

TOWARD A CONFSSIONAL
LUTHERAN UNDERSTANDING OF
EVANGELISM

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evangelism, based upon Lutheran theology, is an acceptable starting point for Missouri Synod pastors to make in evangelism endeavors.

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The intent of this paper is to provide an understanding of evangelism in the Lutheran context, especially in view of popular Reformed methodology. The Lutheran pastor must understand evangelism as the true mission of the Church and train laymen for this task. However, it is questionable whether methods which were originated by Reformed theologians are the best option for the Confessional Lutheran.

A basic understanding of what evangelism means and how it is faring in the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod is presented. Next, Confessional Lutheranism, centered in justification, is examined to shed light on Reformed theology and methodology. A variety of sources are employed in this study and are carefully compared and contrasted to aid in understanding evangelism within Lutheranism.

Research indicates that there is a misunderstanding of evangelism on the part of many Lutherans, and statistics demonstrate plenty of room for evangelistic growth in the Missouri Synod. Reformed theology is found to vary in several key doctrines with Lutheran theology. One attempt to modify Reformed methodology for use in the Missouri Synod is found to manifest these subtle variances in theology and practice.

Based upon these findings, the Missouri Synod must better understand evangelism and train for this important task. However, this training must occur within the context of Confessional Lutheranism. A compromise in methodology is tantamount to a compromise in theology. One pastor has demonstrated that credal

CHAPTER I

BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND EVANGELISM: PERTINENT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Confusion Over Evangelism

There is a need for understanding evangelism within the context of Confessional Lutheranism. Although this paper can only begin to analyze the vast quantity of information pertinent to a Lutheran understanding of evangelism, this chapter will provide necessary background information. The problems associated with evangelism will be the first matter of consideration. These include: the need for a Biblical definition of evangelism, the affects of modern theology on the evangelism concepts of many Christians, and the statistics which indicate alarming evangelistic inactivity on the part of many Lutherans. In response to these problems orthodox Lutherans will be quoted to put the mission of the Church into proper focus. Their statements will also serve as a basis for the additional treatment of a Lutheran understanding of evangelism.

There is official recognition in the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod of confusion in the minds of many of its members about evangelism.¹ This confusion is due in part to the fact that the word does not appear in the official writings of the church body until the 1950's.² However, this cannot be the only reason for

confusion since the church was accustomed to speaking of *missions*. Further, the church has always sought to be faithful to the doctrines of Holy Scripture. But, confusion over the word "evangelism" has caused some Christians to view that work as high-pressure salesmanship, manipulation, or shallow moralism in the place of Christ.³ It is clear that the word "evangelism" must be defined more carefully in order that laymen in the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod may understand their role in this important work of the church.

Scripture uses three important words to describe the mission activity of individual Christians, *kērussein* (to proclaim), *euaggelizesthai* (to tell good news, *euaggellein*⁴), and *marturein* (to bear witness).⁵ *kērussein* is used two ways in Scripture: (1) in the *secular* (general) sense of a herald (*kērux*) or a town crier (Luke 12:3), and (2) in the *particular* sense of speaking forth the message of salvation in Jesus Christ.⁶ The latter will be the sense referred to throughout this paper.

The most important word under discussion is the word *euaggelizesthai*. The noun form of this word depicts the content of the message of salvation. This message became known as the Good News, the Gospel (*to euaggelion*).⁷ Early Christians told the Good News, or to state it another way, Jesus was the Good News they proclaimed. Those who told this Good News were called evangelists (*euaggelistēs*).⁸

The final word under consideration is that of *marturein*. This word is closely associated with the word for evangelism and is used in the legal sense of bearing witness. It can be used to

denote events actually seen or to vouch for truths known to the individual.⁹ Those who proclaimed (*kērussein*) the saving message of Christ's death and resurrection were called witnesses (*martus*) as well as evangelists (*euaggelistēs*). These titles were applied to the early Christians because they were simply caught up in the task of evangelism (good news speaking) and witnessing (bearing witness to the truth).

To shed light on the way these terms have been used by Scripture it is important that the external use of these terms be examined further. The word "evangelism" consists of two important senses: (1) the *general* sense (wide, broad sense), and (2) the *particular* sense (narrow sense). Erwin J. Kolb states:

Evangelism, in its general sense, is sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Such sharing occurs in whatever form and with whatever means or methods may be most relevant for the particular situation of serving the total need of mankind, whom Christ has redeemed. In a more particular sense, evangelism has special reference to sharing the Gospel with those who do not yet confess "Jesus is Lord," to the end that they, too, may enjoy with us all the benefits of our Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁰

The word "witness" also consists of this two-fold sense. However, this word is most commonly used by many Christians in referring to the *general aspects* of witnessing apart from the verbalization of the Gospel.¹¹ This can be seen in the case of the Christian wife whose exemplary life has the potential to save her unbelieving husband by drawing him to the Gospel (I Peter 3:1-2). One of the main texts which speaks of the *general* sense of witnessing is Matthew 5:16: "Let your light shine before men *in such a way* that men may see your good works and *glorify your Father* who is in heaven."¹² (italics mine).

The phrase, "in such a way," indicates that the good works of a Christian are intended to gain a hearing for the Gospel so that men may be moved to "glorify God."¹³ The only way sinful man may glorify God is through faith in Jesus Christ as Romans 10:17 teaches: "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." The witness of good works must find its fulfillment in the proclaimed Gospel message so that sinful men may be saved (Acts 4:12). Good works in themselves do not save apart from the Word, especially since the witness of the sincere Christian can be nullified by one sinful act seen by the non-Christian.

Witnessing should also be defined in the *particular* sense. Rev. Armand Ulbrich uses the word "witness" in this sense:

By "spontaneous witnessing" is meant speaking spontaneously of the Savior whenever the occasion arises. In spontaneous witnessing we respond to the circumstances confronting us. We seek to make the most of our opportunities to witness as they open before us.¹⁴

This aspect of witnessing is important since people join a church because they respect the people in the church (20%), or because friends and neighbors first invited them (35%).¹⁵ The fact is that positive results occur when Christians verbalize their faith.

In short, evangelism and witnessing, used in the general *and* particular senses of proclaiming the Gospel, are synonymous terms. Both words, and both aspects of each word, are important for the Christian to understand. First, the good life of the Christian will gain the attention of non-Christians (the general sense). Secondly, the attention which the non-Christian focuses on the Christian, due to his good life, is intended to open the doors

for the proclamation of the Gospel (the particular sense). The nature of evangelism and witnessing in the particular sense has been summarized by Erwin J. Kolb as "*sharing the Gospel with those who do not yet confess 'Jesus Christ is Lord,' to the end that they, too, may enjoy with us all the benefits of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"¹⁶ (italics mine).

Finally, the new convert is drawn into the witness (evangelism) of the entire Christian community. The people of God work together with all the various gifts of the Holy Spirit to nurture the seed of faith which the new convert possesses. The Great Commission itself displays this concept in the words: "Going therefore, make disciples . . . teaching them to observe all that I commanded you."¹⁷ The making of disciples, especially through the preaching of the Word, refers to the particular sense of evangelism. The teaching and nurturing aspects of the Great Commission contain the general sense of evangelism as related to the witness of the entire Christian community.

Modern Theology's Perspective of Evangelism

Since evangelism is concerned with proclaiming the Gospel so that men may be saved, it is understandable why Martin Luther wrote: "The Christian should do nothing else than teach the Gospel in its truth and purity and thus give birth to children."¹⁸ However, in reaction to Luther there are some who feel that too much emphasis is placed on doing *nothing else* than teaching the Gospel. As it was seen above, a delicate balance is needed to maintain the effectiveness of the mission of the church through

the general and particular uses of evangelism. The focus now shifts to the delicate balance needed between the particular sense of evangelism and its *social* aspects. The social aspects of the Gospel are described in Scripture as an extension of the Good News in which the compassionate heart of the Christian is moved to care for the social needs of people (Matt. 25:35f; Acts 2:45; Gal. 6:10).

Modern theology is primarily concerned with the social aspects of the Gospel, and thus the term "social Gospel" has been used to describe their emphasis. Like the definition of evangelism, the influence of modern theology has been officially recognized by the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod as a confusing factor in the understanding of evangelism.¹⁹ William L. Gast states:

Now, however, because our theology is in a state of confusion, many are confused as to our mission. The liberal [modern] theological trend has so bewildered the church that many are honestly asking, "Just what are we supposed to be doing?"²⁰

This emphasis has resulted in part from the opinion held by some that the church has not involved itself with social problems. In reaction to this lack of involvement in social problems, modern theologians have put virtually all their stress on the social Gospel. As noble as this might seem to the natural man,²¹ there are specific dangers to be pointed out with this view:

(1) Christians may get so caught up in the social concerns of the day that they forget that they are called to witness to people of Christ's work on the cross, and (2) the Christian may

become so concerned with his own community that he forgets the Gospel is for all nations.²²

To some this may seem to be an over-statement; however, this warning is needed. The World Council of Churches has been recognized as a leader in the social Gospel movement. It was recently recorded in the publication, *The Church Around the World*:

The World Council of Churches has done it again--deeply disturbing many of its members by sponsoring a six-day symposium of anthropologists who called for "suspension of all missionary activity" among South American Indians. The attack was based on these scientists' belief that it is wrong to destroy native religions and to replace them with faith in Christ.²³

Modern theology has also tried to reverse the actual role of the Christian missionary. Louis J. Luzbetak states:

A missionary whose mind is completely occupied with the "pagan" culture's "falsehood," "darkness," "deprivation," and "blindness," who sees among his adopted people nothing but "spiritual misery," "sin," and "the night of heathenism"--such a missionary ought to have his spiritual eyes examined. His vocation and the task for which he was commissioned by the Church is something positive: to make the beautiful in the so-called "pagan" heart even more beautiful, to seek out the naturally good in order to make it supernaturally perfect, to present Christianity not as an enemy of the existing way of life but as a friend possessing the secret that will enable the non-Christian culture reach its God-intended perfection.²⁴

Two observations should be made here. First, a missionary should never be *completely occupied* with the negative aspects of man. However, he dare not ignore nor excuse them either. They are aspects which the missionary must understand if he is to carry out his mission of applying Law and Gospel. Secondly, it is clear that Luzbetak does not take the nature of man and sin seriously. He puts these terms in quotation marks. In this way

he indicates that he regards them as mere theological terms and not realities. The result is that he does not understand the mission of the Church. God has revealed that man is spiritually dead and the *spiritual eyes* of the Christian sees this. It is therefore clear that modern theology should have *its* spiritual eyes examined.

The balance between the proclamation of the Gospel and its social aspects should be maintained at all costs. When this issue intensely confronted the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod in the late 1960's, President Harm stated that there is no substitute for "verbalizing the Gospel . . . no substitute for declaring that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself."²⁵ Whereas the modern theologian opts for an either-or choice, Lutherans should respond with a profound both-and.²⁶

Francis Pieper emphasizes this fact when he states:

Of course, the Lutheran Church has an "active social trend," too, in so far as it very energetically directs Christians to serve their fellow men in their social relations. Well known is the dictum of Luther: "Cursed be the life wherein a man serves only himself and not his neighbor; and, again, blessed be the life wherein a man lives not for himself, but for his neighbor!" (St. Louis XI:747.) The Lutheran Church more than any other directs Christians into the social relations with all their works by teaching emphatically that works do not belong to the relation toward God, that is, are not necessary to obtain or preserve salvation.²⁷

Although the effects of modern theology have not been helpful to a Biblical understanding of evangelism, the orthodox Lutheran must remember some important points. First, had the church been more faithful to the task of evangelism with all its implications (general, particular and social), perhaps the modern theologians would not have developed their emphasis on the social

Gospel. Secondly, orthodox Lutherans strongly oppose the belief of modern theology that men may be saved without the Gospel of Jesus Christ (universalism).²⁸ Yet, inactivity in evangelism may in reality amount to passively condoning this universalistic belief. Inactivity indicates a lack of understanding of the Gospel and the good works which flow from justification. (See discussion in next chapter.) The following section will demonstrate that Lutherans need to be more active in evangelism.

The Status of Evangelism in the Lutheran Church

By the year 2,000 there will be between six and seven billion souls living on this earth. Dr. C. George Fry states:

There is a greater need for witnessing now than when Christ initially gave this command in ancient Galilee . . . There is a greater responsibility for witnessing now.²⁹

Jesus thought it important to reach the population of fifty million in His day, therefore, four billion today and seven billion by the year 2,000 are vital. Yet, it is surprising that a sense of urgency is not felt more widely in the Lutheran Church. In fact, Christianity has not kept pace with the population of the world.³⁰

The seriousness of the Gospel not being spread is seen first in the number of persons who are dying without Christ. Eighty-three die each minute without Christ, 4,980 each hour, 119,520 each day.³¹ It is clear that these statistics will continue to rise each minute, hour and day. They reflect the kind of job which the Church is doing in the area of evangelism. The Lutheran Church is also directly affected by this inactivity.

