

The Pastor's Quarry

First Baptist Church of Granite Falls, MN
July, 2010

A Classical Yarn, Part I

A parable.

In the shadow of tall glass skyscrapers and smokestacks there squatted a small apartment building. Cheap and tawdry, it had long been a haven for students of the four colleges of the sprawling megalopolis.

Late one night a noxious pall descended upon the dwelling-place, engulfing it and permeating every room therein. The students who were studying at their desks nodded, then slept. And they dreamed a dream.

And so it was that four students woke up together in a dream-world. Blinking in the light, each of them was driven by the same thought: *Kill the Minotaur*. They knew not from whence this thought came, nor did they wonder. It simply was. Thrilled with this mission, they stood ready before a yawning door to an underground labyrinth. And inexplicably, each held a sword that gleamed in the sunlight.

With a face that bore the timeless beauty of ancient wisdom, a woman robed in white stood at the entrance. In her hands she held four balls of yarn, and she held out one to each of the four students.

The first student to accept his ball of yarn was from the Institute of Technology (IT). He grinned impetuously and plunged into the labyrinth, trailing his yarn behind him. The second student was from the forward-thinking College of Liberal Arts (CLA). He too accepted his ball of yarn and trailed it behind him absent-mindedly as he crossed the threshold into the labyrinth, gripping his sword tightly and peering anxiously about him as he disappeared from sight. The third student was from Hereditas, a very small college that did nothing but read the greatest books of old. He accepted his ball of yarn and carefully unrolled it behind him as he stepped resolutely into the darkness.

The fourth student was from the Bible College. Shaking his head and smiling, he waved away the ball of yarn. "I have no need of it," he said with a smile, "for I have faith. I shall find my way back out by following my heart."

"Take it, I pray thee," said the woman, urgently, "for it is not only for thine escape. By it shalt thou retrace thine steps when thou lovest thine way."

But the Bible College student gave her a pitying look and would not be persuaded. Humming a cheerful tune, he plunged into the darkness.

Inside, the IT student encountered a troll who offered him a sack of gold coins for his ball of yarn. He marveled at his good fortune at being the first one into the labyrinth, and so the first one to receive such an offer. Gladly he sold his ball of yarn, for he had no need of it; he had confidence in his analytical mind and his sharp powers of observation that he knew would serve him well in his quest.

The CLA student grew to appreciate the contours of the labyrinth for their own sake, and was exultant at having discovered this new genre in art. Unfortunately, in his excitement to reach out and take in as much of this new art form as he could, he became disoriented in the darkness, bumped his head, and stumbled. To his dismay he realized that his yarn had parted in the mishap, and he could not find the bitter end by which he could retrace his steps. He wandered until his feet splashed in a pool of some sort, the sound echoing off the walls of what must have been a huge cavern. He sat down and wept in despair for quite some time. Finally, wiping his eyes, he stood and squared his shoulders. "I shall plant one end of my yarn here," he said to himself with determination, "so that I shall at least be able to find my way back to some place that I have found along the way." And so he did, naming that place the Pool of Despair. Off he trod, humming the "Ode to Joy" as he went, willing himself to be hopeful as he ventured away from the pool.

To be continued.

Mark Your Calendars

Sun., August 1, 10:30 A.M.: Ordinance of Christian Baptism for Isaiah Streblov, Sophia White, and Olivia White at the conclusion of the morning worship service.

Fri., August 13, 7:00 P.M.: Music and book discussion in the lower level of the church building.

Fri., August 27, 7:00 P.M.: Book discussion in the lower level of the church building.

Sun., August 29, 1:15 P.M.: During the afternoon assembly, I shall present the next installment of the Fifth-Sunday Biography Series.

