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# The Christology of Luther's Theology of the Cross

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Douglas John Hall, a contemporary Canadian theologian, has done much to accentuate the importance of Luther's theology of the cross as a method or hermeneutic for theology. His assertion that the theology of the cross calls people to face up to the realities of life is a point that is well taken. However, in highlighting the methodology of a theology of the cross, its Christology should not be overlooked. This paper will focus on some of the main Christological points found in Luther's theology of the cross.

Marc Lienhard, the French Luther scholar, argues that for Luther, "Christology is placed under the sign of the cross."<sup>1</sup> In other terms, the theology of the cross unites the person of Christ (Christology) with his work of salvation (Soteriology) at the place of the cross.

There are three main aspects of Luther's Christology which have relevance for the theology of the cross: the theme of the hidden and revealed God; the understanding of faith which ensues from this; and Luther's understanding of atonement.

## 1. The Hidden/Revealed God<sup>2</sup>

What is God like? How has society, through movies, books and other media, pictured God? The images a society has of God reveal something about that society's theology.

In general, most mental portraits we have of God are based on an image of a God in heaven. The same was the case in the time of Luther. If you were to ask the "typical" theologian of the early 16th century what God is like, his or her answer would likely reflect the influence, not of movies, but of the scholastic theologians of the time,<sup>3</sup> who in turn relied heavily upon the

Greek philosopher Aristotle. The scholastics' understanding of God was based on an assumption about what God was like in heaven. God was considered the ideal and ultimate of all that was good, powerful, wise, and virtuous. In other words, God was the perfection of all that was best in humans. Based on this image of God in heaven, the theologians of the time conjectured that these same traits or qualities in humans were assets which were useful, in however small a way, to assist in one's own salvation. This was, in essence, the teaching of the "congruous merits" (*meritum de congruo*), earned by doing "what was in you" (*quod in se est*). This was basically a salvation by good intentions, even if these intentions were misplaced. As long as a person attempted in any way to reflect some of these "godly characteristics", God would grant that person merit worthy of salvation. In crass terms, if you imitated, even microscopically, what God was like in heaven, then God would have pity on you and save you.

Luther criticized this approach, labeling it a "theology of glory".<sup>4</sup> Its fundamental flaw was a works righteousness. It sought to discover what God was like in the heavens, and then tried to become like that, based on this speculative image of God. If one imitated God's virtues, one would be saved. Another flaw arising from this was that it overestimated human potential. Even if people could know the hidden God and see this God face-to-face, they would still be unable to imitate perfectly these virtues of God and so save themselves.

In reaction to this imitation of God based on speculations about what God is like in heaven, Luther proposed a totally different approach. For him, the starting point in both theology and Christology was the incarnation and cross of Christ. In the Heidelberg Disputation of 1518, Luther wrote: "Thesis 20. He deserves to be called a theologian, however, who comprehends the visible and manifest [literally, the 'backside'] things of God seen through suffering and the cross."<sup>5</sup> In the explanation, he added: "Now it is not sufficient for anyone, and it does him no good to recognize God in his glory and majesty, unless he recognizes him in the humility and shame of the cross."<sup>6</sup> (I will quote Luther without converting his writings to inclusive language, partly to serve as a reminder of the need for an ongoing reformation in the church, and to reflect his historical context more accurately.)

Luther stressed that the God in the heavens cannot be known by us directly. Instead, this God is hidden, or concealed, from eyes prying into heaven. As Luther noted from Isaiah 45:15, "Truly thou art a God who hidest thyself."<sup>7</sup>

But where is God hidden? In the most unlikely place of all, according to Luther. God is hidden on the cross. God is so well hidden there that Alistair McGrath states, "if God is revealed in the cross, he is not recognizable as God."<sup>8</sup> McGrath goes on to say: "Where the unbeliever sees nothing but the helplessness and hopelessness of an abandoned man dying upon a cross, the theologian of the cross (*theologus crucis*) recognizes the presence and activity of the 'crucified and hidden God' (*Deus crucifixus et absconditus*), who is not merely present in human suffering, but actively works through it."<sup>9</sup>

