

9-1972

September 1972

O.P. Kretzmann
Valparaiso University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholar.valpo.edu/campus_commentary

Recommended Citation

Kretzmann, O.P., "September 1972" (1972). *Campus Commentary*. 41.
https://scholar.valpo.edu/campus_commentary/41

This Newsletter is brought to you for free and open access by the University Archives & Special Collections at ValpoScholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Campus Commentary by an authorized administrator of ValpoScholar. For more information, please contact a ValpoScholar staff member at scholar@valpo.edu.



September, 1972

Dear Brother:

A few years ago a British theologian spoke of the contemporary members of the church, and particularly pastors, as the "children of the afterglow." To a certain extent that is true. For much of our life and thought, also in the church, the sun has gone down and we live only in the long afterglow of a day of faith. At least so it would seem to us. So much so that we are tempted to substitute the quietism of twilight for the burden of the battle for God in one of the decisive hours of history. **It is imperative for us, the living servants of the living acting God and a living acting church, to remember again and again our high dignity and consuming task, particularly in times of controversy over methods and procedures.** We are the messengers of His coming. We have been given the strange magnificent power to relate our lives and the lives of others to the Incarnation, Passion and Resurrection, and the Exaltation of the eternal Son of God.

And that will never be an afterglow. It will always be a living, vital and holy thing, carried in the hands of men who, above everything, are the property of eternity who have been loaned to the world for a little while. We must always remember, no matter what disturbs the church momentarily, that we are the heralds of the way, confessors of the truth, men who are of the blood royal of the children of God by divine knighthood.

In times like these it is particularly significant and important that we look to the rock from which we were hewn. In our case, of course, it is the story of what happened back there in the sixteenth century when our fathers said to God and to the world: "This is the way we understand our message from Thy will and Word. This is what we believe, and with this we face the problems of our time; for this we are willing to die." **This process of understanding the heart of our message is decisively important for our task in the ministry of today and what it does to the Lutheran Church in America and in the world. It may be later now than we think.** Certain signs point to that fact. But by the mercy of God we can so clarify our thoughts and maintain our loyalties that in a day of unprecedented confusion and fear, of irrelevant controversy over minor matters, we will see again a majesty of power, an immovable loyalty, a serene faith, and a driving devotion to Him Who may even now be making ready for the day of His appearing.

In other words, what I am trying to say is that **the time for secondary and less important matters is past. This is an hour in which the full Christological understanding of the Christian Gospel is basic.** The Christological understanding of life and history is something that is completely bound up in the Incarnation and Resurrection of our Lord. We need a new emphasis on Christological thinking which is totally submerged in the facts of the Incarnation. Nothing less than that will do. **It is the Christological understanding of our Confessions which will eventually lead us out of our present state of confusion and misunderstanding. Our sixteenth century Confessions are not, as some people have made them out to be, separatistic documents. They are, especially today, unitive and catholic. A re-study of our Confessions might very well lead us to some direction for our relationship to other confessions. For the Lutheran Church in America to exercise its proper and God-willed influence the way lies through the Confessions and their renewed faithful, intelligent and timely applications to the theological thought and life of our day. Nothing less than that will do.**

This Christological understanding and reading of the Confessions leads to a number of conclusions which are vitally important for the momentary life of the church today. Today as never before the church must present the paradox of timelessness and timeliness, just as the individual child of God is in the world and yet not of the world, in time, yet not of time; yet subject to time and its limitations. In a very real sense the life in the church and God is a life which has no yesterdays and no tomorrows, which is unchanging, which has no past and no future, but is a part of the eternal Now. This determines the significance for us in the twentieth century of the statements adopted by our fathers four hundred years ago.

Let me say again: The essence, the heart, of our loyalty to the Confessions even at this late and troubled time lies in the thorough Christological interpretation of them. This is the heart of our problem. To ask the Confessions to say something apart from and different from their eloquent insistence upon Jesus Christ as the heart of our message is tragically missing the point. Every other approach is to take away this dynamic power and its overwhelming appeal to the heart. To shift it to the doctrine of Creation or any other doctrine except the Atonement of Jesus Christ is a perversion of the Christological power and dynamism of the Gospel. To substitute for it a series of synodical resolutions, no matter how well-intentioned, is almost blasphemous. It is the totally Christological emphasis on the person and work of Jesus Christ which gives the Confessions their continuing power and lasting influence.

