

Luther on Preaching as God Speaking

by H.S. WILSON

The word is meant to be spoken. The majesty of the Word of God is infinite and unspeakable, for which we can never give enough thanks to God. . . . Listen, brother: God, the creator of heaven and earth, speaks with you through his preachers. . . . Those words of God are not of Plato or Aristotle but God himself is speaking.²

What is the most important event in Sunday morning worship? Preaching, of course. Then the question is: How is preaching understood by preacher and laity? If the people come with a notion that they are going to hear an expert say something about religion or the Bible, something they can accept or reject, then the purpose of preaching is lost. If the preacher has prepared a “safe sermon” so that he or she will not offend the congregation, the purpose of preaching is likewise lost.

Preaching has been weakened by a frantic effort on the part of the pulpit to deliver a message that is popular. By “popular” we do not mean the sermons with “a catchy topic” or the presence of “the glamour boy” in the pulpit, but rather the message that says to the people what they want to hear and that keeps them coming back for this reason only.³

Preaching is then reduced to nothing more than rhetoric: a human being talking to human beings. It is a lecture by an expert to seekers of knowledge. Thus, the whole biblical perspective of preaching as God communicating with people through people is lost. Luther’s greatest service to preaching is the recovery of the biblical understanding of preaching—God speaking (*Deus loquens*). Preaching is not mere human talk but it is God himself speaking to individuals through preachers.

Chester Pennington pointed out in the 1970s what is even truer today: that many clergy seriously doubt the importance of preaching.⁴ One of the problems they face is a “Professional Identity Crisis.”⁵ “They feel that they are given little support in our society. Their theology lacks clarity and assurance. Consequently, many clergy wonder who they are and what they are supposed to be doing.”⁶ When

a preacher loses confidence in his or her preaching, it will certainly be reflected in the sermon. Instead of speaking God's authoritative yet loving Word, the preacher will communicate doubt and lead people into confusion.

We are not suggesting that there is no place for doubt and, in particular, "self-searching" on the part of the preacher. But it is equally important that preachers be certain about what they are called to do, so that they might have a sense of identity to rely on in these critical times. Luther has pointed out that the "call" to the office of preaching, which comes from God through the people, is a significant assistance to the preacher.⁷ Luther said that when he was confronted with the problem of uncertainty and crisis his comfort came from his (divine and human) calling to the office of preaching.

God has opened my mouth and bidden me speak, and he supports me mightily. . . . Therefore, I will speak and . . . not keep silent as long as I live, until Christ's righteousness goes forth as brightness, and his saving grace be lighted as a lamp. . . . For no matter what I may be personally, still I can boast before God with a good conscience that in this matter I am not seeking my own advantage. . . .⁸

One could not comfort a minister more profoundly then or now, than by pointing to the call which ultimately comes from God. When one ignores this call and becomes self-reliant, he or she surely must suffer a pastoral identity crisis.

It is most important that both the preacher and the congregation should be aware that in communicating with people, God uses human beings as co-workers. God has sought the cooperation⁹ of human beings in carrying on the work of salvation completed through Jesus Christ. By cooperation we do not mean that people contribute something towards their own salvation.¹⁰ Rather, we mean that God has chosen to use people for the task of spreading the gospel to the whole world. The preacher is the agent for God's message to the people. In his *Sermon on the Gospel of St. John* (August 28, 1540) Luther said, "To be sure, I do hear the sermon; however, I am wont to ask: 'Who is speaking?' The pastor? By no means! You do not hear the pastor. Of course, the voice is his, but the words he employs are really spoken by my God."¹¹ While it is true that Luther considered preaching as the minister's activity, it is also true that it is God's activity. God encounters human beings through the preacher's activity.

