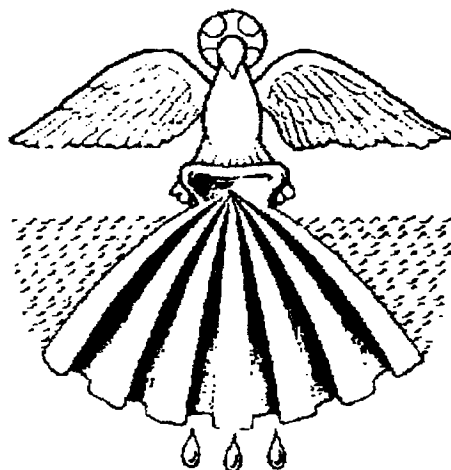
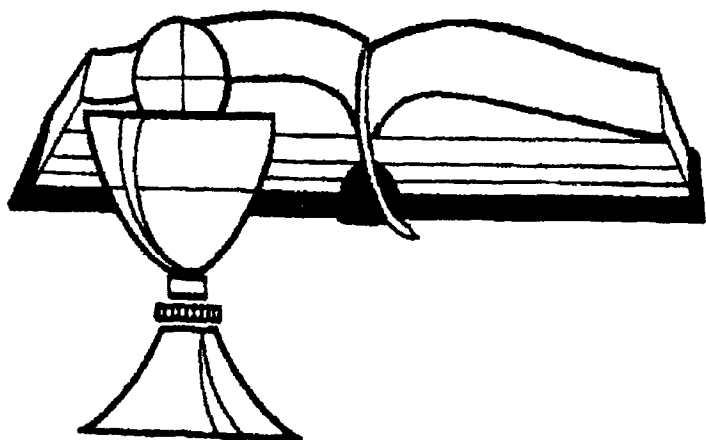
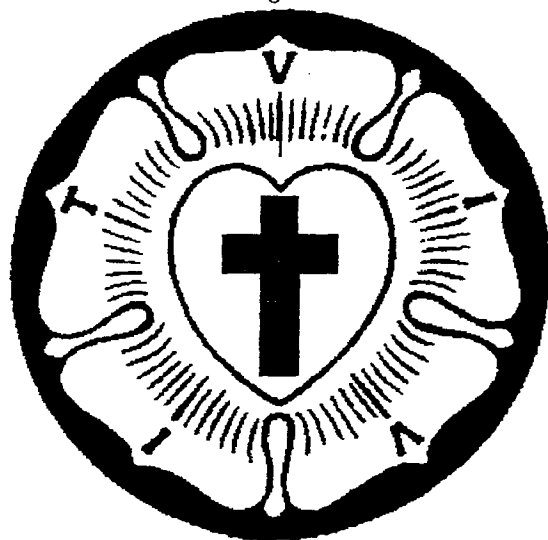


THE MEANS OF GRACE THE FORMAL PRINCIPAL OF THE REFORMATION



*And after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire, and after the fire a still small voice.
1 Kings 19:12*



CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION
TWENTY SECOND CONVENTION

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN COLLEGE
EAU CLAIRE, WISCONSIN
JUNE 17-21, 1996

Pastor David R. Naumann
Holy Truth Lutheran Church Ketchikan, AK

INI

THE MEANS OF GRACE THE FORMAL PRINCIPAL OF THE REFORMATION

Isaiah 55:8-13 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. 9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts. 10 "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, 11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. 12 "For you shall go out with joy, And be led out with peace; The mountains and the hills Shall break forth into singing before you, And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. "

God's Word is our great heritage And shall be ours forever;
To spread it's light from age to age Shall be our chief endeavor.
In life it guides our way, In death it is our stay.
Lord, grant, while worlds endure, We keep its teachings pure
Throughout all generations. Amen. (TLH 283)

John 8:31-32 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

With the witness of these verses of the Bible, along with a wealth other verses; a complete Psalm (119), entire chapters (Romans 10, Mark 4), even whole books of the Bible (Proverbs, Galatians), we are led by faith to the Spiritually discerned truth that, as far as He's told us, in working salvation, our Triune God has limited Himself to the Means of Grace. Put simply, the Means of Grace are: the Gospel, in Word and Sacraments. They are efficacious, that is, they have the power to produce the effects God intends.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The power that is in the Means of Grace is nothing less than the Almighty power of God. This is the power that was used to put faith in your heart. This is the power that is used to sustain that faith. The same power that was used to create light is what the Lord used to turn your "heart of stone to a heart of flesh."

