of the Holy Scriptures and the teachings of the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church which relate to the renewal of Christian man and consequently Christian congregation as well.

The study proceeds on the basis of an examination of the need for renewal in the heart and life of man. Man as a child of God, and significantly a child of nature as well, is, upon examination of the evidence, found to be in need of fellowship with God which is made available to him through the Word of God. The Word of God is examined as

the means of this renewal for man, both as this renewal applies in its initial stages and its continuing progress in the life of man. This thesis examines how the Word of God, as it is heard by the man in his need, creates both the willingness and the ability to receive the gift which it offers, namely, life and salvation. This thesis also examines the life of renewed man as he continues to live in fellowship with God and other believers through the continual dependence upon the Word of God. The life of renewed man is viewed as a continual dependence upon the Word of God as the basis for and as the continuation of life with God. The thesis seeks finally to examine the evidence which tells how the Word of God can be applied through adult education and how such application of the Word of God will be productive of new relationships in the life of every man who hears. The life of renewal is examined as a new relationship with God, a renewed fellowship with fellow-believers, and a new attitude to other people outside the immediate fellowship with Christ.

The thesis examines the evidence to determine the need for renewal, and how the means of renewal, the Word of God, is able to produce such renewal and continue to maintain man in it, and how the Word of God impinges upon man through adult education to produce renewal.

## CHAPTER II

### THE NEED FOR RENEWAL

The Christian Church is the fellowship of believers in Jesus Christ. Each congregation is made up of individuals who are the object of God's grace and mercy, and who are members of the fellowship of believers only because of their relationship to Him.<sup>1</sup> In this Church the Word of God is taught in all its truth and purity and the sacraments are rightly administered as this Church seeks to be the servant of God to His holy people.<sup>2</sup> The believers, even though they are part of the holy Church, are in a relative state of incompleteness, since the Scriptures affirm that man is not perfect.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, every believer in Christ is in need of renewal as the Formula of Concord states,

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. "Apology to the Augsburg Confession," Articles VII and VIII, "The Church," The Book of Concord, The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert and others (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, c.1959), p. 169.5. "The Church is not merely an association of outward ties and rites like other civic governments, however, but it is mainly an association of faith and of the Holy Spirit in men's hearts."

Hereafter, The Book of Concord, The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, will simply be cited as The Book of Concord, followed by page and paragraph numbers. All citations are from the Tappert edition.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Romans 3:10ff.; Matthew 5:48. Cf. also Chapter V of this thesis which speaks of "putting on the new man," and the "putting off of the old man."

Since, however, believers are not fully renewed in this life but the Old Adam clings to them down to the grave, the conflict between spirit and flesh continues in them. According to the inmost self they delight in the law of God; but the law in their members is at war against the law in their mind.<sup>4</sup>

Thus it can be said that every believer is in a state of becoming,<sup>5</sup> since he still possesses the Old Adam which seeks to serve the law of sin. Each believer, therefore, needs the constant dependence upon the Word of God which assures of strength and grace to live in accord with the plan of God for his life.

What has made man the way he is, and how is man able to become a believing member of the holy Christian Church? And furthermore, what are his needs, in relation to God, after he becomes part of Christ's Church? This chapter will examine the evidence of Scripture and other relevant writings to determine the answers to these questions.

#### Man as a Creature of God

The Scriptures are unanimous in stating that God created the world and all that it contains.<sup>6</sup> Man was created as the crown and glory of God's new world.

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<sup>4</sup>"Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration," Article VI "Third use of Law," The Book of Concord, p. 567.18.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 568.24. "Nevertheless, they continue in a constant conflict against the Old Adam. For the Old Adam, like an unmanageable and recalcitrant donkey, is still a part of them and must be coerced into the obedience of Christ. . . ." Cf. also Romans 7:23.

<sup>6</sup>Genesis 1:1ff.; Exodus 20:11; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 33:6.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion. . . ." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him.<sup>7</sup>

What is this "image" or "likeness" of God, in which man was created? Is it the "spark of divinity" as has been suggested by some poets, philosophers, and theologians? The resemblance which man bears to God cannot be physical for God is a Spirit.<sup>8</sup> Nor is the image to be equated with man's unique endowment as a creature of mind and will.<sup>9</sup> The consultants, who collaborated, in the writing of What, Then, Is Man? state,

Therefore, within the limitations of his given faculties, man was as perfect, holy, and righteous as God, who made him, and he led a perfectly integrated existence.<sup>10</sup>

It is to be noted that they make the statement, "within the limitations of his given faculties," which would indicate that man's faculties were not in a state completely like God but in a state of becoming.<sup>11</sup>

Man was created, according to divine revelation, as an

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<sup>7</sup>Genesis 1:26-27.

<sup>8</sup>John 4:24.

<sup>9</sup>What, Then Is Man? A Symposium of Theology, Psychology, and Psychiatry (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958), p. 39.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Scripture does not speak of man's perfectness but it does say that man was created a little less than God. Cf. Genesis 1:26ff.; Ephesians 4:24ff.; Colossians 3:9ff.; and Psalm 8:5.

altogether lovely being. He was free from sin, without corruption of body and soul, and without distortion or contradictions in his intellect and will.<sup>12</sup>

His environment was pleasant and he spent his time in intimate fellowship with God.<sup>13</sup> Man was not subject to death and was not subject to suffering of any kind. He lived with God in whose presence is "fulness of joy," and "pleasures for evermore."<sup>14</sup>

Man was created to live in fellowship with God. This fellowship necessarily presupposes that man possessed freedom to exercise his will in relation to God. Man in the freedom of choice, chose to love God. He possessed not only the capacity for love to God but he really loved God out of free choice to do so.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>As created in the likeness of God he could not possess imperfections. Jesus Christ is referred to as the second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45-47), and is also called perfect (Hebrews 5:9). The Lutheran Dogmaticians distinguished between the image of God in the narrower sense and in the broader sense. In the narrower sense the image of God in man is love. In the broader sense it consists in this, that man, like God, is a conscious and volitional personality or spirit. In this last sense it could not be lost by the fall, for man did not cease to be man. Cf. "The Formula of Concord, Epitome," Article I, "Original Sin," The Book of Concord, p. 466.2,6.

<sup>13</sup>Genesis 2:19ff.

<sup>14</sup>Psalms 16:11

<sup>15</sup>Cf. "Apology of the Augsburg Confession," Article II, "Original Sin," The Book of Concord, p. 102.15ff.

## Man in Rebellion

The free association, within his creaturely limitations, which God conferred upon man, gave him the opportunity and responsibility to choose whether or not to remain in this harmonious association with God. God gave man the freedom to decide whether or not to love Him, and whether or not to be obedient in love. Man possessed moral freedom which consisted in the ability to sin and in the ability not to sin.<sup>16</sup>

Man, in an act of independent self-assertion, chose to be disobedient to the command of God.<sup>17</sup> This action was a deliberate rejection of the fellowship with God which man had been privileged to enjoy. Scriptures, therefore, speak of sin as lawlessness,<sup>18</sup> and rebellion.<sup>19</sup> Ever since this original rebellion against God, man has asserted his position of independence by refusing to live as a creature of God.<sup>20</sup>

Man today continues to assert himself in independent pride and self-will against God's law, which constitutes sin against God. It matters not whether these violations take

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<sup>16</sup>What, Then, Is Man? P. 50.

<sup>17</sup>Genesis 3:5ff.

<sup>18</sup><sub>1</sub> John 3:4.

<sup>19</sup>Deuteronomy 9:23-24.

<sup>20</sup>Romans 1:18,32.

the form of evil deeds,<sup>21</sup> or evil thoughts and desires,<sup>22</sup> they still constitute sin against God.<sup>23</sup> The lack of intent or awareness of the sinful act, thought, or word does not make it less sinful for the person involved.<sup>24</sup>

Any distortion of the original image and likeness of God, which was God's gift to man in creation, is sin. This applies also to the inherited disobedience, which everyone possesses, even if against his will.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, sin is lawlessness, primarily as this lawlessness is practiced in relation to God, as Luther says in the Smalcald Articles,

Here we must confess what St. Paul says in Romans 5:12, namely, that sin had its origin in one man, Adam, through whose disobedience all men were made sinners and became subject to death and the devil. This is called original sin or root sin. The fruits of this sin are all the subsequent evil deeds which are forbidden in the Ten Commandments, such as unbelief, false belief, idolatry, being without the fear of God, presumption, despair, blindness, --in short, ignorance or disregard of God. . . .<sup>26</sup>

Man in rebellion lost the original image and likeness of God and today lives as one who has been separated from his original and intended fellowship with God. He has lost

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<sup>21</sup>2 Samuel 12:13.

<sup>22</sup>James 1:15; 1 John 2:16; Ephesians 2:3.

<sup>23</sup>Proverbs 21:11; 1 Corinthians 10:6.

<sup>24</sup>Romans 7:19; 1 Timothy 1:13; Acts 3:17ff.

<sup>25</sup>Romans 7:19-20.

<sup>26</sup>"Smalcald Articles," Part III, Article I, "Sin," The Book of Concord, pp. 302.lff.



that which God gave and which God intended for him to keep and enjoy throughout his life in this world.

### Natural Man or Man Under Sin

The condition of natural man is described by the apostle Paul when he says,

And you he made alive, when you were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.<sup>27</sup>

St. Paul here affirms what other writers of the Holy Scriptures teach, namely, that man apart from God is spiritually dead;<sup>28</sup> and spiritually asleep.<sup>29</sup> The Scriptures further describe the condition of natural man as spiritual darkness;<sup>30</sup> blindness;<sup>31</sup> poor hearing;<sup>32</sup> a lack of understanding of the things of God;<sup>33</sup> disobedience;<sup>34</sup> and sinfulness.<sup>35</sup> The apostle Paul

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<sup>27</sup>Ephesians 2:1; 5:14; Colossians 2:13; 2 Timothy 5:6.

<sup>28</sup>Cf. the warning of God, Genesis 2:17; also Ezekial 18:20; Romans 6:23; 8:6.

<sup>29</sup>Isaiah 56:10; Romans 11:8; 13:11; Ephesians 5:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:6.

<sup>30</sup>Matthew 6:23; John 1:5; Psalm 82:5; Romans 3:12.

<sup>31</sup>Matthew 15:14; 2 Corinthians 3:14; 4:4.

<sup>32</sup>John 8:43; Hebrews 5:11.

<sup>33</sup>1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 4:18.

<sup>34</sup>Ephesians 5:6.

<sup>35</sup>Genesis 6:5; Psalm 14:3; 53:3; 130:3; Isaiah 53:6; 64:6; Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8; 5:19.

describes man as he lives apart from God.<sup>36</sup> According to the evidence of Scripture, therefore, natural man is impotent man, alienated from God, without hope and without God in the world.<sup>37</sup>

The Lutheran Confessions also teach that man is outside of fellowship with God,<sup>38</sup> alienated from him, and actually at enmity with God,<sup>39</sup> in need of the new relationship which God has made possible through Jesus Christ.<sup>40</sup>

Man is not free to choose between good and evil.

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<sup>36</sup>Romans 1:18-32; 2 Timothy 3:1ff.

<sup>37</sup>Ephesians 2:12.

<sup>38</sup>"Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration," Article I, "Original Sin," The Book of Concord, pp. 508-519.1-62. A careful differentiation is made between nature and original sin in order to avoid the error of equating the two as one and the same thing. Original sin is considered as an invasion of man's nature, thereby changing the nature to desire the evil but not overcoming its original ownership--which is God's. Man's nature is described as originally pure but by this invasion of sin, wholly corrupted, so that it can no longer choose that which is good or right of itself. The total depravity refers to this incapacity of the human nature. Cf. also "The Smalcald Articles," Part III, Article I, "Sin," p. 302.1-11; "Apology of the Augsburg Confession," Article II, "Original Sin," pp. 100-107.1-50; and "The Large Catechism," Part II, "The Creed," p. 412.13, The Book of Concord.

<sup>39</sup>"Formula of Concord, Epitome," Article II, "Free Will," The Book of Concord, p. 470.2-3. Here it refers to man's regenerate will as turned away from God, as an enemy of God, and that it desires and wills only that which is evil and opposed to God.

<sup>40</sup>"Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration," Article II, "Original Sin," The Book of Concord, p. 514.33f.

The Lutheran Confessions affirm that natural man is enslaved by Satan, and is therefore, unable to choose to live in the freedom for which God originally created him.<sup>41</sup>

Natural man is utterly impotent in relation to his spiritual condition.<sup>42</sup> He has absolutely no power, within himself, either to alter or change this spiritual condition of his life, nor is he able to cooperate with God to effect such change or improvement.<sup>43</sup> Any change or alteration which takes place in man is solely the work of God. The Formula of Concord is very explicit,

man's conversion is not only in part, but entirely, the operation, gift, endowment, and work of the Holy Spirit alone, who accomplishes and performs it by his power and might through the Word in the intellect, will, and heart of man. . . . Man does or works nothing.<sup>44</sup>

#### Man is Rescued

From this position of hostility and enmity toward God,

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<sup>41</sup>"Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration," Article II, "Free Will," The Book of Concord, p. 538.37. Cf. also "Apology of the Augsburg Confessions," Article II, "Original Sin," p. 106.46-50; Article IV, "Justification," p. 126.138; "The Smalcald Articles," Article I, "Sin," p. 302.1; "The Large Catechism," Part I, "The Ten Commandments," p. 378.100; Part II, "The Creed," p. 417.52, The Book of Concord.

<sup>42</sup>Ephesians 2:1; 5:14; Colossians 2:13.

<sup>43</sup>Matthew 7:17-18; John 3:16; 15:5; Romans 8:7-8.

<sup>44</sup>"Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration," Article III, "Righteousness," The Book of Concord, p. 538.89.

man needs to be rescued. But this rescue must take place from outside of man, and enter into his life as an invasion, since he is absolutely unable to assist in it. The rescue is effected, by the Holy Spirit, as he brings man into confrontation with the Word of God.<sup>45</sup> In this confrontation man is given the ability to receive the Word of God, which offers the gracious gift of God, namely, life and salvation.

The natural man, who is dead in trespasses and sins and alienated from the fellowship with God, is confronted by the Word of God in Holy Baptism. Baptism, the means through which God applies His Word to the heart of man, is an act commanded by God,<sup>46</sup> through which He promises new life,<sup>47</sup> the forgiveness of sins,<sup>48</sup> and a new relationship with Himself.<sup>49</sup> Baptism is the effective means through which the activity of the Word of God creates this new life,

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<sup>45</sup>Cf. "The Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration," Article II, "Righteousness," The Book of Concord, p. 538.87-90. "the conversion of our corrupted will, which is nothing else but a resurrection of the will from spiritual death, is solely and alone the work of God, just as bodily resurrection of the flesh is ascribed to God alone, . . . in conversion through the drawing power of the Holy Spirit, God makes willing people out of resisting and unwilling people, . . . conversion to God is solely of God the Holy Spirit, . . . He uses the preaching and the hearing of His Holy Word as His ordinary means and instrument. . . . Toward this work . . . the person . . . does nothing, but only lets God work in him, until he is converted."

<sup>46</sup>Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 10:48; 22:16; John 3:5.

<sup>47</sup>Mark 16:16.

<sup>48</sup>Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3.

<sup>49</sup>Galatians 3:27; 1 Corinthians 12:13.

blotting out sins and transgressions, giving life for death, and actively creating a new relationship with God. Baptism, as a means of grace, is the Word of God in action, in a visual deed, commanded by God, and through which He has promised to convey Himself to people.

Baptism performs the work of God because it is the power of God operative in and through this means. God, Himself, is conveyed through the water and the Word to perform His activity in the heart of man. As Luther says,

What is Baptism? Answer: It is not simply water, but water comprehended in God's Word and commandment and sanctified by them. . . . Baptism is a very different thing from all other water. . . . God himself stakes his honor, his power, and his might on it. Therefore it is not simply a natural water, but a divine, heavenly, holy and blessed water, . . . all by virtue of the Word, which is a heavenly holy Word which no one can sufficiently extol, for it contains and conveys all the fulness of God.<sup>50</sup>

The Smalcald Articles emphasize that "Baptism is nothing else than the Word of God in water."<sup>51</sup> St. Paul affirms that it is "the washing of water with the Word."<sup>52</sup> In accordance with this evidence, it can be concluded that God is active through His Word to perform that which Baptism signifies and

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<sup>50</sup>"The Large Catechism," Part IV, "Baptism," The Book of Concord, p. 438.14,17. Cf. also "The Small Catechism," Part IV, "The Sacrament of Holy Baptism," The Book of Concord, pp. 348-9.1-14.

<sup>51</sup>"Smalcald Articles," Article V, "Baptism," The Book of Concord, p. 310.1.

<sup>52</sup>Ephesians 5:26.

the Word promises. Baptism is God's act performed through the outward and visible sign given to His Church.<sup>53</sup>

Baptism is the means of making the sinner a partaker of justification, regeneration, and eternal life. It is really a means whereby the entire personal being, spirit and nature, is made a partaker of the salvation God has provided in Christ, even as the Apostle Peter says, "Baptism saves us."<sup>54</sup> Martin Luther sums up Baptism concisely when he says,

What gifts or benefits does Baptism bestow? Answer: It effects forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and grants eternal salvation to all who believe, as the Word and promises of God declare.<sup>55</sup>

Luther elaborates on the meaning of Baptism saying,

The significance of Baptism is a blessed dying unto sin and a resurrection in the grace of God, so that the old man, which is conceived and born in sin, is there drowned, and a new man, born in grace, comes forth and rises. Thus St. Paul in Titus 3, calls Baptism a "washing of regeneration," since in this washing man is born again and made new. As Christ

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<sup>53</sup>"The Apology of the Augsburg Confession," Article XXIV, "The Mass," p. 252.18; "The Large Catechism," Part IV, "Baptism," The Book of Concord, p. 437.10.

<sup>54</sup>1 Peter 3:21.

<sup>55</sup>"The Small Catechism," Part IV, "The Sacrament of Baptism," The Book of Concord, pp. 348-349.1-14. Cf. the position held by Karl Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, translated from the sixth edition by Edwyn C. Hoskyns (London: Oxford University Press, 1933, 1960), "But Baptism is a sacrament of truth and holiness; and it is a sacrament, because it is the sign which directs us to God's revelation of eternal life and declares, not merely the Christian 'myth,' but-- the Word of God. . . . Baptism mediates the new creation: it is not itself grace, but from first to last a means of grace," p. 192. Cf. also Church Dogmatics, The Doctrine of the Word of God, I, 1, authorized translation by G. T. Thomson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936, 1960), pp. 175, 258ff.

also says in John 3, "Except ye be born of water and the spirit of grace, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." For just as a child is drawn out of its mother's womb and born, and through this fleshly birth is a sinful man and a child of wrath, so man is drawn out of Baptism and spiritually born, and through this spiritual birth is a child of grace and a justified man. Therefore, sins are drowned in Baptism, and in place of sin, righteousness comes forth.<sup>56</sup>

God works through Baptism to perform His saving work in the heart of man. This saving work is performed by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God.

The purposes of God are served in Baptism as man is taken from the place of wrath and judgment, because of his sin, to the place of forgiveness and life, because of the saving work of Christ. But this justified sinner cannot remain in this fellowship without the continual return to the Word of God as the place of forgiveness and grace. An examination of this new man's need for renewal is the subject of the next section.

#### Renewal is Still a Necessity

The attitude of the Lutheran Church to those who have been instructed in the Christian faith and who are aware of their relationship with God is expressed very clearly in the prayer for the Confirmation Service,

Almighty and merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Thou who through the Holy Spirit dost begin and perfect the good work in us; we thank Thee

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<sup>56</sup>Martin Luther, "A Treatise on Baptism, 1519," Works of Martin Luther, volume I, The Philadelphia Edition (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, c.1943), p. 57.

that in Baptism Thou hast granted these young servants of Thine the gift of regeneration; we thank Thee that through the enlightenment of Thy Word Thou hast enabled them to acknowledge Thy saving grace. Perfect, we beseech Thee, what Thou hast begun. Grant them an ever increasing knowledge of the salvation Thou hast prepared in Christ. They are weak; strengthen them with Thy might. They are to meet a dangerous world; guide them with Thy counsel. They are to experience manifold temptations; do Thou help them to resist and to overcome. In every hour of need and sore trial, comfort them with Thy Holy Spirit. Help them to watch and pray, and to seek diligently in Word and Sacrament the nourishment of Thy grace, to the end that, in sanctification of the Spirit, together with Thy faithful people, they may before all the world, in word and deed, confess Thee with the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.<sup>57</sup>

This prayer commends the newly confirmed to God, and beseeches Him to continue the work which He has begun in the lives of these His children. It expresses the truth that God continues to work in the lives of His children through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God working through the Word and the Sacraments causes the life of faith to be strengthened and increased as the believer lives in dependence upon God.

The Scriptures affirm that the Christian is a living battleground. The hosts of devil, world, and flesh are seeking to overcome the life of faith which the Christian possesses by virtue of fellowship with Jesus Christ. The battle is fought inwardly against invisible foes who seek to destroy

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<sup>57</sup>Altar Book with Scripture Lessons and Collects  
(Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, n.d.) This Altar Book is the translation of the "Alterbog" of the Church of Norway. Translated in 1902, and revised in 1915, by the United Norwegian Lutheran Church of America.



the life of faith.<sup>58</sup>

In this struggle the enemies of the Christian may be invisible but they are identifiable. The evidence from the Scriptures show that these enemies include: the devil;<sup>59</sup> the world;<sup>60</sup> and the Christian's own flesh.<sup>61</sup> It is between these foes and Christ that the battle of faith is fought. A struggle in which the victory is already assured but in which the Christian will be molested by the vanquished throughout his life. Yet, the Christian is assured that in this battle he is never left alone.<sup>62</sup>

Lutheran theologians have identified this battle as that which takes place in man because he possesses both the Old Adam and the new man. Harry G. Coiner says,

The Christian at any moment is completely innocent, righteous through and through, and at the same time he is a sinner through and through.<sup>63</sup>

In this duality the Christian lives his life in the tension of his flesh (self-rule) against the Spirit (God-rule), a

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<sup>58</sup>Cf. Romans 7:15ff.; Ephesians 6:12; 1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:4.

<sup>59</sup>1 Peter 5:8; Luke 22:31; 2 Corinthians 2:11; 11:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:5.

<sup>60</sup>Psalm 86:14; Jeremiah 18:20; Ezekial 22:35; 1 John 2:26; 2 Peter 3:17.

<sup>61</sup>James 1:14-15; 2 Peter 2:18.

<sup>62</sup>Hebrews 13:5-6; Psalm 16:8.

<sup>63</sup>Harry G. Coiner, "The Inclusive Nature of Holy Baptism in Luther's Writings," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXIII (November 1962), 649.

tension which exists as long as he lives.<sup>64</sup>

Although the Christian is in Christ, he does not always respond to Christ's lordship. He has been freed from the dominion of sin, but he still has to strive against sin in his life. And man himself is the battleground on which God and Satan are fighting for his eternal allegiance.<sup>65</sup>

In this battle the Christian is forced to abide in Christ<sup>66</sup> and in obedience to His Spirit to seek out His will and respond in obedient love.

