

A DIALOGUE BEGINS

Papers, Minutes and Agreed Statements
from the Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue in India
1978-1982

Edited by

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Sanctification, Glorification, Theosis

A Lutheran contribution in the background of the Vedantic experience

by

Michael von Brueck

The methodology of this paper is neither a historical one nor a classical dogmatical evaluation of what Luther has to say with regard to the question of sanctification, glorification and theosis. We rather intend to put this question under our specific 20th century context where interconfessional dialogue is accompanied and stimulated by interreligious encounter, especially, here in India.

The centre in interreligious dialogue is man struggling in all dimensions for justice and peace on earth. In view of so many serious problems of mankind today, the question if man's nature can be improved or changed is asked with urgency. Different religions answer this question in different ways, but they all face the challenge on this issue from Humanists and Marxists today.

The secular and religious dimensions of a process-called "education", "mutability" or "metanoia" cannot be separated. It is interesting to trace the development of the modern ideal of a gradual improvement of man and his conditions (anthropological and social progress), for we find the roots in medieval mysticism, especially in Eckart. The doctrine of *imago Dei* and the final transformation of man into the image of Christ form, as it were, the two pillars on which Eckart's idea of sanctification of man rests.¹ Perfection of man is not merely something which is lost, but it is also the expected future showing new qualities. For Eckart the soul is transformed according to the image of Christ which has been there already in a hidden state.

Luther later changed this understanding by shifting the emphasis on God who is the only actor in this process of a new creation. For him there is no province in man which would not be totally corrupted by sin. Thus, man as man cannot be regarded to be able (aptus) to grow in sanctity. He can be regarded as renewed only in so far as Christ is living in him, as we will see later.

A very different understanding has been developed later, certainly on the background of the Reformation impulse but with a whole

change of perspective. It finds its climax in Hegel. Here the knowledge of man and his growth in maturity and perfection is mediated by man's understanding of and work in the world. Man is a subject finding this subjectivity in confrontation and dialectical appropriation of the object. In changing his surroundings man changes himself. This theory has been further developed by Marx. This aspect is certainly important to balance the theological emphasis on the *coram Deo* set forth by Luther. But this is not the topic here.

In the 16th century the question was basically the problem of individual salvation. Today we still have to discriminate between the individual and universal dimension of salvation, but we cannot separate them. It is not our task here to go into this problem. We rather should concentrate on the theo-anthropological question of the mutability of man towards a higher realization of his being on the basis of Luther's outlook but in context with Indian ways of sel for God-realization.

Three more preliminary remarks;

1. There are contradictory tendencies and developments in Luther's experience and thought on the issue. As I said, we will not go into a biographic-theological development, but I understand Luther primarily on the basis of his mystical roots, especially from the influence mystics like Tauler, Seuse, also Eckart have had on him as a young monk. His central understanding of temptation and nothingness (*nihiloitas*) of man *coram Deo* is based on an experience which seems to suggest a certain similarity to Eastern and Western mystics. I have elaborated on these questions elsewhere. ²
2. Indian ways of spirituality are manifold and even contradictory to each other. They are certainly not all the same and do not lead to the same result, since the respective way is an integral part of the "result". Even more, the discrimination of way and result in the spiritual process is problematic anyway. Hence, I concentrate on vedantic references and basically the interpretation of Sankara.
3. I see sanctification, glorification and theosis as three aspects of one process. I will concentrate on this process without stressing the differences in the aspects. I am going to develop my arguments and understanding around six basic statements which touch the issue from different points of view, but without suggesting a closed circuit of arguments or conclusions. This formal openness and imperfection seem to me more appropriate to the content, because we do not yet know what we will be, except in a poor reflection and partially (1 Cor 13, 12). I will finally come out with five concluding points which include also some implications.

Six Basic Statements

1. *Justification by faith alone (sola fide) does not mean that the pneumato-psycho-somatic being of man is not able to change towards higher states of being or divinization.*

The old controversy how salvation is brought—by grace or by own effort—presupposes a rather dualistic view: God is one subject, and man is a more or less separated other subject. The two cannot really interact, because they are seen under this contradiction. But this is certainly not Luther's view.