2 Corinthians 4:5-7 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. 6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

To deny the Means of Grace, is to deny the one true Jesus Christ;

John 1:1, 14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

At the time of the Reformation, some five hundred plus years ago, the visible church had all but forsaken the Means of Grace. It was a time that is commonly referred to in history books as "the dark ages." Education was rare, superstition was rampant, and except for the "happy inconsistency" of perhaps a few isolated parish priests, true Christ centered teaching was almost non-existent. But the Lord had reserved for Himself a number of men who had not "bowed the knee to baal." At a time when merely to be a Christian was synonymous with membership in the Catholic Church of Rome, the Lord accomplished what He pleased through His Word in the hearts of the men He chose to lead the Reformation. Indeed, we affirm that the Means of Grace was the "formal

principal of the Reformation." Without it, there would have been no real "reform." Without the Means of Grace, there might be a "Church of the Lutheran Confession" but it would not be, as by God's grace it is today, the only true teaching visible church of God on earth of which this writer is aware. Praise be to our ever living God for the Means of Grace! It is our continued prayer that He keep us in and through the Means of Grace unto that Day when our salvation will be made complete.

It was vital to the Reformation that the true teachings of the Means of Grace was brought to the forefront of Christian instruction. For as we said and say again, without the Means of Grace, the Reformation would not have happened. Without the Means of Grace, we would not be here at the Twenty Second Convention of the Church of the Lutheran Confession claiming unity of belief, teaching, confession, and practice out of genuine Church Fellowship! What would you call the most important teaching of Scripture? Whatever you'd point to, it goes hand in hand with the Means of Grace, or it is absolutely worthless. For instance; "the doctrine of justification is intimately bound up with the true doctrine of the Means of Grace. In order to keep the doctrine of justification in all it's purity, one must ever maintain that the forgiveness of sins which Christ earned for mankind can never be appropriated by man through any other means than the Word and the Sacrament. Therefore, Walther said, the correct doctrine on justification stands or falls with the correct doctrine concerning the Means of Grace."¹ Therefore no denomination of our day stands except for the Lutherans, and then only a small portion of them who still adhere to the Historical Lutheran Confessions as the correct exposition of the Holy Scriptures, and hence the Means of Grace. It has been truly said that the Means of Grace are the peculiar glory of Lutheranism. I do not know of a single heterodox Christian organization (that does not carry the name Lutheran) that correctly adheres to the doctrine of the Means of Grace. It is a blessing that we are able to look back in history and see the results of the Means of Grace working in the hearts of the Lutheran Reformers. Those results are found in abundance in the recorded history and in the Lutheran Symbols of the Reformation.

The following statements that come to us from the Lutheran Symbols of the time of the Reformation are some of the finest confessions of faith regarding the Means of Grace. As we read these excellent quotes, keep in mind that these men were able to write them only because of power found in the Means of Grace by the God-given faith working in their hearts. Truly God does deal with us His children by a "grace for grace" basis. From Article V of the Augsburg Confession read in Augsburg, Germany before the Emperor Charles V on Saturday, June 25, 1530: "That we may obtain this faith, the Ministry of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith, where and when it pleases God, in them that hear the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our own merits, but for Christ's sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ's sake. They condemn the Anabaptists and others who think that the Holy Ghost comes to men without the external Word, through their own preparations and works."² From the Smalcald Articles of 1537; "In those things which concern the spoken, outward Word we must firmly hold that God grants His Spirit or grace to no one except through or with the preceding outward Word, in order that we may [thus] be protected against the enthusiasts, i.e., spirits who boast that they have the Spirit without and before the Word and accordingly judge Scripture or the spoken Word, and explain and stretch it at their pleasure."³ Also from the Smalcald Articles; "We ought and must constantly maintain this point, that God does not wish to deal with us otherwise than through the spoken Word and the Sacraments. It is the devil himself whatsoever is extolled as Spirit without the Word and Sacraments."⁴ From Luther's Large Catechism; "I believe that there is upon earth a little holy group and congregation of pure saints under one Head, even Christ, called together by the Holy Ghost in one faith, one mind, and understanding, with manifold gifts, yet agreeing in love, without sects or schisms. I am also a part and member of the same, a sharer and joint owner of all the goods it possess, brought to it and incorporated into it by the Holy Ghost by having heard, and continuing to hear, the Word of God, which is the beginning of entering

