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The Doctrine in the Liturgy

Donald L. Deffner

The Doctrine in the Liturgy is an adult instruction course combining biblical doctrine with Lutheran hymnals (*The Lutheran Hymnal, Lutheran Worship, Lutheran Book of Worship*). It was published by the Concordia Theological Seminary Press, Fort Wayne, Indiana, in 1988. Its forty-two pages contain a Teacher's Manual and Study Guide of which the following excerpts are reproduced here: (I.) Foreward, (II.) Introduction to the Course, (III.) Prospectus for the Course, (IV.) Sample Lesson of the Course: The God We Worship, and (V.) Assignments for the Course. Acknowledgement is herewith made to the faculty (and Dan Petzold of the library) of Concordia Theological Seminary for gracious assistance in providing some of the bibliographical material. *The Doctrine in the Liturgy* has been combined with the author's *Myths about the Lutheran Church* in a forthcoming adult instruction course entitled *Myth or Faith*.

I. FOREWORD

One of the most exciting tasks of the pastor is adult education. This is particularly challenging—and crucial—when working with adults joining the Lutheran Church through baptism or affirmation of faith. Note that the term “premembership instruction” was not used. For anyone validly baptised is a member of the Holy Christian Church already. One does not “become a member” or “join the church” at confirmation. Nor do confirmands “renew” (a misleading word) their baptismal vow. For baptism is the gracious, unilateral act of God alone, and it is not “renewable.”

Adult instruction is a *crucial* task because the conception of the Lutheran faith imparted in the study course may give adults a *Gestalt*—a conceptual framework of what Christianity is—for years to come. For example, one very popular manual used in the Lutheran Church for decades spends an inordinate amount of time on the ten commandments. The impression is easily given that to be a Christian is “to keep the commandments.” That is, unless the instructor valiantly puts the ten commandments and the law in proper perspective in relation to the life of sanctification.¹

Furthermore, in the course fragmented verses of Scripture are cited, leading to a “proof-text” conception of Christianity.

Again and again, for proper understanding one is driven back to the *context* of the isolated passages quoted—where one should have started in the first place. Thirdly, Christ and His salvation are treated half-way through the course, which, unless put into proper focus, can be “just another doctrine to be believed.” But we do not view the Scriptures as just “a sourcebook of doctrinal pronouncements,” in which any doctrine has equal importance with any other. Luther says, “All the Scriptures show us Christ.”

Furthermore, the starting point is more Calvinist than Lutheran, beginning with the Scriptures rather than God’s gracious act in Christ (cf. the expansion of this point below). In sum, the whole *format* of the manual militates against a sound understanding and practice of the Christian faith. Overall, the impression is given that to become a member of the Lutheran Church the primary requisite is to assent noetically to various biblical doctrines, among which we find Christ and His work. But the primary objective should be personal surrender to Christ and His atoning work: a vital *relationship* with our blessed Lord.² Therefore, beyond the problems of the errata noted above, if any manual, by form or content, does not support this organizing principle, it cannot be conscientiously used. What then is our starting point for those becoming members of a local congregation (with both Christian and non-Christian background)?

(1.) I submit that our starting point is man’s need and God’s action, not the Scriptures. The infallible Scriptures are the only source of full knowledge about the nature of God and the way of salvation. But our starting point should be justification by grace through faith in Christ—as God’s mighty act in response to the existential need and condition of a fallen humanity.

Commitment to the inspiration of Scripture and the nature of the Bible comes *after* surrender to the Lord of the Bible. For, as Luther said, the Scriptures are a creche for *Christ*. Franz Pieper notes in Volume I of his *Christian Dogmatics*:

The question has frequently been raised how one can know whether he has the faith wrought by the Holy Spirit or only a human conviction of the divine authority of Scripture. . .

Likewise those lack the internal testimony of the Holy Ghost as to the divine authority of Scripture who are prompted merely by arguments of reason or by human authority—such as the authority of the pastor, the parents, or other men—to regard Scripture as the Word of God. . .

Our missionaries in heathen countries, our home missionaries, and our institutional workers do not therefore begin with rational arguments for the divinity of Holy Scripture, but they preach “to one and all” (“*in den Haufen hinein*”) repentance and remission of sins. And when faith in *Christum crucifixum* has once been created, there is no need to worry about securing faith in the divinity of Holy Scripture. . .³

The question is whether we want to be Lutheran or Calvinist in our approach. As Herman Sasse says in *Here We Stand*:

Although both churches hold that justification by faith is a doctrine without which the church cannot exist at all as a true church, the place of this article of faith in the sum of Christian doctrine differs in such a way that Lutheran and Reformed also give it a different meaning. As we have seen above the essential character of the Lutheran Reformation consists of a rediscovery of the Gospel as the message of the sinner’s justification. The gracious promise of the forgiveness of sins for Christ’s sake—this, and nothing but this, is the Gospel. *And the Holy Scriptures cannot be properly understood except in the light of the Gospel.* Consequently, the doctrine of justification is the key which “alone opens the door to the whole Bible.” The Reformed Church repudiates this.⁴

Accordingly, study of the meaning and purpose of Scripture in an adult instruction course should come after an initial confrontation with Christ and His saving work for sinful humanity.

The natural starting point—and that is where our liturgy begins!—is with sinful humanity’s condition.⁵ We begin with the confession of sins—and then focus on and cling to the redemption earned for us by our blessed Lord through His death and resurrection. (Ergo, “The God We Worship” is Lesson 1 in this manual.) Implicit here again is the valid

application of law and gospel. I know what I am under God's judgment before I grasp what the gospel means for me.

(2.) The class member should ideally focus on primary, not secondary material. In other words, most time should be spent on actual study of the Bible itself—in and outside of class sessions—rather than on a secondary aid such as a manual or even the catechism. It is not a matter of mastering a systematization of doctrine, but getting into the Scripture itself and seeing the doctrines and passages *in context*.