For Luther faith is a total transformation of man by the indwelling Christ, it is *conformitas Christi, ingressus in Christum*.³ The "old Adam", who wants to be on his own while standing before God, disappears, and Christ actually becomes the centre of life or the only real subject (Gal 2,20). Justification by faith means a total surrender of man into the transindividual power of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the indwelling God, creating and renewing the interrelated Being by enabling all creatures to participate in the self-movement of the Trinity. The Spirit actually is the subject of everything. Therefore, Luther speaks about the *Spiritus creator*.⁴ Any truly Christian theology, however, sees the power of the Spirit in close relation with God's incarnation in Christ, which can be regarded as the basis for discrimination of spirits and experiences of the Spirit.⁵

In all psychosomatic process it is either the Spirit or the selfish Ego who is directing the action. Therefore, genuine prayer is prayer of the Spirit (Rm 8,26f). Similarly, genuine meditation is not the effort of the Ego to grasp God, but it is being grasped by God. It is preparation and listening, therefore silence. The way to God is a real way, but God is the only subject leading and finally even going on the way.

The term "Ego" is understood here in the same sense as Paul uses *sarx*. Speaking Freud's terminology it is the narcissistic Ego which refuses to go the way into real Ego, integrating its interrelationship with the outside world in order to master the power of the "Id". It is the vedantic *ahamkara* which is the centre of isolation from the real, the ground, the atman or God. In Buddhist philosophy it is the centre of greed, hatred and illusion (illusion, that is, concerning the ignorance about the interrelatedness of all that is).

Everything, even prayer, meditation and also the doctrine of justification by faith alone can be misused by man to disintegrate and dissociate from God. The path is very narrow but extremely clear. That is what all mystics in all different traditions know: surrender of separating Ego is precondition for the indwelling grace of God.⁶

To speak more accurately: the precondition is also the result, because ability for surrender or the drive toward surrender is also given by the Spirit, i.e. by God's grace. The death of the Ego-expressed in the term of *mortificatio* by Luther – is the way of suffering. For without this suffering there is no *vivificatio*, no rebirth into a new identity, no glorification in the Spirit (Rm 8, 14–17).

For Eckart our end is to exchange our own limited state of being for God's unlimited state of being. This is the process of divinization, and finally only God is: "Ego, daz wort ich, ist nieman eigen denne gote alleine in siner dinekoit."⁷ In Nicholas of Cusa's understanding of *deificatio* we also see that the *ablatio, omnis alteritatis et divinitatis* is the crucial point.⁸

This view was Luther's basic standpoint also. Luther was not only influenced by these men, but his whole life was an experience of this *mortificatio and vivificatio*. Otherwise his understanding of the temptations as "embracements of God",⁹ as well as his theological emphasis on the need for God's work *sub contrario* would be impossible. It is the basis for his *theologia crucis*.

There is only one source of life. The human hypocrisy of imagining there to be a second source is total misconception. It is an existentially significant fact, but ontologically without value in the last sense. There is no dualism, but God's glory will prevail. Without being able to go into a more detailed analysis of the difference in thought-patterns of Christian theology and the Vedantic systems, one can see at least a surprising similarity in some traits of the underlying spiritual experiences.

What we have said so far links up to a remarkable extent with the non-dualistic (advaita) intuition of the *rishi's* speaking in the Upanisads. Only *brahman* actually is, and the *brahman* or *atman* is the only subject.¹⁰ The Ego (*ahamkara*) is finally not real, but it holds man in bondage.¹¹ Hence, liberation means union with the divine oneness or realization of the *ekam eva advitiam*. The one who attains liberation (*moksa*) "attains conjunction with the Spirit." (*atman eva sayujyam upaiti*).¹² Man is *brahman*, enters into *brahman* and *brahman* into him.¹³ There is only one advaitic reality. This real knowledge or knowledge of the real (*Brahmavidya*) is interpreted by some schools gnoseologically only. But in most cases it is supposed to be a real transformation of the whole man, a certain kind of merging into the unity of the one.¹⁴

This is definitely not a salvation by the Ego (*ahamkara*) but by and in the self (*atman*). On the level of discursive logic these three statements are contradicting each other, but the advaitic intuition goes beyond the subject-object dualism. At least structurally this is a similar experience to the transformation by the power of the Spirit into conformity with Christ. It is not man who changes

himself, but it is this one transforming power which has created everything (*spiritus creator*) and renews and elevates everything (*spiritus sanctificator*) into its fulfilment.

