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AFTER THE MONKS—WHAT?

Luther's Reformation and Institutions of Missions, Welfare, and Education

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IN HIS BOLD declaration of independence from the structures of medieval Christendom, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* of 1520, Martin Luther demanded "that all vows should be completely abolished and avoided." And, recognizing the implications of his program, he raised the rhetorical question: "Will you not overturn the practice and teaching of all the churches and monasteries, by virtue of which they have flourished all these centuries?" and proceeded to answer it forthrightly: "This is the very thing that has constrained me to write of the captivity of the church . . . What do I care about the number and influence of those who are in this error? The truth is mightier than all of them."[1]

A year later, near the end of 1521, the beginnings of a mass exodus from the monasteries prompted him to compose a long treatise *On Monastic Vows*, in which he set forth the theological and exegetical grounds for his attack on the threefold vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience, arguing that vows were inconsistent with Christian obedience, inimical to authentic Christian faith, hazardous to Christian liberty, alien to the demands of Christian charity, and contrary even to the precepts of sound reason.[2] His basic objections to monasticism in this treatise and throughout his life were theological, for he regarded it both as a false theory of Christian perfection and as a betrayal of the Gospel of free grace. "Monkery" in Luther's vocabulary became synonymous with works-righteousness;[3] and when, for example, he denounced men like Thomas Müntzer as "new monks," he was referring not only to their ascetic attitude toward the world, but to what he regarded as their monkish effort to achieve justification through their ascetic works.[4] A recent monograph by Bernhard Lohse has shown, with exemplary

care and penetrating insight, how Luther's quarrel with monastic theology developed;[5] and, taking up a suggestion from Karl Holl, another study, by René Esnault, has related Luther's doctrine of the church to the issues of monastic theology, suggesting that an important element of his ecclesiology was the application of the monastic ideal to the Christian community in the world.[6]

Valid though this concentration on the theological aspects of Luther's polemic against monasticism is, it may obscure the bearing of that polemic upon the structures of the church. For the institutional structures and organized life of the church, there are few results of the Reformation more far-reaching than the dissolution of the monasteries and the abolition of the religious orders. David Knowles has called this action a "momentous decision which, far more than any of those concerned in it could have foretold, was to be of revolutionary significance not only in the religious, but also in the social and economic life of the nation."[7] Dom David is speaking here specifically of the dissolution of the monasteries in England under Henry VIII, but *mutatis mutandis* his words apply no less to the Lutheran lands. Luther's polemic and its practical outcome not only undercut the medieval valuation of cloistered contemplation over public action, but also deprived the church of the shock troops who had been almost exclusively responsible for certain areas of her life. Three such areas certainly are missions, welfare, and education. The virtual elimination of monasticism from the organized life of the church by the Reformation necessitated the development of new structures for all three. The significance of Luther's Reformation for the renewal of education has been dealt with repeatedly, but it has usually been isolated from the other monastic structures of missions and welfare—and with good reason, since Luther's concrete achievements in these two areas of ministry are considerably less impressive than is his role in the development of new structure for Christian education.

Our investigation will not be concerned with Luther's "theology of missions" or his "philosophy of education," but with the more modest question of the implications of the abolition of the religious orders. The question of both the structure and the staff of the church's work in missions, welfare, and education has become an acute problem, and no one can maintain that the structures created by the Reformation, such as they were, would be adequate today. Therefore on this 450th anniversary of Luther's Reformation, the problem of what he proposed to do after the monks is one of the most practical and contemporary of the many issues raised by the commemoration of his life and work.

Missions

Together with most of the other Christians of Europe, Luther owed his Christian inheritance to the work of the medieval monks. He acknowledged that "everything that is Christian and good is to be found (under the papacy) and has come to us from this source."[8]

He knew, too, that none of the original apostles had come to Germany, and he joked that though Christ had had only twelve apostles, there were eighteen buried there.[9] In 1522 he noted that "Germany was converted about 800 years after the apostles," and added that "recently many islands and lands have been discovered, to which this grace (of God) has not appeared for these 1500 years."[10] Although Luther was certainly aware, at least to some extent, of the historical circumstances surrounding the Christianization of Europe,[11] he does not refer to them very often. Those circumstances were, in the words of a colleague, Kenneth Scott Latourette, that for most of Christian history "the large majority of the missionaries were monks. But for monks, indeed, it is hard to see how in most regions the expansion of Christianity could have been carried on. But for them it would have proceeded much more slowly and would have remained more superficial."[12]

This judgment by Professor Latourette becomes all the more significant for our purposes here when it is placed alongside a statement he makes in the next volume. Contrasting the spectacular accomplishments of Roman Catholicism in the conversion of the New World with the late start of Protestantism, he suggests, among other reasons, that "Protestantism lacked the monks who for more than a thousand years had been the chief agents for propagating the faith. Even when they were interested in giving the Gospel to non-Christians, Protestants did not have ready to hand machinery for spreading it among non-Christians."[13] Karl Holl, too, in an incisive comparison between the methods of medieval and of early missions, pointed to the role of the monks as one of the most striking differences and therefore as one of the most influential factors in the shaping of the history of the missionary enterprise.[14]

Latourette's words, "even when they were interested in giving the Gospel to non-Christians," should be noted. For the only non-Christians in whose evangelization Luther seems to have had very much interest were Jews and Muslims. In the early years of the Reformation Luther believed that the evangelization of the Jews had been so unsuccessful because the Gospel had been suppressed under the papacy.[15] "But now that the golden light of the Gospel is rising and radiating a bright beam, there is the hope that many from among the Jews will be converted in a more sincere and honest way (than they had been under the papacy) and thus let themselves be moved from the world to Christ."[16] What some editions of his works subtitle as "Instructions about how to deal with the Jews in order to convert them"[17] turns out to be a repetition of the traditional exegesis of the benediction of Judah in Gen. 49:10-12,[18] proving that this prophecy had been fulfilled in Christ and that therefore Judaism had lost its historic significance. Luther's hopes about the conversion of the Jews were mistaken, and his disappointment expressed itself during his later years in a treatise against the Jews about which even so sympathetic a biographer as Roland H. Bainton has said: "One could wish that Luther had died before

ever this tract was written."[19] Thus his interest in the Christianization of the Jews never developed an appropriate structure; it did not get beyond the stage of hope, and even that did not last long. Lacking such a structure, or what Professor Latourette calls "ready to hand machinery for spreading (the Gospel) among non-Christians," the Reformation's mission to the Jews died aborning.