Memory Verses

Here are the verses we will recite from the ESV at the beginning of the Sunday School hour, one week after the date assigned:

Jul 25: Deu 7:9

Aug 1: Deu 10:12-13

Aug 8: Rom 11:34-36

Aug 15: Rom 12:1-2

Aug 22: Psa 56:3-4

Aug 29: Psa 62:5-8

Quote of the Month

*The present is the past
rolled up for action;
the past is the present
unrolled for
understanding.*

Will Durant
The Story of Civilization

May God Bestow on Us His Grace

Martin Luther (1483-1546)

May God bestow on us His grace,
With blessings rich provide us,
And may the brightness of His face
To life eternal guide us
That we His saving health may know,
His gracious will and pleasure,
And also to the heathen show
Christ's riches without measure
And unto God convert them.

Thine over all shall be the praise
And thanks of every nation,
And all the world with joy shall raise
The voice of exultation;
For Thou shalt judge the earth, O Lord,
Nor suffer sin to flourish;
Thy people's pasture is Thy Word
Their souls to feed and nourish,
In righteous paths to keep them.

Oh, let the people praise Thy worth,
In all good works increasing;
The land shall plenteous fruit bring forth,
Thy Word is rich in blessing,
May God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit bless us!
Let all the world praise Him alone,
Let solemn awe possess us,
Now let our hearts say, Amen.

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A Bit of History

In last month's issue of *The Pastor's Quarry*, I began exploring the changes that Martin Luther made to the Roman Catholic liturgy of his day. I would like to explore those changes further, but first we must understand the basic structure of liturgy that has endured from the time of the early church to this day.

"As early as the second century, records indicate that the church divided its worship into two major segments: the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Upper Room."¹ The "Liturgy of the Word" corresponds to what we currently enjoy on Sunday mornings – a worship service that reaches its climax in a sermon. The "Liturgy of the Upper Room" corresponds to what we call a Communion Service. For most of history, Christian worship included both of these liturgies in a single worship service. The Liturgy of the Word came first, followed by the Liturgy of the Upper Room after the dismissal of all but communicant members. Luther preserved the unity of these two liturgies, but he made significant changes to each.

Let us first consider the changes that Luther made to the Liturgy of the Word. This traditional liturgy moved from Preparation for the Word (prayers, singing, and scripture reading) to Proclamation of the Word (the sermon). Luther preserved this order, but made two major changes. First, he turned over certain elements to the congregation. Second, he translated the liturgy into the common tongue of the people.

With these changes, Luther deliberately drew the people into active participation. The Roman liturgy began with an Introit ("a Scripture spoken or sung that sets the theme of the service"²) offered by a priest or choir, but Luther decided to start with a congregational hymn! With this change, "right from the beginning, the Lutheran service reflects the German monk's distinctive theology."³ This was a bold statement that the congregation was there not to worship God through the intercession of a priest, but to worship God directly as priests themselves. Next was the traditional Introit, *Kyrie* (prayer for mercy, Heb 4:16), *Gloria* (Luk 2:14), Collect (prayer of petition), Epistle Reading, Gradual (a psalm sung), and Gospel Reading. Then the people recited a creed and once again sang a congregational hymn:

Before the Sermon, the people help in the final preparation for the Word that will be preached by singing a Sermon Hymn. The Lutheran Sermon always concentrates on the gospel . . . After the Sermon, the people sing again. They are presumed to be co-laborers in the gospel, not merely those who are passively represented by a priest. So, they respond in affirmation to the instruction from the Word with a Post-Sermon Hymn. For Luther, the church is God's "mouth house," and everyone inside participates in the proclamation of the gospel.⁴

Luther eventually translated the liturgy into the common tongue of the people, but not until he had spent years laboring with his musicians to do it well. "He was slow in writing a fully vernacular liturgy because he was musically astute enough and linguistically sensitive enough to know that more is involved than just translating texts. German requires a totally different melody."⁵ Luther took this task seriously.

These are the changes Luther made to the Liturgy of the Word. Next, I shall explore the changes he made to the Liturgy of the Upper Room.

¹ Brian Chapell, *Christ-Centered Worship: Letting the Gospel Shape our Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 19.

² Chapell, *Worship*, 36.

³ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁵ Vernon P. Kleinig, "Lutheran Liturgies from Martin Luther to Wilhelm Löhe," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 62:2 (April 1998): 131.