

# MAKING ROOM WHERE THERE IS NONE: FORGIVENESS, RECONCILIATION AND INSTITUTIONS

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## Introduction

To begin, I share two stories that have to do with forgiveness, reconciliation, and institutions. One of the stories is from the past and the present; the other is from the present and future. Taken together, I hope that they will give a frame of reference from which to proceed.

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During the summer months of 2007, I lived and researched in Lutherstadt-Wittenberg, where Martin Luther once taught, preached, and nailed the 95 Theses to the Castle Church door. What I was studying, in effect, was the concrete nature of how Martin Luther understands the Gospel. Over the course of that summer, I asked every native German whom I met—whether from the former East or West—the following question: “What does the Gospel of Jesus Christ sound like in this place?” Forgiveness and reconciliation were most often given in response. When I asked between whom forgiveness and reconciliation needed to happen, I would most often hear that the Church needed to ask for forgiveness from and seek reconciliation with those who had sought solace and hope within the walls of the Church. As I would learn from those inside and outside the Church with whom I spoke, the reasons for this had to do with the Church’s complicity with the government from the time of WW II until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.<sup>1</sup> One person with whom I spoke clearly echoed the sentiments I heard from many when they said, “I am afraid that there seems to be no room in the Inn when it comes to the Church asking for forgiveness from and seeking reconciliation with us.”<sup>2</sup>

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One of the courses I have the privilege of co-teaching at Augsburg College is a keystone course for Business majors in their senior year of college. One of the books the seniors most often read for this course is Simon Wiesenthal’s *The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness*. In the book, Wiesenthal, a Jewish man, recounts an experience he had in a concentration camp. A nurse brought Wiesenthal to the bedside of a dying S.S. officer named Karl. Karl asked Wiesenthal to forgive him on behalf of the Jews whom he had tortured and killed. After much wrestling with this request, Wiesenthal declines Karl’s request. At the end of the story, Wiesenthal asks what the readers would do, were they in his place. The second half of

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<sup>1</sup> For a fascinating study on reconciliation in the context of East Germany and South Africa, see Ralf K. Wüstenberg, *The Political Dimension of Reconciliation: A Theological Analysis of Ways of Dealing with Guilt During the Transition to Democracy in South Africa and East Germany*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009) .

<sup>2</sup> The phrase “no room in the Inn” is in reference to the biblical account in Luke 2 of Joseph and the pregnant Mary looking for a room in which to stay in Bethlehem.

the book, then, is a collection of responses to that question from people of all faith traditions, including those who identify themselves as not having any sort of faith affiliation.

After the students have read the book, I often ask two questions. Initially I ask what the students would do were they in Wiesenthal's place. The vast majority of students have said that they would not forgive Karl, either. When asked why this is the case for them, their response is far, it seems, from why Wiesenthal would not offer forgiveness to Karl. Following certain lines of Jewish thought, Wiesenthal believed that only those who had been wronged could offer forgiveness to Karl; for the students in the course that I co-teach, the reasons for not offering forgiveness have to do with Karl getting what he deserves for torturing and killing many Jewish persons. I will then often ask what if they are Karl, and thus not Wiesenthal, in this story. Here my pedagogical aim was to get them to own up to the significance of forgiveness. Sometimes this works, other times it doesn't. One such time where it didn't work was when a student said, "Karl shouldn't have to ask for forgiveness, actually, because he was just following orders. It's not his fault that in carrying out orders so many were killed. So, if I'm Karl, then I shouldn't have to ask for forgiveness or seek reconciliation. I would just be doing what I needed to do to get ahead."<sup>3</sup>

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Admittedly, these two stories are not quantitatively adequate, but they may serve as qualitatively instructive for purposes of this essay. Is it the case that when institutions – be they secular or sacred, private or public, non-profit or for-profit – do something that wrongs someone or a group of people, which also is a matter of course for who the institution is, what it is about, and where it is headed, that these institutions do not need to ask forgiveness from and seek reconciliation with those whom they have wronged, wittingly or not? Theoretically, it is easy to say that, of course, institutions should do what they can to be forgiven from and seek reconciliation with those whom they have wronged. Yet, practically, this may be a little more complex than first met the eye in theory. Is it possible, given the polarity of what is true in theory and what is true in practice, for institutions to seek forgiveness and reconciliation with those whom they have wronged?

