

**Appendices for  
Grow in Grace!  
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*the*  
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*at*  
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WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY

## Appendix A – Reading from *The Contemplative Pastor*

### Redefinitions

*religiosa sollicitudo pro Deo*, a blasphemous anxiety to do God's work for him.

I (and most pastors, I believe) become busy for two reasons; both are ignoble.

*I am busy because I am vain.* I want to appear important. Significant. What better way than to be busy? The incredible hours, the crowded schedule, and the heavy demands on my time are proof to myself — and to all who will notice — that I am important. If I go into a doctor's office and find there's no one waiting, and I see through a half-open door the doctor reading a book, I wonder if he's any good. A good doctor will have people lined up waiting to see him; a good doctor will not have time to read a book. Although I grumble about waiting my turn in a busy doctor's office, I am also impressed with his importance.

Such experiences affect me. I live in a society in which crowded schedules and harassed conditions are evidence of importance, so I develop a crowded schedule and harassed conditions. When others notice, they acknowledge my significance, and my vanity is fed.

*I am busy because I am lazy.* I indolently let others decide what I will do instead of resolutely deciding myself. I let people who do not understand the work of the pastor write the agenda for my day's work because I am too slipshod to write it myself. The pastor is a shadow figure in these people's minds, a marginal person vaguely connected with matters of God and good will. Anything remotely religious or somehow well-intentioned can be properly assigned to the pastor.

Because these assignments to pastoral service are made sincerely, I go along with them. It takes effort to refuse, and besides, there's always the danger that the refusal will be interpreted as a rebuff, a betrayal of religion, and a calloused disregard for people in need.

## II

### *The Unbusy Pastor*

*How can I persuade a person to live by faith and not by works if I have to juggle my schedule constantly to make everything fit into place?*

THE ONE piece of mail certain to go unread into my wastebasket is the letter addressed to the "busy pastor." Not that the phrase doesn't describe me at times, but I refuse to give my attention to someone who encourages what is worst in me.

I'm not arguing the accuracy of the adjective; I am, though, contesting the way it's used to flatter and express sympathy.

"The poor man," we say. "He's so devoted to his flock; the work is endless, and he sacrifices himself so unstintingly." But the word *busy* is the symptom not of commitment but of betrayal. It is not devotion but defection. The adjective *busy* set as a modifier to *pastor* should sound to our ears like *adulterous* to characterize a wife or *embezzling* to describe a banker. It is an outrageous scandal, a blasphemous affront.

Hilary of Tours diagnosed our pastoral busyness as ir-

It was a favorite theme of C. S. Lewis that only lazy people work hard. By lazily abdicating the essential work of deciding and directing, establishing values and setting goals, other people do it for us; then we find ourselves frantically, at the last minute, trying to satisfy a half dozen different demands on our time, none of which is essential to our vocation, to stave off the disaster of disappointing someone.

But if I vainly crowd my day with conspicuous activity or let others fill my day with imperious demands, I don't have time to do my proper work, the work to which I have been called. How can I lead people into the quiet place beside the still waters if I am in perpetual motion? How can I persuade a person to live by faith and not by works if I have to juggle my schedule constantly to make everything fit into place?

### Much Ado about the Significant

If I'm not busy making my mark in the world or doing what everyone expects me to do, what do I do? What is my proper work? What does it mean to be a pastor? If no one asked me to do anything, what would I do?

Three things.

*I can be a pastor who prays.* I want to cultivate my relationship with God. I want all of life to be intimate — sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously — with the God who made, directs, and loves me. And I want to waken others to the nature and centrality of prayer. I want to be a person in this community to whom others can come without hesitation, without wondering if it is appropriate, to get direction in prayer and praying. I want to do the original work of being in deepening conversation with the God who reveals himself to me and addresses me by name. I don't want to dispense mimeo-

graphed hand-outs that describe God's business; I want to witness out of my own experience. I don't want to live as a parasite on the first-hand spiritual life of others, but to be personally involved with all my senses, tasting and seeing that the Lord is good.

I know it takes time to develop a life of prayer: set-aside, disciplined, deliberate time. It isn't accomplished on the run, nor by offering prayers from a pulpit or at a hospital bedside. I know I can't be busy and pray at the same time. I can be active and pray; I can work and pray; but I cannot be busy and pray. I cannot be inwardly rushed, distracted, or dispersed. In order to pray I have to be paying more attention to God than to what people are saying to me; to God than to my clamoring ego. Usually, for that to happen there must be a deliberate withdrawal from the noise of the day, a disciplined detachment from the insatiable self.

*I can be a pastor who preaches.* I want to speak the Word of God that is Scripture in the language and rhythms of the people I live with. I am given an honored and protected time each week to do that. The pulpit is a great gift, and I want to use it well.