This concept of the hidden God was crucial for Luther's context. God wishes to be known, not through an obvious image of a heavenly God, but rather in the person of the incarnation and cross. This image of God is radically different from the image of God in the heavens. In fact, on the cross, any possible image of all that is good and godly appears to be hidden from view, wrapped in weakness, foolishness and suffering. Thus the incarnation reveals that a great inversion is needed in our thinking about what God is like and where God is to be found. God is revealed, not in philosophical speculations and conjecture, but in an incarnate person. Besides, what God is like in heaven is not useful knowledge for humanity, apart from the perspective of the cross. In fact, according to Luther, such ill-gotten knowledge stinks. He has this to say about the subject: "[Y]ou should realize that when a monk in the monastery is sitting in deepest contemplation, excluding the world from his heart altogether, and thinking about the Lord God the way he himself paints and imagines Him, he is actually sitting—if you will pardon the expression—in the dung, not up to his knees, but up to his ears."<sup>10</sup>

Any attempt to figure out what God is like in heaven is also wrong because it ignores Christ. It tries to know God apart from Christ and it attempts to construct a formula for salvation apart from Christ. For Luther, who held to the principles of Christ alone, faith alone, grace alone, scripture alone, and the cross alone, such an approach would be heretical. Instead, he gives this simple advice for understanding the hidden God:

For [God] did not bid you soar heavenward on your own and gape to see what God is doing in heaven with the angels. No, this is His command (Matt. 17:5): "This is My beloved Son; listen to Him. There I descend to you on earth, so that you can see, hear, and touch Me. There and nowhere else is the place for those who encounter and find Me who desire Me and who would like to be delivered from their sin and be saved."<sup>11</sup>

This becomes a common theme for Luther. The incarnation, the word, and the sacraments are the "clothes" or "masks" which God wears in the act of revelation.<sup>12</sup> More specifically, God is revealed in each of these things through Christ. What are the scriptures but the "swaddling clothes" which hold and reveal Christ? The sacraments are centred on revealing a God hidden in Christ's body and blood and our incorporation into Christ's death and resurrection.

But why has God chosen to be hidden? Would it not be a lot easier and simpler if God were simply revealed to us, with none of this confusion? One reason for the hiddenness is given in Luther's treatise *On the Bondage of the Will*. Here Luther talks about the hidden God in two ways. There is, he suggests, an aspect to God that must always remain hidden from humans, otherwise we would die from this overpowering glimpse of holiness. God cannot remove this mask. Another reason God chose to be hidden, according to Luther, is found in a sermon he preached on February 24, 1517. He suggests that humans hide what is theirs in order to conceal it, whereas God conceals what is God's so that it may be revealed.<sup>13</sup> Luther thus argues that God is hidden for two reasons. First, if we saw God's face, we would die (Exodus 33:20–23). We cannot afford to have God reveal certain things to us. It would be too much for mortals to handle: sort of like the Phantom of the Opera revealing his face in public. Second, and more central for Luther's theology of the cross, it is in the "backside of God", hidden in the incarnation, that the true nature of God is revealed.<sup>14</sup> God wants to be known as God-with-us, rather than God who is distant and remote in the heavens. Moreover, it is only by God taking on our own nature that we can understand or even recognize God.<sup>15</sup>

We have to be careful not to assume a progression from the hidden to the revealed God. The hidden God does not become the revealed God, so that over a period of time we will know

all that there is to know about God. Rather, the revealed God always remains simultaneously the hidden God. God's mask always both reveals and conceals at the same time, just like the masks of actors on stage. As a result, God's revelations always occur in the midst of hiddenness. These revelations can be perceived only by faith, not by progressive knowledge.