It would be easier, perhaps, to throw one's hands in the air and walk away from the whole matter, frankly. Yet still there would be increasingly more fracture and fragmentation between institutions and those whom they serve; further, these fractures and fragmentations have the potential to eat away at the institution as much from the inside as from the outside. Forgiveness and reconciliation are not only needed between institutions and the larger society; they are also needed within institutions themselves.

This essay takes up the question of whether or not there is "room in the Inn" for institutions to seek forgiveness from and reconciliation with those whom they have wronged, either inside the institution or out. Some would want to say that the eminent Christian Ethicist Reinhold Niebuhr has already answered that question for us with a resounding "No," because, while individuals may live morally, groups of individuals cannot.<sup>4</sup> Others may wonder if forgiveness and

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<sup>3</sup> Simon Wiesenthal, *The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness* (New York: Schocken, 1998).

<sup>4</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man & Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics* Library of Theological Ethics (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001). See also Robin W. Lovin, *Reinhold Niebuhr* Abingdon Pillars of Theology (Nashville: Abingdon, 2007), especially pp. 1-34.

reconciliation would be enough to fix what is wrong between institutions and the larger society, or even within institutions themselves.

There is room in institutions to seek forgiveness and reconciliation, both inside and outside of itself. In order to develop this thesis, I will initially investigate how we might understand forgiveness and reconciliation in relationship to institutions. Next, I will explore how Martin Luther's understanding of vocation may serve to open up institutional life. Then, I will uncover what kinds of space or room might be present in institutions to do the hard work of seeking forgiveness and reconciliation. All of this is but an initial thinking through, on my part, what forgiveness and reconciliation might mean for institutions both in their thinking and practice of such matters.

### **Forgiveness and Reconciliation**

Desmond Tutu, South African Archbishop and Co-Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, has suggested that forgiveness and reconciliation are matters of the future; without them, no future can emerge.<sup>5</sup> In the context of a people torn apart, one can perhaps readily see why Tutu would hang the past and future around the fulcrum of forgiveness and reconciliation in the way that he has, although he is by no means alone in talking about forgiveness and reconciliation in this way. Modern and postmodern theologians have used forgiveness and reconciliation to talk about the eschatological future that they cannot see, but know is there; this is the future is the new creation, in which, “[God] will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.” (Rev. 21.4) For those doing theology in the key of the future, the issue at stake is making sure that the Gospel of God's forgiving and reconciling activity in Jesus Christ for our sake does not get truncated into the ditch of the here and now without having any traction to move into the future. This is a helpful corrective in many respects; yet, what does it mean for matters of forgiveness and reconciliation? It would seem to me that it might mean that forgiveness and reconciliation, which certainly come to full fruition in the eschatological future, never really land in the present. In this light, forgiveness and reconciliation risk being seen as more theory than reality, and, as such, in ways that suggest that wrongs are merely brushed aside or those things to which we turn a blind eye.

In short, when seen only eschatologically, forgiveness and reconciliation may be avenues of further fracture and fragmentation. Institutionally, when seen only from the macro view through the lens of only one tense (the future), forgiveness and reconciliation might seem to fit snugly into notions of progress and success, not to mention the notion of the autonomous self; yet, on a more micro level, to not deal with matters of forgiveness and reconciliation in a way that holds together both the long (eschatological) and short (the present) view in light of the institution's rearview (the past) could be said to be disastrous for the institution as a whole.

Forgiveness and reconciliation are as much about the present as they are about the past and the future. This is as true on the institutional as it is on the individual level. In order to get at this way of understanding forgiveness and reconciliation, I turn to what is perhaps an odd place, namely, how Martin Luther describes forgiveness in his *Small Catechism*. The *Catechism*, itself,

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<sup>5</sup> Desmond Mpilo Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness* (New York: Image/Double Day, 1999).

was written in 1529 for parents and others who would teach the faith in the context of the home.<sup>6</sup> In his discussion of the Lord's Supper, Luther writes in response to the question, "What is the benefit of such eating and drinking,"

The words 'given for you' and 'shed for you for the forgiveness of sins' show us that forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation are given to us in the sacrament through these words, because *where there is forgiveness of sin, there is also life and salvation.*<sup>7</sup>