Dr. C. George Fry states:

Let me be honest, brethren. We are not doing a good job in this area. It is sad to read that in 1971 the total membership of world Lutheranism dropped by two percent and that it takes 287 members of the American Lutheran Church to add one adherent to their communion.³²

The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod has a slightly better record. It takes 50-60 members of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod to gain one adherent.³³ Every hour the population of the United States increases by 180 people and the Lutheran Church decreases by three souls.³⁴

The major reason for the loss of souls is that most Christians, even Lutherans, do not personally confess their faith before men. Ten percent of all Lutherans do *considerable* witnessing, 50% do not witness at all, and 40% witness sometimes.³⁵

A Response to Inactivity in Evangelism

Orthodox Lutherans have responded to inactivity in evangelism by reasserting the mission of the Church in very strong terms. Dr. Francis Pieper states that Christians are not to remain at home but to preach the Gospel.³⁶ Those that believe that evangelism work is optional actually harm the Church--there is no middle ground.³⁷ P. F. Koehneke counters the belief that it is the responsibility of the unchurched to come to church with the simple response: "utterly wrong." He continues: "We have committed [a] tragic mistake . . . the mistake of not being sufficiently zealous about the work of the Lord."³⁸ Dr. David P. Scaer equates the misunderstanding of evangelism with misunderstanding the atonement of Christ. Those who understand the atonement can-

not refuse to witness, rather, these same persons will be caught up in evangelistic activity. In fact, when the atonement is known the evangelism imperatives in the Great Commission become superfluous. He states:

The Great Commission becomes an endorsement of what is already known and seen in the atonement . . . If the atonement is God's only real work which reflects His limitless love, so evangelism can be the Church's only real work which reflects that same limitless love through us.³⁹

The Word of God and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church have always made the task of evangelism clear because they center on the atonement of Christ and the doctrine of justification. Even without a formal definition of evangelism, orthodox Lutherans have known that the mission of the Church is to preach the Gospel to the world.⁴⁰ When the doctrine of justification is preserved, the central doctrine of Scripture, evangelism is understood. Dr. Erwin J. Kolb states: "The Church preserves the Gospel in order to proclaim it."⁴¹

Although the Confessions of the Lutheran Church preserve the doctrine of justification, they have not aided the understanding of evangelism in recent years to their full potential. This is due to the tension between theology and evangelism. Dr. Erwin J. Kolb states: "A Problem: When theologians are not interested in evangelism and evangelists are not interested in theology."⁴² It is vitally important that theology guide the proper understanding of evangelism. William L. Gast states:

Evangelism is theology in action, and if your theology is out of kilter with the truth of God's Word, then your evangelism

efforts are going to be out of kilter with God's purpose.⁴³

When orthodox Lutherans put their theology into evangelistic practice (particular sense), not only will men be saved by the message of Christ's atonement, but the world will come to know the meaning of the word "evangelism." The next chapter will treat the doctrine of justification. That the doctrine of justification is to be used for establishing the proper understanding of evangelism is seen in the following statement by F. R. Zucker:

We have the Word of God; we have it in its truth and purity; the Word shines like a bright morning star in dark night . . . Others around us may still be in semi-darkness or in complete darkness, but we have a good light . . . *Surely we want to help light up the way for others.*⁴⁴ (italics mine)

NOTES FOR CHAPTER I

¹Erwin J. Kolb, A Lutheran Understanding of Evangelism (St. Louis: The Board for Evangelism of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, 1976), p. 34.

²Leroy W. Biesenthal, Dialog Evangelism (St. Louis: The Board for Evangelism of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, n.d.), p. 1.

³Kolb, A Lutheran Understanding of Evangelism, p. 34.

⁴Gerhard Kittel, ed., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 10 vols., trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Brometey (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), 1:710-711, 720.

⁵Michael Green, Evangelism in the Early Church (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970), p. 48.

⁶Ibid., pp. 58-59.

⁷Ibid., pp. 48-51.

⁸Kittel, ed., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 10 vols., 1:719ff.

⁹Green, Evangelism in the Early Church, p. 70.

¹⁰Kolb, p. 34.

¹¹John H. C. Fritz, Pastoral Theology (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1932), p. 286.

¹²All quotations of Scripture are taken from the New American Standard Bible translation unless otherwise indicated.

¹³Armin W. Schuetze and Irwin J. Habeck, The Shepherd Under Christ (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1974), p. 228.

¹⁴Armand H. Ulbrich, Reaching People for Christ (St. Louis: The Board for Evangelism of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, 1973), p. XVI-A-1.

¹⁵Kolb, p. 20.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 34.

¹⁷This is the author's translation of the text as it is found in Edition XXVI, Novum Testamentum Graece, Kurt Aland, et al., eds. (Stuttgart, Germany: German Bible Society, 1979).

¹⁸Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, 4 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951) 3:416.

¹⁹Kolb, p. 34.

²⁰William L. Gast, "Evangelism," Evangelical Directions for the Lutheran Church, Erich Kiehl and Waldo J. Werning, eds. (Chicago: The Lutheran Congress on Loyalty to the Scriptures and Confessions, 1970), pp. 112-113.

²¹Alfred von Rohr Sauer, "The Doctrine of the Church," The Abiding Word, 3 vols., Doctrinal Essays compiled and selected by the Literature Board of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1960), 3:310-311.

²²Social Ministry in the Life of the Church, n.p., 1969.

²³The Church Around the World, n.p., Nov., 1971.

²⁴Louis J. Luzbetak, The Church and Cultures (Divine Wordbook Publications, 1970), p. 4.

²⁵"Don't Hide Gospel, Presidents Told. Harms Says No Substitute for Verbalizing the Gospel," The Lutheran Witness Reporter, Feb. 5, 1967.

²⁶Ulbrich, Reaching People for Christ, p. I-B-1.

²⁷Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, 4 vols., 3:179.

²⁸Ibid., 3:45, 126, 554.

²⁹C. George Fry, "Evangelism: An Historical Perspective," Concordia Theological Evangelism Journal (January - March 1982): 13-14.

³⁰Commission on Evangelism of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Talk About the Savior, Milwaukee: The Ev. Bookshop, 1979, p. 1.

³¹Kolb, A Lutheran Understanding of Evangelism, p. 32.

³²C. George Fry, "History and Identity: Sections on the 350th Anniversary of the Introduction of Lutheranism into North America." Paper presented on the 350th anniversary of Lutheranism in North America, Springfield, Illinois, November 1975.

³³W. Leroy Biesenthal, Dialog Evangelism, p. 2.

³⁴Gast, "Evangelism," Evangelical Directions for the Lutheran Church, p. 111.

³⁵Kolb, A Lutheran Understanding of Evangelism, p. 8, quoting M. P. Strommen, A Study of Generations (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1972), pp. 182-185.

³⁶Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, 3:134.

³⁷Ibid., 3:449.

³⁸P. F. Koehneke, "The Call into the Holy Ministry," The Abiding Word, 3 vols., ed. by Theodore Laetsch (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1946), 1:366-388.

³⁹David P. Scaer, "Atonement and Evangelism," Concordia Theological Evangelism Journal (November 1981): 1.

⁴⁰Gast, "Evangelism," Evangelical Directions, p. 111.

⁴¹Kolb, p. 27.

⁴²Ibid., p. 4.

⁴³Gast, "Evangelism," Evangelical Directions, p. 111.

⁴⁴F. R. Zucker, "The Lord's Supper," The Abiding Word, 3 vols., ed. by Theodore Laetsch (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947) 2:423-446.

CHAPTER II

THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING EVANGELISM:

THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION

How Lutherans Have Understood Evangelism

To understand the proper relationship between evangelism and theology, there is a need to examine how Luther and other orthodox Lutherans have viewed evangelism. This chapter will analyze various evangelism-related statements by orthodox Lutheran theologians and the doctrine of justification by grace through faith (hereafter, justification) will be treated. The basis for the proper understanding of evangelism is the doctrine of justification. Understanding justification will serve particularly in the analysis of Reformed theology and methodology and in establishing a proper Lutheran methodology.

Evangelism has been understood in positive terms since the beginning of the Reformation. Martin Luther not only revived the truth of the Gospel, but also the truth that the Gospel needs to be spread to all nations. Luther believed that where a sincere Christian is to be found, a mission-mindedness is also manifested.¹ Luther personalized the mission of the church for himself in the following words:

This mother [the Church] gives birth to children without ceasing . . . by exercising the office of the Word, that is, by teaching and spreading the Gospel; for thus she bears children . . . I, having been begotten by others

through the Gospel, do now beget others, which in turn shall beget others hereafter, and so this begetting shall continue to the end of the world.²

The second Martin, Martin Chemnitz, was in accord with Luther on the mission of the Church. Not only did he keep the Reformation alive, but also the reason for the Reformation, namely, the spreading of the Gospel. He wrote:

The highest favor that can come from heaven to any province, city, or people is this, when God kindles and causes to arise the light of his saving Word, by whose splendor all darkness of errors, abuses, superstition, and idolatrous worship are put to flight, and hearts are enlightened by the true and salutary knowledge of God.³

Past leaders of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod have also maintained the evangelism emphasis of the Reformation. For example, John H. C. Fritz believed that the Christian has been left here on earth "for the chief purpose, to wit, to build up the Kingdom of Christ, John 17:14-23; I Cor. 15:58."⁴ Also, Francis Pieper recognized that the purpose of Pentecost was the equipping of the disciples for witnessing,⁵ and that this divine command to disciple all nations applies to the daily interaction of Christians in the world.⁶

More recent Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod leaders, such as Alfred von Rohr Sauer, express the importance of Christian witnessing in terms of the global dimensions of the Lord's commission.⁷ He explains the success of the Church's mission also in terms of the faithfulness of individuals to baptize and preach.⁸ E. L. Wilson states the mission of the Church in very simple terms: "The Church exists for the purpose of directing

the world of men to Calvary."⁹ Siegbert Becker finds in the term "gospel," the good news, tremendous implications for mission work, that is, the term points to mission work as being necessary.¹⁰

Since the whole Bible is a missionary book,¹¹ and the doctrine of justification is the central message of Scripture,¹² it is clear that this doctrine is vital to the proper understanding of evangelism. The remainder of this chapter will treat the doctrine of justification. The importance of justification will be presented first. Then the nature of man, of the Gospel and of the Christian will follow to provide the basis for the theological understanding of evangelism.¹³

An Analysis of the Doctrine of Justification

The Importance of Justification

William Arndt has called the doctrine of justification as stated in Article IV of the *Augsburg Confession*: "a gem in our fundamental confession."¹⁴ The truth of this statement of Arndt is seen in the words of the article:

Also they [the Lutheran Reformers] teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who, by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight. Rom. 3 and 4.¹⁵

The importance of justification is seen also in the words of the *Smalcald Articles* where Luther emphasizes that "Nothing of this article can be yielded or surrendered, even though heaven and earth . . . should sink to ruin."¹⁶

One of the most concise definitions of justification is found

in *Outlines of Doctrinal Theology* by Theodore Graebner:

The chief benefit of Christ's vicarious obedience is the perfect righteousness obtained by Christ for all mankind, the acquisition of which God accepted as a reconciliation of the world to Himself, imputing to mankind the merits of the Mediator--general or objective justification--; and inasmuch as faith is the actual acceptance of this imputation announced in the Gospel, or of the righteousness imputed and offered in the Gospel, it is justifying faith, and God in His judgment graciously and for Christ's sake holds and pronounces the believer actually and by personal application fully absolved from all guilt and punishment while in the state of faith--individual or subjective justification.¹⁷

This way of justifying the sinner was designed in the wisdom of God in eternity and is unique to the Christian religion.¹⁸ Therefore, justification has direct implications for the task of evangelism. Francis Pieper summarizes these implications by stressing the fact that God chose justification by grace through faith so that the Christian may be certain of the forgiveness of sins and glory in God, not his own works (Rom. 4:16 and Eph. 1:6-7).¹⁹

When speaking of justification, one must presuppose the fact that man is in need of salvation. There is a truism which says: "Tell me what your doctrine of sin is and I will tell you what your doctrine of justification is, or visa versa."²⁰ The nature of the natural man must be presented for a full understanding of justification and evangelism.

The Nature of Natural Man

Man began his existence as a perfect creature made in the image of God (Gen. 1:27ff). Being created in the image of God meant that man's intellect and will were rightly disposed toward

God,²¹ and that he was immortal, that is, able not to die.²² However, man voluntarily transgressed the commandment of God (Gen. 2:17),²³ and lost the image of God.²⁴ The loss of the image of God meant that man became spiritually dead, depraved, and would suffer temporal death and eternal damnation.²⁵

Belief in the total depravity of man is vital to the task of evangelism. God warned man: "For in the day that you eat from it [forbidden fruit] you shall surely die" (Gen. 2:17). God was referring to spiritual death in the word "die." It is clear that God did not mean the end result of spiritual death, namely, physical death and eternal death. This is seen first from the fact that Adam and Eve did not die physically on the day of their fall into sin. Also, had God meant physical death, the words of Satan would have been the truth: "You surely shall not die [physically]!" (Gen. 3:4).