The problem is that, if we do not give people some elementary hermeneutical and isagogical helps on how to study Scripture as we instruct them in preparation for joining a congregation, when will they learn? Some may become a vital part of Bible study groups in the parish, but many do not.

Obviously this is an idealistic objective, because the pastor just cannot do everything in one brief course. We need to keep our goals high, however (cf. point 5 below), and people in the professional world, or some university students, may well take up the challenge of intensive between-class study and exploration of the reading assignments suggested.

For those without time for in-depth study, however, a secondary aid may be necessary. And here I would highly recommend *Life with God* by Herman Theiss. Stressing the Christian's *relationship* with God, the course includes clear and succinct summaries of biblical truth plus provocative true-false statements which stimulate dialogue. As of 1988 this volume was available from Seven Hills Publications, Suite 6, 131 Thirtieth Street N.E., Auburn, Washington 98002.

(3.) Whatever format is used, the thrust of the course must not be doctrine *qua* doctrine, but doctrine related to life. Many manuals are a series of chapters systematizing scriptural doctrine well, but using no metaphors or illustrations from contemporary life, and making no application of the doctrines to the problems of the people taking the course. The result is that many people never make the transfer of doctrinal meaning to the everyday problems which beset them. These doctrines must be seen in relationship to life, that is, that of the man loading boxes for United Parcel eight hours a day.

Our besetting problem in the Lutheran Church has been that people have felt that to be a Christian is "to believe all the right

doctrines.” “Oh, don’t get me wrong, Pastor. I still remember my catechism.” But this is head knowledge, not heart knowledge. We have many people who know a lot of doctrines, but it is often abstract knowledge divorced from life.

The principles of learning apply here: readiness; satisfaction or effect; exercise; belonging or association. To properly teach Christian doctrine, we must proceed “from the known to the unknown,” not start in left field with some archaic biblical reference, miles from the needs and problems of the class members. People are need-meeting beings, and respond to need-fulfilment. Our Lord always addressed human need. At the same time, He told people what they “needed” to hear.

Also implicit in this objective is our concern that we avoid “systematizing doctrine into statements of truth which are then supported by Bible passages which keep the focus on the individual and neglect the place of the individual in the community of the redeemed.”⁶ The neophyte needs to see at once himself or herself as a vital part of the worshipping community, not as a “solo Christian.”

(4.) Church doctrine must always be related to worship. It is not doctrine *qua* doctrine about which we are concerned, but doctrine coordinated with and integrated in the worship-life of the individual. This “worship-life” means a concept of worship as totality of life—all the ways in which one lives out the sacramental life. Ergo, it means a way of instruction which trains the individual in the meaning and practice of the eucharist.

The liturgical service is still the church’s primary teaching opportunity, especially for those involved in little else in the congregation during the week. It must be meaningful and relevant to their daily lives in the richest and fullest sense. We need to see “the doctrine in the liturgy”—and how this worship service is the focal point and power supply for our life all during the week.

As people become new members of a local congregation, we need to instruct them fully in the worship life of that community, or some might become illiterate worshippers for some time to come. Often this is still the biggest blind spot in many a church’s educational program.

(5.) One must set high goals in assignments. The more one lovingly expects of people, the more they will do, and the more they will grow. Many classes degenerate into the pastor lecturing, and people listening. This is not always a "learning situation." People learn best by doing—by creative thinking and internalization.⁷ The instructor must develop the skill of inductive questioning.

(6.) The ultimate objective is that one write and keep developing one's own course, with inductive Bible study as the primary approach in instruction. Until that time comes, one must avoid using only one manual, whatever it is, time after time. The effect can be stultifying. The busy pastor, pressed for time, can (with little preparation!) walk into a class session using a text he knows "like the back of his hand"—and just lecture.⁸ The pastor fails to grow—and can lose the freshness evident to class members when using creative new material. Blessed is the pastor who uses a different instruction class format every time a new adult course begins.⁹

There is no perfect course this side of heaven. The following course is offered with the hope that it may trigger ever more fruitful growth for the teacher (co-learner) and students, that Christ and His saving work may be glorified.

RESOURCES OF SINGULAR NOTE

Baptized, We Live; Lutheranism As a Way of Life. By Daniel L. Erlander. Available from Campus Pastor Daniel L. Erlander, Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Washington 98447. \$2.50. Here is a refreshing and catchily illustrated 28-page study of Lutheranism as a movement within the church catholic. The treatment of the doctrine of inspiration (p. 11) bears critical analysis. The manual is rich in its sacramental-liturgical approach. Noteworthy emphases include the salient elements of the *Confessio Augustana*; Jesus' "Yes" to the theology of the cross and "No" to the theology of glory; and justification by grace through faith.

The Bible and the Liturgy. By J. Danielou. University of Notre Dame Press, 1956; out of print. Arthur Just, Jr., states: "Danielou traces the history of liturgical rites through the fathers to the scriptural antecedents, forming a sacramental theology that provides a foundation for pastoral liturgy."

Introduction to Christian Worship. By James F. White. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980. Arthur Just, Jr., states: "White gives a history of Christian worship from the New Testament to the present century by means of such subjects as time, space, the service of the word, the sacraments, and rites of passage."

Keeping the Faith: A Guide to the Christian Message. By David G. Truemper and Frederick A. Niedner, Jr. Fortress Press, 1981. \$6.95. Luther G. Strasen describes the work as "a commentary on the catechism designed to help Christians tend the faith they hold, nurturing their understanding of it in our changing age. It interprets Christian doctrine as instruction on how to bear the message well, how to tell the story in such a way that Christ is glorified and sinners hear the good news."

Johann Sebastian Bach and Liturgical Life in Leipzig. By Guenther Stiller. Translated by Herbert J.A. Bouman, Daniel F. Poellot, and Hilton C. Oswald. Edited by Robin A. Leaver. Concordia Publishing House, 1984. 308 pp. \$24.95. Here is a faith-strengthening work which will enhance our appreciation for our Lutheran musical and liturgical heritage. It is a treasure trove of insights into the fervent piety and theological orthodoxy of Bach. Major implications for our own day are implicit in Bach's counteraction to the sentimentalism, subjectivity, and uncontrolled liturgical experimentation which ignore sound church music in favor of the banal and trashy lyrics of "praise choruses" and the emasculated "hymns" of television evangelists devoid of any reference to sin and need of God's forgiveness.