A correct reading of the Confessions requires a continuing emphasis on the backward look. One of the chief words in the Bible is "remember." Here is a dynamic word. It incites to memory until remembrance becomes an imperative for action. **Much of the Christian faith is summed up in three imperatives: "Believe" — "Remember" — "Love."** One of the sacred commands in Scripture is: **"This do in remembrance of Me."** The truth conveyed by the Scriptures is not

disincarnate, idealistic truth. It is always immediately and passionately concerned with history and life. It says that once the Eternal entered time in such a way that in and through a series of historical events God became manifest. We look back and see Him in the Sacred Record. We remember the words and deeds all around Him, before and after Him. Before and after Him are faces on which the light of the Eternal shines, voices in which the Voice of Heaven speaks. He becomes the Christ after us and the Christ before us. He becomes our contemporary and the contemporary of all generations. The historical becomes the timeless. But that process is begun with the backward look, with the active remembrance of our heritage.

There is, of course, another side to this. There is a paradox here. The backward look must not become rigid and formal without life and strength of its own. The piling up of tradition on tradition acts as a sort of spiritual primitivism by which all the greatness and power of the church is assigned to the past. It becomes completely subservient to the past, leaving no room for new insights, new apprehensions, new applications, even new formulations.

The Church of Jesus Christ can never become the slave of its own history. History is great, but Christ is greater. He is ever present, and the Church abides in Him. This is vastly important for the practical life of the church. This life is sensitive to the pulse and impulse of the Holy Spirit within the Body of Christ, the beloved community. No intellectual exercises based on Aristotle will do it. No blind worship of every new doctrine, but only the constant humble submission to the Spirit of God, working through the means of Grace, can save us from blind traditionalism on the one hand and a rootless soft liberalism on the other.

And so, in the divine order of things, at three o'clock on the afternoon of June 25, 1530, in the small conference room in the Bishop's palace at Augsburg, **Dr. Beyer began to read the Augsburg Confession. It was a great moment in the ongoing history of the church. This was the first complete formal Confession in more than a thousand years since the Athanasian Creed in 434.** It marked the beginning of the breaking down of the organization and institutionalization of Redemption. The lines of battle had been clearly drawn. The Spiritual conflict of a great soul had widened until it would involve millions of members of generations to come, even to our own day. **An institution was broken, but the Kingdom remained, more shining than ever before.** It emerged from the ashes of burned out intellectual and theological fires to go on to new victories for Christ in a world that was approaching its greatest pain and its most desperate hours. For those of us who respond to its meaning today it has the thrill of a living faith which has behind it a long past and before it a long, long future.

Its great heart lies in Article III, "Of the Son of God," which together with IV, "Of Justification," and XX, "Of Good Works," make up the very center and heart of this great statement of Christian faith. These Articles constitute the principal and most important articles of Christian doctrine. They nail down the clear and correct apprehension of the Holy Scriptures. They provide the only key to the Bible. They alone show the way to the incredible treasure and the true knowledge of Jesus Christ without which the poor conscience can have no true fixed hope nor conceive of the riches of the grace of God in Christ. This note pervades the entire Augustana, not only in the Articles which we have mentioned. There can be no acceptance before God whether based upon cultivation of the natural virtues or anything else in man. **Luther has said that this Article on Justification determines the character of a standing or falling church, and the Augustana reflects Luther's theology.**

So we have here again at the end of a thousand years the perennial unbeatable theology of the Cross. **The great glory of Lutheran life and thought is in danger now of being forgotten and displaced by secondary ideas and theories. The justification of the sinners through faith in the Cross is the material principle of the Reformation.** Four hundred years have made no difference in our terrifying closeness to the pulsing heart of our theology. Even in our time we must never forget that our greatest and most distinctive contribution to the theology and thought of Christendom lies not in the emphasis on abstract truth and the multiplication of formulas, but in the humble eloquent pointing to the Cross and its meaning. The genius and essence of Lutheranism is the relentless theologically thoughtful implication of the Cross. To put it crudely and bluntly, the Crucifixus from the Mass in B Minor is what we have to give to Christendom.