The fact that Adam and Eve suffered spiritual death is seen in their behavior after the fall. Before the fall Adam welcomed the times when he would walk with God in the Garden of Eden. However, on the day of the fall Adam and Eve hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God (Gen. 3:8). When confronted by God, Adam blamed God and his wife, Eve, for the fall (Gen. 3:12). Adam could act no differently, he was spiritually dead and depraved. All men after him are also spiritually dead as Scripture declares: "And you were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). The main point to be remembered in the task of evangelism is the meaning of man's depravity, namely, his utter helplessness and inability to contribute anything to his salvation.²⁶ The *Lutheran*

Confessions state:

Therefore the Scriptures deny to the intellect, heart, and will of the natural man all aptness, skill, capacity, and ability to think, to understand, to be able to do, to begin, to will, to undertake, to act, to work, or to concur in working; anything good and right in spiritual things as of himself. (II Cor. 3:5; Rom. 3:12; John 8:37; 1:5; I Cor. 2:14; Rom. 8:7; John 15:5; Phil. 2:13).²⁷

If man is to be saved from sin, spiritual death, and eternal damnation, salvation must come from outside himself. Man has a natural knowledge of God²⁸ and can do great outward acts, but cannot believe on account of his own power.²⁹ The only quality which man finds in himself is sin, foolishness, death and hell.³⁰ He is without a cure for his condition. The only answer for man's natural condition is the Gospel which is to be proclaimed to all men.

The Nature of the Gospel

God's work of saving mankind is expressed in the doctrine of the *universal atonement*, also called *objective reconciliation* or *justification*. This teaching has already been cited in the definition of justification by Theodore Graebner who wrote:

The chief benefit of Christ's vicarious obedience is the perfect righteousness obtained by Christ for all mankind, the acquisition of which God accepted as a reconciliation of the world to Himself, imputing to mankind the merits of the Mediator.³¹

The emphasis here is on the fact that Christ died for the sins of *all men, the entire world*. The importance of the evangelist's proclamation that Christ has taken away the sins of the entire world is summarized by Francis Pieper:

An essential prerequisite of justification by faith, or of subjective justification, is the objective justification

(the reconciliation) of all mankind. If God had not in His heart justified the whole world because of Christ's vicarious satisfaction, and if this justification were not offered in the Gospel, there could not be a justification by faith. All those who deny the objective justification (the objective reconciliation) will, if they would be consistent, also deny that subjective justification is brought about by faith; they will have to regard their faith as a complement of Christ's merit--a human achievement.³²

Universal atonement presupposes the very important doctrine of *universal grace (gratia universalis)*. It is of the utmost importance to stress the fact that God offers forgiveness of sins in the Gospel to all men without distinction on the basis of the universal atonement. This is the message needful for the person terrified by his sins and the punishments of hell. The qualities of God's justice and grace were maintained in the universal atonement. William Arndt states:

Mark well these words of unspeakably great significance. God was in Christ. God was most intimately united with Christ and did His work through Him. What He performed can be designated by that one word "reconciliation." He reconciled the world to Himself . . . Punishment had to be meted out. It was done when Christ suffered and died . . . When Christ spoke the word on the cross . . . "It is finished," then all sins had been actually expiated . . . And on the third day after the event on Golgatha, God made it known throughout the world that the demands of divine justice had been met and all sins had been forgiven--He raised Jesus from the dead . . . Where are our sins? They have been canceled . . . Who can speak of these things without being deeply moved?³³

The great truth of the universal atonement is summarized in Romans 5:12ff in very simple terms. As Adam's sin affected the whole human race, in the same way, Christ's death on the cross affected the whole human race.³⁴ This doctrine of universal grace is a great comfort to sinful men. It stresses the fact that man is completely justified, and justification is a judi-

cial act. This judicial act is unique in that the unjust man is declared just by God's grace through faith.³⁵

Just as the universal atonement and universal grace are implied in justification, so too, is the doctrine of salvation *by grace alone (sola gratia)*.³⁶ Since man cannot save himself, he looks to the universal atonement alone for salvation apart from his own works. Although the universal atonement and salvation by grace alone are divine mysteries which may even appear to be paradoxical, both doctrines must be taught as Scriptural truth. When the universal atonement and salvation by grace alone are maintained, men are lead unto salvation by evangelism endeavors.

When the universal atonement and salvation by grace are not properly understood, then the very nature of the Gospel is misunderstood. The result of not understanding the Gospel is that the distinction between Law and Gospel is lost and the Word of God is not properly divided (II Tim. 2:15). When Gospel and Law are mixed, the presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ suffers.³⁷

The evangelist must see Law and Gospel in a clear light so that these doctrines may be applied for the eternal benefit of man.³⁸ Both Law and Gospel are alike in that they are the Word of God, they apply to all men, and they are to be taught side by side in the Church.³⁹ But these doctrines are opposites in that the Law demands what it cannot give, while the Gospel demands faith--the very thing it gives freely apart from the works of the Law.⁴⁰ In short, the Law needs to be preached in all its stern-

ness, and the Gospel in all its sweetness.⁴¹

With the Law, God crushes the sinner by revealing his sin, and *contrition* (true sorrow for sin) is produced. After the Law has worked contrition, the Gospel is preached to soothe the troubled heart and faith is there created. When both contrition and the faith are present, there is conversion.⁴² In short, a proper understanding of the Gospel is important to the work of evangelism in the most practical sense. The right use of the Gospel directly effects the salvation of men.

The proper use of the Gospel clearly implies an understanding that the Gospel is a means of grace. The purpose of the means of grace is to confer the forgiveness of sins.⁴³ Scripture teaches that the Gospel has power to convert sinful men (Rom. 10: 14-17; John 5:39; 17:20; Rom. 1:16) since the Gospel actually offers and conveys the forgiveness of sins.⁴⁴ Just as justification has its *objective* side, so do also the means of grace. This objectivity is found in the Holy Spirit's accompanying the Word at all times.⁴⁵ Since the Holy Spirit accompanies the preaching of the Word, men can be assured of its power to convert sinful men.⁴⁶

The sacraments, too, as means of grace should be stressed equally in the task of evangelism. The sacraments are means of grace because they proclaim to men Christ's righteousness, His work for them on the cross of Calvary, and actually offer and convey forgiveness of sins to the individual.⁴⁷ Each time baptism and the Lord's Supper are performed the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins is made. Just as in the preaching of the

Gospel, the Holy Spirit is active through the sacraments as He invites, urges, and draws sinful men to the grace of God.⁴⁸

J. T. Mueller summarizes the nature of baptism as a means of grace as follows:

Yes, indeed, Holy Baptism is pure Gospel; and just because it is Gospel, it is a means of grace. . . . Holy Baptism is God's gracious, loving, beneficent work which He does "in us" (Luther's expressing: *Gottes Werk in uns*) to offer, convey, and seal unto us the grace of God, which Christ merited by His vicarious obedience. So, then, Holy Baptism is Gospel, not Law. In this blessed truth we rejoice, for in this lies the whole comfort of Holy Baptism.⁴⁹

Since Baptism is "pure Gospel" it has an important place in evangelism work. It is the primary means of grace appointed for infants. Infants are included in the Church's commission to disciple all nations, yet they are often forgotten. Infants are to be baptized due to their sinfulness (John 3:6) and their need to be born of water and the Spirit (John 3:5). They, too, must be cleansed by "the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).⁵⁰ Faith is directly predicated to the infants in such passages as Matthew 18:6 and Luke 18:15 (*βρεφῆ*, i.e., infant). Indirectly predicated is the fruit and effect of faith, namely, eternal life (Mark 10:14).⁵¹ In addition to the testimony of Scripture to baptize infants, the tradition of the Church supports the validity of infant baptism.⁵²

The Lord's Supper as a means of grace also needs to be emphasized in evangelism. The Lord's Supper creates, sustains, and strengthens faith in the saving Gospel. It is intended to be taken frequently so that the communicant may have personal assurance of the forgiveness of sins. The Lord's Supper as a

means of grace is further summarized by Arthur E. Neitzel in the statement:

In the Sacrament of the Altar the precious Gospel promises of the words of institution preach the atoning death of Christ with such force and clarity that no doubt should ever have arisen concerning the truth that this Sacrament possesses the Gospel's power and is a means of grace, efficaciously operating toward the acceptance of the greater assurance of the forgiveness of sins. Here the Lord speaks of His given body and His shed blood and thus declares the historic fact of His voluntary death. But here He also explains the meaning of and the purpose of that death when He says: "This is My body, *given for you.*" "This cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is *shed for you.*" According to the words of St. Matthew He adds the words: "*For the remission of sins.*" . . . The very essence of this Testament, or Covenant, is the forgiveness of sins.⁵³

To the natural man it may seem redundant that God has given the Christian so many reassurances of the forgiveness of sins. The question: "If the Lord's Supper gives us only [*sic*] the same blessings as the Gospel, why was the Sacrament added?" F. R. Zucker answers:

For two reasons: The fact that the Lord so richly forgives our sins, in more ways than one, should be a source of great joy and comfort to us, for we daily sin much and deserve nothing but punishment. And God does something special for us personally, when the grace that has been proclaimed to all in general is now in the Sacrament brought to us personally, offered, given, and sealed to each communicant in particular.⁵⁴

Once the means of grace are understood, especially the individual sacraments, then faith is brought into the proper focus in conversion. It is God working, solely by His grace in the objective proclamation of the universal atonement, which creates faith and converts sinful men. In response to the forgiveness of sins the Christian cannot help but speak the saving message of the Gospel (Acts 4:20). In short, the nature of the Gospel sheds

light on the nature of the Christian and the understanding of evangelism.

The Nature of the Christian

The Christian differs from natural man in that he believes his sins are forgiven for Christ's sake by grace through faith. Luther was more interested in the content of faith than in a formal definition.⁵⁵ He believed that God's working of faith in man was "a work so great as if He created heaven and earth anew."⁵⁶ The content of faith is summarized by William Arndt thus:

The nature of this saving faith is easily determined if we hold to the Scriptural doctrine of the grace of God and the work of Christ. When you have learned that Christ has done for us what the Law requires, and that God has forgiven all our trespasses, the role of faith is clear. It merely has to take the pardon of Christ. It does not create, it appropriates.⁵⁷

In evangelism the correct concept of faith is vital to the proper presentation of the Gospel of Christ. The evangelist must always point the person to the cross of Christ and never to qualities in himself, including his faith. Only when the sinner is directed to the cross is faith created in the heart and the benefits of the universal atonement accepted.⁵⁸

Three important aspects of faith must be presented for the proper understanding of evangelism. First, faith saves whether it is weak or strong. All too often weak faith is virtually equated with unbelief and therefore not considered capable of saving a person. However, since faith saves by laying hold of Christ, therefore, weak faith saves just as strong faith.⁵⁹

Secondly, faith has an active and a passive aspect. Francis Pieper states:

Faith is an active apprehension in so far as it apprehends its object, Christ, or the forgiveness offered in the Gospel. It may be called a passive apprehension in so far as this apprehending is not effected through human cooperation, but solely through God's operation.⁶⁰

Man who is spiritually dead comes alive when the universal atonement is preached, and the Holy Spirit through this means creates faith in his heart.

Finally, it is correct to say that faith is experienced.⁶¹ However, faith in Christ's atonement is only experienced through the means of grace.⁶² This aspect of faith is particularly important to the task of motivating Christians to evangelistic endeavors. People of faith are people of action as stated by E. L. Wilson:

True faith, therefore, is a living power, an energizing, motivating, vitalizing power, which propels, drives, and urges to action. As such, living faith is functional, active, operative. It is God-begotten energy.⁶³

The means which brought the Christian to faith, namely, the objective message of the Gospel, in turn motivates the Christian to proclaim this same Gospel. Not only has the Christian been told of the completed, universal atonement, but he, in this very proclamation itself, is told of his *response* and *role* in relation to the universal atonement. His response is to spread this message of reconciliation which is now a *part of him*. Francis Pieper states:

To the report of the finished universal and objective reconciliation the Apostle immediately adds that God has committed unto us the Word or news of this completed reconciliation

in order that men may share in the finished reconciliation.⁶⁴

It is vital to note that only the Gospel can motivate Christians to do evangelism work.⁶⁵ The certainty which Christians have in the Gospel motivates them to do good works and especially to preach the Gospel.⁶⁶ Sanctification and good works have their utmost fulfillment in evangelism.⁶⁷ The Apostle Paul states that the faith of the Roman Christians was "spoken of throughout the whole world" (Rom. 1:8). The Apostle Peter says that a good life, "silences the ignorance of foolish men" (I Peter 2:12, 15). The father of Augustine, Patricius, was very much impressed by the godliness of his wife. In time, he paid special attention to God's Word and through this means became a Christian.⁶⁸

It must be stressed that "good works do not sustain faith, but faith sustains good works."⁶⁹ In the same way, faith sustains the good work of evangelism. Abundance of faith results in the mouth speaking of that which fills the heart (Matt. 12:3).⁷⁰ Francis Pieper states: "Only if one does not know the Scriptural doctrine of justification by faith will he be timid in asking for a multitude of good works."⁷¹

When Christians are reluctant to do good works, evangelism suffers. Luther's belief in good works is a fine example of a Biblical emphasis. Luther held good works dearer than his own life and recognized the value of good works for his neighbor's benefit. He believed that the ultimate purpose of the Christian's life on earth is the performance of good works.⁷² The good work intended in the Second Commandment, as Luther emphasized, was

that the name of God was to be proclaimed "far and wide to all men . . . when time and place demand."⁷³

Luther's view of good works, as stated in the Lutheran Confessions, is to be maintained at all costs. Understanding good works will shed needed light on the task of evangelism. First, good works are not to be considered necessary *for salvation* as George Major believed. However, good works are necessary as a fruit of faith,⁷⁴ and evangelism is the most important work. In the same way, while doing evangelism work is not necessary for salvation, it is a most important fruit of faith. Christians must consider the importance of evangelism in their lives as an expression of their faith. On the other hand, the Lutheran Confessions reject the position of Nicholas of Amsdorf who believed that good works were *detrimental* to salvation.⁷⁵ Yet, inactivity in evangelism may, in part, amount to passively condoning an attitude similar to that held by Nicholas of Amsdorf.