2. The Lutheran distinction between justification (*justificatio impii*) and sanctification provides a basis for a strong realism in the view of man.

Justification is an event, a happening coming from outside into man's life. It is to be realized again and again in the act of faith. Sanctification is a gradual change in man induced by the existential acceptance of justification (*pro me*) but not identical with it. The priority of justification clarifies that we recognize: If there is not a real renewal by the Spirit which affects the whole psychosomatic being, there is no change towards theosis at all. Sanctification is a process which does not go on automatically once it has started, but it has to be fought out again and again. As Luther says: the old Adam (the Ego) has to be drowned daily.

The Holy Spirit is the sanctifier: "He is divine and makes us so." (Byzantine Liturgy, Monday of Pentecost). But the sanctum never becomes an attribute of man or the Ego. On the contrary, the Ego has to die daily, otherwise the spiritual process of sanctification cannot continue.

The potential to sin and its actuality, the departure from the participation in the Trinitarian unity, always remain. But God's offer of His renewing Spirit is always there, too. Man's existence is an existence in between these two poles. Luther's formula is: *simul iustus et peccator*, saint and sinner at the same time.

Often this formula has been interpreted in such a way that man is justified only *Coram Deo* in a forensic act which does not change his actual life as a sinner. Righteousness as *iustitia imputata* and as sanctifying force is thus denied. It is true that there are passages in Luther which tend to such a formalistic understanding of justification. However, especially in the younger Luther the mystical tendencies are much stronger, circling around his notions of *mortificatio - vivificatio*,¹⁵ *conformitas*, the mystical nearness of God, the *benignitatis ira*,¹⁶. God's benevolence is expressed in his wrath in order to destroy the old Ego (cf. also Luther's understanding to the *usus theologicus legis*) so that the new Adam can live by the identity in Christ.

Luther wants to stress the *promissio* aspect by his forensic interpretation. Man experiences himself as sinner, but due to God's *promissio* he is given assurance of salvation. The biblical understanding of *zedakah/dikaio syne* certainly wants to convey this forensic-soteriological meaning. But it is not a human forum. It is the forum of God dealing with man's actual status of being. The

promissio is effective in faith setting man free to a real life in Christ (*ingressus in Christum*).¹⁷ This *promissio* which takes into account the real power of *sarx* does not urge man into a struggle for perfection which would reveal nothing else than another *sarkic* aspect of man's sinful nature. The forensic interpretation wants to assure that *metanoia* does not have its cause in a change because of man, but that such real change (sanctification) is the result based on man's new being in faith.

Faith is an experience in the sense of real impression and affirmation.¹⁸ It, therefore, brings to realization the assurance envisaged and expressed in Luther's insistence on the *promissio* aspect in his understanding of justification. The description of human life as simultaneous existence shows biblical realism, on the one hand, and Luther's mystical insight, on the other hand. Without death, break, nothingness and despair sanctification, glorification, new life, fulness and theosis are impossible.

Man in his life is, as it were, never over the mountain. He remains on the way and in danger. Evil forces draw him away from God again into his powerful ego-cage. Without overcoming this separateness conditioned by sin man cannot partake in the Trinitarian love (Lk 14, 26; John 12, 25); *Psyche* and *pneuma* are different, indeed (Heb. 4, 12).

From a Lutheran point of view it can be said that one's faith rooted in God's saving action of justification has to radiate into daily life in so far as "faith in dealing with life has day by day a chance to experience and discover newness, so that one can grow also in sanctification which however is regarded as practice into the justifying faith. Thus, the being simultaneously sinner and justified is no strange paradox but corresponds more and more exactly to the situation in which the Christian is facing God in the world the more mature he becomes."¹⁹

The point is that Luther rejects any idea of synergism in a theological sense. He does not deny growth in faith or sanctification, but the subject of this growth can only be God's saving grace.

This position contradicts the Indian idea of *jivanmukta* (a man of perfection and liberation still living under spacio-temporal conditions), which is common to Hinduism as well as Buddhism. According to Christian faith—strongly emphasized by Luther—the basic tension of human life can be reconciled only eschatologically. Sanctification, Glorification and Theosis have to be seen as a beginning process, but never as an accomplished result. Man remains sinner. He is brought on the way by the Holy Spirit. But he never reaches the further shore under spacio-temporal conditions. Here I see one of the most fundamental differences between Luther's

mysticism and some other Christian understandings of sainthood, as well as many Eastern ways of spirituality.

