

Concordia Theological Monthly



F E B R U A R Y ♦ 1 9 5 8

BRIEF STUDIES

THE CONTENT OF LENTEN PREACHING

" . . . to explain all these single points separately [the details of Christology] belongs not to brief sermons for children, but rather to the ampler sermons that extend throughout the entire year, *especially at those times which are appointed for the purpose of treating at length of each article* [italics not in original text] —the birth, sufferings, resurrection, ascension of Christ, etc. Ay, the entire Gospel which we preach is based on this, that we properly understand this article as that upon which our salvation and all our happiness rest, and which is so rich and comprehensive that we can never learn it fully."¹

These words of Luther sound the dominant note of all Lutheran theology, whether in the classroom, in the pulpit, or in private *Seelsorge*.²

The entire Lutheran church year is oriented Christologically and therefore soteriologically. The redeeming sacrifice and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ must receive their rightful emphasis in every Lutheran sermon worthy of the name. At the same time, Luther calls attention to "appointed times" for special treatment of "each article," such as Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, etc. The specific accent of the Lenten season is, of course, the Passion of our Lord, culminating in the events of Holy Week.

Our churches have made much of Lent, and rightly so. It would be difficult to imagine a Lutheran church which under normal circumstances did not occupy itself intensively, in one way or another, with the history surrounding the cross of Golgotha. In addition to various individual features of Lenten observance, our churches almost always conduct a series of special Lenten services with sermons devoted to some aspects of the Passion story as told in the Four Gospels. The

¹ Luther's Large Catechism, II 32, 33.

² Cf. Edmund Schlöcker, *Theologie der lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften*, 3. Auflage, München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1948, p. 31: "Nur im Glauben an das Evangelium kann die Schrift recht ausgelegt werden, das heisst im Empfang der Wohltaten des gekreuzigten Christus." Carl Stange, in *Theologische Aufsätze*, Leipzig, 1905, p. 47: "Alles, was die lutherische Dogmatik zu sagen weiss, ist . . . darauf gerichtet, die Zuversicht und den Glauben des Menschen zu stärken."

material and possibilities of treatment are well-nigh inexhaustible, as any casual glance at published collections of Lenten sermons will demonstrate. It is, unfortunately, true that much Lenten preaching fails to do justice to its purpose by neglecting or perverting certain basic truths which are of the very essence of Gospel proclamation. Since a true preacher must say the same things again and again, and yet does not want to surfeit or bore his hearers by a mere repetition, a constant concern for variety and freshness of approach is necessary and laudable. Let us have variety, by all means!

Beneath the multiplicity of method and emphasis, however, Christian preaching can properly be expected to feature a certain blessed "monotony," that is, to reiterate without fail the primary, indispensable truths of our holy Christian faith.

Our church has produced many fine collections of sermons, also for the season of Lent. One of the most detailed and profound homiletical studies of our Lord's Passion is undoubtedly the product of Dr. George Stoeckhardt's pen.³ What Stoeckhardt says concerning the purpose and scope of preaching on the suffering of Christ has timeless validity and deserves to be conscientiously heeded. The pertinent material is from the introduction to his first sermon, which is here offered in translation in the conviction that it may perform a worthwhile service for our brethren in the parish ministry:

The Passion story is the best Lenten preaching. The entire Gospel is the proclamation of Christ Crucified, the Word of reconciliation. In a special sense, *the* Word of reconciliation, the very marrow and kernel of the Gospel, is comprised in the narrative of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, as the inspired evangelists record it. This narrative deals with words and concepts that are grand, serious, powerful, and highly consoling. The words are plain and clear, and they of themselves penetrate heart and conscience. Whoever fixes his eyes and his soul on this narrative and invokes the Holy Spirit for his meditation will receive and enjoy the fruit of Christ's Passion. Since, however, the words are so grand, so rich, and so profound, we do well to make them the object of our special preaching and exposition. But such an undertaking will produce the proper results only if we devote careful attention to every detail of the record in the Four Gospels and seek to discover the true sense and significance. To that end we propose to follow slowly, step by step, the way of sorrows of our Lord and Savior, as described in the Passion story.

³ *Passionspredigten* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House), 1890.

At every stage of the journey, in connection with every paragraph of the history, we wish to note chiefly the following points.