Francis Pieper lists three more reasons for the necessity of good works:

(1) they are tokens of salvation, Phil. 1:28; (2) they are God's will and command, and (3) God promises a glorious reward in this life and in the life to come.⁷⁶

In short, when evangelism is considered an important part of sanctification, then it is clear that evangelism is an obvious fruit of faith. Just as sanctification flows from justification, so too, good works flow in the life of the Christian, the greatest of which is evangelism (both senses).⁷⁷

An understanding of all the aspects of justification presented in this chapter is vital to the task of evangelism and

its proper understanding. The nature of man is that he is spiritually dead, totally depraved, and is utterly unable to save himself. The nature of the Gospel is that Christ has died for the sins of the entire world and the Holy Spirit, working through the means of grace, brings men to faith totally by grace. The nature of the Christian as a new man, motivated by the same Gospel and means which converted him, responds gladly to others in need of the Gospel. By Christ's words, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age," the Christian is motivated to "Go" (Matt. 28:19-20). In short, the Christian is motivated by the Gospel. All of these aspects of the Gospel have been presented so that Reformed theology and methodology may be examined in the next chapter.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER II

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³Martin Chemnitz, Ministry, Word and Sacrament, trans. Luther Poellot (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), p. 15.

⁴John H. C. Fritz, Pastoral Theology (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1932), p. 284.

⁵Ibid., p. 289.

⁶Ibid., p. 443.

⁷Alfred von Rohr Sauer, "The Doctrine of the Church," The Abiding Word, 3 vols., Doctrinal Essays compiled and selected by the Literature Board of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1960), 3:304ff.

⁸Ibid., 3:308-310.

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¹⁰Siegbert W. Becker, "The Gospel," The Abiding Word, Laetsch, ed., 2:350.

¹¹Surburg, "Evangelism and Mission in the Old Testament," Concordia Theological Evangelism Journal (January - March 1982), p. 3.

¹²Pieper, 2:512-519.

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¹⁴William Arndt, "The Doctrine of Justification," Abiding Word, 2:252.

¹⁵"Augsburg Confession," Concordia Triglotta (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. 45.

¹⁶"Smalcald Articles," Concordia Triglotta, p. 461.

¹⁷A. L. Graebner, Outlines of Doctrinal Theology (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1980), pp. 189-190.

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²⁰Eugene F. Klug, "The Eletronic Church," Concordia Theological Quarterly, no. 45 (October 1981), p. 275.

²¹Pieper, 1:516.

²²Ibid., 1:521.

- ²³Graebner, Outlines of Doctrinal Theology, p. 59.
- ²⁴Ibid., p. 60.
- ²⁵Ibid., p. 61.
- ²⁶W. H. Wenthe, "Conversion," The Abiding Word, 1:186.
- ²⁷Concordia Triglotta as cited by Wenthe, The Abiding Word, 1:173.
- ²⁸Becker, "The Gospel," The Abiding Word, 2:348.
- ²⁹Pieper, 2:451-458.
- ³⁰Walther von Loewenich, Luther's Theology of the Cross, trans. by Herbert J. A. Bouman (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1976), p. 78.
- ³¹Graebner, p. 189.
- ³²Pieper, 2:508.
- ³³Arndt, The Abiding Word, 2:243-245.
- ³⁴Ibid., 2:244-245.
- ³⁵Pieper, 2:524.
- ³⁶Ibid., 2:508.
- ³⁷Idem., 3:245-246.
- ³⁸Ibid., 3:242.
- ³⁹Ibid., 3:224.
- ⁴⁰Ibid., 3:228-229.
- ⁴¹Becker, The Abiding Word, 2:351.
- ⁴²Walter Geihlsler, "The Law and the Gospel," The Abiding Word, 1:116ff.

- ⁴³Pieper, 3:108.
- ⁴⁴Idem., 2:459, 523.
- ⁴⁵Graebner, p. 172.
- ⁴⁶Arthur E. Neitzel, "The Sacraments," The Abiding Word, 2:377.
- ⁴⁷Ibid., 2:390.
- ⁴⁸Arndt, The Abiding Word, 2:246-247.
- ⁴⁹J. T. Mueller, "Holy Baptism," The Abiding Word, 2:404.
- ⁵⁰Ibid., 2:399.
- ⁵¹Pieper, 2:448.
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- ⁵³Neitzel, The Abiding Word, 2:388-389.
- ⁵⁴Zucker, The Abiding Word, 2:437.
- ⁵⁵von Loewenich, Luther's Theology of the Cross, p. 86.
- ⁵⁶Pieper, 2:458.
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- ⁶⁰Pieper, 2:437.
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- ⁶⁵Kolb, Lutheran Understanding of Evangelism, p. 31.
- ⁶⁶Pieper, 3:85.
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- ⁶⁸Ibid., 2:295.
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CHAPTER III

UNDERSTANDING POPULAR EVANGELISM METHODOLOGY: REFORMED THEOLOGY AND ITS APPLICATION TO EVANGELISM

An Analysis of Reformed Theology

Many of the most popular evangelism methods in the United States today are grounded in Reformed Theology.¹ These methods have a great influence on the understanding which many Christians have of evangelism. Since many Lutherans have also been instructed by them,² it is essential that Reformed theology be analyzed in the light of the doctrine of justification. Lutherans must know the implications of using these methods in their evangelism endeavors. By analyzing these methods the Lutheran will begin to understand the type of evangelism methodology that he must adopt.

The doctrines presented in the previous chapter would have been accepted and remained in tact had the Reformed theologians not tried to answer the *crux theologorum*. The *crux theologorum* is simply the question: "Why under universal grace not all men are converted and saved?"³ Since Scripture does not answer the question, Christians are obligated to teach and believe only what Scripture *has revealed*. Francis Pieper summarizes what Scripture has revealed in relation to the *crux theologorum* as follows:

On the basis of Scripture--since we do not claim to know more than Scripture--we maintain these three propositions: 1. We know definitely the cause of conversion: God's gracious operation alone. 2. We know definitely the cause of non-conversion: it is solely man's resistance to grace. 3. Since, however, God's grace is universal and earnest, and since all men are equally and wholly corrupt, it will remain a mystery to us in this life why some are converted and others not.⁴

The pastor's main duty is to teach the people of God all that Christ has taught (Matt. 28:20). However, since men try to explain the mysteries of God apart from the revealed Word, the pastor has the responsibility also to warn his people of false doctrine.⁵ In fact, any falsehood is to be boldly confronted just as God's truths are to be boldly asserted. The pastor does not judge the person, but only the doctrine under consideration.⁶ By judging the doctrine and not the person, objectivity is maintained in the analysis of theological difficulties.

To begin to understand the differences between Lutheran and Reformed theologies, it is helpful to note the key differences between Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli. Their personalities are not under judgment, but the experiences which influenced their theological orientation. First, Luther's theology developed through long years of realizing his sinfulness and subsequent helplessness before God. He found hope only in the objective words of the Gospel. Zwingli, on the other hand, had his start in the concepts of humanism and its emphasis on reforming the corrupt morals of the community. He had not come to experience his total hopelessness before God as Luther had. In short, Luther was thrust totally upon the objective

promises of God's Word for his assurance of salvation, while Zwingli was forced to consider qualities in man as he flatly rejected the objective means of God's grace.⁷

From Zwingli sprang a great diversity of Reformed theology. The analysis of Reformed theology is simplified by dividing it into its two main categories: Calvinism and Arminianism. While a diversity exists today, including unique emphases within both categories,⁸ Calvinism and Arminianism will be presented as they were understood in their 16th century context. Since Dr. Francis Pieper authoritatively treats both historic positions, his dogmatic works will serve as the basis for this discussion.⁹ The historical presuppositions will be seen in the current Reformed evangelism methodologies.

Calvinism

Calvinists agree with Lutherans that Scripture teaches the total depravity of man. However, they try to solve the mystery of the *crux theologorum* by denying the universal atonement. They believe that Christ died only for the elect. Despite the fact that this may *rationaly* solve the mystery, it simply is not based on Scripture. Francis Pieper states: "Scripture teaches that grace is offered even to those who actually are not converted, but are lost (Matt. 23:37; Acts 7:51)."¹⁰ To be consistent the Calvinist has to eliminate the atonement for himself. If Christ's atonement is not of sufficient value to cover all men, then there can be no *efficacious* grace extended to the elect. Either God's grace covers all men, or no men at all.¹¹

The objective means of grace are also surrendered in the Calvinistic denial of the universal atonement. It is believed that those who are saved by *efficacious* grace must be converted *irresistably*, apart from means. It is argued that if the Word, as a means, converts people, then all who hear the Word should be converted. Since only the elect are saved when the Gospel is preached, then God must work apart from means to convert the sinner. However, Scripture teaches that men do indeed resist the Holy Spirit and that the grace dealing with the unconverted *is in itself efficacious grace* which has the same power as in the case of those converted (Matt. 23:37; Acts 7:51).¹²

Since Calvin denied the objectivity of the means of grace, he directed his followers to ascertain their *predestination* from their *special call*. This is a look to the *inner illumination by the Holy Spirit*--not a look to Christ.¹³ In fact, it is impossible for the elect to know their calling through the external Word of the Gospel because also the reprobate are *called* by the Gospel. Therefore, like the atonement, the elect also must abandon the objectivity of the means of grace for themselves. Francis Pieper states:

Consistent Calvinism therefore has no means of grace for the elect either, no means that offer the gracious will of God to man, and for that reason also no means that work saving faith and effect a regeneration.¹⁴

Naturally, the sacraments as means of grace have also been denied by Calvinists. Zwingli, Calvin's forerunner, claimed that he never read in Scripture that the sacraments, particularly baptism, brings and confers grace. Rationalistic considerations forced Zwingli to claim that water could not work such great

things as the forgiveness of sins.¹⁵ This presupposition makes it clear why some Reformed have also rejected infant baptism. The denial of infant baptism is not based on Scripture, but rather, on rationalistic considerations.¹⁶ Instead of taking God at His Word, men have turned to reason, and consequently, lose the blessings and comfort of these gifts.

Other Reformed doctrines arise from rationalistic considerations such as the *once saved, always saved* belief. This doctrine was formulated to ease the troubled consciences of those who rejected the universal atonement, and subsequently, the assurance and comfort which this doctrine provides. However, this doctrine is a futile attempt to ease the troubled conscience for it is not based on faith in Christ, but on a one-time subjective religious experience. Only by focusing on Christ and the promises of the Gospel will assurance and comfort be found.¹⁷ The only true assurance for the Christian is whether he believes Christ has died for him.

According to Pieper, Reformed churches have an higher percentage of persons that believe they have committed *the sin against the Holy Spirit* than in Lutheran churches.¹⁸ This fear is the result of looking to one's self rather than to Christ. The person who denies the universal atonement can never be sure that Christ has died for him--whether *he* is elect (*particular grace*). As the person looks inward, he finds only sin. Since he can find no comfort within himself, the fear of committing the sin against the Holy Spirit is a logical conclusion he may make.

In the final analysis it is interesting to note that although the Calvinists reject the means of grace, they do not keep silent, but do preach the Gospel. This not only helps to prove the validity of the objective means of grace, but it helps to prove it in a unique way. That is, there is something within the nature of the Christian that does not allow him to be silent--even if he believes God works without means. When he sees his fellow man, who is in need of the saving Gospel, he does not wait for him to be *illuminated* by some *efficacious grace*, but rather, he proclaims the message of salvation to him.

The Reformed have been successful in leading the task of evangelism in the United States. This is not due to their theology, but because God truly does work through the means of the proclaimed Word.¹⁹ This is not true only in the case of Calvinism, but also in the case of Arminianism. Arminianism too must be analyzed due to its influence on evangelism.

