

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY



Volume 85:3-4

July/October 2021

Table of Contents

From Reinhold Pieper to Caemmerer: How Our Preaching Changed Adam C. Koontz	193
The Role of the Seminaries in the LCMS, 1847-2001 John C. Wohlrabe Jr.	215
Secondhand Memories: The Springfield Class of 1942 Cameron A. MacKenzie II	241
The Move to Fort Wayne: The “How,” the “What,” and the “Why” David P. Scaer	263
Concordia Theological Seminary 1985-2010: A Story of Decline and Renewal William C. Weinrich	279
The Expectation of Advent: Acclamations of Hope Paul J. Grime	297
“You Are My Beloved Son”: The Foundations of a Son of God Christology in the Second Psalm Christopher A. Maronde	313

Theological Observer	341
Pastoral Formation at the Seminary: A View from the Parish	
Does God Have Female Characteristics? Not Really	
Gerd Lüdemann Dies	
Research Notes	347
Chronological Bibliography of the Works of Robert D. Preus	
Book Reviews	373
Books Received	387
Indices to Volume 85 (2021)	381

Theological Observer

Pastoral Formation at the Seminary: A View from the Parish

People have different ideas about the Office of the Ministry. Conversations between individuals can be cordial or heated. Regarding seminary exposure, one need not attend seminary to have an impression of what transpires there. One who has attended, however, should have a better ability to assess the seminary experience and reflect on the process. The ability to assess and describe is useful for engaging in conversation with others who are looking for or needing clarity on the issues of seminary and “ministry.”

Though challenging, the seminary experience is wide-ranging and most helpful. Those who have not experienced it often operate with some false impressions. One who has completed the process is in a position to offer insight and guidance.

What follows is a revision of remarks composed in response to a layperson many moons ago, who asked why seminary pastoral formation was needed.

What the disciples learned with Jesus, pastors-in-training now learn at seminary. Jesus was the professor, and the disciples were the seminarians. It took a long time to complete the process, and when they were done they still did not understand everything (or even most things).

Enrolling in seminary is, on the one hand, like a tour: you see and hear a lot, but you can't go through it all, since there isn't enough time. It is also like cultural immersion; you live in an “exotic country” for a limited time. There is also “apprenticeship” occurring: field-work assignments from a local pastor, adopting congregations through which you may work with the host pastor, a yearlong vicarage under a supervising pastor, seminary student leadership roles, and numerous class assignments in which you complete a practical component, often in conjunction or cooperation with other individuals. Along with all that, there is your relationship to professors who guide and influence.

“Attending seminary” might be considered the beginning of the call process to the ministry. The seminary environment is a crucible, or pressure cooker, shaping, molding, and refining seminarians in the midst of chapel, coursework, casual banter, or heated discussion over a prolonged exposure in a fixed theological setting,

something like a three-year tour with Jesus. It is, obviously, more than school and education. The seminarian is being tenderized, like a chunk of meat. His faith is put on the precipice, in any number of ways. He must get a sense of himself—of who he is, what he does, and where he’s going. Men are observed, tested, and examined, both morally and doctrinally, as they try to stay afloat in a cauldron of conflict, especially when they have entered seminary with a bag of ideas that are wrong—just as the Twelve experienced under Jesus. At minimum, seminary formation does one good thing in that it deconstructs the urban theological legends that we have stored in our minds, gathered from whatever sources. This is just as true for synodically trained commissioned ministers, such as the DCE, or the schoolteacher, of which I was one. Then a new hard drive is installed, presumably pure in doctrine. With that should also come a compassionate spirit. A seminary is only as good as the instructors; the design of the courses, curriculum, and chapel; and the diligence of the seminarian. But there is a much harder and exacting teacher out there: that of the congregation. When you have to read, write, preach, teach, exhort, console, correct, admonish, and “get called out on the carpet” on a regular basis, Christology naturally becomes an organic part of you. And eventually you feel no need to put a Bible reference at the end of every other sentence.

You will have to suggest a suitable alternative, if you are not in favor of the seminary campus model. To be sure, the seminary experience, like anything, could be refined, but the devil will always find (and create more) kinks and burrs in the machinery. Any alternate route leaves much to be desired. The call to seminary is a full-time pursuit. Similarly, Jesus called two handfuls of men to leave everything to follow him. They were together—a lot. They learned by imitation. Competition was a factor. Seminary is a protracted, intense process for a reason. If medical schools (for health care) and law schools (for the practice of justice) have high standards, so should the ministry (for soul care). Pack up your family if need be, but do not put your hand to the plow and look back.

Jody A. Rinas
Clifford, Ontario

Does God Have Female Characteristics? Not Really

The *Journal of Biblical Literature* (*JBL*) is standard fare for biblical scholars. Membership in the Society of Biblical Literature, the parent organization, gives readers access to the online book reviews, which in some cases are adequate substitutes for reading the book itself. *JBL* is well worth the subscription price.

Volume 140, no. 2 offers several intriguing titles, such as “The Ending of Luke Revisited” and “*Imitatio Dei* and the Formation of the Subject in Ancient Judaism.” As obscure as some subjects may first appear, they often uncover overlooked items and can provide a wealth of preaching and Bible class material not available in the usual manuals. At the top of the list in this issue is “Alleged Female Language about the Deity in the Hebrew Bible” by David J. A. Clines of the University of Sheffield (d.clines@sheffield.ac.uk). This title might otherwise go unnoticed, but if a reciprocal relationship exists between understanding God as having feminine characteristics and arguments for the ordination of women as used by some of its proponents, an issue at which Clines hints, it should indeed be noticed.

