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# Christ Crucified

*A 21st-Century Missiology of the Cross*

by Mark Thomsen

The author's theological reflection is seasoned by long years of engagement in mission and interfaith relations. On each page the reader is drawn into the author's passionate concern both to affirm Luther's

**A missiological vision centered in God's work in the crucified and risen Jesus Christ.**

theology of the cross and free it from a fortress of tradition that must be copied in every place and clime. He argues rather that the Lutheran tradition of the "theology of the cross" must be stretched in many ways as it responds to the needs of Christians in the "third world" and through dialogue with the world's other religions. For Thomsen

there is "no God other than the God embodied and identified in the Crucified." At the heart of the universe is a God whose love, concretized in the life and suffering of Jesus, embraces the whole cosmos. It's this deep Christcentric understanding of God that frees us, says Thomsen, to be radically open to the world, to one another and to all people. Thomsen's cross-based missiology is a welcome theological guide for Christians who wish to be in a relationship of witness, dialogue and service with the neighbor who is also religious other.

## **Christ Crucified**

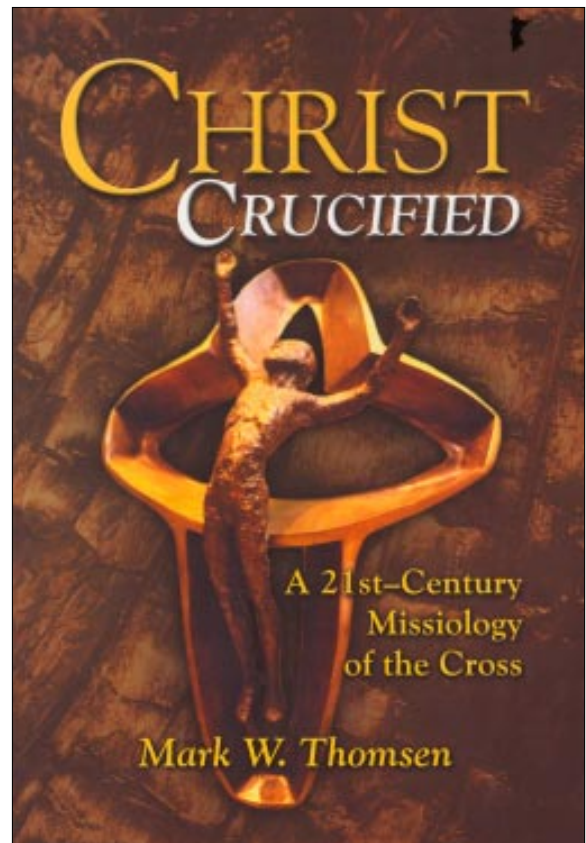
*A 21st-Century Missiology of the Cross*

by Mark Thomsen

ISBN 1-932688-01-3

120 pages

\$16.00



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## THE AUTHOR

### Mark Thomsen

Mark Thomsen is Visiting Professor of Mission at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) and director of the Chicago Center for Global Ministries. Following his ordination in 1957, Thomsen was principal of the Lutheran Seminary, Lamurde, Nigeria, and academic dean at the Theological College of Northern Nigeria. Upon returning to the United States, he taught at Dana College, Blair, Neb., and Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn. Before joining the LSTC faculty in 1996, he was director of the Division of World Mission and Church Cooperation of the American Lutheran Church, and executive director of the Division for Global Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

His writings have appeared in numerous magazines and journals, including *Word and World*, *Dialog*, *World Encounter* and *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*. His most recent book, *The Word and the Way of the Cross: Christian Witness Among Muslim and Buddhist People*, was published by the ELCA in 1993.

Thomsen received the bachelor of arts degree from Dana College and the bachelor of divinity degree from Trinity Theological Seminary, Blair, Neb. The master of theology degree in New Testament theology was awarded by Princeton Theological Seminary, and the doctor of philosophy degree by Northwestern University and Garrett Theological Seminary.



### Published Works

“In the Spirit of Jesus: A Vision Paper on Christian Service and Mission.” In *Mission at the Dawn of the 21st Century: A Vision for the Church*, ed. Paul Varo Martinson. Minneapolis: Kirk House Publishers, 1999. Pp. 255-67.

“Living from the Table: The Future of Ecumenism.” *Word and World* (Summer 1998) 315-317.

“The Christian Mission in the Muslim World.” *Word and World* (Spring 1996) 194-202.

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## What the Reviewers Say

Mark Thomsen's prophetic voice inflected by the experience of the crucified people, as documented by witnesses from around the world, carries the accent of the author's own vocational engagement in their plight and immersion in their strife. *Christ Crucified*, is the invocation of a cause that the gospel frees us to adopt, a convocation for the discipleship of a costly and precious grace, and a provocation to theologians that fail to listen to the present Christ in the cries and laments of a crucified world.

Vitor Westhelle, Professor of Systematic Theology, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

A timely work that offers the reader a splendid, insightful—at times poignant—missiological vision centered in God's work in the crucified and risen Jesus Christ. With care and respect, he critically evaluates various works that posit a pluralist approach or offer an alternative to such an approach, showing their theological and missiological strengths and shortcomings. His own inclusivist approach is rooted in Luther's theology of the cross, in which there is the indispensable call for the Church and individual Christians to not be shy or ashamed to share the gospel of God's incredible offer of forgiveness through the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Winston D. Persaud, Ph. D., Professor of Systematic Theology, Wartburg Theological Seminary

Though founded in Luther the author insists that Lutherans ought never turn their foundation into a fortress of tradition that must be copied in every place and clime. He argues rather that the Lutheran tradition of the "theology of the cross" must be stretched in many ways as it responds to the needs of Christians in the "third world" and through dialogue with the world's other religions.

Richard A. Jensen, Emeritus Professor of Homiletics, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

This is an incisive perspective of a person who has direct experience with global mission, interfaith relations, and the theology of religious pluralism. Thomsen's cross-based missiology is a welcome theological guide for Christians who wish to be in a relationship of witness, dialogue and service with the neighbor who is also religious other.

By Carol Schersten LaHurd, Founder and co-chair of the Minnesota Muslim-Christian dialogue, adjunct instructor at Fairfield University.

On each page the reader is drawn into the author's passionate concern both to affirm Luther's theology of the cross and free it from its 16<sup>th</sup> century context of personal guilt before a wrathful, inscrutable God. At the heart of the universe is a God whose love, concretized in the life and suffering of Jesus, embraces the whole cosmos.

Harold Vogelaar, Visiting Professor of Christian-Muslim Relationships, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

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