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Theological Observer

THE "NEW" MISSIOLOGY

The *Inter-Connections* of August 1994, issued in St. Louis by the Office of Campus Ministry of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, carried an article entitled "Campus Ministry—Nigerian Style." The article describes and solicits support for Victory Chapel, the "Protestant Chapel" at the University of Uyo in Nigeria. This Protestant Chapel is one of three such major entities, the other two being the Roman Catholic Campus Parish and the Muslim Community. The author of the article cited is the resident Protestant Chaplain himself, Dr. Udo Etuk, who is also the Nigerian Lutheran Hour speaker. He writes:

The members of Victory Chapel are drawn from the Anglican Church, the Assemblies of God, the Baptist Church, the Church of Christ, the Full Gospel, the Fourth Ground, the Lutherans, the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Qua Iboe Church, the Revival Valley Ministries, the Mount Zion Church—Christians literally from A to Z!

The chaplain explains his ministry in this way: "We are conservative with the gospel of Jesus but modernists in our modes of worship. We are all things to all students—to paraphrase our Brother Paul—if by God's grace we might win some."

The practice is just what these descriptions would lead us to expect: "Preachers are usually the very best from among the ministers, preachers, and evangelists who can deliver the message with power. The liturgy followed is very simple: hymn singing, prayers, praise worship, plenty of choruses (short, simple, spiritual songs) accompanied by dancing, drumming, clapping, and loud hallelujahs!" For baptisms "we set out to the river-side." Additional remarks include the following: "Speaking in tongues is not discouraged in our worship services. 'Deliverance' is an important though not a central feature of this campus ministry. Whenever we have powerful and charismatic men of God to preach our worship venue is usually jam-packed."

The editors of *Inter-Connections* regard this depiction as a "fresh and exciting description of Lutheran campus ministry" and recommend that checks earmarked for Victory Chapel be made out to LCMS World Missions. Only one slight qualification is offered: "You may sense that some things are very different in Africa and would not necessarily be appropriate in the U.S. and yet some of the problems sound all too familiar."

What does it mean that "things are very different in Africa"? Do

Baptists there believe in the regenerating power of holy baptism, and do they baptize babies? Do other Protestants in Africa confess that the body and blood of the Lord are verily received with the mouth and by all communicants, regardless of worthiness? Are African Methodists and revivalists not synergists, and Pentecostals not sectarian emotionalists? Or, if they all agree with their co-religionists elsewhere, are these things contrary to Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions in Europe and America, but not in Africa? Or is the unionistic mixing up of different confessions God-pleasing in Africa, but not "necessarily . . . appropriate" here? Or are they not "appropriate" because of our "old-fashioned" perceptions here? Was it perhaps for this reason that North America had to be formally declared a "mission-field," so that we might copy here the "mission" practices accepted in more enlightened parts of the globe? Or perhaps holy baptism, holy absolution, and the holy supper belong to the core of the gospel only in Europe and America, but are peripheral extras in Africa?

The plain fact is that there is nothing particularly "African" about confessional promiscuity. The latter is simply the course of least resistance and has been thoroughly "mainstream" in Europe and America for some time. There are, on the other hand, confessional churches as much in Africa as everywhere else. The demeaning fiction that Africa is confessionally "different" was most likely dreamt up by non-Africans to save themselves extra effort, expense, and inconvenience. When the Missouri Synod began its missionary work in India in the last century, it was in conscious opposition to the confessional laxity of the Leipzig Mission. Nor were things "very different" only in Europe and in India then. In North America, too, the mood of pietistic "American Lutherans" was very much in favor of "cordial and active cooperation with other evangelical churches in the great work of extending the Redeemer's kingdom" (F. Bente, *American Lutheranism* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1919], volume II, p. 129).

No, truth and confessional integrity cannot be bounded by mere continents. A would-be "Lutheran" missiology which purrs and burbles generically whenever "mission" is mentioned, but lacks the backbone to insist on building truly confessional churches with the pure gospel and sacraments of Christ, is not merely in crisis. It is bankrupt.

Kurt Marquart

THE REFERENCE TO ORDER IN LUKE'S PREFACE

Writing of Luke's account of the shipwreck (Acts 27), Brian M. Rapske states the following:

Those methods must be considered suspect which, in quest of pattern, genre, or typicality, forbid consideration of or trivialize the remarkable display of accurate geographical and maritime knowledge throughout this episode and which ignore the real witness to frequent shipwrecks both in marine archaeology and in the Pauline autobiography (2 Corinthians 11:25).

Rapske's remarks concerning literary methods which discount Luke's geographical and maritime knowledge apply equally to methods which overlook his accuracy as a historiographer. The essay by Rapske and a number of other contributions to the new series called "The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting" (edited by Bruce W. Winter, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993-1994) are a welcome corrective in the modern exegetical scene.

The methods we use in our interpretation of Luke's writings depend to some degree on how we handle a key word in the Gospel's preface, the adverb *kathexēs* ("orderly," Luke 1:3). The issue is not translation; most English versions agree that Luke's purpose was to write "an *orderly* account." Where we find divergence is in the assessments by commentators of the kind of order Luke had in mind. Did he set out to write an account that followed chronological order? Or was he concerned merely for literary order? Does the choice matter?

Donald Guthrie's *New Testament Introduction* asserts: "Luke meant to write a historical account . . . *kathexēs* would seem here to mean chronological and historical order." In response to claims that Luke's purpose was dominated by a theological motive, he writes: "No one would deny that Luke's purpose is theological. But this is quite different from saying that the history has been conformed to the theology, an approach which had its origins in the Tübingen school of thought" (pp. 106-107). I. Howard Marshall and the Lutheran commentators, William Arndt and R. C. H. Lenski, concur that Luke has at least a broad chronological sequence in mind. To these may be added the judgment of the standard lexicon in English that Luke meant to "write someth[ing] for someone in orderly sequence" (Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich; second edition, revised by F. Wilbur

Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker [Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1979], p. 388).