The Liturgical Year. By Adrian Nocent. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1977. 4 volumes. \$39.00. Dean O. Wenthe describes the work as "an introduction to the substance and theological rhythm of the church year. The focus is on the formation of one's spirituality in a communal and christo-centric manner."

Made, Not Born; Perspectives on Christian Initiation and the Catechumenate. Notre Dame University Press, 1976. \$7.95. Dean O. Wenthe describes the work as "a series of studies on how the catechetical task of the church can be carried out with fresh clarity and conviction in the face of a bland and non-sacramental cultural environment."

"The Meaning and the Task of the Sermon in the Framework of the Liturgy." By Bo Giertz. In *The Unity of the Church: A Symposium*. Commission on Theology and Liturgy. Lutheran World Federation. Augustana Press.

Prayer. By Hans Urs Balthasa. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987. The work deals with the act, object, and tensions of contemplation.

"Seven Theses on Reformation Hermeneutics." By Martin H. Franzmann. Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR). Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Reprint from *Concordia Theological Monthly*, April 1969.

A Theology to Live By: The Practical Luther for the Practicing Christian. By Herman Preus. Concordia Publishing House, 1977. \$7.95. Heino Kadai states: "The book is a competent and inviting guide to the religious perspective of Luther and the Lutherans. The work can be read with profit by professional theologians, but it speaks most rewardingly to those Christians who are seeking to increase their depth of knowledge and Christian commitment. . . It is both a realistic and a joyful book about Christian faith as Luther and Lutherans see it. . . Such timely themes as God and suffering, man in his predicament and potential, word and sacrament as the food for life, and what happens after life are dealt with by Preus, a competent, confident, committed theologian."

"What the Symbolical Books Have to Say about Worship and the Sacraments." By Arthur Carl Piepkorn. Concordia Publishing House, 1952.

Worship in the Name of Jesus. By Peter Brunner. Concordia Publishing House. \$14.95. Kurt Marquart describes the work as "a scholarly, in-depth discussion of the meaning of the service of word and sacrament."

Worship in Word and Sacrament. By Ernest B. Koenker. Fort Wayne, Indiana: Concordia Seminary Printshop. \$2.75.

ENDNOTES

1. "The Ten Commandments, as they appear in Exodus 20, come after God has covenanted with His people in Exodus 19:5,6 and are to be the people's response to God's covenant grace." This quotation comes from an unpublished manuscript by Robert L.

Conrad, "Some Principles for the Development of Adult Pre-membership Materials," St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1968. See also David P. Scaer, "Sanctification in Lutheran Theology," *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, 49 (April-July 1985), p. 181. Scaer notes Luther's stress on the positive prescription rather than the negative prohibition of the decalog (p. 184).

2. Note Donald L. Griggs' helpful distinction between goals and objectives in his manual, *Teaching Teachers to Teach* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985), p. 13. An objective is specific, achievable, and measurable. A goal is beyond our reach, and never fully realized, but gives direction for the educational enterprise. Griggs' manual is a superb tool for improving teacher skills.
3. Franz Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1938), pp. 312-313.
4. Herman Sasse, *Here We Stand*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1938), pp. 111-112.
5. A man told his Lutheran friend, "You could have people filling your churches if you could just get rid of that one phrase in your service." What is that?" replied his companion. "We are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves," he replied.
6. Conrad, *op. cit.*, p. 4. Also see his "Principles for the Development of Adult Pre-membership Instruction," *Concordia Theological Monthly* (February, 1968), p. 67.
7. Richard Rehfeldt writes in "The Road to Educational Ministry," *the Pastor's Role in Educational Ministry*, ed. Richard Allan Olson, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), pp. 35-36. "This lecturing method, complete with a good deal of humor (which I later came to see as a device which keeps people at a distance), I used in confirmation instruction classes. . . [But] as I began to turn more and more from total lecturing to listening, I saw my role as pastor to be one of humanizing a learning situation. I began to see that Christian education is person-centered. Thus, I began to concern myself with both halves of the situation—with the person as well as with the subject. I began to see that the whole person—not just his mind—must be engaged in meaningful experiences."
8. As Griggs (*supra*) notes (p. 6), the point is to *uncover* the material, not to "cover" it—*hide* it from view.
9. See also *A Handbook for Ministry with the Adult Inquirer*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986). A resource to help incorporate adults into the life and mission of the church. Helpful both as a guide for involvement of new and old members

of a congregation. The manual is produced by the Division for Life and Mission in the Congregations of the American Lutheran Church. See also Martin E. Marty's *Invitation to Discipleship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986).

II. INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

Instruction in the teachings of the Christian faith with the Holy Communion service as context is not a new approach. Many pastors have used this method, and varied it from time to time. The following, therefore, is one more contribution to the cause which would view the totality of life as worship—wholly proclaiming the “worth-ship” of Him who created, redeemed, and sustains us. (This course was first published by the Concordia Seminary Printshop, St. Louis, Missouri, in May of 1960. The author is indebted to Richard R. Caemmerer, Arthur C. Repp, and Arthur Carl Piepkorn for their critical reading of the manuscript at that time.)

Objectives of the Course

The “so great a cloud of witnesses” of the whole Body of Christ and the personal faith of the Christian teacher are but signposts which point to our blessed Lord. Furthermore, the content of the course is *not* a series of “lessons” *among* which we find Christ and the message of His meritorious work at the cross and empty tomb. Much less is it a series of “meetings” in which we discuss a number of “doctrines” to be swallowed like so many pills, and *among* which we find the doctrine concerning the Son of God.

Rather, our concern from beginning to end is to confront the potential Lutheran Christian with the incarnate Lord Himself. As Berthold von Schenk has said:

The greatest thing that ever happened to you was when you met Jesus and fell in love with Him.