The Christian is not unaware of this struggle which takes place within his life. The Apostle Paul says,

So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?<sup>67</sup>

Intuitive judgment of Christian man, in relation to himself, brings the conclusion that there are two forces within him battling for his attention and allegiance.

Christian man is in need of a continuing dependence upon God in His Word, which brings renewal.

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<sup>64</sup>Galatians 5:16ff.

<sup>65</sup>Harry G. Coiner, "The Secret of God's Plan," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXIV (May 1963), 273. Cf. also "Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration," Article VI, "Third Use of Law," The Book of Concord, pp. 567.18,19; 568.24; and "Formula of Concord, Epitome," Article VI, "Third Use of Law," The Book of Concord, p. 480.4.

<sup>66</sup>John 15:4ff.

<sup>67</sup>Romans 7:21-24.

## Renewal

True man emerges only in the Christian Gospel. Donald L. Deffner says,

And it is at this point, turning to the Christian Gospel, that we find true man, the new man in our blessed Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the Christ-man. Incomplete man falls short of this image, the complete man in God, Jesus the Christ. For Christ is at once the man we are to be and the power to become such a new creature.<sup>68</sup>

Such a new man in Christ, the Christ-man needs the Word of God to strengthen and sustain as he lives in fellowship with Christ. The Word of God comes to him through the proclamation of it in preaching and teaching and through participation in the Sacraments.

Faith cannot feed itself but must depend upon the forgiving Word of God.<sup>69</sup> As the Word of God is proclaimed and heard it is for the Christian the bread and water of life, even as through the Word, Jesus Christ is Himself conveyed to the hearer.<sup>70</sup> Faith is fed, nurtured, and strengthened in this Word of God as it comes giving forgiveness of sins, as well as increased and increasing victory over the power of devil, world, and flesh.

The Christ-man also learns to depend upon the Word of

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<sup>68</sup> Donald L. Deffner, Toward Adult Christian Education: A Symposium (River Forest, Illinois: Lutheran Education Association, Nineteenth Yearbook, 1962), p. 24.

<sup>69</sup> Romans 10:17.

<sup>70</sup> John 6:35; 7:38.

God which comes to him in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. For Baptism is an act which continues to maintain its influence in the life of the Christian.

In Baptism, therefore, every Christian has enough to study and to practice all his life. He always has enough to do to believe firmly what Baptism promises and brings--victory over death and the devil, forgiveness of sin, God's grace, the entire Christ, and the Holy Spirit with His gifts.<sup>71</sup>

The ongoing nature of Baptism consists in a life-long repentance and faith which clings to the assurance that the perfect righteousness of Christ (which is real for every believer now) and the sovereign rule of Christ may be established and that the power of world, flesh, and devil will be defeated.<sup>72</sup>

The Christian makes use of both the armor and the weapons provided by God through His Word. He willingly receives the armor of God,<sup>73</sup> which consists of the breastplate of faith and love, and the helmet of salvation.<sup>74</sup> Together with this equipment he is given the Word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit and the shield of faith with which he will be able to overcome all the fiery temptations of the evil one.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>"The Large Catechism," Part IV, "Baptism," The Book of Concord, p. 441.41.

<sup>72</sup>Coiner, "The Inclusive Nature of Holy Baptism in Luther's Writings," p. 649.

<sup>73</sup>Ephesians 6:11ff.; Romans 13:2; 2 Corinthians 6:7.

<sup>74</sup>Isaiah 59:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:8.

<sup>75</sup>Ephesians 6:16-17; Hebrews 4:12.

Through the Word of God and the word of testimony the Christian is able to overcome the power of the devil.<sup>76</sup>

The Word of God is the Christian's weapon against devil, world, and flesh, which he wields in faith, and trust and hope. Luther calls the Word of God,

the power which burns the devil and gives us immeasurable strength, comfort, and help. . . . Not only do we need God's Word daily as we need our daily bread; we also must use it daily against the daily, incessant attacks and ambushes of the devil with his thousand arts.<sup>77</sup>

The strength and ability to live in victory in the midst of this battle will be true for the Christian only as he learns to rely entirely upon the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to accept the guidance of the Holy Spirit for his life.<sup>78</sup>

Renewal, which is the daily revitalization of the Christian in the midst of the battle, will take place as the Gospel of Christ is proclaimed to the Christian for help, resource, and power right now. For the Word of God serves the purpose of bringing the atonement of Jesus Christ to bear upon the life situation of Christians, and gives them the victory over sin, death, and the devil right now.<sup>79</sup> Frederick W. Danker says,

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<sup>76</sup>Revelation 12:11.

<sup>77</sup>"The Large Catechism," "Martin Luther's Preface," The Book of Concord, p. 360.11,13.

<sup>78</sup>Frederick W. Danker, "Faith With Works--Galatians 5 and 6," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXVII (August 1956), 600.

<sup>79</sup>Galatians 6:6.

The minister's task is to call the Christian's attention continually to the implications of the Gospel, so that he may constantly be urged to shift dependence from self and rely always on the atonement of Christ. In the atonement, and only in the atonement, is the Christian's spiritual walk a possibility. Because the flesh is always with the Christian, the Gospel must always be with him to remind him continually of his saved condition. . . . The fruits of the Spirit grow only where the Gospel is sown tirelessly and unremittingly. The practical life of the Christian is never something merely tacked on. It is faith active through love. It is love activated by faith. It is faith with works.<sup>80</sup>

The natural man is recalled to the place of forgiveness and peace through the Word of God. It is that same Word of God which gives him life for death and causes him to become a child of God. In this new relationship of faith and love he daily depends upon the Word of God for strength and grace to live in victory in the battle of life. Without this Word of God he is not able either to come to or to live in fellowship with Jesus Christ. The whole life of the creature depends upon the Word of God. Through it he was created, through it he is given new life in fellowship with God, and by it he is sustained in this fellowship as he continues to depend upon it for daily strength and grace. The Word from God is the life of the child of God. Therefore, it is important for this study that the meaning and scope of the Word of God be examined and determined.

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<sup>80</sup>Danker, p. 600.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE MEANS OF RENEWAL: THE WORD OF GOD

In the examination of the evidence presented in the previous chapter it was established that man, outside of fellowship with God, needs new life, and that this new life is given to him through the work of God as this Word is received by him through the work of the Holy Spirit in his life. But, even as this man receives new life, he still possesses what the Scriptures refer to as the "old man." He is at one and the same time both saint and sinner. Within his life there is a constant struggle between these two opposites. The "old man" desires to regain control of his lost domain. The new man, fashioned after and living in Jesus Christ, desires to remould and remake the life of man after the Spirit of God. In this struggle the Christian is not left without assistance, for God continues to come with His Word to establish and to strengthen this new life with His power and grace. Through the Word of God Jesus Christ conveys Himself to His children to give them the ability to live in and with the Spirit of God in a life of victory.

Therefore, it is fitting to ask the questions: What is this Word of God which is the means of renewal and how is it manifested to the child of God? And what attributes does this Word possess as it comes to man in these manifestations? An understanding of these two questions will give an

understanding of the message through which God renews His Church.

Richard R. Caemmerer affirms that many people have the pre-conceived idea that the Word of God equals the Bible. He also affirms that the Bible is the Word of God but that this is not the only definition nor the only understanding which may properly be conveyed by that term.<sup>1</sup> Richard Caemmerer further states that the concept "Word of God," which is the translation of  $\aleph \aleph \aleph$  in the Hebrew, and  $\lambda \acute{o} \gamma \omicron \varsigma$  and  $\rho \acute{\eta} \mu \alpha$  in the Greek, has two major categories of emphasis. First of all, it portrays an active purpose, the working out of a design and intention, synonymous with force, activity. "The Word of God is simultaneously His activity and His communicating that activity to men."<sup>2</sup> But secondly, Word of God also conveys the idea of communication. The force, the purpose, and the activity is being registered toward people, made apparent in them and through

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Richard R. Caemmerer, "A Concordance Study of the Concept 'Word of God,'" Concordia Theological Monthly, XXII (March 1951), 171, in which he says, "Many a reader of the Bible approaches the term 'Word of God' with such a pre-conceived category, i.e., 'Word of God'= Bible itself. He need not discard that category, but he must be aware of making it the sole definition of the term. Even a lexicographical review of the most abundant terms translated 'Word of God,' namely, dabar in the Old Testament and rhema and logos in the New Testament, indicates the hazard in such an oversimplification; for these words denote not merely 'word,' but 'thing,' 'fact,' as well; not merely verbum but res."

<sup>2</sup>Class notes for P-810, The Theology of Preaching, a Graduate Course at Concordia Seminary taught by Richard R. Caemmerer.



them. Therefore, the Word of God does not mean merely the sayings of God, but God Himself as He acts and as He unfolds Himself and His actions to men. When "Word of God" and "Bible" are equated, this concept seriously limits the God Who speaks to the place of His written message and thereby confines the message to the correct understanding of that which is written. To so confine the Word of God would mean that God is limited to a written mode of expression and denies the Scriptural truth that God also speaks and acts, that He enters into the speech of man, and that He acts upon man to perform that which He promises in this speaking.

A third category of emphasis concerning the Word of God is the divine action of God, in relation to man, as He works in and through His Word. God is the divine power Who brings His promises to fruition in the lives of the hearers. Luther notes this emphasis in relation to the Word of God, when he says, "It is a divine power, yea, it is God Himself."<sup>3</sup>

#### The Manifestations of the Word of God

In the biblical sense the Word of God is every communication of God to men, His  $\overline{\overline{\overline{\gamma}}}$ .<sup>4</sup> The Letter to the Hebrews

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<sup>3</sup>Martin Luther, Sermon on 1 Peter 1:23, delivered in 1523, Dr. Martin Luthers Sammlliche Werke, LI (Frankfurt a. M. and Erlungen: Verlag von Heyder & Zimmer, 1852), p. 377.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. Walter R. Roehrs, "The Theology of the Word of God in the Old Testament," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXII (May 1961), 265-266, in which he says, "In view of its root meaning, dabar then preeminently denotes not a thing but that

begins by stating,

In many and in various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.<sup>5</sup>

In these many and various ways God has made Himself known to His prophets and through His prophets to His people. Five of these various manifestations of the Word of God will be discussed in this thesis, all of which are derived from the biblical record.

#### God Spoke Directly to His Prophets

God spoke directly to His prophets and patriarchs as He walked and talked with them.<sup>6</sup> These prophets and patriarchs received the message directly from God in order that they as God's messengers would speak it to God's people. Sometimes the Lord spoke directly to the prophet in order to give specific directives in relation to the people of God. God reserved for Himself the right to speak directly, face to face with Moses, even as He tells Aaron and Miriam, "With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly and not in dark

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which is behind a thing, first locally and then in a transferred sense, namely, its meaning, its *νοῦς*, its *λόγος*. . . . It is the power behind a thing through which it achieves a designed purpose. . . . A dabar at times becomes equated with the thing itself. . . . It can also denote the inherent power itself."

<sup>5</sup>Hebrews 1:1-2.

<sup>6</sup>Robert Preus, "The Power of God's Word," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXIV (August 1963), 453.

speech; and he beholds the form of the Lord."<sup>7</sup> The Word of God to Moses was not so much a message to be spoken to the people but actions to be performed in relation to their welfare, and particularly to guide them through Moses back to the Promised Land.<sup>8</sup>

Often the Word of God was spoken to the prophet for the immediate benefit of one person, usually the king or other leader. Shemaiah received the Word of God in order to say it to Rehoboam.<sup>9</sup> Micaiah, a prophet of the Lord in the days of Ahab and Jezebel, received a message of the Lord to deliver to the two kings, Ahab and Jehoshaphat.<sup>10</sup> Samuel was given a message for King Saul and in inviting him to listen to it he said, "stop here yourself for a while, that I may make known to you the Word of God."<sup>11</sup> These and other prophets were conscious that their message was God's message to the leaders of His people. This message was considered to be very important and worthy of obedience.

Some of the prophets spoke the message of God directly to the people. The message received was not relayed through

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<sup>7</sup>Numbers 12:6-8. God spoke directly to Moses in the journey from Egypt back to the Promised Land. He directed the actions of Moses in relation to His people.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. The Exodus from Egypt, Exodus 3-20.

<sup>9</sup>1 Kings 12:22-24.

<sup>10</sup>1 Kings 22:5ff.

<sup>11</sup>1 Samuel 9:27.

the king or other leader but spoken by the prophet to the people.<sup>12</sup> These spokesmen for God identified their message to the people as God's message and that they were speaking for Him.<sup>13</sup> The people, too, were aware that the prophet spoke for God, and that his message was to be heeded by all who heard it.<sup>14</sup> The message spoken by the prophet was spoken in the language and to the circumstances which these people faced in their day. God chose special men through whom He gave His message so that they could speak it aloud to His people. God's message is primarily a spoken message.

#### God Communicated Visibly Through Dreams and Visions

Not only did God speak directly to His prophets and patriarchs, He also revealed Himself to them in dreams and visions.<sup>15</sup> This method of communication is closely associated to the former method of speaking directly, but the procedure of such revelation is different. Very often visions become the means through which God speaks to the prophet.<sup>16</sup> On other occasions, however, the vision is explicit enough, so

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<sup>12</sup>Cf. Joel 1:2; Amos 3:1-2; Micah 1:2.

<sup>13</sup>Psalms 81:8-10; Isaiah 22:14.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. Psalm 85, particularly verse 8.

<sup>15</sup>Cf. Preus, p. 454.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. Ezekiel 1:28, which says, "Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking." Cf. also Ezekiel 1:1-3; Isaiah 6:1ff.; Micah 1:1ff.; Obadiah 1:1ff.

that the prophet receives the message without the voice of God.<sup>17</sup>

God also brought messages to His people through their dreams. One of the most notable examples of this type of communication is Joseph, who possessed both the ability to receive a message from God in a dream, and the ability to interpret these dreams, for himself and others.<sup>18</sup> Joseph's father Jacob, had also been directed by God through a dream.<sup>19</sup>

Sometimes God communicated directly, in a dream, with the leader of His people, as He did with Solomon, who had asked of God an understanding mind to govern, "this thy great people."<sup>20</sup> But on other occasions He used the dreams of others to bring His message to His leaders.<sup>21</sup>

One of the serious difficulties with this type of communication was the real possibility of falsification. God recognized this danger and placed all His people on the alert to prevent such falsification and possible deception by

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<sup>17</sup>Ezekiel says that he told the exiles all the things which the Lord had shown to him, Ezekiel 11:24-25. The vision of Amos indicates that He saw that which God wanted His people to know through him, Amos 1:1ff. Daniel had a vision interpreted to him by a second vision in which a man spoke to him, Daniel 8:1ff. Nahum had a vision concerning Nineveh without direct words, Nahum 1:1ff.

<sup>18</sup>Genesis 37:5; 40:5,12; 41:1,25.

<sup>19</sup>Genesis 28:12.

<sup>20</sup>1 Kings 3:5ff.

<sup>21</sup>Judges 7:13ff.

"lying visions" from the false prophets.<sup>22</sup> In spite of this danger the Lord chose to speak to His people in dreams and visions. The Lord spoke out of the pillar of cloud, before the tent of Aaron and Miriam, and said,

Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you,  
I the Lord make myself known to him in a vision,  
I speak with him in a dream.<sup>23</sup>

Even though this method was chosen by God, the dangers were not overlooked nor were the falsifications permitted to go unpunished.<sup>24</sup>

God continued to communicate with His people through dreams and visions into the New Testament period. He manifested Himself, in the form of an angel, to bring a specific message to specially chosen people, among whom are: Mary, the mother of Jesus, to whom the angel Gabriel announced the birth of Jesus;<sup>25</sup> Zacharias, the father of John, was struck dumb when he disbelieved the message;<sup>26</sup> and to Joseph, the husband of Mary, who was told of the danger to the child Jesus, and also when this danger was over was told to return

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<sup>22</sup>Jeremiah, speaking for God, speaks out against such false witnesses, Jeremiah 14:14ff. Cf. also 23:16ff.

<sup>23</sup>Numbers 12:5-6.

<sup>24</sup>Severe punishments are provided for those who would falsify dreams or visions, Deuteronomy 13:1ff. Punishment supposedly severe enough to prevent the false witnesses from speaking their spurious dreams and worthless visions. The history of Israel reveals that this was not prevented.

<sup>25</sup>Luke 1:26ff.

<sup>26</sup>Luke 1:11ff.

to Palestine.<sup>27</sup> Other visions were used by God to bring a specific message at a given time, among which are: the vision to Peter, in which he was reminded that everything God has made is clean;<sup>28</sup> the vision to Ananias, through which he was given the responsibility to welcome Saul of Tarsus into the fellowship of believers;<sup>29</sup> the vision to Cornelius, who was given a direct answer to his prayer, and through whom the Christian Church was extended;<sup>30</sup> and Paul, who was led by many visions from God in his ministry and witness.<sup>31</sup>

God also spoke through a dream in several instances. He spoke to Joseph, through an angel, which appeared to him in a dream.<sup>32</sup> Through a dream the wise men were warned not to return to Herod with the message of Jesus' birth and whereabouts.<sup>33</sup> Even Pilate's wife had a very disturbing dream because of her husband's part in the trial of Jesus.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Matthew 2:13,19,22.

<sup>28</sup>Acts 10:9ff.

<sup>29</sup>Acts 9:10ff.

<sup>30</sup>Acts 10:1ff.; 10:17ff.

<sup>31</sup>Acts 16:9; 19:9; 22:18; 23:11.

<sup>32</sup>Matthew 1:20.

<sup>33</sup>Matthew 2:12.

<sup>34</sup>Matthew 27:19.

God Communicated Himself Through His  
Mighty Acts of Judgment and Redemption

Through His mighty acts of judgment and redemption God has revealed Himself as the God of love and mercy, the God of justice and righteousness, the God who has spoken by His acts which indeed have become a word.<sup>35</sup>

The people of Israel were assured of the presence of God during their flight from Egypt back to the promised land. The pillar of cloud and fire was given as a symbol of God's presence, a pillar of cloud by day to guide them on their journey, and a pillar of fire by night to give them light.<sup>36</sup> This cloud also served as God's real presence, as He protected them in this time of emergency.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, it not only symbolized God's real presence but actually conveyed God's presence at given times in their journey.<sup>38</sup> God chose to speak with His chosen servant, Moses, through this cloud, and Moses in turn would speak God's message to the people. Here, Moses was able to speak to God face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Cf. Preus, p. 454.

<sup>36</sup>Exodus 13:21.

<sup>37</sup>Exodus 14:19ff.

<sup>38</sup>Exodus 16:10.

<sup>39</sup>Exodus 33:9ff. Cf. also Numbers 12:5-6, where God rebukes Aaron, Miriam, and the people of Israel for not listening to God's servant, Moses.



The pillar of cloud symbolized God's presence in the midst of the camp. This symbol of His presence was preserved even when the Ark of the Covenant was built. The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, in which the Ark of the Covenant was housed, when the pillar of cloud hovered over this tent of meeting.<sup>40</sup> In this pillar of cloud God revealed Himself as the God who cares for His people and also assured them of His continuing presence.

God communicated Himself, to His people, in other miraculous happenings, as well, not least of which were His actions to confirm faith in the believers. Gideon desired assurance that God would deliver Israel by his hand, and therefore asked for a sign from God which would assure him of this deliverance. God gave Gideon two signs which served to increase

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<sup>40</sup>Exodus 40:34ff. God continued to reveal Himself to the leaders of the people through this means of cloud and fire. The shekinah, the supernatural light or cloud which appeared above the mercy-seat was God's way of revealing His continuing presence. The command of God, through Moses to Aaron, stated that God will appear in the cloud and fire on the mercy-seat. Cf. Leviticus 16:2. When the Ark of the Covenant was brought to the House of the Lord in Jerusalem, a special service commemorating the event was held. When the trumpeters and singers began to lift their voices in songs of praise to the Lord, when the priests came out of the Holy Place to lead the service, and when they in unison began to sing the praises of the Lord, "For He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever," the priests could not stand to minister before the people because the cloud filled the house of the Lord, and the glory of the Lord filled His house. Cf. 1 Kings 8:10-11; and 2 Chronicles 5:13-14. This cloud signified the presence of God in the midst of the people, and He thereby assured them of His faithfulness and of His abiding presence.

the faith of Gideon that God would deliver Israel by his hand.<sup>41</sup>

The mighty act of God which is predicted in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New Testament is the most important of all. This prediction and act is, "Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."<sup>42</sup> This mighty act is none other than the coming of the Son of God, God with His people in person, the person of His Son, Jesus Christ.<sup>43</sup>

In His mighty acts of judgment and redemption the Word and the work of God are correlated.<sup>44</sup> The Word of God carried

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<sup>41</sup>Cf. Judges 6:36ff. Gideon tested God on two successive nights. The first night Gideon asked that God assure him through putting dew on the fleece of wool alone and not on the threshing floor around it, and it was so. The next night he asked for the reverse, a wet threshing floor and a dry fleece, and it was so. This was enough to assure Gideon of God's continuing presence. Cf. also Isaiah who was commissioned by God to speak to Hezekiah, and to promise him that the Lord would extend his life fifteen years and through him deliver the city of Jerusalem out of the hands of the King of Assyria. Hezekiah asked for a sign, and Isaiah told him that the Lord had promised, "Behold, I will make the shadow cast by the declining sun on the dial of Ahaz turn back ten steps." This took place even as Isaiah said. 2 Kings 20:8ff.; Isaiah 38:4-8. Cf. also 2 Chronicles 32:24-33. In these and many other ways God assured His people of His presence.

<sup>42</sup>Isaiah 7:14.

<sup>43</sup>Cf. infra, the fifth manifestation of the Word.

<sup>44</sup>Cf. Caemmerer, P-810, The Theology of Preaching; also Preus, p. 454. In Psalm 3 it is written, "For the word of the Lord is upright; and all His work is done in faithfulness. . . . By the Word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth." Psalm 33:4,6. Cf. also Psalm 130:20; 107:20; 119:89ff; 147:15-19. In Psalm 145:5 the Hebrew word אֲשֶׁר is translated "work."

with it the assurance that what He said would be in existence already or surely come to pass. In several instances in the Old Testament the phrase, "The Word of the Lord came" is used to designate the actual reality of that which the words relate.<sup>45</sup> In this sense, the Word of the Lord is an act of revelation which infallibly achieves its purpose.<sup>46</sup>

This revelation accorded to the Word of God is valid, since that which the Word of God foretells, actually happens. What God promises by a word He brings to reality in the corresponding act of fulfillment. Richard R. Caemmerer says,

The Word of God is shown as effective in the fact that He keeps His promises; hence his fulfilling of His plans in a continuing Word and action also to subsequent generations. Thus creation and preservation involve promises that come true.<sup>47</sup>

The promises of God, therefore, cause the discerning believer to react with confidence to all the Word of God. The words of the Psalmist, "Thou hast dealt with thy servant, O Lord, according to thy Word," become the joyful song of confidence in God who portrays His trustworthiness through keeping His promises.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Cf. Jeremiah 32:6-8; Ezekiel 1:3; 12:26-28.