Arminianism

While Calvinism erred in the denial of the universal atonement, Arminianism finds its basic error in the denial of man's total depravity. Arminianism asserts that it is the responsibility of man to cooperate in his conversion. By asserting that man is merely *wounded* (deprived), and that man can cooperate in his conversion, the Arminians believe that they have solved the mystery of the *crux theologorum*.²⁰

This belief has had its effects on the Lutheran Church since the time of the reformation. After the death of Luther, Melanch-

thon, not liking the Calvinistic denial of the universal atonement and universal grace, chose a form of Arminianism called *synergism*. (Hereafter, Arminianism and synergism will be considered synonymous for simplification purposes.) Melancthon placed the will of man beside the working of the Holy Spirit as concurrent causes of conversion. As logical as this may seem, salvation by grace alone is denied by this teaching (Eph. 2: 8-9).²¹

Luther considered all other doctrinal matters as trifles compared to the belief that the natural will of man possesses *any* spiritual power to initiate, or cooperate, or concur in conversion.²² The errors found in the synergistic doctrine of man spreads to all other doctrines of Scripture, including the doctrine of conversion and justification.²³ The focus is turned away from Christ and the universal atonement, and emphasis is placed upon subjective considerations in man, particularly his works. Man must in a sense *supplement* Christ's atonement.²⁴ Rather than having solved the *crux theologorum*, Arminianism has made faith into human self-determination as Roman Catholic theology does.²⁵

The spiritually dead condition of man must be reasserted in response to synergism (Eph. 2:1, 8-9). Man's knowledge and reason can not bring him back to spiritual life, i.e., to faith.²⁶ He has absolutely no free will to determine to choose the ways of God.²⁷ Even the Christian looks beyond his faith to Christ who is the object of his faith. Conversion is totally the result of God's grace apart from man's works.

Even though the synergists use the term *sola fide* (solely by faith), the moment they say man contributes anything to his salvation, the *sola* (solely) is denied. Subsequently, the *fide* (faith) is denied simply because Scripture teaches *sola fide*. Synergism cannot be viewed as embracing *sola fide* because it teaches that man is active in conversion. However, man, who is spiritually dead, is passive.²⁸ Francis Pieper states:

One who denies the *sola fide* also denies the *fide*, since Scripture places the *fides* in opposition to works. Rom. 3:28: "By faith, without the deeds of the Law."²⁹

Man cannot cooperate in conversion because the first thing faith does is to work a negation of the man's self as stated by von Loewenich: "The first step faith takes . . . is the negation of ourselves, the thoroughgoing demolition of all our own glory."³⁰

The preaching of Christ is clearly the only power which can convert men who are spiritually dead. Synergism is clearly opposed to this belief. Christians should seriously consider the dangers of synergism before adopting evangelism methodology which is based on these beliefs. Francis Pieper states:

Synergism not only vitiates, but destroys the Christian doctrine of justification, because in synergism faith is no longer placed in opposition to good works (as Scripture places it), but has itself become in part a work of man . . . Another disastrous result of synergism: It tends to prevent conversion and to destroy the faith of those who have been converted through the working of the *sola gratia* . . . Faith, which comes into being by relying on the *sola gratia*, can live only *vis-a-vis* the *sola gratia*. When faith is no longer centered in grace alone, it is cut adrift from its anchorage . . . Synergism is the sworn enemy of pure grace; it cannot abide a man's coming to faith in the grace of God or his continuing in faith in the grace of God.³¹

The treatment of the doctrine of justification, especially its relation to evangelism, has shed considerable light on Reformed theology thus far. The universal atonement and salvation solely by grace, intended to save and comfort sinful men, have both been abandoned on the grounds of rationalism. The analysis of both Lutheran and Reformed theology will provide the necessary background information for the proper analysis of Reformed evangelism methodology.

An Analysis of Reformed Evangelism Methodology

The best representative of Reformed theology as it is applied to the task of evangelism is the Rev. Billy Graham. He has greatly influenced the understanding of evangelism in the United States as he has preached to millions of people. However, one of Graham's major teachings is at variance with the heart of the Scriptural doctrine of justification. Stated simply, Graham condones synergistic theology similar to that examined earlier. While, as Pieper correctly states, conversion is worked solely by God's operation without human cooperation,³² Graham considers conversion to consist of three parts. One part of conversion is passive, the other two are active. The passive is regeneration by the Spirit; the active is *your* willingness to repent and *your* free decision of faith. The emphasis is on what the *individual* must do.³³ Clearly this belief conflicts with salvation solely by grace.

While Billy Graham is the most popular evangelist today, Rev. D. James Kennedy's *Evangelism Explosion* is the most popular

evangelism method available today. Rev. Kennedy has reminded the Christian Church and, more importantly, individual Christians of the importance of evangelism. He has stressed several important concepts which are needed for successful evangelism endeavors. The most important concept which he stresses is the training of a lay work force on a regular, weekly basis. The emphasis in these sessions is upon on-the-job training³⁴ in the use of an outlined Gospel presentation (see Appendix A).³⁵

The need for training lay persons has been an accepted principle for years in the Christian Church.³⁶ The pastor who has a zeal for evangelism will set an example which his people will follow.³⁷ On-the-job training is also very much encouraged by other methodologies as an effective way to train people to tell the good news.³⁸ John Fritz, in *Pastoral Theology*, combines his exhortation to conduct regular, special, evangelism activities with a practical dialog to be used on the typical evangelism call. He states:

We cannot expect the unchurched to come of their own accord and request to be received as members of the Christian congregation, for natural man is "dead in trespasses and sins," Ep. 2:1 . . . Jesus therefore bids us "go" to him and bring the Gospel to him, Mark 16:15. We should not only use, but seek, the opportunity to do so.³⁹

In addition to on-the-job training of laymen, Kennedy's outlined Gospel has been popular because it enables the average Christian to present the essentials of Christian faith in an organized manner. Outlines which summarize Christian doctrine are basically useful, that is, especially when they preach the Gospel in all its fullness.⁴⁰ The main points in Kennedy's

Gospel outline (see Appendix A) which need special attention are (1) the two diagnostic questions, summarized as: "Are you sure of going to heaven?" (I. E.), (2) the God section (II. C.), and (3) the commitment section (III.).⁴¹

The introduction and particularly the two diagnostic questions are designed to measure the callee's faith in Jesus Christ. The introduction is designed to fulfill some of the following goals: "find out where the person is spiritually," and "create a desire to hear the Gospel."⁴² Both of these goals are commendable from the standpoint of listening to the callee and initiating the Gospel presentation. However, these diagnostic questions do not insure that the caller will find out where the person is spiritually, unless the person flatly rejects Christ as his Savior. The true way to find out where the person is spiritually is by finding out whether he believes that Jesus died for his sins. Heaven and Christ may be related subjects, however, Jesus Christ is the object of faith whereas heaven is the end result of faith.

A practical word of warning must accompany these questions. Since these questions focus on heaven, and not on the Person and Work of Christ, negative reactions may result. For example, the topic of death does not appeal to many people, especially the unconverted. No matter how skillfully the question, "If you were to die tonight?" is asked, there is a great risk of upsetting the callee.

Another practical problem exists. For various reasons a person may very well believe in Christ, but not be able to confess

his faith in connection with these two particular questions. The simple truth is that an incorrect view of heaven does not necessarily mean that a person does not believe in Christ. It must be said here again, weak faith saves as much as strong faith. As far as salvation is concerned, faith that understands heaven and how to get there is no better than faith that does not fully grasp the connection. Faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ saves.

A question which focuses directly on Christ would be: "What do you think of Jesus?" This is based upon the question which Jesus asked of his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" (Matt. 16:13). The public opinion of Jesus in His day asserted that Jesus might be John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or another prophet (verse 14). However, this question was the heart of one of the most critical episodes in the life of Christ because it sought to answer the question, "Who was Jesus?" Each man must answer the question for himself. No man may refuse to answer because refusing to answer this question is equated with a negative answer.⁴³

The sequel to *Who* Christ is, of course, is *what* Christ has done. In short, this question will measure whether the callee knows that Jesus Christ, God's Son, has paid the price for his sins. This is done in a more direct manner by focusing on Christ instead of heaven. The person who refuses to answer this question does not know Jesus. On the other hand, when the person confesses Christ, no matter how simple the confession, this confession is to be accepted by the evangelist with all joy--the

Gospel has been confessed!

Kennedy does not use more direct questions (than his diagnostic questions) due to his fear that the person will have mere *head knowledge* and confess Christ with the head and not the heart.⁴⁴ However, this problem is not solved by indirect questions, but rather, with direct, Christ-centered questions. Since the evangelist cannot look into the person's heart, he must trust the confession of the person out of Christian love.⁴⁵

Asking Christ-centered questions will motivate the callee to focus on Him, and thus minimize the risk of the evangelist being led astray by his answers. In this case the proper distinction between Law and Gospel is vital. On an evangelism call, when doubt arises with regard to a person's certainty of salvation, steps must be taken to relieve that person's doubts. Since the evangelist does not know the real condition of the person's heart, the only action he can take is to properly divide Law and Gospel by applying the Law to the person who feels secure in his sin and the Gospel to the person in terror of his sin.⁴⁶

The lack of Law and Gospel distinction is also seen in the God section (III. C.) of Kennedy's outline.⁴⁷ This is a minor point on the outline, but in reality, it is a major point with great significance. Kennedy presents God's mercy before His justice. However, God's justice must always be presented before God's mercy. God's mercy is the answer to man's sin and depravity.

Kennedy also mixes Law and Gospel in his view of faith. Some of the fruits of faith, namely, belief in God, prayer, etc., are not treated as such in his practical dialog.⁴⁸ James 2:19

is quoted: "The devils also believe, and tremble" to demonstrate *what faith is not*. It is simply assumed that the callee has this type of faith, namely, head knowledge. However, the evangelist must probe deeper into *why* the person believes in God, prays, etc. The evangelist must never assume that the person is not a Christian. The Gospel moves the evangelist to rejoice when the person states that he believes in Jesus Christ, prays to the Triune God, and the like. Only when the callee expresses a belief in God apart from Christ may this Law passage be used. Until this time, Law passages such as this, assumptions, and judgments are all out of place in the *Gospel* presentation.

Kennedy states that men are "deaf, blind, and dead," and "Salvation is of the Lord (Jonah 2:9)" yet his synergistic bias is seen in his discussion of *what faith is*.⁵⁰ Even though Kennedy says men are spiritually dead, in practice he demonstrates that he does not mean *total* depravity. Men are *deprived* rather than *depraved* as seen by his description of faith as an act of the will. Kennedy contradicts his statement that "Salvation is of the Lord," by denying salvation by grace alone. He states:

However, by a simple act of faith *you* have placed *your* trust in Jesus Christ for salvation.⁵¹ (*italics mine*)

The Scriptural position is that men have salvation when they know their sins are forgiven by focusing on Christ, not their faith.⁵²

Kennedy's confusion on the Scriptural teaching of conversion is further seen in one of his own illustrations of faith. He recounts the effect which a sermon based on *Luther's Preface to the Book of Romans* had on John Wesley, the greatest preacher of

the 18th century. Kennedy records Wesley's recollection thus:

I felt I did trust Christ, Christ alone, for salvation;
and an assurance was given me that He had taken my sins
even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.⁵³

This recollection of Wesley as stated here cannot be regarded as synergism. Note that Wesley does not claim to have done anything to believe in Christ. He merely testified that faith was created in his heart: "I did trust Christ, Christ *alone*, for salvation . . . He had taken away my sins." (italics mine). Yet, Kennedy sees this experience of Wesley as something which Wesley had done to believe.⁵⁴ However, either Wesley believed in Christ before the sermon on Romans or he did not. The fact is, if Wesley did not believe before he heard this sermon, then faith was created in his heart through the objective proclamation of the forgiveness of sins in that very sermon. Faith was created in the heart of Wesley by grace apart from human cooperation.

Kennedy's misunderstanding of the nature of faith is reflected in his commitment section.⁵⁵ The commitment question: "Do you want to receive this gift of eternal life?"⁵⁶ is synergistic as used by Kennedy. First, an affirmative answer to this question is no true indication that the person believes or will believe in Christ. It is true that a "yes" answer to this question could be a true longing for grace, yet most people desire to go to heaven with or without faith in Christ. Secondly, if faith has been created in the heart of the callee by this time, then this question could deny that the faith indeed exists.

A question which focuses on whether the person possesses faith in Christ is essential. Just as the question, "What do

you think of Jesus?" initiates the presentation of the Gospel, a question such as "Do you believe that you are a sinner and that Jesus died for your sins?"⁵⁷ concludes the Gospel presentation with the same vital focus on Christ. The proper way to seek responses to the Gospel message is by focusing on the *object* of faith, and not a simple desire for some heaven.