Karl Barth expressed this quite plainly: "... preaching has a dual aspect; the word of God and human speech."¹²

The most difficult part of Luther's theology of preaching is his assertion that preaching is God's own speech to people. It is too easy to see preaching as mere speech *about* God.¹³ If this latter concept is the understanding held by the church, preaching is reduced to a rehashing of the old stories and it becomes a memorial speech. Gustaf Wingren explained this as follows:

The Lutheran assertion that ... preaching, in so far as it is Biblical preaching, is God's own speech to men [sic], is very difficult to maintain in practice. Instead it is very easy to slip into the idea that preaching is only speech *about* God. Such a slip, once made, gradually alters the picture of God, so that he becomes the far-off deistic God who is remote from the preached word and is only spoken about as we speak about someone who is absent.¹⁴

Luther's struggle was against *deus taciturnus* (a non-speaking God), the silent God. If God is thought of as silent, then the Bible is reduced to a mere chronicle and one could only read it to gather information. Luther wanted to break through this barrier in order to point out that when one reads the Bible and hears the sermon in faith it is God himself speaking to that person.¹⁵

The static God projected by philosophers and scholastic theologians is of no avail for Luther. Through the Scripture he knew that the God who reveals himself speaks and acts continuously.¹⁶ When the preacher preaches and the congregation hears the sermon (in faith), it is God himself speaking and God himself who is heard. Luther believed that God speaks through *persons* to *persons*. It is here that the certainty of the preachers lies,¹⁷ that when they are preaching, it is God himself who is speaking, and the congregation by accepting or rejecting, accepts or rejects God's message itself.

The core of Luther's understanding of God's dealing with human beings is that "faith and God belong together."¹⁸ Luther has discussed this in the explanation of the First Commandment in his *Large Catechism*. "To have a god is nothing else than to trust and believe him with our whole heart. As I have often said, the trust and faith of the heart alone make both God and an idol... For these two belong together, faith and God."¹⁹ Of course, it is not any kind of faith. For Luther it is the "right kind of faith," "if your faith and trust are right,

then your God is the true God. On the other hand, if your trust is false and wrong, then you have not the true God.”²⁰ The important thing is that this right faith is the one that comes through hearing the Word. Only this faith will be able to teach one about God’s action and will towards oneself and the whole human race. In other words, God’s will towards us is known only through the proclaimed Word. Since people cannot reach up to God it becomes necessary for God to take the initiative. God must lower himself to reach us; he must speak in a manner people can understand. Luther expressed this in his *Lectures on Genesis* as follows:

It is for this reason that God lowers himself to the level of our weak comprehension and presents himself to us in images, in coverings, as it were, in simplicity adapted to a child, that in some measure it may be possible for him to be known by us . . . Therefore he puts before us an image of himself, because he shows himself to us in such a manner that we can grasp him. In the New Testament we have Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, absolution, and the ministry of the Word . . . These are the divine images and “the will of the sign.” Through them God deals with us within the range of our comprehension. Therefore these alone must engage our attention.²¹

Because of the human condition, God deals with people through coverings and masks. It is through these masks (*larvae*) that God opens the dialogue with people at their level. “He takes us as we are, as one of us, often a bit awkward at times, so that perhaps we will listen.”²²

But God does not become one with these masks, his creations.²³ They are simply his masks. He is hidden behind them. Only a person of faith is given the understanding that God himself is active behind the masks.

We need the wisdom that distinguishes God from his mask. The world does not have this wisdom. Therefore it cannot distinguish God from his mask. When a greedy man, who worships his belly, hears that “man does not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4), he eats the bread but fails to see God in the bread; for he sees, admires, and adores only the mask.²⁴

Again the wisdom to distinguish God from his masks comes from God. A person who is given this kind of wisdom will give attention to God’s will and put trust in nothing but God himself, who is operating behind these masks. “. . . [I]f someone knows that the power

and wisdom of God are of such a sort, he trusts wholly, not in the mask of God but in the Word behind the mask; and he can and does perform wonders, yes, everything, in the Lord.”²⁵ God will continue to confront human beings through masks, but wants people to pay attention to the will and Word hidden behind the mask and not the mask itself.

One of the most direct ways in which God communicates is through the proclaimed Word of the church, that is, the words of the preacher! When one believes in the promise of God communicated through the verbal pronouncement of the preacher, he or she receives God’s favor.