The closest Luther ever came to proposing a concrete structure for the missionary task was a suggestion that arose, quite *en passant*, in the course of his writing about the menace of the Turks. Most of that writing was devoted to a careful effort to disengage himself from any notion of a crusade or holy war in which the secular government would be fighting to defend the cause of the Gospel.[20] It was indeed the duty of the emperor to fight, but not in the name of the Christian faith. Turning his attention to the plight of those Christians who had been captured and enslaved by the Turks and who must now try to practice their faith in a Muslim land, Luther urged them to be faithful slaves of their Turkish masters. Struck by the parallel between their situation and that of the early Christians in the Roman empire, Luther counseled:

"All you will ever accomplish with resistance and impatience is to irritate your master, whose slave you have become, and thus make him more cruel. In addition, you will slander the doctrine and the name of Christ, as though Christians were such wicked, unfaithful, and false people who do not serve but run away, who want to enrich themselves as scoundrels and thieves. In this way (your master) will become even more confirmed and obdurate in his faith. On the other hand, if you serve him faithfully and diligently, you would adorn and enhance the Gospel and the name of Christ, so that your master and perhaps some others, regardless of how wicked they might be, would have to say: 'Well, well! Those Christians are certainly a faithful, obedient, pious, humble, and diligent people!' Thus you would also overthrow the faith of the Turks and perhaps convert many, if they were to see that the Christians are so superior to the Turks in humility, patience, diligence, faithfulness, and similar virtues. This is what St. Paul means when he says in the third chapter of Titus (actually Titus 2:10): 'Slaves should adorn or enhance the doctrine of our Lord in everything.' "[21]

This was undeniably a moving expression of the strategy to be followed by an individual Christian who had been taken as a prisoner of war by Muslims and who needed encouragement in the path of Christian duty. But it was considerably less than a proposal to replace the structure of the missionary orders, whose monastic rules Luther had repudiated, with some other structure that would carry on the mission imperative. Luther's failure to propose such a structure has proved embarrassing to later generations. Many of their defenses do not deserve scholarly consideration, but those of Holl, Elert, and Dörries should be mentioned.[22] All three respond vigorously to the charge that "Luther was not a mission man,"

and they score important debating points. On one question at least, their case seems irrefutable. Luther was not unresponsive to the missionary imperative contained in the Gospel. Repeatedly he gave voice to that imperative as an inescapable corollary of Christian faith. Christians had to address the Gospel to others not only (perhaps even not primarily) because the others were outside the church, but because of the dynamic of the Gospel itself; and the Gospel they addressed to "the world" was the same as that addressed to "the church."

From the words quoted earlier and from several *obiter dicta* like them it is evident that Luther was aware of the islands of the sea which had just been discovered and were still being discovered, where there would be men "to whom no one has preached" and to whom the Gospel had never been addressed.[23] About the imperative to address it to them, there is no ambiguity; about the method and the structure for addressing it, there seems to be little more than improvisation. The only non-Christians of whom he was at all directly aware were not pagans, but adherents of one of another "book monotheism." Yet even in order to convert a Judaism that was, in his judgment, all-too present in Christian Europe, and an Islam that was, in his judgment, all-too close by the time of the battle of Mohács, he could not devise a structure to serve as an evangelical substitute for the hated monks. A century and a half were to pass before his followers could produce such a structure, and even in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the heirs of Luther's Reformation in the Missouri Synod had to struggle with the problem.[24]

Welfare

In proposing structures to substitute for the institutions of monasticism in the field of welfare, Luther was somewhat more concrete—concrete enough in any event to devote a special treatise, albeit a brief one, to such structures. He was even more concrete in his criticism of the existing monastic structures for dealing with the problems of human need. The most conspicuous among these was begging, or, to use the more theological term, mendicancy. By Luther's time this practice certainly deserved the honorific "structure," for it had become an administrative institution in its own right. As Père Congar has shown in a brilliant study, the medieval church had been caught up in a series of important ecclesiological controversies over the ideal of poverty demanded by the New Testament as a mark of the true disciples of Christ.[25] One of the outcomes of those controversies was the emergence and stablization of the mendicant orders as an institutional embodiment of that ideal, though not without bitter resistance both from the older religious orders and from the diocesan clergy.

Luther rejected this entire development as a distortion of what had been intended by the ideal of poverty expressed in the first of the Beatitudes, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Repeatedly throughout his writings Luther attacked the notion that this poverty in

spirit was attainable only in the so-called "angelic life" of such orders as the Franciscan and the Carthusian. The Sermon on the Mount was speaking of a poverty *in spirit,* "so that nothing is accomplished when someone is physically poor and has no money or goods . . . This does not mean, therefore, that one must be poor in the sense of having nothing at all of his own . . . There is many a beggar getting bread at our door more arrogant and wicked than any rich man."[26] "From this fifth chapter (of the Gospel of Matthew) have come the pope's monks, who on the basis of this chapter have laid claim to a more perfect station in life than other Christians."[27] But the summons to discipleship in the Beatitudes was not a series of "evangelical counsels," intended only for the spiritual athletes in the cloisters. It was addressed to all, and Christ had threatened "that no one will enter heaven who abolishes even one of the least of these commandments, and He explicitly calls them 'commandments'."[28] Thus the ideal of poverty was not to be realized within the structures of the monastic orders, for it was a matter of the spirit. As Lohse has shown, this new portrait of the ordinary Christian rather than the full-time ascetic as the true beggar before God represented a radical break with the traditional ethics of Western Christianity, and one point on which Max Weber and R. H. Tawney agree is the implication of this break for a new relation between Christianity and the world.[29]

