

The Bowling Alley Disputation— [20 years on and 20 years right on!]

Here's a little story about the Bowling Alley Disputation's place in the history of Holden Village:

At the Holden Village summer board meeting in 2006, Fred Niedner, secretary of the board and professor of Theology at Valparaiso University, was asked to give a session on the 'Theology of the Cross.' Why? Because Holden's executive directors, installed the year before, talked about 'it, as if everyone knew what it meant.'

Many on the Holden Village board were certain that the theology of the Cross meant something like paying attention to Jesus words in Matthew (16:24 "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.' NRSV). **NO WAY! But Jesus says!** Some thought the theology of the Cross was a violent call to 'crusader madness.' Where do people get these ideas? Oh, right, the Crusaders, for example, 'took up the cross' and then went forth to slaughter Jews, Muslims & Heretics.

[Those directors would say things like: *"It takes a Cross & If You've got it, you've lost it & God's on the cross: Everything's Broken-that's o.k. & This business of being right was always wrong & The Gospel lives by controversy & The trip down is way Mucho costly..."* No wonder Dr. Fred was called in]

So, It was time to clear the theological decks and Fred volunteered to do what needed to be done: Time to explore Martin Luther's startling insight into the Love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. The reason the 'disputation' took place on the risers in the Village bowling was this: There was no other space in a fully programmed June Holden, 2006. Twenty years on, the memory of those words in that space of grace, is still burning within our hearts and minds.

On the other side of this cover letter (plus another page) is Fred's handout from that day. This will have to 'do' for us because there was no recording made. [The Holden Village Audio Archive has thousands of sessions on its website—even the "Watermelon Review" from August 1973]

We'll take time Sunday morning after worship to read closely the 'Luther points' Fred has provided.

Read & Die and Rise up!

pkh