The synergistic emphasis in the "commitment question" is more clearly seen in the "clarification of commitment" section. Kennedy states: "Let me clarify just what this involves. It means, *first of all*, that *you* are going to transfer your trust . . ." ⁵⁸ However, at this point a person either believes or he does not. The evangelist should divide Law and Gospel according to the need of the moment rather than talk of commitment in the synergistic sense. Christ and His unconditional grace should be the object of trust, not Kennedy's concept of "transferring trust from self to Christ."⁵⁹ Kennedy uses passages such as Revelation 3:20 to support his synergistic belief: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: at the door of your life if anyone hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him."⁶⁰ Not only does Kennedy's bias show through by inserting brackets in the passage, but also, the use of the passage is in itself weak due to the fact that this passage was written to Christians--not those who are spiritually dead.

The ultimate denial of salvation by grace alone on the part of Kennedy is found in that even though the callee expressed the desire to *receive* Christ,⁶¹ Kennedy still preaches the Law. He preaches the Law in stressing that Christ also comes as *Master* and

King demanding room in the person's heart.⁶² While the *third use* of the Law has its place in the life of a Christian, the above emphasis of Kennedy is synergistic in nature. This application of Law is based on the belief that the Christian's repentance causes God to be gracious. This is untrue as God was gracious from all eternity.⁶³

It follows that the prayer of commitment by Kennedy serves no practical purpose in the conversion of the sinner. This is true because natural man does not go to God in prayer, but is fearful of God as Adam was after the fall (Gen. 3:8). Luther wrote:

When man then sees his sins and senses God's holy wrath, how shall he then call on God, that God from whom he would prefer to flee? . . . True prayer is always a prayer with empty hands. The true praying man has nothing but God, and Him only by faith.⁶⁴

Prayer must be viewed only as a response to what God has already done in the Christian, and never the cause of receiving grace. In the Word, God reaches down toward men, in prayer, the believer responds toward God.⁶⁵

The section in Kennedy dealing with the assurance of salvation⁶⁶ has only one positive aspect, that is, it uses Scripture (John 6:47).⁶⁷ This section is as weak as the synergistic theology on which it is based. In fact, Kennedy's synergism is further seen as he states: "At this point it is important to point him to the promises of God and help him take hold of them by faith."⁶⁸ However, the natural man cannot *take hold* of salvation or believe, nor can the evangelist *help him take hold of faith*. The evangelist can only proclaim the Gospel, divide Law and Gospel,

and pray that *God* converts the sinner.

Just as Reformed theologians are inconsistent and encourage the proclamation of the Word of God, so Kennedy claims his method is merely the simple Gospel.⁶⁹ When persons are converted as a result of Kennedy's method, this is due purely to God's Word and not to synergistic theology.⁷⁰ Although God can work even through synergistic theology, inconsistent or false theology is to be avoided for two basic reasons: (1) salvation by grace and the universal atonement may be surrendered and therefore the heart of the Gospel obscured, and (2) Law and Gospel cease to be divided when synergistic beliefs prevail. Stated differently, the *message* of salvation itself and the *method* of converting man may be surrendered. The key concept for the Christian to remember in evangelism is *discernment* rather than *commitment*. When the Christian properly divides or discerns Law and Gospel, then God works faith in the heart of the sinner and commitment *results*.

A Final Word

Vital to the understanding of all the current Reformed methods of evangelism is their use of terminology. History demonstrates that the clarification of terms is essential in theological discussions. For example, John of Antioch and Cyril resolved their difficulties in a Christological controversy by merely defining terms.⁷¹ In more extreme cases some terminology, (although perhaps even Scriptural), may have to be avoided. Martin Chemnitz recalls that certain terms employed before the Nestorian and Eutychian controversies had to be discarded after

they became confusing.⁷²

Due to rationalistic presuppositions, synergists assign different meaning to words than do Lutherans. This has been done most clearly to synonyms of conversion, namely, regeneration, awakening, rebirth, quickening, illumination, calling, repentance and the like. These terms have been used in a variety of ways and combinations which make conversion appear as an act in which man cooperates in conversion.⁷³ Confusion of terms will keep the callee from knowing whether he is under wrath or grace, whether salvation is a gift or work.⁷⁴

One such term is *self-decision*, or *decide for Christ*. It reflects the view of synergism because it focuses on *self* and not on Christ.⁷⁵ The words *accept* and *receive* (John 1:12) must be understood in their proper sense. That is, faith in Christ only *accepts*, *receives* and never *gives* anything to God.⁷⁶ These terms plainly refute synergism. The term *born again* is extremely popular today and is based on John 3:3: "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." The context of this Scripture section clearly indicates that man has nothing to do with his first birth, and likewise, nothing to do with his second birth or conversion. Synergism again is refuted by this Scriptural term.

Since even Biblical terms have been misunderstood, it is recommended that: (1) teachers of the Gospel review terminology regularly so that both conversion and evangelism are taught as Scripture teaches them, and (2) that unScriptural terminology such as Kennedy's *transfer your trust*⁷⁷ be avoided for the sake

of clearer terminology. When the terminology and theology of Scripture are clear, then the proper evangelism methodology may be established. The next chapter will use what was presented in this chapter, combine it with the correct understanding of justification, and begin to present the evangelism method options which are open to Lutherans today.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER III

¹Kennedy, Evangelism Explosion, pp. iii-iv, vii-viii.

²Biesenthal, Dialog Evangelism, p. 2.

³Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, 2:485.

⁴Ibid., 2:486.

⁵Chemnitz, Ministry, Word and Sacraments, pp. 46-47.

⁶Ewald M. Plass, "Synergism," The Abiding Word, 2:302.

⁷Ibid., 2:302.

⁸Louis Berkhof, Systematic Theology, 2nd Ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing House, 1941), pp. 462ff.

⁹Numerous sections of Dr. Francis Pieper's work, Christian Dogmatics, volumes II and III will be used as authority for the Reformed positions of Calvinism and Arminianism.

¹⁰Pieper, 2:485-486.

¹¹Idem., 3:154.

¹²Engelder, Handbook of Lutheran Theology, p. 58.

¹³Pieper, 3:119.

¹⁴Ibid., 3:120.

- ¹⁵Ibid., 3:269.
- ¹⁶Idem., 2:448.
- ¹⁷Idem., 3:90.
- ¹⁸Ibid., 3:170.
- ¹⁹Ibid., pp. 160-161.
- ²⁰Idem., 2:486.
- ²¹Ibid., 2:485.
- ²²Ibid., 2:452-453.
- ²³Plass, The Abiding Word, 2:301, 320.
- ²⁴Pieper, 3:104.
- ²⁵Ibid., 3:550-551.
- ²⁶von Loewenich, Luther's Theology of the Cross, p. 75.
- ²⁷Engelder, pp. 38ff.
- ²⁸Wente, The Abiding Word, 1:176.
- ²⁹Pieper, 2:532.
- ³⁰von Loewenich, p. 78.
- ³¹Pieper, 2:492-493.
- ³²Ibid., 2:437.
- ³³Klug, "The Electronic Church," Concordia Theological Quarterly 45, 274.
- ³⁴Kennedy, Evangelism Explosion, pp. 1ff.
- ³⁵Ibid., pp. 16ff.

- ³⁶Schuetze and Habeck, The Shepherd Under Christ, pp. 232-233.
- ³⁷Fritz, Pastoral Theology, pp. 285-286.
- ³⁸Commission on Evangelism of the Wisconsin Ev. Luth. Synod, Talk About the Savior, p. 1.
- ³⁹Fritz, p. 286.
- ⁴⁰J. N. D. Kelly, Early Christian Creeds, 3d ed. (New York: Longman Group Limited, 1972), p. 9.
- ⁴¹Kennedy, pp. 16-17.
- ⁴²Ibid., pp. 47-50.
- ⁴³David P. Scaer, What Do You Think of Jesus? (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1973), pp. 7-8.
- ⁴⁴Kennedy, p. 50.
- ⁴⁵Plass, The Abiding Word, 2:313, 319.
- ⁴⁶Pieper, 2:444.
- ⁴⁷Kennedy, p. 16.
- ⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 36ff.
- ⁴⁹Ibid., p. 45.
- ⁵⁰Ibid., p. 44.
- ⁵¹Ibid., p. 44.
- ⁵²Pieper, 3:397.
- ⁵³Kennedy, p. 39.
- ⁵⁴Ibid., p. 39.

- ⁵⁵Ibid., p. 41.
- ⁵⁶Ibid., p. 41.
- ⁵⁷Commission on Evangelism of the Wisc. Ev. Luth. Synod, p. 33.
- ⁵⁸Kennedy, pp. 41-42.
- ⁵⁹Ibid., p. 41.
- ⁶⁰Ibid., p. 42.
- ⁶¹Ibid., p. 41.
- ⁶²Ibid., p. 42.
- ⁶³von Loewenich, p. 140.
- ⁶⁴Becker, The Abiding Word, 2:361.
- ⁶⁵Pieper, 3:216.
- ⁶⁶Kennedy, pp. 43-44.
- ⁶⁷Ibid., p. 68.
- ⁶⁸Ibid.
- ⁶⁹Ibid., p. 11.
- ⁷⁰Klug, Concordia Theological Quarterly 45, p. 275.
- ⁷¹Martin Chemnitz, The Two Natures in Christ, J. A. O. Preus, trans. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), p. 213.
- ⁷²Ibid., p. 119.
- ⁷³Pieper, 2:498.
- ⁷⁴Ibid.
- ⁷⁵Pieper, 3:124.

⁷⁶Wilson, The Abiding Word, 1:200.

⁷⁷Kennedy, p. 23.

CHAPTER IV

UNDERSTANDING CURRENT TRENDS OF EVANGELISM METHODOLOGIES: THE LUTHERAN'S OPTIONS

An Introduction to *Dialog Evangelism*

There are two basic evangelism approaches open to the Lutheran today. The first approach is to use methodologies which are modified versions of popular Reformed methods. Officially the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod has leaned in this direction through the Board for Evangelism Services. The second approach is based upon *starting* within the Lutheran context and spreading the Gospel in a manner in which Lutherans feel comfortable. Lutherans should be aware of both of these options when selecting a methodology to use. The implications (of using one of these types) should be clear to the user before fully adopting either of these.

Rev. W. Leroy Biesenthal, Associate Secretary for the Board for Evangelism Services, has attempted to adapt Kennedy's method to Lutheranism in the workbook entitled *Dialog Evangelism*.¹ (See Appendix B). His suggested improvements include: (1) changing the "God" section to reflect the proper distinction between Law and Gospel by stressing God's justice before His mercy,² (2) teaching faith as being created by the Holy Spirit through the means of the Gospel,³ (he retains Kennedy's "what faith is not" emphasis before

"what faith is"), and (3) changing the "commitment" section to "The Response" and stressing "The Prayer of thanks" instead of "The prayer of commitment."⁴

Rev. Biesenthal handles some of the theological concerns which Lutherans have. Two extremes are treated, namely, the fear that a method *might* manipulate the Holy Spirit, and then, the danger of limiting the Holy Spirit. He relates the proper balance needed between the two dangers of manipulation and limiting the Holy Spirit by using two practical examples. First, Biesenthal states that the entire Sunday school program is not discarded due to one teacher who may teach wrong concepts, but rather, pastors teach and work with the individual. In the same way, evangelists are to be worked with, taught and trained. Secondly, just as it is believed that the Holy Spirit can work in one hour of Sunday worship to create a childlike faith in the heart of a non-Christian, so the Christian should not limit the Holy Spirit's power in one hour of evangelistic conversation.⁵

Biesenthal also confronts one of the reasons for inactivity among Christians, namely, the fear of seeking responses. The lack of knowing what to do is a real problem. However, with the correct understanding of what conversion is, Christians can be trained to seek responses. Just as the sower of seed expects to reap a harvest, so too, the sowers of God's Word should expect to reap a harvest.⁶

The modifications in *Dialog Evangelism* provide a more usable method for Lutherans than does *Evangelism Explosion*. *Dialog Evangelism* is a noble attempt to take a popular methodology of

evangelism and modify it for use in the Lutheran Church. However, there are built-in difficulties in the Kennedy method which Biesenthal has not addressed. For example, the two diagnostic questions, with all the implications mentioned in the previous chapter, are still employed by Biesenthal. More importantly, Kennedy's Reformed theological influence will always be a part of his method and the way it is used in practice. Since the original method is associated with Kennedy, the average layman will not understand the subtle differences addressed in the previous chapter. Also, it is natural for the Christian to assume that a person must *decide for Christ*, etc., (especially from a human standpoint). Unless the Word of God instructs the mind of the Christian he will continue to stress a synergistic conversion theology.

Biesenthal does correct the major theological problems in Kennedy's methodology. The task of sifting through and finding the usable material in *Evangelism Explosion* for use in the Lutheran Church is a difficult one. Some of the principles which Biesenthal adapts are a matter of debate as to their Scriptural use and validity. Although not all of these principles can be treated here, it is evident that there are subtle forms of Reformed theology which Biesenthal assimilates.