It also implied an attack on the institution of mendicancy. "One of the greatest necessities," wrote Luther to the Christian nobility, "is the abolition of all begging throughout Christendom." Particularly reprehensible in his eyes was the itinerancy of the mendicant orders, each of which, on its rounds, visited the same town six or seven times a year. With five or six mendicant orders, this amounted to almost a weekly invasion of every town by begging monks. Added to the regular rounds of other beggars, including the *botschafften* or "ambassador beggars," this meant, in Luther's words, that "up to sixty times a year a town is laid under tribute!"[30] The practice of begging, moreover, was filled with "skulduggery and deceit" and encouraged "vagabonds and evil rogues" to take unfair advantage of the Christian charity of the common people. The history of legislation, both civil and ecclesiastical, aimed at cutting down the excesses of professional mendicancy shows that Luther was touching here on an aspect of monasticism that was subject to constant and almost inevitable abuse.[31] What he proposed was another way of coping with "poverty," both with poverty as an evangelical ideal and with poverty as a social and economic reality. As an evangelical ideal, poverty was not to be identified with the ascetic renunciation of property by the full-time religious; as a social and economic reality, it was indeed the proper object of Christian charity, but some way had to be found to protect that charity from being exploited. The two definitions of poverty were, of course, closely tied together in practice; for, as Professor Hussey has said of Byzantine Christianity, "to care for the poor was a Christian duty

which fell on all, and it was one of the special obligations of the monastic world."[32]

Writing to the Christian nobility in 1521, Luther endorsed the increasingly widespread laws requiring that every city take the responsibility to provide for its own poor and prohibiting itinerant mendicancy. The city should have an overseer or warden who would know the resident poor and inform the city council of their needs. He added: "Or some other better arrangement might be made."[33] The opportunity to put forth concrete proposals for some other better arrangement arose two years later. The village of Leisnig in Electoral Saxony had for some time been negotiating with Luther and inviting him to visit, as he reports in a letter to Spalatin dated September 25, 1522, when he was about to travel there.[34] Soon thereafter, probably in January, 1523, Luther received a copy of the ordinance they were proposing for a common chest. He wrote to them expressing his approval, as well as his hope "that it will redound both to the glory of God and as a good example of Christian faith and love to many people. I wish and pray that this intention and plan of yours will be blessed, strengthened, and perfected by God through the richness of His grace."[35] To that end Luther promised to publish the ordinance together with his preface, and apparently did so soon thereafter. The preface is a trenchant little essay on the constituent elements of a truly evangelical ordinance to provide financial support for the ministry of the church to those in need.

In commending the members of the parish at Leisnig for their zeal, which, like that of the Corinthians (cf. 2 Cor. 9:2), had stirred up others to follow their example, Luther expressed his hope that this would have as its result "a great decline in the existing foundations, monastic houses, chapels, and those horrible dregs which have until now battened on the wealth of the whole world under the pretense of serving God."[36] He was well aware by this time that his movement was being cited as the culprit in one social calamity after another. He fully expected, therefore, that he would "have to take the blame whenever monasteries and foundations are vacated, when the number of monks and nuns decreases, and whenever anything else happens to diminish and damage the 'spiritual' estate."[37] Here he was reacting to a constant theme of the polemical literature of men like Ambrosius Catharinus against him, the charge that the elevation of Spirit over structure in his reformatory program was undercutting such agencies as the mendicant orders, by which such Christian ministries as welfare had been carried out.[38] As we have noted in the introduction to this lecture, Luther recognized these implications and did not shrink from them. Here he reinforced that recognition, putting it in the form of a "sincere warning" and a "kind request" to his readers. A reader was entitled to follow through on Luther's proposals only if he "realizes and thoroughly understands from the Gospel that monkery and clericalism (*müncherey und geysterey*), as they have been for the

past four hundred years, serve no useful purpose and are nothing but harmful error and deception."[39] There was, then, to be a clean break with the monastic ideal, both among the common Christians and, if possible, among the inmates of the monasteries themselves.

As in the case of other structures inherited from the medieval church, however, so especially in the case of the monasteries, Luther's Reformation could not simply decree a clean break without some determination about the disposition of existing institutions. Something had to be done about the inmates of the monasteries and about the monastic properties. Although it would have been best if monastic institutions had not arisen in the first place, "now that they are here, the best thing is to let them dwindle away, or, where it can properly be done, to assist them to disappear altogether."[40] This implied, above all, that no monastic vow was to be regarded as binding for life, and that therefore monks were to be allowed, "if they so desire, to leave of their own free will, as the Gospel permits." There would, understandably, be some monks "who because of their age, their bellies, or their consciences elect to remain in the monastery." They were not to be forced to leave, but were to be assured of lifetime support.[41] But this seems to have applied only to those who had already taken their monastic vows before the Reformation took over, rather than to any who, even after the Reformation had begun, might still be minded to assume the cowl. There was evangelical freedom to leave the monastery or to remain in the monastery, but not to enter the monastery and take the vows. For it was the responsibility of the secular government (*öberkeytt*) to work out arrangements "with the monasteries under its jurisdiction to admit no further applicants and, if there are too many inmates, to send the excess elsewhere and let the remainder die out."[42]

The introduction of the civil authorities or *öberkeytt* as the proper agency for presiding over the dissolution of the monastic institutions was part of the fateful process by which, in many areas of church life, Luther's Reformation repudiated the structures of ecclesiastical administration in the name of the freedom of the Spirit, only to end up exchanging these structures for the structures of political administration. The responsibility of the civil authorities extended to the disposition not only of the previous inmates of the monasteries, but also and especially of the holdings of the monasteries, or, more precisely, to the two problems together. Luther recommended that the civil authorities "take over the property of such monasteries, and from it make provision for those inmates who choose to remain there, until they die."[43] They were to be better provided for than they had been under the monastic establishments, to make it clear "that this is not a case of greed opposing clerical possessions, but of Christian faith opposing monasticism."[44] Once the last of the inmates of a monastery died out, of course, any such arrangement would be terminated, so that the authorities would

have to support the remaining monks only for a time and then would have the monastic property for themselves, free and clear.