In our day this single, powerful, basic approach has been lost in our emphasis on man made ideas and man constructed theories and thoughts. Also in our time there has been an effort to make Christianity and the Christian faith a quest instead of an achievement. Somehow it is said we must find a way to raise ourselves by our boot-straps to the grace and favor and the presence of God.

In other words, we must realize that before we can live together and with each other we must learn to live with God. He lived and died that we might become good enough to live with Him and with the universe and with our fellowmen. Our problem has changed during the last four hundred years, but the answer has not changed. It lies in the heart of the Augustana emphasis on the Cross. It is this emphasis which we have missed in our recent history. There has been some lip service to it, but nothing profoundly and vigorously significant. We have attempted to substitute man made statements and principles and resolutions for the eternal truth of the Gospel, the theology of the Cross.

Once a person has knelt in the dust of Calvary he can stand in the high places of the earth. It is necessary for us to return to a warm and thoughtful appreciation of the relevance and power of the theology of the Cross. The great indicative statement of the **kerygma** is true today as it was for two thousand years.

The true power and value of any given section of this Christendom can only be measured by its distance from the Cross. We are always in danger of moving in the direction of Sinai, as we have, or in the direction of Athens. **Consequently we must know that the great secret of Christianity, the foundation of it and its perennial youth, lies in**

two words — in Christ, and not in the historic Jesus of the mountain side, but in the Christ of the Cross, the Lamb of the Eternal Sacrifice, the sin-burdened fashioner of Atonement. This is the heart of our faith and our confession. Once and only once in the long and bitter story of our incompleteness, of our imperfection and uncertainty, there is one task that was done completely, finally, absolutely by every standard of measurement human and divine. The work of our Lord was complete and final, the turning of all of our unfinished tasks, the loose ends of history, the frayed edges of time, the imperfection of our own plans for the Kingdom into something new, complete, holy and glorious.

Out of the present travail of the church something new and precious must come, a more dynamic and relevant Christology, a Christological understanding of life and history. We must realize again that it is only the revelation of an acting God revealing Himself through the Christology which begins with the action of Calvary, in blood and sweat and death, that our hope lies. This alone is our heritage. This is the singular glory of Lutheranism. Our God is a God with tears in His eyes, and a crown of thorns on His brow. Nothing less than that will do.

He who would solve the present problems of the church, difficult though they may be, in other terms than the Christological, is doomed to failure. Our theology is the theology of the Incarnation. The absence of emphasis on this fundamental fact gets us into trouble, and it has. It is only this free emphasis on the central Lutheran truth which will bring to the troubled, bewildered church a certain divine certainty, a sureness which alone is sufficient for the problems of our day. It is in the Incarnation of the eternal Son of God that Lutheranism finds its rest, its peace and its dynamic impulse for the future. From the Incarnation grows the most magnificent idea below that level which has ever come to the mind of man, the idea of the Body of Christ, the communion of saints, the city of God, the beloved community, the communion of those who believe in this Incarnation and in the presence of the Son of God in our world. We believe in a beloved community, ruled by mercy, a kingdom in which men are now free and forgiven, a holy nation, the one reason why this insubstantial world still stands. It is the work of God the Holy Spirit, and when His work is done, the end will come, not for the church, but for its scaffolding in time and history. **The church is now standing at the edge of its final and complete and unimaginable glory. This is no time for secondary matters or secondary problems to concern us.** We must return to the great rock from which we were hewn. It alone holds earth and heaven together, and nothing else.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

FOOTNOTE TO HISTORY:

For better or for worse, **Lutherans have come a long way since the Civil War in being more clearly a part of the American scene.** Over the years, faithful or faithless, we have adopted many of the mores of the American community. Some of us now love big deals and big stuff — others must have the latest car — some have developed a myopic faith in Education (always capitalized) — the Martin Luther Ladies Aid Society discusses precisely the same thing as the John Wesley Women's Group — and so on.

In one area, however, admittedly a minor one, we have lagged behind. We still have a curiously naive, serf-like worship for Government no matter how bad it is. I have been reminded of this at a thousand conventions — lay, clerical, young people — or any other group. Here is the annual convention of the Lutheran Bar Tender and Mixologist Association. All day long the assembled delegates have listened to eloquent speakers, church officials, learned professors, well-known churchmen. Their response has been polite and cool. They applaud sparsely and obediently — and proceed to the next matter.