Joseph Fitzmyer takes the opposite view. He questions William Ramsay's opinion that Luke was "a historian of the first rank." As for the evangelist's claims that his account will possess the qualities of being thorough, traced from the beginning, orderly, and accurate, Fitzmyer believes "they can scarcely be pressed." He finds inaccuracies in dating and geography, concluding that "on many of these issues Luke's information was not the best." Luke's "historical concern was "subordinate to a theological one." Fitzmyer finally adds a parenthetical note explaining to Roman Catholic readers how his "skeptical attitude" may be squared with traditional teachings on biblical inspiration. Against this background it is not surprising that his exegetical notes rule out the possibility that *kathexēs* could mean chronological and geographical order. Fitzmyer fixes on "literary" order, *id est*, "a systematic presentation."

Luke Timothy Johnson's contribution to the series entitled *Sacra Pagina* occupies the middle ground. His section on the gospel's "Genre and Purpose" begins with a recognition of Luke's gifts as a storyteller, his sense of "the importance of plot and characters." To what literary genre, then, do the Lucan writings belong? Johnson goes on to state that there are incontrovertible reasons for placing Luke-Acts in the genre of Hellenistic history. He refers to Luke's use of sources and personal research, his attempt to write a "sustained and sequential" narrative (*kathexēs*), and his concern to anchor events in world history. While not doubting Luke's serious purposes as a historian, Johnson thinks we can only give a "mixed" answer to the question of Luke's factual accuracy. Luke must be mistaken on the timing of the census and the appearance of messianic pretenders, because he disagrees with other ancient sources. On the other hand, "his account of Paul's movements . . . is not far out-of-line." Johnson concludes that on the whole "Luke seems reasonably accurate." When it comes to determining the meaning of *kathexēs* in the prologue, Johnson is unable to make up his mind: "Does it mean only 'in succession'? . . . Or is there special emphasis on the order in which events are related, as in Acts 11:4?"

Is Luke's purpose, then, chiefly historical-theological? Or are his interests mainly to be found in literary-theological artistry? While it would undoubtedly be an over-simplification to suggest that this question may be settled by studying one word in the preface, a concordance study of *kathexēs* and its synonym *hexēs* does throw light on the issue. Word-

studies sensitive to the context will always have an important place in exegesis. In the case of *kathexēs*, the task is relatively straightforward. This vocable is a peculiarly Lucan word, occurring just five times (Luke 1:3; 8:11; Acts 3:24; 11:4; 18:23). *Hexēs* is clearly a synonym. ("I fail to see any difference between the two words," says Fitzmyer.) *Hexēs* is also peculiar to Luke, occurring another five times (Luke 7:11; 9:37; Acts 21:1; 25:17; 27:18).

The easiest place to begin is *hexēs*. In four of its five occurrences it appears in the phrase *tē(i) hexēs hēmera* (Luke 9:37) or the abbreviated form *tē(i) hexēs* (Acts 21:1; 25:17; 27:18). Our versions uniformly translate "on the next day." The fifth occurrence, Luke 7:11, is a variant, *en tō(i) hexēs* (scilicet *chronō(i)*), meaning "not long afterwards" (J. B. Phillips). This phrase is clearly equivalent to *en tō(i) hexēs* (scilicet *chronō(i)*) a few paragraphs later, in Luke 8:1. Thus we have seen six instances in which *hexēs* and *kathexēs* clearly refer to chronology.

We come now to two highly significant uses of *kathexēs*. The first is in the preface itself. The succeeding context soon gives strong indications of how Luke meant the word to be understood. His infancy narrative (Luke 1-2) is related in a clear chronological sequence and Gabriel's visit to Zechariah and then to Mary, Mary's visit to Elizabeth, the birth of John, the census, the birth of Jesus, and so on. Then in chapter 3 the opening of John's ministry is given a precise historical anchorage. Another exceptionally clear case seems to be Acts 11:4, "Peter began to explain it to them, step by step . . ." (New Revised Standard Version). The word *kathexēs* introduces Peter's recounting, in chronological order, of the events leading up to the baptism of Cornelius and his household (verses 5-17).

This process leaves only Acts 3:24 and 18:23. Acts 3:24 reads: "All the prophets . . . from Samuel and *tōn kathexēs* ("those after him" in the NRSV) "also predicted these days." This phrase can only mean the prophets who followed Samuel in their historical sequence. According to 18:23, Paul passed through Galatia and Phrygia *kathexēs* ("one place after the other in Galatia and Phrygia," according to Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker). Some kind of chronological and geographical order is implied. To understand this phrase of literary order makes no sense.

Thus a careful concordance study leaves us with the overwhelming impression that the evidence supports Guthrie's verdict that *kathexēs* means chronological and historical order. Why, however, would one offer such an exegetical study in the section of the *Concordia Theological*

Quarterly called "Theological Observer"? It seems that we need to underline again the importance of historical-grammatical exegesis at a time when there has been an enormous "shift in emphasis and interest to the literary and theological aspects" (Fitzmyer) of the Lucan and other biblical writings. The techniques of rhetorical criticism and other forms of literary-theological analysis are very much in vogue. We may, indeed, learn something from such analysis if the inspired text is still given an attentive hearing. At the same time, as Rapske has reminded us, those methods must be considered suspect which forbid serious consideration of Luke's remarkable care in matters of geography and history. It is appropriate that Lutherans remind themselves of the extraordinary fruitfulness of their own traditional emphasis on taking seriously both biblical grammar and biblical history, in keeping with the central biblical theme of the Word-become-flesh.

Gregory J. Lockwood