<sup>46</sup>When Jeremiah spoke the Word of the Lord to Pashhur the priest, he was telling him that which would actually take place, Jeremiah 20:1ff. This prophecy of captivity and God's forewarning to the people, through Jeremiah, bears record that God's Word is powerful fact and that the Word itself is equal to the work. Cf. Psalm 107:19-20.

<sup>47</sup>Caemmerer, "A Concordance Study of the Concept, 'Word of God,'" p. 172. Cf. also Isaiah 51:15-16.

<sup>48</sup>Psalm 119:65ff.

God Communicates Himself to His People  
Through the Written Word

The speech of God, the revelation of Himself to His people in visions and dreams, as well as His mighty acts of judgment and mercy were written down. This writing was accomplished at the command of God and constitutes a further way in which God speaks to men.<sup>49</sup>

The law of God was given to Moses with the specific command to write it.<sup>50</sup> These writings were to be preserved as the means through which God would continue to speak to His people.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, the written law is equated with the spoken law since it is referred to as the voice of the Lord God,

if you obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, if you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Preus, p. 454.

<sup>50</sup>Before Moses went up into the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments from the hand of God, he wrote all the words of the Lord for the people of Israel (Exodus 24:4. Cf. also Exodus 32:15ff.). In anger Moses broke the first table of the law when he returned from the mountain, but he had to return to receive the new tables, written by the finger of God (Exodus 34:1,27; 31:18; Deuteronomy 9:10). Moses was commanded by God to write the words of the law which God spoke to him (Deuteronomy 27:1). Consequently, when Moses returned he had, not only the two tables of the law, but an elaboration of these as well (Exodus 20-23). Moses' command to write was not confined to the law (Exodus 17:14).

<sup>51</sup>Deuteronomy 27:1; 31:9ff.

<sup>52</sup>Deuteronomy 30:10.

Not only was the law to be written in a book, however, it was to be written upon the doorposts, to be bound as frontlets between the eyes, to be spoken of in the home, and to be taught to the children of the household.<sup>53</sup> Even when Israel would choose a king, the king was to be required to write a book of the law for himself, copying it directly from that copy which was entrusted to the Levitical priests. He was required to have a book of the law in order that,

it may be with him, and he shall read it in all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them.<sup>54</sup>

The prophets of the Old Testament were given specific commands to write all that the Lord had spoken to them.<sup>55</sup> The command to write was given by God for specific purposes. These books were not random writings of random happenings but the record of God's dealings with His people, in order to help the generations yet to be. "Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet unborn may

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<sup>53</sup>Deuteronomy 6:9ff; 11:20ff. Cf. also Proverbs 3:3 where it is written, "bind them about your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart." And 7:3, "bind them on your fingers."

<sup>54</sup>Deuteronomy 17:18-20.

<sup>55</sup>Isaiah was commanded, "write it before them on a tablet, and inscribe it in a book, that it may be as a witness forever." (Isaiah 30:8ff.). Jeremiah records, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Write in a book all that I have spoken to you." (Jeremiah 30:1-2; cf. also 36:2,4). Ezekiel was commanded to write the law of the temple so that the people would observe and perform it (Ezekiel 43:10-12). Habakkuk was commanded to write a vision making it plain upon the tablets so that he who would read it might run (Habakkuk 2:2).

praise the Lord."<sup>56</sup> In other instances the command was given for more immediate purposes, for example, to cause people to turn from their wicked way;<sup>57</sup> to give incentive to observe the law;<sup>58</sup> and to cause the people to learn to fear the Lord.<sup>59</sup>

The written message of the prophets was considered to be the Word of God, even as the spoken Word.<sup>60</sup> Not only did the Apostles recognize this to be true, but Jesus as well. He quoted from the Old Testament on several occasions and began by saying, "It is written."<sup>61</sup> In another instance He read from the Book of Isaiah, and then said to the people who heard Him, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."<sup>62</sup> God continued to speak through the written

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<sup>56</sup>Psalm 102:18.

<sup>57</sup>Jeremiah 36:7.

<sup>58</sup>Ezekiel 43:10-12.

<sup>59</sup>Isaiah 30:8ff. Cf. Deuteronomy 17:18-20.

<sup>60</sup>The Old Testament Scriptures were recognized as the Word of God to His people by the Apostles, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness. . . ." 2 Timothy 3:16. Cf. 2 Peter 1:21; Acts 1:16; 28:25.

<sup>61</sup>Cf. Matthew 4:4 and Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:7 and Deuteronomy 6:16; Matthew 4:10 and Deuteronomy 6:13; Luke 4:18-19 and Isaiah 61:1-2. Jesus recognized, too, that the Holy Spirit would take that which was true of Him and declare it to the world. The Holy Spirit would bring to remembrance all that Jesus had spoken. One of the ways that He uses to this day is the written Scriptures. Cf. John 14:26 and 16:13.

<sup>62</sup>Luke 4:21. The quotation referred to is Isaiah 61:1-2 as quoted in Luke 4:18-19.

word even as He had previously spoken through the mouths of His prophets.

Although the witnesses in the New Testament Church were primarily speaking witnesses, the written Word was also considered to be of major importance in the ongoing witness in the Church. The Apostle John records, "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."<sup>63</sup> It is obvious, by this statement, that John recognized his writing as an effective witness to the Christ, the Savior of the world. This verse from the Gospel according to John could be paraphrased as follows: This written message is God's message to man, and is effective for salvation since it witnesses to Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. The giver of the message is God; the message witnesses to Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world; the intended recipient of this message is man, the object of God's love and mercy; the real purpose of the message is that man might be saved, that the message of God, made available in Jesus Christ, and witnessed to in this writing, might find its target and accomplish its intended result--restoration of man to fellowship with God in Jesus Christ.

Through the written Scriptures God has preserved His direct speech with man, His communications through dreams and visions, the record of His mighty acts of judgment and

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<sup>63</sup>John 20:31.

mercy, and His final manifestation through His Son, Jesus Christ. These have been recorded so that His Word can be spoken to every generation, even to those yet unborn. As Martin H. Franzmann says when speaking about how to interpret the Bible,

We are concerned with that aspect of the Bible which makes it different from all other texts, . . . upon the fact that it is the Word of God, not only the record of God's revelation of Himself, but a continuation of it; that here God not only spoke through men but speaks.<sup>64</sup>

God has Spoken to His People Through His Son

The fifth manifestation of the Word of God is referred to by the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews, when he says, "but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son."<sup>65</sup> This final Word of God to man,<sup>66</sup> is Jesus Christ manifested as the fulfillment of God's promises to His people, and through whom God offers Himself to His people. The Apostle John gives clear testimony to this Word of God by saying,

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>Martin H. Franzmann, Essays in Hermeneutics, reprinted from Concordia Theological Monthly, August, September, and October, 1948 (St. Louis: The Concordia Seminary Print Shop, 1963), p. 13.

<sup>65</sup>Hebrews 1:2.

<sup>66</sup>Preus, p. 454.

<sup>67</sup>John 1:1,14.



This Word of God, in the person of Jesus Christ, is manifested for the specific purpose of making God known to the world. He comes revealing Himself, in the person of His Son, as the very God who seeks to reunite the people of the world with Himself.<sup>68</sup> The Apostle John further witnesses that this is the very Word of God which he as an apostle continues to proclaim.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life--the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us--that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.<sup>69</sup>

Jesus showed Himself to be the Word of God through the declaration of the forgiveness of sins. His primary concern in His ministry was to give the forgiveness of sins, and with it fellowship with God. To the man sick of the palsy Jesus said, "My son, your sins are forgiven." When the Scribes questioned this statement of Jesus, He immediately gave them a further sign of His ability to forgive sins on earth, and said to the sick man, "I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home."<sup>70</sup> By the declaration of the

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<sup>68</sup>Cf. John 1:18.

<sup>69</sup>1 John 1:1-3.

<sup>70</sup>Matthew 9:1ff.; Mark 2:1ff.; Luke 5:18ff. When Jesus was at the home of Simon the Pharisee, a woman of the city came and washed His feet. He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." Luke 7:48.

forgiveness of sins Jesus showed Himself to be the Son of God with power.

The written Scriptures frequently make reference to the Son of God as being worthy of attentive listening. At the mount of transfiguration the voice of God sounded forth, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."<sup>71</sup> Jesus gained a following of people who were willing to listen to Him. This following, however, was more interested in Jesus as the promised Messiah, who, they believed, came to free the land and the people from oppression, want, and physical difficulties.<sup>72</sup> They looked upon the miracles which Jesus performed as an indication that He was the man sent from God to fulfill the requirements for the establishment of the kingdom of Israel. Many of the followers of Jesus looked upon His miracles, His restoration of sight to the blind, His healing of the maimed and deformed, His restoration of speech to the dumb, and hearing to the deaf, and the various other types of healing to the needy, as an indication that He had come to give only this type of physical blessing in a restored Israel. Often the real purpose of Jesus ministry was either missed or overlooked by His followers.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>Matthew 17:5. Cf. also Mark 9:7 and Luke 9:35.

<sup>72</sup>Matthew 20:21. Cf. also Mark 10:37; Luke 22:24.

<sup>73</sup>Acts 1:6. Cf. also the Pharisee's question in Luke 17:20.

Jesus gave Himself for the sins of the world as He died upon the cross of Calvary. By this act He revealed His true identity, the Savior of the world. The people of God in every generation looked forward in hope to the day when God would provide a Savior for them. God, in the fulness of time sent forth His Son as the fulfillment of all His prior promises and in Him was manifested to the world. Jesus Christ has come as the Son of God, but He has also come as the manifestation of the Word of God to the world, the final manifestation of the Word. Karl Barth places strong emphasis upon this in his book, God Here and Now. In this book he says of Jesus Christ, the Word of God,

His Word is Jesus Christ, for God's Word is God's mediation between Himself and man which He has willed and effected by Himself. . . . This mediation and thus God's Word, however, is none other than the Mediator, "the one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5). . . . The sovereignty of God's Word, consists in this: that God's Word is His Son Jesus Christ. . . . God Himself, who is for us and with us--this is the Word of God.<sup>74</sup>

Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, came revealing and actuating the plan of God for the salvation of the world. He came doing the work of God, in the midst of the world, to which this work was directed.<sup>75</sup> The Holy Scriptures testify to His life and ministry.<sup>76</sup> But more than this, He speaks

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<sup>74</sup>Karl Barth, God Here and Now, translated by Paul M. van Buren (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 12-13.

<sup>75</sup>John 5:19ff.

<sup>76</sup>John 20:30-31; 21:24-25.

through His Apostles who have recorded for the world the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, the Word of God. Jesus testifies of them, "I have given them thy Word;"<sup>77</sup> and the Apostle John says, "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."<sup>78</sup> The continuing witness is possible as the Holy Spirit takes this living Word, the Christ, and causes Him to become the living Savior within and through His children in every generation.<sup>79</sup>

#### The Manifestations of the Word of God are Unified in Jesus Christ

As the manifestations of the Word of God are examined their essential unity is attested. The final manifestation, namely, Jesus Christ, becomes the consummation of all other manifestations.

He Himself is the message, His Person is God's revelatory doing, He Himself, in personna, is the self-communication of God; consequently, we must always grasp the being and doing, the acts, words and passion of the Lord as a totality.<sup>80</sup>

Jesus Christ is the totality of God's witness to man, whether that witness took place before Christ's coming in the flesh or after His ascension. The Word of God to every generation

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<sup>77</sup>John 17:14.

<sup>78</sup>John 20:31.

<sup>79</sup>Cf. John 14:26; 15:26,27; 16:13.

<sup>80</sup>Emil Brunner, Truth as Encounter, translated from the German by Amandus W. Loos and David Cairns (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1943, 1964); p. 157.

is unified in the Person and work of Jesus Christ. In fact the Word of God to every generation is the communication of a person, the Person of Jesus Christ.

The person of the Mediator must also be understood as an act of God, namely, as His coming to us in revelation and redemption. It must be understood as the divine act of turning himself toward and giving himself to man.<sup>81</sup>

God has given Himself with the specific purpose of calling man back to Himself and giving man the opportunity to be redeemed. "Jesus Christ did not come merely to come, but he came to redeem."<sup>82</sup> This coming is the consummation of the Word of God to His people. Jesus, as the final Word of God, came as the answer to man's need of redemption, and also as God's final call to man to receive this gracious offer. There will be no other way offered to man, just as there never has been any other way, given to man. The Apostle Peter testifies to this when he says, "There is salvation in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."<sup>83</sup> The Apostle Paul also states, "For no other foundation can any man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."<sup>84</sup>

The beloved Apostle John records many of the sayings of Jesus which indicate that Jesus considered Himself as the

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid., p. 155.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>Acts 4:12.

<sup>84</sup>1 Corinthians 3:11.

only source of salvation. To the woman of Samaria He says that He is the Messiah;<sup>85</sup> to the people gathered beside the sea of Tiberias, He says, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst;"<sup>86</sup> to His disciples He says, "As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world."<sup>87</sup> On other occasions Jesus refers to Himself as: the door;<sup>88</sup> the good shepherd;<sup>89</sup> the resurrection and the life;<sup>90</sup> the way, the truth, and the life, apart from whom no one comes to the Father.<sup>91</sup> John in the Revelation to John, says of this Christ that He is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.<sup>92</sup> These passages, as a sample of the many, bear sufficient testimony to the inclusiveness of this Jesus as the final Word of God to man, through whom God has chosen to redeem the world to Himself.

In whatever manifestation the Word of God comes to man, whether spoken, or written, or in visions or dreams, or through the divine acts of judgment and mercy, or through

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<sup>85</sup>John 4:25-26.

<sup>86</sup>John 6:35ff.

<sup>87</sup>John 9:5.

<sup>88</sup>John 10:7-9.

<sup>89</sup>John 10:14ff.

<sup>90</sup>John 11:25.

<sup>91</sup>John 14:6.

<sup>92</sup>Revelation 1:8,17.

the revelation of Jesus Christ in His Person, it is still just one Word of God, God Himself in His self-communication to man. Jesus Christ is the unity of the message, He is the fulfillment of all previous manifestations of the Word of God, He is the one through whom God has chosen to communicate Himself to His children. Emil Brunner sums it up by saying,

It is therefore he, this Person, who is really the Word. He himself is the communication, the self-communication of God; it is he himself in whom God proclaims and realizes his will to Lordship and His will to fellowship. . . . The Word of God in its ultimate meaning is thus precisely not "a word from God," but God in person, God himself speaking, himself present, Immanuel. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." "Come unto me, all ye . . . and I will give you rest." . . . Words therefore are not of ultimate consequence, not even divine words, but the Word, which he himself, Jesus Christ, is.<sup>93</sup>

#### Attributes of the Word of God

##### The Sovereignty of the Word of God

The first and perhaps the most important attribute of the Word of God is its sovereignty. Karl Barth devotes considerable attention to the sovereignty of God's Word in his book, God Here and Now. In this discussion he says,

The sovereignty of God's Word . . . consists in this: that God's Word is His Son Jesus Christ. . . . God Himself, who is for us and with us--this is the Word of God. The sovereignty of this our God is therefore the sovereignty of the Word of God.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>Brunner, p. 132.

<sup>94</sup>Barth, p. 13.

The Word of God and the God of the Word, who conveys Himself through His Word, cannot be separated without doing violence to either one or both. The sovereignty of the Word of God will be correctly understood when the Word of God and the God of the Word are looked upon as being one and the same. Karl Barth says that the Reformers of the sixteenth century learned this, and need to teach it to us today, but the Church of today must go beyond the understanding of the Reformers in this principle. He says that the Church must learn again,

to seek God in His Word and to seek His sovereignty in the sovereignty of His Word, which is to say, in the sovereignty of His Son, Jesus Christ. . . . Even more than the Reformers did, we must let God and His Word be one, with more emphasis, more joy, more consistency, and we must let Jesus Christ be even more self-evidently the one Mediator between God and man.<sup>95</sup>

Jesus Christ came to be the one Mediator between God and man, in order that man might be the benefactor of God's mercy and grace as evidenced in the Person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul says this of Jesus Christ,

Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>96</sup>Philippians 2:5-10.



Jesus Christ came with the express purpose of giving Himself for man, and having completed His mission by making it possible for man to return to fellowship with God He returned to the Father.<sup>97</sup> Karl Barth has this to say about this act of the Word of God,

The actual sovereign act of the Word of God is its existence as the man Jesus Christ, in which God's eternal Son united our nature with Himself, made its creatureliness His own, and also took upon Himself the curse which was due it, in order that He might share with it in turn His divine glory . . . . He, Jesus Christ, stands as Victor over our sins of yesterday, today, and tomorrow, over the hosts of temptation, over the horror of death and hell . . . . He is become the Head of the body of which we are members . . . . The sovereignty of the Word of God is always the sovereignty of Jesus Christ.<sup>98</sup>

The sovereignty of the Word of God as it is understood in this single yet manifold act of Jesus Christ is discussed by Barth under three headings: its omnipotence; its exclusiveness and its ability to reach man in divine freedom.<sup>99</sup>

1. Its Omnipotence. The omnipotence of the Word of God, according to Karl Barth, consists in a power which is beyond all other powers, a power which has caused God in His love to turn Himself to the world in divine love. This power is further defined as,

power over everything, the power of the Creator, Preserver, the Ruler of all things. Because God

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<sup>97</sup>Cf. John 3:16; Romans 5:1ff.

<sup>98</sup>Barth, pp. 15-16.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., pp. 17ff.

Himself is the Word, this and no less a power stands at the disposal of His Word. This and no less a power is the power of Jesus Christ.<sup>100</sup>

The power of the Word of God is not limited or controlled or overshadowed by other powers, it is not even to be considered as one power among many others, it stands alone as the power over all other powers, the power to which all other powers owe their potency.<sup>101</sup> It is for this reason that the Word of God is trustworthy, even as Barth says,

Therefore the Word of God is truly comforting and certain, infallible, and reliable. Therefore its promises, commands, judgments, and blessings are not empty talk, but creative deeds.<sup>102</sup>

The Scriptures always bear witness to the power of the Word of God. It is never considered as that which is weak and ineffective but always as that which is able to accomplish the purposes of its coming. When Jeremiah spoke the Word he was assured of the power to accompany this speaking: "Behold, I am making my words in your mouth a fire, and this people wood, and a fire shall devour them."<sup>103</sup> Ezekiel, too, experienced the power of God at work in His Word when he was placed in the midst of the valley full of dry bones. Of this experience Ezekiel says,

So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold, a rattling; and the bones

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<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>Cf. Psalms 119:89-91; 145:15-19; John 17:2.

<sup>102</sup>Barth, p. 17.

<sup>103</sup>Jeremiah 5:14. Cf. also Jeremiah 23:29.

came together, bone to its bone . . . and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army.<sup>104</sup>

God is at work in His Word to accomplish that which the Word promises. The Psalmist recognizes this when he says, "For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded and it stood forth."<sup>105</sup> Luther speaks of the power of the Word of God as it accomplishes that which it says. At the time of creation God spoke and those things which were not came into being.<sup>106</sup> He further states that God accomplishes His work with His Word and that the works can be called the words of the Lord. Luther says, "Opera Dei sunt verba eius."<sup>107</sup>

The power of the Word of God is well summarized by Robert Preus, who says,

He is the living God, acting, speaking, working, striving to make His claim on man. He kills and

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<sup>104</sup>Ezekiel 37:7,10. The experiences of Ezekiel and Jeremiah were not exclusive, since every prophet experienced the power of God at work in and through him as he proclaimed the Word of God to the people. Isaiah summarizes their mutual experiences well when he says, "For the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return not thither but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth, it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and prosper in the thing for which I sent it." Isaiah 55:10,11.

<sup>105</sup>Psalm 33:9. Cf. 33:4; 105:19-20; 107:20; 119:160.

<sup>106</sup>Martin Luther, "Dictata super Psalterium," D. Martin Luthers Werke. III (Weimar: Hermann Boehlau, 1885), 152. 7.

<sup>107</sup>Martin Luther, "Enarratio in Genesin," D. Martin Luthers Werke. XLII (Weimar: Hermann Boehlaus Nachfolger, 1911), 17.

He makes alive; He exalts and He casts down; He speaks and He gives knowledge, He shows His strength, He performs mercy, He delivers. He not only loves, but He makes His love manifest by sending His only begotten Son into the world. He not only hates sin, but He executes judgment, and His wrath is actually revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. God's grace and His justice, His omnipresence and His holiness, His majesty and His glory are not quiescent attributes, but active and dynamic. And as God is, so is His Word.<sup>108</sup>

2. Its exclusiveness. The sovereignty of the Word of God is further evidenced in its exclusiveness.<sup>109</sup> The Word of God is intended for everyone and is directed to everyone in the world, yet, this Word of God is one, "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus."<sup>110</sup> The Word of God is the only one of its kind, there is no other Word like it, it is unique. Or as Karl Barth has expressed it, "The sovereignty of the Word of God is distinguished by the fact that it has no competitors."<sup>111</sup>

3. The Word of God reaches man in Divine Freedom. The sovereignty of the Word of God is further distinguished by its ability to reach man in divine freedom.

it is spoken and reaches us in divine freedom;  
 . . . freedom which gives freedom to others, which gives us and allows us our freedom, which asks of

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<sup>108</sup>Preus, p. 457.

<sup>109</sup>Barth, p. 18.

<sup>110</sup>1 Timothy 2:5. Cf. Hebrews 9:24; 1 John 2:1.

<sup>111</sup>Barth, p. 18.

us that we place ourselves at its disposal in freedom--not forced, not pushed, not overpowered, but in adoration.<sup>112</sup>

The Word of God is not bound.<sup>113</sup> It is the truth of God and as such is able to perform its work upon the heart of man in complete freedom. Man cannot bind this Word to perform that which he wills or desires, nor can he predetermine what this Word will do in the heart of man. Karl Barth further says,

The same Jesus Christ is free to be our Judge and our Savior. And so in the witness of the prophets and the apostles, also in its proclamation by the Church, the one Word of God is free to bind and to loose, to blind and to enlighten, to damn and to save. Once more, it would not be the Word of God which we were hearing if we did not feel constrained to recognize without qualification its full sovereignty in this sense as well.<sup>114</sup>

The Word of God is able to reach man in divine freedom, but at the same time it gives man freedom to respond. This freedom which man possesses is only in relation to God and is grounded in his dependence upon God. Emil Brunner says,

This independence of man is never independence from God; contrarily, man's freedom is grounded precisely in his dependence on God, so that a maximum of freedom is at the same time a maximum of dependence. Man is the more free, the more he is conscious of his dependence on God and the more dependent he makes himself; the less free, the more he denies this dependence and seeks to withdraw himself from it. . . . True humanism and true freedom, however, both of which are lost by the man emancipated from God, are present only when

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<sup>112</sup>Ibid., p. 18-19.