Despite the insistence that this was not a case of greed opposing clerical possessions but of Christian faith opposing monasticism, there was clearly room for greed to cloak itself in reformatory zeal. "We have to expect," Luther acknowledged, "that greed will creep in here and there."[45] The widespread disaffection with *müncherey und geysterey* would have brought on some sort of reaction in any case, quite apart from the Reformation; but Luther foresaw that his campaign against monastic institutions would help to set off a wholesale expropriation of their holdings, and he was determined "to the extent of my ability and duty to forestall such a catastrophe while there is still time."[46] He counseled great care "lest there be a mad scramble for the assets of such vacated foundations, and everyone makes off with whatever he can lay his hands on."[47] He recommended that heirs who had been deprived of their inheritance because their ancestors had willed their property to a monastic establishment have the right to reclaim it; but he admitted the validity of the objection that "on that basis the common chest will receive precious little, for everyone will claim the whole amount and say that his needs are great."[48] Realistically Luther also admitted that he did not expect his counsel to be accepted by the "greedy bellies" who were about to "grab these ecclesiastical possessions and claim as an excuse that I was the one who put them up to it."[49] By speaking out as he did, Luther wanted to exonerate himself beforehand and to assign the blame for the catastrophe where it properly belonged. The monasteries must go in any event; the question was what would happen to their assets.

One possibility was that "mendicant houses located in cities might be concerted into good schools for boys and girls, as they were before."[50] As we shall note later in this lecture, Luther made more of this idea in some of his proposals for the reformation of education. But he recognized that not all the monasteries had been intended as schools and that it would neither be practical to convert all of them into schools nor satisfactory to neglect the other needs which they had been serving. He recommended three ways to use the assets of the expropriated cloisters. As has already been noted, he urged that those who wanted to remain in the monasteries have security for life. Secondly, he recognized that many of those who had been in the religious life would have to be retrained before going back into the world, and he proposed that they be compensated for the years they had spent behind monastery walls. "The third way is the best, however, to devote all the remaining property to the common fund of a common chest, out of which gifts and loans could be made in Christian love to all the needy in the land."[51] This is what the Christian citizens of Leisnig had done in the ordinance for which Luther was composing this preface. If this ordinance and his suggestions were put into practice, there would be "a well-filled common chest for every need," and

various economic evils, including begging, would be eliminated.[52] Yet he was "setting down this advice only in accordance with Christian love, and for Christians only,"[53] and he wanted matters "to be determined by Christian love and not by strict human justice."[54] He would not presume to legislate for others in the area of structures for the ministry of welfare.

Subsequent developments suggest that this was not quite the problem. The Leisnig experiment itself proved to be an almost complete debacle. Luther's correspondence documents the pathology of the situation. On August 11, 1523, he wrote to the Elector Frederick to report on a visit to Leisnig, where he had discovered that "the property which has previously been 'spiritual' and which many have used for wicked foundations and abuses, has not yet been handed over."[55] He warned Frederick that further delay would confirm the suspicions of those who charged that the cause of the Reformation would bring with it a breakdown of the church's ministry, and he urged that these slanders be stopped by speedy action. On August 19 of the same year he wrote to Frederick again, prodding him to act. "For even though some of (the citizens of Leisnig) may have a false opinion, the ordinance is still Christian; and regardless of who may be pious or wicked, I am only concerned that idolatry may be reinstated and that the Gospel may fall and be blasphemed, because there is no salary with which to maintain preachers, pastors, and other offices, and the poor must also suffer want."[56] More than a year later, on November 24, 1524, Luther complained to Spalatin regarding the Elector's continued delay in doing something about Leisnig: "Why is the prince delaying? But we are inclined to believe that on the basis of this case good men who are forsaken this way will resign from their parishes. Or will they not rather be driven back into the monasteries? This exceedingly unfortunate case vexes me very much; for as it was the first, it also ought to have been the best."[57]

Nor was the debacle at Leisnig an isolated instance, as Luther's correspondence and other writings show. On January 22, 1525, two months after the letter just quoted, Luther wrote to Johann Lang: "Although we are poor here ourselves, we are overwhelmed daily (with poor people). Our church is burdened with poor strangers, while we are unable even to do right by our own poor. Erfurt, meanwhile, that great and horrible city, which is situated in a lush place and is richer and more fertile than we, is able to support more of them—if only somehow the power of the Word would take hold!"[58] On September 16, 1527, Luther wrote to the Elector John of Saxony, requesting that the Franciscan cloister in Wittenberg be converted into a poorhouse, given as "an inn and dwelling to our Lord Jesus Christ for His poor members, since He has said: 'As you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' "[59] The following year Luther wrote a foreword to a new edition of the Book of Vagabonds, once more complaining that he was being overwhelmed by paupers and beggars and once

more recommending the procedure he had urged in the preface to the Leisnig ordinance five years earlier: "Let every city and village know and be acquainted with its own poor, as listed in a catalogue, to help them, and not put up with foreign or alien beggars without a letter of reference or other attestation. For all sorts of rascality goes on in this matter, as this book shows. But if every city kept track of its poor this way, that rascality would soon be avoided and abolished."[60] And in 1533, thus ten years after the Leisnig incident, Luther wrote another foreword on the subject, this time to a book by Caspar Adler, *A Sermon on Almsgiving.* Here he expressed his disgust at the greed that posed as evangelical Christianity, his disappointment at what was happening to the level of support in the churches, and his eschatological despair over the possibility of any change in the broad masses.[61]