¹The Abiding Word, Vol II, Theodore Laetsch, CPH, 1947, p.326

²Augsburg Confession Art. V. Conc. Trigl., p.45.

³Smalcald Articles, III, 8. Conc. Trigl., p.495

⁴Ibid p.497

it."⁵ The following four quotes from the Formula of Concord of 1577 also deserve our study; "Both the ancient and modern enthusiasts have taught that God converts men and leads them to the saving knowledge of Christ through His Spirit, without any created means and instrument, that is, without the external preaching and hearing of God's Word."⁶ "The enthusiasts, since they can do nothing in these spiritual things, but everything is the operation of God the Holy Ghost alone, they will regard, hear, or read neither the Word nor the sacraments, but wait until God, without means, instills into them His gifts from heaven, so that they can truly feel and perceive in themselves that God has converted them."⁷ "And by this means, and in no other way, namely, through His holy Word, when men hear it preached or read it, and the holy Sacraments, when they are used according to His Word, God desires to call men to eternal salvation, draw them to Himself, and convert, regenerate, and sanctify them." 1 Corinthians 1:21 "For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe." Acts 10:5-6 "Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do." Romans 10:17 "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." John 17:17-20 "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18 "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. 20 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word."⁸ "The declaration, John 6, 44, that no one can come to Christ except the Father draw him, is right and true. However, the Father will not do this without means, but has ordained for this purpose His Word and Sacraments as ordinary means and instruments; and it is the will neither of the Father nor of the Son that a man should not hear or should despise the preaching of His Word and wait for the drawing of the Father without the Word and Sacraments. For the Father draws indeed by the power of the Holy Ghost, however, according to His usual order (the order decreed and instituted by Himself), by the hearing of His holy divine Word, as with a net, by which the elect are plucked from the jaws of the devil. Every poor sinner should therefore repair thereto [to holy preaching], hear it attentively, and not doubt the drawing of the Father. For the Holy Ghost will be with His Word in His power and work by it; and that is the drawing of the Father."⁹

The doctrine of the Means of Grace, though plain enough in Scripture, are found only in Lutheran circles. They are denied by the Reformed and by the Roman Catholic Church. The Concordia Cyclopedia defines the Means of Grace as;

1)Unchangeable "The emphasis of Luther upon purity of doctrine is accounted for by the fact that he regarded the Word as bound up with human salvation. Were the Spirit assumed to work immediately, there would be no need of urging purity of doctrine."

2)Sufficient "The Roman Church has added five sacraments to the Scriptural two and supplements the apostolic doctrine by the traditions of the Church. The Reformed look upon prayer, giving, "service," as means of grace."

3)Efficacious "While it is true that the hearer of the word as well as the communicant and the subject of Baptism derive no benefit from the means of grace unless they have faith, it does not follow that faith makes the means of grace effective. The Word is a living word, the Sacraments true Sacraments (Christ's body and blood really present in the Lord's Supper), under all circumstances."¹⁰

This "power to produce effects" is there in every syllable of Scripture, although it's power varies. "The effect of a message is determined by the content of the message. Not every teaching of the Word of God will produce the same effect. Because of its peculiar content, the Law produces knowledge of sin and contrition of heart (Romans 3:20); the Gospel, being the glad tidings of the grace of God, produces faith and hope (Romans 10:17).

⁵Large Catechism; Creed, Art. III. Conc. Trigl., p.691

⁶Form. Conc., Art.II. Conc. Trigl., p.881

⁷Ibid p.899

⁸Ibid p.901

⁹Ibid p.1087 f.