In light of the previous discussion regarding the sole emphasis on the eschatological nature of forgiveness and reconciliation, one can certainly see in this passage how Luther is working with this connection. This isn't the only connection being made, however. In the phrase, "where there is forgiveness of sins, there is life and salvation,"<sup>8</sup> it would seem that Luther is at work doing several things. He writes these lines – and, in fact, the whole section concerning the Lord's Supper – fresh off of a debate with the Reformed theologian Zwingli over whether or not Jesus Christ is really present in the sacrament; Luther says yes, Zwingli says no.<sup>9</sup> Zwingli, it seems does not understand how it is that Jesus Christ could be present in a bodily way, since Christ is ascended into heaven, and so he suggests that Christ is only present in a symbolic, or metaphorical way. Luther won't hear of this; Christ is present for Luther in a bodily way. In the sacrament of the altar, then, Christ comes to us as a "bodily word."<sup>10</sup> Among other things, what is important about this is that for Luther, it would seem, the finite and the infinite are not at odds with one another; rather, the finite bears the infinite (*finitum capax infiniti*).<sup>11</sup> While Christ is present everywhere in the world, in ways that are hidden, in bread and wine, brought together with the Word, Christ comes to us and for us, full force.<sup>12</sup> The same is true in the word of forgiveness: Christ comes to us and at us, full force.

Also significant in the phrase, "where there is forgiveness of sin, there is also life and salvation," is that in it, Luther is suggesting that forgiveness is not only about the past and the future, but about the present as well. In this phrase, life is not disconnected neither from the past nor the future, but is rather deeply connected to them both. In forgiveness, then, where Christ comes as "bodily word," there is what Oswald Bayer calls a *Verschränkung*, an "interweaving of time."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> There are many fine introductions to Luther's Catechisms. Among them is the classic text by James Nestingen and Gerhard O. Forde, *Free to Be: A Handbook to Luther's Small Catechism* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, Rev. ed. 1993). More recently, see Timothy J. Wengert, *Martin Luther's Catechisms: Forming the Faith* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> Martin Luther, "Small Catechism," in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* edited and translated by Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), p. 362. Emphasis added.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Martin Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper (1528)" LW 37.151-372.

<sup>10</sup> For an excellent discussion of this, see Oswald Bayer, *Leibliches Wort: Reformation and Neuzeit im Konflikt* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992). See also, Oswald Bayer, *Living by Faith: Justification and Sanctification* trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), pp. 50-52.

<sup>11</sup> See Kurt K. Hendel, "The Material as a Vehicle of the Divine," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 28:3-4(June/August, 2001): 326-334.

<sup>12</sup> See Jörg Baur, "Ubiquität," *Creator est Creatura: Luthers Christologie als Lehre von der Idiomenkommunikation* ed. Oswald Bayer and Benjamin Gleede (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), pp. 186-301. See also Oswald Bayer's essay, "Das Wort ward Fleisch: Luthers Christologie als Lehre von der Idiomenkommunikation," in *Idem.*, pp. 5-34.

<sup>13</sup> This concept is interspersed throughout Bayer's work and is the subject of my doctoral dissertation.

In forgiveness, then, Christ comes to us and at us in such a way that all of time – and space – come together in the present.

Something needs to be said about sin in what Luther is about in this phrase as well. In everyday rhetoric, sin ends up being about what one does or does not do. This is not the primary meaning for Luther. Instead, sin is a state of being, in which we turn in upon ourselves.<sup>14</sup> In other words, sin is about how we become self-absorbed. Forgiveness sets one free from being self-absorbed, and free for being “self-forgetful.”<sup>15</sup>

These initial insights from Luther may be of some help us to understand forgiveness and reconciliation in institutions in ways that may or may lead us ask how they are understood and practiced by the world around us. Allow me to mention but a few.

