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Abstracts of Dissertations

The following pages constitute the initiation of a new undertaking by the editors of the *Concordia Theological Quarterly*. By resolution of its editorial committee the *CTQ* will henceforth periodically publish summaries of the dissertations of those students on whom the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary has, in consequence, conferred a graduate degree of some variety.

I. The Degree of Master of Sacred Theology


The purpose of this study was, from the text of Numbers itself, to determine the reasons for the things that the Book of Numbers teaches about the roles of men and women. Other sections of the Old Testament, especially the Pentateuch, were compared, to give proper context to the teachings of Numbers. These teachings were compared with extant writings from cultures with which ancient Israel could have had contact, in order to document the extent of agreement or disagreement between what Numbers says and what surrounding cultures did. Reasons for agreement and disagreement with Israel’s neighbors were then examined. Special attention was given to determining whether the claim that "the Old Testament reflects the patriarchal nature of the society in which it was written" (Commission on Theology and Church Relations Report, *Women in the Church*, p. 6) accurately describes what the book of Numbers asserts about the roles of men and women.

All passages in the book of Numbers which specify the sex of a person were examined exegetically to determine precisely what the passages say concerning the relative roles of men and women. Each was compared to other parts of Scripture and to extra-biblical examples of a similar nature which might have had an influence on Israel. The results of the exegesis and comparisons were then analyzed to determine whether Numbers followed the practices of contemporary cultures or not. Explanations for agreements and disagreements with the cultures of Israel’s neighbors were sought in keeping with the analogy of Scripture.

The laws in Numbers and the practices which they reflect and regulate were found to have both similarities to the practices of Israel’s neighbors and differences from them. Israel’s laws did not merely "reflect" the practices they might have inherited from others. The general idea of a patriarchal structure in society seems to have been shared throughout the ancient Near East, but the details of how this was practiced differed. Numbers itself claims that the Lord is the source for its laws and
judgments. This claim was found to be reasonable. It was found that at the time Numbers was written a patriarchy of some sort was in existence in Israel. Numbers teaches that the authority of men in their households, in their extended families, in worship life, and in the nation was given by God and limited by His laws, so that the individual responsibility of both men and women for their actions is upheld. The author of the Book of Numbers wants his readers to believe that the Lord Himself accepted and further established the patriarchy in Israel and that the treatment of men and women seen in Numbers, unequal as it was at times, was condoned by Him.

It was found that laws in Numbers which made the same requirements of men and women were all ceremonial (Numbers 5:1-10 and 6:1-21). Laws which discriminated between men and women were in part ceremonial (e.g., limiting Levitical service to males), in part familial (Numbers 5:11-31; 27; 30; and 36), and in part political (e.g., the concept of "heads" in Israel).

Contemporary disagreements about how Numbers applies to the roles and relationships between men and women were found to stem more from differences in principles of biblical interpretation than from disagreements about what Numbers itself teaches. It was concluded that one who believes in the divine origin of the Bible needs to evaluate not only what the Bible says but also his own culture, lest contemporary cultural standards limit either his understanding of the Bible or his ability to apply what it teaches.


The thesis of this dissertation was that Theodore Graebner was an advocate of an Americanized form of ecclesiastical individualism. The method of study employed was as follows. (1.) The first step was to define individualism and trace its roots. Relying primarily upon the study of Robert Bellah and others in Habits of the Heart, the ecclesiastical characteristics and paradoxes of individualism were defined. (2.) The second step was to examine ecclesiastical individualism in the light of John Calvin, especially his Institutes of the Christian Religion. With the aid of a unique examination of the roots and development of individualism in Stoic philosophy and Christianity by Louis Dumont (who in turn relies upon Ernst Troeltsch), individualism was traced to John Calvin. (Calvin
harmonized the ecclesiastical conflicts arising out of the political institutionalization of Christianity by Rome.) How Calvin modified the historic doctrine of the church to accommodate the conflicting claims of the spiritual and temporal was examined in the light of his *Institutes*. 

(3.) The third step was to compare Calvinistic ecclesiology with Lutheran ecclesiology in the light of the Lutheran Confessions and to identify distinctive differences as they impinge upon ecclesiology. The convergence and divergence of Lutheran ecclesiology and Calvinism, with its platonic idealizing of the church, was discussed for the purpose of noting the subtle variations in concepts which lie behind common terminology. 

(4.) The fourth step was to trace and identify the characteristic developments of Calvinistic ecclesiastical individualism and mark how it came to fruition in America. In a short overview it was noted how Calvinism, in Europe and in America, tumbled into Schleiermachian individualism (or in America, what Lowell Green calls, "American Enthusiasm"). 

(5.) The fifth step was to evaluate Theodore Graebner's ecclesiology in the light of ecclesiastical characteristics of individualism. Graebner's ecclesiology was studied in the light of the subtle presuppositions of individualism.