This very basic theme of the hidden and revealed God finds its way into much of Luther's theology. For example, it is present in his understanding of the alien and proper work of God (*opus alienum Dei* and *opus proprium Dei*). The alien works of God are those works which appear contrary to God's nature, but which ultimately lead to a revelation of God's true nature. Christ reveals God's alien work of bringing humanity to the point where it can no longer find salvation in the God of speculation. When this happens, then God's proper work, namely the revelation of God, and thus the salvation of God, as revealed in the incarnate Christ and as perceived by faith, can occur. To eyes of faith the hidden God is also the revealed God. God remains hidden only to those who insist on seeking God in the wrong things, such as in the divine majesty and in speculation, while shunning the revelation of God found in the incarnation and the cross.

## 2. The Understanding of Faith

If Luther's concept of the hidden and revealed God were mistakenly understood in terms of a progression from a hidden God to a revealed God, then it would be a logical next step to interpret his theology of the cross merely as a theology of "reversals". This theology would argue that God is revealed through a reversal of what was previously hidden. What we would end up with, however, is simply bad theology. Why? Because these reversals are separated from faith. God can be found by anyone, merely by looking in the opposite place of where the world would seek to find God. Faith is not needed. So if the world is operating from a theology of success, where the prevalent theology says that wealth is a revelation of God's favour, a simple reversal theology could conclude that God reverses things and blesses the poor instead. As a result, you could conclude that God is hidden, not in success, but in poverty. The formula for understanding the hidden and revealed God then becomes very mathematical and simplistic.

This is one of the mistakes or temptations haunting liberation theologies. The “preferential option for the poor” may be misunderstood simply as God choosing to be hidden in the poor, the apparent “failures” of the world, rather than in the “successes” of the world. If you want to find God, therefore, just find the poor. This approach, while noble, makes two basic mistakes. First, it assumes a progression of revelation. Second, it tends to glorify the “status” of poverty as some sort of spiritual estate or calling! Yes, God is “hidden” among those struggling in poverty, in places where the world is least likely to look. But God’s presence cannot be limited. In fact, God may be just as hidden and “unknown” to the poor as anyone else. Poverty itself is not a sign of God’s presence. More often, it is a sign of human injustice.

What is needed, then, is a criterion or control of some sort in discovering this God who seeks to be revealed in the most unlikely places. For Luther, this criterion is found in his understanding of faith: a faith rooted in the cross. As McGrath notes: “[T]he theology of the cross is thus a theology of faith, and *of faith alone*. The correlation to *Cruz sola* is *sola fide*, as it is through faith, and *through faith alone*, that the true significance of the cross is perceived, and through faith alone that its power can be appropriated.”<sup>16</sup> It is only by faith that God can be recognized in the cross and the incarnation, hidden under weakness and suffering. Discovering God hidden under weakness and suffering cannot happen by merely looking at the opposite of success. Faith is not needed if the theology of the cross is merely a matter of reversals; making the good appear bad, and the bad appear good. In fact, Luther defined this as a theology of glory. “A theologian of glory calls evil good and good evil. A theologian of the cross calls the thing what it actually is.”<sup>17</sup>

What did Luther mean by faith? If it meant knowing certain facts and teachings about God, then a progressive revelation would make sense. As one knows more, God’s will becomes clearer. But that was not Luther’s approach. Instead, he defined faith as trust. It is to trust that God is revealed to us in Christ on the cross, and it is to trust that God will continue to be revealed to us even in the midst of hiddenness, when our experience would suggest God’s absence rather than presence. Hebrews 11:1 provided Luther with his standard definition of

faith: "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."<sup>18</sup> Faith is not a progressive learning about God, but rather a trusting in God. It is centred in relationship, rather than facts or data. It cannot be gained by logical deductions or speculations about what God is like in heaven.

Apart from the eyes of faith, one cannot see God revealed on the cross in Jesus Christ. All that is seen is a convicted criminal or a failed messianic pretender. It takes faith to *trust* that in this convicted criminal, God is revealed!