I have no interest in "delivering sermons," challenging people to face the needs of the day or giving bright, inspirational messages. With the help provided by scholars and editors, I can prepare a fairly respectable sermon of either sort in a few hours each week, a sermon that will pass muster with most congregations. They might not think it the greatest sermon, but they would accept it.

But what I want to do can't be done that way. I need a drenching in Scripture; I require an immersion in biblical studies. I need reflective hours over the pages of Scripture as well as personal struggles with the meaning of Scripture. That takes far more time than it takes to prepare a sermon.

I want the people who come to worship in my congregation each Sunday to hear the Word of God preached in such a way that they hear its distinctive note of authority as God's Word, and to know that their own lives are being addressed on their home territory. A sound outline and snappy illustrations don't make that happen.

This kind of preaching is a creative act that requires quietness and solitude, concentration and intensity. "All speech that moves men," contends R. E. C. Browne, "was minted when some man's mind was poised and still." I can't do that when I'm busy.

*I can be a pastor who listens.* A lot of people approach me through the week to tell me what's going on in their lives. I want to have the energy and time to really listen to them so that when they're through, they know at least one other person has some inkling of what they're feeling and thinking.

Listening is in short supply in the world today; people aren't used to being listened to. I know how easy it is to avoid the tough, intense work of listening by being busy — as when I let a hospital patient know there are ten more people I have to see. (Have to? I'm not indispensable to any of them, and I am here with this one.) Too much of pastoral visitation is punching the clock, assuring people we're on the job, being busy, earning our pay.

Pastoral listening requires unhurried leisure, even if it's only for five minutes. Leisure is a quality of spirit, not a quantity of time. Only in that ambience of leisure do persons know they are listened to with absolute seriousness, treated with dignity and importance. Speaking to people does not have the same personal intensity as listening to them. The question I put to myself is not "How many people have you spoken to about Christ this week?" but "How many people have you listened to in Christ this week?" The number of persons listened to

must necessarily be less than the number spoken to. Listening to a story always takes more time than delivering a message, so I must discard my compulsion to count, to compile the statistics that will justify my existence.

I can't listen if I'm busy. When my schedule is crowded, I'm not free to listen: I have to keep my next appointment; I have to get to the next meeting. But if I provide margins to my day, there is ample time to listen.

## The Means to the Margins

"Yes, but how?" The appointment calendar is the tool with which to get unbusy. It's a gift of the Holy Ghost (unlisted by St. Paul, but a gift nonetheless) that provides the pastor with the means to get time and acquire leisure for praying, preaching, and listening. It is more effective than a protective secretary; it is less expensive than a retreat house. It is the one thing everyone in our society accepts without cavil as authoritative. The authority once given to Scripture is now ascribed to the appointment calendar. The dogma of verbal inerrancy has not been discarded, only re-assigned.

When I appeal to my appointment calendar, I am beyond criticism. If someone approaches me and asks me to pronounce the invocation at an event and I say, "I don't think I should do that; I was planning to use that time to pray," the response will be, "Well, I'm sure you can find another time to do that." But if I say, "My appointment calendar will not permit it," no further questions are asked. If someone asks me to attend a committee meeting and I say, "I was thinking of taking my wife out to dinner that night; I haven't listened to her carefully for several days," the response will be, "But you are very much needed at this meeting; couldn't you arrange another evening with your

wife?" But if I say, "The appointment calendar will not permit it," there is no further discussion.

The trick, of course, is to get to the calendar before anyone else does. I mark out the times for prayer, for reading, for leisure, for the silence and solitude out of which creative work — prayer, preaching, and listening — can issue.

I find that when these central needs are met, there is plenty of time for everything else. And there is much else, for the pastor is not, and should not be, exempt from the hundred menial tasks or the administrative humdrum. These also are pastoral ministry. But the only way I have found to accomplish them without resentment and anxiety is to first take care of the priorities. If there is no time to nurture these essentials, I become a busy pastor, harassed and anxious, a whining, compulsive Martha instead of a contemplative Mary.

A number of years ago I was a busy pastor and had some back trouble that required therapy. I went for one hour sessions three times a week, and no one minded that I wasn't available for those three hours. Because the three hours had the authority of an appointment calendar behind them, they were sacrosanct.

On the analogy of that experience, I venture to prescribe appointments for myself to take care of the needs not only of my body, but also of my mind and emotions, my spirit and imagination. One week, in addition to daily half-hour conferences with St. Paul, my calendar reserved a two-hour block of time with Fyodor Dostoevsky. My spirit needed that as much as my body ten years ago needed the physical therapist. If nobody is going to prescribe it for me, I will prescribe it for myself.