¹⁰Concordia Cyclopedia p.299

Thus the Scriptures are really able to make men wise unto salvation through faith in Christ (2 Timothy 3:15)."¹¹ Edward Koehler writes; "With this Word of God the Holy Ghost is present, and opens hearts, so that they, as Lydia in Acts 16:14, are attentive to it and are thus converted."¹² Faithful pastor and theologian Henry Jacobs of the mid-to-late 1800's wrote; "Is it not a limitation of God's sovereignty and power to affirm that these acts are accomplished only through means? Theology does not deal with divine possibilities, but with what God has revealed concerning Himself and His various forms of activity. Not only have we no promise of His intervention otherwise, but He constantly turns us away from any expectation of such aid to the simple means, in and through which He promises to be always found with His entire efficacy."¹³ The Holy Spirit has always worked through the Word and that alone, or as Jacob's also said; "Spirit and Word, or Word and Spirit are never separated."¹⁴ Throughout the period of the Reformation this great truth was one of the major doctrines that separated the Lutheran camp from the Reformed. Because the Word really is the power behind the Sacraments, we sometimes refer to them as the Visible Word. This too, was an ear-mark of genuine Lutheranism. Article V of the Augsburg Confession says; "That we may obtain this faith, the Ministry of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith, where and when it pleases God, in them that hear the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our own merits, but for Christ's sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ's sake. They condemn the Anabaptists and others who think that the Holy Ghost comes to men without the external Word, through their own preparation and works."¹⁵ "The Sacraments are not mere symbolic expressions by which faith is strengthened (Calvin), nor are they mere acts of confession of faith (notae professionis, Zwingli), but are effective means by which God sows faith in the hearts of men."¹⁶

There is a unity in the rejection of the Means of Grace by both the Reformed camp of the Reformation and also the Papists: It is called ENTHUSIASM. In truth, "enthusiasm" afflicts all mankind since the fall into sin. All of us, by nature, are enthusiasts. Article VIII of the Smalcald Articles defines enthusiasm for us; "In short, enthusiasm clings to Adam and his descendants from the beginning to the end of the world. It is a poison implanted and inoculated in man by the old dragon, and it is the source, strength, and power of all heresy, including that of the papacy and Mohammedanism. Accordingly, we should and must constantly maintain that God will not deal with us except through His external Word and Sacrament. Whatever is attributed to the Spirit apart from such Word and sacrament is of the devil."¹⁷ One thoroughly infected theologian was John Calvin (1509-1564) who wrote of the "secret instincts of the Spirit" within man; "I grant that doctrines ought to be tested by God's word; but unless the Spirit of wisdom (spiritus prudentiae) is present, to have God's word in our hands will avail little or nothing, for its meaning will not appear to us...."¹⁸ "He also convinced them without the word, for we know how powerful are the secret instincts of the Spirit (arcani spiritus instinctus)."¹⁹ "...we are touched with some desire for strong doctrine, it evidently appears that there is some piety in us; we are not destitute of the Spirit of God, although destitute of the outward means."²⁰ Martin Luther summarized the deadly teachings of Zwingli and his followers: "They [the Zwinglians] divorced the Word and the Spirit,

¹¹Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article II, 5, Triglotta, p. 787:

¹²Edward W. A. Koehler, A Summary of Christian Doctrine, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1952, p. 12. Acts 16:14; Romans 3:20; 10:17; 2 Timothy 3:15.

¹³Henry Eyster Jacobs, A Summary of the Christian Faith, Philadelphia: General Council Publication House, 1913, p. 265.

¹⁴Ibid p. 271.

¹⁵Augsburg Confession, Article V, The Office of the Ministry, Concordia Triglotta, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921, p. 45. Tappert, p. 31.

¹⁶Walter G. Tillmanns, "Means of Grace: Use of," The Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church, 3 vols., Julius Bodensieck, Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1965, II, p. 1506.

¹⁷Smalcald Articles, VIII. Confession, 9-10. The Book of Concord, ed. Theodore G. Tappert, p. 313.

¹⁸John Calvin, Commentaries, 1 Jn 4:1: CO LV, 347-48. Benjamin Milner, Calvin's Doctrine of the Church, Heicko A. Oberman, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970, p. 105.