<sup>113</sup><sub>2</sub> Timothy 2:9.

<sup>114</sup>Barth, p. 19.

man knows and acknowledges his complete dependence on God. Complete dependence upon God is at the same time true freedom.<sup>115</sup>

When man asserts his independence from God he thereby enslaves himself to the destructive powers of sin, which are in opposition to God, even as the Scriptures testify,

Do you not know that if you yield yourselves to any one as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness.<sup>116</sup>

Therefore, even man's "no" is "no" in relation to God, even as his "yes" is "yes" in relation to God. Man is free to say "no" to God and to His Word of reconciliation, Jesus Christ, but in saying "no," as the above Scripture so clearly states, he does not gain freedom but slavery. On the other hand, when man in freedom says, "yes" to God and to this Word of reconciliation he regains his freedom, freedom which is conditioned by complete dependence upon God. But, this freedom to say "yes" is also God's work within the person thus speaking, and in the time of choice between "yes" and "no," the Holy Spirit works through the Word of God and willing obedience to Him. Karl Barth emphasizes this when he says,

We may and ought to choose, but it is His decision, the decision of the Word of God, just when, and where our choice is the choice of truth in adoration.<sup>117</sup>

The Word of God reaches man in divine freedom but it

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<sup>115</sup>Brunner, p. 93.

<sup>116</sup>Romans 6:16. Cf. 7:14,23; 2 Timothy 2:26; John 8:34.

<sup>117</sup>Barth, p. 19.

also produces the desire and the ability to say "yes" to this Word, and thus to receive the Word of reconciliation, which is Jesus Christ. The Formula of Concord is very clear on this, where we read in part,

man's conversion is not only in part, but entirely, the operation, gift, endowment, and work of the Holy Spirit alone, who accomplishes and performs it by His power and might through the Word in the intellect, will, and heart of man. . . . Man does or works nothing.<sup>118</sup>

The Word of God is sovereign in that it is omnipotent, that it is exclusive, and that it is able to reach man in divine freedom, and furthermore, that it has the sovereignty over man. Man is neither sovereign over the Word of God, nor in relation to the Word of God. The Word of God is always sovereign over, and in relation to man. For this reason, when the Word of God reaches man in complete freedom, seeking to give man complete freedom in itself, man must choose between the freedom offered and the slavery which he already possesses. But, whatever choice he makes, it is always a choice in relation to God, and to the Word of God, never in isolation.

God as Lord lays claim to the obedience of man; and by giving himself to be known as the loving God, He gives this love of His to man, that man may love Him in return. He does both through the Word of God. . . . The Word, . . . is that communication which does not convert the subject into an object; but when it is

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<sup>118</sup>"Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration," Article II, "Free Will," The Book of Concord, The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert and others (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, c.1959), p. 538.89.

accepted it stimulates self-activity. The Word is the self-communication of God, which leaves an area of freedom for creaturely self-decision, which gives without violence, which so gives that the taking can be self-giving, voluntary self-giving.<sup>119</sup>

Even in the choice of independence from God, the sovereignty of the Word of God is attested.<sup>120</sup>

The Word of God is an Active Word

God's Word is always God's activity directed toward people. This constitutes one of the attributes of this Word of God. Wherever and whenever the Word of God is spoken and heard, God in that instance, is actively performing His work in relation to man. J. K. S. Reid, in his book, The Authority of Scripture, has this to say, "When God acts, and whenever He acts, what is done displays a salvific character."<sup>121</sup> The activity of God is directed toward this specific target in the heart of man, even his salvation. Richard R.

Caemmerer says,

God speaks and acts His Word of help; He sends His Son as His Word of help; the Son is not only that Word, but He speaks a Word which works powerfully in His disciples; also their Word to their world becomes a powerful action of God in the hearts of men to turn them to God.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>119</sup>Brunner, p. 102-103.

<sup>120</sup>Cf. King Saul who rejected God, 1 Samuel 15:25-26; 1 Chronicles 10:13.

<sup>121</sup>J. K. S. Reid, The Authority of Scripture (New York: Harper and Brothers, n.d.), p. 249.

<sup>122</sup>Richard R. Caemmerer, "The Word of God and the Bible," Proceedings of the Southeastern District of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Charlotte, North Carolina,



Thus God speaks His Word with effective intent, to His people.

This activity of God is conveyed to man, through the Holy Scriptures insofar as they are permitted to speak the Word of God. The Holy Scriptures set before men the record and the account of God's action in the past. God takes this record of past action and causes it to become a living reality in the lives of people today, thus causing it to become the Word of God. The Scriptures are not given merely as a divine record of past action, but to bring God's active purposes to bear upon man today. The Word of God is a force to be applied. It is a power to be used--the power of God. This force, this power, is registered toward people wherever and whenever the Word of God is proclaimed and man listens to its message. It is always an active Word.

This great activity of God is revealed in the sending of His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world, to be the final Word of God to man. The Word of God is the Word made flesh, in which God spoke to men in and through His Son, Jesus Christ, the Word which clarifies all the other words that God has spoken across space and time.<sup>123</sup> Harry G. Coiner continues,

The focal point of the Biblical revelation is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As the writer of the Hebrews tells us, God had been speaking to men for long ages in a variety of ways and through a number of different persons, but

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1960. (Unpublished essay in the hands of R. R. Caemmerer, St. Louis, Missouri), non-paginated.

<sup>123</sup> Harry G. Coiner, Teaching the Word to Adults (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), p. 65.

finally He spoke to men in and through His Son  
(Heb. 1:1,2).<sup>124</sup>

This active purpose of God having been revealed in the giving of His Son, Jesus Christ, is the continuing activity that God wants His people to believe, to live and to share with their world.

The Gospel is the action of God in Jesus Christ which comes to lift man out of the depths of despair to fellowship with God. It is God's great act through His Son, Jesus Christ. Brunner states,

The person of the Mediator must also be understood as an act of God, namely, as His coming to us in revelation and redemption. It must be understood as the divine act of turning Himself toward and giving Himself to man. . . . In him, God reveals Himself; in Him, God reconciles the world unto Himself; in Him, God redeems us.<sup>125</sup>

This is God's way of dealing with a sinful and lost humanity. He, in Jesus Christ, the Word of God, reveals Himself in His activity toward men.

The activity of the Word of God is always the action of God in relation to man, never the action of man in relation to God.<sup>126</sup> God is the one who initiates the action and He is also the one who brings this action to fruition in the lives of people. Man is never the initiator of the action,

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<sup>124</sup>Ibid.

<sup>125</sup>Brunner, p. 156.

<sup>126</sup>Karl Barth, The Doctrine of the Word of God, Church Dogmatics, Volume I, 1, translated by G. T. Thomson (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936, 1960), p. 141.

nor is he able to bring it to fruition in his own life.<sup>127</sup>

### The Word of God is the Truth

To say that the Word of God is the truth is a commonplace. Yet this is a very important attribute of the Word of God. Jesus bears testimony to Himself and says, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life."<sup>128</sup> God is witnessed to by Moses who says of Him,

The Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is he.<sup>129</sup>

His words are also recognized as true by King David, "And now, O Lord God, thou art God, and thy words are true."<sup>130</sup>

Since the Word of God is true, even as Jesus Christ, the Word is Truth, that which it speaks to man is the truth in relation to himself and in relation to God. Every man who hears the Word of God finds in its proclamation the fulfillment of that which the Word says in relation to sin and condemnation, and also in relation to life and salvation. Since man knows that God is speaking the truth to him, he acts contrary to that which he knows is right in his denial of the Word of God.

When Jesus Christ was upon the earth, He spoke as one

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<sup>127</sup>Ephesians 2:8-10.

<sup>128</sup>John 14:6; Cf. 1:14; 18:37.

<sup>129</sup>Deuteronomy 32:4. Cf. Isaiah 65:16.

<sup>130</sup>2 Samuel 7:28. Cf. Romans 3:4; Titus 1:2.

having authority. This authority was none other than the Word of Truth. He revealed Himself, as He spoke the Truth, as the authority of Truth to his hearers. Karl Barth says,

It is the truth because it is God's person speaking, Dei loquentis persona. . . . It is known and true for no other reason than that He Himself says it, that He in person is in and accompanies what is said by Him.<sup>131</sup>

The Word of God is the Life

Not only is the Word of God the Truth, it is also the Life, even as Jesus testifies of Himself, "I am the . . . Life."<sup>132</sup> Jesus Christ revealed Himself as the Life which is radiant;<sup>133</sup> and abundant;<sup>134</sup> and He came to give Life for death, even as He said, "I am the resurrection and the life."<sup>135</sup> He came to give everlasting life to all who would receive it from Him.<sup>136</sup> Furthermore, He witnessed by the Holy Spirit, through John, that there is no other source of life,

And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; He who has not the Son has not life.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>131</sup>Barth, Church Dogmatics, p. 155.

<sup>132</sup>John 14:6.

<sup>133</sup>John 1:4.

<sup>134</sup>John 10:10.

<sup>135</sup>John 11:25.

<sup>136</sup>John 3:16; Romans 5:21.

<sup>137</sup>1 John 5:12.

The evidence portrays that the Word of God is the life that God has intended for all His children. It also showed that when the Word of God comes conveying this life, it speaks the truth about man in relation to sin, and about God in relation to His most precious gift, His Son. Furthermore, when it is conveyed to man it is an active Word having within it the power to perform that which it promises and to give to man that which he needs, namely, forgiveness, life, and salvation.

The writer to the Hebrews affirms that God, who has spoken in many and various ways in the past, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, Jesus Christ, the one through whom and in whom the Word of God is made known to every generation. As the Scriptures are read, meditated upon, and studied, Jesus Christ is present to perform His works anew, and that as He is proclaimed by His followers in this day, He is the content that gets taught and preached, the message that every generation needs to hear. If the teaching ministry of the Church is to produce renewal in the lives of the people of God and in the life of the Congregation as well, Jesus Christ is the one that must be proclaimed.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ACTION OF RENEWAL: THE WORD OF GOD STRIKES MEN

The Word of God is the message of the Church to the man in the world as he is caught in the dilemma of meaninglessness, frustration, guilt, and despair. This message of the Church comes as an invitation from outside of man and supplies the answer to the deepest needs of his life. The only satisfactory answer to meaningless is meaning; to frustration--purposeful activity; to guilt--forgiveness; and to despair--hope. The Word of God comes with these answers to the needs of life and replaces the inner turmoil and unrest with the peace of God.<sup>1</sup>

The Word of God, as the message of God to man, comes through the proclamation of a word--the good word of the Gospel, the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ, the joyful word of announcement, through which God offers His Son, Jesus Christ, as the answer to the needs of man, and through which God, not only announces that these needs can be satisfied, but, bestows that very satisfaction upon all who hear this Word with a receptive heart. The power of God comes with the proclamation of the Word of God to bestow the very thing which the Word promises. Often the ears are stopped

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<sup>1</sup>Psalm 29:11; John 14:27; Philippians 4:7. Cf. also the disciples who went preaching peace by Jesus Christ, Acts 10:36. Jesus is the peace, Ephesians 2:14.

by the cares of this life so that the voice of God is unheard, or being heard is unheeded with the result that the activity of God through His Word does not accomplish its divine purposes in the life of the individual.<sup>2</sup>

The Word of God, however, creates in the heart of the individual a willingness to hear the Word, as well as the willingness to receive its gracious offer.<sup>3</sup> Through this created receptivity to the Word of God, the individual is able to respond with a "yes" to God, rather than with a "no" of disbelief. Three results which the Word of God creates in man, as he hears its message, will be considered in this chapter: first of all, the Word of God reveals the human predicament, and leaves man face to face with himself as he really is; secondly, the Word of God calls man back to his divine origin, calls him to the place of restored fellowship with God; and thirdly, the Word of God bestows the gifts which renew and redirect man's life. Man is renewed through hearing the Word of God and being renewed will walk in the paths of righteousness and peace.

#### The Word of God Reveals the Human Predicament

The proclamation of the Word of God, through which man encounters Jesus Christ, uncovers the human mystery.<sup>4</sup> Brunner

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<sup>2</sup>Luke 8:4ff. The Sower and the Seed.

<sup>3</sup>Psalm 40:6; Proverbs 20:12.

<sup>4</sup>Emil Brunner, Truth as Encounter (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1943, 1964), p. 38-39.

explains that in this encounter with the Word of God man sees himself not only as a person who has been created by God, but also as the being who has destroyed this fellowship, through his revolt against his origin. Specifically Emil Brunner says,

The Word of Christ discloses to us not only the grandeur but also the misere de l'homme. Man is not only the being created by God's Word but also the being estranged from his origin.<sup>5</sup>

The misere de l'homme is made knowable to man through the awareness of who he is and of what his nature really consists. This knowledge of himself becomes available to him through the Word of God which encounters him through the preaching of Christ. Brunner puts it this way:

To understand what man is we must start from his divine principium, and not from his temporal initium, not with the prehuman becoming man, but with God becoming man in Jesus Christ. . . . In this Logos, man as a person has his origin. . . . Here it becomes clear that man is . . . responsive actuality, answering, responsible person.<sup>6</sup>

As man sees himself revealed in this Word of God, Jesus Christ, he sees himself as he really is: unclean; rebellious; alienated; out of fellowship; defiant; and helpless. Some notable examples of man revealed before Jesus Christ are scenes from the life of the Apostle Peter. When Peter stands in the presence of Jesus Christ he sees himself as

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 34-35.



he really is: sinful;<sup>7</sup> helpless;<sup>8</sup> rebellious;<sup>9</sup> in despair and remorse;<sup>10</sup> and yet Christ is revealed to him as the true Son of God.<sup>11</sup> Peter is a picture of what man is like today. When the man of today sees himself in the light of Jesus Christ, he is not different from the picture of man revealed to Peter. His problems may be more complex, but his basic drives, desires, and needs remain very much as they were at that time.

This Word of God comes to man in several different ways, but in each instance of its coming, the portrayal of the self in all his nakedness becomes the starting point for a new and meaningful life. The Lutheran Church has traditionally spoken of this uncovering of the human mystery in the terms of Law and Gospel: the law shows who he is and what he needs; the gospel announces the gracious gift of forgiveness in Jesus Christ and brings salvation. This emphasis became part of the Lutheran Church in the Reformation and has been defined in the confessions of the Lutheran Church as follows:

the law is a divine doctrine which reveals the righteous and immutable will of God, shows how man ought to be disposed in his nature, thoughts, words, and deeds in order to be pleasing and

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<sup>7</sup>Luke 5:8. ". . . I am a sinful man, O Lord."

<sup>8</sup>Matthew 14:29-30. "Help, save me."

<sup>9</sup>John 18:25-27. He denied it and said, "I am not."

<sup>10</sup>Matthew 26:75. "He went out and wept bitterly."

<sup>11</sup>Matthew 16:16. "You are the Christ, the Son of God."

acceptable to God, and threatens transgressors of the law with God's wrath and temporal and eternal punishment. For, as Luther says against the nomoclasts, "Everything that rebukes sin is and belongs to the law, the proper function of which is to condemn sin and to lead to a knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20; 7:7).

The Gospel, however, is that doctrine which teaches what a man should believe in order to obtain the forgiveness of sins from God, . . . The content of the Gospel is this, that the Son of God, Christ our Lord, himself assumed and bore the curse of the law and expiated and paid for all our sins, that through him alone we re-enter the good graces of God, obtain forgiveness of sins through faith, are freed from death and all the punishments of sin, and are saved eternally.<sup>12</sup>

The Apology to the Augsburg Confession teaches that the Gospel is the promise of forgiveness of sins and of justification through Christ, while the law is the message which rebukes and condemns sin.<sup>13</sup>

God speaks His Word to awaken man from sleep and to give him life for death. He calls man through the Word of the Gospel.<sup>14</sup> But man cannot hear this call of God in the Gospel until he is aware that this call to forgiveness and salvation is both intended for him and needed by him. God, therefore, through the law moves the heart of man to see

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<sup>12</sup>"Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration," Article V, "Law and Gospel," The Book of Concord, The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert and others (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, c.1959), p. 561.17,20.

<sup>13</sup>"Apology of the Augsburg Confession," Article IV "Justification," The Book of Concord, The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert and others (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, c.1959), pp. 112.40; 114.45; Article XII, "Penitence," pp. 187.45; 192.73; 193.76.

<sup>14</sup>2 Thessalonians 2:14; John 6:44.

himself as he really is, by nature, sinful and rebellious, alienated and outcast, and in need of that which God so graciously offers him in the Gospel, namely, life and salvation. The Law causes man to come to the acknowledgement of his sinful condition, leads him to sorrow and contrition over his sin, and brings him to desire freedom from the consequences of his sin. The Law in its convicting and judging power works upon man's intellect, will and conscience, and to this Law man must listen and give serious attention.<sup>15</sup>

The Law with its message of condemnation and judgment serves the purposes of the Gospel, but it cannot do the work of the Gospel in bringing man to the place of repentance and faith. This work is done only by the Holy Spirit through the good news of the Gospel. The Law prepares the heart of man for the Gospel, making him willing to listen to the good news, but it cannot either cause or force man to believe. Only the Gospel, whose purposes are served by the Law, is able to bring the ability and the power to believe. Yet the Law must do its work in order that the Gospel will be heard and be good news when it is heard by the man in sin. The Apology to the Augsburg Confession asks the question, "if the preaching of the law were enough by itself, why would Christ and Gospel be necessary?" to which it answers:

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<sup>15</sup>Man is aware of this operation of God in his heart. This is made clear in the following passages: Jeremiah 23:29; Mark 10:22; John 6:60; Hebrews 4:12.

in the preaching of penitence it is not enough to preach the law, the Word that convicts of sin. For the law works wrath; it only accuses; it only terrifies consciences. Consciences cannot find peace unless they hear the voice of God, clearly promising the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, it is necessary to add the Gospel promise, that for Christ sake sins are forgiven and that by faith in Christ we obtain the forgiveness of sins.<sup>16</sup>

The call of God cannot be effective in man until man realizes who he is, and to some degree realizes his needs. No man ever believes the Gospel before he learns his sinfulness from the Law. The Law must first work the recognition of sinfulness, and it must first grind a man to death, before he can receive the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection from the dead, which are offered by the Gospel.<sup>17</sup> Both doctrines, Law and Gospel, are necessary, and both serve the purposes of God as they work together to bring the sinner back into fellowship with God. The Gospel alone saves, but the Law makes the message of the Gospel acceptable to the man in sin, since it becomes the answer to the human predicament as clarified in the Law.<sup>18</sup>

The relatively new field of psychotherapy offers a method which, rightly used, can often open the lives of

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<sup>16</sup>"Apology of the Augsburg Confession," Article IV, "Justification," The Book of Concord, p. 144.257.

<sup>17</sup>C. F. W. Walther, Licht Des Lebens (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1905), pp. 124ff., 139.

<sup>18</sup>"Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration," Article VI, "Third Use of Law," The Book of Concord, p. 562.24-26.

people to the application of the Word of God. Carl R. Rogers, a noted psychologist from the University of Wisconsin, puts his finger on the dilemma of man when he says,

each individual seems to be asking a double question; "Who am I?" and "How may I become myself?"<sup>19</sup>

These questions receive their answers in the life of the individual through what Carl Rogers refers to as the "process of becoming." In this process the individual drops the defensive masks with which he has faced life, and begins to experience the unknown aspects of his own life. In fact he often discovers the stranger who has been living behind the defensive masks which he has shown to the world. This discovery of who he is marks the beginning of the emergence of the person. He becomes himself as the façades of life are dropped and as he develops courage and willingness to be himself. The person who emerges is the one who possesses very definite attributes which cause the ongoing process of becoming to be effective. Carl Rogers refers to these personal attributes in this way,

I have tried to give my picture of the characteristic attributes of the person who emerges; a person who is more open to all the elements of his organic structure; a person who is developing a trust in his own organism as an instrument of sensitive living; a person who accepts the locus of evaluation as residing within himself; a person who is learning to live in his life as a participant in a fluid, ongoing, process, in

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<sup>19</sup>Carl R. Rogers, On Becoming a Person (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, c.1961), p. 123.

which he is continually discovering new aspects of himself in the flow of his experience.<sup>20</sup>

This description of Carl Rogers is not different from, but rather complementary to, the picture of becoming a Christian person, standing in the fellowship for which he was originally created. This restoration to the original fellowship included that which Rogers outlines above: an awareness of feeling and sensitive response in his own heart; the locus of evaluation as residing in self--God speaking directly, a relationship between God and self alone; and this life in God is but the beginning of a life-long process of becoming, of call and response to the Word of God as it comes to him in life. C. F. W. Walther refers to the preacher as performing this through his preaching in the congregation. He asks the question, "What is to be effected by preaching?" to which he answers,

Bear in mind that the preacher is to arouse secure souls from their sleep in sin; next, to lead those who have been aroused to faith; next, to give believers assurance of their state of grace and salvation; next, to lead those who have been assured of this to sanctification of their lives; and lastly, to confirm the sanctified and to keep them in their holy and blessed state unto the end. What a task!<sup>21</sup>

This task can be performed through the preaching of the Word of God in the congregation, for God works through His Word as

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>21</sup>C. F. W. Walther, The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel, reproduced from the German edition of 1897 by W. H. T. Dau (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1928), p. 248.

it is proclaimed and heard. The Apostle Paul tells Timothy that this task is performed by, "rightly handling of the Word of Truth."<sup>22</sup>

The proclamation of the Word of God will itself be the means through which God reveals to man his predicament. As the Word of God strikes man it will reveal to him who he is--a sinner in need of God's grace. C. F. W. Walther further says,

It is therefore one of the most important requisites of a truly evangelical minister that he know how to depict for his hearers the true nature of sin in terms that are as plain and distinct as they are terrible, drastic, and impressive. For without a real knowledge of what an awful thing sin is man cannot understand and accept the Gospel.<sup>23</sup>

Man must know who he is before he will accept the need or the possibility of renewal.

Only as man realizes who he is can he be led from the place of despair to the joy of faith. The Word of God produces such knowledge of self that man, who thus sees himself, is able to respond to God in contrition and faith. "The Word of God alone produces repentance, faith, and godliness and preserves man therein unto the end."<sup>24</sup> Walther further says,

There is no other way to faith than that which leads through a person's knowledge of his sins and damnable condition, through the inward crushing of his heart in contrition and sorrow. A person that has not come to faith in this way is not a believing Christian, much less a theologian.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Walther, The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel, p. 111.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 235.