## The Poised Harpooner

In Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, there is a turbulent scene in which a whaleboat scuds across a frothing ocean in pursuit of the great, white whale, Moby Dick. The sailors are laboring fiercely, every muscle taut, all attention and energy concentrated on the task. The cosmic conflict between good and evil is joined; chaotic sea and demonic sea monster versus the morally outraged man, Captain Ahab. In this boat, however, there is one man who does nothing. He doesn't hold an oar; he doesn't perspire; he doesn't shout. He is languid in the crash and the cursing. This man is the harpooner, quiet and poised, waiting. And then this sentence: "To insure the greatest efficiency in the dart, the harpooners of this world must start to their feet out of idleness, and not out of toil."

Melville's sentence is a text to set alongside the psalmist's "Be still, and know that I am God" (Ps. 46:10), and alongside Isaiah's "In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength" (Isa. 30:15).

Pastors know there is something radically wrong with the world. We are also engaged in doing something about it. The stimulus of conscience, the memory of ancient outrage, and the challenge of biblical command involve us in the anarchic sea that is the world. The white whale, symbol of evil, and the crippled captain, personification of violated righteousness, are joined in battle. History is a novel of spiritual conflict. In such a world, noise is inevitable, and immense energy is expended. But if there is no harpooner in the boat, there will be no proper finish to the chase. Or if the harpooner is exhausted, having abandoned his assignment and become an oarsman, he will not be ready and accurate when it is time to throw his javelin.

Somehow it always seems more compelling to assume the work of the oarsman, laboring mightily in a moral cause, throw-

ing our energy into a fray we know has immortal consequence. And it always seems more dramatic to take on the outrage of a Captain Ahab, obsessed with a vision of vengeance and retaliation, brooding over the ancient injury done by the Enemy. There is, though, other important work to do. Someone must throw the dart. Some must be harpooners.

The metaphors Jesus used for the life of ministry are frequently images of the single, the small, and the quiet, which have effects far in excess of their appearance: salt, leaven, seed. Our culture publicizes the opposite emphasis: the big, the multitudinous, the noisy. It is, then, a strategic necessity that pastors deliberately ally themselves with the quiet, poised harpooners, and not leap, frenzied, to the oars. There is far more need that we develop the skills of the harpooner than the muscles of the oarsman. It is far more biblical to learn quietness and attentiveness before God than to be overtaken by what John Oman named the twin perils of ministry, “flurry and worry.” For flurry dissipates energy, and worry constipates it.

Years ago I noticed, as all pastors must, that when a pastor left a neighboring congregation, the congregational life carried on very well, thank you. A guest preacher was assigned to conduct Sunday worship, and nearby pastors took care of the funerals, weddings, and crisis counseling. A congregation would go for months, sometimes as long as a year or two, without a regular pastor. And I thought, *All these things I am so busy doing — they aren't being done in that pastorless congregation, and nobody seems to mind.* I asked myself, *What if I, without leaving, quit doing them right now? Would anybody mind?* I did, and they don't.

## Appendix B – Reading from *Eat This Book*

### Preface

So what was he doing, “reading” his New Testament on the park bench that autumn Saturday?

When my wife later told me the story, I also was impressed and amused. But after a few days the story developed in my imagination into a parable. At the time I was immersed in writing this book, an extended conversation in the practice of spiritual reading; I was finding it hard to keep my hoped-for readers in focus. They kept blurring into a faceless crowd of Bible-readers and Bible-nonreaders, Bible teachers and Bible preachers. Is there an impediment, a difficulty, that we all share in common when we pick up our Bibles and open them? I think there is. Hans gave me my focus.

\* \* \*

My wife picked up our seven-year-old grandson at noon on an October Saturday at Holy Nativity Church. Hans had been attending a class in preparation for his First Communion. They drove off, headed to a local museum that was featuring a special children’s exhibit on gemstones. On the way they stopped at a city park to eat their lunches. The two of them ate while sitting on a park bench, Hans chattering all the while — he had been chattering nonstop ever since leaving the church. Lunch completed — his was a lettuce and mayonnaise sandwich that he had made himself (“I’m trying to eat more healthy, Grandma”) — Hans shifted away from his grandmother, faced out into the park, took from his bookbag a New Testament that he had just been given by his pastor, opened it, held it up before his eyes, and proceeded to read, moving his eyes back and forth across the page in a devout but uncharacteristic silence. After a long minute, he closed the Testament and returned it to his bookbag: “Okay, Grandma, I’m ready — let’s go to the museum.”