And then inevitably the great moment comes. The chairman announces: "We had planned to have the privilege of having with us this morning the mayor of this great city, the Honorable B. B. Bumble. He cannot be with us. He has, however, sent a fine substitute, Mr. Houndog, the assistant dog-catcher of this fine community." Then we all rise and applaud vehemently. A nondescript character ambles out from the wings: "It is hard for me to tell you how bad Mayor Bumble feels that he cannot be with you." Translation: His honor has a hang-over. "He is confronted with weighty problems." Translation: His honor is trying to figure out why he tried to draw to an inside straight last night. "He has to spend today reviewing recent developments." Translation: He is reviewing the fact that he took that eighth martini last night. "He is also pondering problems in the administration of justice in this great city." Translation: The mayor's wife got a ticket for speeding from a hostile police judge.

And so on. Mr. Houndog is greeted by waves of applause. Moral: This is not what is meant by "give unto Caesar."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This business of supporting the preacher by gifts in kind was—and is—a tradition with both good and bad sides. In many cases it was—and is—an honest, loving sharing of food and other things with the "Herr Pastor." Deacon Sauerbraten slaughtered several hogs each year and the preacher always shared in the results—and often it was more than the feet or the ribs. I still remember a cellar in a parsonage in Western Canada which was stocked with rows and rows of pressed duck, vegetables, fruits and other good things.

On the other hand, I have often heard a brother's wife express profound resentment over the fact that she had to "oh and ah" over gifts of chicken necks and hand-me-down clothes. I recall that some farmers in Central Illinois were regularly surprised by the faithful activity of their hens in spring. They had more eggs than they could sell profitably. The result? The first batch went to the "Herr Pastor." If there were some still left, they were shipped to the seminary at

Springfield. I can still hear my good friends at the Sem come out of the dining hall cackling for weeks at a time. I recall a parsonage into which we moved more than forty years ago which was so solidly stuffed with baked beans—there must have been a sale somewhere because many of the cans were dented—that years went by before we could look a baked bean in the eye.

I presume that by now this custom has succumbed to urbanization, super markets and higher salaries. In one way, of course, I regret this. The quantity and quality of the gifts was often used by our fathers as a measure of sanctification. There was a close relationship between the degree of holiness and the quality of the eggs. For example, there was in my Grandfather Hueschen's "Begleitschreiben" a provision that in addition to his \$300 annual salary the "Vorsteher" (deacons) were to supply him with wood. This was no small order; he had a large house and there was a stove in every room. Normally, on cold winter days, each afternoon would find him making his sick calls. He usually walked because Hans, the parish horse, was a contemporary of Dr. Walther and got the chills on cold days. This was, therefore, the logical time—during his absence—for some of the deacons to deliver their share of the wood. They could drop it and run. Grandfather Hueschen would come home as dusk came down over the "Friedhof" on the hill, take one look at the new pile of wood in the barnyard and say "Das hat nun wieder der elende Schmidt gebracht. Der liebe Gott hat ihm gesagt er soll teilen was er hat; er teilt aber nur was er uelig hat." Translation for the younger brethren: "This wood comes from Schmidt. God told him to share what he has; however, he shares only what he has left over." Note: It is a curiously linguistic, cultural and nationalistic fact that English has no exact equivalent for "der elende Schmidt" or even for "der liebe Gott."

All this was brought on by a report in the *New York Times* that a young Anglican vicar's wife had published an article in which she advised "Never Marry a Cleric": "I had high-minded visions of entering with my husband to the great work of converting the world (who doesn't at 21), but here I am surrounded by four children, tied to the house, expected to turn up at every cat-hanging and feeling like a widow as my husband is always on duty.

"I also resent the fact standard. **A clergy wife is expected to run the conventional things, turn up at church and every other connected social affair whatever her domestic circumstances may be.** It is often extremely difficult with a young family. One receives no encouragement from managing it with plenty of blame when one does not. Ordinarily a woman has a right to share her husband's life but for the clergy wife this has been reduced to an occasional privilege."