3. The question whether the transforming power of the Spirit creates a total break or a continuous renewal should be approached dialectically.

Luther's theological position at this point is absolutely clear: There is no continuity between the sinful nature of man and the healing Spirit of God. The transformation of man is a new creation. It is a break. The old and rotten structures of human being have to be broken completely. Otherwise, there is no sanctification.²⁰ This break is executed by God's grace and becomes manifest in faith.

However, this position is not necessarily the basis for an ontological or existential dualism. The early dialectical theology of Karl Barth may have argued this way, but not Luther.

God and man are different and not the same because of the fact that man is dependent creature and sinful. But this does not mean that God is not present. He is actually closer to man than man is to himself, as Augustine says and Luther repeats in connection with his understanding of the real presence of Christ in the Holy Supper.²¹ But this presence of God has to be realized and discovered. It is a potentiality which becomes actual only through the grace of God in faith.

Luther cannot speak about a certain part in man which would be divine or a divine spark, because nothing is spared by the power of sin. The whole human nature is one, and it is corrupted as such. But if the Holy Spirit takes possession of man, this whole nature is transformed and united with God in conformity with Christ. This is a break. It is the one process of mortificatio and vivificatio.

I would like to add that, on the other hand, this process can be experienced psychologically. What Luther emphasizes is that the break is not caused by changes of man but that such changes are the consequence of the break.²² And if we speak about a process we imply an experiential (not theological) continuity. There is this process of maturing in the participation in God. It is a process of allowing oneself to be integrated into the Trinitarian dynamism. Man, in spite of remaining a sinner, is moved closer to God to the extent that his ego-centred isolation is overcome.

It is interesting to observe, in a comparative approach, that in Eckart and other European mystics as well as in Eastern mystical ways such as Yoga and Zen and other spiritual paths of transformation both can be found, the experience of break and of continuity.

There is a break because the veil of duality and separation of things disappear and the whole world appears in a new light. But the world is still the world, or again the world. It is a break which restores the original continuum or non-duality of creation.

I do not want to elaborate on non-duality (*advaita*) here. I have described elsewhere how I see in the Trinity a self-realizing dynamism, the perfect prototype or symbol for the *advaita* of Being: the three "persons" are neither one nor separate. Sanctification and divinization (*theosis*) can be seen in the same light. Even if man remains broken as a sinner until death, he participates more and more in the divine life. The divine life becomes his inner subject, penetrating the whole psychosomatic system.

The dialectical model seems to be the most suitable one to explain or describe this process. There can be a quantitative growth of the Spirit in man, a quantitative enhancement of his surrender into God, a growth in faith. Those quantitative accumulations are based upon a new quality. The Lutheran point is that this quality is not a *habitus* or a *proprium hominis*, but an ever new action of God. It is not a perfection of the otherwise ego-centred man, but a realization of the universal presence of the power of the Spirit.

4. Theosis is a total transformation of man by man's participation in the Trinitarian life.

Luther does not speak about *theosis*. Thus, the following reflections cannot claim to represent Luther's view. But they want to contribute to a possible understanding of theosis in the light of Luther's theology.

The content of the concept of *theosis* has been classically expressed by Athanasius; "For He became man that we might become Gods."²³ Man (and finally the whole cosmos—but this universality is neglected by Luther) is transformed in God (1 Cor 15,28). The fulfilment of creation is this transformation. Therefore, the Bible speaks also about a new creation which we can understand under the above mentioned dialectics of break and continuity. This new creation is beginning in Christ and continued in the church²⁴, but proleptically and fully given already in the sacraments.