An Hidden Agenda: Church Growth Theology

Despite the strengths of the so-called *church growth movement*, Biesenthal's assimilation of some of its presuppositions threatens the usability of *Dialog Evangelism*. While the church

growth movement has motivated many Christians to witness, much of church growth theology is based upon synergistic theology similar to that of Rev. Billy Graham, Rev. Kennedy and others.

The church growth movement claims that one of its greatest contributions to evangelism is its stress upon receptivity, i.e., the belief that God prepares people to be ready for accepting the Gospel.⁸ Although from a human standpoint some people are more receptive to the Gospel than others, and Christians should have their eyes wide open for a chance to proclaim the Good News, it is not true that natural man can ever be *spiritually* receptive. As seen in the previous chapter, the word "receive" is used in Scripture to indicate that faith *has been* created in the person who was spiritually dead. This person, after conversion, is said to be receptive (past tense in John 1:12)--never before conversion.

From a human standpoint, the very person who may seem to be unreceptive, may be the one that is converted by the power of God's Word. Despite this, George G. Hunter III, one church growth writer, presents receptivity as: "People being made ready to consider Christianity."⁹ This is clearly the opposite of the Biblical concept of the depravity of man and his need to be saved solely by grace.

Hunter attempts to strengthen his case by citing historical examples from the Book of Acts. While this has some value at times, clear passages of Scripture which specifically teach a doctrine should be examined first, then historical examples may be used to support doctrines.¹⁰ The starting point for this type of study is the Scriptures which teach the conversion of the

spiritually dead man. These Scriptures explain the unreceptivity of man to the Gospel better than historic passages which may be subjectively twisted to fit any given presupposition. The fact that Hunter supports his position by putting great stress on extensive historical and cultural research also shows a lack of understanding of the condition of natural man.¹¹ The emphasis on cultural research clearly points to a synergistic philosophy of man.

Hunter goes on to explain how God somehow "prepares certain harvests of people" as he responds to the question of "why some are receptive [*saved*] and others not."¹² This is clearly a revival of the Calvinistic attempt to answer the *crux theologorum*. Hunter admits: "Christian theology does not even pretend to have satisfactorily explained this,"¹³ yet he goes on to explain this. First, he observes that certain circumstances in the life of a person can open him up to being receptive. Secondly, he asserts:

God's Holy Spirit *works through* the events and circumstances of some people's lives to create receptivity, to "warn the heart" for the gospel. Our gracious God goes before us *into* the hearts and consciousness of people, preparing for an evangelical harvest.¹⁴ (*italics mine*).

From a human standpoint there may be people who appear to be more receptive to hearing the Gospel, however, the Holy Spirit *works only through* His appointed means. He certainly does not "go before us *into* the hearts of people." If God did go before us, there would be no need for evangelists--He could do a better job Himself. The Holy Spirit has revealed in the Word that the only way in which He may enter the heart of a sinful man is when the Gospel is proclaimed by the evangelist.

Although this is clearly synergistic theology, Arthur Glasser, another leader in the church growth movement, claims that the movement is solving the problems which have divided the Christian Church for centuries. This assumption is based upon the common goal which all Christians share in reaching the lost with the Gospel. They have in reality adopted synergistic theology and claimed it as a new renovation. Glasser writes:

There is a time when God's Spirit is peculiarly active in the hearts of men. They become "ripe unto harvest" . . . Indeed we feel we have leaped over the inscrutable mystery that down through the years has provoked endless theological debate and ecclesiastical division, and have put strength where it furthers, not hinders, the ongoing of the Christian mission. In seeking to win those whom God has made winnable we have not unnaturally gained new insight into what it means to be co-laborers with God in the building of His Church.¹⁵

Just as in the concept of *receptivity*, when the Christian finds those open to hearing the Gospel, the person is not "winnable" (receptive) until he is won. *Winnableness* is something all men have simply because God would have all men to be saved (I Tim. 2:4). To describe some as more winnable than others is to misunderstand the depravity of man and the universal atonement. To deny either the depravity of man or the universal atonement, or both, is clearly contradicting Scripture. When a part or all of Scripture is denied, the evangelist's effectiveness is greatly weakened.

The Effects of Church Growth Theology

The necessity for this brief treatment of church growth presuppositions is seen to be even more essential as one considers that Biesenthal, like Glasser, has claimed new insights

due to the church growth movement. Biesenthal has claimed that these new insights have caused in him "an awakening."¹⁶ Unfortunately this awakening, via church growth theology, has caused the greatest difficulty for Lutherans who desire to use *Dialog Evangelism*. Although Reformed theology is assimilated in a very subtle manner, the effects of this theology are the same as the more obvious points corrected by Biesenthal's outline. Therefore, *Dialog Evangelism* must correct these points to complete the task of modifying *Evangelism Explosion* for use in the Lutheran church.

The most unfortunate subtlety which Biesenthal accepts is a definition of evangelism based upon commonly accepted church growth principles rather than needed exegesis.¹⁷ Since he relies on church growth proponents, he arrives at a definition of evangelism which is not based on Scripture (see pages one to five). Although Biesenthal acknowledges that the term "evangelism" is used in a general and particular sense, he confuses these terms in two ways.

First, he spiritualizes the particular sense by attaching a special *gift* to one's ability to evangelize.¹⁸ Although some may be more *gifted* from a human standpoint, by having a more *outgoing* personality, and the like, Scripture does not speak of a special spiritual gift of evangelism. *All* Christians are equally called to do the work of evangelism (particular sense). Dr.

Robert Preus states:

Of course, not everyone will confess Jesus as effectively as others . . . But everyone, if he can think and talk and react to the Gospel at all, can confess Jesus before men.¹⁹

The main passage used to support the case of church growth's definition of evangelism as a special gift is Ephesians 4:11, "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers." This passage is improperly used by Biesenthal as a support passage. First, Biesenthal quotes the *Living Bible*, a *paraphrase* rather than a more reliable *translation* of Holy Scripture. The Greek text says, "and some as evangelists,"²⁰ not: "some have the special ability in winning people to Christ, helping them to trust him as their Savior."²¹ The latter paraphrase does not reflect what the text states, but grammatically and contextually varies with the text.

In fact, the context places the evangelist in a teaching (didactic) role to the building up of the entire Body of Christ. That is, God *initiated* His revelation through apostles and prophets; God *maintains* this revelation, His Word, through the teaching of faithful pastors. In the same sense, there are those who are gifted by God "for the equipping of the saints" (verse 12) in *extending* the revelation of Christ's atonement. Initiating, maintaining, and extending are all three vital aspects of the way in which God has used and uses men to equip the saints "for the work of service" (verse 12) and kept the Christian from being "carried about by every wind of doctrine" (verse 14).²²

The special *gift* spoken of here in the text is for "*the equipping of the saints*" (verse 12), and not the actual *direct* proclamation of the Gospel to non-Christians. The end result of this gift is obviously that the entire Body of Christ, each

individual, is enabled and equipped to evangelize (particular sense).²³ When evangelism is described as a super-spiritual activity, restricted to only a few through a special gift, then the mission of the church suffers.²⁴ Individual Christians, misled by this kind of teaching, have failed to see their roles as evangelists.

The second way in which Biesenthal confuses the definition of evangelism is that he does not define evangelist and witness as synonyms, but as separate entities. He states: "While not everyone is an evangelist in the narrow sense of the term, everyone is a witness - Acts 1:8."²⁵ A look at Biesenthal's own proof-text will reveal his failure to see these two terms as being synonymous in their uses in Scripture. This fact is seen in the fulfillment of Acts 1:8 as found in Acts 8:1, 4:

And on that day a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria [the *witness* in Acts 1:8 fulfilled], except the apostles . . . Therefore, those who had been scattered [simple laymen] went about preaching the word [particular evangelism].

Scripture's use of these terms is simple. In one case (Acts 1:8, "you shall be My witnesses") Jesus says that his disciples and all believers would be witnesses, and in another (Acts 8:1, 4) these same witnesses were "preaching the word," or evangelizing in the particular sense. The clarity of the use of these terms is only dimmed when presuppositions of various kinds are allowed to interpret Scripture.

The obvious confusion over these two terms has caused many Christians to view witnessing apart from the verbal proclamation

of the Gospel, producing inactivity as an end result. This is seen in the fact that the word "witness" is usually depicted in the minds of laymen in the general sense (Matt. 5). While this aspect is important, it is only one aspect of the Scriptural term. Christians who overstress the general sense of the word "witness" are not concerned with verbal proclamation of the Gospel. However, there is no substitute for proclaiming Christ's atonement verbally when opportunities present themselves.²⁶ This is done by simply reciting John 3:16 or by a more lengthy presentation of the Gospel message. Christians must understand the term witness in its Scriptural sense, namely, that they are to let their light shine *in such a way that* people will be interested in the verbalized Gospel and, as a result, men may come to faith and glorify God.

The Scriptures examined are against a definition of evangelism which states that only a few can evangelize in the particular sense. They are in opposition to a definition of witnessing which merely implies a presence in the world apart from the verbal proclamation of Christ's atonement. Clearly, the definition of evangelism adopted by church growth proponents, and subsequently by Biesenthal, is not based on Scripture. Rather, these definitions are an attempt to explain why not all Christians, who have the Holy Spirit, evangelize. The question as to why some evangelize and some do not, like that of the *crux theologorum* and "why some are receptive and others not," is left unanswered by Scripture and, therefore, cannot be answered by men. Rather than dwell on *why* people do not evangelize and cloud the interpretation

of Scripture, it is best to focus on *what* motivates Christians to evangelize. Since the Gospel alone motivates a Christian to evangelize, logically, a Scriptural definition of evangelism, centered in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, will motivate Christians to evangelize.²⁷

The belief that only some Christians are gifted evangelists (10% as church growth proponents believe) will not properly motivate a Christian to evangelize because: (1) many do not consider verbal proclamation to be their gift, and (2) this belief directs the Christian, not to Christ, but toward himself.²⁸ The Christian should look to Christ for salvation and not to his faith. In the same way, the Christian should look to Christ for primary motivation for evangelism (his gifts are secondary). In fact, when the Christian realizes what Christ has done on the cross, the motivation is there.

Kennedy, church growth proponents, Biesenthal and others have motivated some to evangelize. However, this motivation is due only to God's faithfulness in working in His Word, not to their theology, methodology, or evangelism definitions. The ten percent concept has not worked in the words of Biesenthal himself who claims that there are 9.5% of the 10% who are still not active in evangelism. He asks: "Wouldn't it be great if every member of each parish in the LCMS who is part of that 10% would come out of hiding and BE an evangelist?"²⁹ It should be stated in reaction that the 9.5% will never be found because they do not exist. In fact, the more the 9.5% figure is asserted, the fewer persons will be truly motivated with the Gospel. When *any* Christian hears

Jesus say to *him*, "Lo, I am with *you* always," he will be moved to "go." The motivation is in the words "Lo, I am with you," the direction is in the word "go."

Secondly, it would be even greater if 100% were motivated and would evangelize as they are able to with the help of God. Rather than seek out 10% that do not exist, it is better that the pastor seek out the type of individuals whom Ephesians 4:11-14 speaks of. Without speculating on how many of these individuals actually exist, the pastor's efficiency as equipper of the saints will be clearly multiplied. While Biesenthal warns of a "you all do it approach"³⁰ which frees the pastor and laymen of evangelistic responsibility, at the same time equipping those who are able to equip others in evangelism will help to remedy the "you all do it approach."

The next section will begin to present how *all* Christians may be equipped and trained for their task of evangelism. The advantages which Lutherans have in the evangelism task will be seen in the context of Lutheran theology, particularly as it is manifest in worship. Although Kennedy's *Evangelism Explosion* was seen to have strong practical points, his methodology is grounded in synergism. Although Biesenthal's *Dialog Evangelism* also has these strong points, the beginning methodology is simply not from a Lutheran context. The built-in difficulties of the Kennedy-originated outline, as well as the effects of the church growth movement on Biesenthal's evangelism perspective, do not provide the proper methodology which will motivate many Lutherans. Using evangelism methods from Reformed sources causes some to avoid

evangelism for fear of becoming Reformed. However, the pastor must seek the best way to motivate his people to evangelize through the Gospel despite the existence of Reformed theology and methodology.