Luther’s view that God continues to communicate with us though the Word proclaimed by the preacher as found in the Scripture reflects his high regard for the preacher’s role in the church. However, this means that a preacher both has and does not have something new to say. T.H.L. Parker failed to do real justice to Luther’s understanding of the preacher’s role when he suggested that “in binding the Word of Spirit so rigidly to the human word of preaching . . . [Luther] was perilously near making the preacher a passive oracle of God.”²⁶ One does not find this view of a preacher in Luther. When the minister preaches he or she does not just recite the biblical message.²⁷ Of course reading of the Scripture precedes the sermon. When a preacher preaches, he or she stands in the long tradition of personal witness to God’s saving act. But this witness is carried on by the preacher, keeping in mind the need and situation of the congregation. “Only the *intention* to communicate and to resort to imagination can save preaching from cliché.”²⁸ That means there is ample room in which the individuality of the minister with all his or her personal gifts and faculties can be exercised. In fact the whole personality of the preacher has to be thrown into the sermon.²⁹ Charles Rice has further explained the human role in preaching when he said, “the particular vehicle of the Word is a man [sic] whose humanity is the medium of the message . . . Christian theology suggests that it is a witnessing man among men who can communicate the gospel.”³⁰

According to Luther, the preacher has nothing *new* to say other than what is already spoken and written by the Apostles.

It is impossible to derive the Word of God from reason; it must be given from above. Verily, we do not preach the human wisdom of philosophers, jurists, medics, or of any other profession . . . The apostles transmitted it to us, and thus it will continue until the end of the World.³¹

Even though a preacher continues to preach the Apostles' message, it is his or her responsibility to make the same message as simple and clear as possible to the people there and then so that everybody can benefit from it. In his *Table Talk* Luther mentioned that this was the pattern of his preaching:

Cursed be every preacher who aims at lofty topics in the church, looking for his own glory and selfishly desiring to please one individual or another. When I preach here [in Wittenberg] I adapt myself to the circumstances of the common people. I don't look at doctors and masters, of whom scarcely forty are present, but at the hundred or the thousand young people and children. It's to them that I preach . . . If the others don't want to listen, they can leave.³²

In the task of preaching Luther has a place for human imagination and talent as long as everything is done in subjection to the Word of God and as long as the preacher is aware that with all the talent used in preaching he or she is only giving voice to the Word which is not his or her own. For the sermon is not only meant to speak to the understanding but also to the *heart*.³³

Given this kind of understanding of preaching, the preacher should proceed to make preaching simple but clear using examples and illustrations if needed. "For ordinary people are caught more easily by analogies and illustrations than by difficult and subtle discussions; . . . For teaching it is useful to be able to produce many analogies and illustrations; not only Paul but also the prophets and Christ used them."³⁴ The purpose of all this is to make God's message clear to people. Therefore, a preacher, besides being a faithful servant of the Word should be gifted with certain qualities and virtues so that the task of preaching can be carried on for the greater glory of God. In his *Table Talk* Luther listed the following ten virtues a good preacher should have:

A good preacher should have these properties and virtues: first, to teach systematically; secondly, he should have a ready wit; thirdly, he should be eloquent; fourthly, he should have a good voice; fifthly, a good memory; sixthly, he should know when to make an end; seventhly, he should be sure of his doctrine;

eightly, he should venture and engage body and blood, wealth and honour, in the word; ninthly, he should suffer himself to be mocked and jeered of everyone. (Finally, he should patiently bear the fact nothing is seen more easily and quickly in those preachers than their faults.)³⁵

While looking for qualities and talents in preachers, Luther also pointed out the danger of pride to which particularly a gifted and talented preacher falls victim.

As the disheartened and new preachers get their consolation and courage by looking at their “call” and by seeing preaching as ultimately God’s way of communicating with people, so also the danger of over-confidence and pride can be avoided by reminding oneself that all the talents are gifts received and are subject to the faithful teaching of the Word.

The greatness of preaching lies in the fact that it is God himself who is active in preaching and speaks to the people through the preached Word. God is active in preaching insofar as the preacher remains obedient to the Word and seeks nothing but for the people to hear the Word of God. Only then the faithful hearers will be able to say, “Pay attention, we are hearing God’s speech.”

For right preachers should diligently and faithfully teach only the Word of God and must seek only his honor and praise. Likewise the hearers should also say: I do not believe in my pastor, but he tells me of another Lord, whose name is Christ; him he shows to me; I will listen to him, insofar as he leads me to the true Teacher and Master, God’s Son. Then things would be right in the church and it will be well governed, and there would be harmony all around.³⁶

The preacher’s task is clear: to give voice to the Word of God. A preacher is not expected to add anything to the Word, but to express it clearly. Thus “the church has no other teacher but God, and therefore it has no other obedience.”³⁷

The preacher’s task is to tell the “story of God coming into the middle of life, of our lives, opening dialogue with us.”³⁸ This dialogue between God and human beings will go on until the end of time. The initiative is taken by God. In Dietrich Ritschl’s words,

It is in the weakness of the human word that God confronts us with himself, and we would miss the point completely if we were to understand this as an unfortunate and special burden for our faith. The very contrary is true: it is because of God’s infinite mercy and wisdom that He has chosen our human words

to make Himself known to us. If He had decided to speak otherwise, we would not be able to understand Him and to respond to His claim and offer.³⁹

And people will continue to hear God speaking as long as God provides preachers through the community of believers here on earth. “The Word of God is the Word behind the words”⁴⁰ of the preachers provided by God.