- We are simultaneously sinners and forgiven sinners. As simultaneously sinners and forgiven sinners at the same time, institutions, like individuals, bear neither impeccability nor infallibility in either their identity or work.
- Forgiveness and reconciliation are not only about the past and future, but also about the present.
- Forgiveness releases sinners from self-absorption into a life in which they are free to do the hard work of forgiveness and reconciliation with those whom they have wronged, whether they intended to harm them or not.<sup>16</sup>
- Forgiveness pries loose our hands that hold on tightly to that which comes between us and others, so that in reconciliation, we can seek to do the hard work of reaching out and being reached out to by those whom we have wronged.
- Forgiveness and reconciliation are not only private, but also public matters.
- Forgiveness and reconciliation are not mere theoretical constructs; rather, they are about life of institutions and individuals, in all of its complexity and messiness.

## Vocation

These points might begin to lead us to perhaps ask how and why an institution would even be remotely interested in living out forgiveness and reconciliation. On the one hand, there will be those who will ask about the relevance or payoff of such hard work; on the other hand, some will ask how an institution might even begin to embody forgiveness and reconciliation in their common life and work. Both of these questions are important, for each question is attempting to discern what room or space might be made for forgiveness and reconciliation in their institution.

Before we get to the question of room or space that might be made for forgiveness and reconciliation, I want to explore what I see to be at the heart of questions that ask after relevance (or “why?”) and that ask after discernment (or “how?”). I want to suggest that what lies at the heart of these two kinds of questions that are sure to be raised within institutional life to one

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<sup>14</sup> For a recent discussion of sin in Luther, Augustine, and Barth, see Matt Jenson, *The Gravity of Sin: Augustine, Luther and Barth on homo incurvatus in se* (London: T&T Clark, 2006).

<sup>15</sup> Oswald Bayer, *Living by Faith: Justification and Sanctification* trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), pp. 25-27. Bayer actually calls this “the gift of self-forgetfulness.”

<sup>16</sup> When God forgives, he sets free; in other words, when God justifies us by faith alone in Christ alone, we are set free. See *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, Art. IV, *Book of Concord*, pp. 120-173.

degree or another is vocation. Vocation is, in essence, the answer to the questions of why and how in matters of living out forgiveness and reconciliation, whether individually or corporately.

In 1520, Martin Luther famously wrote what Christian life looks like when he says,

A Christian is lord of all, completely free of everything.

A Christian is a servant, completely attentive to the needs of all.<sup>17</sup>

Because Christians are justified by faith alone in Jesus Christ alone, who died and was raised from death for us, we are free, Luther says, to not be focused on the self or institution to the exclusion of others; instead, we are free for love and care of the neighbor. This second freedom is not about ethics, or, merely what we do; it is instead about the whole life of the person or institution in relationship to the whole world.

When we talk about vocation, then, we are talking about how, in this case, an institution engages both responsibly and responsively in their relationships with the rest of the world. Let me unpack that a bit. While some suggest that vocation is merely about what the individual or institution feels called to do, which we would understand as the internal sense of call, there is also an external sense of call. In the sense of the external sense of call, there are three parties always at play in the work of discerning what we are called to be and do. In our teaching about vocation at Augsburg College, many of us have configured the relationship of the three parties in this way:

God

Self/Institution

World

While the model may make it look as though these relationships are somewhat static, they are not. While it is true that God is the one who initiates the call, how the call comes to us is dynamic. For, while God can call us directly to love and care for the neighbor (internally), it is equally true that God can be at work in and through the world, calling us to love and service to the neighbor (externally).

The call to love and serve the neighbor, in whatever ways it comes to us, is a call to fully engage the world, and not to retreat from it. The German Lutheran pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer calls this a “this-worldly faith,” by which he means,

One must completely abandon any attempt to make something of oneself, whether it be a saint, or a converted sinner, or a churchman (a so-called priestly type!), a righteous [one] or an unrighteous one, a sick [one] or a healthy one. By this-worldliness I mean living unreservedly in life’s duties, problems, successes and failures, experiences and perplexities. In so doing we throw ourselves completely

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<sup>17</sup> Martin Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian* Luther Study Edition, Mark D. Tranvik, trans. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), p. 50.

into the arms of God, taking seriously not our own sufferings, but those of God in the world – watching with Christ in Gethsemane.<sup>18</sup>

