

2nd visitation: Theology of the Cross, September 2026--

The Bowling Alley Disputation: 20 years on! Deo Gratias!

Thanks to all for our conversation last Sunday. There's More—There's always more for Luther's insight which we don't 'get' and if, as CLH would say: "If we've got 'it' we've lost 'it'! And, we have to keep on being born again ('Semper Reformanda') to this eternal amazing delight! We'll re-read Fred Niedner's Bowling Alley Disputation and THINK and THANK

Some clues for this week's continued 'The Gospel lives by Controversy'

--9th stanza of Luther's Christmas Carol: 'O Lord, you have created all! /How did you come to be so small/to sweetly sleep in manger bed/where lowing cattle lately fed!'

--'The theologian of Glory, that is, celebrates God's majesty and power, and loves "works and the glory of works," while the true theologian proclaims that "God can be found only in suffering and the Cross" ---a difficult truth that humans prefer not to hear.' [Lyndal Roper 'Luther, Renegade and Prophet', pg. 92 there's more—there's much more!]

--"According to Luther, the theology of the Cross does not begin *from* the visible works of God in order to disclose God's invisible being *but* takes the opposite starting point, '*that part of God's being which is visible and directed towards the world.*' For him **this visible being of God is the passion and cross of Christ**. It is set over against the 'invisible being' of God in the ascending (!) knowledge of the *theologus gloriae* **and contradicts it...** Christ the **crucified alone** is our '*true theology and knowledge of God.*' [Moltmann 'The Crucified God. pg. 212—there's much more!]

Here something 'completely different' – [not really, Bach was Luther's heir] ---'Bach's way of understanding something was to get his hands on it, turn it upside down and backward, and wrestle with it until he found a way to make something new.' [Gaines, 'Evening in the Palace of Reason' pg. 185]

--My current reawakening is thanks to a long conversation (and walk!) with a Wisconsin pastor who has no time for a theology of the Cross. He is certain that the church most requires works—our hands! [James: Faith without works is dead. (2:17 & 26)].

--'The tragedy of Luther is that he fell into the hands of the Lutherans.' John Berryman

--Let's talk!