And since to love Christ is to *worship* Him, it is essential that we understand the worship forms of the church and, in so doing, recognize the striking ways in which our blessed Lord is there declared and enfolded.

The point need not be belabored that *meaningful* worship is one of the greatest needs of the church today. The morning service is still the chief educational medium of the Christian

Church. No matter how much we try to expand our educational program, the worship service is still the only channel by which we reach many people. Therefore the highest skill and preparation must go into this hour to make it a life-giving experience for the worshipper—in the proper *liturgical* and *educational* sense.

It is in the eucharist that the church each Lord's Day retraces what T.S. Eliot calls the "greatest drama in the world"—the "re-presentation of the suffering and death of our blessed Lord for the remission of our sins." Thus Yngve Brilioth says (*Eucharistic Faith: Evangelical and Catholic*, p. 1):

The place of the Eucharist in the life of the Church is one of the most central problems which confront Evangelical Christendom today. It is a problem for the theologian, because the sacrament is a meeting point on which all the issues of theology converge; for the liturgical reformer, whose business it is to help to provide a worthy outward expression for Christian worship; and for the pastor of souls, whose concern is with the church's actual life.

Aware of these concerns, the Christian teacher is led once again to restudy such great chapters of Scripture as 1 Corinthians 11 and Hebrews 10 and to ask, "Just what do we mean by worship in general and sacrament in particular?" Richard R. Caemmerer has described our worship together in this way:

The adoration of God and offering up of self and others to him.

The seeking of His grace through His Word of forgiveness.

The sharing of His grace through the acts of mutual edification.

Accordingly, the purpose of this course is to provide an instruction class for adults in the teachings of the Christian faith in the Lutheran Church, using the church's worship service and the Christian church year as the framework and point of reference, with a "real, vital, personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior" as the goal.

Structure of the Course

The Prayer

The meeting opens with a prayer—a collect selected (from the propers) which strikes the keynote for the lesson theme.

This procedure will familiarize the novice with the use of the propers.

To emphasize the “balanced diet” of the church year and show that its festivals are not mere commemorations but “present and living realities,” an attempt has been made to select a collect from some time in the Christian church year which stresses the particular doctrine to be studied. For example, the lesson on sin begins with the penitential collect of Ash Wednesday. But the nature of the collect is usually quite general. (The propers begin on page 54 in the *Lutheran Hymnal*.)

Introduction and the “Doctrine in the Liturgy”

Following the introductory remarks of the leader on the specific subject at hand, a sample introduction is suggested. The leader moves to the pertinent phrases in the worship service immediately. (Hymnals are always handy.) For example, the introduction in Lesson 3 on sin could be one of these:

In *The Lutheran Hymnal* the “Confession of Sins” is on pages 6, 15-16.

In *Lutheran Worship* the “Confession of Sins” is on pages 136-137, 158, 178.

In *Lutheran Book of Worship* the “Confession of Sins” is on pages 56, 77, 98.

The references are examined by the group.

Hymn

“Here is a typical hymn in which we affirm our faith—in which we proclaim this Bible doctrine.” The group examines the hymn, hears its history, and some comments are made on the hymnology of the church.

Bible

Since confirmands frequently use secondary and tertiary source materials in instruction classes and never really get into the Bible itself. The next step in the class meeting is an actual tussle with a carefully selected portion of Scripture. Each class member has a Bible in hand (a gift from the church), and the pastor interprets a section pertinent to the lesson theme in the light of the *analogia fidei*.

It is to be noted that, if the Bible readings on the assignment sheet are fulfilled, the class member will have read the entire

New Testament and parts of the Old Testament by the end of the course. Correlated assignments in *Luther's Small Catechism* will also complete that book by the end of the course.

Lesson Content

This portion of the meeting consists of a basic doctrinal presentation by the teacher in amplification of the preceding biblical study, and dialogue together in the light of the catechetical and related assignments. The body of the lesson content is left to the ingenuity and creativity of the teacher, but a framework for discussion is suggested.

Beyond the assignment sheet given out at the beginning of the course, a duplicated outline could also be provided the class members a week before each lesson, and the teacher's presentation would then synthesize and amplify the material, providing ample opportunity for discussion questions *during* and *after* the presentation. Whatever the lesson theme, the leader must certainly give evidence of the "growing edge" of his *own* spiritual life; and class members must always consciously be lifted to a higher level than their class preparation.

Discussion Questions

Additional time should be set aside after the presentation by the teacher for questions on corollary material first of all (catechism, confessions, tracts, assigned reading) and then questions of a general nature. Of particular concern in the first session is the instructor's sensitivity to where individuals in the class "are coming from." Our Lord started with the "known" in the lives of his hearers (their real world) and then went to the "unknown," the spiritual challenge He was bringing them (the Real Word). What questions are class members bringing with them and how can they be related to the elements of the liturgy as it is examined?

Conclusion

The meeting concludes *at the agreed time* after the next week's assignment has been made, tracts and books have been distributed for corollary reading, and members have been briefed on their nature and content.

III. PROSPECTUS FOR THE COURSE

A Study of the Teachings of the Christian Faith
in the Lutheran Church,
Stressing the Worship Life of the Church

1. The God We Worship
2. The Bible We Use
3. The Sin We Confess
4. The Father Who Gives
5. The Son Who Redeems
6. The Spirit Who Sustains
7. The Church We Are
8. The Baptism We Receive
9. The Eucharist We Celebrate
10. The Ministry We Share
11. The Life We Nurture
12. The World We Serve
13. The Goal We Seek
14. The Congregation We Join

IV. SAMPLE LESSON OF THE COURSE:

“The God We Worship”

Prayer

“Stir up, we beseech Thee, Thy power, O Lord, and come, that by Thy protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and saved by Thy mighty deliverance; who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.” (Collect for the First Sunday in Advent, TLH, p. 54; LW, p. 10; LBW, p. 13.)