All this indicates that *theosis* is a tendency towards oneness (1 Cor 10.17; John 10.30; 16ff. etc.) The eschatological fulfilment is an *advaitic* vision. Sometimes it is understood as a participation in God (2 Peter. 1, 3-4; Mt 25, 31), sometimes as a fellowship between God and man (1 John 1.3), or as mystical union (John 3, 1ff; 10,30; 17. ff; Gal 2.20, Rm 6,5ff; Eph 2; Apc 21,22). I do not think that it makes sense to quarrel about these differences—they are visions, seen in a mirror, as I quoted earlier (cf. 1 Cor 13,12). What is common to all these descriptions is:

- a) Separation of God and man is overcome. This is the destruction of the power of sin. Therefore, the typology of Adam-Christ (Rm 5,21ff) has been used by Paul. In the first man, Adam the possibility of freedom and communion in God was given but misused because man fell under the bondage of sin. In the new man, Christ (and then in the Christ-power, the Christ in us, namely the Holy Spirit), the actuality of freedom appears.
- b) It is a very close union with God. There can be hardly a more vital expression than the "eating" of God. We assimilate him completely; He penetrates us from within—not just spiritually—but in our pneumato-psycho-somatic unity. This is what the Holy Supper expresses: the closest communion we can think of.
- c) It is the restoration of the original intention of God. The whole idea of theosis is based on the understanding that man is *imago Dei* (Gen 1,27) The protological intention and the eschatological realization correspond with each other.
- d) *Theosis* is a transindividual and transpersonal event. It has cosmic dimensions (Rm 8; 1 Cor 15, Col 1 etc.) Man as an individual is not divinized, but individual separation is destroyed so that personal interrelatedness in cosmic dimensions can be realized. *Theosis* is unthinkable without the concept of the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12, 2f; 2 Cor 3, 2f; Eph 4, 4ff, etc.) This aspect is not so much in focus in Luther's understanding of justification. Thus, the term justification cannot cover the same spectrum of meaning as the term *theosis*. The former seems to underline some important theological implications of the latter, as explained above. Further, *theosis* not only refers to the Body of Christ but to a cosmic integration. *Theosis* is the "experience of God" as the universal pantocrator in a double sense grammatically: an experience of who God is and an experience which God has. It is the very process of the Trinitarian life. It is the realization of the all-pervading presence of the Spirit.

All this can be said also in a Vedantic perspective, except for the importance of point (d) in the Christian experience. This again is crucial for the Christian view, because it is directly connected with the understanding of the Trinitarian God as community in himself. According to Christian faith the last reality is interrelatedness and not undifferentiated oneness.

I would like to illustrate these remarks on *theosis* by commenting on one scriptural passage which seems to me of utmost importance for our topic, Eph 4, 23-24:

"anneoūsthai de to pneumati tou noos hymōn kai endysasthai ton kainon anthrōpon tou kata theou ktisthenta en dikaiosynē kai hosiōteti."

“Become renewed in the Spirit of your very being and get dressed with the new Self created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”

This is my own translation trying to bring out the crucial points more clearly than the New International Version or even Luther. I want to make four comments:

a) “Nous,” “citta” or in Luther’s translation “Gemat” is much more than soul or mind or some aspect of the human psychic system. It is rather the centre of our existence as person. It is the very essence of being, the subject in us including and penetrating the whole psychosomatic being, also including the mind, the subconscious etc. This has to be renewed, changed, or better: to be put onto a completely new basis in the Holy Spirit (*pneuma*).

Sometimes in Lutheran theology we have taken a rather voluntaristic standpoint, misunderstanding faith as a rational act of the will. This is in line with the spirit of enlightenment in 17th and 18th century theology, but not with Luther’s experience of temptation and his existential understanding of faith as the real renewing power of the Spirit. Luther is much more a mystic than we usually assume, and I will give one evidence more a little later.

b) The new man, Christ, is already there. He is the prototype, preincarnated so that we can dwell in Him (en Christ). I do not have to repeat the long discussion on Paul’s understanding of this “en christō”, but everybody agrees that at least the terminology is a mystical one. The new life is actually there, and its realization is a discovery which transforms life. It is the discovery of truth. (Both Heidegger’s interpretation of “alētheia” as the appearance of the real out of hiddenness, as well as the Sanskrit term “satya” which is truth as the disclosure of Being, point in the same direction, by the way.)