His grandmother was impressed. She was also amused because Hans cannot yet read. He wants to read. His sister can read. Some of his friends can read. But Hans can’t read. And he *knows* he can’t read, sometimes announcing to us, “I can’t read,” as if to reinforce our awareness of what he is missing.

I have been at this business of reading the Bible ever since I was not much older than Hans. Twenty years after I first started reading it I became a pastor and a professor; for over fifty years now I have been vocationally involved in getting the Christian Scriptures into the minds and hearts, arms and legs, ears and mouths of men and women. And I haven’t found it easy. Why isn’t it easy?

Simply this. The challenge — never negligible — regarding the Christian Scriptures is getting them read, but read on their own terms, as God’s revelation. It seems as if it would be the easiest thing in the world. After five or six years of schooling, schooling that the whole community pitches in to pay for, most of us can read most of what is written in the Bible. If you don’t own one and can’t afford to buy one, you can steal a Bible from nearly any hotel or motel in the country. And without fear of arrest — who has ever been arrested on a misdemeanor charge for stealing a Bible in this fair land?

But as it turns out, in this business of living the Christian life, ranking high among the most neglected aspects is one having to do with the reading of the Christian Scriptures. Not that Christians don’t own and read their Bibles. And not that Christians don’t believe that their Bibles are the word of God. What is neglected is reading the Scriptures formatively, reading in order to live.

Hans on that park bench, his eyes moving back and forth across the pages of his Bible, "reading" but not reading, reverent and devout but uncomprehending, honoring in a most precious way this book but without awareness that it has anything to do with either the lettuce and mayonnaise sandwich he has just eaten or the museum he is about to visit, oblivious to his grandmother next to him: Hans "reading" his Bible. A parable.

A parable of the Scriptures depersonalized into an object to be honored; the Scriptures detached from precedence and consequence, from lunch and museum; the Scriptures in a park elevated over life on the street, a book-on-a-pedestal text, buffered by an expansive and manicured lawn from the noise and stink of diesel-fueled eighteen-wheelers.

It is the devil's own work to take what is presently endearing and innocent in Hans and perpetuate it into a lifetime of reading marked by devout indifference.

What I want to say, countering the devil, is that in order to read the Scriptures adequately and accurately, it is necessary at the same time to live them. Not to live them as a prerequisite to reading them, and not to live them in consequence of reading them, but to live them as we read them, the living and reading reciprocal, body language and spoken words, the back-and-forthness assimilating the reading to the living, the living to the reading. Reading the Scriptures is not an activity discrete from living the gospel but one integral to it. It means letting Another have a say in everything we are saying and doing. It is as easy as that. And as hard.

## CHAPTER 1

# "The Forbidding Discipline of Spiritual Reading"

Years ago I owned a dog who had a fondness for large bones. Fortunately for him we lived in the forested foothills of Montana. In his forest rambles he often came across a carcass of a white-tailed deer that had been brought down by the coyotes. Later he would show up on our stone, lakeside patio carrying or dragging his trophy, usually a shank or a rib; he was a small dog and the bone was often nearly as large as he was. Anyone who has owned a dog knows the routine: he would prance and gambol playfully before us with his prize, wagging his tail, proud of his find, courting our approval. And of course, we approved: we lavished praise, telling him what a good dog he was. But after awhile, sated with our applause, he would drag the bone off twenty yards or so to a more private place, usually the shade of a large moss-covered boulder, and go to work on the bone. The social aspects of the bone were behind him; now the pleasure became solitary. He gnawed the bone, turned it over and around, licked it, worried it. Sometimes we could hear a low rumble or growl, what in a cat would be a purr. He was obviously enjoying himself and in no hurry. After a leisurely couple of hours he would bury it and return the next day to take it up again. An average bone lasted about a week.

I always took delight in my dog's delight, his playful seriousness, his childlike spontaneities now totally absorbed in "the one thing

needful." But imagine my further delight in coming upon a phrase one day while reading Isaiah in which I found the poet-prophet observing something similar to what I enjoyed so much in my dog, except that his animal was a lion instead of a dog: "As a lion or a young lion growls over his prey . . ." (Isa. 31:4). "Growls" is the word that caught my attention and brought me that little "pop" of delight. What my dog did over his precious bone, making those low throaty rumbles of pleasure as he gnawed, enjoyed, and savored his prize, Isaiah's lion did to his prey. The nugget of my delight was noticing the Hebrew word here translated as "growl" (*hagah*) but usually translated as "meditate," as in the Psalm 1 phrase describing the blessed man or woman whose "delight is in the law of the LORD," on which "he meditates day and night" (v. 2). Or in Psalm 63: "when I think of thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the watches of the night" (v. 6). But Isaiah uses this word to refer to a lion growling over his prey the way my dog worried a bone.