This is the function of the law as it serves the purposes of the Gospel. It is not thereby separated from the Gospel nor is it used to serve its own purposes of crushing and killing. The Law is used rightly and fulfills its proper function only as it leads to a willing receptiveness to the Gospel. This is the emphasis of C. F. W. Walther when he says,

Since the fall the Law, you know, has but a single function, viz., to lead men to the knowledge of their sins. It has no power to renew them. That power is vested solely in the Gospel.<sup>26</sup>

But the person has to be led to the place where he hears this Word of God as it comes to him with a revelation of who he is and what God has intended him to become. James Smart considers this as one of the important functions of the teaching ministry of the Church. He says,

The person in need must be led to the point where he begins to hear God speaking into the deep places of his life through the Word of Scriptures.<sup>27</sup>

Unless the teaching and the preaching of the Word of God produces hearing ears, its message will go unheeded and its intended results unclaimed. The teacher and the preacher, therefore, will speak so realistically and truthfully to the man in his situation, that the Word of God will be able to make its claims in his life and also produce God's purposes

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 236.

<sup>27</sup>James D. Smart, The Teaching Ministry of the Church (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954), p. 42.



with him. The Word of God, as the truth of God, taught in all its truth and purity, is able to produce in man the intended purposes of God. It is urgent, therefore, that the preacher and the teacher know the temper of the times in which they live, so that they can speak realistically and truthfully to the people who are living in the world of their day. It is also of utmost importance that he know the Word of God, in relation to these times, and particularly as it applies to the man in the world. In so understanding his times and his message he will be able to speak the Word of God in such a way that God can use it to create hearing ears and receptive hearts.

In this preaching and teaching, however, the one speaking conveys the message of the Word of God as the central message, and is careful not to intrude upon it his private opinions or personal desires. The Word of God may be greatly hindered in its effectiveness by an egotistical, self-centered desire to seek the results which are pleasing to men. The man who speaks the Word of God must not stand in the way of God as the message from God is brought to men, nor should the one who speaks impose his own demands upon the results of the message. Man is but the mouthpiece for the truth of God, not one who is able to implement it in the lives of others, nor in any way to predetermine its outcome. Donald G. Millar relates,

Ideal preaching [or teaching is] . . . where the presence of God becomes so real that the preacher

himself drops almost entirely out of the consciousness of the worshippers, so that even as the preacher speaks, they and God seem to be left alone.<sup>28</sup>

Renewal is Made Possible Through the Gospel--  
The Call Back to the Divine Origin

Only when the man in the world knows who he is can the gracious offer of God, in the Gospel, be heard by him, and become for him good news.<sup>29</sup> When the man who sees himself in rebellion, in opposition to God, in lawlessness, and in sin, and realizes that he is unable to do anything to rectify this condition, hears the Word of God, which offers him a release from these repulsive thoughts, words, and actions, it will be good news.<sup>30</sup> Willy Loman did not know who he was and thus took the only way out which he could understand.<sup>31</sup> Judas Iscariot had stopped his ears and thus could not hear the gracious offer of God.<sup>32</sup> King Saul refused to listen to God and so cut himself off from the blessings of God.<sup>33</sup> The rich young ruler heard the Word of God but went away sorrowful in his response of "no."<sup>34</sup> But the woman of Samaria

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<sup>28</sup> Donald G. Millar, Fire in Thy Mouth (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), p. 18.

<sup>29</sup> Matthew 11:28.

<sup>30</sup> John 6:37.

<sup>31</sup> Arthur Miller, Death of a Salesman (New York: Viking Press, 1958), p. 138. His son Biff summed up his life by saying, "He never knew who he was."

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Matthew 26:14-16.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. 1 Samuel 13:8ff.; 15:10ff.

<sup>34</sup> Mark 10:17-22.

heard the call of God and responded with a "yes" as she ran to tell all her neighboring townspeople.<sup>35</sup>

When this call of God comes to the person who knows who he is, there is always a choice between the two possible responses mentioned above. The choice involves either acceptance of the offer made by God in His Holy Word, or the refusal to accept and to remain in sin and rebellion. The call, however, must be answered, it cannot be ignored or dismissed. Francis Ayres speaks of it in this way,

Nothing, not even current religious practice and law, is to stand between Christ and those He calls. To offer reasons for delay, or conditions under which the call will be accepted, is to reveal the fact that one is unaware of who has made the call, of what God has done in order to make the call, or of what urgency there is to the task. In other words, the call has not been heard. When the call is heard, the only possible answers are yes or no.<sup>36</sup>

The "no" of man is the answer which is able to keep the gift of God from becoming an actuality in the heart and life of the person called. Such a person remains in the enslavement to sin of which the Scriptures speak,

Do you not know that if you yield yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?<sup>37</sup>

But the "yes" of man permits the Gospel to have effective

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<sup>35</sup>John 4:7ff.

<sup>36</sup>Francis O. Ayres, The Ministry of the Laity, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), p. 37.

<sup>37</sup>Romans 6:16.

reign in the heart and life of such a person. The Word of God, in its activity, directed toward man, gives and bestows the gracious gifts which the Word promises.<sup>38</sup>

The Gospel Bestows the Gifts which Renew  
and Redirect Man's Life

The Gospel becomes good news when the Law of God has served the purposes of the Gospel by bringing forth its results in life. When the person "comes to himself" as did the prodigal son,<sup>39</sup> then the message of God can be good news. But the Gospel is less than good news to the person who is content with life or too busy with the manifold distractions of life to listen to its message.<sup>40</sup> The hearing of the Gospel is often conditioned by the situation in which a man lives. The prodigal son would not listen to that inner voice till he "came to himself"; the psychiatric patient is in the process of becoming when he "knows who he is"; the man to whom the Word of God comes also needs to know who he is, in order that when the Gospel comes it will be good news.

The outward form of the Gospel is the story of salvation, the good news of God given in the person and work of his Son, Jesus Christ. Werner Elert gives this definition

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<sup>38</sup>John 6:35; 8:12; and many others.

<sup>39</sup>Luke 15:11-32, especially verse 17.

<sup>40</sup>Cf. the excuses given by the guests invited to the wedding feast, Luke 14:18-20.

of the Gospel,

the Gospel is an authentic report of facts which has as its content the historic Person of Christ from His birth to death. It brings attention therefore to an historic occurrence. But the report is distinctive in that the historic event is designated as the acting, speaking, calling, and decreeing of God.<sup>41</sup>

The story, which is called the Gospel, includes the total life of Christ as the one who fulfilled the plan of God for the salvation of the world. A brief resume of this story can be given as follows: God has visited and redeemed His people by sending His Son; the Messiah came of Israel's race as was prophecied; He died for man's sin upon the cross and was buried according to the prophecy; He arose the third day as many witnesses can testify; He was exalted to the right hand of God; He sent forth His Spirit to those who believe in Him; He, Himself, will return again to the earth to inaugurate His visible Kingdom on earth; and He offers the remission of sins and the life of the world to come to all who believe this good news.<sup>42</sup>

The Gospel is more than the repetition of this story, although this is necessary. It is the power of God at work through the telling of this story to the world today. Through the retelling of this story God is really present to perform

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<sup>41</sup>Werner Elert, Der Christliche Glaube (Hamburg: Furche-Verlag, 1956), p. 117. Translation taken from Robert Preus, "The Power of God's Word," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXIV (August 1963), 459.

<sup>42</sup>C. H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1936), p. 17.

that which the Gospel promises. Paul testifies to this when he says,

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.<sup>43</sup>

This Gospel also gives life, making the work of Christ efficacious in the lives of people in the world.<sup>44</sup> The Gospel is, also, the action of God directed toward people in their need of a restored fellowship with Him. As Paul says,

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.<sup>45</sup>

Peter also says that the Gospel is God's activity of salvation directed toward people. He says,

You have been born anew, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; . . . that word is the good news which was preached to you.<sup>46</sup>

The resurrection of Christ is the act or word of God by which His verdict of justification is spoken and through which it is made available to man.

It will be reckoned to us who believe in him that raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was put

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<sup>43</sup>Romans 1:16. Cf. also Romans 1:3-6.

<sup>44</sup>2 Timothy 1:8-11; 1 John 1:2.

<sup>45</sup>2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Romans 1-3; John 1, 3.

<sup>46</sup>1 Peter 1:23-25.

to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification.<sup>47</sup>

This is God's creative action through which He performs His work in the hearts of people today.

The living, creative Word of God is at work in the lives of men today, giving the gifts which God has planned for man from all eternity. The gifts which are given are specially planned for man in his need and, therefore, bring special benefit. Man would remain eternally separated from God without these gifts of the Gospel given in this activity of God through the Gospel. But with these gifts and the blessing they bestow man is able to be reinstated to fellowship with God and to service for God. Five of these gifts will be briefly summarized below.

1. The Gospel works salvation. Krogh-Tonning, a Norwegian Theologian, in his book Den Kristelige Troeslaere i Grundtraek makes the statement,

Ikke blot Guds Ord som det i den hellige Skrift nedskrevne, men ogsaa Guds Ord som det af Kirken forkyndte er virkekraftigt til Salighed.<sup>48</sup>

Earlier in this same section of the book he says these significant words,

At Gud er en naadig, frelsende Gud, som "ikke gjør med os efter vore Synder, ikke betaler os efter

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<sup>47</sup>Romans 4:24-25.

<sup>48</sup>K. Krogh-Tonning, Den Kristelige Troeslaere i Grundtraek (Kristiania: P. T. Mallings Boghandel, 1879), p. 498. "Not only the Word of God as it is recorded in Holy Writ, but also the Word of God as it is proclaimed by the Church is efficacious unto salvation."

vore Misgjerninger" (Psalm 103,10), dette ved det naturlige Menneske ikke. Det maatte Gud selv sige os, ellers havde vi aldrig faaet det at vide. Med andre Ord: en guddommelig Aabenbaring er nødvendig til vor Frelse. 1 Kor. 2,4.5.). Ro. 10,14).<sup>49</sup>

This gracious, saving God works salvation through the Gospel even as it is proclaimed.

Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the Gospel, which you received, in which you stand, by which you are saved, if you hold it fast--unless you believed in vain.<sup>50</sup>

By this proclamation of the Gospel God delivers and justifies the sinner.<sup>51</sup>

Paul even equates salvation with the Gospel when in the First Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians he says,

So, being affectionately desirous of you, we are ready to share with you not only the Gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have been very dear to us.<sup>52</sup>

Paul believed that by sharing this Gospel he was also sharing the very gift which the Gospel bestows, namely, life and salvation.

2. The Gospel brings to faith. The proclamation of the Gospel creates faith within the heart of the hearer of the Word of God, through which faith God is able to give the

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 495-496. "Natural man does not know that God is a gracious and saving God, 'who has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us after our iniquities' (Psalm 103:10). God must tell us this Himself, otherwise we would never have learned to know it. In other words: a divine revelation is necessary for our salvation. (1 Cor. 2:4-5; Rom. 10:14)."

<sup>50</sup>1 Corinthians 15:1-2.

<sup>51</sup>Cf. Ephesians 1:7,13-14.

<sup>52</sup>1 Thessalonians 2:8.



gift of salvation. Paul bears this out in the Letter of Paul to the Romans, "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ."<sup>53</sup> The preaching of the apostles also brings forth the results of faith, even as Jesus prayed in His high-priestly prayer, "I do not pray for these only, but also for those who are to believe in men through their word."<sup>54</sup>

Krogh-Tonning speaks of faith as that which is the condition in man for salvation. He does not mean thereby that faith itself has any merit or value in itself because of which God forgives the sinner and receives him as His child, but, rather, that faith is the hand which receives the gift of salvation, given to the sinner, in the proclamation of the Word of God. Faith, itself, is a gift of God, and thus it can be said that salvation is all of God's work in man. He states,

I sin tro har Synderen saaledes den aandelige Haand, hvormed han kan tage imod Guds tilbudte Gave. Der findes neppe noget mere traeffende Billede end dette paa den Tro, som er Retfaerdiggjorelsens Betingelse. . . . Har Synderen denne Aandens aabne Haand, udstrakt efter Naadens Gave, saa er alt, hvad der fra hans Side maa forlanges, forat han kan blive forløst fra sin Synd og Skyld, tilvejebragt.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>Romans 10:17.

<sup>54</sup>John 17:20.

<sup>55</sup>Krogh-Tonning, p. 356-357. "Faith is the spiritual hand whereby the sinner receives the gift which God extends to him. There can scarcely be found a more suitable illustration than this of faith as the condition for salvation. . . . If the sinner has this open hand of the spirit extended for the gift of grace, this is all that is required on his part that he may be redeemed from sin and guilt."

He says further,

Vi retfaerdiggjøres ikke for Troens Skyld (ikke propter fidem); men vi retfaerdiggjøres "ved Troen" (per fidem). Troen kommer som Betingelse for vor Retfaerdiggjørelse ikke i Betragtning for sit eget Vaerds, sin egen Fortraeffeligheds Skyld, men den kommer i Betragtning for sin Gjenstands Skyld: Den kommer i Betragtning som det Middel, hvormed vi til-egner os Jesum Kristus og hans Fyldestgjørelse som vor Retfaerdighed. I Synderens Hjerter maa det vaere Tro, dersom Gud skal kunne skjaenke ham Retfaerdighedens Gave, fordi den er det eneste aandelige Modtagelses Organ ( ὄργανον λήπτικόν ), den eneste aandelige Haand, hvormed vi kan modtage denne Gave. Rom. 3,28; Ef. 2,8; Ap. Gj. 10,43; Gal. 3,26; 1 Mos. 15,6.<sup>56</sup>

Faith as this spiritual hand receives the gift of grace which brings salvation. But this faith, born in the Word of God, is able to grasp the gift of grace by the power of the Holy Spirit operative within it. Martin Luther speaks of this in a unique way when he says,

It (the Church) is the mother that begets and bears every Christian through the Word of God. The Holy Spirit reveals and preaches that Word, and by it illumines and kindles hearts so that they grasp and accept it, cling to it, and persevere in it.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 377. "We are justified, not because of faith (propter fidem), but "by faith" (per fidem). As a condition for our justification faith is a factor, not because of its own worth, its own essential excellence, but because of its object. Which is Christ. The value of faith consists in that it is the means whereby we appropriate Jesus Christ and His merits as our righteousness. There must be faith in the sinner's heart if God shall be able to bestow upon him the gift of righteousness, because it is the only spiritual organ of reception ( ὄργανον λήπτικόν ), the only spiritual hand, whereby we can receive this gift. Cf. Rom. 3:28; Eph. 2:8; Acts 10:43; Gal. 3:26; Gen. 15:6."

<sup>57</sup>"The Large Catechism," Part II, "The Creed," The Book of Concord, The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert and others (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, c.1959), p. 416.42.

The Word of God gives birth to every Christian. Without it Christians are not born.

3. The Gospel also creates new life and works renewal of the image of God in man. God gives the sinner a new spiritual life. This giving of a new life is called a re-birth or a being born again, regeneration, because man thereby is born again as it is taught in the Scriptures. "Jesus answered him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'"<sup>58</sup> Regeneration is to bring forth a new creation, which is in fellowship with God through Jesus Christ. God creates a new man through whom He is able to live and work. This is clearly taught in the Scriptures in which God promises through Ezekiel,

A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.<sup>59</sup>

This promise is fulfilled in Christ even as St. Paul testifies, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away,--behold, the new has come."<sup>60</sup>

This new birth effects a change in man which is referred to as the renewal of the image of God in man. St. Paul refers to this renewal when he says,

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<sup>58</sup>John 3:3. Cf. also John 3:5-8.

<sup>59</sup>Ezekiel 36:26.

<sup>60</sup>2 Corinthians 5:17.

Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.<sup>61</sup>

In the Letter of Paul to the Colossians it is further clarified,

Do not lie on one another, seeing you have put off the old nature with its practices, and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.<sup>62</sup>

In regenerate man the understanding is again enlightened;<sup>63</sup> the conscience is renewed and at peace with God;<sup>64</sup> and the will of man is again restored to holiness and righteousness.<sup>65</sup>

The total attitude of the regenerate man's heart, even his purposes and activities become different. Therefore, it can be said that in regeneration man has been given a new life-- that the image of God has been renewed in him.

The renewal of the image of God in man is accomplished by God through the Word of God. The Apostle John says,

But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Ephesians 4:22-24.

<sup>62</sup>Colossians 2:9-10.

<sup>63</sup>Ephesians 1:17ff; 1 John 2:20.

<sup>64</sup>Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:14; Colossians 1:20.

<sup>65</sup>Ephesians 4:24.

<sup>66</sup>John 1:12-13. Cf. also Titus 3:5, ". . . He saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Spirit. . . ."

This same truth is affirmed by Peter when he says that rebirth takes place through the Word of God,

You have been born anew, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding Word of God.<sup>67</sup>

This renewal accomplished by God through the Word of God is received by man in faith. As St. John says, "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God."<sup>68</sup>

This renewal of the image of God in man, affects the whole man, not only the spirit and nature.

May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>69</sup>

Paul indicates in this verse that man in his entire being is the object of the renewing work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. Regeneration, therefore, is not only a change of mind, but a change of nature as well. It involves the whole person. Luther too, says that the body apprehends Baptism for its salvation and thereby affirms that the body has a part in regeneration. He says in part,

Since the water and the Word together constitute our Baptism, body and soul shall be saved and live forever: the soul through the Word in which it believes, the body because it is united with the soul and apprehends Baptism in the only way it can.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>1 Peter 1:23.

<sup>68</sup>1 John 5:1. The King James version translates, "born of God." The Greek verb is *γενέσθαι*, is a perfect passive of *γεννᾶω* --to beget, bring forth.

<sup>69</sup>1 Thessalonians 5:23.

<sup>70</sup>"The Large Catechism," Part IV, "Baptism," The Book of Concord, p. 442.46.

Baptism as the sacrament of regeneration is the means through which God effects this renewal of the image of God in man.

4. The Word of God, as it impinges upon man and creates in him a new man fashioned after the likeness of God, also gives the hope of eternal life. The man of God lives as one who is a stranger upon earth, subject to all its vicissitudes, in need of its possessions, aware of its difficulties, subject to its laws, and subject to the restraining influences of the bodily needs, yet, nevertheless, as one who is living in a fellowship which transcends the temporal situation. Fellowship with God not only creates a change of mind and a change of nature but gives a new hope--the hope of eternal life. This hope is productive of new attitudes toward the fellow-believers and toward other people in the world. The new life brings forth new relationships as well as new hope and joy. St. Paul says,

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love which you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.<sup>71</sup>

This hope is grounded in the resurrection of Jesus Christ,<sup>72</sup> and is produced in the heart of the believer by God through the Gospel. Peter emphasizes this when he says, "By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through

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<sup>71</sup>Colossians 1:3-5. Cf. also 1 John 3:3.

<sup>72</sup>1 Peter 1:3.

the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."<sup>73</sup>

5. The Word of God also strengthens man for the life of faith, creating not only the desire to live as a new creature but also the ability to continue in this new relationship. The Word of God not only gives but is the strength in which man is able to live the life of faith as a renewed man. The man of God is equipped with the footwear called, "the equipment of the gospel of peace."<sup>74</sup> He is given a new boldness with which to speak confidently to God;<sup>75</sup> he is given the faith which rests in the power of God, not in the wisdom of men;<sup>76</sup> and he is working within the Word of God which effectively keeps him in faith.<sup>77</sup>

The man of God lives in a constant awareness that he has been created by the Word of God, that he has been born

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<sup>73</sup><sub>1</sub> Peter 1:3. Cf. also Colossians 1:5, "Of this you have heard before in the Word of the truth, the Gospel which has come to you. . . ."

<sup>74</sup> Ephesians 6:15. Cf. also Romans 10:15, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news!" Quoted from Isaiah 52:7. God promises to keep the feet of his saints, 1 Samuel 2:9; David gives thanks to God for deliverance and mentions that his feet are like hind's feet, 2 Samuel 22:34; David also says in a Psalm, "He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings." Psalm 40:2. How beautiful are the feet of the saints, not stained and mired down, but clad in the equipment of the Gospel, and swift to do the will of God.

<sup>75</sup> John 15:7.

<sup>76</sup><sub>1</sub> Corinthians 2:3-5.

<sup>77</sup><sub>1</sub> Thessalonians 2:13.

again by that same Word of God, and that he is also sustained by that Word as he lives the life of faith. Only as each person remains in fellowship with God, who speaks to man through His Word, can the Word of God continue to perform its desired results in life. The renewal which has taken place by the Word of God will be an ongoing experience as this renewed man continues to return to this place of renewal, namely, Jesus Christ, the Word of God. The life of the child of God, therefore, will be a continual return to the place of renewal for a continuing relationship with God who speaks and acts through His Word. It is to this continuing relationship that the next chapter speaks.

gracious gifts which renew and sustain the Christian in fellowship with God. The Church's task is to convey this Word of God to man so that through it life may be given and believers strengthened and renewed.

The man who has been born again through the Word of God lives a life which is in continuing harmony with God who set him in His Word. St. Paul admonishes the Colossians,

As therefore you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so live in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught abounding in thanksgiving.

Whether the man set him in Baptism before being capable of conscious awareness, or in conscious awareness received His gracious offer of forgiveness and salvation, this relationship



## CHAPTER V

### THE LIFE OF RENEWED MAN: THE WORD OF GOD CONTINUES TO BE ACTIVE IN THE LIFE AND RELATIONSHIPS OF MAN

The Christian life is not only called into being by what God does, but it is itself a continuation of God's own activity. God conveys Himself through His Word, as it is proclaimed by His children in the world. Only by a continuing encounter with the Word of God can the Christian be sustained in the Christian life. God works through His Word to perform His works in the heart and life of His children. As this Word of God encounters man it conveys God Himself with His gracious gifts which renew and sustain the Christian in fellowship with God. The Church's task is to convey this Word of God to men so that through it life may be given and believers strengthened and renewed.

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abounding in thanksgiving.<sup>1</sup>

Whether the man met Him in Baptism before being capable of conscious awareness, or in conscious awareness received His gracious offer of forgiveness and salvation, this relationship

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<sup>1</sup>Colossians 2:6-7. Cf. also Ephesians 4:1ff.

needs to be a knowledgeable, personal, and vital relationship between the God who gives and the man who receives. This relationship begun by the Word of God will continue in that Word of God, there receiving its strength and vitality for effective and constructive living in fellowship with God.

