



INTERSECT

Thoughts and Themes on Teaching the Two Kingdoms

An Equipment Inventory

A colleague and I were looking at the slide below which contains many of the parts and pieces for a thorough examination of the Lutheran tradition. Our colleague inspected it for a few moments, then said, “Oooh, makes me woozy to look at it.” The slide had the desired effect.

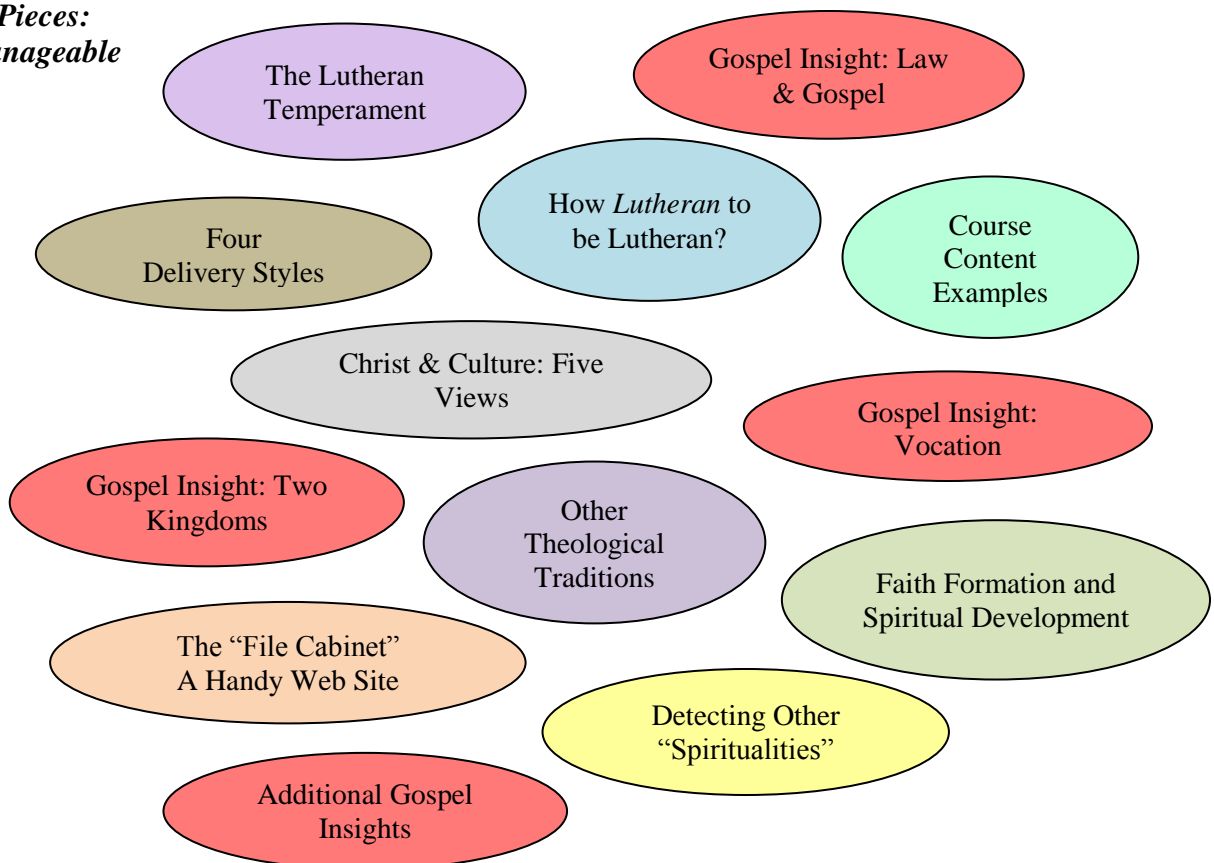
Which part of the discussion catches your interest? Perhaps it’s “How *Lutheran* to be Lutheran?” Many of us are wary about denominational triumphalism and unnecessarily offending those of other persuasions as we discussed in Table Talk 2. Or perhaps you’re interested in one of the specific Lutheran insights from our list-of-ten such as the two kingdoms doctrine. The “Two Kingdoms” theme can powerfully inform much of our instruction. Some of us have previously studied various Christian spiritualities, and “Detecting Other Spiritualities” is worth revisiting. Our students are influenced by these spiritual presuppositions but are

generally unaware of them.