*Hagah* is a word that our Hebrew ancestors used frequently for reading the kind of writing that deals with our souls. But "meditate" is far too tame a word for what is being signified. "Meditate" seems more suited to what I do in a quiet chapel on my knees with a candle burning on the altar. Or to what my wife does while sitting in a rose garden with the Bible open in her lap. But when Isaiah's lion and my dog meditated they chewed and swallowed, using teeth and tongue, stomach and intestines: Isaiah's lion meditating his goat (if that's what it was); my dog meditating his bone. There is a certain kind of writing that invites this kind of reading, soft purrs and low growls as we taste and savor, anticipate and take in the sweet and spicy, mouth-watering and soul-energizing morsel words — "O taste and see that the LORD is good!" (Ps. 34:8). Isaiah uses the same word (*hagah*) a few pages later for the cooing of a dove (38:14). One careful reader of this text caught the spirit of the word when he said that *hagah* means that a person "is lost in his religion,"<sup>1</sup> which is exactly what my dog was in his bone. Baron Friedrich von Hügel compared this way of reading to

"The Forbidding Discipline of Spiritual Reading"

"letting a very slowly dissolving lozenge melt imperceptibly in your mouth."<sup>2</sup>

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I am interested in cultivating this kind of reading, the only kind of reading that is congruent with what is written in our Holy Scriptures, but also with all writing that is intended to change our lives and not just stuff some information into the cells of our brain. All serious and good writing anticipates precisely this kind of reading — ruminative and leisurely, a dalliance with words in contrast to wolfing down information. But our canonical writers who wrestled God's revelation into Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek sentences — Moses and Isaiah, Ezekiel and Jeremiah, Mark and Paul, Luke and John, Matthew and David, along with their numerous brothers and sisters, named and unnamed across the centuries — absolutely require it. They make up a school of writers employed by the Holy Spirit to give us our Holy Scriptures and keep us in touch with and responsive to reality, whether visible or invisible: God-reality, God-presence. They are all distinguished by a deep trust in the "power of words" (Coleridge's phrase) to bring us into the presence of God and to change our lives. By keeping company with the writers of Holy Scripture we are schooled in a practice of reading and writing that is infused with an enormous respect — more than respect, awed reverence — for the revelatory and transformative power of words. The opening page of the Christian text for living, the Bible, tells us that the entire cosmos and every living creature in it are brought into being by words. St. John selects the term "Word" to account, first and last, for what is most characteristic about Jesus, the person at the revealed and revealing center of the Christian story. Language, spoken and written, is the primary means for getting us in on what is, on what God is and is doing. But it is language of a certain stripe, not words external to our lives, the sort used in grocery lists, computer manuals, French grammars, and basketball rulebooks.

1. A. Negoita, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), vol. 3, p. 321.

2. Baron Friedrich von Hügel, *Selected Letters* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1927), p. 229.

These are words intended, whether confrontationally or obliquely, to get inside us, to deal with our souls, to form a life that is congruent with the world that God has created, the salvation that he has enacted, and the community that he has gathered. Such writing anticipates and counts on a certain kind of reading, a dog-with-a-bone kind of reading.

Writers of other faith traditions and writers who hold to none — atheists, agnostics, secularists — also, of course, have access to this school and benefit enormously from its training in the holiness of words. But the adjective “spiritual” does serve to identify the way the writers who collectively scribed the Bible used language to form “the mind of Christ” in their readers. The adjective continues to be useful in identifying the post-biblical men and women who continue to write journalism and commentary, studies and reflections, stories and poems for us as we continue to submit our imaginations to the shaping syntax and diction of our biblical masters. But Holy Scripture is the source document, the authoritative font, the work of the Spirit that is definitive in all true spirituality.

What I mean to insist upon is that spiritual writing — Spirit-sourced writing — requires spiritual reading, a reading that honors words as holy, words as a basic means of forming an intricate web of relationships between God and the human, between all things visible and invisible.

There is only one way of reading that is congruent with our Holy Scriptures, writing that trusts in the power of words to penetrate our lives and create truth and beauty and goodness, writing that requires a reader who, in the words of Rainer Maria Rilke, “does not always remain bent over his pages; he often leans back and closes his eyes over a line he has been reading again, and its meaning spreads through his blood.”<sup>3</sup> This is the kind of reading named by our ancestors as *lectio divina*, often translated “spiritual reading,” reading that enters our souls as food enters our stomachs, spreads through our blood, and becomes holiness and love and wisdom.

3. Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, trans. M. D. Herter (New York: W. W. Norton, 1954), p. 201.