¹⁹John Calvin, Commentaries, Amos 4:12: CO XLIII, 68. Benjamin Milner, Calvin's Doctrine of the Church, Heicko A. Oberman, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970, p. 108n.

²⁰John Calvin, Commentaries, Amos 8:11-12: CO XLIII, 153. Benjamin Milner, Calvin's Doctrine of the Church, Heicko A. Oberman, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970, p. 109.

separated the person who preaches and teaches the Word from God, who works through the Word, and separated the servant who baptizes from God, who has commanded the Sacrament. They fancied that the Holy Spirit is given and works without the Word, that the Word merely gives assent to the Spirit, whom it already finds in the heart. If, then, this Word does not find the Spirit but a godless person, then it is not the Word of God. In this way they falsely judge and define the Word, not according to God, who speaks it, but according to the man who receives it. They want only that to be the Word of God which is fruitful and brings peace and life..."²¹ Calvin and Zwingli can't differ materially on their teaching of the Means of Grace because they agree, first of all, that Christ's merit and saving grace do not apply to all who use the Means of Grace. Secondly, that saving grace is not bound to the Means of Grace. In their rejection of the Means of Grace, their teachings on every single other doctrine of Scripture is off the mark and therefore of Satan himself. C.F.W. Walther quoted Luther and then explained him; "'For the devil at all times assaults the grace of God; no heresy can bear the teaching of divine grace.' (Martin Luther on Deut 4:24; St. L. III, 1691 ff.) Luther's remark about the enmity of all heretics against the grace of God is an important axiomatic statement. Every heresy that has sprung up was caused by the heretic's inability to believe that man becomes righteous in the sight of God, and is saved, by grace alone. That is the real rock of offense against which all heretics, all false teachers, dash their head."²²

This also holds true for the Roman Catholic Church. They insist that along side of Scripture must go the edicts of the Pope, and all the Traditions of the Catholic Church. Thus the "enthusiasm" of individual men parallels, and therefore supersedes God's Means of Grace, His holy Word. Luther lumps together the error of both the Reformed and the Papacy; "For we can definitely assert that where the Lord's Supper, Baptism, and the Word are found, Christ, the remission of sins, and life eternal are found. On the other hand, where these signs of grace are not found, or where they are despised by men, not only grace is lacking but also foul errors will follow. Then men will set up other forms of worship and other signs for themselves."²³ "From this it follows that they act foolishly, yea, against God's order and institution, who despise and reject the external Word, thinking that the Holy Spirit and faith should come to them without means. It will indeed be a long time before that happens."²⁴

The outcome of the Enthusiasts comes down to two different schools of religious error: rationalism and Irrationalism. The outright denial of the Means of Grace led to a horrendous collection of lies and false teachings, most of which are alive today and have spread like cancer. Francis Pieper commented: "Thus in heterodox churches, in order to defend false doctrine, God's Word must continually be denied. It is rightly said: 'It cost nine lies to maintain one lie.' Whoever allows himself such liberties with the Word of God, let him beware, lest the devil also make this clear Word doubtful for him in the hour of death: 'The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.' 1 John 1:7"²⁵ The evidence of really strange false teachings during the Reformation are Historical fact and recorded for us to read. Francis Pieper comments on John Calvin's bizarre deductive false teachings; "Because saving grace is particular, according to the teaching of the Calvinists, there are no means of grace for that part of mankind to which the grace of God and the merit of Christ do not extend. On the contrary, for these people the means of grace are intended as means of condemnation. Calvin teaches expressly: 'For there is a universal call, through which, by the external preaching of the Word, God invites all, indiscriminately, to come to Him, even those for whom He intends it as a savor of death and an occasion of heavier condemnation' (Institutes, III, 24, 8)."²⁶ Calvin also says: "If the Spirit be lacking, the sacraments can

²¹Martin Luther, What Luther Says, An Anthology, 3 vols., ed., Ewald Plass, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959, II, p. 664f.

²²C. F. W. Walther, The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel, trans., W. H. T. Dau, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1928, p. 160, 163.

²³Martin Luther, What Luther Says, An Anthology, 3 vols., ed., Ewald Plass, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959, II, p. 914. Genesis 4:3.