This leads us to another central aspect of faith. For Luther, faith is centred on Christ. By faith the Christian trusts that the incarnate and crucified Christ is truly the Son of God, despite all appearances to the contrary. Thus, faith and Christ are intertwined. As Luther stated: "[T]hose who approach God through faith and not at the same time through Christ actually depart from him."<sup>19</sup>

This emphasis on Christ and faith together is also an antidote to the theology of the cross becoming merely a negative thing. God is not just hidden on the cross. God is also revealed—in Christ. This is expressed eloquently by von Loewenich: "For the fact that Christ and faith belong together clearly shows...that faith is not a leap into a vacuum. It perhaps gropes in the darkness—and precisely there runs into Christ. It moves away from all experience and experiences Christ. And Christ is the firm possession of this faith."<sup>20</sup>

Finally, faith is not a present security or a means of escape from the realities of this world. This does not mean, however, that there is no certainty in faith.<sup>21</sup> Rather, this certainty can only be based on the experiences which have been qualified by faith already, or which are consequences of faith.<sup>22</sup> Certainty of faith is not, therefore, a blind belief that "knows" how God "must" act in every situation and which can therefore avoid the darkness; rather it is a trust that even in the darkest nights there is a certainty that God will lead you into a new and better unknown. Douglas Hall has aptly captured this in the title of one of his books, *Lighten Our Darkness*. The title of this book comes from a prayer in the *Book of Common Prayer*. It is not a prayer to take us out of the darkness, but that God would lighten our way *in* the darkness of life.



In summary, for Luther faith has trust in Christ as its ground and centre. Only through faith can Christ be seen as the God who is hidden in the incarnation and cross. This faith is not one which offers a present security; rather, it leads people into the darkness where God dwells and where all that a person can do is to trust in God to lead them through the darkness.

### 3. The Understanding of Atonement

According to Luther's theology of the cross, the cross reveals more than how God wants to be known. It also reveals, through faith, God's hidden and revealed work of salvation, in the person of Jesus the Christ. Luther states:

Through the Gospel we are told who Christ is, in order that we may learn to know that He is our Savior, that He delivers us from sin and death, helps us out of all misfortune, reconciles us to the Father, and makes us pious and saves us without our works. He who does not learn to know Christ in this way must go wrong. For even though you know that He is God's Son, that He died and rose again, and that He sits at the right hand of the Father, you have not yet learned to know Christ aright, and this knowledge still does not help you. You must also know and believe that He did all this for your sake, in order to help you.<sup>23</sup>

This emphasis on "for you" reinforces the idea that the theology of the cross is not a spectator theology.<sup>24</sup> While theologians of glory may discuss theories about the cross, in doing so the cross remains distant. It is merely an object or tool that God uses, and it is something agreed upon by God and Christ in heaven. It does not involve humanity personally.

Theologians of glory treat atonement as something worked out in heaven, apart from humanity. It is either a part of a payment plan between God and Satan, or it is the result of some resolution reached in God's own being concerning how God could compromise the desire to be both just and loving. In either case, however, atonement is decided upon in heaven, and not on earth. The power or significance of the cross and the incarnation itself is minimized.

Luther attempted to counteract this misunderstanding by stressing two central elements of atonement: the notion of "God-with-us", and that of "God-for-us".

### a. God-with-us

First, his emphasis on the idea of God-with-us, or Emmanuel, is clearly found in his commentary on Galatians. Luther writes: "Christ was not only found among sinners, but of his own free will and by the will of the Father he wanted to be an associate of sinners and thieves and those who were immersed in all sorts of sin. Therefore when the Law found him among thieves, it condemned and executed him as a thief."<sup>25</sup> This action of solidarity also impacts on salvation. As Lienhard states: "[Christ's] work is redemption, it is salvation. Now, that redemption is realized by him, by his suffering, by his real solidarity with sinful human beings, and by his active obedience to the Father. How would he have been able to realize all that without entering into our flesh, without partaking at all points of our human existence?"<sup>26</sup>

What is important for Luther is that not only did God become flesh, but that Christ entered into solidarity with our *sinful* humanity. Luther states this in a graphic way:

When the merciful Father saw that we were being oppressed through the Law, that we were being held under a curse, and that we should not be liberated from it by anything, He sent his Son into the world, heaped all the sins of all men upon him and said to him, "Be Peter the denier, Paul the persecutor, blasphemer and assaulter, David the adulterer; the sinner who ate the apple in Paradise; the thief on the cross. In short, be the person of all men, the one who has committed the sins of all men."<sup>27</sup>

In this vivid explanation, we see the extent of the solidarity which Christ displayed in the incarnation. Christ identifies and enters into solidarity not only with humanity, but with the sinfulness and the suffering of humanity. Christ's whole life is then one of saving significance. That is why, for Luther, the word "cross" refers not just to Christ's death, but to his suffering and struggles throughout life. Christ's death is a result of his life and because he took humanity's sin upon himself. It is God's very presence with us which brings salvation.