We may be anxious to move directly to instructional ideas and begin with the Four Instructional Delivery Styles: “Hey, let’s get on with it and just get to work.” We certainly want to get there soon rather than slog through too much prolegomena. But the slide and its scattered elements are intended to remind us that we have a lot going on when it comes to understanding, articulating, and employing a thoroughly developed tradition in the church. We have made a good start by acknowledging a few preliminary matters because if we launch right into instructional tactics, we may lose some participants.

For instance, we need to examine the expression, “integrating the faith.” Some among us want little to do with that notion, and they have reasons for caution. We need to provide a selection of other ways to convey a tradition that is worthy of *higher* education in the church. One of those ways will examine the biblical concept of

The Parts and Pieces: Several Yet Manageable



God's incursions into the secular (which we've been calling "intersections").

Also, some among us may first want to discuss further whether emphasizing a particular tradition and giving it a privileged place in our curriculum is ultimately in the best interest of all our students, Lutheran and non-Lutheran. Some of us have experienced Lutheranism in less-than-hospitable ways and want to consider how we can be forbearing rather than overbearing.

Thus, we may not all share the same point of entry and priorities when it comes to our Lutheran tradition. A living tradition has lots of moving parts and, individually, we likely are in various places when processing that tradition. How then to proceed?

At our November Table Talk, the take-away point for that session was articulated by two participants, one earlier and one later in the discussion:

As faculty and student-services staff, we collectively have a good handle on our Christian orientation to higher education and a fairly good grasp of much of the Lutheran tradition. While we will, of course, continue to strengthen our own grip on our heritage, our work at hand is to expand our expression to students as to what the Lutheran ethos involves and how it informs the Christian life in all ways. We can do this by presenting to them multiple examples and applications across several disciplines, classes, and campus experiences. And we will do well to consider how we may best tailor and present this content to different populations such as first and second year undergrads, our grad adjunct profs and students, our athletics programs, and others. By deliberately "salting" and "seeding" this content across a wide spectrum of classes and events, we expose students to a coherent tradition in an organic, continued, and comprehensive way. This approach will be more effective than trying to compartmentalize an entire tradition into a few dedicated classes and events (e.g., theology classes and chapel).

But to enhance this approach, we'll address just a few preliminary concerns as noted above. Then, in later Table Talks planned for the spring semester, we will set out some methods and strategies for using our instruction to exhibit various biblical and Reformation themes. Use and fit will, of course, vary depending on the academic discipline, but we will also find opportunities for cross pollination. Over time, students will continue to "connect the dots," providing additional opportunities for exploring, comparing, and contrasting assorted perspectives on the Lutheran tradition and other world views.

The slide on page one is arranged to be a bit random and

disorienting. It suggests that the world, while still God's good creation, struggles in travail under the burden of sin (Rom. 8:22). We would therefore not expect oversimplification in a coherent tradition which adequately and reasonably addresses this condition. We would expect such a tradition to include tension and paradox, and also allow for mystery—while not quickly and conveniently deferring to these characteristics.

Our aim is not to graduate Lutheran clones. Our aim is to equip the saints for ministry (as Paul puts it in Eph. 4:12) across a wide scope of domains and circumstances in the world. This "equipping the saints" is not merely a slogan. The saints need equipment—a set of powerful ways for understanding the natural world, the social world, and the world of ideas. And ideas have consequences and practical outcomes.

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The slide indicates several pieces of equipment. These themes and concepts can serve all of our students and all Christians, whether Lutheran or of another of the church's great traditions. Together, these themes and concepts form a constellation that helps illuminate the Gospel. Our aim is, point by point, to light up the constellation.

R. Moulds

A colleague responds:

If there's anything to sum up the Lutheran temperament it would be a propensity to disagree (respectfully or otherwise) with any proposed thesis, without eternally condemning its originator. When asked in December whether or not Holy Scripture affirms organized religion, I naively voiced a strong "Yes," thinking of the ponderous religious and civil code imposed on the ancient Hebrews by God Himself. My colleagues at our table and elsewhere quickly dispelled any illusion that we shared a uniform perspective on this or any other subject in the discussion. I, for one, need to hear these various views, and discussion takes time (and nourishment).

While a random display of bubbles laced with hot-topic items fills me, too, with a sense of unease, I say, "Bring on the wooziness".

J. Jurchen