“This-worldliness” is the key in answering the question of why we would want to be about the difficult work of seeking out forgiveness from and reconciliation with those whom we have wronged, wittingly or not. We seek out forgiveness and reconciliation because we have been engaged, again, wittingly or not, in a way of life as an institution in which others have been harmed in some way. We do this because we are free to do so, no longer having to justify or legitimate ourselves; in fact, in the context of the twenty-first century, nothing would be more legitimizing than for an institution to own up to its wrong doing. The health and vitality of institutions in the twenty-first century is dependent on whether or not the institution takes hold of its freedom by confessing its sin, not only before those whom they have wronged, but also before the larger world as well. In suggesting this, I need only point to Bonhoeffer, who is pointing us not to our own suffering, but to the suffering in the world. By doing this, we are not only paying attention to the suffering we have caused others, but also the suffering we have caused ourselves by not living fully out of who we are, what we are about, and where we are headed, that is, our own vocation in relationship to the rest of the world.

While the above only begins to suggest something about our posture in relationship to God and the rest of the world, it does not get at how we might actually go about seeking out forgiveness and reconciliation as institutions from and with those whom we have hurt. Often the cliché that is heard when forgiveness and reconciliation does not really take effect is this, “I will forgive, but I will not forget,” which is actually akin to saying, “I’ll tolerate you, but I won’t really engage with you any longer.” It should be said that there are times when this sort of sentiment is appropriate, when abuse or murder or some other sorts of heinous crimes have been committed. Yet, for the rest of us within institutions that are seeking only to be and do what we have been called to be and do, how do we get beyond the impasse of a kind of forgiveness and reconciliation that remains at the level further fracture and fragmentation?

In normal instances in which two parties –be they individuals or institutions – seek to work out their differences, there is often an emphasis on the self/institution and the world, where the one wronged is seen as superior and the one who has wronged is seen as somehow inferior. In such instances, I would argue that a forgiveness and reconciliation that brings about wholeness and fullness is not possible. My reason for saying that is that there really is not a common space, place or room on which the wronged and the wrong doer are able to stand to do the already difficult work of forgiveness and reconciliation. In such instances, one party or the other (or perhaps both) throw up their hands, saying that they have done all that they can, and still things are broken between the two parties.

For institutions to take their vocation seriously to love and serve the neighbor in the world by making room to seek forgiveness and reconciliation, doing things as normal is not an option. Instead, I want to use the vocation triangle described above as a model for what forgiveness and reconciliation that brings about wholeness might look like. If you refer again to the triangle as it is depicted above, there is, in fact, common ground between the self/institution and the world; they are on the same level. This common state of being has nothing to do with socioeconomic

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<sup>18</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* Eberhard Bethge, ed. (New York: Touchstone, 1971), pp. 369-370.

status, accomplishments, or the like. The common room in which they find themselves has to do with the fact that each – self/institution and world – are simultaneously sinners and saints; both are in need of the grace, love, and forgiveness of God in Jesus Christ. To say this is to suggest that for there to be any sort of forgiveness and reconciliation that brings about wholeness between self/institution and world, neither can count on their abilities or capacities, or – and this is hard for modern sensibilities – on themselves at all. For forgiveness and reconciliation to be sought, much less accomplished, the dependence depends on God and God alone.

This raises the question of what kind of God we have. Luther can be all sorts of help to us in this question. Early on in his life, he saw God as completely vengeful and wrathful; the kind of God who sits up in heaven with a score card, writing down everything we have and have not done, and making judgments about us and on us on that score. Because of this, Luther needed to justify himself before God; yet, he worried that he was never going to be good enough to earn God's favor. In essence, while he prayed to God and sought to do what was in him, what he thought of in terms of God was wholly not dependent upon God, but upon himself.

While studying Romans 1.17, Luther came to understand that it wasn't up to us to justify ourselves before God; rather, God justifies us on account of Christ alone. This God whom he saw as vengeful and wrathful was in all actuality gracious, merciful, and compassionate. Reflecting on this new insight, Luther would remark, "I felt that I had been born anew and had entered paradise itself through open gates."