The conclusion of this study was that Theodore Graebner did, in fact, come to advocate a form of Americanized individualism (especially as he joined with the group of dissidents called the "44" in 1945). Apparently he was able to do so without consciously sensing a change in position (from where he stood ten years before) because he had, in fact, actually held Calvinistic ecclesiastical presuppositions in those earlier years. He underwent not so much a conversion from Lutheranism to individualism as an inversion from Calvinism (which he thought was Lutheran, but which in fact differed from C. F. W. Walther and the Lutheran Confessions) to an Americanized individualism which assumes similar ontological presuppositions in its understanding of the church.

Mark Sell: "A Study to Identify and Evaluate the Proper and Improper Use of Modern Linguistics in Confessional Lutheran Hermeneutics Based upon the Intersecting Relationship of the Modern Linguistic Principle of 'Synchronic Semantic Value' and the Traditional Linguistic Principle Known as the *Usus Loquendi*." Advisor: Kurt E. Marquart. Readers: Eugene W. Bunkowske and Dean O. Wenthe.

Chapter one of this dissertation is an overview of hermeneutics according to the classic categorization of general and special hermeneutics. In section one a brief history of hermeneutics is presented and divided into two historical periods. The first period extends from the inception of
hermeneutics (with Plato's Cratylus) up to the middle of the eighteenth century which characterizes "traditional linguistics." The beginning of the second period is marked by Schleiermacher's psychological approach to the person behind the text as well as the text itself.

Section two identifies the role of linguistics in a theological hermeneutic. The relationship of linguistics to theology is dependent upon the distinction between the ministerial and the magisterial use of reason. This theological distinction is the foundation upon which the discussion which follows is built.

Section three seeks to define in a precise manner a confessional Lutheran hermeneutic. Such a hermeneutic entails the use of four distinctly confessional Lutheran principles, all of which maintain a tension between biblically revealed truths: (1.) the relationship between the norma normans and the norma normata; (2.) the relationship between the kingdom of the left and the kingdom of the right; (3.) the proper understanding of the ministerial and magisterial use of reason; (4.) the nature of unconditional confessional subscription.

Chapter two is a brief presentation of the various terms and concepts of modern linguistics. Although this chapter is entitled "Traditional and Modern Linguistics," there is no section titled "traditional linguistics." Traditional linguistics appear instead throughout the presentation of modern linguistics as a point of comparison. This chapter provides a definition of modern linguistics as it is rooted in structuralism. Chapter two also presents the main branches of linguistics. The material in this chapter is predominately based upon Ferdinand de Saussure's Course in General Linguistics. Saussure is known as the "father of modern linguistics."

Chapter three compares the modern linguistic concept of the "synchronic semantic value of a word" with the traditional linguistic principle of the usus loquendi. The first section of chapter three defines the usus loquendi based upon the presentations of Ludwig Fuerbringer (Theological Hermeneutics) and Terry (Biblical Hermeneutics). Section II is the comparison of the two concepts previously mentioned. They are presented side by side so that the reader may compare the corresponding statements of each concept. This chapter shows that the synchronic semantic value of a word possesses many of the same characteristics as the traditional linguistic principle of the usus loquendi. Many times the words used to describe both procedures in their own system are identical.
Chapter four presents the conclusions of this dissertation. The comparison presented in chapter three shows that the modern linguistic principle of the synchronic semantic value of a word is in part identical to the traditional linguistic principle of the *usus loquendi*. The synchronic semantic value of a word, however, provides several other categories which further explains the meaning of a word (synchronic versus diachronic). Since the *usus loquendi* is an accepted tool in confessional Lutheran hermeneutics, one may conclude that at least that part of the synchronic semantic value of a word which is identical with the *usus loquendi* is compatible with a confessional Lutheran hermeneutic. In general, then, one must use one's reason in a ministerial fashion when using modern linguistics when it confronts Scripture. Chapter four concludes with an introduction to the philosophical questions which must be taken up by confessional Lutherans concerning the structuralist approach to language and, above all, to God's word. One must consider the philosophical question of "objectivity" in language.

II. The Degree of Doctor of Ministry


Leaders of a congregation, as members of the priesthood of all believers, are blessed by God with forgiveness of sins. They are responsible for bringing God's grace to others. This project was meant to assist leaders to grow in God's grace by laying a foundation for serving in grace.

The method of achieving this goal involved studies of the context of the congregation, the literature on the development of lay leadership, and patterns of the development of leadership in Scripture. This project included a weekend retreat followed by four Bible studies. Responses in initial interviews were compared with follow-up questionnaires to determine growth.


In the context of ministry in Iron County in Michigan, because of the history of both the pastor and the people involved, there existed an underlying tension between what should be and what was thought to be
the function of pastor and laity and, therefore, a tension that prevented them from discussing the calling of each. In order to alleviate this tension, it was necessary that each be willing to study the calling of the other and thus come to an understanding of what God expected of each. With this understanding achieved, when each saw each one's function within the context of being a redeemed sinner set aside for God's use in and through the church through the means of grace, pastor and laity began to determine how better to serve the Lord, who has set us free through His innocent suffering and death and glorious resurrection.