The experience of theosis is *sola gratia*, coming from outside. But it is a real process transforming man according to his original shape which always has been but is covered by sin. Theosis, therefore, could be described as reunification on a new level of awareness.

c) This new Self (*kainos anthropos*) is created like (*kata*) God. It is not God himself. There is ontological sameness but personal difference. It is oneness in pluriformity, an image of the Trinitarian mystery. Luther calls this the conformity with Christ. The difference between God and man is definitely upheld, but in a non-dualistic manner.

d) The whole sentence, of course, is expressed in the passive voice. The subject is God. He is the sanctifier who draws man into the process of *theosis*. The more he becomes the one subject, the more this process is accomplished. It is neither man’s decision

nor merit nor anything else. The "who" in any righteous action of man is the Christ within (Gal 2, 20). In Vedantic terms it is the *âtman*, the immanent transcendence or transcendent immanence which is in everything the subject but simultaneously beyond every thing. This again is precisely the way Luther explains God's presence in the world.²⁵

To relate this understanding of theosis once more to the Vedantic experience we can say this: The *aham brahmasmi* (I am brahman) is not all spoken by the Ego, but it is the *brahman/atman* itself which speaks. *Brahman/atman* is the only subject. We have here a very similar experience of theosis as in Christianity. But for the New Testament, Christ is the very centre, focus and integrating point of this new identification. And he calls into communion, which marks the difference from the Upanisadic vision.

Because he speaks of a call into communion, Luther does not speak about *theosis*. He prefers to speak about *conformitas Christi*. What sanctification, glorification and theosis will finally lead to we do not yet know. But now, here in this moment, we are called and transformed into conformity with Christ. This again shows Luther's realistic approach, which we had noted already with regard to the *simul iustus et peccator* formula. Man should concentrate on the visibility of God, i.e. on the Incarnation, also with regard to the promise of theosis.

What Luther means is this: The Spirit creates the real new man through and in conformity with Christ. *Fides Christi* is for Luther the life in and by the real presence of Christ. In faith the Christian is so much united with Christ that faith is the redemption through Christ as an immediate reality. His reality becomes in faith our reality. His victory is then really our victory. Faith is the real unification with the living Christ.²⁷ In this *unum cum eo fieri* man reaches his destiny and glory.

In conformity with Christ the real and true knowledge of God is automatically given. Man in his *sapientia carnis* was only able to project a demon out of his Ego and interest.²⁸ But in the death of the old being the illumination by the Spirit is implied because man is now completely determined by God. He has overcome the ego and lives in the Spirit. Thus, his knowledge comes from *sapientia spiritus* because his *sensus naturalis* has been transformed:

Et sic edisse animam suam Et velle contra proprium velle,
seper centre suum sapere, peccatum concedere contra suam
Iustitiam, Stultidiam audire centre sapientiam suam, hoc est
'crucem accipere' et 'Christi discipulum fieri' et 'transformari
nouitate sensus.'²⁹

However, conformity with Christ means for Luther never complete identity, for *fides Christi* is not our work or our piety, but

alone the work of God. It is certainly not an active *imitatio Christi* by man. It is rather a being determined by the saving action of the Trinitarian God who created new life, redeems in Christ and transforms into the new being in the Spirit. Thus, we have a new identity, not an identity of and in egocentredness of sin, but in God. This is what Luther says with the term *conformatas Christi*.

Sanctification, glorification, *theosis* are one. They are a movement of God. We are taken up into this movement in so far as we share and partake in Christ. The centre of being is Christ in us, the *atman*, as it were, in Vedantic terms. For Luther, however, the process comes only eschatologically to an end. Sainthood is not, but it is *becoming* due to the transcendent Spirit. And it is a collective event building up the body of Christ.

The two remaining aspects can be dealt with briefly.

5) The process of theosis reflects the non-dualistic life of the Trinity

The process of theosis is a Trinitarian process of the glorification of God in creation and creation in God (cf. 2 Cor 3,18). It is a process of integration of the polarity of God and man:

- a) God became man.
- b) Man is becoming God.

These two aspects are, according to Athanasius' understanding of *theosis*, an inseparable correlation. For Luther the main concern is to stress the priority of sentence "(a)" for reasons we have already explained. Perhaps it could be said that "(a)" is ontologically prior but "(b)" is existentially prior. For only in the process of sanctification "(b)" faith becomes real which again makes (a) an existential happening for me (Luther's *pro me*).

6. Non-dualism of God and man does not mean that theosis creates a change of identity or a "history" in God.

Luther's standpoint is clear: there is no "history" or change in God.³⁰ The inner-trinitarian movement or process is what I would like to call a "transtemporal simultaneousness." It is the happening of love in the Trinitarian interrelatedness. It is not history, because history presupposes that there is a bias of possibility and actuality, of beginning and perfection, etc. This bias, however, is unthinkable for Luther with regard to God. Yet, from the standpoint of simultaneous existence (*simul iustus et peccator*) there seems to be change. From the standpoint of God there is the disclosure of eternal sameness and glory, as we pointed out already.