## **Appendix C – Personal and Professional Growth Planning Tools**

### **One Way to Make Use of June 24 & June 25 to Plan for Personal Growth in Faith and Ministry Gifts**

Here are some points to ponder as you prepare to plan on these two days (or any other days):

- Spend one of the two days in more a more royal priestly focus: personal devotional life and the callings we live out as royal priests of God (child of God, spouse, parent, congregational member, etc.).
- Also include in your reflection attention to issues such as health, exercise, and diet. The impact on our mental alertness and energy level for life and ministry can be huge. Such things aren't all important, but they are certainly not unimportant. We are not Gnostics.
- Spend the other day in a more public ministry focus.
- If you haven't read through the Augsburg Confession recently, let that be a part of your reflection on the second day.
- On the second day, also reread the words spoken to you – and that you answered – on the day of your ordination/installation. Those words will give you further reason for prayer and study of the Word!
- Use the lessons and prayers and hymns appointed for those two feast days (found below) to wrap the entire enterprise in Word and prayer thereby keeping it focused on the empowering grace of God (1 Ti 4:5).
- A thorough (measured in hours, not minutes) devotional and prayerful study of one of the pastoral epistles would be a wonderful addition.
- Each day invite input from others who can assist you in your time of personal and ministry reflection (spouse, children – whose almost naïve forthrightness might say precisely what we need to hear but that others are afraid to say, co-workers in full-time public ministry, lay leaders, friends).
- Take your “reflection assistants” out for breakfast and lunch (give them ahead of time a clear idea of what input you are looking for).
- Urge those speaking with you to be lovingly open and honest. Christians whose status and identity are secure in Christ do not need to be afraid to confront sins and weaknesses (and be absolved by fellow Christians!) and can in all humility also give thanks to God where his grace is in evidence!
- If you have not done so before, spend some time exploring your personality style (something like the DISC profile can be helpful, even if it is a bit simplistic). Also consider your preferred ways of learning. Many foolish false steps may be avoided by designing a growth program that actually matches how God wired you. With thanks to Dr. Jim Grunwald of MLC, here are a three web sites that might be useful for both issues:
  - <http://www.discprofile.com/>
  - [http://www.jobsetc.gc.ca/eng/toolbox/quizzes/quizzes\\_home.do](http://www.jobsetc.gc.ca/eng/toolbox/quizzes/quizzes_home.do)
  - <http://www.engr.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/ilsweb.html>

- When you are finished, share your plan with others who can help you crucify daily your sinful nature in regard to your plan, and, even more important, supply the encouragement of the gospel (not to mention keeping you and your plans in their prayers!).
- Do some reading or online study on what constitute SMART goals. SMART is a common acronym for goals that are Specific, Measurable (caution: some very important goals in the kingdom of God defy outward measurement – don't neglect them because of that), Attainable (by God's grace!), Relevant, and Timed (always acknowledging God may have a better calendar than yours!).
- Set both short term goals (weeks, months, a year) and long term goals (2, 3, 4 or more years). If you only set short term goals, some larger growth tasks might never be attempted. If you only set long term goals, you may miss out on some rather immediate blessings that could be reaped under God's blessing.
- Be careful not to attempt too much in each area of devotional life, personal life, and public ministry. Better one or two specific goals in each area accomplished well by God's grace than too many goals leading to frustration and abandoning of your plan. Perhaps several short term goals in one area might substitute for one longer term goal.
- Pick a date each quarter to spend an hour or two making any mid-point adjustments to your plan. Just don't abandon too quickly good plans that are just taking time to show visible fruit. Don't forget that God's grace means it is always OK to start over if necessary!
- Remember: Your plan is your servant, not your master. You serve Christ, and your plan must serve you. Live out of the gospel!

The proper for each day is taken from *Christian Worship Manual* p. 457 with a slight lengthening of the gospel appointed for June 24.

This pattern for the three devotions suggested for each day is taken from *Morning Meditation*, *Midday Meditation*, and *Evening Meditation* as found in *Christian Worship Supplement*.

As you read each lesson, try using Martin Luther's advice to his barber to slow down and ponder each reading. The four questions are:

- 1) What is God saying here?  
A question seeking comprehension of Spirit's point in the Scripture
- 2) For what does this lead me to give thanks?  
A question searching out God's gracious blessings in the reading
- 3) What sins does this lead me to confess?  
A question probing our hearts and lives for what sends us running to God's grace in Jesus)
- 4) For what does this lead me to pray?  
A question reminding us the Bible study and prayer make for a full "conversation" with God and that it is his Word that informs our prayers so that learn what it means to pray "according to God's will".