### b. God-for-us

Second, there is also in Luther's understanding of atonement the stress on God-for-us. His repeated use of "for us" (*pro nobis*) and "for me" (*pro me*) constantly points to the fact that God does something for us, something beyond entering into

solidarity with us. One of the best examples of this theme is found in Luther's concept of the "joyous exchange". In a letter to George Spenlein, dated April 8, 1516, he writes: "Therefore my dear Friar, learn Christ and him crucified. Learn to praise him, and despairing of yourself, say, 'Lord Jesus, you are my righteousness, just as I am your sin. You have taken upon yourself what is mine and given me what is yours. You have taken upon yourself what you were not and have given to me what I was not.'"<sup>28</sup>

Through this exchange, God does more than identify with humanity; God actually acts in Christ for us, giving us a righteousness which is foreign to us. This brings into focus the whole emphasis which Luther places on justification by faith through grace (forensic justification). God acts, and liberates us from the sin which we are unable to overcome. God does what we cannot do. Atonement, then, is more than Christ becoming Peter or Paul or David, or entering into solidarity with sinful humanity; it involves Christ dying in order to defeat sin and its powers. Atonement occurs because sin and the law cannot ultimately conquer his invincible righteousness or keep him in the tomb. Christ's righteousness defeats those powers which would seek to keep us in oppression. Since sinful humanity could not do this, Christ did it "for us".

This duality of the "God-for-us" and "God-with-us" approach to atonement is perhaps best illustrated in Luther's comments on Hebrews 2:3. There, he says that salvation is both something which is done for us (*pro nobis*), and something which Christ does by being in our presence (*coram nobis*).<sup>29</sup> Salvation occurs, therefore, both *extra nos* (outside of us, through Christ acting for us), and through solidarity, by Christ being with us.

The danger in focusing only on the Christ-with-us is that it can lead to imitating the Christ who is in our midst as a means to salvation, rather than trusting in Christ alone in order to be justified *coram Deo* (in the presence of God). God's act of justification must come before our imitation (*imitatio*). As Luther explains:

If any man wants to follow Christ as an example, he must firmly believe in the divine sign (the *sacramentum*) that Christ suffered and died for him. Consequently, those who contrive to blot out their sins by good works and penitential disciplines do err very greatly,

for they begin by trying to follow the example set by Christ when they ought to begin with the sacrament wrought by Christ (i.e., the passion of Christ).<sup>30</sup>

Merely imitating Christ's suffering would glorify suffering, while ignoring what God does for us and God's word spoken to us. For Luther, that would be the cross without the word of promise. The other danger is the word of promise without the cross: what Bonhoeffer called "cheap grace". It accepts God declaring us righteous because of Christ, but it ignores the fact that, in this declaration, we are united into Christ's death and resurrection. The word of God is effective!

In summary, Luther's understanding of atonement emphasized both the God-for-us and the God-with-us aspects of salvation. God in Christ must become completely one with us, even to the extent of entering into our sinfulness. Only then can Christ exchange his righteousness for our sinfulness, his life for our death. Christ acts for us to bring about our salvation, because we cannot achieve it on our own. Christ does for us what we cannot. The Christian is called to follow the Christ in response to this. This means entering into the darkness, facing suffering, and finally dying before one can enter into the new way which was previously unknown to us, hidden from our eyes. Salvation comes from the One whom we would least expect—an outcast on the cross. There, in the manger and at the foot of the cross, not only is the hidden God revealed to us through the eyes of faith, but there salvation is also accomplished for us by the One who came into our midst and entered into our world of sin and suffering.