Introduction of Class Members

Sample Course Introduction

(a section to be given to the student)

T.A. Kantonen has written as follows (*The Message of the Church to the World of Today*, p. 3):

In ancient Greek philosophy, there was a character by the name of Cratylus. Now the master of Cratylus was Heraclitus; and he philosophized that you could not step into the same river twice; for in the process of constant flowing its substance would have changed. Now Cratylus went one step further, and said that you couldn't even step into the same river once, since by the time you had stepped into it, it would not be the same river into which you had decided to step.

And if we carried this still further, we would have to conclude that you couldn't even say anything about stepping into a river, for by the time you had finished the statement, the river which you had in mind wouldn't even be there. And the final conclusion we would have to draw from such a philosophy, would be that you would simply have to scurry around as fast as possible and rapidly point to things before they had changed into something else.

The world *is* filled with change today. And the church must be aware of these changes and how to address its message to contemporary persons in their contemporary setting.

But no matter how much the world changes, our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the church, never changes. "He is the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). He is the "changeless Christ for a changing world." It is *His* person and work with which we are primarily concerned in this course.

Now we do start out with certain premises in our study. Every person has one's own point of view, one's own starting point, one's own mental construct of the facts, whether one follows the "dogmatism" of empiricism, or rationalism, or revelation.

We in the church, too, have our *a priori*—the objective work of God in Christ, and God in Christ changing *us* by His Spirit. And with this conviction it is our hope that *you* may believe that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31). And so we ask you to consider our point of view, to approach it with an open mind. Be "scientific" about it. If you are going to study in the field of chemistry, you will use a chemistry textbook, not

Shakespeare or a Russian primer. And in dealing with the “things of the Spirit of God,” you will need to use its premises and its methodology. Phillips paraphrases 1 Corinthians 2:14 in this way:

The unspiritual man simply cannot accept the matters which the Spirit deals with. They just don’t make sense to him. For, after all, you must *be* spiritual, to *see* spiritual things.

And so whatever happens in this course is not a matter of the instructor “convincing” you. We believe it is the work of God the Holy Spirit alone—if you confess sin, desire the worship of the church, pray, and are led closer to Christ in faith, love, and service.

Speaking pragmatically, however, what you receive from this course *will* depend to a great extent on what you put into it in terms of study and time. Scripture reminds us: “Seek ye the Lord while He may be found; call ye upon Him while He is near” (Isaiah 55:6).

Perhaps you will never have another opportunity quite like this one to make a systematic study of the teachings of the Christian faith. So make the most of it. Ask these questions as you study in this course:

Who made me?

Where am I going?

What is my purpose in life?

And strive, by the blessing of the Holy Spirit, to find *for yourself* the only answer which Holy Scripture gives: Through trust, worship, and prayer in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. During the course, the instructor will not attempt to fill you with a *false* sense of guilt. We believe in the necessity of a genuine “sense of sin.” But this is a conviction which must be reached *by the individual* through one’s own study, and reading, and prayer. And if you give God’s Word a chance, we believe that this conviction—and the corresponding forgiveness with which Christ responds—will be yours. For our blessed Lord has said: “If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God or whether I speak of Myself” (John 7:17). And God “will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).

And we believe, with the stress which is placed in this course on the necessity and meaning of *corporate worship*, that your participation in the liturgy here each week will be of immeasurable help in making *your very own* "the things. . . which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1 Corinthians 2:13).

For here we come face to face with the "stuff" of the Christian life:

1. The adoration of God and offering up of self and others to Him.
2. The seeking of His grace through His Word of forgiveness.
3. The sharing of His grace through acts of mutual edification.

And "this is most certainly true" of our worship *services* and our whole *life* as worship.

Methodology

There are three books which will be used in this course:

1. *The Holy Bible*
2. *The Lutheran Hymnal or Lutheran Worship or Lutheran Book of Worship*
3. *Luther's Small Catechism* (Concordia Publishing House, 1943)

(Here the teacher should comment briefly on each and describe the procedure in meetings, assignments, and preparation for classes.)

Suggested Lesson Content and Discussion

When someone mentions "church" we often think of a church's *worship service*. And yet, especially in liturgical churches, the order of worship is often not fully understood. In this opening lesson let us examine *the meaning of our liturgical worship*, keeping in mind the central truth of our faith and the heart of our worship—the Triune God—and the central scriptural doctrine of justification by faith in Him alone.

(The instructor may also wish to define pertinent liturgical and architectural terms with reference to the local congregation's services and its house of worship.)

The teacher will work through the eucharistic service with the class members, stressing what worship itself is in the company of fellow Christians.

Conclusion

The instructor makes the assignment for the next lesson. He hands out materials, including *Our Way of Worship* by Jungkuntz and Gehrke, for the student's review.

[*Editorial Note:* The course continues with thirteen more lessons. Then in the Study Guide a new bibliography for laity is provided, consisting of books which are popularly written, in print, and inexpensive.]

V. ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE COURSE

1. The God We Worship

Introduction. Orientation to the course. Analysis of the Holy Communion service. Overview of the contents of the hymnal.

HANDOUTS

Our Way of Worship. By R. Jungkuntz and R. Gehrke. Concordia Publishing House (pamphlet). The "path" we walk through the liturgy (inside cover illustration) is a most helpful teaching tool when transposed into a poster (three feet by four feet) by an artist.

Lutheran Church Worship. ALPB, 308 West Forty-Sixth Street, New York, New York 10036 (tract).

SUGGESTED READING

Symbols and Their Meaning. By Rudolph F. Norden. Concordia Publishing House, 1985. \$3.50. Norden gives a devotional interpretation of 52 symbols of Christianity.

2. The Bible We Use

ASSIGNED READING

Catechism: Questions 1-17, 24 C (Introduction. Bible. Law and Gospel); pages 209-221 (Books of the Bible. Index and Dictionary).

Bible: Mark.

SUGGESTED READING

Introducing the Books of the Bible. By Rudolph F. Norden. Concordia Publishing House, 1987. \$3.95. Norden gives a devotional insight into each book of the Bible.