So now for some background. When women pastors were proposed for the German churches in the 1950s, then Heidelberg University professor and confessional Lutheran scholar Peter Brunner predicted that this would lead to a feminine view of God. Now about seventy years later some mainline Protestant clergy pray to God as “Our Father and Our Mother.” In their churches, women clergy and seminary students are common and may soon constitute the majority. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) presumes that its members ordain women who in some cases serve as bishops and presidents, as now is the case of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Ordaining women is established, uncontroverted practice and no longer a topic for discussion in its journals or conferences. If one recognizable issue would be singled out separating the International Lutheran Council (ILC), to which The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) belongs, and LWF, it would be the ordination of women. Ever since the ordination of women was adopted in the predecessor synods of the ELCA, there has been no lack of essays coming from the LCMS opposing the practice.

This makes the appearance of an essay in the *JBL* entitled “Alleged Female Language about the Deity in the Hebrew Bible” all the more intriguing. Clines references scholars who in the last decades have suggested “that the deity is, at least sometimes, viewed as ‘female’ or that in some respect or to some degree this deity is ‘female’ or ‘feminine’” (229). Some of *CTQ*’s more senior readers may recognize the name of Norman Habel, onetime professor at the St. Louis seminary and leading figure in the Lutheran Church of Australia, as one who has argued that a female clergy corresponds to feminine aspects in God. In an extensive footnote, Clines provides a lengthy bibliography of articles and books promoting God as feminine, among which is the book *Till the Heart Sings: A Biblical Theology of Manhood and Womanhood* from the Old Testament scholar Samuel Terrien (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985).

In an introductory summary required for *JBL* articles, Clines says that those who argue for feminine characteristics in God cite

passages where the deity Yahweh is said to be described as a human or animal mother, and other passages where language that seems appropriate only to women (e.g., of birth and midwifery) is used as reference to the deity. Twenty-two such passages are assessed here, with the conclusion that there is not a single instance of such feminine language. There are indeed two cases where the deity may be *compared* to a woman, but they do not mean the deity itself is viewed as in any sense female. (Emphasis original)

Arguments for the ordination of women are not of one kind: the universal priesthood of believers; Junias and other women were apostles or pastors; Paul's prohibitions are law and no longer applicable in gospel-centered churches; or they applied only to unruly women. And the most profound argument: that God is in some sense feminine. It is unlikely that Clines's article will lead to discontinuing the ordination of women where it is practiced, but his research knocks over one of the foundational pillars: that God can be thought of in feminine terms. Expect a counterargument in an upcoming issue of the *JBL*. That's how the game is played.

David P. Scaer

Gerd Lüdemann Dies

The German publisher Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlage announced on May 23, 2021, that one of its authors, Gerd Lüdemann, passed away at age 74. Along with Robert Price, John Dominic Crossan, and Bart Ehrman, he was well known for his radical views, which included the denial of the resurrection of Jesus. He was an ordained Lutheran pastor, at least until he was removed from the ministerium of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover. A scholar who served in American and German universities, he was a recognized authority on ancient gnosticism. At the University of Göttingen, the institution at which he last served, he established the *Archiv Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* [Archive for the School of History of Religions] in 1987 for the purpose of preserving the writings of German liberal theology with which he identified. *Religionsgeschichte*, a word that is more often left untranslated, is a method of comparing Christianity to other religions and philosophies to determine common elements and so Christianity is not recognized as a unique revelation of God. According to the death notice sent out by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Lüdemann felt an attachment with the German liberal theology.

Holding positions at Duke University, McMaster University, and Vanderbilt University, he was known in the English-speaking theological world and frequently attended annual meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature and was as much admired on this side of the ocean as he was on the other. The well-known British scholar N. T. Wright in his *The Resurrection of the Son of God* has at least ten references to Lüdemann and places him on the same level as John Dominic Crossan in doing theology on a foundation of unproven hypotheses.

Philosophical theories rather than substantive evidences lay at the foundation of Lüdemann's scholarship. He contested that the tomb of Jesus was empty in a book translated into English in 1994 as *The Resurrection of Jesus: History, Experience, Theology*. For Lüdemann, the origin of the resurrection of Jesus is located in Peter's psychological experience in which the disciple overcame his guilt for denying Jesus and then remembered the transfiguration, which was a matter of the sun getting into his eyes. From Peter's experience emerged the resurrection belief. Here the German in describing the resurrection is too precious to be omitted: *psychologisch erklärbares Phänomene* [psychologically explainable phenomena]. This approach to the resurrection of Jesus is hardly new as it was typical of late eighteenth-century Rationalism and was standard fare for the now long-debunked nineteenth-century quest for the historical Jesus that came to a dead end at the turn of the twentieth century.

Though German universities allow their professors to speak their minds, Lüdemann was suspended by his theological faculty and, after much controversy, was reinstated in 2008. For some, Lüdemann had taken one step too far in speaking of *die Unglaubwürdigkeit des christlichen Glaubens*. This might be translated as "the Christian faith is not worthy of belief." His death notice did not say whether, before he died, Lüdemann reevaluated what he said.

David P. Scaer