Thus for Luther preaching is *deus loquens*—God speaking, but through *persons*, to *persons*. Even contemporary preaching cannot overlook this view of Luther for proper preaching. Otherwise preaching is reduced to reporting what had happened 2000 years ago. Such a report cannot be called good news as it was called by the people of Christ’s time. Luther pointed out that if preaching has to be continually considered as proclamation of the good news that God acted for our salvation, then God’s activity in preaching must be recognized. Only human pride can claim anything more as the preacher’s task than faithfully proclaiming the Word as it is recorded in the Bible.

The Bible has been written in common human language and words, and so preaching must be. It is how God has decided to communicate and make himself known—in everyday human language. But it is hard to accept that we hear God in that way. It is God the Holy Spirit who convinces the heart of the message of God coming through human words and thereby enables people to recognize God’s speech. That is why Luther said, “We have the *jus verbi* (right to speak) but not the *executio* (power to accomplish). We should preach the Word, but the results must be left solely to God’s good pleasure.”⁴¹

God’s activity and speaking belong together and they cannot be separated from each other.⁴² In the beginning God spoke; this act resulted in the creation of the world. In Jesus Christ God spoke again and acted for our salvation. Thereafter, as well as now, God speaks through the preachers. That is how he is active in each individual’s life. When God speaks through human beings it does not reduce the significance of his message or Word. In fact, it is the proper way by which one can hear God. Human beings cannot hear God directly from Mount Sinai through angels, for the mountain was wrapped in smoke and it quaked.⁴³ However, God is gracious enough to continue to communicate on a human level through human beings using human words. Any person who does not care to hear God in this

way will bring about his or her own destruction. On the other hand, every believing person will be saved through his message.

All preaching for Luther had one supreme aim: Justification of sinners through faith in what God has done in Christ. That is why, for Luther, the purpose of preaching was not *primarily* to raise consciousness about world issues nor to promote morality in society. These however, tend to be the only aims of much contemporary preaching. It may include all of this, but first and foremost preaching is God's activity of redemption in history. It is the *viva vox Evangelii*, the living Word of the gospel.

Conclusion

The Reformation was a period of the revival of Christian preaching.⁴⁴ Christian preaching goes back to Jesus Christ himself. God spoke to us through him. Jesus not only proclaimed our deliverance and salvation but also brought it about through his life, death and resurrection. The church from the beginning conveyed this good news of what God has done for us through Jesus Christ through its life and preaching. Although preaching was carried on through all ages, now with more, now with less authenticity, the Reformers gave it new vigor.

More than anything else, "the Reformation was a crisis about the Word of God; it was also a crisis of communication."⁴⁵ The Reformers strongly advocated that God primarily deals with and communicates with human beings through the Word. The Word comes in a form alive to every generation through the preaching of the church. That is why Luther upheld preaching as a very important task of the church. It is a God-given responsibility and, as such, *the important mark* of the church.⁴⁶ When preaching is neglected, spiritual damage results.

Luther spoke strongly for preaching because he was convinced that God himself is heard in preaching. God's Word is a living and a personal Word. Besides the preacher, God himself is also active in preaching, communicating and seeking personal responses from the hearer. Therefore, the key phrase to explain Luther's understanding of preaching is *Deus loquens*, God speaking, through persons, to persons.

While Luther's understanding of preaching as *Deus loquens* seems a difficult concept to accept, the alternate understanding available to us reduces preaching to a talk *about* God. Preaching about God reduces God to *Deus taciturnus*, the silent God. If God is silent, how can the gospel, which is beyond human reason, be heard and give benefit? This communication problem Luther solved by pointing to God's living Word, heard anew every time the preacher gives it voice.

Since God's message is personal, the proper way to communicate it to people is through the spoken form.