Seeing how God has placed us each in responsible positions within the church and within the world, and seeing the special standing each has by the gift of faith in Jesus Christ and in baptism and ordination, it was the goal of this project to bring each to desire to strive for excellence in his calling to the glory of God and the furtherance of His kingdom. When pastor and laity each identified conceptions and misconceptions of each other's functions within the church, they set about correcting any misconceptions to better serve our Lord. They looked to each other for support and guidance so that lives of thankfulness for the salvation of all could be lived out in willing service, always trying to show thanks by better fulfilling the individual callings of pastor and laity. By remaining open to the appraisal of each one's work by each other and to the constructive criticism which can take place in an atmosphere of mutual desire for excellence in serving the Lord, pastor and people have taken an important step in living out their callings to the glory of God.

The use of some of the concepts of "human resource management" provided pastor and laity the means whereby they could communicate with each other on mutually agreed terms, with mutually agreed goals, so that each one's work could complement the other's. Thereby both pastor and laity achieved the goal of responding to the salvation of all by more effectively serving the Lord who redeemed them with His precious blood.


The thesis of the project-dissertation was that existing Lutheran congregations in a racially changing community could reach the hispanic population and become a dynamic multi-ethnic community of the Lord's people. The method of study in this instance involved the construction of a model utilizing the resources of existing Lutheran Christian communities
to build bridges between themselves and the hispanic community which was rapidly developing in the surrounding area. The purpose of these bridges was to span the gap created by language and culture and to share the good news of how God reaches out to all of us in Jesus Christ in order to gather us together as His very own dear children for time and eternity.

The result anticipated was a Lutheran Christian community of essentially Anglo-American composition reaching out successfully to the hispanic community with a ministry responding to the deepest needs of its hispanic neighbors and giving the Holy Spirit the opportunity to work in their hearts the faith that unites all believers as the body of Christ. After ten months of implementation the first fruits of the project were apparent, although one could not as yet report the existence of a new and dynamic multi-ethnic Christian community. What one could report was the development of a new awareness on the part of the Lutheran community in Washington County of the presence of a significant hispanic community in its midst; an awareness of the great mission opportunity which this phenomenon presented; a growing interest of both pastor and lay leaders in developing an outreach to this ethnic group; and the active support (including financial contributions and the active participation of laypeople) of congregations in the area of Washington County.

It is, therefore, at least possible to report that the model constructed can be a means of initiating an effective ministry to a hispanic community on the part of an existing congregation. Indeed, the experience demonstrates that some form of ministry to a hispanic community can arise almost simultaneously in several congregations when there has been ample time to inform them of the need, demonstrate the opportunities, and offer the support needed to establish a modest ministry within the resources available to them. Such an approach can, therefore, be commended as an alternative to more popular models which operate on the premise that it is best to establish, in effect, a separate Spanish Lutheran Christian community. The approach delineated here is, in fact, viable—although, to be sure, it requires the patience, the love, the understanding, and the faith that only God’s Spirit can give.

The project has served to affirm the author’s conviction that a Christian community in a multi-ethnic setting can and should reflect the character of the community surrounding it. Such a gathering of God’s people is a community of the faithful that is blind to racial and cultural differences (in the sense of these being at all divisive of the unity of faith given by
the Spirit of God). This kind of community surely resembles more closely than its rivals the model provided in the Book of Acts. Certainly this model has the potential for utilizing more fully the resources of the church in terms of people and finances. As idealistic as it may seem, this model has the potential for involving the whole people of God in the work of making disciples of all nations.


The ultimate goal of the project was to demonstrate to the participants that the effort of evangelism is an ongoing process which is motivated by a secure and ongoing relationship with the Father in heaven through Jesus Christ. This relationship is presented with beautiful clarity by the marital metaphor of Ephesians 5:22-33. The response of the child of God as a member of the bride of Christ is to proclaim the invitation to all people to the wedding.

The participants in the project demonstrated to themselves in the context of a special seminar that the process of sharing Jesus Christ is an everyday response and that with godly preparation they can victoriously resist any activity that seeks to destroy that sharing. As the bride of Christ, the church’s response to the love of Christ is to participate in the great mystery of God’s will: to bring all things together through the proclamation of the gospel.


The question asked in this project-dissertation was whether isolated and lonely people could be attracted into the fellowship of the church through small groups with special interests. Within the context of a Lutheran parish in the San Diego area five groups were initiated: one for military spouses, one for people seeking exercise, one for senior citizens, one for single parents, and one for people in their twenties. On the basis of research conducted theologically, sociologically, and demographically, the author found moderate success in attracting people into the church and established a flexible and ongoing small-group outreach utilizing several models of leadership and structure.