Reading the New Testament for Understanding. By Robert G. Hoerber. Concordia Publishing House, 1986. \$7.50.

Speaking of Jesus: Finding the Words for Witness. By Richard Lischer. Fortress Press, 1982. The summary of the whole Bible in ten pages (pp. 38-48) is profound in this superb text on evangelization for the laity.

A Survey of the New Testament. By Robert H. Gundry. Zondervan Publishing House, 1981. This well-illustrated text involves the student in the biblical text by continual dialogue with it.

The Word of the Lord Grows. By Martin H. Franzmann. Concordia Publishing House; out of print. This richly devotional volume is a non-technical introduction to the New Testament speaking to us "as the living voice of God now."

3. The Sin We Confess

ASSIGNED READING

Catechism: Questions 18-99 (Ten Commandments); 187-194 (Forgiveness of Sins); pages 31-35 (Christian Questions).

Bible: Romans

SUGGESTED READING

Guilt and Grace. By Paul Tournier. Harper and Row, 1983. Profound insights into the human condition in the light of the gospel by the Swiss lay theologian-physician. See also Tournier's *A Doctor's Casebook in the Light of the Bible*, *The Meaning of Gifts*, *The Meaning of Persons*, *The Whole Person in a Broken World*, and especially *Learn to Grow Old*.

Mere Christianity. By C.S. Lewis. Macmillan, 1964. \$10.95. This lasting trilogy by one of the greatest

Christian apologists of this century is superb for the "honest agnostic" and doubting intellectual.

Sin. By J. Keith Miller. Harper and Row, 1987. Here is practical help for "vulnerable" (not "got-it-made") Christians with clay feet by the popular Episcopal lay theologian-business man who also authored *The Taste of New Wine, A Second Touch, Habitation of Dragons, The Becomers*, etc.

The Screwtape Letters. By C.S. Lewis. Macmillan, 1982. \$1.95. These are mythical letters from hell to junior devil Wormwood, who is trying to destroy a new Christian.

4. The Father Who Gives

ASSIGNED READING

Catechism: Questions 24-26 (God); 100-120 (First Article); 215-216 ("Our Father").

Bible: Genesis 1-11.

SUGGESTED READING

Martin Luther Christmas Book with Celebrated Woodcuts by His Contemporaries. Translated by Roland H. Bainton. Fortress Press, 1948. \$3.25.

Martin Luther Easter Book. Translated by Roland H. Bainton. Fortress Press, 1983. \$3.95.

Psalms/Now. By Leslie Brandt. Concordia Publishing House, 1973. The cries and jubilation in 150 psalms are rendered in the language of today's world.

Reflections on the Psalms. By C.S. Lewis. Walker and Company, 1985. \$9.95.

5. The Son Who Redeems

ASSIGNED READING

Catechism: Questions 121-159 (Second Article).

Bible: Matthew; Isaiah 53-55.

SUGGESTED READING

First Christmas. By Paul L. Maier. Harper and Row, 1971. Fresh insights on the nativity are presented in this illustrated volume.

First Easter. By Paul L. Maier. Harper and Row, 1973. New historical evidence surrounding the resurrection is presented in this illustrated volume.

Jesus and His Times. The Reader's Digest Association, 1987. This very colorfully illustrated 336-page volume blends the biblical and historical accounts of the world of Jesus. The resurrection is affirmed (p. 261). It is well worth the price of \$27.25.

What Jesus Means to Me. By Herman W. Gockel. Concordia Publishing House, 1956. \$4.95. This devotional classic deals with the joy of the life in Christ.

We Confess. Volume 1: Jesus Christ. By Hermann Sasse. Concordia Publishing House, 1984. This clear and concise treatment comes from one of the foremost students of the Lutheran Confessions in this century. \$10.95.

6. The Spirit Who Sustains

ASSIGNED READING

Catechism: Questions 160-174 (Third Article).

Bible: John; Galatians.

SUGGESTED READING

The Charismatic Movement and Lutheran Theology. Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR). The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, January, 1972.

First Christians. By Paul L. Maier. Harper and Row, 1976. Pentecost and the spread of Christianity are treated in this illustrated volume.

The Holy Spirit and the Life of the Church. By Paul Opsahl. Augsburg Publishing House, 1978; out of print. Ted Peters states: "These essays by a Lutheran theologian cover the biblical, historical, and theological dimensions of the Holy Spirit with reference to the charismatic renewal."

The Holy Spirit and You. By Bernhard N. Schneider. BMH. \$4.95. Dan Petzold describes this book as "a well-organized, catechism-styled text on the Holy Spirit."

Theology of the Holy Spirit. By Frederick D. Bruner. Eerdmans Publishing House, 1970. \$7.95. Kurt Marquart describes this book as "a critical evaluation of the standard pentecostal-charismatic 'guided tour' of the Book of Acts."

We Confess. Volume 3: The Church. By Hermann Sasse. Concordia Publishing House. There is a section on the Holy Spirit.

What the Bible Teaches about the Holy Spirit. By John Peck. Tyndale House, 1979. \$3.95. Dan Petzold calls this book "a clear introduction to the Holy Spirit well-supported with Scripture, setting the layman up for further study."

7. The Church We Are

ASSIGNED READING

Catechism: Questions 175-186 (Communion of Saints).

Bible: Acts, chapters 1-8; Ephesians; Luke.

SUGGESTED READING

Augsburg Confession: A Contemporary Commentary. By George W. Forell. Augsburg Publishing House, 1968. \$4.50.

Augsburg for Our Day: A Study of the Augsburg Confession. By George R. Kraus. Concordia Publishing House, 1978. Study Guide, \$2.95; Leader's Manual, \$3.95.

Getting into the Story of Concord. By David P. Scaer. Concordia Publishing House, 1978. \$3.95.

Getting into the Theology of Concord. By Robert Preus. Concordia Publishing House, 1978. \$3.75.

Luther the Reformer: The Story of the Man and His Career. By James L. Kittelson. Augsburg Publishing House, 1987. \$24.95. Lewis W. Spitz calls this book "the best complete biography of Luther for our times."