The man in fellowship with God is a new man, with new desires, new attitudes, and an awareness of his relationship with God and with his fellows. This new life is evidenced in a new and meaningful attitude to himself, a new and revitalizing relationship with God, and a new love and concern for his fellows. He is changed as the Scripture says,

A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; . . . and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Daily Renewal

The man of God will of necessity continue to return, day by day, to the place of forgiveness so that there he may receive anew the proclamation of forgiveness, thereby being assured of victory over sin, death, and the power of the devil. The life of faith bestowed upon the child of God is not fully developed. Therefore, there is this need for a continuing dependence upon God who has given this

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<sup>2</sup>Ezekiel 36:26-27. Cf. also Jeremiah 24:7; and Ezekiel 11:19; 18:31. As a specific instance of this see also 1 Samuel 10:9.

life through His Word. If this life is not fed with the very source of its life, the Word of God, it will die. Thus the new life in Christ which this man possesses needs to be nourished and strengthened by the continual return to the Word of God from whence it came.<sup>3</sup>

The new life of the regenerate is not only weak but it also has an enemy within the heart of man. In the heart of man dwells the desire of sin, which should not develop and grow, but should be caused to die. The lost domain is always in danger from its former master and the child of God need always be on the alert to prevent sin from destroying the life of faith. The Christian's life is therefore a constant conflict between the desire to do good and the desire to serve sin. Luther's time worn phrase "simul justus et peccator" expresses this conflict within the heart of man.<sup>4</sup> This life in Christ, therefore, is not characterized by a steady development of the good that dwells within by faith, but a constant conflict with evil which comes from without and within, and which threatens to overthrow the life of faith.<sup>5</sup>

In chapter four regeneration was considered as the renewal of the image of God in man.<sup>6</sup> In regeneration,

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<sup>3</sup>2 Corinthians 4:16.

<sup>4</sup>Romans 7:13ff. Here Paul describes the conflict which goes on in the heart of a Christian.

<sup>5</sup>1 Peter 5:8; Romans 8:13.

<sup>6</sup>Cf. Supra, p. 79ff.

therefore, it can be said that man becomes like God again, restored to the place which he enjoyed prior to the fall. But this image of God in man is not complete. Man is not completely like God and finds that he has to confess with Paul, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"<sup>7</sup> The renewal of the image of God needs to be a continuing process by which the Holy Spirit is able to bring the child of God to greater and greater dependence upon God who continues to meet Him in His Word. To this end it is necessary that the regenerate child of God constantly appropriate the spiritual gifts and grace which the Holy Spirit seeks to bestow upon him in the Word.

The daily renewal refers to two activities in the life of the child of God. The one is a positive activity-- "putting on the new man";<sup>8</sup> and the other is a negative activity--"putting off of the old man."<sup>9</sup> Both are appropriate activities for the continuing process of renewal.

1. "Putting on of the new man." The vital powers of life operative within the child of God need rejuvenation in order that life itself may not become weak, decrepit, languish, and die.<sup>10</sup> Paul gives expression to this necessity

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<sup>7</sup>Romans 5:24.

<sup>8</sup>Ephesians 4:24.

<sup>9</sup>Ephesians 3:6.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. Colossians 3:10; Ephesians 4:23.

in his Letter to the Romans, where he says,

With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give your bodies as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable by him. Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity.<sup>11</sup>

Scripture also refers to the life in the child of God as in need of continued growth.<sup>12</sup> This growth, however, needs to be correctly understood. It is growth in the "grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ";<sup>13</sup> it is "bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God";<sup>14</sup> it is an "increase of faith";<sup>15</sup> and it is an "abounding in love."<sup>16</sup> These fruits of faith are to increase by the Word of God,<sup>17</sup> upon which the life of faith feeds and through which the increase comes.<sup>18</sup> The child of God is a partaker of the Christ-life which is Christ

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<sup>11</sup>Romans 12:2. Translation from The New Testament in Modern English by J. B. Phillips (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1960).

<sup>12</sup>Ephesians 4:15.

<sup>13</sup>2 Peter 3:18.

<sup>14</sup>Colossians 1:10.

<sup>15</sup>2 Corinthians 10:15.

<sup>16</sup>1 Thessalonians 3:12. Cf. also 4:10.

<sup>17</sup>1 Peter 2:2.

<sup>18</sup>Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst." John 6:35.

dwelling within him. This life is complete in itself, it cannot grow and increase as such, but the manifestation of it in the life of the child of God can increase and become more visible to the observer. In these fruits of faith there is of necessity an increase and a growth, as the previous Scriptures clearly indicate. These can be referred to as the fruits of faith or the fruits of the Spirit as He operates in the heart and life of the renewed person.<sup>19</sup>

Renewal, as regeneration, is not just a matter for a certain part of the person, like his soul or spirit, but it involves the whole person in all his parts and the entire human life in all its aspects. The new life in Christ will by continual return to its source, the Word of God, gain the mastery over the whole man, inner and outward being, both spirit and nature, even as the Spirit gains increasing positive response from the heart. That the whole person is included the Scriptures clearly indicate: the whole mind is to be dedicated to the good things;<sup>20</sup> the body is also to be presented to God for His service,<sup>21</sup> since it is the dwelling place of His Spirit;<sup>22</sup> and the whole man is included

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<sup>19</sup>Cf. Galatians 5:22-26, where Paul enumerates the fruits of the Spirit. He includes in his writing this significant statement, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." v. 25.

<sup>20</sup>Philippians 4:8.

<sup>21</sup>Romans 12:1. Cf. also 2 Corinthians 7:1.

<sup>22</sup>1 Corinthians 6:19-20.

as the object of God's work in life.<sup>23</sup> All of man is included in the regeneration of man, and all of man is included in his subsequent life of faith.

The vital activities of the renewal will appear in all the various phases of man's spiritual life. Even as these phases of life have been restored by man's new relationship so they need to be maintained in their relationship in order to be of value to the life and living of this new man. For the understanding there is opened up an entirely new field of knowledge. Not only are the heavenly things a precious object of his thinking but the things of earth appear in an entirely new light. He asks questions about life and living, questions for which he receives grace to answer. These questions are asked and answered in the light of the Cross, the new light which penetrates and illuminates the total understanding of this new man. This light brings clarity to the understanding, in relation to the things of the Spirit, where there was darkness before, since it is Christ who opens the mind to understand the truth about God.<sup>24</sup> This understanding and knowledge is being renewed after the image of God, even as the child of God becomes more and more like Him in the increase of knowledge and wisdom.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>1 Thessalonians 5:23-24.

<sup>24</sup>Luke 24:45. Cf. also 2 Corinthians 4:4-6.

<sup>25</sup>Colossians 3:9-10. Cf. also 1:9-10; Ephesians 1:17-18; 3:17-19.

Not only is the understanding revitalized and increased in the knowledge of God, but in the emotional life the peace with God and joy in the Lord become increasingly confirmed. The realization that only a life with God satisfies the deepest needs of the heart validates the return to the Word of God for grace in every experience of life. These experiences serve to strengthen the Christian in his conviction that life with God is the life of peace and joy,<sup>26</sup> as the fruits of the Spirit increase within him.<sup>27</sup>

As the heart gains insight into the depths of God's grace, the more it experiences the inner glory and grace of the Christian life, that is, the more the regenerate comes to "taste and see that the Lord is good,"<sup>28</sup> the more will also the will be strengthened to live in the newness of life. The will concerns itself with action, and can be compared to the governor of an engine. As action is being performed it is the will which determines the intensity and the validity of such an action. The will, therefore, needs to be nurtured and strengthened in the Word of God. The Holy Spirit gives the willingness to accept this nurture and creates anew the strength for holy and righteous action before Him.

The most immediate fruit of regeneration is the life

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<sup>26</sup>Romans 8:6; 14:17. Cf. also Colossians 3:15.

<sup>27</sup>Galatians 5:22.

<sup>28</sup>Psalm 34:8.



of love in fellowship with God.<sup>29</sup> This love, too, as an act of the will, is the real power in the life of the regenerate person.<sup>30</sup> The holiness and righteousness of the regenerate is nothing else than his love to God displayed in life's actions.<sup>31</sup> As the will is strengthened, the love increases, and consequently the holiness and righteousness of life increases accordingly. This increase in the life of love and faith is conditioned by the experience of the grace of God in daily life and in the constant use of the means of grace--the Word and the Sacraments.

2. "Putting off of the old man."<sup>32</sup> The old man can be called the innate sinfulness which still clings even to the regenerate. The Scriptures use several terms in reference to this old man as he still clings to the child of God, the most notable expression being "the flesh."<sup>33</sup> The fundamental disposition of the regenerate is, "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit," as Paul says,<sup>34</sup> but there is a remnant of the flesh remaining in man even after he is regenerate.<sup>35</sup> This remnant of the flesh, this old man, all

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<sup>29</sup>Colossians 3:14; Galatians 5:6.

<sup>30</sup>1 Corinthians 12:31; 14:1. Cf. also 2 Thessalonians 3:5.

<sup>31</sup>Ephesians 5:2; Colossians 3:14; 1 John 4:16.

<sup>32</sup>Ephesians 3:6.

<sup>33</sup>John 3:6.

<sup>34</sup>Romans 8:9

<sup>35</sup>Romans 7:17-20. Cf. also Romans 8:10,13.

that which is carnal, that which is "sold under sin," "the flesh with its passions and lusts," is to be crucified, given over to death.<sup>36</sup> For only as this old man is put to death can the new man spring forth to live in the life of holiness. Or rather, only then can Jesus Christ live through His child without hindrance from this man of sin. Paul expresses this relationship very clearly when he says,

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.<sup>37</sup>

This putting off of the old man is also an action of the will. It is not only essential to desire the good, the regenerate will also desire to flee from that which is evil.<sup>38</sup> The will is involved since this becomes a decision to do the good rather than performing that which is evil.

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<sup>36</sup>Romans 8:13; Galatians 5:24; Romans 6:6; Colossians 3:5.

<sup>37</sup>Galatians 2:20. Cf. also Martin Luther who compares this dying to sin and living to Christ as a drowning of the old Adam. "What does such baptizing with water signify? Answer: It signifies that the old Adam in us, together with all sins and evil lusts, should be drowned by daily sorrow and repentance and be put to death, and that the new man should come forth daily and rise up, cleansed and righteous, to live forever in God's presence." Taken from "The Small Catechism," Part IV, "The Sacrament of Holy Baptism," The Book of Concord, The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert and others (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, c.1959), p. 349.11-12. Cf. also "The Large Catechism," Part IV, "Baptism," The Book of Concord, p. 444.64-67.

<sup>38</sup>Romans 12:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; 1 Peter 5:11.

This action involves self-denial, since it becomes the renouncing of the altogether too precious self.<sup>39</sup> Self-denial follows necessarily from the Christian's new life of love, for it is the nature of love to give itself, to sacrifice itself. Out of love to God, therefore, the Christian willingly gives himself in self-denial as a thanksgiving to God for His denial of Himself and His sacrificial offering of Himself at the cross. The constant action of putting off the old and putting on the new man will continue in the life of the child of God because of this love. Only because of this love is it possible for the child of God to continue in this life-long process of renewal.

#### A Life of Love

God desires to be in fellowship with the man over whom He is Lord. He has created this man, this counterpart, who in freedom can acknowledge Him as Lord, and He desires to give Himself to this man in love. Not only does God desire that His creation should acknowledge Him as Lord and obey Him, but what is more, He desires that the creation should love Him with the love that He Himself bestows upon His creation.<sup>40</sup> Emil Brunner says that the theme with which the Bible is always concerned and which "is the single theme

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<sup>39</sup>Luke 14:33; Matthew 16:24.

<sup>40</sup>Matthew 22:36-40.

of the entire biblical proclamation can be stated in two words: Lordship and fellowship."<sup>41</sup> Lordship he defines as that ability which gives God the right to do as He pleases with that which He has created.<sup>42</sup> Lordship, then, is the "self-affirmation" of God over against His creation, while love, His will to fellowship, is His unconditional self-communication to the creature. The love of God is this giving of Himself in complete and unconditional self-communication to man,<sup>43</sup> in order that He may have fellowship with him in a mutual relationship of freedom and trust, and that man can love Him unconditionally in return.

#### Love is Freedom

Love always presupposes complete freedom, for love which is demanded, enforced and required in any way is not really love at all. In genuine love there is a complete giving of the self to the person being loved. God displayed this kind of love when He in freedom chose to give His Son, Jesus Christ, to man.<sup>44</sup> But God is not satisfied to just give His Son and remain apart from man thereafter, He seeks to give Himself continually to man through His

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<sup>41</sup> Emil Brunner, Truth as Encounter (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1943, 1964), p. 94.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp. 97-98.

<sup>44</sup> John 3:16.

Word so that the act of redemption accomplished at the cross can be a continuing bestowal of Himself upon man.<sup>45</sup> God gives Himself to all men in love, and desires that all men give themselves to Him in mutually responding love.<sup>46</sup> Love is inspired and conditioned by His sacrificial love but, nevertheless, man is free to respond to it with a "yes" or a "no." Love is always free.

#### Love is Dependent

Love not only presupposes complete freedom but it also is at the same time the most completely dependent action of man. It is dependent upon God for "we can give ourselves to God in love only because He has given Himself to us."<sup>47</sup> Love is at one and the same time, free and dependent, It must be free, otherwise it is less than love. It must be dependent because without the self-giving of the one loved, in this instance God, love cannot eventuate in the heart of man.<sup>48</sup>

Emil Brunner says that God wills to be Lord even in His self-giving love.<sup>49</sup> He gives Himself to man because He has chosen man to be His counterpart in fellowship, but He gives Himself to man as one who is Lord over him. Yet, He gives

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<sup>45</sup>Romans 5:5; Ephesians 3:19.

<sup>46</sup>Ephesians 5:2; 2 Timothy 1:7.

<sup>47</sup>Brunner, p. 98.

<sup>48</sup>Ephesians 2:13; Romans 8:1ff. Cf. also 1 John 3:24.

<sup>49</sup>Brunner, p. 99.

man the right of free decision to acknowledge Him as Lord and to love Him in response to God's love for him.

The Lordship and love of God can be communicated in no other way than by his giving himself to be known and by his becoming known.<sup>50</sup>

Even when He is loved in responsive love God still desires to be known as Lord, for only then is He Lord in the complete sense over man.

### Love is Responsive

The love of God to man must be known by man in responding love for only then can God communicate Himself to man in the fullest measure. Man is able to hinder the self-giving love of God by refusing to give himself to God in spontaneous acceptance of this Creator-Lord. God gives Himself to man in order that man will be able, by this self-giving God, to give himself to God in spontaneous and voluntary self-giving.

Emil Brunner describes the responsive nature of love when he says,

God as Lord lays claim to the obedience of man; and by giving himself to be known as the loving God, he gives this love of his to man, that man may love him in return. He does both through the Word. . . . The Word is the self-communication of God, which reserves an area of freedom for creaturely self-decision, which gives without violence, which so gives that the taking can be self-giving, voluntary self-giving. . . . God's self-communication is made by the Word--a self-communication that at the same time reveals to man God's Lordship and love, in such a way that he acknowledges and accepts them.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., pp. 102-103.

Man in his response to God finds new meaning in his relationship with God. Only as this relationship is established is man able to respond to and live in the love given to him by God. The faith given continues to be operative in day by day living as the man of God is renewed and sanctified by the continuing response to the Word of God.<sup>52</sup>

Man is equipped for this new life by the knowledge that God has given the forgiveness of sins, faith, and love as His gifts to the sinner. This knowledge of justification by grace through faith equips the child of God to live the new life of faith unto God in love.<sup>53</sup>

Faith evidenced in the person by the forgiveness of sins results in a changed heart. The heart of love replaces the heart of rebellion. The desire to do good works in responsive love to God replaces the desire to sin and also the inability to do good works. Faith, itself the gift of God, creates in the heart the desire and the ability to accept the forgiveness of sins offered in Jesus Christ. This acceptance results in responsive love to God which comes as a desire to give all of self to Him who has given Himself to man. The person who thus loves desires to do that which

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<sup>52</sup>C. F. W. Walther, The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel, reproduced from the German edition of 1897 by W. H. T. Dau (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1928), p. 91.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 92.

the Scriptures admonish,

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.<sup>54</sup>

The new attitude of heart is really love for God kindled as responsive love for Him. This results in a life that is well-pleasing to God in attitude, desire, purpose, and response.

#### Love is Responsible Activity

The attitude of love now conditions the actions and decisions of the child of God. No longer is the "I" in control of the heart but the Lord, and as such the decisions of life are made in relation to that which is His will. The love of God determines the decisions about specific situations in life which the child of God must face. The fruits of the Spirit become possible in this self-surrender to God, and the child of God abounds in these fruits permitting the Spirit of God to direct him into a fuller measure of their manifestation in his life.

This new love, which is a necessary fruit of faith,<sup>55</sup> is described in the Scriptures as the fulfillment of the law.<sup>56</sup> In love the power to keep the commandments is

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<sup>54</sup>Deuteronomy 6:4-5.

<sup>55</sup>James 2:18; Galatians 5:6.

<sup>56</sup>Romans 13:10; Matthew 22:37; 1 Timothy 1:5.



given,<sup>57</sup> which power is also referred to as "keep my words."<sup>58</sup> The child of God keeps the commandments of God because he loves God and desires to do His will.<sup>59</sup> All his works are works of love,<sup>60</sup> for which he has been created and redeemed,<sup>61</sup> in which he is to be fruitful,<sup>62</sup> in which he is to abound,<sup>63</sup> and for which he is equipped through the continual return to the Word of God.<sup>64</sup> Being equipped by the Word of God he is given the ability to do the will of God as a free expression of his love for God. This fulfillment of the will of God becomes a joy and a delight because it is this expression of love for God in free self-giving. In this way love becomes the spontaneous response to God in self-expression on the part of the child of God, but in such a response that is intended and planned as a way of pleasing Him to whom his love is directed. The law of God is no longer burdensome but rather a means through which the love can find expression and by which it can be directed in God-pleasing service. What the law says the regenerate does,

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<sup>57</sup>1 John 5:3; John 14:15,21.

<sup>58</sup>John 14:23.

<sup>59</sup>1 Corinthians 7:19.

<sup>60</sup>1 Corinthians 16:14; Hebrews 10:24; 1 Thessalonians 1:3.

<sup>61</sup>Ephesians 2:10; Matthew 5:16.

<sup>62</sup>Colossians 1:10.

<sup>63</sup>1 Corinthians 15:58.

<sup>64</sup>2 Timothy 3:17; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17.

not because it is a command but rather because this is the inward desire of his heart, and he knows of no better way to express it than through love for God with his whole being, and love for his neighbor even as he loves himself. The life of love is a life in fellowship with God, a life in response to God's love, a life in active service to God, and a life which seeks to please Him as the one who has given all to the sinner out of love.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE MEANS OF RENEWAL APPLIED THROUGH ADULT EDUCATION

The object of renewal, the Christian congregation, is made up of individual persons who are themselves in need of renewal. The renewal of persons, who are part of the congregation, will result in the renewal of the congregation as well. Every person is in need of the relationship with God spoken of in this thesis. Those who do not recognize this need are deluding only themselves, and hindering what God would accomplish through His Word in the life and work of His Church.

The object of renewal is man. The means of renewal is the Word of God. The Word of God working this renewal in the heart of man keeps him in continual dependence upon this active Word. From the evidence presented it has been shown that when the Word of God is applied to the heart of man, through adult education, renewal of the life that man lives in relation to God and his fellowmen, in continual dependence upon the Word of God, becomes an ongoing experience. This chapter, therefore, will be devoted to a discussion of how this application of the Word of God is taught in Scripture and how the Word of God may be applied to people within the congregation.

## The Scriptures Affirm Adult Education

When our blessed Lord assembled His disciples before Him prior to His ascension He left them a command which is the command to the whole Christian Church on earth. These marching orders are written in the Gospel According to Matthew, which reads,

Full authority in heaven and on earth has been committed to me. Go forth therefore and make all nations my disciples; baptize men everywhere in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all that I have commanded you. And be assured, I am with you always, to the end of time.<sup>1</sup>

This command to the disciples was followed by further instructions on how this would come to pass through their ministry and in their lifetime. Our blessed Lord presented Himself to the disciples on several occasions during the forty days before His ascension, and on one occasion he charged them not to depart out of Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father.<sup>2</sup> They waited in Jerusalem, as they were commanded, and received the final words from our Lord while He was still with them, words which were spoken in response to their question, "Will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority.

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<sup>1</sup>Matthew 28:18-20. New English Bible, New Testament (Oxford & Cambridge: The University Press, 1961).

<sup>2</sup>Acts 1:4.

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.<sup>3</sup>

The disciples were obedient to the command of Christ, and went to their upper room to wait for the fulfillment of the Lord's promise to them. While they were in the upper room in Jerusalem they continued in prayer and supplication, and were of one accord.<sup>4</sup> To this band of waiting, praying, and united people of God, the Holy Spirit came and filled them with His power. They, being filled with that power were compelled to go forth from their place of waiting in the upper room and speak the message of the Gospel to all who would listen to them. The travelers from twelve different nations heard the Word of God from these believers and were given grace by the same Spirit to become believers together with them. After baptism they were joined in the ongoing witness to the Word of God as heard and experienced by them.

The unique characteristics of the Church of the Acts speak for themselves in relation to what that Church was and what it accomplished. First of all, this Church had within its leadership those who had been trained by Jesus Christ. They were the eyewitnesses to His miracles, the hearers of His parables, and could now speak of the things which they

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<sup>3</sup>Acts 1:6-8.

<sup>4</sup>Acts 1:14ff.

had both seen and heard.<sup>5</sup> Secondly, they had received specific instructions from Jesus Christ on how to fulfill their ministry in the world of their day. Thirdly, the power of the Holy Spirit operated in and through them to accomplish the purposes of God in their ministry. Fourthly, they had the privilege of speaking the Word of God to a people who had also seen and heard this same Jesus, but many of whom had rejected and crucified Him. They therefore spoke to a people for whom their message was both understandable and relevant. Fifthly, they were given the ability to speak in the language of the people to whom the Word of God was addressed. People of many different lands were in Jerusalem and heard the Word of God in their own tongue.<sup>6</sup> And finally, they spoke the Word of God because of an inner compulsion. They had a story to tell and they could not keep still. This unique beginning of the Christian Church portrays the mission of the Church as it seeks to bring the Word of God to its generation.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>1 John 1:1ff; Acts 4:20.

<sup>6</sup>Acts 2:5ff.

<sup>7</sup>A good description of the mission of the Church of the Acts is given by Joel H. Nederhood, The Church's Mission to the Educated American (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1960), p. 14, who says in part, "The astonishing transformation of Jesus' followers into a Spirit-filled Church, the unexpected conversion of many of Jesus' enemies, the uniquely selfless conduct which the early Christian community embodied, and the rich spiritual graces which enriched the Christian fellowship, gave evidence that the Holy Spirit animated the primitive apostolic Church. Each of these elements was a proof that Jesus, the ascended

The spirit of the Church of the Acts is worthy of imitation by the Church of today, if it would speak the Word of God to its generation. It is not in a sense of nostalgia that the Church looks back into its history but rather with the sense of awareness that the same Word of God which filled them with power is the Word of God available for the Church today, and that the Spirit which filled them with grace for service in the Church is the Spirit which operates in the Church today. To recapture this essential spirit of the Church of the Acts is, therefore, to listen to the Word of God, and to permit the Spirit of God to indwell and to empower for His business in the world today. This essential spirit of the Church includes some important characteristics for the people of the Church of today, some of which are: a sense of belonging;<sup>8</sup> a sense of being possessed;<sup>9</sup> a sense of being filled with power;<sup>10</sup> a sense of being sent;<sup>11</sup> a sense of being message-bearers;<sup>12</sup> a sense of urgency;<sup>13</sup> a sense of accomplishment;<sup>14</sup> and a

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Lord, had indeed baptized his people with His Spirit and with power as he had promised. Each of these elements contributed to the Church's impact upon the world."