It seems that we find in Luther some differentiation of God's truth and reality and man's realization. It is similar to the differentia-

tion between *paramarthika* and *vyavaharika* in Sankara, i. e. between the highest standpoint of non-dualistic realization and the lower knowledge of a differentiated ordinary perception of reality.

Luther says:

Qui baptisatus, est renatus coram deo nach seiner rechnung, er hats angefangen Ideo coram eius oculis schon geschehen, der jungst tag sthet in fur oculis und in der thur, Coram oculis nostris neadum sic. Sed sua misericordia schon gerechnet, quando plenus, quasi offusus opulente etc. mode halten fest an dem anfang.³¹

Luther says here that for God the process of sanctification–glorification–*theosis* is completed. Only under man's conditions there is the expectation of something to come. This links up with Luther's Christocentric understanding of *theosis*. For him there is no cycle of evolution which still has to come to a climax in the future, a view which is held in many Hindu philosophies. Especially Vivekananda and Aurobindo believe that we can speed up this process by different paths of Yoga, etc. This kind of evolutionism is widespread in modern secularized Western thinking also.

For Luther, however, perfection is neither a higher morality nor advance in evolution of any kind, but is based on the freedom to join into the eternal rhythm of God. The crucial event is seen in Jesus Christ. Everything else is discovery of the event in faith which transforms the faithful one into conformity with Him.

Summary and Consequences

1. I do not see a basic difference in sanctification, glorification and *theosis*. The essence of all is the transformation into the reality of Christ. However, they mark aspects of one process.
2. It is a process which remains ambiguous under spatiotemporal conditions. We never reach perfection during life. *Theosis* is an on-going process, a growing in faith. Thus Luther's view of man implies a solid realism and gives relief from an artificial urge towards perfection.
3. It is a real process and a real transformation. It is a joining into the Trinitarian self-movement. I would like to call it: the giving of oneself into the rhythm of God.
4. This rhythm of God underlines, as it were, the Trinitarian melody, which expresses cosmic harmony. Luther emphasizes the individual justification of man, whereas sanctification is more seen in its collective dimension as the building up of the body of Christ. His view, however, remains anthropocentric and does not include transformation of nature and matter. We

would have to say that Trinity as subject of *theosis* implies a universal understanding of sanctification, glorification and *theosis*. This is not excluded in Luther (cf. his mystical understanding of the indwelling God); it is rather a consequence of his experience.

5. Sanctification, glorification and *theosis* are acts of God. They have to be seen in the light of the *opus alienum Dei* and the cross. Unless our Ego dies and is drowned daily we cannot partake in the mystery of the indwelling Christ who is the identity of the new man.

NOTES

1. Cf. W. Pannenberg, "Gottebenbildlichkeit und Bildung des Menschen' (Imago Dei and Education of Man), in: *Grundfragen Systematischer Theologie* Bd. 2, Göttingen 1980, p. 211
2. M. V. Bruck, "Advaita und Trinitat: Indische und Christliche Gotteserfahrung im Dialog der Religionen" (Indian and Christian Experience of God in Dialogue of Religions), unpublished thesis for habilitation Rostock, 1980.
3. WA 1, 125, 24: "Christum mortuum in se transformare eque se conformare," WA 4, 703, 36f: "Qui enim credit Christum esse suum, esse sibi datum tulisse suum peccatum, vicisse suam mortem, in Christi spiritum transferetur, ut omnia mala, omnem concupiscentiam, omnem quoque impatientiam vincat." WA 1, 593 ff: perfidem Christi efficitur Christianus unus spiritus et unum cum Christo" WA 2,146,14f: "qui credit in Christo, hearet in Christo estque unum cum Christo" WA 2, 535, 24: "credere enim in Christum est eum induere, unum cum eo fieri."
4. cf. R. Prenter, *Spiritus Creator*, Studien zu Luthers Theologie, Munchen 1954, p. 188.
5. Cf. J. Moltmann, *Kirche in der Kraft des Geistes* (Church in the Power of the Spirit), Munchen 1975, p. 320 and P. B. T. Bilaniuk, *Theology and Economy of the Holy Spirit: An Eastern Approach*, Bangalore 1980, p. 148. This remark does not imply that the special dynamism and relatively independent pattern of the Holy Spirit are denied. However, we have to see that Luther stands unquestionably in the Western filioque tradition which he does not see in any contradiction with his emphasis on the *spiritus creator*. It has to be seen if and how a further developed Lutheran Pneumatology could affect the position in the filioque-debate. cf. J. Moltmann, *Trinitat und Reich Gottes* (Trinity and Kingdom of God), Munchen 1980, p. 194ff.
6. Luther describes this surrender or even death of the Ego in strong terms in connection with his temptations (*temptationes*), namely "descensus ad inferes" (WA 5, 604 5, 176,24) "resignatio ad infernum" (WA 56, 388, 11: 391, 10 "excessus in nihilum" (WA 5, 168, 1) It is the "dark night of the soul" of John of the Cross, the experience of death of a Ramana Maharsi, the darkness and nothingness in Buddhist ways, etc.
7. Meister Eckart, *Werke*, ed. F. Pfeiffer, Göttingen 1924 p. 261 (Ego, the word "I", is appropriate only for God in his oneness).
8. Cf. A. K. Coomaraswamy, "On the One and only Transmigrant," in: *Selected Papers II*, Bollingen Series LXXXIX., Princeton University Press 1977, p. 66 f.
9. WA 40/2, 582,5