In the field of welfare, Luther's Reformation had proceeded on the expectation that Christian love, animated by the Spirit, could be relied upon to carry out the ministry to the needy, and that the monastic structures inherited from the Middle Ages were worse than useless. Luther summarized the pathos of that expectation and of its disappointment less than a year after his Leisnig preface when he said, in a sermon on the creation of deacons in the apostolic church: "It would be good, if there were people available for it, if such a city as this were to be divided into four or five sectors. To each one there would be assigned a preacher and a deacon, who would distribute goods, care for the sick, and see who is suffering need. But we do not have the personnel for this; therefore I do not think we can put it into effect until God makes Christians."[62]

Education

Of all the structures of medieval life whose existence was threatened by the abolition of the religious orders, education was by far the most prominent in Luther's mind and in his authorship; it has also received more attention from later interpreters of the Reformation than almost any of the other structures of the church, though frequently with only passing reference to the importance of monasticism.[63]

Luther himself was well aware of that importance. If anything, he exaggerated it, for he supposed that this had been a primary responsibility of the orders since their founding. In the treatise *On Monastic Vows,* discussing voluntary vows as "an institution of the primitive church," he declared: "The first Christian schools came from this practice . . . Colleges and monasteries eventually developed from these early beginnings." But now, he complained, these "free Christian schools have been made into servile Jewish monasteries, which are actually nothing but synagogues of ungodliness."[64] He went on to propose that these institutions be restored to what he regarded as their primitive purpose. "Monasteries would then have the character God intended for them to have and nothing else. They would simply be Christian schools for

youth, designed to establish ardent young people in the faith by means of a godly upbringing."[65] If vows were made voluntary and if the education of the young were recovered as the chief task of the monastic establishments, Luther foresaw a possible role for them also in the reformed ecclesiastical structure for which he was working.

In education as in welfare, however, events moved faster than Luther had anticipated, so that a year or so after the preface to the common chest at Leisnig he had to turn his attention also to education, in the first and most important of his so-called "pedagogical writings," *To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany that They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools,* written early in 1524.[66] Here, too, he spoke of education as "how the monasteries and foundations originated," adding that "they have since been perverted to a different and damnable use."[67] He was speaking from his own experience as a monk when he described the libraries established by "the monasteries and foundations of old," but he was critical of them because "they neglected to acquire books and good libraries at that time, when the books and men for it were available." Instead, the monks had "devoured all our goods and filled every monastery, indeed every nook and cranny, with the filth and dung of their foul and poisonous books, until it is appalling to think of it."[68] In this connection he also took note of the financial support which the religious orders and other institutions of the medieval church had received, a support which, he argued, could now better be diverted to the cause of Christian education.[69] The monastic schools were "nothing but devourers and destroyers of children,"[70] because they had failed to carry out their educational tasks. He attacked "those devil's masks, the monks, and those phantoms which are the universities, which we endowed with vast properties."[71] Specifically, Luther's attack on monastic education was directed not only at the library, as we have already noted, but especially at the faculty and the curriculum.

For the faculty of the typical monastery school Luther expressed utter contempt. "The tonsured crowd," he said, "are unfit to teach or to rule, for all they know is to care for their bellies, which is indeed all they have been taught."[72] He described them as "teachers and masters who knew nothing themselves, and were incapable of teaching anything good or worthwhile. In fact, they did not even know how to study or teach."[73] He blamed the incompetence of the faculties on the vicious circle of monks teaching other monks on the basis of textbooks written by still other monks, with nothing but monastic books available to either students or teachers. His comments here in *To the Councilmen of Germany* should be supplemented by the anecdotal material that appears in his *Table Talk* and elsewhere, in which he recounts some of the choice instances of the ignorance of the monks.[74] He seems to have taken a special delight in exposing their innocence of the rules of Latin grammar. His oft-repeated attack on the "divisions and sects"

among the monastic orders,[75] who wanted nothing to do with the monks under a different rule, also contained the implication that such isolation only fostered ignorance by depriving teachers of enlightenment from other sources. If there was to be educational reform, there had to be a new breed of teacher.

There also had to be a drastic revision of the curriculum. On this issue perhaps more than anywhere else in his thought, Luther joined himself to the cause of the humanists in the call for a thoroughgoing reform.[76] Praising these adherents of the new learning as "the finest and most learned group of men, adorned with languages and all the arts," Luther asked: "What have men been learning till now in the universities and monasteries except to become asses, blockheads, and numbskulls?"[77] So disgusted was he with the traditional curriculum and with its results that he was willing to conclude: "If universities and monasteries were to continue as they have been in the past, and there were no other place available where youth could study and live, then I could wish that no boy would ever study at all, but just remain dumb."[78] The revival of learning by the humanists was beginning to provide men who could teach the youth properly; it was also setting forth proposals for changes in the subject matter of education at all levels. It was a time in which God had "graciously bestowed upon us an abundance of arts, scholars, and books,"[79] a real "year of jubilee"[80] for German culture. The old-fashioned curriculum of the monastic schools simply was not appropriate to the new needs and new opportunities of the day.

Luther's critique of the old-fashioned monastic curriculum and his proposals for curricular reform concentrated on the study of the Biblical and classical languages. He charged the monks with having been hostile to the study of the languages; "indeed, these have always raged against languages and are even now raging."[81] Nor was this charge based primarily on cultural or educational theory. Their hostility to the languages was theological in its basis and demonic in its origin. "We do not see many instances," he said, "where the devil has allowed (the languages) to flourish by means of the universities and monasteries." The devil had stirred up the monks against the languages, for he knew "that if the languages were revived a hole would be knocked in his kingdom which he could not easily stop up again."[82] To oppose this demonic plot, it was vital that the study of the Biblical and classical languages be established and preserved. But "if through our neglect we let the languages go (which God forbid!), we shall not only lose the Gospel, but the time will come when we shall be unable to speak or write a correct Latin or German."[83] In support of this educational principle, Luther cited "the deplorable and dreadful example of the universities and monasteries, in which men have not only unlearned the Gospel, but have in addition so corrupted the Latin and German languages that the miserable folk have been fairly turned into beasts, unable to speak or write a correct German or

Latin, and have well-nigh lost their natural reason to boot." Thus the cultural niveau of the monastic schools and their religious niveau were, in Luther's judgment, closely related.