<sup>8</sup> Cf. John 10:14.

<sup>9</sup> Romans 8:16.

<sup>10</sup> Ephesians 3:16; Colossians 1:11.

<sup>11</sup> Romans 10:15; 1 Corinthians 1:27-29; John 17:18.

<sup>12</sup> John 15:16.

<sup>13</sup> Jeremiah 20:9; Isaiah 62:1; Acts 18:25.

<sup>14</sup> Acts 6:7.

sense of the Lord's continuing presence.<sup>15</sup> The evident ability of the early Christians to speak to the adults of their day would indicate that the Christians today should recapture their essential spirit. This is especially significant in the consideration of the theological sanctions for Christian adult education as seen in the study of the Greek words which are used in the Scriptures to identify the proclamation of the Gospel.

#### Theological Sanctions for Adult Education

The theological sanctions for adult education in the Church are understood through a consideration of the Greek terms used for education in the New Testament. In such a study, C. H. Dodd has made the statement that teaching a person to live according to the Gospel follows after the Gospel has already completed its initial work in the heart of the person. He says that there is a clear distinction between teaching and preaching. Preaching is the proclamation of the *κηρυγμα* so that its saving effect can take place in the life of a person, while teaching is the ethical instruction which follows after the *κηρυγμα* has completed its work.<sup>16</sup> Richard R. Caemmerer has written an

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<sup>15</sup>Matthew 28:20; Isaiah 43:2.

<sup>16</sup>C. H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962) in which he says, "Teaching (*διδασκειν*) is in a large majority of cases ethical instruction," p. 7. And also, "It was by



article in Concordia Theological Monthly, in which the meaning of the words *κήρυγμα* and *διδασχῆ* is discussed as it applies to Christian education. He refutes the position taken by C. H. Dodd as being incomplete and inadequate, and authenticates the interrelationship of these two terms *κήρυγμα* and *διδασχῆ*, as they apply in instruction in righteousness. He says that the *κήρυγμα* is the content of the teaching, while the *διδασχῆ* is the application of this *κήρυγμα* to the target.<sup>17</sup>

Although there are more than the following words which speak of preaching and teaching in the New Testament this discussion will be limited to five which are most pertinently used in the New Testament. These five words will be sufficient to give the meaning of preaching and teaching as it is understood in the New Testament sense. First of all, *εὐαγγελίζω*, which means "to bring good news," "to announce glad tidings."<sup>18</sup> The word has the additional meaning of "to be proclaimed to one," "to be announced," "to be preached."<sup>19</sup> A third meaning of the term is "to proclaim

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*kerygma*, says Paul, not by *didache*, that it pleased God to save men," p. 8. Cf. also his Gospel and Law: The Relation of Faith and Ethics in Early Christianity (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951), p. 8ff.

<sup>17</sup>Richard R. Caemmerer, "Kerygma and Didache in Christian Education," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXII, 4 (April 1961), 197-208.

<sup>18</sup>Revelation 10:7; 14:6.

<sup>19</sup>Galatians 1:11; 1 Peter 1:25.

glad tidings," specifically, "to instruct men concerning the things which pertain to Christian salvation."<sup>20</sup> To proclaim glad tidings is not reserved exclusively for the preacher but it is also the very real responsibility of all believers.<sup>21</sup>

The second word in the Greek is *κηρύσσω* --this word refers to proclamation as well, and means "to be a herald (of good news)," "to proclaim"; "to proclaim openly," "to say it out loud"; thus it refers to the public proclamation of the Gospel and the matters pertaining to it.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, it has the meaning "to proclaim to persons one with whom they are to become acquainted in order that they may learn what they are to do with him."<sup>23</sup>

The third word is *κατηχέω* which means "to sound towards," "sound down upon," "resound"; also "to teach orally," "to be instructed in the things of God, in order that the truth about Him may be known."<sup>24</sup> It has the further meaning of "to inform by word of mouth" or "to be orally informed."<sup>25</sup> From this word comes the English word

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<sup>20</sup>Luke 20:1; Acts 14:7; 1 Corinthians 1:17.

<sup>21</sup>Acts 11:19ff.

<sup>22</sup>Matthew 11:1; Mark 3:14; Romans 10:15.

<sup>23</sup>Cf. Acts 8:5; 1 Corinthians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 4:5.

<sup>24</sup>Acts 18:25; Luke 1:4; Galatians 6:6.

<sup>25</sup>Cf. 1 Corinthians 14:9; Acts 21:21.

"catechetics." This would imply that the meaning of the word conveys the idea of teaching the learner facts about which he must do something in life and not just teaching facts as information.

The fourth word is *παιδεία*, which word properly means "to train children."<sup>26</sup> It also means "to be instructed," "taught to learn."<sup>27</sup> But it also refers to correction with the intent of bringing repentance, so that the one corrected may know the truth and be delivered.<sup>28</sup> Even when chastened by the Lord, this chastening is intended to keep the one so chastened from falling away.<sup>29</sup> This word is correctly understood to mean the training of persons to be in relationship, and to recognize this relationship as binding upon the one to whom the training is directed. By this training the Lord lays a claim upon the person being trained and directs him into the paths of His peace and blessing.

The fifth word is *διδάσκαλος*, a teacher. But this is a teacher who teaches the things of God, and the duties of man. It cannot be construed to mean only to teach behavior. In fact, this seems to be only a part of the duty of such a teacher. This word was used by Jesus when He

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<sup>26</sup>Cf. Acts 22:3.

<sup>27</sup>1 Timothy 1:20; Titus 2:12.

<sup>28</sup>Cf. 2 Timothy 2:25.

<sup>29</sup>1 Corinthians 11:32; 2 Corinthians 6:9; Hebrews 12:6.

spoke of Himself as the one who teaches men the way of salvation.<sup>30</sup> It is also used of the Apostles as those who teach men concerning the things pertaining unto salvation.<sup>31</sup>

Richard R. Caemmerer looks upon all of these words as being interrelated and makes comparison of them in the following words,

Διδαχή, διδασκαλία, διδασκῆν, παιδεύειν, κατεχεῖν, are therefore not activities separate from κηρύσσειν and εὐαγγελίζειν. But they are the process by which the great fact of the atonement is brought into relation with its target in the here and now. The Kerygma (κηρύγμα) affirms that the intention of God to redeem the world has been carried out. The Didache (διδαχή) applies the intention of God to its target now, whether that be one not yet in the orbit of the Kingdom of God, or whether it be a member, young or old, in the Holy Christian Church. For the intention of God is never merely to rescue people from death but to employ them for the activities of rescued and rescuing people.<sup>32</sup>

Christian adult education cannot be separated from the total program of rescuing people from sin and giving them the message of the forgiveness which was offered and already made available. Christian adult education is a very real part of this proclamation which is too often relegated to the pulpits of the congregations. Caemmerer says further,

For, that Christian education, too, is the business of making God's act in Christ, completed in the death and resurrection of Christ, apply to and do its work on people now.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Matthew 23:8.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. 1 Timothy 2:7; 2 Timothy 1:11.

<sup>32</sup> Caemmerer, "Kerygma and Didache in Christian Education," p. 202.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

In fact Christian education is the means whereby the message of the Gospel is brought to bear upon people right now. Through Christian education the proclamation takes place and the Word of God is brought to its target.

Kerygma (κήρυγμα) is basic--it is the speaking, the continued proclaiming that is the power. The Kerygma (κήρυγμα) is not merely a statement of fact, but a tool to every Christian end. 1 Cor. 1:21. But the functions by which the Kerygma (κήρυγμα) are brought to bear upon the objectives to be achieved are Didache (διδάχη)--the process by which the Kerygma (κήρυγμα) is brought to the target. . . . Really to play its role in the process of Christian education the Gospel has to be directed to explicit ends and purposes; but really to provide power in Christian education, it has to direct the Gospel of God toward its ends and purposes.<sup>34</sup>

The Church is commissioned to proclaim the Gospel to people now, but the Church is also commissioned to direct this Gospel to people as help resource, life and joy, right now, so that the goals of sustained faith, trust in God, and constancy in prayer may be realized in the life of people. This directing is to be done by teaching. ". . . proclaim the Gospel, and direct it by teaching toward those goals of sustained faith, trust in God, and constancy in prayer."<sup>35</sup> The results which God expects of His Church are best accomplished when the Kerygma (κήρυγμα) is not separated from the Didache (διδάχη). The teaching within the Church conveys the Gospel, for as the Kerygma (κήρυγμα)

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 203.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 203-204.

is being taught it in reality is the proclaiming of God's redemption in Jesus Christ, made available for His children, in the here and now. Or as Richard R. Caemmerer has said it, "Hence the Kerygma must be implemented by teaching, and the teaching must implement the Kerygma."<sup>36</sup>

This brief survey of the process as revealed in the New Testament terms will serve as the theological sanctions for adult education within the congregation. However, it will be helpful for the purposes of this thesis to outline the implications of this survey.

#### Christian Adult Education Transmits God's Word

Christian adult education comprises the efforts of God's people to transmit their Scriptural beliefs and practices from one generation to another,<sup>37</sup> and the efforts of believers to nurture one another in the faith and to increase in the knowledge of the things of God.<sup>38</sup> St. Paul affirms this when he says,

for the equipment of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for building up the body of Christ, the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; . . . Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ. . . .<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 204.

<sup>37</sup> Psalm 145:4.

<sup>38</sup> Ephesians 4:29; 5:19.

<sup>39</sup> Ephesians 4:12-13,15.

Christian adult education is based on the recognition that believers are responsible before God for teaching His Word to their generation.<sup>40</sup> Every believer is expected by God to share with others the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and to let the light of Christ within Him shine before and among those with whom he lives and works.<sup>41</sup> Christian adult education is the ministry of believers to one another in the name of Christ and for His sake.<sup>42</sup> The Church, the assembly of believers, therefore, has the specific responsibility to make the educational program function within the local congregation and within the homes of that congregation, and beyond itself supports the educational program together with other congregations and other churches.<sup>43</sup>

But believers may not direct their education in accord with their own desires or their own plans, each one has the sacred duty to educate as God directs and in accord with His plans. The standards for Christian education are summarized as follows:

1. Christian education is a lifelong process. All who are in Christ are to "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Matthew 28:19-20.

<sup>41</sup>Matthew 5:14-16.

<sup>42</sup>Colossians 3:16-17.

<sup>43</sup>Ephesians 4:1-7; Philippians 2:1-16.

<sup>44</sup>2 Peter 3:18.

2. The content of Christian education is prescribed by God in His great command to His Church. Not only is the command "to teach" but it includes, "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you";<sup>45</sup>
3. Christian education is expected to produce results in the lives of those taught. The proclamation of the Word of God will produce results as the content of the teaching is in accord with God's command. Scriptures says, "teach them diligently";<sup>46</sup> and also that the Word shall not return void.<sup>47</sup>
4. Christian education is to be "in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."<sup>48</sup> Christian education, therefore, involves not only instruction but disciplinary guidance as well.
5. Christian education is to be an experience of mutual edification as Christians share the Word of God with one another.<sup>49</sup>

Christian education is the communication and the application of God's Word. The Word of God is communicated to men as frequent and favorable opportunities are provided for the learner to feed on the Word, and to hear the Word as it is spoken, to learn the Word as it is taught, and to act in life according to that which the Word proclaims and teaches. This communication of the Word of God is not the mere transfer of facts. Arthur Repp speaks to this in his book, Confirmation in the Lutheran Church, when he says,

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<sup>45</sup>Matthew 28:19-20.

<sup>46</sup>Deuteronomy 6:6-7.

<sup>47</sup>Isaiah 55:11.

<sup>48</sup>Ephesians 6:4.

<sup>49</sup>Colossians 3:16-17.



In formulating objectives the Church must guard against the historic fallacy that at the popular level identified instruction with knowledge or understanding. Since the power of the Gospel permeates the whole person, Christian instruction must be directed at the total personality of the learner--his understanding, his emotions, his skills, and his behavior patterns, which include his will. It is true that the Scriptures say, "This is life eternal that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3), but this knowing is not to be understood in the Greek sense, where it is limited to the intellect, but it is to be understood in the Hebrew sense, which involves the whole person, the fusion of all the facets of the human personality.<sup>50</sup>

The communication of the Word of God in Christian education, therefore, is an attempt to be effective in the nourishing, strengthening, protecting, guiding, and perfecting of the learner in his Christian faith. As the Word of God is taught it is to be related to life in the teaching, and opportunity is to be given to make the Word functional, under guidance, in attitudes and conduct.<sup>51</sup>

Christian education is not only the work of believers, but it is the work of God through the believers. It is the Holy Spirit who makes the Word effective in the heart of man. Since man by nature is totally ignorant of the things of God, and incapable of any God-pleasing response to the Word of God, the Holy Spirit must work in his heart both the gift of faith and the life of faith which follows from such faith.<sup>52</sup> The

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<sup>50</sup> Arthur C. Repp, Confirmation in the Lutheran Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1964), pp. 197-198.

<sup>51</sup> Ephesians 4:11-16.

<sup>52</sup> John 3:6; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Galatians 5:22.

Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to accomplish these works of faith in the heart of man. The Word of God as the means of grace possesses the effective power to change man from death to life, for the very Word of God which is communicated works faith to believe and to accept it.<sup>53</sup> The effectiveness of Christian education, therefore, does not depend on human pedagogical skill but on the miracle-working power of the Holy Spirit operating through the Word of God. God Himself is the creative agent through the Word of God as the Holy Spirit causes this Word to be productive of faith and good works in the lives of individuals.<sup>54</sup>

God is the pioneer and the perfecter of faith and on Him all spiritual life and growth depends.<sup>55</sup> The new life in Christ comes as an undeserved gift of the grace of God as it is received by faith. This grace-faith relationship, rooted in biblical theology, motivates and controls the process of Christian education. The believer is what he is altogether because of the work of God in Christ.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> <sup>53</sup> Ephesians 1:19; John 17:20; Romans 1:16; 10:17.

<sup>54</sup> 1 Peter 1:23; Ezekiel 12:25; Isaiah 2:3.

<sup>55</sup> Hebrews 12:2.

<sup>56</sup> John 15:1ff.

Christian Adult Education Fulfills God's  
Purposes for His Redeemed

The gracious purpose of God is to make man wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, and to cause man to grow and increase in every good work in the life of faith.<sup>57</sup> Christian adult education seeks to fulfill this gracious purpose of God. The person justified by grace is nurtured and trained in the Word of God so that he might come to full-grown maturity in Christ in accordance with this gracious purpose of God.<sup>58</sup> The whole life of the believer is to find its center and its vitality in Christ.<sup>59</sup> And life on earth is to be lived as unto God who gave it and still sustains it through His Word.<sup>60</sup> Of course the ultimate goal of the believer is life with God in heaven.<sup>61</sup>

The Christian Church proclaims the Word of God to men so that men may be in Christ and may also be sustained in the relationship of faith with Him. This proclamation is performed by the members of the Church both in their preaching and in their teaching, as they share the Word of God with one another. The Church is charged to preach and teach,

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<sup>57</sup>2 Timothy 3:15-17.

<sup>58</sup>Colossians 1:9-14; 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13.

<sup>59</sup>Ephesians 1:10-12.

<sup>60</sup>Titus 2:11-14; Colossians 1:15-17.

<sup>61</sup>Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Peter 1:3-9.

and to use the Word and the Sacraments. Evangelism and education are twin concerns of the Church as it seeks to fulfill the purposes of God to save men. These concerns walk together and work hand in hand to bring the Word of God to its target in the heart of men. The purposes of God to save men are fulfilled when men are brought into a saved and living relationship and continue to live by the power of the Word of God in a living fellowship with Jesus Christ.<sup>62</sup>

The Christian Church is the fellowship of the redeemed who continue to bring the Word of God to bear upon all who have come to life through the work of the Holy Spirit by the Word of God.<sup>63</sup> The regenerate person makes a practice of speaking of the things of God since these things are the primary concern of his life.<sup>64</sup> In this speaking of the Word of God to one another the redeemed is brought to know the fruits of repentance and faith, since even in such speaking of the Word of God, God is at work to perform His gracious purposes in life.<sup>65</sup> The regenerate enters into the life of the community of believers with its preaching, its sacraments, its worship, its care for the widows and orphans, its concern for missionary work and Christian

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<sup>62</sup>John 3:1-17.

<sup>63</sup>Ephesians 5:19-20; Deuteronomy 6:7.

<sup>64</sup>Malachi 3:16; Psalm 145:11.

<sup>65</sup>Luke 24:13-14,32.

teaching, and its care for one another in Christ. He worships and works and prays and gives and through them all speaks the Word of God for the welfare and spread of God's kingdom among men. He knows that this is God's world, that he has a stake in it, that God made him and called him for Himself and redeemed him in Christ to be His own and serve Him in His kingdom.<sup>66</sup> He is enabled to trust the creative power of the Holy Spirit and so receives the gift of faith and the ability to obey God and to grow in knowledge and grace and love.<sup>67</sup> He walks and lives before God in confidence since he is certain of his justification before God at all times. And he looks hopefully to the time when he will be with God in heaven forever.<sup>68</sup>

#### Christian Adult Education Meets the Problems of Human Existence

God's revealed, communicated, received, and believed Word answers man's fundamental questions about human existence. Man today is caught in a dilemma because he cannot make up his mind who he is and what he is to do with his life.<sup>69</sup> He aspires to be man as God created and as God intended him to be, but he is man in the most radical

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<sup>66</sup> Titus 2:14.

<sup>67</sup> 2 Corinthians 9:8; Romans 6:4-11.

<sup>68</sup> 2 Timothy 1:12.

<sup>69</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:9.

unlikeness of God, man in rebellion, man in sin, and furthermore, his original divine image is ruined beyond human ability to mend it.<sup>70</sup> Christian adult education does not minimize but bluntly affirms the teaching that man, made in the divine image, is a person who was and is a sinner.<sup>71</sup> Man is in a very difficult situation apart from God. Therefore, the emphasis in Christian adult education is not on man's goodness nor on his ability to save himself, or even on his ability to do good works. Rather the emphasis is on God, and His great work of redemption aimed at the rescue of man from his terrible plight. God in His great love has planned and fulfilled a means whereby man can be rescued and re-established in life with God. The major emphasis will be upon Jesus Christ Who was sent into the world to redeem all men, to suffer and die upon the cross so that God would be able to forgive their sins and send His Holy Spirit back into their hearts.<sup>72</sup>

The redeemed, regenerated sinner is faced with the problem of duality for the rest of his life. This duality consists of flesh, born of flesh, constantly seeking to pull him away from God, and of spirit, born of the Holy Spirit, which strives upward and toward God. The child of God needs the constant return to the Word of God so that he may live

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<sup>70</sup>Ephesians 2:3.

<sup>71</sup>Galatians 5:17.

<sup>72</sup>John 3:1-16; 14:26ff.; 16:7ff.

in this duality without either losing his mind or capitulating to the forces of evil. The Word of God is the power of God unto salvation and is the only power which can overcome the conditions of human experience and existence which bind him, because of their very nature earthward. This is the only power which can make the rule of God functional in his life, his heart, his will, and his mind, enabling him to become what God wills him to be.<sup>73</sup>

In Christian adult education the Christian Church unfolds to man the truth of God. The answers to man's deepest needs and questions are not found in himself or by himself. He needs to know who he is and how he is in his finiteness and sin. He needs to know who other people are and how he is related to them. He needs to know the purposes of life, where he is going in eternity, and what he is and may become by reason of Jesus Christ. The answers to man's questions and problems in the struggle of his soul for truth and life and good are wholly dependent upon the authoritative events which a given power does for him that which he cannot do for himself. The gracious Word of God is able to break through man's defenses and prepare his heart to receive the Christian answers to the deepest and most persistent questions arising in human existence.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>Ephesians 6:10-11; Galatians 2:20.

<sup>74</sup>Ephesians 2:19-22.

## How to Get Gospel Going in Christian Education

The renewal of the congregation will take place as the Word of God is applied to its target, namely, the heart and life of man. This Word of God needs to be set in motion in the congregation. Through Christian adult education and the Word of God applied to the heart and life of man the task of renewal in the individual and subsequently in the congregation can be carried out. Therefore, some basic affirmations should be made in relation to a program of Christian adult education, if such renewal is to take place.

First of all, it will be important that the total program of adult Christian education have a proper theological orientation. James Smart in his book The Teaching Ministry of the Church, has this to say,

The pressure for the recovery of theological concern in Christian education has not come in the main from educational leaders. . . . Rather, it has come from underneath, from young people and adults who in the world of today, are confronted with non-Christian faiths, and demand of their leaders that they tell them plainly what the Christian faith is in distinction to all other faiths. A religious education that refuses to take the essential doctrines of the Christian faith in earnest no longer speaks to the Christian or to man in general, at the point of sharpest urgency.<sup>75</sup>

The whole program of Christian education in the congregation should have as its objective "to put and keep the person in relation to God and His will through the atonement of Christ

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<sup>40</sup> <sup>75</sup> James D. Smart, The Teaching Ministry of the Church (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954), p. 63.



and the gift of His Spirit."<sup>76</sup> The person being so instructed should be aware of the purpose of the learning which is taking place. Randolph Crump Miller states that

The significant factor in Christian education is helping the individual, by God's grace, to become a believing and committed member of the community of the Holy Spirit, obedient to Christ as his Lord and Master, and living as a Christian to the best of his ability in all his relationships.<sup>77</sup>

It is tragic if the learning that is taking place under the program of adult Christian education should fail to meet the needs of people in life and living right now. The living and the relationships of the person are important for all effective adult Christian education.

The objectives of Christian education should always be expressed in relation to what is expected to happen in the life of the person in relation to God. The person being taught should always be aware that this teaching is helping him in relation to God, and that through this educative process God is Himself present with His saving and sanctifying power to cause each one to reach the great objective of Christian life. The purposes of God are being served when Christian adult education permits the Word of God to accomplish its work in the heart and life of every person.

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<sup>76</sup>Richard R. Caemmerer, "Theological Foundations for the Religion Curriculum in Lutheran Schools," a report of the Conference on Religion Curriculum Materials for Lutheran Elementary Schools, (St. Louis, Mo.: May 10-11, 1963), p. 8.

<sup>77</sup>Randolph Crump Miller, Christian Nurture and the Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, c.1961), p. 4.

When the purposes of God are being served the person who hears the Word of God will not only possess a new life given by God but will also seek to live a new life in relation to God and in association with others.