I really wonder if she is right. I know that **occasionally I get a letter from Mrs. Theophilus in which she writes: "Theophilus is too busy. He told me to write."** I always read the next few paragraphs hurriedly because I know the good part is coming. It always begins: "As far as I am concerned—" At this point my attention quotient goes up and I read with a great deal of interest and no little approval. Perhaps I should say that too often she refers to some hidden grief which has touched her family. I become aware of the fact that she does not like to trouble Theophilus with some of these problems and that she has very few people in whom she can confide; so she writes to a dim, dumb, and distant figure. Perhaps there should be a separate set of counselors for pastors' wives.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Notes on a Frayed Cuff: One by one—inexorably—my ties with the past of the Missouri Synod are being cut. There are moments when I hesitate to open a copy of *The Lutheran Witness* because I know I will see the cutting of another link with the past. For example, some time ago *The Lutheran Witness* reported the passing of Dr. George W. V. Schick. For many years I had known him as a great scholar, a charming friend, and that strange combination—a **sound theologian with a sense of humor.** My relationship to him, however, was even more personal than that. In 1926 at the Johns Hopkins University I was a timid soul trying to establish graduate standing. I was conferring with the head of a department who said, "You have no AB? Where did you graduate?" I answered: "Concordia Seminary, St. Louis." He said: "Sorry, I never heard of it. (This would not happen today.) What were your courses?" Haltingly I reviewed the years of Latin, Greek, Hebrew, English, and the sciences. I did not mention my grades because for the moment I thought they were irrelevant. His face was incredulous: "I did not know that anything like that still existed. Has anybody from your denomination ever done work here at Hopkins?"

"Yes, sir," I said, "Mr. George Schick."

He took down the name: "Come back tomorrow. I want to check the records."

Promptly at nine the next morning I appeared at his door. He was smiling: "**The Registrar and I have agreed that anyone with Schick's background is welcome at Hopkins. You're in. No undergraduate work will be required.**" So a few months ago I said a quick and quiet little Deo Gratias for "Georgie" Schick. I owe him very much.

Footnote: I will not wait for the flood of letters from my classmates: "Ya bum. You should have mentioned your grades. You got in under false pretenses."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Isn't it true that one of the great crosses for the modern ministry is the proliferation of evening meetings? This has always seemed to me to be one of the real burdens the twentieth century ministry must bear. After a day of sick calls, confirmation classes, Sauerbraten waving from his new Cadillac, and possibly a half-hour checking next Sunday's pericope to see if it will fit what you want to say, you come home and are faced with another gathering that evening of

the Paul and Timothy Pinochle Club or the HTT (Holier Than Thou) Ladies Society. Certainly something should be done about this, and I hope that the proper officials will take note.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Another “little girl” paragraph: Many years ago I remember boarding the train out of Chicago one morning to head for a synodical convention. Just as we were seated in the car the venerable president of Synod, Dr. Frederick Pfotenhauer, came down the aisle. He looked us over and finally said: “Es wirt in der Synode zu viel gereist.” Translation: “There is too much traveling in Synod.” He should really see us now! At the drop of a postcard from Timbuctoo two executives dash for the airport and hop the next jet. I myself head for Seattle as casually as I used to drive my green Chevy to Chicago. One may legitimately ask as did Dr. Pfotenhauer: “Is this trip really necessary or would a letter do?” **It is, of course, one real reflection of the fact that our world has become a neighborhood and the miles have been squeezed into inches.** An overnight trip to Iceland gets me away from telephones, certain non-synodical newspapers and my financial problems. So we are now a generation of post-modern Cains, “vagabonds in the earth.” **One can only hope that the Gospel moves as fast as we do.**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Notes on a Frayed Cuff: Have you ever noticed that many great sentences of Holy Writ are really great because they include a single word which is totally unexpected, completely strange, and perfectly right? For example: **“The truth shall make you free.”** That last word is startling. As a sinner and a child of God I was expecting something entirely different. “The truth shall make you”—possibly faithful, obedient, wise—but not free.

Another example: **“The just shall live by faith.”** The natural man in me expects “The just shall live by his goodness, by his strength, by his wisdom.”—But no, the word is faith.

