

Levenhagen λογοι

February 2022

Thoughts from Aaron *God Moves in a Mysterious Way*

Troops massing on the border of Ukraine. Bitter political strife, mudslinging, and infighting. Runaway inflation with costs rising at the gas pump and in the grocery aisle. Some overworked and pressed to the limit; others unemployed and struggling to get by. Immorality everywhere we turn. A seemingly never-ending pandemic, with nearly everyone touched in some way by loss. Faces hidden behind masks, separated from each other. Children and adults alike in the grip of social anxiety, loneliness, and depression. It is hard to see how God is moving in this moment. But He is moving. In His own, hidden mysterious way.

How often have we heard the adage: “God moves in mysterious ways”? Many attribute it to Scripture, but that is not its source. The phrase was coined in 1773 by William Cowper, a British poet and friend of John Newton (who gave us several of our best loved hymns, including *Amazing Grace*). Though a Christian, Cowper struggled throughout his life with depression, even despairing of life and attempting suicide several times. Seeking to bring a bit of light to Cowper’s existence, John Newton asked him to contribute to a hymnbook he was writing. Among his contributions was a poem entitled, *Light Shining Out of Darkness*. The first line of this poem read: “God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform...” This poem was adapted into the hymn that we still sing today (*God Moves in a Mysterious Way*, LSB 765). Consider the wisdom in these words:

*His purposes will ripen fast, unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flow’r.
You fearful saints, fresh courage take; the clouds you so much dread
Are big with mercy and will break in blessings on your head.*

Cowper’s faith in God was the light shining into and out of His own moments of darkness. And so it is with us. In uncertain days and fear-filled times, we place our faith in the God and His promises...the God who moves in a mysterious way, the Light shining out of the darkness.

**Oh how great are God’s riches and wisdom and knowledge!
How impossible it is for us to understand His decisions and
His ways!**

(Romans 11:33, NLT)



Above: Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus, Concordia Seminary, looking west through the Main Quadrangle Archway

Prayer Requests

- For Aaron’s upcoming vicarage. That God will guide placement decisions about a current vicarage vs. a deferred vicarage and place him in the congregation where he can best serve and learn.
- For Nathan, as he begins the college search and application process, that he will identify the best school for his interests and goals.
- For Faith, as she continues to adjust to our new home in St. Louis and her new school, that she would find joy and make godly friends.

Classroom Corner

Academic & Field Work Update

As I write this, a very busy second semester about to begin. Here's a quick update on my current coursework and field work.

The Reformation and the Lutheran Church – this course is taught by Dr. Gerhard Bode and will focus on the history of the Reformation, with special attention given to the historical context of the Lutheran Confessions.

Pastoral Care and the Word – Dr. Rick Marrs will be teaching us about pastoral care for the congregation and our community, focusing on skills, techniques, and practices for pastoral counseling in the parish.

Reading and Preaching the Word of God – this course teaches skills for both the interpretation and proclamation of Scripture. Special attention is given to preaching Christ from Old Testament texts. This class will be team taught by Dr. Peter Nafzger and Dr. Mark Seifrid.

Church and World – this is an exploration of the life and witness of the Christian church in the contemporary world. We reflect on the impact of cultural realities on the church and the church's engagement with them. Dr. Kent Burreson will lead this class.

Language Labs – the seminary continues to bring greater rigor to our Hebrew and Greek studies. I'll participate in weekly labs for each language where I'll practice reading Scripture in the original languages, along with intensive reviews of vocabulary and grammar.

Miscellaneous – I'll continue to meet with my small formation group mentored by Dr. Dale Meyer. There will also be several vicarage preparation workshops to attend. Additionally, all second-year seminarians are required to complete Financial Peace University. Finally, I'll continue to be active at my fieldwork congregation, Zion Lutheran Church, assisting with liturgy and preaching.



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