More, perhaps, should be said about the kind of God we have, but enough has certainly been said to suggest something about what makes the hard work of forgiveness and reconciliation possible between self/institution and the world. Forgiveness and reconciliation between self/institution and world does not begin either with self/institution or world; it has its genesis, according to Luther, in God, who in Christ forgives sins. Standing before God, on our own, we are sinners who are declared forgiven for the sake of Christ. God's forgiveness in Christ Jesus sets us free from self-absorption and free for what Oswald Bayer calls "the gift of self-forgetfulness." Forgiven and freed, both self/institution and the world are free to do the hard work of confessing, forgiving, and reconciling sin. In the words of Douglas John Hall, self/institution and world are free to have "the courage to fail."<sup>19</sup>

### **Making Room Where There is None**

While institutions make room for self-evaluation and other measures to ensure that they are living out their vocations, the question I want to raise in the final section of this paper is whether or not there is room made for regular confession of sin, or, to confess failure, not only in-house, in board meetings or company-wide meetings, but also to the larger world, who are sometimes hurt by institutions, whether it is the intention of institutions to wrong people or not. In asking this question, I am, of course, suggesting something of a twofold answer: no, there perhaps is often not that kind of room in institutions for regular, public, transparent, authentic conversation with those whom they have hurt; and, yes, that such a room is possible.

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<sup>19</sup> Douglas John Hall, *Lighten Our Darkness: Towards an Indigenous Theology of the Cross* Rev. ed. David J. Monge, ed. (Lima, Ohio: Academic Renewal Press, 2001), pp. 259-262. It is interesting to note that Hall originally wanted to publish this book under the title, "The Courage to Fail," but the publisher would not agree to it, because they were afraid that the book would never sell under that title.

I am interested in thinking briefly about what it might look like for there to be room within institutions for regular and public engagement in confession and forgiveness, and thus forgiveness and reconciliation. In raising this as a possibility, I am concerned that room or space<sup>20</sup> be made within the life of the institution for this kind of work. In what follows, I will give only some contours of what such room could look like.

- Sin. It's a downer to talk about, and some attempt to mask or diminish its presence under the guise of mistake, faux pas, slip up, or the like. Call it whatever one will, sin fully identifies both the ways in which we seek to justify ourselves by whatever means, as well as who we are not; we are not God. Notice in this description that I am not only talking about the sinfulness of those who are either on the margins or outside the institution, but also those within the institution as well. Identifying sin begins from within and then moves outside the institution.
- Hope. Hope is not a blithe looking away from what is wrong. To do that is to engage in optimism. Hope, on the other hand, fully and wholly looks at what is going on, and "calls a thing what it actually is."<sup>21</sup>
- Cross. By *cross*, I mean the death and resurrection of the institution rooted in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.<sup>22</sup> Allow me to relay a brief story in this regard. In conversation with essentially the CEO of a major institution who was worried that his institution was falling apart and dying, I suggested to him that he should let the institution die, because God raises dead things. He, who knows this quite well, said to me, "I wish I could be as certain of this as you are." Death and resurrection are not propositional truths for the Christian community; rather, they are the very ground on which the Christian community is built.

Within these contours in the life of institutions, the difficult but essential work of forgiveness and reconciliation are made possible. By God's grace and mercy, we live them out, cracks and all.

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<sup>20</sup> I am interested in raising space or room as a category of apocalyptic, in which old and new creation not only meet, but also, perhaps, are intertwined. In the background of this discussion, then, are Oswald Bayer, whose work has been amply displayed throughout this essay, as well as the work of Vitor Westhelle, especially his book, *The Scandalous God: Use and Abuse of the Cross* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006). Recently, Cyril O'Regan has given a series of lectures at Marquette University that draws out the category of apocalyptic in theology under the title, *Theology and Spaces of the Apocalyptic* The Père Marquette Lecutre in Theology 2009 (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2009). I am using *contours* in this section as a way to talk about room, both because what room will look like from institution to institution will differ, and, because, as I have said, this is a first foray for me into a project that I hope to give far more time to in the future.

<sup>21</sup> See Douglas John Hall, *Lighten Our Darkness* for a distinction between hope and optimism. The comment regarding "calling a thing what it actually is" comes from Martin Luther's description of what a theologian of the cross is. See his, "Heidelberg Disputation," LW 31. For a reliable commentary on Luther's "Heidelberg Disputation," see Gerhard O. Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross: Reflections on Luther's Heidelberg Disputation, 1518* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).

<sup>22</sup> In using *cross* in this way, I am following Gerhard O. Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross*, p. 1, fn. 1.