1. All Christian preaching, hence also Lenten preaching, is, first of all, preaching of repentance.⁴ Christ's suffering must show us how great and serious our sins are, "How God at our transgression To anger gives expression, How loud His thunders roll."⁵ Each new glance at the cross of Christ should elicit the confession:

I caused Thy grief and sighing
By evils multiplying
As countless as the sands.
I caused Thy woes unnumbered
With which Thy soul is cumbered,
Thy sorrows raised by wicked hands. (*LH*, 171:4)

2. All Christian preaching, including Lenten preaching, is primarily Gospel, proclamation of the grace of God. The Word concerning the suffering and dying of Jesus Christ is the most glorious message of faith, the most certain absolution. Therefore we sing:

Lord Jesus, we give thanks to Thee
That Thou hast died to set us free;
Made righteous through Thy precious blood,
We now are reconciled to God. (*LH*, 173:1)

3. All that we hear of the Crucified Christ is for us an earnest admonition and reminder of sanctification. Hence we pray:

Thy cords of love, my Savior,
Bind me to Thee forever,
I am no longer mine.
To Thee I gladly tender
All that my life can render
And all I have to Thee resign. (*LH*, 171:8)

4. Finally, Lenten preaching is the message of comfort.⁶ The Cross of Christ grants us consolation, power, and relief in our cross and affliction. We turn to the Crucified One and say:

Ev'ry wound that pains or grieves me,
By Thy stripes, Lord, is made whole;

⁴ Cf. FC SD V 12, quoting from a sermon of Luther: "Yea, what more forcible, more terrible declaration and preaching of God's wrath against sin is there than just the suffering and death of Christ, His Son?"

⁵ The *Lutheran Hymnal* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1941), 171:10.

⁶ Cf. Carl Stange, loc. cit.: "Es gibt überhaupt in der ganzen lutherischen Dogmatik kein Kapitel, welches nicht die Aufgabe und die Absicht hätte, den Menschen zu trösten."

When I'm faint, Thy Cross revives me,
 Granting new life to my soul.
 Yes, Thy comfort renders sweet
 Ev'ry bitter cup I meet;
 For Thy all-atoning Passion
 Has procured my soul's salvation. (*LH*, 144:4)

Indeed, Christ's cross, blood, and death are the most potent consolation for our dying hour. Therefore, Paul Gerhardt concludes his great hymn "O Welt, sieh hier dein Leben" with these words:

Thy groaning and Thy sighing,
 Thy bitter tears and dying,
 With which Thou wast opprest,
 They shall, when life is ending,
 Be guiding and attending
 My way to Thine eternal rest. (*LH*, 171:12)

May the Holy Spirit use our contemplation of our Lord's great Passion to create repentance, faith, sanctification, love, and patience, and also grant wisdom, power, and consolation for our life, our suffering and death!

St. Louis, Mo.

HERBERT J. BOUMAN

TITULI ECCLESIAIARUM — THE NAMES OF OUR CHURCHES

In 1842, when the first Saxon Lutheran congregation in St. Louis, Mo., was about to choose a name, its pastor, blessed Carl Ferdinand William Walther, expressed the wish: (1) That the name chosen would not be the name of a person (although apparently he did not understand this principle rigidly as precluding the name of a canonized saint); (2) that it would embody a confession; and (3) that it would not easily elicit the ridicule of the world outside the church.¹

A survey of the current situation, as reflected in the 5,167 names of churches and missions of the thirty-two North American Districts of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, and its Latin American missions on this continent, listed in the latest *Statistical Yearbook*,² yields the following figures:

¹ Manuscript minutes of Trinity Church, St. Louis, Mo., for the meeting of March 1, 1842, Concordia Historical Institute Microfilm No. 142 (*Protokoll der Gesamtgemeinde*, St. Louis, Mo.).

² Armin Schroeder, ed. 1956 *Statistical Yearbook of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1957), pp. 2—162, 168, 169.