Luther's attack on the monastic schools had, by the time of the composition of *To the Councilmen of Germany,* helped to precipitate a crisis in education similar to that which we have noted in missions and in welfare. Luther himself admitted that "schools are everywhere being left to go to wrack and ruin. The universities are growing weak, and monasteries are declining."[84] People had begun to recognize "how un-Christian these institutions are," and their support for the monasteries and monastic schools had declined accordingly. The difficulty was that this decline in support was not being matched by a corresponding rise in support for evangelical institutions. Now that the average citizen was rid of the "pillage and compulsory giving" associated with the support of the monastic establishments, he should "contribute a part of that amount toward schools for the training of the poor children."[85] The devil had not objected "when men gave their money for monasteries and masses, pouring it out in a veritable stream," but he did object when they supported truly Christian education. There was great danger, then, that Germany would "let our schools go by the board and fail to replace them with others that are Christian."[86] The crisis was urgent, for the old structures were disappearing and new ones had not yet been created.

Aggravating the crisis was a by-product of the spirit of the Reformation, a growing anti-intellectualism. In part, this disparagement of learning was the product of the materialism of the age, which looked upon education in a purely utilitarian way and therefore could not understand the value of foreign languages even though it was eager for foreign wares.[87] But quite unintentionally Luther had helped to abet this anti-intellectualism by his violent attacks on the monastic schools and universities, on their textbooks and teachers. In education as in liturgy, Luther's colleague, Carlstadt, sought to carry out all the way what Luther had announced in theory. By the time of *To the Councilmen of Germany* Carlstadt had launched his campaign against formal education, repudiating his own academic degrees on the basis of Matt. 23:10 and dissuading students from continuing at the university.[88] Certain groups among the Bohemian Brethren, too, had been minimizing the importance of the Biblical languages. "We should not be led astray because some boast of the Spirit," Luther warned. "Dear friend, say what you will about the Spirit, I too have been in the Spirit and have seen the Spirit . . . I know full well that while it is the Spirit alone who accomplishes everything, I would surely have never flushed a covey if the languages had not helped me."[89] Spirit there had to be, yes, but there also had to be that structure of learning which only formal schooling could provide.

It was to meet this crisis created by the dissolution of the monasteries and of the monastic schools that Luther turned to the

councilmen of Germany. With the departure of the monks, the councilmen were the proper authorities to step in. For one of the most fundamental implications of Luther's thought for education was a new concentration on training for public service. Monastic education had despised public service as something beneath the dignity of the perfect Christian. The monks had "shown no concern whatever for the temporal government, and have designed their schools so exclusively for the 'spiritual' estate that it has become almost a disgrace for an educated man to marry."[90] Nevertheless, "temporal government has to continue."[91] And if it was to continue, there had to be educational structures whose task it was to train men for service in the government. In a sense, government needed "good schools and educated persons even more than the spiritual realm."[92] This was evident even from the conclusions of reason, as well as from the educational achievements of ancient, pagan Rome. On the basis of his reading of Cicero, Quintilian, and other Latin writers, Luther was deeply impressed by the quality of man produced in Roman schools. It was a man who knew the languages, studied the liberal arts, and served the common weal. "Their system produced intelligent, wise, and competent men, so skilled in every art and rich in experience that if all the bishops, priests, and monks in the whole of Germany today were rolled into one, you would not have the equal of a single Roman soldier."[93]

Because it was a responsibility of the schools to train such men for public service, the councilmen had both the right and the duty to concern themselves with developing the structures of education. Luther devoted a long section of *To the Councilmen of Germany* to an exposition, based both on the Old Testament and on the New, of the duty of parents to provide for the education of the young. To the objection that "all that is spoken to the parents; what business is it of councilmen and the authorities?" Luther replied that some parents lacked the goodness and decency to do their duty, that most parents lacked the ability, and that almost all parents lacked the time and opportunity. "Is it for this reason to be left undone, and the children neglected? How will the authorities and council then justify their position, that such matters are not their responsibility?"[94] Similarly, it could be argued that if the common man was "incapable of it, unwilling, and ignorant of what to do, princes and lords ought to be doing it." True perhaps, the princes did have a responsibility for the education of their subjects, but most of them were so "burdened with high and important functions in cellar, kitchen, and bedroom" that they could not be bothered with the schools.[95] And so it was up to the councilmen, who, for that matter, had "a better authority and occasion to do it than princes and lords." Luther admonished them: "Therefore, dear sirs, take this task to heart which God so earnestly requires of you, which your office imposes upon you, which is so necessary for our youth, and which neither the spiritual realm nor the secular realm can do without."[96]

Like the other programs we have examined, this entire proposal operated on the tacit assumption that the councilmen of Germany would be equally concerned with the welfare of the spiritual and the secular realm. Even in the short-range perspective of the remaining two decades of Luther's life, this assumption proved to be false. Luther's faith that the Spirit could dispense with the monastic structures was accompanied by the hope that the Spirit would, by creating true Christians, call forth the establishment of new and more authentic structures. The faith was sound, the hope was illusory. No such structure for missions was erected; the structures for welfare were a series of unworkable improvisations; and even the educational structures came into the hands of *das landesherrliche Kirchenregiment,* which proved to be even less responsive to the Gospel than the religious orders had been.[97] Our commemoration of the 450th anniversary of the Reformation today must therefore be animated by a boundless gratitude for the power of the Holy Spirit, released in the life of the church through the words and works of Martin Luther, and by a frank recognition that in the area of structure the Reformation did not come out quite as Luther had expected or wished. Thus we give our thanks to Luther, but our praise to God alone—which is precisely what Luther intended with his Reformation.