All These Lutherans. By Todd Nichol. Augsburg Publishing House, 1986. \$6.95.

The Religious Bodies of America. By Frederic E. Mayer. Concordia Publishing House. \$11.95.

We Confess. Volume 3: The Church. By Hermann Sasse. Concordia Publishing House. \$11.95.

8. The Baptism We Receive

ASSIGNED READING

Catechism: Questions 242-266 (Baptism); page 212 (Formula).

Bible: Romans, chapter 6; Selected Psalms.

SUGGESTED READING

Baptism. By Martin E. Marty. Fortress Press, 1977. \$3.50.

Baptism and Fullness; The Work of the Holy Spirit Today. By John R. Stott. Inter-Varsity Press, 1976. \$2.95.

We Confess. Volume 2: The Sacraments. By Hermann Sasse. Concordia Publishing House, 1985. \$11.95.

9. The Eucharist We Celebrate

ASSIGNED READING

Catechism: Questions 296-331 (Sacrament of the Altar); pages 31-35 (Christian Questions).

Bible: 1 and 2 Corinthians.

SUGGESTED READING

The Lord's Supper. By Martin E. Marty. Fortress Press, 1980. \$3.50. Dan Petzold states: "Marty retells the story of the Lord's Supper by recreating a day in which a believer participates in the service."

10. The Ministry We Share

ASSIGNED READING

Catechism: Questions 267-295 (Office of the Keys and Confession).

Bible: Acts; 1 and 2 Timothy; Titus.

SUGGESTED READING

On the Freedom of a Christian Man. By Martin Luther. *Luther's Works.* Volume 31. Concordia Publishing House.

In Search of Faithfulness: Lessons from the Christian Community. By William E. Diehl. Fortress Press, 1987. \$5.95. Practicing Christian faithfulness in the business world, in the face of the church's own barriers to faith development among its people, is the theme of this book by the former Bethlehem steel plant manager and churchman who wrote *Christianity and Real Life* ("the laity must be the agents of their own formation, apart from the clergy").

Thank God, It's Monday. By William E. Diehl. Fortress Press.

11. The Life We Nurture

ASSIGNED READING

Catechism: Questions 201-241 (Lord's Prayer); pages 22-30 (Household Prayers; Table of Duties).

Bible: Colossians; 1 and 2 Thessalonians; Philemon.

SUGGESTED READING

Christian Living

At Peace with Failure. By Duane Mehl. Augsburg Publishing House, 1984. Here is a warm, witty, and highly readable account of one person's struggle towards freedom from chemical dependency.

Bound to Be Free: The Quest for Inner Freedom. By Donald L. Deffner. Morse Press, 1981. This book discusses freedom—of life-style; to disagree; to like oneself; to "grow up"; to fail; in occupation; in politics; in a group setting; in worship; in solitude; to die; to live thankfully; from self-pity; to be joyful; to be obedient; to be patient; to forgive; to be selfless; to dare. Topics are the source of freedom and being freed to free others.

The Christian's Calling. By Donald Heiges. Fortress Press, 1984. \$4.95. Heiges discusses "vocation" rather than "occupation" as seen by Luther (in contrast to Calvin and Zwingli).

The Christian Life-Style. By George Forell. Fortress Press, 1970. Especially useful are chapters 1, 2, 5, 10, 13, 16, 17, 20.

The Cost of Discipleship. By Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Macmillan, 1963. \$4.95. "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die." "Cheap grace" versus "costly grace" is the theme.

The Ethics of Decision: An Introduction to Christian Ethics. By George Forell. Fortress Press, 1955. \$4.50.

The Joyful Christian. By C.S. Lewis. Macmillan, 1984. \$5.95. Here are 127 readings from the key writings of the great apologist.

Life Together. By Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Harper and Row, 1976. \$1.95. "Now one can be a sinner and still enjoy the grace of God!"

The Newborn Christian. By J.B. Phillips. Macmillan, 1984. \$5.95. Here are 114 readings from the author of the famous paraphrase of the New Testament. Sadly, reference to his *God Our Contemporary* is missing—an outstanding text stressing spiritual renewal for *Christian* humanism. "The most hopeful place in which to build a bridge between the worlds of faith and unfaith is on the common ground of human compassion."

The Radical Nature of Christianity. By Waldo J. Werning. Mandate Press, 1976. \$5.85. This book states: "There is an apparent immediate need in the world for an intensified evangelization thrust that involves greater personal consecration and more sacrificial offerings from God's people."

Prayer

Day by Day We Magnify Thee. By Martin Luther. Steiner and Scott; Fortress Press, 1982. \$10.95. This volume contains daily devotional readings from Luther's writings.

Diary of Private Prayer. By John Baillie. Scribner, 1949. \$6.95. Here are vibrant, incisively personal prayers for each morning and evening of the month.

Imitation of Christ. By Thomas à Kempis. Catholic Book Publishers. \$3.50. This historic classic deals with self-abnegation and becoming a "little Christ."

Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer. By C.S. Lewis. Harcourt Brace, 1973. \$3.95.

You Promised Me, God! By Donald L. Deffner. Concordia Publishing House, 1981. Here are semi-poetic vignettes in which God speaks directly to the Christian, sharing some of His 8,910 promises.

12. The World We Serve

ASSIGNED READING

Bible: James; 1 and 2 Peter; 1, 2, and 3 John; Jude.

SUGGESTED READING

The Compassionate Mind: Evangelization and the Educated. By Donald L. Deffner. Fort Wayne, Indiana: Concordia Theological Seminary Printshop, 1988. Concerns include establishing a trust-relationship with the "honest agnostic," witnessing to "intellectuals," and "reading the world" theologically through its secular literature. There is an annotated bibliography.

The How to Respond Series. Concordia Publishing House. Individual booklets include the following topics: Transcendental Meditation; Latter Day Saints; Occult; Jehovah's Witnesses; Eastern Religions; New "Christian" Religions; Islam; Science Religions; Seventh Day Adventists; Cults.