²⁴Martin Luther, What Luther Says, An Anthology, 3 vols., ed., Ewald Plass, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959, II, p. 915.

²⁵Francis Pieper, The Difference between Orthodox and Heterodox Churches, and Supplement, Coos Bay, Oregon: St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 1981, p. 40. 1 John 1:7.

²⁶Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, 3 vols., trans., Walter W. F. Albrecht, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953, III, p. 118f.

accomplish nothing more in our minds than the splendor of the sun shining upon blind eyes, or a voice sounding in deaf ears."²⁷ How sad for Calvin (and all who follow him) when he writes; "Let the threatenings of the gospel terrify us, and humble us in time..."²⁸ Francis Pieper: "Reformed theologians, in order to support their denial of the illocalis modus subsistendi of Christ's human nature, have sought, in their exposition of John 20, an opening in the closed doors, or a window, or an aperture in the roof or in the walls, in order to explain the possibility of Christ's appearance in the room where the disciples were assembled." ²⁹ [Zwingli placed Numa, Aristides, Socrates, etc. among the dwellers in heaven] Zwingli: "A heathen, if he nurses a pious mind within himself, is a Christian, even though he is ignorant of Christ." (Witus Winshemius: "Beware, my hearers, of the heaven of the Zwinglians: I should not like to live in that heaven; I should be afraid of the club of Hercules.")³⁰ Pieper says; "Furthermore, consider this: All doctrines of the Bible are connected with one another; they form a unit. One error draws others in after it. Zwingli's first error was the denial of the presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper. In order to support this error, he had to invent a false doctrine of Christ's Person, of heaven, of the right hand of God, etc."³¹

So no matter what false doctrine of which heterodox church you care to point out, they are caught up in this very grievous error, namely this: they don't rely on Christ and His Word but something that takes place within themselves. These errors have come down to almost every group that claims the name "Christian" today. And they have multiplied sevenfold. Irrationalism is found in the main Pentecostal churches as well as the pockets of Pentecostalism abundant in nearly every denomination. Rationalism is the basis of the Baptist and nearly all Reformed groups. The recent "Church Growth Movement" is a perfect example of Enthusiasm run rampant in our day. Lutheran Americans have not been spared, but targeted. Lutheranism in America today although prolific in name, is, doctrinally speaking, nearing extinction. My friends, this is a grim diagnosis.

The Means of Grace is the only hope of Lutheranism. Every year I watch again the inspiring black and white movie "Martin Luther" with my confirmation class. We cheer on, not so much Luther the man, but what Luther upheld, namely God's Word - grace alone, faith alone, Scripture alone. We realize that, despite Luther's incredible talents, he was merely an instrument created, sustained, and finally taken to heaven by God's Means of Grace. It was the work of God that accomplished the Reformation. The efficacy, the power to produce effects, was in the Word in Luther's day, just as it is in ours. It is the power OF GOD unto salvation. The Means of Grace relies on God's Work alone. Luther once said, "The devil is always plaguing the world by keeping people from distinguishing between the work of God and the work of men...But you should know that though no human being believed Baptism and the Gospel, the Gospel and Baptism would still be right; for both are not mine but God's Word and work." ³² What an overwhelming relief and comfort to know by faith that the Holy Spirit has effectively been working through the Word to call, gather and enlighten us. Through the Means of Grace, He's given us the ability to believe and lay hold of the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The Means of Grace instills in us Christian "Hope" - that absolute and sure confidence of complete forgiveness of sins, life and salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord.

My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame, But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

²⁷John Calvin, Institutes, IV, xiv, 9. Benjamin Milner, Calvin's Doctrine of the Church, Heicko A. Oberman, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970, p. 119.

²⁸John Calvin, Commentaries, Acts 5:5, CO XLVIII, 99. Benjamin Milner, Calvin's Doctrine of the Church, Heicko A. Oberman, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970, p. 93n.

²⁹Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, 3 vols., trans., Walter W. F. Albrecht, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950, II, p. 127. See also I, 25ff., III, 324 John 20:19.

³⁰Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, 3 vols., trans., Walter W. F. Albrecht, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950, I, p. 376.