For Luther's whole point is that the Word is not dead wisdom but is finally a personal Word which must be personally preached and personally heard. Instead of thinking about causal connections, we should think instead about the *mystery of preaching*, in which man [sic] the preacher and man the audience and God the speaker and God the enabler (namely, the Holy Spirit) all work to make this miraculous event happen.⁴⁷

Preaching for Luther meant declaring anew through the human voice the judgment and the forgiveness of God. When a minister preaches so, in obedience to the Scripture (the written Word), God's Word is heard simultaneously with the human word. How this happens is the mystery of preaching. Luther explained: "Thus, the spoken word is indeed a human voice—but instituted by divine authority for salvation."⁴⁸

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NOTES

1. This essay is based upon the author's dissertation, published as *The Speaking God Luther's Theology of Preaching* (Madras: United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India, 1982), 128-142.
2. "Verbum vocale Infinita et ineffabilis verbi Dei maiestas est, pro qua numquam satis gratias agere Deo possumus . . . Audi, frater. Deus, creator coeli et terrae, tecum loquitur per praedicatores suos; . . . Illa Dei verba non sunt Platonis, Aristotelis, sed Deus ipse loquitur" in: *Luthers Werke Kritische Gesamtausgabe Tischreden*, 6 vols. (Weimar: H. Bohlaus, 1912-1921) 4. 531. no. 4812 (henceforth: WA TR 4. 531, no. 4812).
3. Donald Macleod, *Word and Sacrament A Preface to Preaching and Worship* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1960), 9.
4. Chester Pennington, *God Has a Communication Problem* (New York: Hawthorn, 1976), 2.
5. Pennington, *God Has a Communication Problem*, 23.
6. Pennington, *God Has a Communication Problem*, 23.
7. See H. S. Wilson, *The Speaking God Luther's Theology of Preaching*, 112.
8. *Luthers Werke Kritische Gesamtausgabe [Schriften]*, 651 vols. (Weimar: H. Bohlaus, 1883-) 15: 27f (henceforth: WA 15. 27f). *Luthers Werke* [American edition], 55 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress and St. Louis: Concordia, 1955-1986) 45: 347-48 (henceforth: LW 45: 347-48).
9. For Luther's idea of cooperation, see Gustaf Wingren, *The Christian Calling Luther on Vocation*, trans. Carl C. Rasmussen (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1958), 123-43
10. Wingren, *Vocation*, 124. "The fact is that the idea of co-operation grows up directly and simultaneously out of Luther's belief in the bondage of the will before God . . . Co-operation takes place in vocation, which belongs on earth, not in heaven, it is pointed toward one's neighbor, not toward God"
11. WA 47: 229; LW 22. 528; text John 4:7.
12. Barth, Karl, *The Preaching of the Gospel*, translated by B.E. Hooke (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 9.
13. Gustaf Wingren, *The Living Word A Theological Study of Preaching and the Church* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), 19
14. Wingren, *Living Word*, 19.
15. Gerhard Ebeling said that one could not turn to Luther's works without questioning one's own way of speaking about God. "There is something challenging about the way Luther speaks of God" *Luther An Introduction to His Thought*, translated by R.A. Wilson (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 242 Jaroslav Pelikan, *Luther the Expositor Introduction to the Reformer's Exegetical Writings* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1959), 50: "The 'Word of God' was the speech of God, and 'the God who speaks' would be an appropriate way to summarize Luther's picture of God."
16. Warren A. Quanbeck, "The Hermeneutical Principles of Luther's Early Exegesis" (Ph D. dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1948), 74
17. Ebeling, *Luther*, 248. "For Luther certainty is the essence of God's being with man and therefore of man's being with God. In the presence of God, and there alone, there is no uncertainty. But uncertainty is man's sin, and certainty is salvation."
18. Ebeling, *Luther*, 250ff., cautioned that one should understand Luther's statement in the light of his whole theology: Otherwise one might conclude that Luther is suggesting that God is a product of human imagination like Ludwig Feuerbach, an anthropocentric way of seeing God
19. WA 30: 132; The Large Catechism, trans. James Schaaf, Ten Commandments, 2, in. *The Book of Concord*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2000), 386 (henceforth: LC, Ten Commandments, 2, in: BC 386). The right faith even "consummates the Deity;

and, if I [Luther] may put it this way, it is the creator of the Deity, not in the substance of God but in us" (WA 40: 36; LW 26: 227).