NOTES

1. *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, D. Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimar, 1883 ff.; henceforth abbreviated as *WA* with *Briefe* abbreviated as *Br* and *Tischreden* as *TR*), 6, 521, 34-522, 3; *Luther's Works* (Saint Louis and Philadelphia, 1955 ff.; henceforth abbreviated as *LW*), 36, 49. Wherever possible, I shall give references both according to the Weimar Edition and according to the American Edition, even though I shall occasionally diverge from the translations of the latter.
2. *The Judgment of Martin Luther on Monastic Vows, WA,* 8, 573-669 (*LW,* 44, 251-400).
3. See, for example, the *Lectures on Galatians* of 1535, *WA,* 40-I, 688 (*LW,* 26, 480).
4. Cf. the recent essay of Walter Elliger, "Zum Thema Luther und Thomas Müntzer," *Luther-Jahrbuch,* 34 (1967), 90-116.
5. Bernhard Lohse, *Mönchtum und Reformation. Luthers Auseinandersetzung mit dem Mönchsideal des Mittelalters* (Göttingen, 1963).
6. Karl Holl, "Die Entstehung von Luthers Kirchenbegriff," *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte,* I, *Luther* (7th ed.; Tübingen, 1948), 300-301; René H. Esnault, "Kontinuität von Kirche und Mönchtum bei Luther," *Kirche, Mystik, Heiligung und das Natürliche bei Luther. Vorträge des Dritten Internationalen Kongresses für Lutherforschung Järvenpää, Finland 11.-16. August 1966,* ed. Ivar Asheim (Göttingen, 1967), pp. 122-142.
7. Dom David Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England,* III, *The Tudor Age* (Cambridge, 1959), 203.
8. *Concerning Rebaptism, WA,* 26, 147, 14-15 (*LW,* 40, 231).
9. *WA TR,* 2, 447, 9-10.
10. *Church Postil of 1522, WA,* 10-I-1, 21, 15-17.

11. Cf. Ernst Schäfer, *Luther als Kirchenhistoriker* (Gütersloh, 1897), p. 248, note; p. 415, note 2.
12. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* (7 vols.; New York, 1937-1945), II, *The Thousands Years of Uncertainty*, 17.
13. *Ibid.*, III, *Three Centuries of Advance*, 26.
14. Karl Holl, "Die Missionsmethode der alten und die der mittelalterlichen Kirche," *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte*, III, *Der Westen* (Tubingen, 1928), p. 124.
15. On the entire problem, see the industrious compilation of Armas K. E. Holmio, *The Lutheran Reformation and the Jews* (Hancock, Mich., 1949).
16. Luther to Bernard, a baptized Jew, June (?), 1523, *WA Br*, 3, 102, 37-39.
17. Cf. *Dr. Martin Luthers Sämmtliche Schriften* (Saint Louis, 1880 ff.; henceforth abbreviated as *StL*), 20, 1807.
18. Cf. Jaroslav Pelikan, "The Benediction of Judah (Gen. 49:10-12) in Early Christian Thought," *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Patristic Studies* (to be published).
19. Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand. A Life of Martin Luther* (New York and Nashville, 1950), p. 379.
20. See Hans Pfeffermann, *Die Zusammenarbeit der Renaissancepäpste mit den Türken* (Winterthur, 1946), pp. 154-173.
21. *Military Sermon Against the Turk*, *WA*, 30-II, 194, 23-195, 6.
22. Karl Holl, "Luther und die Mission," *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte*, III, *Der Westen*, 234-243; Werner Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism*, *tr.* Walter A. Hansen (Saint Louis, 1962), pp. 385-402; Herman Dörries, "Luther and die Heidenpredigt," *Mission und Theologie*, ed. Franz Wiebe (Göttingen, 1953), pp. 61-77.
23. Sermon of May 29, 1522, *WA*, 10-III, 139, 20-21.
24. F. Dean Lueking, *Mission in the Making. The Missionary Enterprise Among Missouri Synod Lutherans 1846-1963* (Saint Louis, 1964), esp. pp. 24-44.
25. Yves M.-J. Congar, "Aspects ecclésiologiques de la querelle entre mendiants et séculiers dan la second moitié du XIII^{e} siècle et le début du XIV^{e}," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen-age*, 28 (1961), 35-151.
26. *The Sermon on the Mount*, *WA*, 32, 307, 11-15, 26-28 (*LW*, 21, 12-13).
27. *Ibid.*, *WA*, 32, 301, 29-31 (*LW*, 21, 6).
28. *Ibid.*, *WA*, 32, 300, 3-5 (*LW*, 21, 4); in this connection cf. Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Preaching of Chrysostom* (Philadelphia, 1967), esp. pp. 28-34.
29. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, tr. Talcott Parsons (New York, 1956), p. 80; R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism. A Historical Study* (London, 1926), pp. 266-267.
30. *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate*, *WA*, 6, 450, 37-451, 2 (*LW*, 44, 190).
31. Cf. H. Lippens, "Le Droit nouveau des mendiants en conflit avec le droit coutumier du clergé séculier, du concile de Vienne á celui de Trente," *Archivum Franciscanum historicum*, 47 (1954), 241-293.
32. Joan M. Hussey, *The Byzantine World* (New York, 1961), p. 139.
33. *To the Christian Nobility*, *WA*, 6, 450, 32-34 (*LW*, 44, 190).
34. Luther to Spalatin, September 25, 1522, *WA Br*, 2, 604, 14-15.
35. Luther to Leisnig, January 29, 1523, *WA Br*, 3, 23, 5-8.