Name	Number of Churches	Rank	Number of Districts ⁴	Significant Concentrations
<i>A. The Godhead</i>				
<i>1. The Holy and Undivided Trinity</i>				
The Holy Trinity (Athanasian Creed, 3)	662	1 (11.12%)	32*	Minnesota, 61
Jehovah (Ex. 6:3)	4		4	
The Unity (Athanasian Creed, 3)	3		2	
Our Father (Is. 63:16; 64:8; Matt. 6:9; Luke 11:2)	2		2	
The Triune God (<i>A Short Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism</i> , Q. 26)	1		1	
<i>2. Our Lord Jesus Christ</i>				
Emmanuel (Matt. 1:23)	431	4 (8.51%)	31*	Minnesota, 50
The Redeemer (Gal. 3:13)	237	6 (4.68%)	32*	Minnesota, 22; English, 20
Christ (Matt. 1:17)	150	8 (2.96%)	32*	Michigan, 11; Texas, 11
The Saviour (Luke 2:11)	147	10 (2.90%)	31*	Minnesota, 16; English, 13
The Good Shepherd (John 10:11-14)	63	20 (1.24%)	20*	English, 8; Atlantic, 7
The Messiah (John 1:41)	39	25	21	Colorado, 4; Southern California, 4
The Prince of Peace (Is. 9:6)	2		2	
Our Master (John 13:14)	2		2	
The King of Kings (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14; 19:16)	1		1	
The True Light (John 1:9)	1		1	
The Lord Jesus (Acts 7:59)	1		1	
The Rock of Ages (<i>The Lutheran Hymnal</i> , No. 376)	1		1	
<i>3. The Holy Paraclete</i>				
The Holy Ghost	3		3	

³ The twenty-six most frequently used names are ranked in order of frequency. The parenthetic percentage in each case indicates the ratio of churches bearing the name in question among the 5,062 parishes and missions which have names other than local geographical designations.

⁴ An asterisk (*) indicates that the name is in use not only in the indicated number of Districts in the United States and Canada but also in the Latin American missions on this continent.

B. *Mysteries of the Faith*

The Ascension	17	11	English, 5
The Resurrection	13	8	Atlantic, 3; Southeastern, 3
The Epiphany	6	5	
The Atonement	4	4	
The Redemption	3	2	
The Holy Nativity	2	2	
The Incarnation	1	1	
The Transfiguration	1	1	

C. *The Holy Angels*

St. Michael	15	9	Michigan, 4; English, 3
The Guardian	1	1	

D. *Heroes of the Faith*1. *Biblical Persons*

St. Paul's	573	2 (11.32%)	32*	Minnesota, 48; Northern Wisconsin, 40
St. John's	571	3 (11.28%)	32 ^o	Minnesota, 74; Central, 41; Northern Wisconsin, 39
St. Peter's	149	9 (2.94%)	30*	Minnesota, 15; Central, 13
St. Matthew's	82	15 (1.62%)	26	Atlantic, 15
St. Luke's	62	20 (1.22%)	24	Northern Wisconsin, 8
St. Mark's	57	23 (1.13%)	26	Eastern, 6
St. James'	38	26 (0.75%)	18	Central, 8; Minnesota, 5
St. Stephen's	19		14	Southern Wisconsin, 4
St. Andrew's	16		11	
St. Thomas'	8		7	
St. Philip's	8		5	
St. Timothy's	5		5	
St. Matthias'	1		1	
The Holy Apostles	1		1	
The Holy Evangelists	1		1	
SS. Peter and Paul	1		1	
SS. Thomas and Peter	1		1	

2. *Heroes of the Church*

St. Martin's (316?—400)	15		11	
B. Martin Luther (1483—1546)	5		5	
St. Lawrence's (died 258)	1		1	

St. Nicholas' (4th century)	1	1
B. Carl Ferdinand William Walther (1811—87)	1	1

E. *Historical Places, Events, and Documents*1. *Biblical Places*

Zion (2 Sam. 5:7; Ps. 125:1)	397	5 (7.84%)	31	Minnesota, 40; Western, 30
Calvary (Luke 23:33, AV)	106	12 (2.09%)	28	Northwest, 9
Bethlehem (Gen. 35:19; Matt. 2:1)	102	14 (2.02%)	25	Minnesota, 14
Bethany (Matt. 21:17)	77	16 (1.52%)	20	
Mount Olive (Luke 22:39; Acts 1:12)	41	24 (0.81%)	20	Minnesota, 6; English, 5; Southeastern, 4; Texas, 4
Bethel (Gen. 28:19)	30		18	
Salem (Gen. 14:18; Ps. 76:2; Heb. 7:2)	25		11	Western, 6
Emmaus (Luke 24:13)	20		14	Central, 4
Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36)	11		9	
Ebenezer (1 Sam. 7:12)	9		7	
Nazareth (Matt. 2:23)	7		6	
Berea (Acts 17:10, 13)	4		4	
Tabor (Ps. 89:12)	4		4	
Bethesda (John 5:2)	4		3	
Golgotha (Matt. 27:33)	2		2	
Zoar (Is. 15:5)	1		1	
Jerusalem (Joshua 10:1; 1 Kings 11:13)	1		1	
Elim (Ex. 15:27)	1		1	
Pella (Eusebius, <i>Ecclesiastical History</i> , III, v. 3)	1		1	
Wilderness (Matt. 4:1)	1		1	
Pinnacle (Matt. 4:5)	1		1	