#### 4. Summary

The theology of the cross, as Luther explained it, has both Christological and methodological aspects. It is both a theology centred on the cross event and an orthopraxis.

As a Christology, it takes as its starting point the incarnation. In Christ, God has chosen to be hidden from the view of speculative theologians (theologians of glory). The theology of the cross points constantly to a "down-to-earth" God. It is this God in our midst who acts to save us by being in solidarity with us, even to the extent of Christ exchanging his righteousness for our sinfulness. Christ does not escape from

the cross, but goes through death in order that we might have life. The darkness is not avoided but faced head on. The cross also reveals that God acts for us. God does more than dwell with us through Christ. God also acts decisively for us, to give us that righteousness which we cannot obtain.

This Christological understanding of the theology of the cross provides the foundation for Luther's theology of the cross to act as an orthopraxis or way to "do" theology. An adequate discussion of this cannot be covered in this article. Suffice it to say that Luther's operating principle was to start with the Christ revealed to us in our midst, the one who suffered and died. The cross and sufferings of Christ are where God has chosen to be revealed. The cross tests our perception of reality and, in particular, our view of what it means to be human. The problem with a theology of glory is that humans want to climb this ladder into heaven trying to be God (or at least like God), while ignoring their humanness. If the ladder does not help a person to escape, then the theologians of glory try to create heaven on earth by separating the world into sacred and profane spheres. That way, they can spiritually justify ignoring their neighbours.

That is not the way of the theology of the cross. God has chosen to "hide" in this earth, so that only by faith and trust will one discover that one's neighbour may be the Christ in our midst. The reality of human life is that it involves struggles, suffering, death and darkness. The cross and struggles of life cannot be avoided by the Christian any more than they could be avoided by Christ. Rather, they are to be entered into, not as if they were some holy work which earns eternal merit, but as a consequence of entrusting one's life to God. Only by going through death can the resurrection be reached. Thus, the theology of the cross calls for us to focus on the Christ hidden in our midst, to deal with the reality of what it means to be human rather than trying to be gods, and the importance of solidarity with those who are in the midst of struggles and oppression. This focus makes the theology of the cross, as a Christology and as a methodology, very relevant for our context in the late twentieth century.

## Notes

- 1 Marc Lienhard, *Luther: Witness to Jesus Christ. Stages and Themes of the Reformer's Christology*, trans. Edwin H. Robertson (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1982) 136.
- 2 Luther's use of *deus absconditus* has come under much scrutiny, with a wide array of conclusions as to its significance and meaning. Two works are important in this area: John Dillenberger, *God Hidden and Revealed: The Interpretation of Luther's Deus Absconditus and Its Significance for Religious Thought* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1953), and Helmut Brandt, *Luthers Lehre von verborgenen Gott. Eine Untersuchung zu dem offenbarungsgeschichtlichen Ansatz seiner Theologie*, *Theologische Arbeiten*, vol. 8 (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1958). Other works worth consulting are B. A. Gerrish, "'To the Unknown God': Luther and Calvin on the Hiddenness of God," *The Journal of Religion* 53 (July 1973), 263–292; and Egil Grislis, "Martin Luther's View of the Hidden God: The Problem of the *Deus Absconditus* in Luther's Treatise *De Servo Arbitrio*," *McCormick Quarterly* 21 (November 1967) 81–94.
- 3 Primarily Gabriel Biel and John Duns Scotus. Luther had studied their writings diligently in university. The whole reaction against scholasticism is delineated in the 1517 "Disputation Against Scholastic Theology," *Luther's Works*, American Edition (Philadelphia: Fortress, and St. Louis: Concordia, 1957–1986), Volume 31:3–16 (hereafter referred to as LW), and *D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus, 1883ff), Volume 1:221–28 (hereafter referred to as WA).
- 4 A theology of glory avoids the cross and the incarnation, as well as the reality of this world, which was where God had chosen to be revealed to humanity. William Hordern calls it a "theology of triumphalism". It assumes that once a person has faith, God must rescue him or her from all struggles and uncertainties, and that the individual will always triumph over evil. William E. Hordern, *Experience and Faith: The Significance of Luther for Understanding Today's Experiential Religions* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1983) 85–105.
- 5 LW 31:52; WA 1:362.2–3 (Heidelberg Disputation, May, 1518).
- 6 LW 31:52–3; WA 1:362.11–14 (1518 Heidelberg Disputation).
- 7 LW 31:53; WA 1:362.13–14 (1518 Heidelberg Disputation).
- 8 Alister E. McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985) 167.
- 9 McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, 175.
- 10 LW 21:33–4; WA 32:325 (1521 Sermon on the Mount).
- 11 LW 24:65; WA 45:520 (1537 Commentary on John). See also LW 26:29; WA 40:77–78 (1535 Galatians Commentary); and LW 17:330–331; WA 31/2:516–7 (1529 Isaiah Lectures).