Out of the Salt Shaker: Evangelism as a Way of Life. By Rebecca M. Pippert. Inter-Varsity Press, 1979. \$4.95. Study Guide, \$1.95. This warm, human and "vulnerable" guide to both relaxedness and authentic enthusiasm in conversational evangelism describes evangelism as a lifestyle. There are 400,000 copies in print. There is a valuable annotated bibliography: understanding the Christian faith; evangelization Bible studies; books for Christians on better witnessing; and also (for non-Christian friends) in-depth books for non-Christians on various issues.

Speaking of Jesus: Finding the Words for Witness. By Richard Lischer. Fortress Press, 1982. Here is a superb text on evangelization for the laity.

Speaking the Gospel Today. By Robert Kolb. Concordia Publishing House, 1987. This book treats basic doctrines in relation to the mission of the church.

Who Are the Unchurched? By J. Russell Hale. Glenmary, 1977. The reasons why people stay outside the church are divided into twelve interview-filled categories—with implications for mission. This very readable manual will help evangelization committees to understand the thinking of their “unchurched” neighbors—with implications for the church’s approach.

A Witness Primer. By Erwin J. Kolb. Concordia Publishing House, 1986. Basic tools for personal witnessing precede a helpful bibliography.

13. The Goal We Seek

ASSIGNED READING

Catechism: Questions 151-159 (Resurrection); 195-200 (Life Everlasting).

Bible: Philippians; Hebrews; Revelation.

SUGGESTED READING

The Mystery of Pain. By Paul J. Lindell. Augsburg Publishing House, 1974; out of print. Here is a profound christological approach to the bearing of pain and facing imminent death.

A Cry of Absence: Reflections for the Winter of the Heart. By Martin E. Marty. Harper and Row, 1983. Marty addresses the inadequacy of “summery religion,” the feel-goodism of the fundamentalists, and speaks to the more “wintry” disposition of those “who live on the horizon” where faith and unfaith meet—with immense assurance to those who live on that dangerous border and a great affirmation of faith.

Door Ajar: Facing Death without Fear. By Josephine M. Benton. Pilgrim Press, 1979. \$4.45. Dan Petzold describes this book as “full of comforting quotes, recounted experiences and feelings, and consolation from the Bible.”

A Grief Observed. By C.S. Lewis. Bantam Books, 1976. \$3.50. Dean Wenthe states: “This study meets the reality of death and suffering and works through it christologically.”

Living with Dying. By Glen W. Davidson. Augsburg Publishing House, 1975; out of print. Norbert H. Mueller states: "In a very understandable and readable fashion, Davidson ably shows people how to handle their emotions, understand the dying, and respond to the needs of the dying."

Understanding the Death of the Wished-for Child. By Glen W. Davidson. Springfield, Illinois: OGR Service Corporation, 1979. Norbert H. Mueller sees this book as "helping parents—particularly a woman who is susceptible to chronic disorientation as a result of the death of the wished-for child—through a miscarriage, still-birth, or death in the neo-natal period."

Understanding Mourning. By Glen W. Davidson. Augsburg Publishing House. \$5.95. Norbert H. Mueller states: "Dr. Davidson presents a way in which people can live through the confusion, bizarre thoughts, emotional swings, sudden tears, and sense of defeat and depression that come about as a result of being bereaved and, through helpful guidelines, brings such people through healthy mourning and returns them to a reorganized life."

Why Me, Lord? Meaning and Comfort in Times of Trouble. By Carl W. Berner. Augsburg Publishing House, 1973. \$5.95. Dan Petzold states: "This simple but complete book presents biblical truth and comfort for Christians facing problems, even death, offering personal resolutions and prayers."

14. The Congregation We Join

ASSIGNED READING

Catechism: Questions 175-186 (Church); 319-331 (Communion and Confirmation—but excoriate the word "renewal" in reference to the baptismal vow).

SUGGESTED READING

Basic Christianity. By John R. Stott. Inter-Varsity Press, 1970. \$2.95. Here is a concise summary of humanity's need, God's action, and our loving response. Rebecca Manley Pippert calls this book "a great refresher for the believer and a clear presentation for the seeker."

Damned through the Church. By John Warwick Montgomery. Bethany House, 1970. \$2.95. Dan Petzold states: "This little book jolts the indifferent church-goer with the danger of a worldly, self-oriented understanding of the body of Christ and draws him into the gospel."

The Large Catechism. By Martin Luther.

My Heart, Christ's Home. By Robert Boyd Munger. InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. This booklet is an intriguing account of how Christ possesses the totality of the "house of our life."

Keeping the Faith: A Guide to the Christian Message. By David G. Truemper and Frederick A. Niedner, Jr. Fortress Press, 1981. \$6.95. Luther G. Strasen describes this book as "a commentary on the catechism designed to help Christians tend the faith they hold, nurturing their understanding of it in our changing age. It interprets Christian doctrine as instruction on how to bear the message well, how to tell the story in such a way that Christ is glorified and sinners hear the good news."

The Protestant Faith. By George W. Forell. Fortress Press, 1975. \$5.95.

A Theology to Live By: The Practical Luther for the Practicing Christian. By Herman Preus. Concordia Publishing House, 1977. \$7.95. Heino Kadai states: "The book is a competent and inviting guide to the religious perspective of Luther and the Lutherans. The work can be read with profit by professional theologians, but it speaks most rewardingly to those Christians who are seeking to increase their depth of knowledge and Christian commitment."

This People, This Parish. By Robert K. Hudnut. Moody Press, 1986. Dan Petzold states: "As the author subtitles his book, it is a 'love story' about a pastor and his people, conveying the powerful benefits of fellowship in the church."

Wings of Faith: The Doctrines of the Lutheran Church for Teens. Edited by Terry K. Dittmer. Concordia Publishing House, 1988. This book is written for youth, but is highly valuable for later age levels. There are excellent chapters by William Weinrich, John Johnson, David Lumpp, Dean Wenthe, Paul Raabe, and Terry Dittmer.