2. *Events, Places, and Documents in Church History*

Grace (1707)	229	7 (4.52%)	30	Minnesota, 14; Northwest, 13
Concordia (1580)	71	18 (1.40%)	25	Central, 10; Western, 9
Peace (1648)	68	19 (1.34%)	26	Minnesota, 6; Iowa, 6
Gloria Dei (1700)	8		6	
Centennial (1839—1939; 1847 to 1947)	4		3	
Reformation (1517—55)	2		2	
Augsburg (1530)	1		1	
Augustana (1530)	1		1	
Eisleben (1483; 1546)	1		1	

3. *Local American Place Names*

Local Names	105	22	English, 22
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F. *Theological Concepts and Related Themes*

Faith	108	11 (2.13%)	30	English, 10
The Holy Cross	73	17 (1.44%)	27*	Texas, 6; Western, 6
Hope	60	22 (1.19%)	21	Western, 8
The Holy Sacraments	2		2	
The Covenant	2		2	
The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:33)	2		2	
Victory	2		2	
The Holy Gospel	1		1	
Charity	1		1	
Paradise	1		1	

G. *Miscellaneous*

First	103	13 (2.03%)	28	Southern California, 15; California and Nevada, 13
Pilgrim	34		16	English, 9
Memorial	9		7	
All Nations	1		1	
The Lutheran Hour	1		1	
Nimrod (Gen. 10:8, 9)	1		1	
Beacon	1		1	
Hosanna-Tabor	1		1	

Notes

Linguistic designations (English, German, Latvian, Lithuanian, Estonian) have not been counted as names. The English form includes the name in other languages; thus *Holy Cross* includes *Santa Cruz*, *St. Martin's* includes *St. Martini*, *St. Paul's* includes *San Pablo*, *Trinity* includes *Trinidad*, etc. Since imitation may be presumed to be a considerable factor in the choice of a church name, significant concentrations by District are indicated.

The Holy Trinity includes *Trinity* and *St. Trinity*. This is the most frequent dedication in thirteen Districts; in addition, it is tied for first place with *St. Paul's* in two and with *St. John's* in two more.

Our Father appears to be related to Our Lord's model prayer, which Western theology regards as addressed to the Holy and Undivided Trinity rather than to the First Person.

Emmanuel includes the variants *Emanuel* and *Immanuel*. This is the most frequent title in the Colorado District.

The Redeemer includes *Our Redeemer*. This is the most frequent title in the English District.

Christ includes *Christ the King* and *Cristo Salvador* (*Christ the Saviour*).

The Saviour includes *Our Saviour*, *Beautiful Savior* (obviously inspired by the religious folksong, No. 657 in *The Lutheran Hymnal*), the *Saviour-Redeemer*, and *St. Salvator*.

The Good Shepherd includes *Our Shepherd* and the *Shepherd-King*, although the last may be a reference to the Israelite monarch David.

The Guardian may be based on another concept.

Heroes of the Faith. It may be noted that there are no dedications of record to women, not even to those who are commemorated in the calendar of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, that is, the Mother of God and St. Mary Magdalene. Nor are there any dedications to St. Simon, St. Jude, St. Bartholomew, All Saints, or Holy Innocents.

St. Paul's is the most frequent dedication in six Districts; it is tied with *Trinity* in two more Districts and with *St. John's* in one more.

St. John's. Apart from dedications under the titles of *St. John the Evangelist* and *St. John the Divine*, no differentiation is made between *St. John the Baptist* and *St. John the Apostle and Evangelist*. This is the most frequent title in five Districts; it is tied with *Trinity* in two more and with *St. Paul's* in yet another.

St. James'. No differentiation appears to be made between *Saint James the Elder* and *St. James the Less*.

St. Philip's. No differentiation appears to be made between *Saint Philip the Apostle* and *St. Philip the Evangelist*.