- 12 LW 24:67; WA 45:521-2 (1537 Commentary on John). See also LW 14:114, note 9 (1531 Commentary on Psalm 147:13).
- 13 See LW 51:26; WA 1:138.13ff (1517 Sermon).
- 14 This reference to Exodus 33 is clearly implied in Thesis 20 of the Heidelberg Disputation. Unfortunately, the American Edition of Luther's works obscures this reference by translating *posteriori Dei* as "the manifest things of God", rather than "the backside of God".
- 15 WA 10/I/1:356.9 (1522 Sermons).
- 16 McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, 174. Regin Prenter says much the same thing in his work, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, Facet Books Historical Series-17 (Reformation), Charles S. Anderson, editor (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971) 4.
- 17 LW 31:53; WA 1:362.21-2 (Thesis 21 of the 1512 Heidelberg Disputation).
- 18 LW 33:62; WA 18:633.7 (*The Bondage of the Will*, 1526).
- 19 LW 25:287; WA 56:299.13ff (1515-1516 Lectures on Romans).
- 20 Von Loewenich, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, 106.
- 21 Luther writes, "The command to you is not to crawl into a corner of the desert, but to run out, if that is where you have been, and to offer your hands and your feet and your whole body, and to wager everything you have and do" (LW 21:27; WA 32:319-20). Faith is not, therefore, an escape or security from the world, as the monks would do by going into the desert to be strengthened by faith. Rather, it involves entering into the uncertainties of this world and risking all, certain only of God's abiding promises! Paul Althaus is thus correct when he states: "The theology of the cross is the theology of faith: the theology of faith is and remains, however, the theology of temptation [*Theologie der Anfechtung*]." (*The Theology of Martin Luther*, trans. Robert C. Schultz [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966] 33-34).
- 22 LW 25:232; WA 56:246.14ff (1515-1516 Romans Commentary). See also LW 4:321; WA 43:367.35ff (1540 Genesis Commentary).
- 23 LW 30:29-30; WA 12:285.9ff (1522 Sermons on 1 Peter). See also Lienhard, *Luther: Witness to Jesus Christ*, 176-185.
- 24 Gerhard Forde uses this terminology in his book, *Where God Meets Man* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972) 33ff.
- 25 LW 26:278; WA 40:434 (1535 Galatians Commentary).
- 26 Lienhard, *Luther: Witness to Jesus Christ*, 221. This theme of solidarity with sinful humanity bringing about our salvation is one of Luther's common themes. See also 132-133. Forde echoes this view as well: "Atonement takes place when Christ absolutely entered our place and is attacked by the law, by sin, by death and the devil" (Gerhard O. Forde, "Luther's Theology of the Cross," *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. 2, Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, eds. [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984] 54-55).
- 27 LW 26:280; WA 40:437 (1535 Galatians Commentary).

28 LW 48:12; WABr 1.35-6.

29 LW 29:123; WA 57/III:113-14 (1517-1518 Hebrews Commentary).

30 Translation taken from *Luther: Early Theological Works*, James Atkinson, ed., Library of Christian Classics: Ichthus Edition (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962) 46. See another English translation in LW 29:124. From WA 57/III:114 (1517-1518 Hebrews Commentary).