I would be interested in having you send other examples of the remarkable and unpredictable exactness of many Biblical phrases and sentences. The entire matter would make it an interesting subject for a conference paper.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MISSOURI SEMANTICS

Missourian semantics remains a fascinating science. A brother stops me in the hall in front of the registration desk at Milwaukee, (as always a *sheol* of confusion) to tell me about the new usage of the word coordinate. You are a synodical employe (another new ecclesiastical word — Pieper, Stoeckhardt, Graebner were teachers in the church; but now we have only employes), part of whose job it is to spill your hours of the theological study into the ultimate curse of our theological world, a yawning microphone, (imagine Stoeckhardt’s “Bibliche Geschichte” poured into a surprised microphone) and you know that you and your work will be coordinated. What is the meaning of this? You soon discover, usually at meetings of boards — and joint meetings at that. I am trying to persuade a good student to write a thesis: “Joint meetings — the post-modern reflection of original sin.” I have no objection to the existence of boards as such. I recognize them as a necessary part of our momentary *Diesseitigkeit*, an evidence of the fact that we are still enmeshed in the murky ambiguities of history. **But a joint meeting of two boards is something else again;** with it we move into the realm that St. Paul described: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” **This was evident at Milwaukee. Reports by one committee were, God knows, bad enough; joint reports from two or more moved the brethren into strange sayings.**

Milwaukee strengthened my interest in the new Lutheran Semantics — Course II — for parish pastors only. Prerequisites: Sanskrit I and Esperanto II. **My emotional interest in theological semantics continues. The 1971 convention brought many dismaying examples.** In fact, in my new catalog the vastness of the subject has persuaded me to subdivide the material. E.g.: **Protective semantics, deceptive semantics, lying semantics.** In each case the adjective accurately describes the ultimate purpose of the use of words. I saw one a few days ago in a mission report. **The reporter referred to a “belt-tightening” budget. The adjective is both protective and deceptive.** It augurs up to well-fed executives in a luscious office whose only reaction to the crying tragedy of dismissed or starving missionaries is to pull his belt a little tighter over a thrusting paunch. Or the burial of a tragedy covered up by the vague and abstract words about a lost missionary. **His tenure was terminated in 1972 because of the recent setbacks in the mission budget. That takes care of my good friend in Latin America. He will not preach in his little church next Sunday. In his place there will be a member of the Mission Board: “My dear Christian friends, real or prospective, there has been a cutback; and instead of Holy Communion this morning, we shall have a Litany of deficit.”**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

I could not help remembering the little German prayer with which I closed these remarks a few weeks before the Milwaukee convention: **“Ach lieber Gott, sei doch nicht boes.”** If you are blessed with a long memory you may recall that I emphasized the little word **“doch.”** It ought to appear, I said, in every approach to the throne of divine mercy

and judgment — “doch.” Despite our little hates and our small differences, our raucous yelping at each other as we approach the stillness in God and with God, we ask Him to forget, not to get angry with us, not to cast us away from His presence.

So the “doch” is vital. It is a small enough apology to a God whom we insult with our littleness, our sinful unwillingness to let him be God. So we apologize. Our words “*sei doch nicht boes*” are lost in the tremendous chorus of cherubim and seraphim singing praises unceasingly to Him Who does all things well and right — also in the little corner of His kingdom called the Missouri Synod.

So we add “doch” to our prayers. It is an expression of our awareness that God is busy elsewhere — doing greater things in His Kingdom.

* * * * *

One of the side effects of these yellow sheets is the fact that district editors of *The Lutheran Witness* send me samples of their labors. Lately I have become greatly interested in the efforts of a brother in the Southern California District, Robert Mittelstaedt. He regularly leaves space for his District President, the Rev. Arnold G. Kuntz, who writes with an eloquent pen. In a recent issue he surveys our current problems, combining good sense with good theology:

“I’m not amazed at the good-natured time God takes. Making something always takes time. Making something out of us who constitute His Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod may take even more time, and tears maybe. And broken hopes and bitter delays. Another 40 years, for some of us. ‘Not through the way of the land of the Philistines, though that was near; but God led the people about by way of the wilderness.’ You find that in the Book of Exodus, but you find its application a lot closer home than that. There is no great distance between Egypt and Canaan. By the straightest road the ancient Israelites would have been dragging their feet if it took them 40 days. Forty years was required by way of the wilderness. On the other side of that lay the land of promise.

“And what I am suggesting is that this interminable going round and round in circles may be better for us than we think. It’s God’s road, you know, only God’s road, roundabout, by way of the wilderness, that leads to the land of promise.”

As ever,

O. P. Kretzmann