Zion is the most frequent title in the Manitoba and Saskatchewan District.

Calvary. This designation for Golgotha is not in the original Greek of the New Testament.

Mount Olive. The Biblical form is "Mount of Olives" or the "mount called Olivet"; the non-Biblical form of this dedication suggests a borrowing from Protestant sources.

Bethel. Dedications under this title obviously contemplate the experience of the patriarch Jacob rather than the later history of this community as a center of schismatic worship.

Tabor. The choice of this dedication reflects belief in the tradition — dating back only to the fourth century — that Tabor was the site of our Lord's transfiguration.

Wilderness and *Pinnacle* may be local rather than Biblical dedications.

Grace. The original *Gnadenkirchen* were erected pursuant to the Treaty of Alt-Ranstädt of August 22—31, 1707, by which the Austrian Emperor Joseph I guaranteed to King Charles XII of Sweden religious tolerance of the Lutherans of Silesia. The sense of the historic origin of this name has largely been superseded by the theological implications of the concept of divine grace.

Concordia is the Latin title of the *Book of Concord*, the collected doctrinal norms of the Lutheran Church, of which the *editio princeps* appeared in 1580.

Peace. The original *Friedenskirchen* were erected pursuant to agreements incorporated in the Treaty of Osnabrück in Westphalia (October 24, 1648) by which the Thirty Years' War was formally terminated for most of the participants. It is probable that in many instances a consciousness of this historic origin has been superseded by a contemplation of the "peace of God that passeth understanding."

Gloria Dei. This is the title of "Old Swedes' Church" in Philadelphia, dedicated in 1700 and one of the main centers of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Church of Sweden Mission on the Delaware. With one exception, all the parishes and missions in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod which bear this title were organized after the Swedish Tercentenary of the late thirties brought the name into renewed prominence.

Centennial. The occasion commemorated in three cases is the coming of the Saxon Lutherans under Stephan to Missouri in 1839; in the fourth case it is apparently the organization of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod at Chicago in 1847.

Augsburg and *Augustana* refer to the Augsburg Confession (Latin, *Confessio Augustana*), presented at Augsburg to the estates of the Holy Roman Empire in 1530, which subsequently became the basic Lutheran particular creed.

Eisleben was the city in which blessed Martin Luther was born and died.

Local names include all designations of churches borrowed from local geographical names, such as names of communities, districts, and streets, as well as names like *Community*, *Village*, *University*, etc. Where a local designation is combined with another dedication (for example, *Outer Drive Faith Church*), the name has been counted under the other dedication.

Hope includes three churches called *Mount Hope*.

The Covenant as a dedication seems to have been borrowed from the Presbyterian Church.

Charity probably has in mind the divine charity more than the third theological virtue.

Paradise may be a local designation.

First. Where *First* is combined with another dedication (for example, *First St. Paul's Church*), it is counted only under the other dedication. *First* is the most frequent designation in the Southern California District.

Pilgrim seems to have been borrowed from Congregationalism as a church name.

Memorial. Except in one case, which commemorates a deceased local lay leader, the combination of *Memorial* with another dedication (for instance, *Christ Memorial* or *Luther Memorial*) has been counted under the other dedication.

Beacon may be a local designation.

Hosanna-Tabor is the result of a parish merger.

It is illuminating to compare the current list with a list of the twenty most frequently used titles (other than local designations) out of the sixty-three that occur in the *Statistical Yearbook for 1930*:⁵ 1, *Saint John's* (15.20%); 2, *Trinity* (14.47%); 3, *St. Paul's* (14.28%); 4, *Emmanuel* (12.64%); 5, *Zion* (10.52%); 6, *St. Peter's* (4.17%); 7, *Grace* (3.13%); 8, *The Redeemer* (2.97%); 9, *Christ* (2.28%); 10, *Bethlehem* (2.24%); 11, *St. Matthew's* (1.64%); 12, *First* (1.39%); 13, *Calvary* (1.04%); 14, *St. Luke's* (1.01%); 15, *The Saviour* (0.95%); 16, *St. Mark's* (0.95%); 17, *Peace* (0.95%); 18, *Concordia* (0.91%); 19, *St. James'* (0.79%); 20, *Holy Cross* (0.76%).

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⁵ [E. Eckhardt, ed.], *Statistical Yearbook of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States for the Year 1930* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1931), pp. 24—144.