Following Luther's suggested pattern for the six devotional times suggested below may build a devotional study skill you may wish to continue during the year you are planning! Luther's pattern is simply trying to slow us down long enough to ponder the Word in our hearts! If you want a fuller description of this pattern, purchase the pamphlet *A Simple Way to Pray* that Luther wrote for Peter the Barber.

If you have never sung psalms, hymns and canticles as part of your personal devotional life (as suggested below), it may seem strange at first. Remember that you are really never singing alone. You are simply joining the thunderous chorus of saints and angels who already stand visibly before the throne of God.

In all of this study and reflection, take your time! You are consciously seeking to be a Mary in a Martha world! It might even be wise to find a quiet place to get away where you can meditate on the Word and pray. Your church's sanctuary might be a wonderful place for such prayerful reflection.

**Thursday, June 24, 2010**

**+ The Commemoration of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist +**

**Before breakfast:**

Use the *Morning Meditation* from *Christian Worship Supplement*.

|           |                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hymn:     | By All Your Saints Still Striving (CW 552: 1, 12, 3)                                                                              |
| Psalm:    | Psalm 1                                                                                                                           |
| Lesson:   | Isaiah 40:1-5<br>The LORD reminds us of the great privilege of announcing his great salvation to a world in desperate need of it! |
| Canticle: | The Song of Moses (CWS 786)                                                                                                       |

**For the rest of the morning:**

Meet with your spouse, a child, a good Christian friend at breakfast or lunch to assist you in your evaluation. If you are using a SWOT type analysis, it would be helpful to provide that to the other person ahead of time so that your helper would be able to provide knowledgeable feedback.

Focus on analyzing your life in your callings that are part of your royal priestly service to God: spouse, parent, friend, congregational member, part of a high school association, synod, etc. Include also reflection time on issues of health, diet, exercise, and getting sufficient rest. Save some of the best time to evaluate your personal devotional life.

One way to pursue this time of reflection would be to use a SWOT analysis for each calling or area of life. For more complex areas of life, it can be helpful to divide up that area into subcategories.

A SWOT analysis includes:

**Strengths** (These look at the present situation.)

(Only false humility refuses to see where God's grace wherever it shows evidence of itself in our lives. When focused on God, identifying strengths is praise.)

**Weaknesses** (These look at the present situation.)

(Where the weaknesses are sin, don't neglect to crucify your old self by confessing them specifically to God for the evil they are and, most important of all, finding the comfort of Christ's dying and rising love!)

**Opportunities** (These look at the future.)

(This tries to anticipate new windows of opportunity God may be giving to make positive changes in the days, weeks, and months ahead.)

**Threats** (These look at the future.)

(Without giving in to sinful anxiety about tomorrow, this attempts to understand changing circumstances in each area of life that threaten to hinder the change and growth which we are prayerfully seeking to plan.)

**For the afternoon:**

Begin with the *Midday Meditation* as found in *Christian Worship Supplement*.

Hymn: Speak O Savior, I Am Listening (CW 283)

Lesson: Acts 13:16-26

Paul gives us a vista from which to view God's saving deeds down through the centuries, including a reminder of the place in God's plan of salvation that John the Baptist fulfilled.

For the rest of the afternoon, develop specific plans for each of the areas for which you reflected in the morning. Give some of your best and most careful attention to your personal devotional life. Be careful not to plan too much in each area at the same time. One or two good goals in each area may be sufficient. Include specific action steps as needed for how you will, God willing, implement each goal.

**For the evening:**

Plan some special time with family and/or friends that you have been meaning to do for some time. Perhaps consider making it "non-media" related. A night off from television or the Internet might provide a welcome break to everyone involved.

Make part of the evening sharing with one or more family/friends your written plans. Ask them to pray for you and to encourage you in meeting your goals. Depending on the goals, they might even consider joining you in those plans (for example: doing the same reading in Scripture and then discussing it from time to time).

**At the close of the day:**

Use the *Evening Meditation* as found in *Christian Worship Supplement*.

While much of this day has been spent in personal planning and meditation, this would be a wonderful time to invite family members or friends to join you for this evening meditation.

Hymn: The Day You Gave Us, Lord, Is Ended (CW 594)

Psalm: Psalm 85 (This could be sung using CW p. 97.)

Lesson: Luke 1:57-80

The birth of John and the wonderful insight into God's plan of salvation revealed by Zechariah's song.

Canticle: Sing the Benedictus (Praise Be to the Lord) as found in CW 276.