³¹Francis Pieper, The Difference between Orthodox and Heterodox Churches, and Supplement, Coos Bay, Oregon: St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 1981, p. 41.

³²Martin Luther, What Luther Says, An Anthology, 3 vols., ed., Ewald Plass, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959, II, p. 705. November 24, 1537 John 1:30-34.

SOURCES

The greatest source for this study has been the Holy Spirit working through the Means of Grace - God's Word. The translation used has been the New King James Version.

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On Christ the solid Rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand. (TLH 370:1)

And we know that the efficacy of the Word is the ONLY method God uses.

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

Luther, when preaching on this verse said; "Secondly, it is shown here that this Word precedes, or must be spoken beforehand, and that afterwards the Holy Spirit works through the Word. One must not reverse the order and dream of a Holy Spirit who works without the Word and before the Word, but one who comes with and through the Word and goes no farther than the Word goes."³³ In the parable of the sower and the seed of Mark 4, the seed is the Word. It is the medium through which the Kingdom of God is brought to people.

This strict adherence to the Means of Grace is not found in any denomination other than confessional Lutheranism. Indeed, it can't be. Reformed theology has not improved since the time of the Reformation. Neither has it fared better since time of Francis Pieper who wrote; "Some time ago, a respected Presbyterian preacher in St. Louis confessed that if he in his congregation would try to have God's Word rule as it does with us, in four weeks his whole congregation would scatter. The sects owe their outward size mostly to this, that they play church instead of actually conducting themselves as God's Church. Neither do they rightly bear witness of the Law of God to man, nor do they act as true witnesses of God's grace. But, this is what the Lutheran Church does."³⁴ It is a true statement and valuable heritage that we may page back in the classic Lutheran works and find there in abundance strong emphasis on the Means of Grace. To name a few for example, Johann Quenstedt (1617-1685) who has been called the "Bookkeeper of Lutheran orthodoxy" and who's most notable work is "*Theologia Didactico-Polemica sive Systema Theologicum*." Also the men of the Muhlenberg (1711-1787) tradition (The Philadelphia Seminary): Charles Krauth (1823-1872) author of "*The Conservative Reformation and It's Theology*"; Henry. E. Jacobs, (born 1844) who wrote a prolific number of works including "*The Doctrinal Basis of the United Lutheran Church in America*"; Theodore Schmauk (1860-1920), author of many works, among which is "*The Confessional Principal and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church*". The staunchest supporters of the Means of Grace were, of course, Martin Luther (1483-1546) and C.F.W. Walther (1811-1887). Being surrounded by the "enthusiasm" of the Reformed as well as the Roman Catholic Church, supporting the doctrine of the Means of Grace meant the continual use of strong reproof and correction from which these men did not waver.

We appreciate the Means of Grace at the time of the Reformation. At the same time, we understand the Reformation did not end, but continues to this day. The "peculiar glory of Lutheranism" - the Means of Grace - is the very thing that our Great God is using now to keep us with Christ in the one true faith. It is an on-going process because the Holy Spirit continues to enter our hearts through Word and Sacraments to create, strengthen and sustain our faith. Every real sermon contributes to such a renewal. By faith, every reading of Scripture, every communion, every baptism works just such a renewal and continued reformation. The church literally lives by the Word of God. It wouldn't exist if it didn't constantly go through a renovation by the Word of God again and again. How has genuine Lutheranism survived the last 500 years? How was the CLC formed? Should we tremble and shake when our fellowship is tested? Did the men of 1960 possess something different than do the men of 1996 today? How will our young people continue to uphold the pure Word of God? How will you, yourself? The answer is simple: The Holy Spirit who has created faith in your heart through the Means of Grace, will continue to strengthen and sustain that faith through the same Means of Grace unto the end.

It pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 1 Cor 1:24

To God Alone be Glory

³³Martin Luther, Sermons of Martin Luther, 8 vols., ed., John Nicholas Lenker, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983, III, p. 329. Pentecost, Third Sermon John 14:23-31.

³⁴Francis Pieper, The Difference between Orthodox and Heterodox Churches, and Supplement, Coos Bay, Oregon: St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 1981, p. 46.