A Confessional Beginning

Since the Lutheran Confessions focus on justification, the center of Scripture, these precious documents serve as the best theological tools to aid in establishing proper evangelism methodology. Since their focus is on Christ's death on the cross, they also serve as fine motivating instruments of the Christian's task of evangelism. Using the Lutheran Confessions as an evangelism tool is the best guarantee that orthodox Lutherans will not become inactive in the task of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The task of the orthodox Lutheran is confidently to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all the world. William L. Gast warns:

Our role is not to sit here like a bunch of Little Jack Horners, sticking our thumbs in the Scriptures to come up with some nice orthodox plumbs . . . No! We are here to pledge ourselves to the Scriptures and the Confessions in order that we might be on the right tract with the task that God has given us--the task of evangelizing the world.³¹

Orthodox Lutheranism has plenty of fuel to feed the evangelism fires of the church. When orthodox Lutheranism is asserted in all its Biblical richness, Christians will be motivated to evangelize. Lutheran evangelism principles are Biblical evangelism principles because they take into consideration the universal nature of the mission, the evangelical nature of the mission, namely, that the Gospel will be proclaimed, and the Confessional

nature of the mission, namely, that Scripture alone directs the mission of the church in all its purity.³²

One Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod pastor, Rev. Robert Louis Schroeder, has taken the Confessional emphasis in evangelism seriously. He developed a booklet using the Apostle's Creed.³³ The development of this booklet was based upon concerns with Kennedy's method, particularly the commitment section. In addition, he noticed that little mention was made of the Holy Spirit's working through the ongoing witness of the Church in follow-up.³⁴ Schroeder states: "The Church had run well all those years [i.e., for centuries] with its expanded Gospel witness, it had stood the test of time."³⁵

The Creed is a natural way to present sin and grace. The First Article of the Creed speaks of creation. The story of creation in Genesis is naturally the story of the fall of man. The Second Article presents Christ and Him crucified--Law and Gospel are maintained. The Third Article talks of the Church and the means of grace entrusted to her. As a close, this method, in particular, emphasizes the ongoing witness of the church in public worship.³⁶

The validity of the *credal method* of evangelism has considerable support in the history of the Christian Church. Although never intended to be complete summaries of the Christian faith,³⁷ the use of the Creed has plenty to say for the phenomenal success of early Christian evangelism endeavors. J. N. D. Kelly states:

The early Church was from the start a believing, confessing, preaching Church. Nothing could be more artificial or more improbable than the contrast so frequently drawn between the

Church of the first century, with its pure religion of the Spirit and its almost complete absence of organization . . . Had the Christians of the apostolic age not conceived of themselves as possessing a body of distinctive, consciously held beliefs, they would scarcely have separated themselves from Judaism and undertaken an immense programme of missionary expansion. Everything goes to show that the infant communities looked upon themselves as the bearers of a unique story of redemption.³⁸

In short, the creeds were never viewed in the early Church as dry-as-dust documents, but living expressions of the precious Gospel derived directly from Scripture (see Appendix C).³⁹

Luther suggests that at the end of each part in the Second Article of the Apostles Creed, the words "for me" or "for the forgiveness of my sins" should be added.⁴⁰ Of the First Article Augustine says:

Observe how quickly the words are spoken, and how full of significance they are. He is God, and He is Father: God in power, Father in goodness. How blessed we are who find that our God is our Father!⁴¹

The Third Article has been summarized as "The Spirit in Action"⁴² by J. N. D. Kelly. Particularly interesting to note is that this article links the church with the forgiveness of sins. Kelly states: "Hard on the heels of the mention of the Church comes THE REMISSION OF SINS."⁴³

In addition to those in the early Church, the reformers, Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin all considered the Apostles' Creed as normative in their doctrinal works.⁴⁴ The Apostles' Creed was considered a fitting expression of the Christian message at the Lausanne World Conference on Faith in 1927 by churchmen from both the East and West.⁴⁵ Those Christians who, despite testimony from all these sources, do not believe in creeds, rob themselves of a

valuable summary of Christian faith, and a valuable evangelism tool.⁴⁶ Building on the understanding of the value of the creeds, Lutherans can use the other Confessional writings of the Lutheran church. Dr. Robert Preus states:

If any layman and laywoman would read these great statements of our faith they would become more knowledgeable and powerful witnesses for the Lord Jesus, yes, better evangelists.⁴⁷

It is to the advantage of the Lutheran evangelist to present the Gospel in the credal manner because it is consistent with the public witness of the church. The callee who has heard the Gospel presented in the Creed will be prepared to be followed up by the liturgical worship of the church. Since Lutherans stress the objective means of grace which proclaim Christ in worship, the visitor on Sunday morning not only recognizes the Creed, but is also pointed to the means of grace. This is actually the most honest method on the part of the Lutheran which is consistent with his worship. It seems that the methodology which a church adapts will, in time, influence the church's worship. Since the objective means of grace preach the Gospel so clearly, and these means are surrounded by a Christ-centered liturgy, Lutherans should adapt a method from this context.⁴⁸ To compromise in methodology or worship is to compromise a clear presentation of the Gospel.

When the evangelism methodology of the Lutheran church is drawn from its confessional heritage, then the "mystery will be" taken "out of personal witnessing."⁴⁹ The wisdom of choosing a credal form of evangelism is clear. The success of the credal evangelism method is measured in its practicality. It is simple.

It is unforgettable. The content is revealed in Scripture. The callers mature through its use. Schroeder states:

We must not forget the callers. They are the workers. They need the best and they need to be honest. Given the opportunity, they will use this method more than any other. Point out to them that this is the witness of the church! Then watch them grow in it as they use it!⁵⁰

The Lutheran Confessions focus on the greatest truth of Holy Scripture, the doctrine of justification. The creeds help the evangelist to proclaim this great truth--man is saved by God's grace. When the Gospel is clearly understood by the Christian, evangelism is clearly understood and the Good News is spread confidently and effectively.⁵¹ In addition to the Lutheran Church being known as the church which teaches justification as its main tenet,⁵² may the Lutheran Church be the leader in the task of spreading this message through tools such as the Apostles' Creed.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

¹Biesenthal, Dialog Evangelism, p. 41.

²Ibid., pp. 41, 59ff.

³Ibid., p. 41.

⁴Ibid., pp. 41, 20.

⁵Ibid., p. 65.

⁶Ibid., p. 67.

⁷Ibid., pp. 6ff, especially p. 8.

⁸George E. Hunter, The Contagious Congregation (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979), p. 104.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Milton S. Terry, Biblical Hermeneutics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), pp. 161ff.

¹¹Hunter, The Contagious Congregation, p. 11.

¹²Ibid., p. 105.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 106.

¹⁵Arthur F. Glasser, "An Introduction to the Church Growth Perspectives of Donald Anderson McGavran," Theological Perspectives on Church Growth, p. 38. Ed by Harvie M. Conn (The Den Dulk Foundation, 1976), cited by Hunter, The Contagious Congregation, p. 106.

¹⁶Biesenthal, Dialog Evangelism, p. 6.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 6-7.

¹⁹Robert Preus, "Every Lutheran is a Confessional Lutheran," Concordia Theological Evangelism Journal (January - March 1982) 1-2.

²⁰Nestle - Aland, Novum Testamentum Graece, 26th Ed., p. 509.

²¹Kenneth Nathaniel Taylor, The Living Bible, Paraphrased (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1971), cited by Biesenthal, Dialog Evangelism, p. 7.

²²R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, to the Philippians (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), pp. 529-542.

²³Fritz, Pastoral Theology, p. 286.

²⁴Kolb, A Lutheran Understanding of Evangelism, p. 12.

²⁵Biesenthal, p. 7.

²⁶"Don't Hide Gospel," The Lutheran Witness Reporter (Feb. 5, 1967).

²⁷Kolb, p. 31.

²⁸Biesenthal, p. 8.

²⁹Ibid., p. 11.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Gast, "Evangelism," Evangelical Directions for the Lutheran Church, p. 111.

³²Fry, Concordia Theological Evangelism Journal (November 1981) 9-12.

³³Evangelism Department of Our Savior Lutheran Church, Bettendorf, Iowa, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost (Bettendorf, Iowa: Our Savior Lutheran Church, 1979).

³⁴Robert Louis Schroeder, "Origins of Recent Creed Witnessing," Concordia Theological Evangelism Journal (January - March 1982) 9ff.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid., p. 10.

³⁷Kelly, Early Christian Creeds, p. 165.

³⁸Ibid., p. 7.

³⁹Ibid., pp. 131ff.

⁴⁰Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, 2:539.

⁴¹Kelly, p. 139.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 155ff.

⁴³Ibid., p. 160.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 368.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Preus, Concordia Theological Evangelism Journal (January - March 1982) 1-2.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 2.

⁴⁸Schroeder, Concordia Theological Evangelism Journal (January - March 1982) 11.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 12.

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 11-12.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 12.

⁵²Arndt, The Abiding Word, 2:257.

APPENDIX AOUTLINE OF THE GOSPEL PRESENTATION - KennedyI. THE INTRODUCTION

- A. Their secular life
- B. Their church background
- C. Our church
- D. Testimony: personal or church
- E. Two Questions:
 1. Have you come to a place in your spiritual life where you know for certain that if you were to die today you would go to heaven?
 2. Suppose that you were to die tonight and stand before God and He were to say to you, "*Why should I let you into my heaven?*" What would you say?

II. THE GOSPEL

- A. Grace
 1. Heaven is a free gift
 2. It is not earned or deserved
- B. Man
 1. Is a sinner
 2. Cannot save himself
- C. God
 1. Is merciful - therefore doesn't want to punish us
 2. Is just - therefore must punish sin
- D. Christ
 1. Who He is - the infinite God-man
 2. What He did - He paid for our sins and purchased a place in heaven for us which He offers as a gift which may be received by . . .
- E. Faith
 1. What it is not - mere intellectual assent not temporal faith
 2. What it is - "trusting in Jesus Christ alone for our salvation"

III. THE COMMITMENT

- A. The qualifying question
- B. The commitment question
- C. The clarification of commitment
- D. The prayer of commitment
- E. The assurance of salvation

APPENDIX BOUTLINE OF PRESENTATION - BiesenthalI. THE INTRODUCTION

- A. Chit-Chat
- B. Their Church
- C. Our Church
- D. Testimony: Personal or Church
- E. Diagnostic Questions:
 1. Have you come to the place in your spiritual life where if you were to die tonight, you would know for certain that you would go to heaven?
 2. Suppose that you were to die tonight and stand before God and He were to say to you, "Why should I let you into my heaven," what would you tell Him?
- F. Bridge
 1. Heaven is God's free gift to man
 2. It is neither earned nor deserved

II. THE MESSAGE

- A. Man
 1. Is a sinner
 2. Is spiritually dead
 3. Is unable to save himself
- B. God
 1. Is just - and must punish sin
 2. Is merciful
- C. Christ
 1. Is all powerful, all knowing, ever present God-man
 2. Is He who lived and died and rose for us, to forgive us our sins and give us new life with Him now and hereafter in eternity
- D. Faith
 1. Is more than mere intellectual assent or temporal faith
 2. Is trusting in Jesus alone for our salvation
 3. Is created in the heart by the Spirit through the Word
- E. Repentance - Sorrow and Turning

III. THE RESPONSE

- A. The qualifying question: "Have I made myself clear to you?"
- B. The response: (Question or Statement)

- C. The clarification of response
- D. The prayer of thanks
- E. The close

IV. IMMEDIATE FOLLOW-UP

- A. Assurance
- B. Discipleship
- C. Follow-up appointment

APPENDIX CTHE APOSTLES' CREED & SCRIPTURE EXAMPLESTHE FATHER:

I Believe in God the Father (1 Cor. 8:4-6; Phil. 2:11; 1 Tim. 2:5f; 6:13f; 2 Tim 4:1)

Almighty (Rev. 4:8)

Maker of Heaven & Earth. (Gen. 1:1)

THE SON:

And in Jesus Christ, (Mark 8:30; Acts 8:36-38; 4:42; Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 8:6; 12:3; Phil. 2:5; 1 Tim. 2:5f; 1 John 2:22; 5:5)

His only (begotten) Son, (John 1:14-18; 3:16-18)
(Begotten of His Father before all worlds . . .)

Our Lord; (John 11:27; Acts 2:36)

Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, (Luke 1:31, 35; Rom. 1:3f)

Born of the Virgin Mary; (Luke 2:7; Rom. 1:3f; 1 John 4:2)

Suffered under Pontius Pilate, (Matt. 27; 1 Tim 6:13; 1 Peter 3:18; 4:1)

Was crucified, (Matt. 27:35; 1 Peter 3:18)

Dead, (Matt. 27:50; Rom. 8:34; 1 Cor. 15:4; 1 Peter 3:18)

And buried; (Matt. 27:59-60; 1 Cor. 15:4)

He descended into hell; (1 Peter 3:18-22)

The third day He rose again from the dead; (Rom. 1:3f; 4:24; 8:34; 10:9; 1 Cor. 15:4; 2 Tim 2:8; 1 Peter 1:21; 3:18)

He ascended into heaven (Luke 24:50-51; 1 Peter 3:18f)

And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; (Rom. 8:34; 1 Peter 3:18-22)

From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. (Rev. 22:20; 2 Tim. 4:1)

THE HOLY GHOST (SPIRIT):

I believe in the Holy Ghost; (Acts 5:3-4; Matt. 29:19; 1 Cor. 12:4; 2 Cor. 1:21f; 13:14; Gal/ 3:11-14; 1 Thess. 5:19; Heb. 10:29; 1 Peter 1:2)

The holy Christian Church, (Eph. 1:4)

The communion of saints; (John 1:6-7; 1 Cor. 10:16)

The forgiveness of sins; (John 20:22-23; Acts 2:38)

The resurrection of the body; & the life everlasting. (Jn 11:24-26)

Amen. (Rev. 22:20)

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