10. EG Veda X, 124 1-3
Brhad Up III, VII, 23; Maitri Up VI, 17, 3 etc.
11. Cf. M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, Bombay 1973, p. 364; S. Murty, *Revelation and Reason in Advaita Vedanta*, Delhi 1974, p. 3ff, etc.
12. Maitri Up IV, 4
13. Brahad Up IV, 4, 6
14. That this is not a vision or other kind of psychological experience but a direct intuition beyond object-subject discrimination has been clearly stated by S. Murty, op. cit., p. 115.
15. WA 30/1, 191, 17ff; cf. H. Beintker, *Die Überwindung der Anfechtung bei Luther*, Berlin 1954, p. 170.
16. WA 56, 300 11
17. In the life and death of Christ, God reveals His different justice opposing the religious value system of man. In accepting Christ's self-sacrifice God declares this justice as His will. This has to be seen as the root for Luther's understanding of justification. Cf. J. Moltmann, *Kirche in der Kraft des Geistes*, p. 106.
18. Cf. H. Ott. "Erfahrung und Gewissheit" (Experience and Assurance) in: *Wirklichkeit und Glaube II; Der persönliche Gott*, Goettingen 1969, Op. 207.
19. G. Ebeling, *Dogmatik des christlichen Glaubens III*, Tubingen 1979, p. 242.
20. WA 5,111, 35; 207, 7ff; 387,9; 411, 40ff; 307, 30ff; etc.
21. WA 23, 137, 33; God is there "tiefer, ynnerlicher, gegenwertiger denn die creatur yhr selbs ist." (God is there deeper, innermost, more present than the creature is to itself).
22. Cf. G. Ebeling, *Dogmatik des christlichen Glaubens*, op. cit., p. 139.
23. Athanasius, *De incarnatione*, 2,54
24. Cf. the interesting title: *Die Kirche als Keimzelle der Weltvergöttlichung* (The Church as Germ-cell for Theosis of the world) by H. Andre, Leipzig 1920.
25. WA 23, 137, 33ff.
26. Brhad UP III, 7,23; cf. Katha Up III 3-9.
27. Cf. Note 1
28. WA 56, 359, 27 ff: "Spiritus enim occidit, prudentiam carnis et vivificavit hominem inferiorem facitque mortem contemni et vitam prodigi ac Deum solum super omnia diligi."
29. WA 56, 450, 2 ff.
30. Cf. especially his understanding of the relationship of *deus revelatus* and *deus absconditus* in "De servo arbitrio," 1525.
31. WA 45, 175, 18ff, (Rorer 1537): The baptized one is reborn before God according to His calculation. He has started it. In God's view this has already happened; the day of judgement has already come and is in the door. In our view it is not so. But His mercy is counted already and fully given. In this way we take refuge in the beginning. (The translation is difficult because of a mixture of Latin and German. It is a text written by a pupil recording Luther's lecture and does not give full sentences.)