This life may sometimes be in the domain of worship, thanksgiving, prayer, adoration, reverence (first table), sometimes in the area of cultivating personal purity and conquest of the flesh, or of love and service and witness to other people (second table), and sometimes both.<sup>78</sup>

Since the Christian adult education program in the congregation is to have a proper theological orientation the basis of this program will of necessity be the Holy Scriptures. This is not to be construed as the study of Bible facts alone, nor the memorization of Bible verses, but that these facts learned and these verses memorized become the basis for purposeful and meaningful living in fellowship with God.<sup>79</sup> This, of course, will mean that the great fact of the atonement is to be specific in the teaching and the nurturing program and not just supposed

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<sup>43</sup> <sup>78</sup>Caemmerer, "Theological Foundations for the Religion Curriculum in Lutheran Schools," p. 8.

<sup>79</sup>Cf. Paul [Emile] Bergevin and John McKinley, who state, "Subject matter is important. A body of facts, however, is of greatest educational value only as the learners use it as a means to an end. Subject matter itself should not become the end, sought for its own sake." Design for Adult Education in the Church (Greenwich: Seabury Press, c.1958), p. xxv. Also C. F. W. Walther, who says, "Head knowledge . . . it does not renew and transform the heart, does not produce a new man, but leaves the person in the former opinion and conduct." The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel, reproduced from the German edition of 1897 by W. H. T. Dau (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1928), pp. 229-230.

or taken for granted. The biblical teaching will have at its centre the Christ and His ministry in the world and for the world. The Kerygma ( *κηρυγμα* ) will be the central unifying principle of the teaching program in the Church, and all other instruction and information will be considered as secondary to this one great fact of the Gospel.

Secondly, the Christian adult education program in the congregation will be geared toward helping each person to do the will of God in life. The will of God will be done not only in Church but also in business, in the home, in the community, and in all relationships to which each one is subjected. The World Council of Churches made a study of this problem under the title, "The Significance of the Laity in the Church," in which the following statement appears,

We are thinking of the lay member of the Church not as a worker in the congregation, but as one living and working in the wider community. The question to be faced here is this: how can members of the Church be enabled to see the bearing of their Christian faith on their life in their occupation? How can men and women who stand in the stress and problems of life be helped to see how they can obey just there the will of God.<sup>80</sup>

In the Church the person should find the resources needed to be able to fulfill this will of God regardless of the difficulty of the situation into which he is thrust within

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<sup>80</sup>Quoted from a report to the World Council of Churches, 1948, "The Significance of the Laity in the Church," by Francis Ayres, The Ministry of the Laity (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), pp. 14-15.

life. The Christian adult education program will, therefore, proclaim the Word of God, so that the proper ability and the proper motivation to rely upon God will be available to every learner in every given situation. The Word of God will also motivate to reliance upon God rather than upon self-reliance in every such situation. This reliance upon God will become the watchword of the Christian, and should be the direct result of the teaching program of the Church. Won Yong Ji makes the following observation about Luther's attitude to education,

Luther's education is directed to the ultimate goal of making the Word of God function in all walks of life, and thus, making it meaningful to all situations in life, for all types of people in every profession.<sup>81</sup>

It is well to mention that all the activities of the child of God should be related to the awareness that Jesus Christ died for him, rose again for his justification, and is alive forevermore to be the continuing and sustaining power for every situation in life.<sup>82</sup> The cross of Jesus Christ ought to be the central emphasis of the Christian

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<sup>81</sup>Won Yong Ji, "The Concept of Education in the Light of the Theology of D. Martin Luther," (An unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., 1957), p. 194.

<sup>82</sup>Cf. Caemmerer, "Kerygma and Didache in Christian Education," p. 206, where he says, "Hence Catechetical instruction has to preach the Kerygma as the claim of God on the learner and set before the learner the purposes in his life as an individual and as a member of the body of Christ which God in His call has empowered in Baptism, is now empowering in the Gospel, and will continue to empower in Gospel and Sacrament."

life as a result of the teaching program of the congregation to which he belongs. Only as it is thus centrally located in the atonement will it be possible for the individual to realize the kind of power and grace necessary for every need at all times in living as unto God.<sup>83</sup> This centrality will be portrayed in faith, in love, and in good works. God is at work in His children to perform that which is His good pleasure.<sup>84</sup> It is not the work of man to believe in God;<sup>85</sup> it is not the work of man to love his neighbor as himself;<sup>86</sup> it is not the work of man to do good works in his life;<sup>87</sup> these all come as a direct result of the grace of God at work in the heart. He performs that which draws to Himself and He gives the ability to do that which is His will.

Thirdly, the congregation which is interested in an effective adult education program will carefully evaluate its goals and objectives in order to realize its intended results. It is difficult to hit the target if careful aim

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<sup>83</sup>Cf. E. T. Thompson who makes the following statement in Tomorrow's Church--Tomorrow's World (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1960), "The end of Christian Education, as now conceived, is to bring the child, the youth, the mature man and woman, to the place where they hear and respond throughout life to the God who continues to address them personally in Christ." P. 77.

<sup>84</sup>2 Thessalonians 1:11-12.

<sup>85</sup>Ephesians 2:8.

<sup>86</sup>Galatians 5:6,22.

<sup>87</sup>Philippians 1:11.

is not taken. The objectives of Christian adult education are in reality the aim that is made toward the end result in the life and living of the person involved. Lewis J. Sherrill recognizes this when he says,

Christian Education is the attempt, ordinarily by members of the Christian community, to participate in and guide the changes which take place in persons in their relationships with God, with the Church, with other persons, with the physical world, and with oneself.<sup>88</sup>

If there are no objectives or if these objectives are only vaguely understood, it is unlikely that any concrete results will be realized.

The objectives for Christian adult education will be stated on the local level so that the place where the teaching takes place will be a major consideration in the formulation of such objectives. Samuel McCrea Cavert, a former Executive Secretary of the World Council of Churches, has this to say,

The task of Christians is to make the Church of Jesus Christ visible. It is just this vitalizing of the fellowship of the local church which I am urging as a major objective of Christian adult education.<sup>89</sup>

Such revitalization can take place only as it is planned for

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<sup>88</sup>Lewis Joseph Sherrill, The Gift of Power (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), p. 82. Cf. also Bergevin and Mckinley, p. xv, who say, "A prime educational purpose of the Church is to help us to know God better so that we may better serve him."

<sup>89</sup>Samuel McCrea Cavert, "Christian Education in World Perspective," The Future Course of Christian Adult Education, Lawrence C. Little, editor (Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburgh Press, c.1959), p. 57.

and the congregation directed toward it through carefully planned objectives.

The objectives will also be stated in terms of the theological sanctions for Christian education, and not in terms of human standards as stated for other types of training or living. James Smart gives warning that the curriculum which is based upon the needs of the person is in danger of becoming very thin and of little value, particularly if much emphasis is placed upon the needs as stated by the child or the adult unaware of the total situation.<sup>90</sup> The needs of the adults as known and expressed in the Scriptures will have a major role in determining the objectives of an adequate adult education program. The theological concerns will be primary in any Christian adult education program.

Furthermore, the objectives will need to be realistic in terms of the situation in which they will be implemented. They will also take cognizance of the situation in which the people, who are thus to be taught, live, and work. These objectives will also be stated in terms of the learner, that is, in terms of what is expected to be achieved in him. Always this will be considered in terms of the Holy Spirit at work in His children through the Word of God spoken and received, for finally, only that which is His work in the heart of man is of major importance in adult education.

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<sup>90</sup>Smart, p. 155.

That which is to be taught will determine the objectives of the program in every given instance. When objectives are stated they will take into consideration: the goals to be accomplished; the resources to be employed; the nature of the subject to be discussed; and the nature and needs of the person to be involved.

Fourthly, the Church will remember in every program of adult Christian education that it has the specific task, given by God, to speak the Word of God in every opportunity and to every participant.<sup>91</sup> The message given by God becomes His Word to each other as it is spoken out loud to one another. It is of great importance that this message be spoken to one another with as little outside interference as possible. Howard Grimes discusses this speaking and witnessing to one another in his book, The Church Redemptive, in which he says,

we cannot of ourselves make the Church. We cannot educate, or create fellowship, or convert anyone, or manipulate the Good Society into being. This is God's work. The Church is finally His gift to us. Yet we must act responsibly. We are the individual parts who must respond in such a manner as to become a medium through whom He works. We are witnesses, agents, media, through whom He acts, but it is God who works in us.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup>2 Timothy 4:1-5; Matthew 10:7; Acts 4:20-21.

<sup>92</sup>Howard Grimes, The Church Redemptive (New York: Abingdon Press, c.1958), p. 34. Cf. also David J. Ernsberger, A Philosophy of Adult Christian Education (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958), p. 61. "As a servant of the Word of God, his task is to lead the group beyond an immature attraction to and dependence upon himself. He must arouse, instead, an attraction to and dependence upon the Word he is called to communicate."



With this in mind, each one needs to give himself to the study of and the meditation upon the message of God as revealed in the Scriptures, and then speak this message to each other. By this speaking the Word of God will be brought to bear upon the life of the Church through the individuals who hear and respond in faith. Although the Scriptures will not be the only source of the Word of God to man it will of necessity be the primary source for determining the message of God for His people in any given situation. Other sources will certainly be used, but not as primary material for determining God's message to His people.

The speaking of the Word of God will take place in every encounter within the Christian community,<sup>93</sup> not least of all in the parish education program. It is submitted that especially in the parish education program this speaking of the Word of God should take place, since this is the place where the Scriptural base for the Word of God is taught and presented to every person participating. Here particularly, the teacher, leader, or layman will share the word of Scriptures which in the speaking will become the

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<sup>93</sup>Cf. Ji, p. 11, "The educational process, the renewal of man's existence as man, occurs through the message of God's Word which is preached and taught in the Church, schools, and the family. The Word of God is the indispensable means in the process of education." Cf. also James Smart, p. 169, "Education, then, is a process far vaster than anything we can organize; it goes on constantly; . . . It goes on for a lifetime. There are no intermissions."

Word of God to the hearer as it strikes his ear and registers in his mind. These in turn will speak to one another, to the teacher, and to the community about them, and thus the impact of the Word of God will be both known and experienced in reality. Won Yong Ji expresses it this way,

God educates through the Word. Luther's education is to make the Word of God available to man in the actual life-situation, and to enable man to live with the Word and in the Word. He sees education as the process of the application of the Word of God in all walks of life.<sup>94</sup>

The experience of God's presence through the application of the Word of God should be a real life experience for every participant in the parish education program within the Christian community. It is only when the proclamation of the Word of God takes place in Christian education that this experience can be possible for the participants. It is submitted that the reverse is also true, that the program of education can be called Christian education only when the Word of God is proclaimed and heard. The parish education program needs to be so oriented that all who are involved in it will be abundantly aware that they are not only hearers of the Word of God, but also speakers of this Word, who themselves become the mouthpieces for God in the community of fellowship to which they belong.<sup>95</sup> They will hear the

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<sup>94</sup>Ji, p. 111-112.

<sup>95</sup>Cf. Bergevin and McKinley, p. 18. "If there is no communication, there is no learning, . . . the most effective learning will take place when both speaker and hearer assume a new role, that of being both receivers and transmitters."

Word of God, but immediately respond by teaching it in the ear of their fellows, and thus become a part of the ongoing witness to the Word of God who saves and empowers for His work in the Church.

Fifthly, therefore, the teacher or leader should be called into the position of being an instructor and a guide for the ongoing thrust of the Word of God into individual lives and through individual lives into the community. God's people are His because He has called them by the Gospel and made it clear to them that they belong to Him, since He has purchased them with the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ.<sup>96</sup> The business of the Church through its pastors, teachers, and leaders is to keep this call of God coming into the lives of its members. These called ones also continue to issue this call and thus it is passed on from generation to generation, and from person to person in every generation. Richard R. Caemmerer expresses it in this manner,

But the called people are themselves put into the position that they speak forth the call; the apostle urges Christians to "stay in their callings," namely, in whatever station of life they find themselves, to keep active in speaking this great call with which God has called them (1 Corinthians 7:13-24; Cf. Ephesians 4-6; and 1 Peter 2-4).<sup>97</sup>

The teacher needs to know the importance of the task to which he is called. It is not just teaching certain facts

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<sup>96</sup>2 Timothy 1:9-12.

<sup>97</sup>Richard R. Caemmerer, Feeding and Leading (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), pp. 43-44.

about the Bible, nor certain specified facts which the Church thinks the individual ought to know, but the specific task of speaking the Word of God into the ear of the learner so that this learner will in turn be able to speak it into the ear of his fellow, and also into the ear of the teacher in return. The pastor should not lose an opportunity to speak this Word of God into the ear of the members of the congregation, and each member of the congregation should be careful to make use of every opportunity to speak the Word of God in return to him and in response to their fellow members. This should be equally true of every teacher, every member, and every active participant in the life of the congregation. It will then be possible to see that the congregation is seeking to fulfill its primary task of building one another in the faith. Richard Caemmerer says,

The pastor is there to equip the individual member of the Church to render this service to others. The tool at his disposal--just as it is the tool at the disposal of the members of their mutual ministry--is the truth, speaking the truth in love, This is administration in its most literal meaning, this is "oversight" or "the work of a bishop": the pastor becomes the energizer and guide of his people so that as many as possible of them, and each of them as richly as possible, play their role in nurturing their fellow Christians.<sup>98</sup>

The teacher needs to be trained in the knowledge of the Scriptures, in the ability to speak to the particular group which is his responsibility, in the understanding of the needs and problems which face the group, in the situations

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<sup>98</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

out of which each one comes to this teaching opportunity, in the methods which are useable to get the Word of God going to each other in the situation, and in the methods that are necessary to cause this group to apply this particular Word of God to their lives and their given situation.

The task of the teacher is not an easy one. It requires that the grace of God be operative by the Holy Spirit in the life of the teacher. Although it is not possible to adequately describe the characteristics of a good teacher, a few basic characteristics should be mentioned as necessary for the teacher in the Christian adult education program of the Church. These can be summarized as follows: love for the Lord (this is understood as given by God and as inclusive of faith); love for the message of God, to His people, through the Bible; love for the adult person to be taught, even the unlovely; a genuine love for the speaking and teaching of the Word of God; and a genuine desire to speak this Word of God to others, either in the classroom situation or in more informal circumstances wherever the opportunity occurs. When the teacher is filled with such love for God, such love for His message, such love for His children, and such a desire to share this message with His children, the task of teaching is somewhat easier.

The task of teaching is made simple and effective as the Holy Spirit is permitted to speak in and through the teacher to those being taught. For the Holy Spirit is willing and able to speak the Word of God to the teacher and through

the teacher to the hearer and learner. When the Holy Spirit is permitted to work through the teacher He is able to accomplish the purposes of God as He brings the Word of God to its target in the hearts and lives of people. In this encounter the Word of God accomplishes God's purposes with God's people. The most effective teacher is the one who speaking for God, reveals God, and permits the Holy Spirit to accomplish God's purposes in the heart and life of man, without interference or hindrance. Through such a teacher God is able to bring sinners to repentance, is able to give the gift of faith to a receptive heart, and is able to give power for effective witness and service to willing and obedient servants.

Finally, the congregation needs to know the community in which it serves. It needs to understand the language that the people speak, not just the national language but the localized colloquialisms, and the localized circumstances that make their words and expressions different in meaning and purpose. The congregation needs to be aware of the peculiar circumstances which impinge upon the people of God within the structure of the community, both as a whole and in each of the component parts--the private homes. The message of the Word of God can be lived by the people only as they understand it and as they in understanding are able to relate this Word to their given circumstances. It is important that the Word of God be relevant to the people to whom it is addressed, that it be understood by them, that

it be applicable in their lives, and that it be verifiable in the life and living of the persons to whom it is addressed and upon whom it makes its impact. The message, therefore, cannot be garbled, or mumbled in speaking, or in some other way hindered from reaching its target and fulfilling its mission. Each person should be a free channel through which the Word of God flows to the other, so that this Word may accomplish its purpose in the life and person of the hearer. The Word of God will continue to be given in mutual address and response as each one being a hearer responds and becomes a speaker of this same Word, causing it to go forth in and through the congregation to the community.

The Word of God is always relevant to the needs of man, but man needs to be made aware that it is relevant for him. It is to this end that the language and the situation of the people being addressed needs to be known by the teacher. For this reason, among others, the members should assume the responsibility of speaking the Word of God to one another in mutual address and response.

One could mention the facilities for teaching, the materials for teaching, and the age group to be taught, but these are either implied or included in the other discussions and would only be repetitious. The facilities are the people wherever they meet together, the country store, the city office, the Seminary Chapel, the classroom, the Church, the sports activity, and so forth. The primary need is that people meet each other in mutual address and response, and

in the encounter speak the Word of God to each other. Good buildings are important and can serve the purposes of God but the people who gather and use these buildings are infinitely more important. The disciples portrayed this when they met in a rented room, and went forth from these rented quarters to speak the Word of God in the streets of their city. Buildings can become ends in themselves, but ought to be only means to an end, the ends and purposes of God in hearts and lives of people.

The material should be Christ-centred and Scripture-centred, carrying the message of God to the ears of the hearers, so that they can hear through it, the Word of God. W. Norman Pittenger, in his Proclaiming Christ Today, has this to say,

We are to seek the truth and to preach the truth, for the Gospel is really nothing other than the proclamation of Him who is the truth.<sup>99</sup>

As the Word of God is taught and proclaimed, the Spirit of God will perform His work in the heart of the willing listener and the affirmative responder. The adult who hears and responds affirmatively, will be transformed from a receiver into a transmitter. The adult who hears and rejects will be unhappy with the message which points up his need, and with his own answer which excludes him from the blessings promised and bestowed by the Word of God.<sup>100</sup> No one is

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<sup>99</sup>W. Norman Pittenger, Proclaiming Christ Today (Greenwich, Connecticut: The Seabury Press, 1962), p. 73.

<sup>100</sup>Cf. John 3:16-21; 2 Corinthians 2:14-17.



excluded by God, only those who exclude themselves through a negative response, or through refusing to hear the Word of God, are excluded from the blessings of life and salvation given through the Word of God. The responsibility for such refusal lies with the individual alone not with the message proclaimed, or with the one who proclaims it, or with God who works through His Word as it is spoken and heard.

Christian adult education is the sharing of the Gospel with one another, and in this sense is the telling of the truth to one another. The truth proclaimed and heard performs God's purposes in the life and living of both the proclaimer and the hearer.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

This thesis has presented evidence to show the need for individual and congregational renewal. The primary emphasis has been directed toward the renewal of the individual since every congregation is composed of persons. These individuals, who are renewed will in turn renew the congregation as they serve and live in the midst of the community of believers in their area. Congregational renewal depends upon the renewal of the individuals of which it consists.

Upon the examination of the evidence this author concluded that man, who is born in sin and out of fellowship with God, is in need of a new life. This new life is made available to him through the Word of God, which comes to him in Holy Baptism while yet unable to hear the spoken message. This new life is life in fellowship with God. But, this new man in Christ has opponents who seek to overthrow the rule of God in his heart. These opponents include the devil, the world, and his own flesh. All seek to destroy the fellowship with God which has been given through the Word of God. The evidence showed that man is living in a duality of flesh and spirit, each seeking his allegiance and obedience. The yielding to the flesh is self-rule and a denial of the new life. The yielding to the spirit is God-rule and a building up of the new life in Christ. This new man, therefore, is

in the dilemma of decision throughout life. For this reason he needs the continual bombardment of the Word of God into his heart and life. Through this Word he is able to receive the assurance of the forgiveness of sins, the awareness of God's presence as he wages the battles of devil, flesh, and world, and the confidence that the victory is already his as he stands in the strength and fellowship of the Word of God.

The means of renewal is the Word of God. In the examination of the evidence in relation to the Word of God this author concluded that the Word of God is God's chosen means through which He meets man with forgiveness, and that He continues to meet man with His assurance of this forgiveness as this Word is read, studied, meditated upon, and particularly as it is proclaimed to one another in the Christian fellowship. The Word of God is God's activity, which has been evident to His people through many and divers manners, which include: direct speaking; dreams and visions; acts of judgment and mercy; through the written record which we have as the Bible; and finally through the person and the activity of His Son, Jesus Christ. These manifestations of the Word of God are unified in the person and work of Jesus Christ. He is the fulfillment of all God's promises to His people. In Jesus Christ God gave to the world the demonstration of His love and mercy, as His Son gave His life for the sin of the world at Calvary. Jesus Christ is the Word of God, the good news of the Gospel, the light of the world,

the life and salvation which God had promised His people. As the Word of God, Jesus Christ is the one through whom man comes to the Father and through whom man also lives in the continuing fellowship with the Father. In these last days He has spoken unto us by His Son.

Through the proclamation of this Word of God, man is given new life as he hears and responds with a "yes." If he responds with a "no" he remains outside of the fellowship which this Word of God seeks to bestow upon him. The man who responds with a "yes" must of necessity continue to respond with a "yes" throughout life. As the Word of God continues to come in the preaching and teaching, each new confrontation demands a new decision. In these decisions the Christian is given the power and the grace of God to respond affirmatively and to be strengthened by thus responding for each new confrontation that comes.

Renewal of the Christian man comes only through this dependence upon the Word of God. He will, therefore, be in the position where this Word of God can strike him and bring to his life the renewal which he needs. He will seek out the opportunities to study the message of God as it is revealed in the Scriptures. He will seek out the opportunities for giving praise and honor to God in worship and in service. He will seek out the opportunities to give himself in service to his Lord even as he serves in the midst of a secular society. In all of these opportunities he will depend upon

the Word of God as his guide and as his strength, both for life in fellowship with God and in service to his fellowmen. As he depends upon the Word of God, as it comes to him in the spoken, and the visible means of the sacraments he will be increasingly aware that the fruits of the Spirit are more in evidence and the fruits of sin are losing their control and power.

Renewal takes place through adult education as the program of the congregation assures the participants that here the Word of God is heard and received. The Word of God comes to each participant as the Gospel is proclaimed as the help, resource, and joy for Christian living. When the Gospel is repeated and heard, there God is present with His grace and mercy to renew and redirect life. He comes to assure of forgiveness, to lift from the place of despondency to the place of confidence in Christ, to give new strength for each new day's task, and to assure of His continuing presence with His children.

If adult education is to be productive of renewal in the congregation several things will need to be true which include: a program of instruction which is centred in the proclamation of the Gospel; a program which is geared toward helping people to do the will of God in their lives; a program which determines its intended objectives and desired results before going into a plan which is poorly worked out; as the program develops the leaders will assist each

participant to be able to speak the Word of God to one another; the teacher and leader will be one who knows the message and the One of whom the message speaks; the teacher will be a Christian sharing the Word of God; and the people of God will speak to their community in the language which the community understands. Only as the Word of God is proclaimed so that it is understandable and understood, applicable and applied, will it be productive of new life and renewal of children of God in the midst of the world. Congregational renewal can take place as each person is placed under the Word of God and given the opportunity to hear it and be obedient to it in life and living.

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