20. WA 30¹: 132; LC, Ten Commandments, 2, in: BC 386, 3.

21. WA 42: 294-95; LW 2: 45-47.

22. Edmund A. Steimle, *From Death to Birth* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), 71.

23. Sandra Anderson, "Words and Word in Theological Perspective: Martin Luther's Views on Literature and Figurative Speech" (Ph.D. dissertation. Northwestern University. 1975), 232 and 530, n. 14, cautioned and drew attention to the danger of pantheism, found in both Nietzsche and Erasmus' *Praise of Folly*, as a result of identifying God with his masks.

24. WA 40¹: 173-74; LW 26: 95.

25. WA 14: 578; LW 9: 41

26. Parker, T.H.L., *The Oracles of God: An Introduction to the Preaching of John Calvin* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1947), 48.

27. David C. Steinmetz said just the opposite when he quoted Bishop Hagen of Norway in his sermon: "Our sole task was to deliver messages composed by others. We were not asked to be original or imaginative. We were only asked to be faithful." To Bishop Hagen's words Steinmetz added that, "The Church has been commissioned, not to be original but to witness to him [Christ]." See his "Woe to Me if I Do Not Preach the Gospel!" *Duke Divinity School Review* (Spring 1975): 9. Even though it is true to say that the church's message is not meant to be original, it is certainly not Luther's position on preaching to say that the preacher is not to be imaginative.

28. Charles L. Rice, *Interpretation and Imagination* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 77.

29. Adolph Spaeth, "Homiletics," in *The Lutheran Encyclopedia*, ed. Henry E. Jacobs and John A.W. Haas (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), 226.

30. Rice, *Interpretation and Imagination*, 76.

31. WA 47: 187-88; LW 22: 477-78.

32. WA TR 3: 419-20; LW 54: 235-36, no. 3573.

33. Paul Scherer, *For We Have This Treasure* from the Yale Lectures on Preaching, 1943 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1944), 67.

34. WA 40¹: 548; LW 26: 359. For other principles of Luther's rhetoric see Birgit Stolt, *Martin Luthers Rhetorik des Herzens* (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 2000).

35. WA TR 2: 531, no. 2580; LW 54: 182, no. 400. "These are the three things, so to speak, which every good preacher should do: first, he takes his place; second, he opens his mouth and says something; third, he knows when to stop" (WA 32: 302; LW 21: 7).

36. WA 51: 191; LW 51: 388; "The Last Sermon, Preached in Eisleben," Feb. 15, 1546, on Matt. 11: 25-30.

37. WA 46: 21; LW 6: 30.

38. Steimle, *From Death to Birth*, 70.

39. Dietrich Ritschl, *Die homiletische Funktion der Gemeinde: zur dogmatischen Grundlegung der Predigtlehre* (Zollikon: Evangelischer Verlag, 1959), 75.

40. Roland E. Sleeth, *Proclaiming the Word* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1964), 35.

41. WA 10³: 15; LW 51: 76.

42. Ritschl, *Die homiletische Funktion*, 25.

43. WA 47: 228; LW 22: 527.

44. However, there were precursors in late-medieval religious life. See Jane Dempsey Douglas, *Justification in Late-Medieval Preaching. A Study of John Geiler of Keisersberg* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1966).

45. Gordon Rupp, *The Old Reformation and the New* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 24

46. See WA 50: 240; The Smalcald Articles, trans. William Russell, III.4 in BC 319, and Luther's treatise on the church, *Von den Konzilien und Kirchen*, WA 50: 628-30; LW 41: 148-51.

47. Bard Thompson, "Lectures on Luther," mimeographed notes for the exclusive use of graduate students and theological students of Drew University, Madison, NJ. See also Eric W. Gritsch, "The Ministry in Luther's Theological Perspective." *Bulletin* 54 (February, 1974): 18. For the Roman Catholic point of view of the mystery of preaching see the essay by Lambert Claussen, "The Mystery of

Preaching *Christus praedicat Christum*" in *The Word*, Collection of essays by Karl Rahner, et al , compiled at the Camisianum, Innsbruck (New York PJ Kenedy and Sons, 1964), 186-95

48 WA 43 71 "Sic verbum vocale est quidem vox hominis, sed autoritate divina instituta ad salutem"



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