36. *Ordinance of a Common Chest, Preface, WA,* 12, 11, 22-24 (*LW,* 45, 169-170).
37. *Ibid., WA,* 12, 12, 3-5 (*LW,* 45, 170).
38. Ambrosius Catharinus Politus, O. P., *Apologia pro veritate catholicae et apostolicae fidei ac doctrinae adversus impia ac valde pestifera Martini Lutheri dogmata* (1520), ed. Josef Schweizer, "Corpus Catholicorum," 27 (Münster, 1956), pp. 156-157.
39. *Ordinance of a Common Chest, WA,* 12, 12, 13-17 (*LW,* 45, 170).
40. *Ibid., WA,* 12, 12, 21-23 (*LW,* 45, 171).
41. *Ibid, WA,* 12, 12, 29-36 (*LW,* 45, 171).
42. *Ibid., WA,* 12, 12, 25-28 (*LW,* 45, 171).
43. *Ibid., WA,* 12, 12, 37-13, 1 (*LW,* 45, 171).
44. *Ibid.,* WA, 12 13, 2-3 (*LW,* 45, 171-172).
45. *Ibid., WA,* 12, 14, 10-11 (*LW,* 45, 173).
46. *Ibid., WA,* 12, 12, 1-2 (*LW,* 45, 170).
47. *Ibid., WA,* 12, 11, 30-31 (*LW,* 45, 170).
48. *Ibid., WA,* 12, 14, 5-7 (*LW,* 45, 173).
49. *Ibid., WA,* 12, 12, 5-7 (*LW,* 45, 170).
50. *Ibid., WA,* 12, 15, 8-9 (*LW,* 45, 175).
51. *Ibid., WA,* 12, 13, 20-22 (*LW,* 45, 172).
52. *Ibid., WA,* 12, 15, 17 (*LW,* 45, 176).
53. *Ibid., WA,* 12, 14, 9-10 (*LW,* 45, 173).
54. *Ibid., WA,* 12, 13, 16-17 (*LW,* 45, 172).
55. Luther to Frederick of Saxony, August 11, 1523, *WA Br,* 3, 125, 7-9.
56. Luther to Frederick of Saxony, August 19, 1523, *WA Br,* 3, 128, 6-129, 11.
57. Luther to Spalatin, November 24, 1524, *WA Br,* 3, 390, 17-391, 21.
58. Luther to Lang, January 22, 1525, *WA Br,* 3, 427, 3-7.
59. Luther to John of Saxony, September 16, 1527, *WA Br,* 4, 248, 18-21.
60. *Preface to Book of Vagabonds, WA,* 26, 639, 8-13.
61. *Preface to Sermon on Almsgiving, WA,* 38, 72-74.
62. Sermon on December 26, 1523, *WA,* 12, 693, 27-38.
63. Cf. the bibliographical references in *LW,* 45, 344-345.
64. *On Monastic Vows, WA,* 8, 614, 40-615, 15 (*LW,* 44, 312-313).
65. *Ibid., WA,* 8, 641, 7-9 (*LW,* 44, 355).
66. Cf. O. Albrecht, "Studien zu Luthers Schrift 'An die Rathsherren aller Städte deutschen Lands, dass sie christliche Schulen aufrichten und halten sollen, 1524'," *Theologische Studien und Kritiken,* 70-I (1897), 687-777, a study that has not yet been superseded.
67. *To the Councilmen of Germany, WA,* 15, 47, 17-19 (*LW,* 45, 371).
68. *Ibid., WA,* 15, 51, 6-7 (*LW,* 45, 351).
69. *Ibid., WA,* 15, 30, 22-27 (*LW,* 45, 350).
70. *Ibid., WA,* 15, 33, 23-24 (*LW,* 45, 354).
71. *Ibid., WA,* 15, 50, 25-51, 1 (*LW,* 45, 375).
72. *Ibid., WA,* 15, 47, 19-22 (*LW,* 45, 371).
73. *Ibid., WA,* 15, 51, 14-16 (*LW,* 45, 375).
74. Cf. the materials collected in *StL,* 22, 950-969.
75. *On Monastic Vows, WA,* 8, 655, 29-31 (*LW,* 44, 378).
76. Cf. *LW,* 9, 6, n. 9.
77. *To the Councilmen of Germany, WA,* 15, 31, 16-18 (*LW,* 45, 351).
78. *Ibid., WA,* 15, 31, 21-24 (*LW,* 45, 352).

79. *Ibid.*, *WA*, 15, 52, 25-26 (*LW*, 45, 377); cf. Jaroslav Pelikan, *Obedient Rebels. Catholic Substance and Protestant Principle in Luther's Reformation* (New York, 1964), pp. 183 ff.
80. *To the Councilmen of Germany*, *WA*, 15, 31, 11 (*LW*, 45, 351).
81. *Ibid.*, *WA*, 15, 36, 25-26 (*LW*, 45, 358).
82. *Ibid.*, *WA*, 15, 36, 24-28 (*LW*, 45, 358).
83. *Ibid.*, *WA*, 15, 38, 12-15 (*LW*, 45, 360).
84. *Ibid.*, *WA*, 15, 28, 6-7 (*LW*, 45, 348).
85. *Ibid.*, *WA*, 15, 30, 25-27 (*LW*, 45, 351).
86. *Ibid.*, *WA*, 15, 47, 23-48, 2 (*LW*, 15, 371).
87. *Ibid.*, *WA*, 15, 36, 16-20 (*LW*, 45, 358).
88. Cf. Hermann Barge, *Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt* (2 vols.; Leipzig, 1905), I, 418-423.
89. *To the Councilmen of Germany*, *WA*, 15, 42, 15-24 (*LW*, 45, 365-366).
90. *Ibid.*, *WA*, 15, 44, 1-3 (*LW*, 45, 367).
91. *Ibid.*, *WA*, 15, 35, 26 (*LW*, 45, 357).
92. *Ibid.*, *WA*, 15, 43, 22-23 (*LW*, 45, 367).
93. *Ibid.*, *WA*, 15, 35, 4-8 (*LW*, 45, 356).
94. *Ibid.*, *WA*, 15, 33, 25-30 (*LW*, 45, 354).
95. *Ibid.*, *WA*, 15, 44, 33-45, 3 (*LW*, 45, 368).
96. *Ibid.*, *WA*, 15, 48, 24-26 (*LW*, 45, 372).
97. Karl Holl, "Luther und das landesherrliche Kirchenregiment," *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte*, I, *Luther*, 326-380.