**Friday, June 25, 2010**  
**+ The Commemoration of the Presentation of the Augsburg +**  
**Confession**

**Before breakfast:**

Use the *Morning Meditation* from *Christian Worship Supplement*.

|           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hymn:     | The Church's One Foundation (CW 538)                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Psalm:    | Psalm 46 (CW and CWS both offer a way to sing Psalm 46.)                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Lesson:   | Isaiah 55:6-11<br>The LORD calls us to find our hope not in our thoughts marred by sin but in his thoughts marked by grace. He also promises that his Word will never fail to prosper in making his saving purpose for us and others bud and flourish. |
| Canticle: | The Te Deum                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

**For the rest of the morning:**

Meet with or call a co-worker in ministry who knows you well and a key lay leader who is also very familiar with your ministry and who has a good grasp on what faithful ministry is in God's definition. Enjoy breakfast or lunch with them as they seek to assist you in your evaluation. If you are using a SWOT type analysis, it would be helpful to provide that to the others ahead of time so that they can provide knowledgeable feedback.

Focus on analyzing your life in your callings that are part of the public ministry.

If you have not read the Augsburg Confession yet this year as part of a review of the Confessions, include a reading of it during the morning.

One way to pursue this time of reflection would be to use a SWOT analysis for each area of your ministry. See the brief SWOT directions listed for the previous day.

**For the afternoon:**

Begin with the *Midday Meditation* as found in *Christian Worship Supplement*.

|         |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hymn:   | In Christ Alone (CWS 752)                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Lesson: | Romans 10:5-17<br>God reminds you how near is his salvation to save you! He also reminds you of the privilege of being one of those specially called to bring that salvation near many others. |

Before moving on to ministry goals and plans, reread the words spoken to you, and the words with which you responded, when you were ordained/installed. These may inform even further the plans you are about to make.

For the rest of the afternoon, develop specific plans for ministry, taking into account your reflection from the morning. Remember: one or two challenging ministry goals

may be sufficient when getting started. You are in this for the long term. More goals will be set in the future. Include specific action steps as needed for how you will, God willing, implement each goal.

**For the evening:**

Plan some special time with family and/or co-workers that you have been meaning to do for some time. Consider again making it “non-media” related. Another night off from television or the Internet might provide a welcome break to everyone involved.

Make part of the evening sharing with one or more family members or co-workers what you have planned. Ask them to pray for you and to encourage you in meeting your goals. Depending on the goals, they might even consider joining you in those plans (for example: planning a study together of the same sermon texts or growth in an area of teaching).

**At the close of the day:**

Use the *Evening Meditation* as found in *Christian Worship Supplement*.

While much of this day has been spent in personal planning and meditation, this would be a wonderful time to invite family members or co-workers to join you for this evening meditation.

Hymn: Dear Lord to Your True Servants Give (CW 542)

Psalm: Psalm 46 (Use the other version from what you did in the morning. Use A Mighty Fortress Is Our God (CW 200 or 201), or simply read through the psalm.)

Lesson: Matthew 10:32-39

Jesus openly and honestly prepares us for the cross that will come to all who boldly confess the Crucified One. Don't miss the awesome promises of his grace that encourage us not to be afraid of our cross.

Canticle: Nunc Dimittis (Song of Simeon)

The Commemoration of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist  
June 24, 2010  
SWOT Analysis of Devotional Life and Royal Priestly Ministry

| Area of Life                        | Strengths | Weaknesses | Opportunities | Threats |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|------------|---------------|---------|
| <b>Personal<br/>Devotional Life</b> |           |            |               |         |
| <b>Marriage</b>                     |           |            |               |         |
| <b>Parenting</b>                    |           |            |               |         |
| <b>Extended<br/>Family</b>          |           |            |               |         |
| <b>Friends</b>                      |           |            |               |         |
| <b>Rest, Diet and<br/>Exercise</b>  |           |            |               |         |
| <b>Congregational<br/>and Synod</b> |           |            |               |         |

**The Commemoration of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist**

**June 24, 2010**

**Goals for Devotional Life and Royal Priestly Ministry**

Under God's blessing (without which nothing good ever happens!) prayerfully work to make your goals SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timed.

Also include action steps you will take to seek to accomplish that goal.

Finally, pick a day three or six months from now when you will see if any midcourse corrections are needed.

Goal #\_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Action steps needed to complete this goal:

1) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date for midcourse checking of progress: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Commemoration of the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession

**June 25, 2010**

## SWOT Analysis of Ministry

[illegible]

**The Commemoration of the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession**

**June 25, 2010**

**Goals for Public Ministry**

Under God's blessing (without which nothing good ever happens!) prayerfully work to make your goals SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timed.

Also include action steps you will take to seek to accomplish that goal.

Finally, pick a day three or six months from now when you will see if any midcourse corrections are needed.

Goal #\_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Action steps needed to complete this goal:

1) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date for midcourse checking of progress: \_\_\_\_\_